

Art Basel in Hong Kong welcomes more mainland galleries

Dealers from across Asia are ramping up their presence, and around half of the projects in the Kabinett sector are by Asian artists

[ANNY SHAW](#)

26th March 2018 04:00 GMT



The Bengali artist Praneet Soi's Srinagar II (2015) is part of a series of papier-mache tiles courtesy of Experimenter and the artist

The profusion of Western dealers opening galleries in Hong Kong to coincide with the sixth edition of Art Basel in Hong Kong (ABHK) is getting a mixed reception. Some view the arrival of such mega-dealers as Hauser & Wirth and David Zwirner with trepidation, while others see it as a sign that the market is maturing.

“It has shaken the ground a little bit; the gallery scene is very competitive,” says Adeline Ooi, the director of ABHK. “But it’s for the greater good. If you are going to call Hong Kong a global hub, you need to have the gallery presence. Besides, they are not only serving Hong Kong but also the wider region.”

Inside the fair, dealers from across Asia are ramping up their presence. Out of 248 galleries, 41 are from mainland China (six more than last year—first-timers include Capsule Shanghai and Don Gallery) and 26 are from Hong Kong (the same as in 2017). Iran is represented for the first time ever at an Art Basel show, with Dastan’s Basement from Tehran. Indian and Pakistani artists grow in visibility each year at ABHK, and this year the number of India-based galleries rises by three to nine, including newcomers Tarq from Mumbai and Gallery Espace from New Delhi. The Indian artist Subodh Gupta is featured in the Encounters section for large-scale works with the installation Start. Stop (2008)—a slow-moving sushi belt covered in tiffin boxes and pots—presented by Arario Gallery.

Around half of the 30 projects in the Kabinett section are by Asian artists, many of them “prominent on the biennial circuit”, Ooi says. They include the Chinese artist Yu Hong, who is presenting She’s Already Gone (2017), a virtual reality (VR) project with Long March Space. “The diversity of works is particularly exciting this year,” Ooi says. “From VR to finely hand-crafted pieces, there’s something for everyone.”

Appeared in *The Art Newspaper*, [299 March 2018](#)