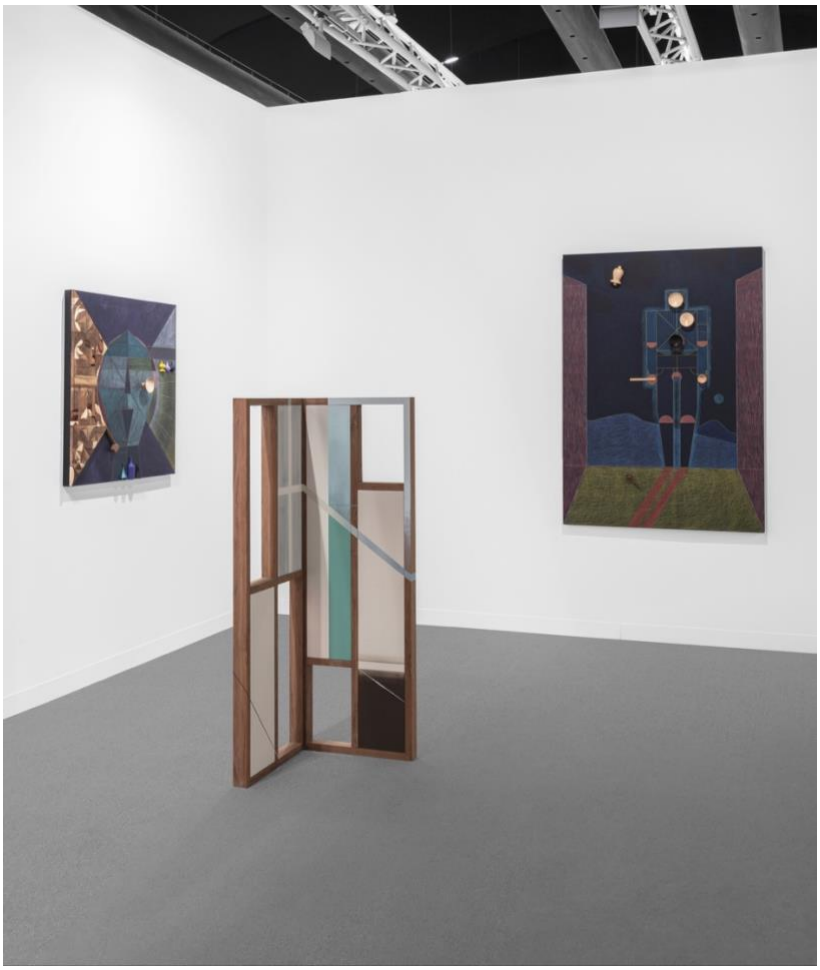
Art News

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Frieze Abu Dhabi Debuts to Brisk Sales and Confident Dealers

By Hikmat Mohammed

https://www.artnews.com/art-news/market/frieze-abu-dhabi-rebrands-high-quality-art-large-sums-1234806923/



On the morning of Frieze Abu Dhabi's inaugural edition, Saudi Arabia's financial center in Riyadh was reportedly attacked by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels. The crowd in Abu Dhabi, at least, had other things on their minds: the fair was about to open, with millions of dollars' worth of art ready to be sold. Members of the royal family were back after getting a sneak peek yesterday, alongside politicians and celebrities including tennis star Venus Williams and architect Kulapat Yantrasast.

(…)

Dealers noted that local collectors, some of whom began their collections by acquiring Western artists, are now deepening their collections with more historical pieces by regional artists.

"We've been seeing European collectors diversifying their collections, too," said Ghiyati. Dubai's Carbon 12 sold a painting and a sculpture by 28-year-old artist Sarah Al Mehairi, as well as two works by Mexican artist Edgar Orlaineta, priced between $17,570 and $35,000 (€16,000-€32,000).

“We’ve engaged mostly with collectors that we’ve cultivated relationships with for a while, and this is our home fair,” Judy Karkour, associate director of Carbon 12, told ARTnews.

(…)

Judging by its debut, Abu Dhabi has become a no-brainer stop on the art fair calendar. The emirate is slowly integrating into the art circuit. Earlier this month, Christie’s hosted its first fine art auction there, with Sotheby’s own version due next month, joining a colorful lineup of events that includes the Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, Abu Dhabi Finance Week and Culture Summit Abu Dhabi.