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STREAMLINE

Elevating the Art of the Deal

By MATTHIAS ANDERSON



In July an important transition occurred at the Fine Art Dealers Association (FADA): After 12 years as president, Howard L. Rehs (Rehs Galleries, Inc., New York) handed the gavel to fellow board member Betina Tasende (Tasende Gallery, La Jolla and West Hollywood). This may not seem momentous from a distance, but the transformation of FADA during Rehs's term has been nothing short of that.

Founded in 1990 as a nonprofit organization, FADA was ably led over the next seven years by presidents George Stern, David Stary Sheets, Gavin Spanierman, and Tom Nygard. In 1997, when Rehs took over, the membership comprised 17 galleries around the U.S., most specializing in traditional art. Today that figure has grown to 53, drawn from all corners of the field and nation. Representing the members' interests on the board today are Susan Bodo, Geoff Cline, Beverly Denenberg, Jonathan Novak, Howard Rehs, George Stern, Louis Stern, and Abby Taylor, who work closely with executive director Jane Glassman.

HIGH STANDARDS

Membership in FADA is by invitation only, though the qualifications required are published for all to see. Members must have owned and operated a full-time business for at least five years; must run a dedicated exhibition space with a significant inventory; must possess a reputation for integrity in dealing with the public, museums, and other dealers; must unconditionally guarantee the authenticity of all works they sell; and must possess expert knowledge of the works they handle.

Once on the inside, FADA members enjoy considerable benefits. Particularly valuable is the advertising campaign that encourages the world to visit fada.com, the increasingly sophisticated website where every member manages his or her own sub-site. As a whole, the FADA site now features more than 5,700 artworks available for purchase through the member galleries. In addition, FADA members keep in touch with each other and their clients through an e-network and list-serve, and make joint donations to worthy charities in the field, including the International Foundation for Art Research, the Archives of American Art, and the scholarly e-journal *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* (19thc-artworldwide.org).

THE MAIN EVENT

FADA's most visible project, however, is the *Los Angeles Art Show*. Launched 15 years ago at the Pasadena Civic Center with just 14 exhibitors, the show has become the West Coast's largest art fair: Its 2009 edition involved more than 130 exhibitors from around the world and drew 35,000 visitors. The next show will return to the Los Angeles Convention Center January 27-31, 2010, presented once again by FADA and KR Martindale Show Management.



ARTIST ERIC FORSTMANN WITH ACTOR KEVIN BACON ON THE STAND OF ECKERT FINE ART DURING FADA'S LA ART SHOW LAST JANUARY

On view next January will be more than 15,000 paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, and photographs, ranging from the blue-chip to the brand-new. Betina Tasende has announced her intention to see the show grow internationally and in the scope of its programming; thus the 2010 edition will feature a lecture series, a sculpture garden, an exhibition of work by California's latest art school graduates, and even a program that brings VIP clients to studios, museums, and private collections for intimate visits.

The rising prestige of the show was underscored last winter when Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa declared January as "Los Angeles Arts Month." The metropolis boasts many superb artistic resources, of course, but it is only in January that the show's opening preview party draws scores of Hollywood celebrities, political leaders, and art collectors downtown. This year's preview is set to benefit the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Inner City Arts, and will coincide with the opening of the International Fine Print Dealers Association's 25th annual fair in Los Angeles.

The ability of collectors to explore both fairs under the same roof on the same weekend is another example of the collegiality that has come to characterize FADA. This spirit is sure to continue during the presidency of Betina Tasende. See you in LA next January! ■

MATTHIAS ANDERSON is a contributing writer to *Fine Art Connoisseur*.

Information: FADA, PO Box 411, Beverly Hills, CA 90213, 310.455.6117, fada.com