

Flash Art

Istanbul

CI – how contemporary is Istanbul?

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A week ago in Istanbul, perhaps the less influenced by global economical crisis city between the USA, Europe and Asia, the eighth edition of the Contemporary Istanbul closed, one of the most attended Turkish contemporary art fairs. Its chairman Ali Gürelisaid to be satisfied with 72,000 visitors from 22 countries, 748 artists presented by 95 art galleries and 13 art spaces and foundations.



Carole A. Feuerman, CI, 2013
Aria Art gallery, Firenze

It goes without saying that Contemporary Istanbul is a unique art fair, due to its geographical position and cultural background, in prism of which visitors should come to understand local Turkish contemporary art and appreciate its national connotations. The Marlborough Gallery, New York, participated for the second time; Galerie Lelong, Paris was at CI for the first time. The two prestigious galleries respectively presented Turkish artists Ahmet Gunestekin (The Marlborough Gallery) and Ramazan (Ramazan Bayrakoglu, Galerie Lelong). Andipa Gallery, London, selected Banksy, while gallery C24, New York, exhibited Robert Montgomery and Ali Kazma, who represented the Turkish Pavilion at the 55th edition of the Venice Biennale 2013.

The fair counted 3,000 artworks with a total value of \$92,000,000 (180,000,000 TL) and even if it was less than its previous edition (more than \$100,000,000), Mr Güreli sees it as a good sign of growing enthusiasm of the new middle-class collectors. In fact, he noticed that the number of Turkish art collectors has increased from 50 in 2005 to 700-800 this year, from which 20-30 are “serious” ones who are ready to invest in contemporary art an average of \$100,000-150,000 a year. Moreover, Contemporary Istanbul 2013 invited members of International Association of Corporate Collections of Contemporary Art, trying to unite local Turkish art map with the Global one; following the good tradition of last year, 67 % of the art works was sold this time.