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CODE Art Fair's Debut at Art Copenhagen

BY STEVEN COX | AUGUST 30, 2016

There was a fresh face at this year's Copenhagen Art Week. CODE Art Fair (26-28 August) took place under the umbrella of Scandinavia's oldest art fair, Art Copenhagen — this year marking its 20th anniversary — alongside the contrasting Selected Art Fair, both of which were on view in the cavernous Bella Center, in Copenhagen's south.



The aim, according to Kristian W. Andersen, Director of Art Copenhagen, was to present a more refined edition of the overarching concept this year, with the introduction of CODE, headed by Julie Leopold Alf and a curatorial team of six: Peter Ibsen, Christina Wilson, Claus Risvig, Mikkel Carl, Ryan Steadman and Ryan Wallace. Together the team succeeded in establishing a compact but strong fair of 48 galleries and two exhibitions — "Flat Fix" and "Danmark" — presenting a decidedly international showing of artists and galleries from around Europe and North America, in a counterpoint to sister fair, Selected.

Stand out selections were Matthias Malling Mortensen's delicate papercuts of irregular pattern making, negative space and shadow casting at Les Gens Heureux, as well as fellow Copenhagen-based artist Kristian Touborg's new series of paintings of reflective, rippling sea water at London's Rod Barton. Lars Morell's vintage poster recreations at Cinnamon drew attention, as did Stefan Muller's raw paintings, often on unprimed canvas, at Galerie Nagel Draxler.

"Flat Fix" greeted viewers at the fair's entrance. New York-based artists and curators Ryan Steadman and Ryan Wallace used the show to introduce Danes to some favorite American painters (several of whom were found outside of this tightly-curated painters-show; Ted Gahl and Graham Collins for example, both up for grabs at Galleri Jacob Bjorn). Rosy Keyser, Joe Fyfe, Kristian Kennedy, and Johannes Vanderbeek, were other notable inclusions, along with pieces by the curators' themselves.