



'My wife has cried probably seven times in our marriage; she's a very tough person, and when I looked over at her about an hour in and I saw that she was crying, I was like, "This is a good sign"'

Author John Green (left) on the movie adaptation of his bestselling book *The Fault In Our Stars*



'I think there were some serious wars going on, I'm sure there were some serious things to discuss, but I really... it's appalling'

Actress Jane Seymour (left), who is saddened her bikini body was photographed by paparazzi and prompted news coverage

'Spiritually, we must be a perfect match. When it's for a lifetime, I'm looking for a person I can talk to'

Television host Sa Beining, former beau of actress Zhang Ziyi, on his ideal love

More Singapore galleries at HK fair

Five of them are exhibiting at Art Basel Hong Kong, which returns for the second year with a new movie segment

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in Hong Kong

Singapore artist Lee Wen does not give the game away easily.

It may be the first time the 57-year-old artist and performance art pioneer is showing at an art fair, and a major one at that, but the conversation between him and collectors at Art Basel Hong Kong rallies back-and-forth with seasoned grace rather than anxiety.

As the prestigious art fair with roots in Basel, Switzerland, comes into its own in Hong Kong in its second year with a spread of art and collectors, Singapore similarly is upping its presence at the event.

Five home-grown galleries are exhibiting at the fair, which opened to the public yesterday. The number is two more than at the inaugural edition last year.

In total, there are 245 galleries participating in this modern and contemporary art fair, roughly half of which come from countries in the East and the rest from the West.

Of the Singapore galleries, the STPI and Gajah Gallery are making return appearances. The newcomers are Yavuz Fine Art, iPreciation - which has dedicated its booth to Lee's oeuvre of performance art works - and Fost Gallery, which is showing upcoming Singapore artist Ang Sookoon.

Seven other international galleries with outposts in Singapore, including Arndt from Berlin and The Drawing Room from the Philippines, are also at the fair.

Singapore's presence at Art Basel Hong Kong is further bolstered by foreign galleries who show works by Singapore artists. They include Hong Kong galleries Osage, which has an installation by Chen



A visitor playing table tennis on an artwork titled Ping Pong Go-Round by Singapore artist Lee Wen (in colourful shirt) during the preview of Art Basel Hong Kong. PHOTO: IPRECINATION

Sai Hua Kuan and paintings by Ng Joon Kiat, and Gallery Exit, which is showing Genevieve Chua's acrylic and screenprint works.

Japan's Tomio Koyama Gallery, with a branch at Singapore's art gallery enclave in Gillman Barracks, is also showing a painting by Ian Woo, who

previously had a solo exhibition at the gallery in Singapore.

From Europe, Galerie Krinzinger in Vienna is showing Donna Ong's delicate jewellery boxes that open to unveil drawings of secret gardens, while Berlin's Carlier Gebauer has pieces by Ming Wong.

Independent Singapore curator Khim Ong, 35,

there are more of them than two years ago when I last attended and the fair was still Art HK."

Art Basel took over Art HK, one of China's biggest art events, in 2011. It premiered as Art Basel Hong Kong last year and drew more than 60,000 visitors over five days.

The fair's Asia director, Mr Magnus Refrew, 38, says: "We are very pleased with the Singapore galleries that are participating this year. Singapore has been an important audience for us, not only in terms of collectors, but also the galleries participating."

He adds: "We are pleased to have strong works being shown, for example, by Lee Wen, one of the fathers of performance art in Singapore."

Artists Chen and Ang are also featured in the Hong Kong fair's new film section. The segment, an existing feature at the fair's Basel and Miami editions, is a fitting addition to the programme in Hong Kong, given the long history of the territory's film industry, says Mr Renfrew.

The film segment comprises works by 41 artists and is hosted at the Hong Kong Arts Centre. It is helmed by Chinese curator, artist and producer Li Zhenhua, who selected works from submissions by galleries showing in the fair.

On the demand for works by Singapore artists, as well as what Singapore galleries show, Mr Renfrew says: "It seems that there is. The galleries want to come back and the galleries want to come only if they feel that they are having a successful time commercially."

Indeed, sales have been brisk. At the fair's private preview on Wednesday, which drew luminaries such as Taiwanese art collector Rudy Tseng and Britain's Princess Michael of Kent, Gajah Gallery sold four works by artists based in Asia for almost \$380,000.

The STPI, which champions works made by artists during their residencies at the arts centre, also closed a \$125,000 deal with an Asian collector on the first day for a sculptural painting by Filipino artist Ronald Ventura, and yesterday, sold the Spice Moons series by South Korean artist Haegue Yang to Moma New York.

The centre's collaboration with China's ShanghaiART gallery on an interactive art installation by Chinese artist Sun Xun, which sells citizenship packages (at US\$13,000 or S\$16,000 each) and visas (US\$100 each) to a yet-to-be formed utopian state, also successfully secured almost 50 citizenship applications and 30 visas.

A work by Ong from her Gift series of jewellery boxes at Galerie Krinzinger was sold to a Chinese collector for €4,500 (S\$7,700).

The first day of the fair drew sales in excess of US\$4.7 million, which is tallied from reported highlight deals at the private preview. The most expensive reported sale at the preview was an oil painting titled Red (2013) by Chinese artist Hong Ling. The US\$600,000 work was sold by Soka Art from Taipei.

Dr Oei Hong Djien, 75, a veteran art collector from Indonesia who attended the private preview, says it is the diversity of works at the fair, including Sun Xun's "fresh and creative" piece, that makes Art Basel Hong Kong a strong one.

"You can come here and be surprised," he says.

Lee's doughnut-shaped ping pong table, with thrice-daily performances, delighted fairgoers who paused to take part in the interactive performance piece by playing the sport.

The artist, a Cultural Medallion recipient in 2005, says showing at the fair is a definite high point for him and not because his works have sold well. Five of his pieces have sold for between \$8,000 and \$16,000, mostly to Western collectors.

"It is memorable. It is nice to do something new and have a new experience and meet people from different places."

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"It is good to see Singapore artists. They are not a big presence yet, but there are more of them than two years ago."

Independent Singapore curator Khim Ong

Visitors checking out works by Ang Sookoon at the booth of Fost Gallery. ST PHOTO: HUANG LIJIE

