

**ANAT EBGI**

# The New York Times

**An Art Fair Served Up Several Ways**

**Written by Ted Loos**

**May 24, 2022**

With physical and satellite booths as well as online viewing, Art Basel Hong Kong aims to reach dealers and collectors amid Covid-related restrictions.



**The dealer Anat Ebgi will use the satellite approach to show at Art Basel Hong Kong this year. Her booth will feature works by Alec Egan, the Los Angeles figurative painter, including “Fruit Bowl With Bird” (2021).**

**Courtesy the artist and Anat Ebgi, LA, Photo by Matthew Kroening.**

6150 Wilshire Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90048  
+1 (323) 272 3418

[anatebgi.com](http://anatebgi.com)

4859 Fountain Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 90029  
+1 (323) 407 6806

# ANAT EBGI

Nobody ever said it would be easy to stage an art fair in a place with a complicated network of Covid-related travel restrictions and quarantines.

For Art Basel Hong Kong, being held Friday to Sunday at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center, part of the solution is satellite booths, or spaces at the fair that are staffed by representatives from Hong Kong, for art dealers who cannot personally attend.

The concept is returning this year, having debuted at the fair last May. More than half of the approximately 130 dealers are using satellite booths.

“Hong Kong was the first in our group of fairs that we canceled, back in 2020, and it was the first to come back, too,” said Marc Spiegler, Art Basel’s global director. The fair currently has iterations in Basel, Switzerland, and Miami Beach, and is adding a new event — called Paris+, by Art Basel — in October.

Mr. Spiegler credits the satellite booth with the success of last year’s Hong Kong fair. But the art world still thrives on face to face interactions, and buyers are used to seeing dealers in the flesh — often the gallery owners themselves. Mr. Spiegler was not completely sure that people would flock again to an event that relied so much on local surrogates.

“My logic was, now that physical fairs are happening again, a satellite booth might not be so appealing,” he said. But he noted that with satellite booths going from 55 last year to 74 this week, the worry was unfounded.

“It’s not people’s preferred way to buy or sell art, but it’s proved effective,” he said.

He credited the strength of the Asian market. “People are playing a long game,” he said. “Dealers have invested a lot of time and money in making the Hong Kong market work.”

# ANAT EBGİ



**The Hong Kong market remains strong, contributing to a successful Art Basel fair in 2021, despite Covid-19 and the use of satellite booths. More local people attended, many of whom were first-time art buyers.  
Credit...Lam Yik Fei for The New York Times**

Mr. Spiegler said that he would not be at the convention center in person, but that Adeline Ooi, Art Basel's director for Asia, planned to attend — after her quarantine.

“This time it’s seven days rather than three weeks,” Ms. Ooi said in an email, referring to her hotel quarantine upon returning to Hong Kong after traveling earlier this month. “It’s certainly not for everyone, but I’ve also come to appreciate this experience of self-isolation.”

She said that organizers had improved the experience for people who cannot attend, particularly related to the virtual version of the fair.

“We’ve expanded and refreshed our virtual tours,” Ms. Ooi said, “and will this year offer nine live walk-throughs that cover both the show floor and Online Viewing Rooms, and are led by specialists in five different languages.”

The noted collector Jens Faurshou, whose Faurshou Foundation has private museums in New York, Copenhagen and Beijing, has been an active patron at Art Basel Hong Kong in years past.

“I got an absolute masterpiece there,” he recalled of Liu Wei’s large installation “Don’t Touch” (2011), which he purchased from Beijing’s Long March Space. Made of ox hide, it is modeled on the Potala Palace in Tibet, once the residence of the Dalai Lama.

# ANAT EBGI

He expressed a typical collector view when he said that he was not thrilled with a virtual fair but that he would check it out in any case. "It's almost impossible to travel to China," he said, noting that he has not been to his own Beijing museum in more than two years.

Ms. Ooi acknowledged the challenges that remain. "Our galleries in Shanghai, which is still in lockdown, have faced considerable difficulties in shipping works to Hong Kong," Ms. Ooi said.



**Capsule Shanghai's satellite booth will show "In Between" featuring four artists: Cai Zebin, Gao Yuan, Liao Wen and Douglas Rieger. Among the works is Mr. Rieger's "Cigarettes" (2021), a sculpture made of wood, upholstery foam, vinyl, steel, epoxy, magnets, iron shavings, rubber gaskets and paint. Credit...Capsule Shanghai**

One of those, Capsule Shanghai, came up with a solution: Since the works for their satellite booth were dispersed, they were shipped directly from cities not facing the same restrictions. "We're trying to be faster than Covid," the gallery's founder, Enrico Polato, said of the quick thinking required.

Mr. Polato spoke on the phone from his Shanghai home, located in the same complex as his gallery, where he remained in mandatory lockdown.

# ANAT EBGI

His presentation at the fair, “In Between,” features four artists: Cai Zebin, Gao Yuan, Liao Wen and Douglas Rieger.

Mr. Rieger is represented by “Cigarettes” (2021), a sculpture made of wood, upholstery foam, vinyl, steel, epoxy, magnets, iron shavings, rubber gaskets and paint.

“It’s about revealing traces of human gesture, in both painterly and sculptural form,” Mr. Polato said of the overall selection. “The artists are all working in the liminal space between reality and imagination.”

Another dealer employing the satellite concept, Anat Ebgi of Los Angeles, said she had a great experience with it last year.

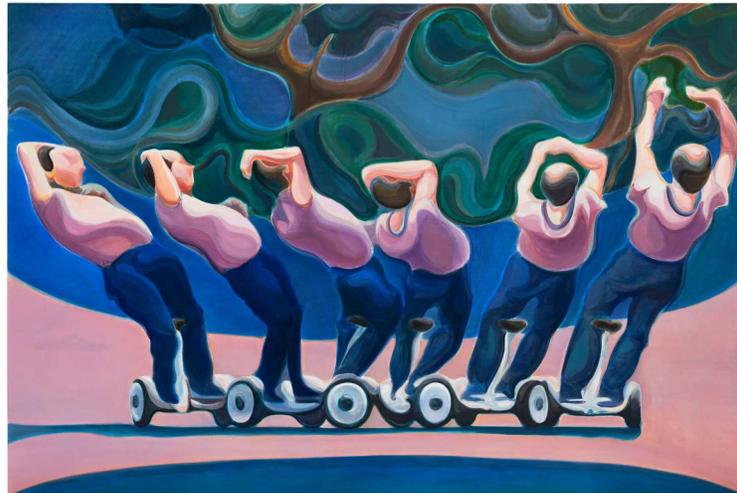
“They really rally for you,” she said of the fair’s organizers. “We’d rather be there, but we’ll participate in any way we can.”

Her booth will feature paintings by the Los Angeles figurative painter Alec Egan, including “Fruit Bowl With Bird” (2021).

“The work is all interwoven, like chapters in a narrative,” Ms. Ebgi said of Mr. Egan’s paintings.

Ms. Ebgi said that even though she had presold some of the works to Asian collectors — “You have to have some certainty,” she said — her gallery’s presence on the floor at the convention center was valuable.

“I still think the exposure is good,” Ms. Ebgi said. “I run a gallery in L.A., and the proximity and expansiveness of the Asian market makes me want to invest more there.”



**Chambers Fine Art of New York will share a booth at Art Basel Hong Kong with a local dealer, Anna Ning Fine Art. Oils by the Beijing-based painter Guo Hongwei will be on display, including “Laughing at This World No. 3” (2021-22), part of a series inspired by viral videos. Credit...The Artist and Chambers Fine Art**

# ANAT EBGI

Chambers Fine Art, with branches in New York City and Salt Point, N.Y., is sharing a booth with a local dealer, Anna Ning Fine Art of Hong Kong.

“We did not do the fair last year because there was too much uncertainty,” said Dan Chen, a partner in the gallery and its director. “But we thought we’d take the plunge this year. We have collectors and friends in Hong Kong we wanted to engage with, and this is one way to do it.”

Chambers will show around a half-dozen oils by the Beijing-based painter Guo Hongwei, including “Laughing at This World No. 3” (2021-22). The works are part of a series initially inspired by videos that went viral on social media during the initial Covid lockdown in China.

“They bring humor and levity to being cooped up,” Mr. Chen said.

Pascal de Sarthe, who founded his gallery in Paris in 1977 and moved to Hong Kong in 2010, has a local dealer’s perspective on the recent art scene there.

“We were all very worried going into it, but last year’s fair was wonderful,” Mr. de Sarthe said. “We saw an influx of local people that we never saw before. Most of them had never bought art before.”

De Sarthe Gallery sold nearly 30 works during the 2021 fair, including a large installation that went to the K11 Art Foundation. Though Mr. de Sarthe will not be on hand — he has been traveling since December — his local staff will be.

The booth’s presentation, “Utopian Reality,” features work by Zhong Wei, Lin Jingjing and the artist known as Mak2.

“They all comment on reality versus nonreality,” Mr. de Sarthe said.

Mak2’s “Home Sweet Home: Gang 1” (2022), from a series of triptychs that began in 2019, riffs on the video game The Sims. Each of the three panels is painted by a separate artist that Mak2 finds on the Chinese e-commerce platform Taobao, and the unpredictability of the result is part of the point.

“Most young people have a virtual life and a real life, especially in Asia,” Mr. de Sarthe said. “In the virtual life, everything is permissible.”

The invocation of internet culture may feel relevant, given that some people will experience Art Basel Hong Kong only online. The convention center audience will be, like last year, more of a local Hong Kong crowd than usual.

“No one really knows what the new normal is,” Mr. Spiegler said of the international globe-trotting that was once the art world’s default mode.

Based on the Venice Biennale, as well as other recent art fairs, “I don’t see a diminished appetite for travel,” he added. “I see a desire to make up for lost time.”