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FRIEZE LOS ANGELES

ART FAIR SPECIAL

Galleries revamp Frieze plans in wake of fires

Last month's deadly wildfires have prompted exhibitors to reschedule exhibitions and parties, and launch fundraisers for artists most affected by the disaster. By Dalya Benor

Frieze Los Angeles is typically a time of celebration for the local arts community. But after January's devastating wildfires, the question of whether to proceed with the fair dangled precariously. Many gallerists, artists and other members of the Los Angeles arts community expressed their wishes to continue with the fair as planned. As a result, Frieze decided to move forward, but participating galleries have been working out how to approach the fair a bit differently this year.

"In the wake of this loss, it seems important to bring people together," Lee Foley, the director of the Chinatown gallery Bel Ami, tells *The Art Newspaper*. "but also to pivot the language around [it], so that it really is about the city, artists who live and work here, and galleries that have their businesses here—and a call to action to support them."

Bel Ami has offered its gallery as a work space for those who have been displaced. Foley says the gallery has yet to plan a party, dinner or event, and is "waiting to see what kind of event would be best to programme around the fair". Depending on how things pan out, Foley says Bel Ami may host a fundraiser or a small off-site exhibition. "I'm still taking the temperature, having conversations with different gallerists and collectors to see what might be best during that time," she says.

Frieze brings energy

"The Los Angeles art world genuinely does need the energy that Frieze Los Angeles brings," says Ariel Pittman, the senior director at Various Small Fires. "It gives people one week a year a reason to come from all around the world. It's very important, given that Los Angeles has this incredible art history and community of artists. It deserves that attention." That said, Various Small Fires opted to pull out of Frieze Los Angeles this year (and all other art fairs in 2025) in response to the fires, citing environmental and climate-change concerns. "The gallery has a long-running commitment to artists that deal with ecological responsibility," Pittman

says, "and that is our response to wanting to be mindful about the bigger picture of factors that led to these fires."

And while it may seem trite to carry on with shows and exhibitions as planned, Frieze provides a financial and cultural stimulus to those who need it now more than ever. The artist Alec Egan was preparing for a solo show at Anat Ebgi gallery when his home, studio and the work he spent two years creating for the exhibition were destroyed in the Palisades fire. In an effort to support Egan and other local artists, Anat Ebgi's Frieze presentation this year features only the works of Los Angeles-based artists. (Egan worked out of Anat Ebgi's gallery on Fountain Avenue to complete two new paintings for Frieze.) Meanwhile, the gallery is hosting a benefit exhibition featuring 15 Los Angeles-based artists (*The Wave*, until 22 March), donating 10% of the show's proceeds to the L.A. Arts Community Fire Relief Fund.

Other galleries have also reworked their Frieze stands to pay homage to Los Angeles. Perrotin is dedicating half of its stand to the local artists Alex Gardner, Zach Harris, Kara Joslyn, Claire Tabouret, Emma Webster and the late Keisho Okayama; it will donate part of its proceeds to benefit fire relief.

L.A. Louver is focusing exclusively on the work of five Los Angeles artists with "deep ties in the community"—Rebecca Campbell, Gajin Fujita, Ben Jackel, Heather Gwen Martin and Alison Saar—says gallery director Elizabeth East. In addition, L.A. Louver has created limited-edition prints by Saar and Fujita, with proceeds going to fire relief.

While not directly related to the Los Angeles fires, Babst Gallery is showing two pieces by Athena LaTocha, whose work is reflective of and was made during wildfires in Canada last year. "We revisited these works in the wake of the Los Angeles wildfires and felt the urgency," says the Babst Gallery partner Mario DeFlice. "In a lot of ways, we've been thinking about how art, landscape and climate are inextricably linked."

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Time is on your side: Greg Ito's inflatable sculpture, *A Time to Blossom*, welcomes visitors to Santa Monica Airport; the work has been created in collaboration with the Art Production Fund

Frieze clock is healing, not alarming

When the artist Greg Ito—a fourth-generation Angeleno—was first approached by Frieze to create an inflatable sculpture to greet visitors just outside its Los Angeles fair, he thought a burning candle the size of a palm tree would be the perfect visual. "It's a symbol I use in a lot of my artwork," he tells *The Art Newspaper*. "I was thinking of it as a beacon." But after the deadly wildfires in January, a giant sculpture of fire seemed inappropriate. "So I pivoted from a candle to an alarm clock," he says.

Ito created *A Time to Blossom* (2025) in collaboration with the Art Production Fund. He

hopes that the huge timepiece, with its crown of orange flowers, will unify the community and serve as a metaphor for healing, hope and transformation. (He adds that it could be a welcome distraction for stressed-out drivers looking for parking at the fair.) The clock is set to 3:33—"I like repeating numbers, and this is the number for regeneration," Ito says—and the blooms atop it represent his Japanese heritage and the poppies that transfigure Southern California's landscape every year. "With time comes healing," Ito says, "and this is a time for us to grow."

Elena Goukassian

Shows offer support for LA

There is no shortage of opportunities to support wildfire-relief efforts in this week. Just a short drive from Frieze, at the Bergamot Station Arts Center, the dealers Craig Krull and Douglas Marshall have organised *Out of the Ashes* (until 1 March), an exhibition of works by artists who were affected by the Eaton and Palisades fires; the artists will collect 100% of the sales proceeds.

"It quickly became apparent that this was also an opportunity for [the artists] to tell their stories, so we asked each artist to write a wall label about their experiences and perhaps how their work relates to this exhibition," Krull tells *The Art Newspaper*. Around 40 people contributed works—including Elaine Carhartt, Ana Morales, Cleon Peterson, Camilla Taylor and Delbar Shahbaz—and there will be a reception and talk on Saturday afternoon (22 February).

Nearby in Venice, Arcane Space has opened *Artists for Loss Angeles* (until 2 March), a benefit show curated by the choreographer Morleigh Steinberg and featuring pieces donated by more than 50 artists. Sales of works—priced between \$200 and \$11,500—topped \$40,000 during the opening weekend. Across town in Glendale, Gattopardo opened



Michael Deyermond's fireproof print #1 you forgot to burn me (2025) is on view at Bergamot Station

Atmospheric River (until 15 March), a group show benefiting artists and art workers affected by the fires. It includes works by nine Los Angeles artists—among them Diana Thater, T. Kelly Mason and Juliana Halpert—as well as the late Gordon Matta-Clark.

"Matta-Clark's work serves as an armature for the exhibition," says Alex Nazari, the owner of Gattopardo. "The goal of the exhibition, other than fundraising, is to highlight the kind of work that art fairs don't: the true slippage that makes LA art interesting."

Benjamin Sutton

grief and HOPE



NEWS

Frieze Los Angeles

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For Make Room gallery, the fires caused a series of delays in opening scheduled shows, leaving it with just a 24-hour window to install during Frieze week. "It's going to be stressful," says owner and director Emilia Yin, "but we believe it's important to put artists first to ensure both shows get the best outcome possible." Meanwhile, the gallery has organised an ongoing online benefit exhibition, *Artists for L.A. Fire Relief*, donating 50% of the gallery's proceeds to fire-relief organisations. "Our goal is to support the community's recovery while sustaining the city and art's livelihood, as many artists depend on us," Yin says. "Make Room's story wouldn't exist without Los Angeles. We are part of its ecosystem in every way."

The artist Amir Nikravan, whose solo exhibition at Tyler Park Presents closed earlier this month, lost his home in the Eaton fire; his parents

"We've been thinking about how art, landscape and climate are inextricably linked"

Mario DeFlice, Babst Gallery

also lost theirs. The gallerist Tyler Park says he is "giving more of a commission percentage from sales of his show to him, along with donating a percentage of the gallery's commission to the [non-profit] World Central Kitchen".

No time for celebration?

The mood in the city leaves the question of celebration up for discussion. Pace cancelled the opening party and associated programming for its latest exhibition in Los Angeles. Instead, it is redistributing those funds to various relief efforts. Pace also launched an internal Fire Relief Subcommittee, which will put money towards using its gallery space for community needs such as donations, food delivery and workshops.

Blum Gallery took the opposite



Alec Egan's *City View (First Tree)*, which he created for Frieze Los Angeles after losing numerous works in the fires



Volunteers search for personal belongings in a home destroyed in the Eaton fire. More than 12,000 buildings are believed to have been destroyed in the fire; some local artists, as well as losing their homes, also lost their studios and their work

approach. Rather than scaling back on festivities, it rescheduled its opening celebrations for its previously planned January shows for Frieze week. "With respect for the tremendous loss experienced by the community, and for our own team's emotional wellbeing, we opted to make space for emergency relief efforts and for processing the disaster," says the gallerist Tim Blum.

"Los Angeles still has some of the best artists, dealers and collectors in the world," says the dealer Carlye Packer, who lost her childhood home (where her parents still lived) in the Palisades fire. "The community of Los Angeles is extremely resilient

and vibrant. The best way to support Los Angeles in this time is to literally come out and support."

Sam Parker, of Parker Gallery, echoes this sentiment: "Now more than ever, the Los Angeles art community desperately needs the support of the art world at large to make this year a success and a galvanising moment. The livelihood of so many artists and art workers rely on events like this. Please do not be afraid to visit Los Angeles!"

"What people don't realise is that even if your house, business or studio hasn't burned down, many others have, which in turn impacts all of us," says Dominique Clayton

of Dominique Gallery. "How can we celebrate, buy and make art (a luxury item) and act normal when normal is not the same for many in the community? It's emotionally and mentally challenging. So I hope visitors to L.A. are sensitive to that, but I also hope they understand we need their visit. We need people to come to L.A., support our programmes, buy things and put some more capital and energy into our efforts, so we can get back on track as soon as possible. As they say in Hollywood, 'the show must go on' – but make sure y'all buy tickets to the show, or else we won't have one! There's no time to dwell. We need to motivate and activate."

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