

THE BRAZILIAN BOOM

Brazil's art market is booming—
as the global artworld
descends upon São Paulo.

By Reena Devi

Brazil's art market is undergoing a rapid transformation amid renewed global interest. Most notably, there has been a growth of various art galleries in São Paulo these few years.

According to Márcio Botner, co-founder of A Gentil Carioca, “New galleries appeared in the last two years. I think there were 10 or 15 new galleries [as well as] galleries expanding their space and becoming more professional. This is changing the market.”

A Gentil Carioca is one such gallery, having opened a new space in São Paulo two years ago, on Travessa Dona Paula, in addition to its two buildings in the center of Rio de Janeiro. The gallery even celebrated its 20th anniversary this fall.

The country's biggest art fair, SP-Arte, reported an uptick in visitors since the pandemic, from 26,000 attendees at the 2019 edition to 31,000 at this year's April edition. This could be attributed to Brazil's local base of art buyers expanding beyond the main cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, thanks to the country's booming agribusiness.

There is also strong international interest in the market. Founder of SP-Arte and art collector Fernanda Feitosa believes the fair played a role in ushering Brazilian artists “into the esteemed programs of renowned art galleries that graced the fair, including names like Gagosian, David Zwirner, White Cube, Franco Noero, Continua, Neugerriemschneider, Pace and Lisson contributing to the promotion of artistic Brazilian production abroad.”

Works by Brazilian artists Beatriz Milhazes, Adriana Varejão, Tunga, Ernesto Neto, Alfredo Volpi and Emiliano Di Cavalcanti have reportedly commanded prices exceeding approximately \$2 million at SP-Arte.

It is not often that a country or region's growing art market is buoyed by diverse artistic talent and institutional acclaim. But that is definitely the case for Brazil.

The São Paulo Biennial, the second oldest in the world, runs from Sept. 6 to Dec. 10 this year. Titled ‘Choreographies of the Impossible’, the exhibition is showing an unprecedented 80% of nonwhite artists from the global South. Veteran art collector Pedro Barbosa, who attended the biennale's opening, observed a “tsunami of foreign visitors.”

“Brazil's art scene has seen the presence of Indigenous art and Afro-Brazilian art increase a lot, and this has been reflected in the last two editions of the São Paulo Biennial,” Barbosa says. “Many curators from important institutions all over the globe came for the latest edition. This will very likely bring Brazilian artists to international shows and institutional collections.” •

SP-Arte, Brazil's largest art fair

