



THE ART NEWSPAPER

FIRST LONDON GALLERY WEEKEND TO FEATURE A WHOPPING 87 GALLERIES INCLUDING DAVID ZWIRNER, GAGOSIAN AND SADIE COLES

Citywide event launching in June will focus on three different areas of the UK capital

By Anny Shaw
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In the absence of art fairs and the surrounding buzz of evening events, performances and parties, a new collegiate spirit has sprung up among galleries during the pandemic, the latest manifestation of which is London's Gallery Weekend, launching in early June.

Nearly 90 Modern and contemporary art dealers have so far signed up; the full list is still under wraps but participants include White Cube, David Zwirner, Gagosian, Thaddaeus Ropac gallery, Sadie Coles, Victoria Miro, Hauser & Wirth, Waddington Custot, Goodman Gallery, Pilar Corrias, Arcadia Misa, Sid Motion, Edel Assanti, Emalin, Hollybush Gardens and The Approach. Each gallery will pay between £300 and £3,000 to participate, depending on their size, though exhibitions are free to view.

Described as a "democratic, peer-led initiative" that supports the geographic diversity of London's gallery network, the event is focused on three areas of London: central (4 June), south (5 June) and the East End (6 June), with each neighbourhood the focus of attention for a day. Most galleries plan to stay open late.

London's galleries have suffered three lockdowns since December, while there has been just one major art fair—1-54 London—in the capital since the pandemic began a year ago. Sid Motion, of the eponymous gallery, believes the new Gallery Weekend could prove a viable alternative to art fairs during these testing times. She says: "I am excited that the London Gallery Weekend can pool galleries in a collaborative and supportive way, while enticing international collectors to see new exhibitions and some of the world's best work."

In 2019, Motion—who is on the committee for the new event—moved her gallery from Kings Cross to South Bermondsey, a burgeoning artistic hub in a formerly industrial part of south London. She says: "South London galleries have, for many years now, given a platform to diverse emerging artists and new voices, so for these artists and spaces to be celebrated alongside the established galleries in the centre of town makes the weekend a true celebration of the thriving scene and community in London."

Galleries can reopen from 12 April, but creating a buzz around one weekend has proven successful in the past. Last year's Frieze Week, though severely curtailed, still managed to whip up local support. It was then the idea for the Gallery Weekend was spawned, including a programme of talks, performances and studio visits, organised by the participating galleries.

**LONDON
GALLERY WEEKEND**

Jeremy Epstein, the co-founder of Edel Assanti gallery and a London Gallery Weekend committee member, says the “critical moment” came when several galleries sent out a survey to gauge the level of community support for a gallery weekend and what shape that might take. “We received over 80 responses to the survey and unanimous support for the endeavour, which allowed us to build rapid momentum,” he says.

The plan is to hold the event annually, in June, which Epstein says was identified as “an existing focal point in London’s cultural calendar, with the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and the Serpentine’s Summer Pavilion usually opening that week”. He adds: “It is also usually the weekend before Zurich Gallery Weekend, which leads straight into Art Basel –so it is an appealing moment for our international audience to visit London.”