



ART

ARTISTS' IMPRESSIONS

Mayfair Times hosted a breakfast discussion
at The Arts Club and quizzed some of the
leading lights of the Mayfair art scene on
current hot topics

BY LORNA DAVIES



ABOVE: Svetlana Marich, worldwide deputy chairman, Phillips
RIGHT: James Roundell, director, Dickinson's modern department and deputy chairman of TEFAF Maastricht



BREXIT

Svetlana: The weekend after the Brexit vote was amazing for auction houses. We made a record for Kiefer for £2.5 million. It was the first time we had all the important Americans fly in for the auction, bidding very intensively. A year later, I think it's all pretty much the same, not too much difference for us.

Lorna: Obviously that is very positive, but it is the short-term result, and I am wondering if anyone is concerned about the future impact?

Alex: I am concerned about import tax, because that will make a big difference. We deal a lot with continental Europe and there is a feeling amongst our colleagues and many Italians with whom we deal, who also open galleries here in London, that we're sort of

mad. There has been a gentle loss of enthusiasm about London in a way, although there's also a feeling that nothing much will change because the art world is so international. But if we start having greater import tax, over the five per cent, that will materially harm our business.

James R: The question I think is whether the government will be bold and actually get rid of the tax. At the moment, we have 70 per cent of the European art market in the UK and we could probably take virtually 100 per cent of it if we got rid of import tax. There's a difference between the international market and the UK art market, so I don't think the international art market is going to be affected by Brexit in any way, because you're dealing with millions in foreign currencies by and large. We price in dollars, we don't price in pounds, so what the pound does is of no importance to us at all, so I think there are two different markets.

Mieka: The fair in September last year was a few months after Brexit. We found that American buyers were definitely here. There was an increase in visitor attendance and that did end up in sales that actually were turned around faster than they have in previous years, so sales for galleries that might have taken a

ATTENDEES

LORNA DAVIES, deputy editor, *Mayfair Times*

MATISSE GHADDAF, co-founder and director of art consultancy, *Atkya Art*

JAMES GREEN, director, *David Zwirner*

JAMES MALCOLM-GREEN, director, *Achille Salvagni Atelier* and founder of *Mayfair Design District*

SVETLANA MARICH, worldwide deputy chairman, *Phillips*

AUORE OGDEN, director of art, *The Arts Club* and co-chair, *Tate Young Patrons*

JAMES ROUNDELL, director, impressionist and modern art, *Dickinson* and deputy chairman of *TEFAF Maastricht*

MIEKA SYWAK, fair director and head of projects, *LAPADA*

KAREN TANG, artist and sculptor

ALEXANDRA TOSCANO, director, *Trinity Fine Art* and deputy chairman, *London Art Week*

CHARIS TYNDALL, director, *Charles Ede*

few weeks to confirm, American buyers were more confident to do that and take advantage of better exchange rates for them.

MAYFAIR

Lorna: Mayfair has changed a lot in recent years, with many galleries moving or moving up to first floor positions. I was wondering how important footfall is for galleries here?

Charis: We have recently moved to Three King's Yard from Brook Street and we basically get no footfall at all, and that suits us really well because we can carry on; we don't have to have someone there watching the objects all the time. We have a wonderful place for display now and can host more events, so we have a lot more of that and that is helpful, but actually the majority of our business is done at fairs. Now we are doing three TEFAF fairs, so that's two in New York and one in Maastricht. We do get quite a lot of clients that we meet at those. When they come to London, they come in, but they practically always give you a call beforehand, and the same with museums. So interestingly, it doesn't seem as important, but it's great if that person does come in, you need a wonderful space to be able to display an object and show them, especially when you've had a really impressive stand at one of these fairs – it's good for them to come in and see that replicated in your gallery.

Alex: I would agree with all of that.

James R: It's changing patterns. If you go back to the 70s and 80s, Bond Street was full of galleries rather than fashion houses. People used to walk up and down and look, now there's nothing to look at, virtually.

Alex: Yes, and the relationship with the art dealer. Saturday mornings, lots of people were coming in to town, the galleries would be open, there would be shops, there would be a real relationship with the dealer, him or herself, and people of all walks of life would be collecting. The art collecting has changed, therefore the requirements we have as galleries have changed. Which is why we have to do exactly



ABOVE: Aurore Ogden, The Arts Club
RIGHT: Alex Toscano, Trinity Fine Art and
London Art Week
BELOW: James Green, David Zwirner



that. We do lots of fairs: you have to have somewhere impressive, but not necessarily a shop.

James R: Mayfair needs art galleries. That is what gave it character and what made it desirable and a place where people want to come. If fashion houses move all

the art galleries out, the whole nature of the place changes, and that, to my mind, is a retrograde step.

James G: Speaking from a gallery that represents living artists, that visibility and footfall aspect is important, because we measure success on exhibitions, not only on the financial and critical response, so we need that space and visibility, and the footfall aspect is how we judge success in some ways as well because that is part of the bigger picture. It is getting harder and harder to do that in Mayfair.

Karen: As a living artist, it is important that your work is not just seen at fairs, due to the curatorial aspect, and I don't think many artists I know would want to be represented by a gallery who only shows at fairs; to have a space and critical responses is so important.

Alex: James is absolutely right, but that's why those who have moved up to first and second floors, these are galleries and no, we don't have people traipsing in morning, noon and night, and we do fairs, but we are galleries. So how do we get people up the stairs? That is what London Art Week has been trying to do in its various guises since 2000; to bridge that gap between the gallery that used to have a shop window and used to be a whole building, to a gallery that is a working,