

Why Going Solo Was a Smart Choice at Frieze

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Elena Platonova is an art advisor, curator, and artist liaison in New York and London. Her Instagram handle is @ElenasArtAdventures.

Frieze Art Fair is now over. 200 galleries from 30 countries vied for collectors' attention in an airy white tent on NYC's Randall's Island. With such an overwhelming multitude of artworks to take in and select from, one-person gallery booths presented a respite for an overstimulated eye.

Two separate sections of the fair—Frame and Spotlight—featured exclusively solo projects. But a number of galleries in the Main section chose to showcase a single artist's oeuvre, an approach yielded a number of benefits. One strong voice is more likely to linger in viewers' memories than a stream of syncopated sounds in a group presentation. In the case of well-known names, this strategy seems to increase the number of sales by allocating more wall space for crowd-pleasing inventory. A single-person booth can also be a savvy way to promote a lesser-known artist—think a mini one-man gallery exhibition with tens of thousands of visitors from around the globe passing through.

Here are five galleries that reaped the benefits of a one-person presentation:

Dieter Krieg at Galerie Klaus Gerrit Friese



German artist Dieter Krieg (1937-2005) forged a unique blend of Pop Art, German and Abstract Expressionism by rendering food, mass-produced household products and, yes, animals, using vigorous gestures with an intensity bordering on religious fervor. Well-respected in his home country both for his art and his influential teaching at the Dusseldorf Arts Academy, Krieg was featured in several important group shows abroad, but he did not receive due recognition outside of his native Germany. Krieg passed away in 2005 and Berlin dealer Klaus Gerrit Friese, who runs the artist's estate, is intent on bringing him into the international spotlight posthumously.

John Currin at Gagosian Gallery



John Currin (b. 1962), one of the breadwinners for the heavyweight Gagosian Gallery, does not need an introduction. His paintings regularly fetch high-record prices at auction and his tongue-in-cheek, often risqué portraits harking back to Old Masters are part of our collective consciousness. Dedicating an entire prime-location booth to the artist's works on paper proved a winning strategy for Gagosian: the crowds around the walls with rows of Currin's drawings and etchings do not wane and the flow of Instagram images of the booth was incessant. Many of the best portraits in dialogue with the Renaissance and Rococo artists or appropriating 20th-century representational clichés were sold or are not for sale, making the available works even more desirable.

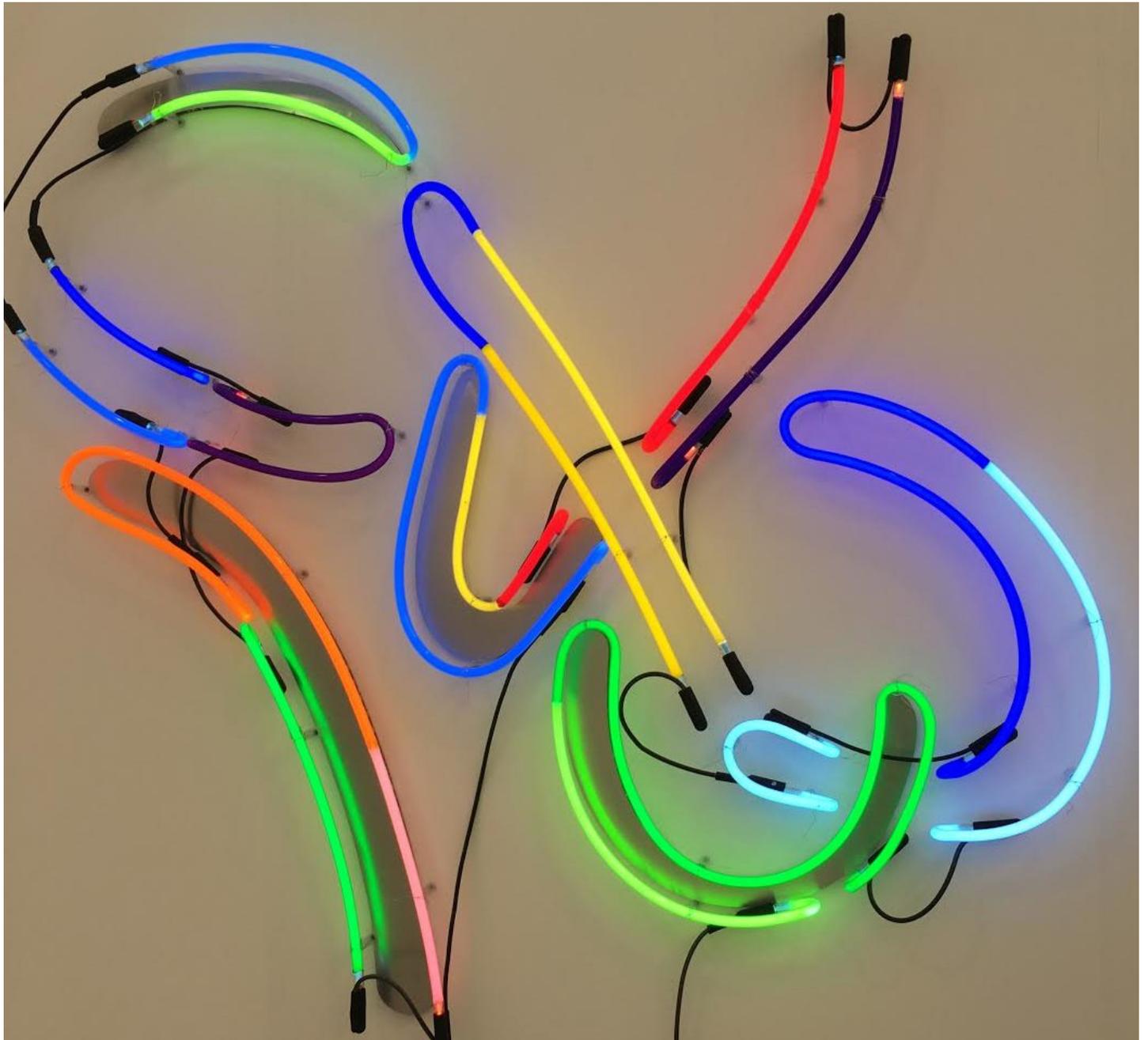
Ursula Schulz-Dornburg at Gallery Luisotti



Documenting the ephemeral and the disappearing with means that are both systematic and detached (conceptual grid, repetition and focus on inanimate objects) is a forte of German octogenarian Ursula Schulz-Dornburg (b. 1938). Her black-and-white photographic views of Armenian bus stops, Mesopotamian landscapes right before the Iran-Iraq war and a moving ray of light in a millennium-old pilgrimage site are featured in the Spotlight section booth of Santa Monica's Gallery Luisotti. *The Financial Times* recently published an overview of the artist's circuitous career, featuring each of the series on view at Frieze and naming American conceptual artists, particularly Ed Ruscha, and Land art as her major influences. What is truly

unique about Schulz-Dornburg's work is her spot-on intuition about capturing the landmarks in peril, such as ancient sites of Palmyra before the Syrian war or lonely Soviet-era bus stops in Armenia, reminiscent of Bernd and Hilla Becher's work, but with an air of tenderness and mystery that is truly her own. At below \$5,000, the *Bus Stops* (1997-2011) presented a rare opportunity to acquire critically acclaimed works by an established artist with an assured vision, at an affordable price.

Keith Sonnier at Pace Gallery



Another market behemoth, Pace Gallery, opted for a solo presentation of sculptures by post-minimalist Keith Sonnier (b. 1941), whose elaborate constructions including neon, mirrors and wire are instantly and comfortingly recognizable, setting the long-living light-art pioneer apart from the younger creators of cookie-cutter neon slogans, ubiquitous at the fair and elsewhere. The booth, provided a captivating photo opportunity for many, features early sculptures by Sonnier alongside his two recent series. Pace's choice to present work solely by Sonnier at Frieze might be a two-pronged strategy: to keep the momentous interest in the artist's work, following his recent solo exhibitions at Tate Modern, Galerie Forseblom in Finland and at Pace's own Midtown space; and to serve as a conversation starter about the gallery's recently-opened show by Leo Villareal, also working with the medium of light.

Tony DeLap at Parrasch Heijnen Gallery



Parrasch Heijnen from Los Angeles employed fittingly minimalist means—only four works are featured on the three available walls—to present an overlooked early minimalist pioneer from the Bay Area, Tony DeLap (b. 1927). DeLap's meticulously crafted monochromatic sculptures—painted canvasses wrapped around wooden supports—exude meditative serenity, prompting the viewers to pause to properly take them in, despite the roaming crowds, the fair fatigue and the fear of missing out, unavoidable during Frieze week. Like the aforementioned Dieter Krieg, DeLap exerted a major influence as a mentor, teaching such West Coast minimalist visionaries

as John McCracken and James Turrell. Considering the critical recognition and popular acclaim of last year's LACMA exhibition of another rigorous minimalist, John McLaughlin, one could hope that the art market's obsession with brand names is a passing malaise and that solo presentations at art fairs will increasingly lead to one-person museum shows, not just the other way around.

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