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PARIS PHOTO LOS ANGELES 2014

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Q&A With Paris Photo LA Director Julien Frydman

by Scott Indrisek 24/04/14 2:36 PM EDT



Julien Frydman
(Photo by Philippe Levy)

Paris Photo Los Angeles hits the city for the second year, bringing 81 exhibitors to Paramount Pictures Studios from April 25-27. An off-shoot of the original Paris Photo in France, which was launched in 1996, the LA edition has “a different flavor,” explains fair director Julien Frydman, thanks in part to initiatives that help younger and emerging galleries participate. We spoke with Frydman about what visitors can expect, including a Dennis Hopper screening, and a series of talks with the likes of Jeff Wall and Taryn Simon.

What can people expect to be different or new at this year’s Paris Photo Los Angeles?

Last year was the first year, and you need to create momentum for people to come to the event and enjoy something unique. The fact that we have the Paramount Pictures Studios — using sound stages and the famous New York backlot, with the fake streets of New York, which is where we put some of the galleries — created a lot of buzz. We want to make sure that the energy was reinforced from last year. One of the issues we had then was that some sound stages were quite dispersed inside the Paramount lots, and this year we’re more focused. We were able to add some programming components, including a great program of conversations: Jeff Wall will be joining us, Taryn Simon, Stephen Shore, and curators, like Simone Castets from Swiss Institute and Philippe Vergne from MOCA. We also have a great new program of screenings curated by Kevin Moore — on a sound stage, and it’s funny to do screenings inside a room which is usually used to *create* images. And then we have some shows, like “UNEDITED!: The LAPD Photo Archives,” or the special screening of Dennis Hopper’s “The Last Movie.” It’s a fair with a lot of things to discover, with an indoor-outdoor feeling, as you move from one stage to another, in that environment of the movie studio.

The other thing we’ve learned is that that’s a great environment to do strong solo shows, because you enter, literally, into small galleries in the “New York” backlot. It’s not like walking down an aisle, looking left and right and seeing different bodies of work. Here you enter into dedicated spaces. We have 31 solo shows in the fair.

How is video a focus of the fair this year?

It’s more a focus in terms of programming, conversations, and screenings. The question is more about a dialogue between different bodies of work.

In terms of audience, is there a big difference between Los Angeles and Paris for the fair?

In terms of numbers, in Paris we have 60,000 visitors; last year in LA we had 13,500. Paris Photo is 17 years old, and it’s year two for LA. But I’d say we’re moving toward the same kind of audience. There’s a very strong collector base coming from LA, the West Coast, and different parts of the world, and a base of people who really enjoy photography — who can buy a print or two, or five, a year, but don’t consider themselves a “collector.” And then you have a larger

audience — the public — who can buy a print, enjoy the books, or simply watch and learn through what they see. People come from New York, Dallas, Minneapolis, San Francisco. What is most important, at the beginning, is that strong curators and collectors are joining us, because the buzz from the first year was really good. The answer I got, the first year, was, “If I have time, I’ll come.” Now the answer is, “I don’t want to miss it again, I heard it was so great!” People are joining. Building the momentum for the market takes time. A fair is really about a moment where you feel at ease to buy — most of our gallerists who are coming back understood the impact of last year.

What opportunities does Paris Photo Los Angeles provide in addition to the original event in Paris?

Paris is very important. There are around 130 exhibitors, but it happens right after FIAC, before Miami Basel, just before Thanksgiving. Frieze is in October. So for a number of dealers who are doing one or two fairs [a year], specifically in London or Paris, they have to make a decision to do Paris Photo or not. Opening a spring version in Los Angeles gives an opportunity for them to join us, and there we also have a different entry point, with less expensive booths for young galleries, less than six years old. We don’t do that in Paris. It goes with the spirit of LA, with the number of younger artists producing there, and it gives a different flavor to the fair.

How do you foresee Paris Photo growing in 2015, now that FIAC will be happening at the same time in LA?

It’s a joint plan. It’s better to have the two fairs in the same week, rather than any other scenario. That will be the week not to miss in Los Angeles. Everybody from different backgrounds will join and move from one fair to the other: different profiles, different energies, different scenarios that we’ll be offering. Of course with some overlaps — a number of important galleries have the capacity to do both fairs. We’re partnering. Through the interior window of my office, I can see the director of FIAC Los Angeles, Jill Silverman van Coenegrachts. She’s four meters away. We work together, literally, and share teams. We have different programs and ways of working with exhibitors, but we work hand-in-hand, and of course she’ll be with us at Paris Photo for the opening and a number of events we’re doing together.