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### Houston Fine Art Fair meets 10K visitor goal

By DOUGLAS BRITT, HOUSTON CHRONICLE  
Published 08:35 p.m., Monday, September 19, 2011

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MAYRA BELTRÁN : CHRONICLE PROFITABLE: Adela Andea, assembling her free-standing light sculpture before the Houston Fine Art Fair, landed some commissions and sales during the event. Photo: Mayra Beltran / © 2011 Houston Chronicle



### Houston and Texas

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The city's first international contemporary art fair wrapped up Sunday night at the [George R. Brown Convention Center](#) as organizers reached their goal of 10,000 visitors and promised to return in 2012.

"We'll definitely be back next year," said Houston Fine Art Fair director [Fran Kaufman](#), adding that at least half the 80 participating galleries, including many Houston dealers, reported sales.

With galleries - including [Hiram Butler](#) of Houston, who sold a rare [Jasper Johns](#) drawing on opening night - reluctant to report sales prices, no estimates of overall fair sales were immediately available. But [Rick Friedman](#), president of [Hamptons Expo Group](#), the fair's organizer, said sales tallied "in the millions."

Among other Houston galleries, [Moody Gallery](#) also enjoyed strong sales led by the purchase of *Tower*, a major [Mary McCleary](#) collage. [Anya Tish Gallery](#) secured multiple commissions and



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sales for Texas sculptors [William Cannings](#) and Adela Andea, and [Barbara Davis Gallery](#) sold a painting by Los Angeles-based artist [Gavin Perry](#), among other works.

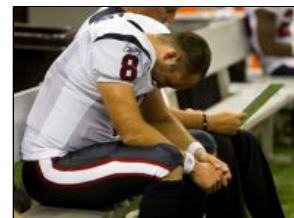
For others, such as [Gallery Sonja Roesch](#), the fair was more about networking and relationship building - Roesch said she saw people she hadn't seen in 10 years - and introducing collectors to an unfamiliar artist. Roesch presented paintings by the late Raimund Girke, an artist with an extensive museum and gallery exhibition history in Europe but none in the United States, so she hadn't expected to realize immediate sales of his works, some of which command six figures.

Similarly, making contacts and educating collectors were the immediate payoffs for visiting exhibitor Louis Stern Fine Arts of West Hollywood, Calif., which focuses on West Coast mid-20th-century abstract painters such as [John McLaughlin](#), [Karl Benjamin](#), Lorser Feitelson and Helen Lundeberg.

Marie Chambers, the gallery's director, said museum collector groups stopped by and expressed interest in some of the pieces on view, and many visitors thanked her for introducing them to important but still under-recognized figures' work.

As for whether the gallery's visit to the fair would end up paying off financially, "we won't know for a couple of months," she said, citing a Chicago art fair exhibit that didn't yield sales for months after the event.

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