

Sales Swift at Liste, Weak Dollar and All

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Courtesy Zach Feuer Gallery

At Zach Feuer's booth, Dana Schutz's "Gouged Girl" (2008) sold quickly after Liste opened for VIPs.

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BASEL—There is no better sign that we are still — despite the credit crunch, despite the doomsayers — in a red hot market for emerging artists than collector impatience. Said phenomenon was in full effect this afternoon outside the former brewery that for over ten years has served as home to the art fair **Liste**, "the young art fair in Basel," as it bills itself. The VIP preview began at 1 p.m., but by 12:50 or so a long line had formed at its entrance. When the clock struck one and the line still hadn't budged, New York collectors **Susan** and **Michael Hort** and dealers **Jack Tilton** and **Stellan Holm** slipped through what appeared to be some sort of secret side entrance. This reporter refrained from such hijinks, grudgingly, only to notice before the line began to move that certain apparent ultra-VIPs were already trolling the booths inside. There was **Todd Levin**, art adviser to hedge-fund manager **Adam Sender**, ascending Liste's outdoor staircase...

Once inside, many collectors didn't hesitate to buy from some of the 64 galleries whose wares were on display. With Liste's reasonable prices — compared to the main fair's six-and seven-figure items — a good number of sales were finalized almost immediately. New York dealer **Zach Feuer**'s booth was located just inside the door, as it was last year, in one of the fair's few light-filled rooms. (Liste is a bit of a rabbit warren, and some rooms even have a sort of dank-cellar feel to them, which, say its fans, lends it something of a punk spirit.) Barely had the fair opened than Feuer parted with a brand new large painting by the star of his stable, **Dana Schutz**. Schutz just had her first solo turn at **Contemporary Fine Arts** gallery in Berlin, and the new work took off in something of a new direction, with amped-up colors. This painting, entitled *Gouged Girl* (2008), follows closely on that series; it depicts a girl sitting on a beach, half of her face having melted away, while the Berlin show featured similarly deteriorating figures. Feuer is reticent to discuss Schutz's prices, but several years ago a very large painting of hers was rumored to be in the six figures.

Not far from Feuer, the New York gallery **Foxy Production** was doing brisk business in photorealistic paintings by American artist **Jimmy Baker**, who was on hand, dressed in a crisp suit, to discuss them. Not two hours into the fair, the gallery had sold the handful of Baker's paintings in the booth, at prices ranging from \$12,500–15,000, all to European collectors. As we stood before the painting *Phantom Pains*,

Baker explained that the picture — a portrait of a hooded figure displaying a bloodied elbow that, due to the position in which he holds it, looks like a post-amputation stump — is a sort of metaphor for "digital culture as a global nervous system." It was unclear whether the hordes of people who gathered in this booth took in all the conceptual nuances of his work; chances are they were in thrall to the very good painting.