

# THE ART OF THE MATTER

Jenny Conlon gets to grips with all things arty at the Battersea Affordable Art Fair

If, like me, you're not an experienced art collector or not that au fait with the art world, then fairs such as the Affordable Art Fair (AAF) in Battersea might seem an intimidating place to visit. However, following my meeting with fair director Sam Gare, I found that the AAF is a place that offers something for everyone, with an abundance of eclectic and authentic pieces.

This month, the Battersea fair is expecting to welcome more than 22,000 visitors over four days. "Our first fair was in Battersea Park in October 1999," says Sam, "so , the culture, the greenery and the people."

I was intrigued to find out what exactly goes on in the months running up to one of the most successful fairs in south west London. "We run things months in advance because we are looking to keep the fair fresh.

We are always looking for new galleries and artists to join us. We want to make sure we are giving opportunities to people who may not be able to actually reach out to us."

With such an impressive selection of art at the fair, visitors can take their pick from a mix of local, national and international galleries. "We have a really great variety of art at the fair, contemporary painting, sculptural work, screen prints and some really interesting mediums with artists using contemporary recycled materials. We are always really surprised with what comes through to us."

Although local art is showcased and celebrated, there will be an international feel this year. "We have galleries from Paris, Brussels and Marrakech and they're bringing in bright contemporary art work. Colour really does impact people so this is a great addition. We have international galleries from Asia, Africa and a lot of artwork from our doorstep and in London."

Sam explained that there are lots of new elements to the fair this year with installation based artwork. "It's sort of artwork that struggles more to get that space, so we are offering these artists the opportunity to explore something different and bring something new to our audience. I love how you can give a voice to individuals who might struggle to express themselves and also how we can offer artists a really good boost in their career."

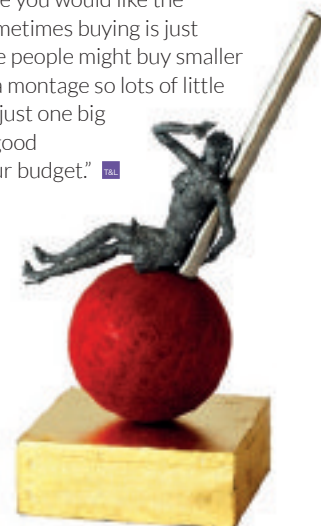
This is the first year where workshops throughout the fair will focus on the art of well being. "We are looking to explore and



The Contemporary London - Jonny Green - Carapace

discuss how art and creativity can be good for the body and mind. Even owning a piece of art can bring a sense of calm to your life. Art has such a positive impact and there are lots of studies that show experiencing art really helps decrease stress levels especially when people are juggling hectic schedules and city living."

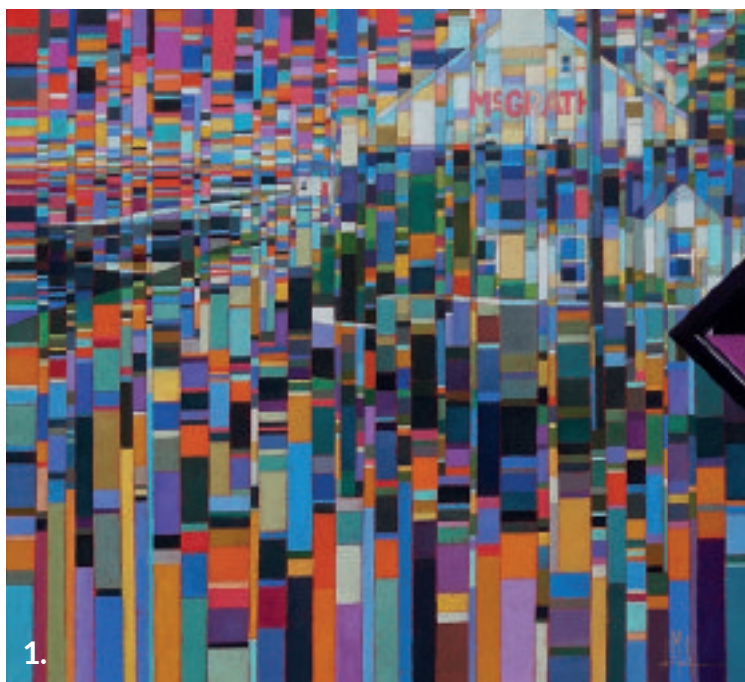
The great news is that the AAF is affordable and accessible to all budgets. "We have a fantastic price range and lots of pieces under £500. When buying a piece of art, you have to think about the value of the artwork and what it brings to you. It's nice to go in understanding where in your home you would like the piece to go, but sometimes buying is just spontaneous. Some people might buy smaller pieces and create a montage so lots of little pieces rather than just one big piece and that's a good way to manage your budget." TEL



Galleri Final - Sven Ake Ekberg - Selfie



Catharine Miller - Rebecca Fontaine - Wolf - Set in Stone



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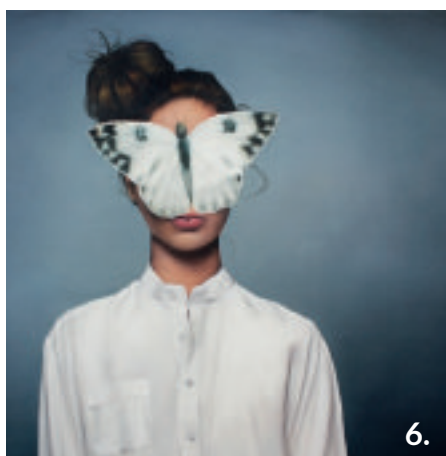


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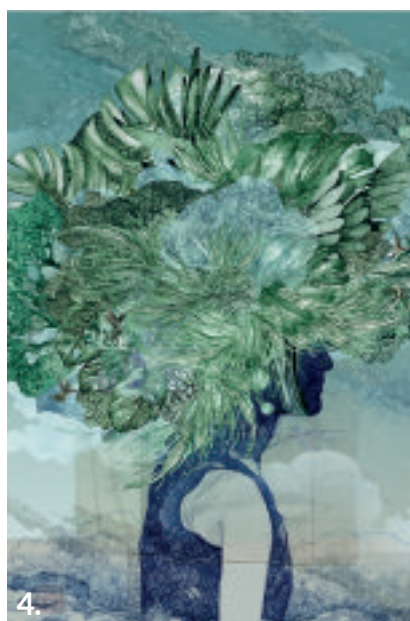


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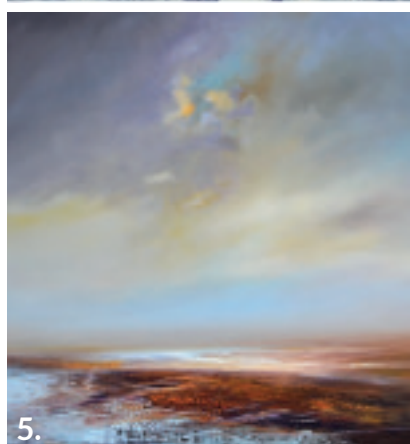
“Battersea has a special place in our hearts. It’s our flagship location and we love it in Battersea”



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1. Sol Art - Kevin Mcaleenan - Day Drifts
2. My Life in Art gallery - Archie Proudfoot
3. ArtDog London - Amy Carter - Everything's Just Fucking Rosy.
4. Gas Gallery - Delphine Lebourgeois - Magnolia
5. Will's Art Warhouse - David Taylor - Receding Tide
6. Hicks Gallery - Amy Judd - Bath White

## SAM GARE'S TOP TIPS FOR **BUYING ART**

**1** The work of emerging and mid-career artists is often exciting, generally lower priced and buyers have the pleasure of watching the artist grow into their creative career.

**2** Take the opportunity to find out more about an artist or piece when you're at an art fair. You might ask where the artist studied and how widely they have exhibited since graduating. If they trained at a well-known art school, have shown commitment to exhibiting their art or been picked up by a number of galleries, institutions, or collectors.

**3** If the artist has been self-taught, don't let this put you off. You can gather an idea of their success so far by asking about where and how many times they have exhibited their work, as well as about their personal story – an artist who is really committed to their own career will have the tenacity to keep going through the tough years.

**4** Look at how well their work has sold or if they have won any prizes – a piece by an artist whose work is already in demand may make you feel more confident in your choice. You can also take a look at the artist's wider collection of work, and think about whether the piece you like represents their style. An artist will most often make a name for themselves by developing a consistent body of work.

**5** Also consider the skill involved in a piece, and speak to an expert about how the work has been made and what the artist's inspiration was. A piece which uses good quality or rare materials will also command a higher price tag.