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A dealer with staying power

The Art Market Templon chalks up 50 years; Fine Art Society at 140; Rech extends reach; video art's clearer picture. By *Georgina Adam*

Next week's Art Basel fair (open to the public from Thursday) features one of its longest-term exhibitors – the Paris-based Daniel Templon, who is celebrating his 38th year at the event, as well as his 50th year as a dealer.

Templon's career started in the 1960s when he was working as a substitute sports teacher in the gritty suburb of Nanterre but got sucked into the creative life in trendy Saint-Germain-des-Prés. With no artistic background, contacts or money, he nevertheless opened an art gallery, which developed into one of Paris's leading spaces. Templon was the first to show the likes of Jeff Koons, Richard Serra, the Chapman Brothers and Kehinde Wiley in France, as well as championing local talent such as Christian Boltanski, Ben Vautier and Martin Barré.

Asked about the changes he has seen in his half-century in business, Templon says: "The market was so limited in the 1960s; today it is so globalised. Then, dealers followed cultural criteria, but today much of what is shown is what will sell – it's a far more commercial place. And in the 1970s American artists were so underrated in France – I couldn't find anyone to buy De Kooning, Lichtenstein or Rauchenberg, whereas French artists were far more popular. Today that has been reversed – the economic strength of the US means that it dominates the cultural agenda, and American Pop Art is far more prized than French art."

But, happily, he adds: "I still have the same enthusiasm for art that I did all those years ago."

His long history is traced in the newly published *Daniel Templon, a History of Contemporary Art* by Julie Verlaine (Flammarion, 2016). It will be launched at Basel.

An even bigger anniversary is that of London's Fine Art Society, which is celebrating its 140th year in business. It has managed to stay in the same New Bond Street townhouse since 1876, and is the place to find everything from a print in the hundreds of pounds to a cast of Alfred Gilbert's "Eros" the celebrated Piccadilly Circus statue, at £330,000.

The company is in the midst of a "changing of the guard" with the departure of long-serving members Patrick Bourne, Robert Upstone and Angus Grossart; new managing director Pippa Stockdale will be recruiting more specialists after the summer.

In the meantime the gallery is holding an anniversary exhibition with a special emphasis on Samuel Palmer. Some of the works have been lent by clients but most are for sale, at prices that range from £1,250 for a Palmer etching to £380,000 for Whistler's pastel "Nude Model Reclining" (c1900; £380,000).



Above: Jeff Koons's "Seated Ballerina" (2010-15)
Alonso Rech Gallery



Art dealer Daniel Templon (left) with Andy Warhol in 1982 – *André Moran*



HH La Thangue's "The Orange Grove" (1920) at the Fine Art Society

Other pleasures are Edward Burne-Jones' "The Three Marys at Christ's Empty Tomb" (1862) and Cayley Robinson's Art Nouveau-inspired "The Oak Addresses the Spirits of the Trees" (1911).

The French dealer **Almine Rech**, who already has galleries in Paris, Brussels and London, is extending further. In October she will open two new spaces; the first is another in London, at 65 Grosvenor Hill; the second, according to the New York Times, is on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Rech – who is married to Bernard Ruiz-Picasso and is the daughter of the fashion designer

Georges Rech – will also keep her first-floor Savile Row space.

The 225 sq metre Grosvenor Hill gallery is close by Gagosian's behemoth space, and Rech will open with a Jeff Koons show, including two of his controversial gazing ball paintings – replicas of masterpieces with a blue orb placed in front of each of them – as well as a pair of ballerina sculptures.

This isn't the first time Koons has played the field despite his long-term relationship with Gagosian; in 2013 he showed his gazing ball plaster sculptures with David Zwirner, at the same time as a Gagosian show.

"Jeff is free to work with the gallery of his choice when the project interests

him," says Rech, who has shown Koons since 2009. The opening is cannily timed to coincide with Frieze week.

A key specialist who left Sotheby's earlier this year has joined Christie's. Alex Rotter, former co-head of the contemporary art department at Sotheby's will become chairman of post-war and contemporary art, Christie's Americas, starting early next year. He will work with Brett Gorvy, the group's head honcho in contemporary art.

Rotter was with Sotheby's for 16 years before joining the exodus of over a dozen senior specialists in the wake of the company's acquisition of Art Agency, Partners. Some, such as Cheyenne Westphal, have been snapped up by other auction houses; others, such as Melanie Clore, have yet to reveal their future plans.

Meanwhile Christie's did not want to comment on recent press reports that it had also seen staff departures, including that of deputy director Philippe Garner, only saying: "Like any business we need to continue to review our deployment of resources."

The market for video art is very small, despite the presence of a few serious collectors such as Julia Stoschek (interviewed in today's Collecting supplement). One of the reasons is that the market lacks clarity, which scares many collectors off. They wonder if further editions of a video can be produced, what happens if a video is destroyed and what rights they have – if they can lend it to a museum, for instance. In one case, a collector bought a Fischli & Weiss video for about €90,000 – one of an edition of seven – only to find it offered online a few years later in an edition of 150 for €7,000.

The first step to resolving such issues has been taken with the launch of the Loop Protocol, created by and launched at Barcelona's Loop video fair. The protocol consists of a contract designed specifically for video art that must be signed by artist, dealer and collector.

Carlos Durán, co-founder of Loop, says: "While major collectors like Julia Stoschek do get contracts, many smaller collectors have nothing to protect their rights. We have created this protocol to bring clarity to the market." He says "several sales" were made at Loop with the new contract.

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For more on the art market see today's separate Collecting supplement