

Strong sales, packed house, vibrant energy, novel talks mark Art Dubai

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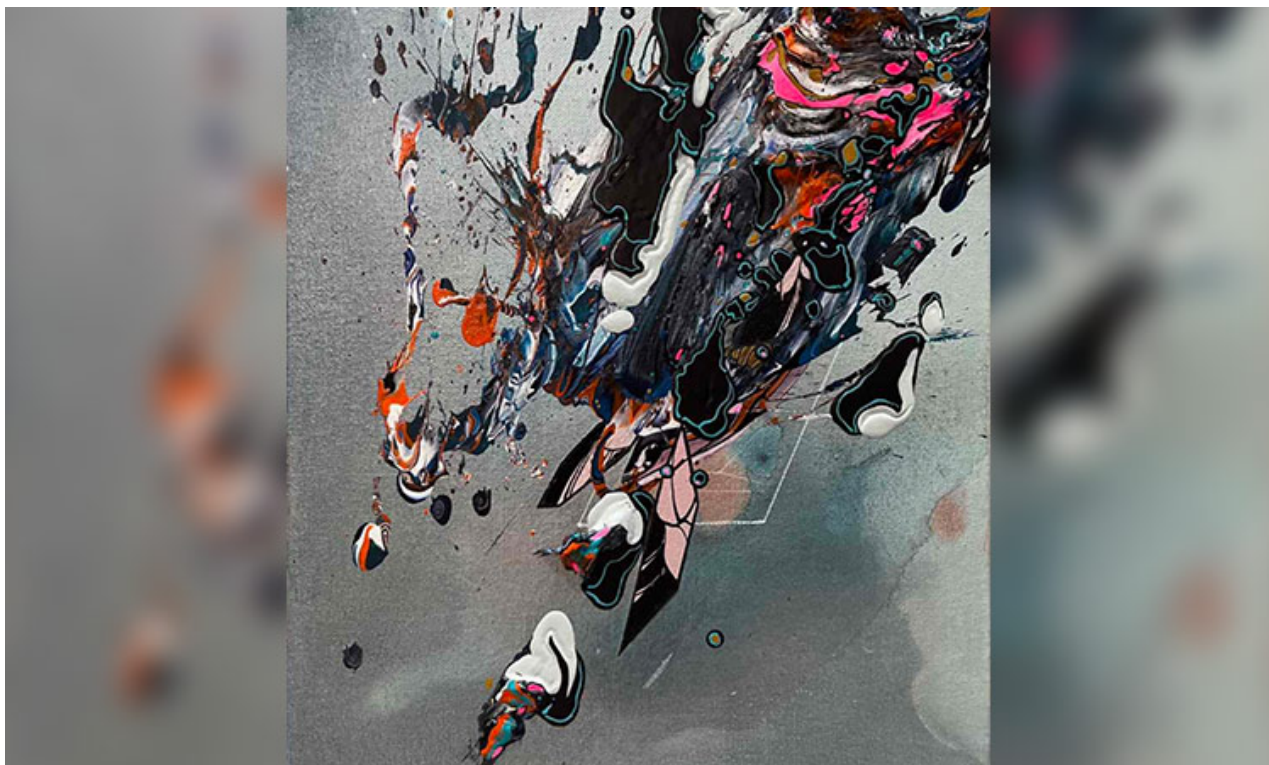
Sola Olulode's composition *Waves Of Emotion Under The Moonlight* from Lawrie Shabibi gallery.

Muhammad Yusuf, *Features Writer*

Art Dubai closed its 15th edition on March 13, with strong sales reported across all four sections of the fair: Modern, Contemporary, Bawwaba and Art Dubai Digital. Marking a return to full scale at Madinat Jumeirah, Art Dubai's 2022 edition was the fair's largest to date, with a record attendance of more than 30,000 visitors across five days. The success of the fair reinforced the importance of Dubai as an international hub for art and culture and for innovation and technology, and Art Dubai as the marketplace for art and artists from the Global South. The fair featured more than 120 presentations by 104 galleries and platforms from 44 countries. The gallery programme was complemented by newly commissioned works from leading international artists and an innovative talks programme, that brought together some of the world's brightest minds through the Global Art Forum and new Bybit Talks Series.

Art Dubai also featured the debut edition of Art Dubai Digital, a new physical gallery section presenting a curated selection of 17 of cutting-edge digital platforms. For many platforms, it was their first experience exhibiting in a traditional fair context; in person

and online sales were widely reported.



Clarence Chum's work *The fog was all around* at Art Dubai.

Art Dubai's Artistic Director Pablo del Val said that "this was without doubt one of the most successful editions of Art Dubai, in terms of both visitors and sales reported, fully reflecting Dubai's position as an engine of global growth and a city no longer of the future, but of the here and now."

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Kristin Hjellegjerde, Founder, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery said: "We had a very successful week; there was a lot of positive energy, and we sold multiple works to both new and returning clients. Dubai is a city in transition, and there is undoubtedly a growing collector scene here, at all levels." Victoria Cooke, Director, Gallery 1957 noted that "this is our third time at Art Dubai and our most successful edition yet — it's great to be back.

On the opening day we sold works to African-American, South Asian, and regional collectors. Dubai is a truly international place, and it's been an incredibly positive experience." Priyanka Raja, Founder, Experimenter said: "We had a very successful week, selling almost all the works we brought, mostly to institutions. It's been one of the strongest editions in Art Dubai's history, in terms of the quality of the galleries and the art

they are showing, and in the conversations we have had. “There has been a constant buzz, on all days of the fair, and as well as the sales we make, Art Dubai is a facilitator or longer-term conversations and feels like a moment of celebration for our artists.”



Artwork hosted by DAG art gallery.

Asmaa Al-Shabibi, Founder, Lawrie Shabibi Gallery said that “we had a good fair this year, with strong sales across our booth and gallery — overall the energy, interest and excitement was back to levels not seen for many years even before the pandemic.” Joe Kennedy, Founder, Institut.co commented: “We were thrilled to be invited to participate in Art Dubai’s inaugural Digital section which brought together an impeccably curated cross-section of platforms, galleries and DAOs from this innovative and rapidly expanding space.”

Henry Brand, Fingerprints DAO said: “We chose to do a hybrid booth including both online and IRL elements and we sold very well, with lots of NFTs being minted in person here at the booth - by collectors of all ages, and a really wide demographic. “It was our first time participating in an art fair and we chose a particularly challenging presentation that expands the use of the blockchain as a medium for artists.”



Artwork on display at Art Dubai Digital.

Dima Abdul Kader, co-founder, Emergeast said that “Art Dubai has been absolutely fantastic for us – the feedback and the traffic has been hugely positive and inspiring. Sales have been great and we almost sold out the booth.” Thomas Brambilla, Founder, Thomas Brambilla said: “It was our first time here at Art Dubai and we sold extremely well. It was a beautiful week and we really enjoyed it, in what is a completely new part of the world for us, and one where we plan to do more. Dubai is becoming ever more important, it’s a gateway to the region, and we met a lot of new, serious collectors this week.”

Matteo Consonni, Founder, Madragoa said that “this is our first experience of Art Dubai and it has been an extremely positive one. We are a young European gallery and this week we feel like we have been in the centre of the melting pot that is Dubai. Sales were consistent across the week and we were pleased to sell out the booth.” Founded in 2007, Art Dubai is one of the premier platforms to see and buy modern and contemporary art from the Global South. Featuring Contemporary, Modern and Digital gallery sections, annual artist commissions and year-round collector and education programmes, it champions art and artists from across the Global South, providing a relevant and increasingly important alternative to mainstream, largely Western-led narratives.

Art Dubai is held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai and in partnership with A.R.M. Holding. The lead partner of the fair is Swiss Wealth Management Group Julius Baer. Dubai Culture & Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) is the fair’s strategic partner. Bybit is the lead partner of Art Dubai Digital.

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