

Ansporn, Catherine, "Fairest of the Fair," *Papercity Magazine*, February 28, 2013 (in-print).

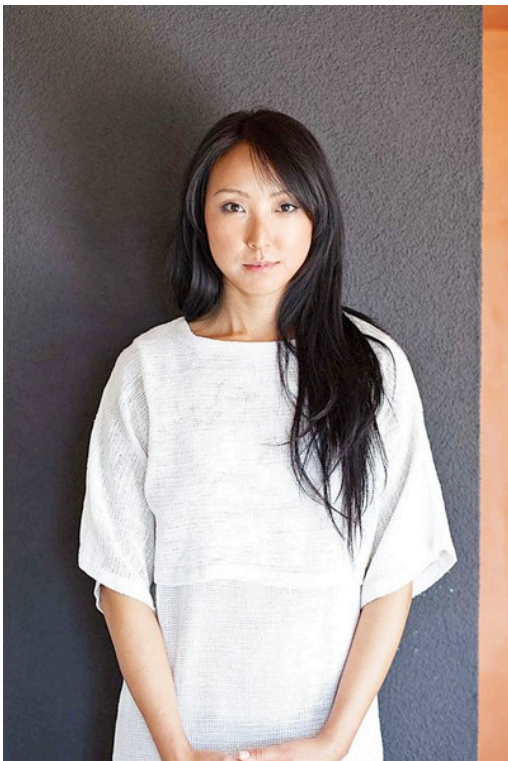
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M A G A Z I N E

Fairest of the Fair

Dallas Art Fair 2013

Dallas Art Fair reaches the five-year marker this spring. Where to begin to navigate the 80-plus booths brimming with cutting-edge fare from the must-see artists you need to know? Catherine D. Ansporn engages in a national and international tête-à-tête with four game-changers, whom touch down next month from Milan, Paris and L.A. Why are they coming to Dallas? Read on. (Save these Fair dates and prepare to collect: Preview Gala, Thursday, April 11; Friday through Sunday, April 12 – 14; at Fashion Industry Gallery; dallasartfair.com.)
Esther Kim Varet Founder, owner and director, Various Small Fires, L.A.



Take us to the beginning.

After graduating from Yale University in 2004, I worked for major New York City galleries like Petzel and Paula Cooper before opening my own gallery at the age of 24 in a ground-floor space in West SoHo. While running the gallery, I was also doing a full time Ph.D. in contemporary art at Columbia University (which was a bit much, to be honest!). I sold my shares in the gallery right before the recession hit in 2008, which saved my life — and bank account! It was an incredible learning experience. I still continued with the Ph.D. and started curating and fund-raising for biennials in New York, started a company that built corporate collections in Asia and started collecting art myself.

I moved to Los Angeles two years ago because all of a sudden the world started watching the young art scene in Southern California with much invested interest. And it was absolutely true — there are so many amazing artists out here, and the city was so welcoming for ambitious new spaces that were willing to provide a fresh platform for artistic talent.

Texas connections?

I born and raised in Dallas and spent K-12 (in uniform!) at Trinity Christian Academy. When I was a senior in high school, I had one summer where I interned at Pillsbury Peters Fine Art in Dallas for one month and then PaceWildenstein Gallery in New York for the other. Boy were they different! I learned invaluable experiences from both, and from then on — I guess I always knew I would be a part of the gallery system in one way or another. Although I have not been a resident in Texas for a while, I did go back to my roots and got married at Houston's Rothko Chapel and had a reception at The Menil Collection. My husband and I are also huge fans and supporters of Fairfax Dorn and Virginia Leberman of Ballroom Marfa. Because of warm art-world Texans like them, I do find more reasons to travel to the Lone Star State several times a year. Also, a critically acclaimed performance artist I represent, Liz Magic Laser, is doing a solo commission project in Houston at DiverseWorks. She has been interviewing local Houston politicians and TV anchors as part of her project — the final product will be unveiled at the DiverseWorks opening on April 6.

Your gallery's aesthetic, and what niche it occupies amid the art ecology of L.A?

Because of my long-term affiliation with Performa, the performance art biennial in New York — I used to chair their young patrons program, as well as occupy a Curatorial Fellow seat — there was a lot of buzz around the gallery and the performances we hosted last year. However, I think people are also increasingly realizing that I am really out there to push the best artists working in all mediums, including painting, video, sculpture and installation.

What drew you to participate in the Dallas Art Fair 2013?

Going back to my hometown, of course! Although my parents live in Hawaii and Seoul now, I still do have close family in Dallas that I am itching to see.

Can you reveal any surprises for your Dallas Art Fair booth? Which

artist(s) will you be bringing?

Anna Sew Hoy, one of the most beloved California sculptors of her generation, and she possess an incredible touch. We will be bringing these incredibly beautiful “wall sculptures” that hang like paintings but double as functional objects. For example, we will have a ceramic piece that looks like a gigantic hanging charcoal plate that doubles as a place to hang your keys in your home entryway (if you choose).

When adding new artists, what are you looking for? Seeing a place for them in history. Another litmus test for me is that the artists I end up working with — I find that I could talk about the artist endlessly. I feel so convinced and excited about the work, it never actually feels like work. It feels like I’m sharing an awesome discovery with the world, you know?

Will you be expanding your roster in the future?

Yes. For example, my gallery has just started working with Roy Dowell, a canonical Los Angeles artist who founded Otis’ [College of Art and Design] graduate program in the late ‘70s. He has been making these fantastic collages and paintings since the late ‘80s that feel so fresh and relevant to a new generation of artists as well.

True tales from the art world?

Running an art gallery in which every rotating exhibition poses a new challenge — there are so many hilarious and ridiculous moments. Where do I start? I collaborate very closely with my artists, so every show seems like a totally memorable experience.