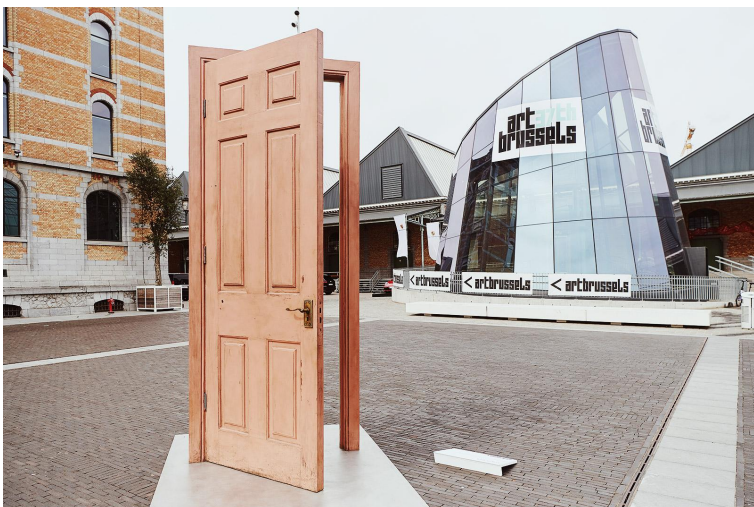


ART | 1 HOUR AGO | BY [JESSICA KLINGELFUSS](#)

# Art Brussels has daring designs on the contemporary art market

The 37th edition of the Belgian art fair proves it still has bite as a destination for discovering new artists



*L'Âge d'Or, 2011*, by Gavin Turk, painted bronze, presented by Belgian gallery Maruani Mercier as part of Art Brussels' Monumental Sculpture Work programme.  
*Photography: David Plas. Courtesy of Maruani Mercier*

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Portentous grey skies and a glacial drizzle did little to dampen spirits on the preview day of Art Brussels (25-28 April), where 148 galleries descended on Tours & Taxis for the 37th edition of the 'discovery' fair. With upwards of 250 art fairs jostling for a position on the calendar each year, Art Brussels managing director Anne Vierstraete says the competition is welcome. (Case in point: the Belgian fair aligns with Gallery Berlin Weekend, Artmonte-carlo, Art Vancouver and Art3f Luxembourg this year.)

Still, Art Brussels claims an above-average gallery retention rate of 70 per cent compared to around 50 per cent for major art fairs (according to the 2019 USB Art Market Report). So what compels exhibitors to keep returning to the Belgian capital? "Daring" is a very important word in our [the Belgian] identity,' explains Vierstraete, 'because we have to translate the kind of things our public expects to see, meaning the latest trends in art creation and the way the art market functions.' And while the players may seem familiar (a common gripe of collectors), Art Brussels ensures it's never complacent, welcoming 36 new galleries to the fold and giving *carte blanche* to nine emerging spaces disrupting convention in its new Invited section.

*Here are five galleries to make a beeline for at Art Brussels 2019...*

#### **01 Kristin Hjellegjerde (London, Berlin)**

The strapline of London and Berlin-based gallery Kristin Hjellegarde – 'for those who collect tomorrow' – couldn't have proven more apt at its technology-tinted booth. The gallerist was 'thrilled' to mark her return to the fair for the third year running with an inspired showing of work 'based on new media'. Robin Kang's handwoven tapestries of Jacquard, cotton and metallic yarn thread an unlikely connection between modern technology and textile manufacturing, while New Zealand artist André Hemer deftly melds digital media with painting.

#### **02 Martos Gallery (New York)**

The US gallery is dedicating its entire booth to a solo presentation of Kayode Ojo, in an extension of the Tennessee-born artist's first New York solo exhibition it

staged in November 2018. Ojo combines mass-produced objects and pop culture to mine ideas of physical beauty while exploring the objectification of the body. ‘The work considers with luxury signifiers, playing with both illusions and delusions of glamour, all the while embracing the grandeur of it all,’ explains gallery director Ebony L Haynes of the booth, where readymade sculptures hold court with self-portraits. At just 28 years old, Ojo has developed a formal visual language that belies his age – watch this space.



*Closed Audition: CR Women's Navy Cowl Neck Velvet Open Back Cami Midi Bodycon Dress (Floor), 2018, by Kayode Ojo. Courtesy of Martos Gallery*

### 03 The Ryder Projects (London)

With a slew of colossal artworks and Instagenic booths vying

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ention because it was, quite refreshingly, neither of those. Reclaimed from the streets of Barcelona (where the artist is based), each chair in the presentation hails from a different era. The artist gradually whittled down the legs to the bare minimum, removing the chairs’ function entirely and suspending them in ‘a state of precarious equilibrium’.

### 04 Mendes Wood DM (São Paulo, Brussels, New York)

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané is the subject of a solo showcase with a site-specific installation that marries the mechanical and the natural. And while it was the Spanish artist’s corner of the booth that first drew us in, we eagerly perused the works by Paulo Nazareth, Solange Pessoa, Matthew Lutz-Kinoy, Neil Beloufa and Antonio Obá on display.

### 05 Ballon Rouge Collective (Brussels)

Art Brussels introduces a new section Invited, with a focus on a younger generation of spaces that are challenging the traditional gallery format. Enter nomadic venture Ballon Rouge Collective, which has just settled down in Brussels with a permanent space following globetrotting exhibitions in Istanbul, London, Los Angeles, São Paulo, Paris and New York. The gallery presents works by Mere Iseri and Philip Janssens at its eye-catching melon pink booth. ✪



*Illuminations # (Vienna, 2019-03-05, 11:21 CET), 2019, by André Hemer, acrylic and pigment on canvas. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde*





*Object/Abject/Subject*, by Jaime Pitarch. *Courtesy of The Ryder Projects*



*The Space In-Between*, 2018, by Rachel Monosov, cacti, earth, metals, plastics. © Rachel Monosov. *Courtesy of Catinca Tabacaru*