All the fun of the art fair: your guide to Frieze London and Frieze Masters

Oversized dice, fish in formaldehyde, 10 people bound together by pink silk — the Frieze art fair opens today and it’s more entertaining than ever

Ben Luke

This is the best Frieze yet. Despite the increase in gallery numbers, from 152 to 162, this year’s new tent in the middle of Regent’s Park is more spacious and better laid out. Complaints about past overcrowding have not been ignored.

Even so, there was a stampede at yesterday's VIP early view, as the collectors rushed in to get to the best on offer by galleries from 25 different countries. With four more days to go, brisk business is already reported — Damien Hirst’s £4 million sale isn’t such a surprise but White Cube also sold a work by American artist David Hammons for $4 million early on.

You can’t escape the fact that this is really about buying and selling but it’s also a chance for Londoners to get a look at some of the best — and worst — contemporary art.

SHOWSTOPPER

Carsten Höller: Gartenkinder, Gagosian Gallery

The gallery started by Larry Gagosian, the biggest art dealer in the world, always goes for the big, bold and childlike at Frieze. Last year it was Jeff Koons’s giant shiny lobster and this time it’s the playful Carsten Höller, the man who created those Turbine-Hall-height slides at
Tate Modern in 2006. This is artwork for children — adults are urged not to enter the dice that doubles as a playpen — but there’s still fun to be had for all the family, as you’re encouraged to squeeze a purple octopus and push the roly-poly toadstool. But what does it all mean? Höller is a scientist and it’s as much an experiment as a playground: a chance to monitor children at play, observe their reaction to the works, and stand back, stroking your chin and pondering your own reactions to the idea of a kindergarten as high art.