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ENTERTAINMENT & ARTS

At Frieze Los Angeles, the art fair goes Hollywood



Bettina Korek, center, executive director of Frieze Los Angeles, on the Paramount back lot with Ali Subotnick, curator of Frieze Projects, and LAXART Director Hamza Walker, curator of Frieze Talks. Frieze Los Angeles premieres Feb. 14. (Ana Venegas / For The Times)

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narrow, brownstone-lined streets of New York City.

Or do they?

The camera pulls back to reveal that the fair is on the Paramount backlot, the Manhattan setting actually part of a Hollywood studio.

Such is the script for the Frieze art fair, debuting in Los Angeles next month. The fair — which started in London in 2003, with a New York edition and a second London fair added in 2012 — gets the full Hollywood treatment when it runs Feb. 14-17 at Paramount Studios. Organizers aim to create an art moment in Los Angeles, drawing international visitors and galvanizing collectors around the well of creativity in the city.

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That the fair will be at a film studio, on a weekend sandwiched between the Grammys and the Oscars, is no accident. It's Frieze's way of putting a pointed Hollywood spin on the art fair. References to Hollywood and entertainment also ripple throughout the programming.

"We absolutely wanted to be a bridge to bring Frieze and its ethos to Los Angeles, but also infuse a local aura," said Frieze Los Angeles Executive Director Bettina Korek. "We're putting art on the calendar between music and film — and at this site, which is a symbol of L.A.'s very unique creative ecosystem."



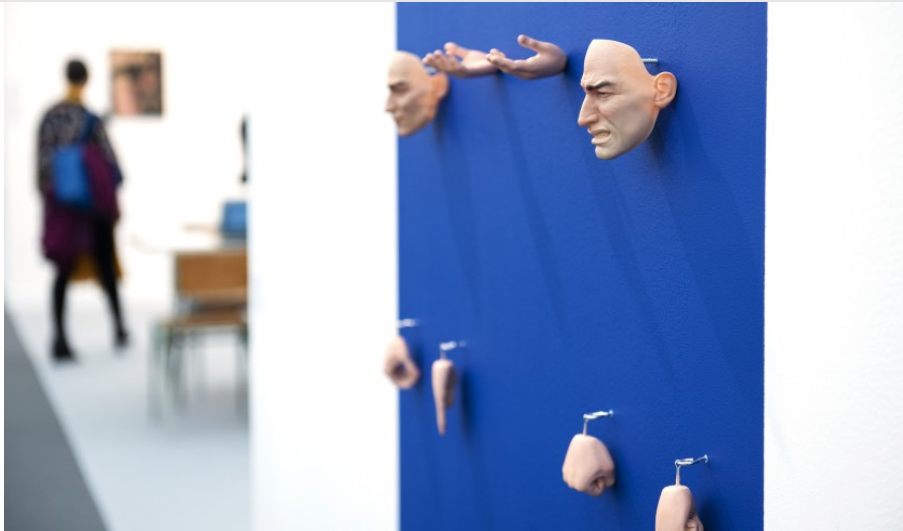
Lara Schnitger's "Suffragette City," a live program from Anton Kern Gallery at Frieze New York in 2018 (Mark Blower / Frieze)

Programming includes gallery booths in a [Kulapat Yantrasast](#)-designed tent, as well as newly commissioned, site-specific artworks scattered throughout the New York backlot and talks in the studio's Sherry Lansing Theatre. Beyond films, performance and music on site, a blitz of public and private happenings is planned at art galleries, museums, restaurants and bars, artists' studios and other locations around the city.

"We've curated a list of 12 art walks that map different concentrations of galleries," Korek said. "And hopefully Paramount will become the center of this moment that emanates throughout the city."

The fair's Hollywood connections are strategic. Endeavor, parent company of talent agency William Morris Endeavor, is the majority owner of Frieze. Victoria Siddall, director of Frieze Fairs, said she and co-owners Matthew Slotover and Amanda Sharp retain creative control of the event and its programming. But Frieze, she said, benefits greatly from its relationship with Endeavor, especially in L.A., "because of the resources and support they could give us to get it off the ground. That partnership helped crystallize it into reality."

Frieze fills a void in Endeavor's portfolio, company President Mark Shapiro said. Chief Executive Ariel Emanuel is an art collector who owns works by Mark Bradford, Al Loving and Kara Walker, among others, and he's on the board of L.A.'s Museum of Contemporary Art. But Endeavor doesn't represent visual artists. Its stake in Frieze, Shapiro said, "was very much a strategic play for us. You think of Endeavor, you've got fashion so strong, sports so strong, music so strong, you've got TV and film so strong, you've got culinary. And we felt we were missing one with art."



At Frieze London in 2018, Cécile B. Evans' "A Man in Progress" was shown by the European gallery Emanuel Layr. This is a partial view of the full work. (Linda Nyland / Frieze)

Los Angeles has traditionally been more of an art production town, known more for artists and art schools than for collectors, though that's slowly changing. Several art fairs — Art Platform Los Angeles, Paramount Ranch and FIAC LA — have tried, unsuccessfully, to take root in L.A. But for every L.A. Art Show, which has taken place for 24 years, or Art Los Angeles Contemporary, which has been around for 10, there's a Paris Photo Los Angeles, which in 2016 canceled its fourth L.A. show because gallery sales had been so low the previous three years.

But that's not something worrying Korek.

With contemporary art museums such as [the Broad](#) and the [Marciano Art Foundation](#) opening here and the arrival of gallery juggernauts [Hauser & Wirth](#) and [Sprüth Magers](#), L.A.'s profile as a contemporary art hub has risen. That these institutions exhibit local artists in the mix validates the local art scene and ascribes something of a value structure for budding and established collectors.

"The timing right now is very different," Korek said, referring to Paris Photo Los Angeles' retreat. "Following both editions of [the Getty's] '[Pacific Standard Time](#),' the consciousness about the importance of the art scene here is very different, and we've seen an influx of international galleries here since then. I also think we've hit more of a turning point in how collectors in Los Angeles see their roles."



Frieze New York 2018. (Mark Blower / Frieze)

It's still something of a cliffhanger as to whether Frieze will be able to rouse as many collectors as it hopes. "We're casting a net," Korek said, "and looking forward to welcoming people from the entertainment community, and others, to learn more about galleries, to get involved in collecting and to experience the Paramount lot as they never have before."

The 52-person host committee includes "ambassadors" such as Salma Hayek Pinault, Tobey Maguire and Serena Williams along with art world figures such as philanthropists Eli and Edythe Broad, collector Beth Rudin DeWoody and MOCA Director [Klaus Biesenbach](#). Some committee members will host private events at their homes; others will participate in public events, such as the talks series.

Frieze New York last year featured more than 190 galleries; the inaugural L.A. fair will have about 70 galleries, a third of which are local.

"It's less about the numbers and more about the quality," Siddall said. "We wanted the best galleries, large and small, young and established."

Hauser & Wirth will present Mike Kelley's "Unisex Love Nest" installation, the first time it's being shown in Los Angeles. David Kordansky Gallery will show new work by Kathryn Andrews that is inspired by the Black Dahlia murder. Sfeir-Semler Gallery of Beirut and Hamburg, Germany, will present a group show of Arab artists, 50% of whom are women. L.A. Louver will turn its booth into an immersive environment showing work by Los Angeles graffiti artist Gajin Fujita.



Gagosian gallery at Frieze New York in 2018. (Mark Blower / Frieze)

Hamza Walker, director of the nonprofit gallery LAXART, curated Frieze Talks, which includes two conversation series. “Eavesdropping” will pair artists in the Sherry Lansing Theatre for conversations about “making.” Artist [Rafa Esparza](#) will appear with performance artist [Ron Athey](#) for one; painter [Mary Weatherford](#) will take the stage with art writer Suzanne Hudson for another.

“Name That Tune,” which Walker organized with music critic and professor [Josh Kun](#), kicks off at LAXART several weeks prior to Frieze. Riffing on the 1950s game show, the event will play “sonic fragments” for select artists — [Jim Shaw](#), [Lauren Halsey](#) and [Frances Stark](#), among them — and test their knowledge of sound and popular music.

L.A. curator Ali Subotnick organized the site-specific art commissions, Frieze

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[Barbara Kruger](#)'s decals — posing philosophical questions such as “who will write the history of tears?” — will appear on the backlot as well as at art institutions around L.A. [Karon Davis](#)' lifesize plaster sculptures of children, an installation called “Game,” addresses gun violence in schools. It will be placed by a brick schoolhouse facade on the lot.

Frieze Los Angeles is essentially fabricating an urban art utopia on the fake streets of New York.

“It’s emblematic of Los Angeles,” Korek said of Frieze Projects. “Artists were invited to respond to this city that was built to be portrayed on film, so it really articulates that dialogue between artifice and reality. It’s Hollywood. We’re creating this fantasy of a city with public art at the center.”

End scene. Fade out.



Revolver Galeria in the Focus section of Frieze London in 2018. (Linda Nylind / Frieze)



Frieze Los Angeles

Where: Paramount Studios, 5555 Melrose Ave., Hollywood

When: Invitation only 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Feb. 14 and 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Feb. 15; open to the public 2-8 p.m. Feb. 15, noon-7 p.m. Feb. 16, noon-6 p.m. Feb. 17

Tickets: Various levels of admission and packages \$20-\$200 for adults, \$7-\$20 for children

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Info: [frieze.com/fairs/frieze-los-angeles](https://www.frieze.com/fairs/frieze-los-angeles)



Artist Jim Shaw at his solo presentation with Simon Lee Gallery at Frieze London 2018. (Linda Nyland/Frieze)

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