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## The New Darling of the European Art Trade? Paris.

At the Paris+ fair and its satellites, there was plenty of talk about the art world's center of gravity in Europe shifting from Britain to France.

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Visitors at the Hauser & Wirth Gallery booth at Paris+ By Art Basel in Paris on Wednesday. Dimitar Dilkoff/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images



By **Scott Reyburn**  
Reporting from Paris

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“Something is going on. People want to come to Paris now,” said the London-based contemporary art dealer Niru Ratnam, who this week was exhibiting at the [Paris Internationale](#) fair for emerging galleries.

Compared to London’s recent [Frieze fair](#), “there are a lot more Americans and Chinese,” added Ratnam. “The bedbugs haven’t put them off,” referring to recent reports of a [resurgence of the parasitic insects](#) in the French capital.

Ratnam was one of 65 gallerists from 25 countries participating in the 9th edition of this popular, dealer-organized event, held this year in an atmospherically grungy disused telephone exchange in Paris’s central Grands Boulevards district.

Since Britain’s 2016 vote to [leave the European Union](#), there has been plenty of talk about the heft of the European art trade shifting from London and Paris. This week in the French capital, with influential names like the mega-gallery [Hauser & Wirth](#), [Mendes Wood](#) from Brazil and the London-based [Modern Art](#) adding to the lengthening list of international dealers opening spaces in the city, and the 154 exhibitor-strong second edition of the [Paris+ By Art Basel](#) fair, this talk was louder than ever.

“What has tipped the needle toward Paris has been the private investments like the [Fondation Louis Vuitton](#), the Bourse de Commerce and the [Fondation Cartier](#),” said Marc Payot, the president of Hauser & Wirth, on Tuesday at the opening of the company’s elegant new four-floor gallery near the Champs-Élysées.



Henry Taylor's "Forest fever ain't nothing like, 'Jungle Fever,'" a contemporary riff on Édouard Manet's "Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe," is one of several of his paintings on show at Hauser & Wirth's new Paris gallery. via Henry Taylor and Hauser & Wirth

The major [Mark Rothko](#) retrospective at the Fondation Louis Vuitton and [Mike Kelley](#)'s at the Bourse de Commerce — Pinault Collection were a draw for international visitors this week. So, too, was Hauser & Wirth's own debut Paris show of 34 new paintings and sculptures by the Los Angeles-based artist Henry Taylor, currently the subject of a retrospective at the [Whitney Museum of American Art](#) in New York. Many of these were made during a recent three-month residency Taylor spent in Paris, including a contemporary riff on Édouard Manet's "Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe," in which the central male reclining figure appears to be replaced by the French soccer superstar Kylian Mbappé. Priced between \$150,000 and \$900,000, all the works were sold, according to Payot.



“It’s an international platform now,” Payot said. “If you have a serious artist and you’re showing them in Paris, the clients come.” This view was endorsed by other major galleries showing new bodies of works by names coveted by both museums and private collectors.

Gagosian was showing new paintings by [Anna Weyant](#), Thaddaeus Ropac new paintings and drawings by [Lisa Brice](#). The Ropac show includes a second version of Brice’s audacious reinterpretation of Manet’s late masterpiece, “A Bar at the Folies-Bergère,” with provocative table dancers, instead of a bartender, challenging the male gaze.



“Untitled,” 2023, by Lisa Brice, a reinterpretation of Manet’s late masterpiece, “A Bar at the Folies-Bergère,” Lisa Brice, via Charles Duprat/Thaddaeus Ropac

Britain's art market still turns over more than twice as much as France, according to the estimates of the most recent [Art Basel & UBS Art Market](#) report. British-based auction houses and dealers turned over \$11.9 billion in sales in 2022, compared to just under \$5 billion in France. But the report's figures are skewed by big-ticket public auctions in London and reliable comparative data on confidential gallery sales remains elusive.

At the preview of the Paris+ fair on Wednesday, the Los Angeles-based art adviser Lawren Joyce was clear: "Paris is far superior. The energy has overtaken London," she said, adding that "so many new galleries have opened up with vibrant programs. The quality of the work is better, things are presented more thoughtfully. And collectors like spending more time here."

Several of Paris's most highly regarded younger dealers — including [High Art](#), [Edouard Montassut](#), [Cecile Fakhoury](#), [Fitzpatrick](#) and [Christophe Gaillard](#) — were clustered in the northern extension of the fair.

At one of these Paris dealers, Allen, "What the Living Do," an undated piece consisting of an empty museum vitrine with a dead bee on top by the Danish-based American conceptual artist Jason Dodge, looked a tough sell, priced at 23,000 euros, or about \$24,000. But it was snapped up at the preview by a French collector, according to the gallery owner, Joseph Allen, who said that, in the last five years, his turnover had doubled.



Galerie Allen's booth at Paris+, in the emerging galleries section of the fair. Sebastiano Pellion di Persano/Galerie Allen

Paris's October flagship fair also seems to have shed its long-held reputation as an event at which it's hard to sell big-ticket works. By the end of play on Wednesday, David Zwirner gallery said that it had sold more than \$20 million of works at Paris+, including a [Kerry James Marshall](#) painting for \$6 million. Hauser & Wirth said it sold out its booth, led by a 2023 George Condo "Female Portrait Composition" at \$2.35 million. And the Los Angeles- and New York-based dealer David Kordansky sold one of Mike Kelly's admired "Memory Ware" plastic trinket-encrusted collages, for \$2.4 million, according to the gallery.

The lengthy list of international art world luminaries that Art Basel said visited the fair suggests that Paris+, combined with satellite offerings such as Paris Internationale, [Offscreen](#) — devoted to installations, still and moving images — and [Asia NOW](#), along with the city's many gallery shows and institutional exhibitions, are adding up to an increasingly compelling package.

Back in the early 2000s, when [Young British Artists](#) like Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin were dominating the European contemporary art scene, "Paris was dead," according to Julie Boukobza, an independent curator based in the French capital. "Over the last five years things have shifted," she added.

But this shift has been driven by international dealers and collectors, Boukobza said, rather than a new wave of young creative people working in Paris itself, which, like many European capital cities, has become an intimidatingly expensive place to live and work, she said.

"Paris is definitely perceived as a growth market," said Drew Watson, the head of art services at Bank of America Private Bank. "You have a lot of momentum," he added.

Many of his American clients had decided to visit Paris rather than London this October, he added. "I mean, who doesn't love Paris?"