

ARTCONTACT ISTANBUL MEETS ART LOVERS FOR THE FOURTH TIME

This year, Istanbul once again hosted a fair with the atmosphere of a festival. The 4th ARTCONTACT International Contemporary Art Fair, held at the Dr. Architect Kadir Topbaş Performance and Art Center from May 22-26, was met with great interest.

The fair featured over 100 participants, showcasing the works of more than 1,200 artists and thousands of artworks, and hosted international artists from nearly 40 countries. It offered unforgettable moments to art lovers with over 20 live performances, 24 panels, and workshops.

The opening ceremony, which began with a concert by the Performing Arts Department of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University, featured speeches by Bilgin Aygül, Chairman of the ARTCONTACT ISTANBUL International Contemporary Art Fair Board, and Tamer Levent, founder of the "Sanata Evet" platform. Additionally, renowned artist and critic Bedri Baykam, General Manager of Kültür AŞ Murat ABBAS, and Beyoğlu Mayor İnan GÜNEY made impactful speeches at the ceremony. The "Artist Honor Award" was presented to Ahmet Umur DENİZ, the "Institution Honor Award" to Art TV, and the "Contribution to Art Honor Award" to Prof. Dr. Yılmaz BÜYÜKERŞEN. After the ceremony, the opening cocktail was held with a jazz performance by the "Esra Gürçay Trio" in the open air.

Among the notable visitors to the fair were Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, Kadıköy Mayor Mesut KÖSEDAĞ, Beylikdüzü Mayor Mehmet Murat ÇALIK, Belgian Consul General Tim Van ANDERLECHT, and the Armenian Patriarch of Turkey, Sahag MAŞALYAN. Many consuls general, cultural attachés, and numerous collectors from various countries also visited the fair. The significant participation from abroad and Anatolia demonstrated that ARTCONTACT ISTANBUL is an important part of the international art calendar.

ARTCONTACT Istanbul International Contemporary Art Fair aims to be a platform where art in public spaces is highlighted, and where local governments, NGOs, art education institutions, and initiatives come together, alongside galleries, artists, and collectors. Strengthening art markets, encouraging new actors to enter the art markets, increasing the importance of young artists, and making art more accessible and shareable are among the fair's key objectives.

The fair saw intense interest from the Russian Federation, Iran, Europe, and South Korea, with over 200 artists participating. The fair showcased contemporary art from all disciplines, including painting, photography, sculpture, and installation. On the international front, 11 artists from the Ilya Repin Art Academy enriched the event with their exhibitions and live performances, while five art galleries from Hungary were present under the umbrella of the Art Market Budapest International Contemporary Art Fair. Galleries from Russia, Italy, Bulgaria, South Korea, Armenia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, and Iran also participated in the fair.

One of the standout names was Ertuğrul Ateş, whose striking paintings and unique artistic approach made him one of the most talked-about artists of the fair. His emotionally charged works attracted great interest from visitors. İsmail Ateş also stood out, gaining appreciation for his colorful and dynamic works. His pieces were favorites among visitors throughout the fair. Çerkes Karadağ distinguished himself with his mastery in photography, sharing his artistic vision and impressive photographs with the visitors, receiving high praise and admiration. Another prominent name was Russian artist Alexander Shadrin, who became one of the most talked-about artists with his unique paintings and engaging workshops. His impressive works and creative processes shared during the workshops attracted significant attention from visitors. Many artists from Spain, the USA, Bulgaria, Iran, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Armenia, Belgium, South Korea, and France were also present with their galleries.

The 24 art talks and conferences held during the fair drew significant interest from art lovers. Topics such as "From Traditional to Contemporary" by Belgian artist Jeroen DEMOEN, "Gallery Beylikdüzü and Collection" by IBB Deputy Secretary General Mahir POLAT and Gallery Beylikdüzü Manager Neslihan Yakupçebiöđlu, "The Art of Living" by Tamer LEVENT, "Virtual Life in Reality" by Mahir GÜVEN, and "A Republic Artist; Zafer GENÇAYDIN" in memory of Zafer GENÇAYDIN, were discussed with the audience.

Works by eleven artists who were born in different regions of Russia, absorbed various ethnic traditions and values, and pursued a unique career path, creating a synthesis of classical and modern images and subjects, were also featured in the fair as "Symphony of the Motherland," attracting great interest.

The journey of A. Osman ÖZTÜRK, the founder of Bilfen Schools, who started as a collector years ago with an interest in art, has turned into a notable art collection over time. This collection was exhibited under the name "Bilfen Art Collection" at their stand.

The exhibition "Rediscovery of Material: Gas Concrete - Ceramics, New Nature Search in the Age of Humans," prepared by Caner YEDİKARDEŞ, Buğra ÖZER, Gamze Boz SÜLÜŞOĞLU, and Olcay BORATAV, drew attention with its works that aesthetically and conceptually questioned the interaction between nature and humans.

The Emart Young Talents Empowerment Foundation participated in the fair with the aim of contributing to the visibility of art students and raising awareness of classical music and opera under the title "Dream Melodies."

Gallery Beylikdüzü, which brought a new breath to Istanbul's cultural and artistic life, was present at the fair with a selection from the Ekrem İmamođlu collection, in cooperation with the Western Istanbul Foundation, founded by Ekrem İmamođlu, and the Beylikdüzü Municipality, attracting great interest.

The Istanbul Photography and Cinema Amateurs Association and the Turkish Federation of Photographic Art also held exhibitions at their stands with selections from their members.

Trakya University, Yeni Yüzyıl University, and Yıldız Technical University also met with the audience at their stands.

This year, art initiatives also took their place at the fair; Diyarbakır Art Initiative, İnisiyatifsizler & Altı Üstü Art Platform, and Şırnak Cudi Art Group held their exhibitions at their stands.

"AB GALLERY" from South Korea, "ART EMBASSY GALLERY" from Armenia, "SIXTEEN ART & MORE" from Italy, Art Market Budapest's "CONTEMPORARY HUNGARY" from Hungary, "ES GALLERY STUDIOS" from Tatarstan, "G GALLERY" from Russia, "GALLERY ORHON" from Kazakhstan, "MOJ ART GROUP" from Iran, "PARKART" from Spain, "YAKUTDER" from Yakutistan, and from Turkey "ALARMART," "ARDA ART GALLERY," "CANVAS ART GALLERY," "FİRÇA ART GALLERY," "GALLERY SOYUT," "GALA GALLERY," "GALLERY SELVIN," "İMOGA ART SPACE," "THE BEST ART GALLERY," and many other galleries exhibited thousands of artworks at their stands.

23,000 Art Lovers Met at ARTCONTACT ISTANBUL

With artists from different countries, from Russia to Italy, from Korea to Spain, the fair attracted 23,000 art lovers to ARTCONTACT ISTANBUL with great excitement. We look forward to seeing you with the same enthusiasm at the 5th edition from May 21-25, 2025.