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Q&A: Elizabeth Dee on Independent Brussels

By Sara Roffino



Elizabeth Dee (Kelly Taub)

Last fall saw the establishment of the permanent exhibition space Independent Régence in Brussels. Now, Independent holds its<u>inaugural European fair</u> in the Belgian capital from April 20 to 23, with nearly 70 galleries in the central Vanderborght building. New York gallerist and fair cofounder Elizabeth Dee shares thoughts on the city and its collectors with *Art+Auction*'s Sara Roffino.

Why another fair?

When you talk about developing artists in the art market, you have to think about two things: the contribution the artist is making, and building consensus. Fairs are an important platform for the discourse, which enables consensus to develop.

What sets Independent apart from other fairs?

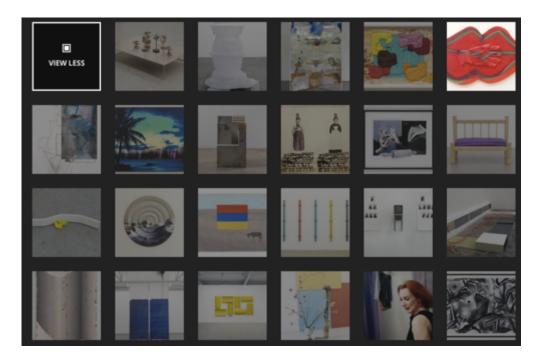
Independent fairs tend to be significantly less expensive for galleries than other fairs, which enables the gallerists to take more risks and present more daring material. What

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sells and for how much is essential, but that is the end result of a much longer process of consensus building, which takes years. This isn't something that happens in the sale room at auction houses.

Why Brussels?

Belgium is in a really interesting place at the moment. Its proximity to Paris, Cologne, and London is unparalleled. Curators and artists are moving there, and in addition to the rich history of collectors here, there are a significant number of young collectors on the scene, some of whom are the next generation—their parents and grandparents were collectors. There's a stewardship and a connoisseurship-based collecting process, which is very special and should be preserved and supported, because it's very much in alignment with how galleries support and advocate for their artists—thinking long term and developing a knowledge base over time. This is something that is present throughout the Belgian collector landscape, whether it's a young person coming from a family where that was the culture or people coming from other parts of Europe to Brussels. The collectors are thoughtful, considered, and committed. It's not speculative, and it's not focused on one region or territory of contemporary art. It's quite diverse.



http://www.blouinartinfo.com/photo-galleries/preview-artworks-from-independent-brussels-2016?image=4#