



Sonja Teszler Around Condo London 2020

Condo London

January 11 - February 8, 2020

By **SONJA TESZLER**, January 2020

Platforming itself as a "large-scale collaborative exhibition of international galleries" hosting each other in their spaces, Condo seeks to encourage more experimental exhibitions as an alternative model for costly art fairs such as Frieze or Art Basel. It's like visiting your Cool Aunt instead of your Highbrow Aunt in that it might leave you feeling more stimulated, relaxed and comfortable, rather than exhausted, anxious and overwhelmed... but also with considerably less pocket money.

Though not as instantly lucrative as bigger fairs, Condo allows galleries and dealers to build exposure for themselves and their artists on a more long-term and sustainable basis. Taking place for the first time in London in 2016, it has since been organized in New York, Shanghai, Mexico City and Sao Paulo. London's 2020 edition of the event opened on the 11th of January on view until February 8th. However, in this case it feels much more like the Highbrow Aunt trying to pretend she's the Cool Aunt.

Before pointing any fingers, one must acknowledge that the market for small to mid-weight galleries has seen better days. It's understandable why many of the participating galleries seemingly decided to go for safe choices both in terms of artists and their exhibition format. However, insofar as Condo's whole purpose claims to be to allow for more innovative shows and practices instead of commercially focused art fair booths, there wasn't an overwhelming emphasis on the collaborative element or on presenting particularly experimental work. This being said, a number of the exhibitions at smaller galleries, especially around East London, indeed spoke to "spirit" of Condo with a nuanced consideration for the work and the narrative. They also give the impression of more dialogue between themselves and their hosted galleries, reflected in the result's value as indeed a "collaborative exhibition".

The following list sees 5 galleries that I believe put effort into bringing their artists' works together both conceptually and visually and didn't shy away from experimentation. At the same time, it is difficult to define "experimental" these days – there is a trend towards more spectacle and experience-oriented exhibitions and installations within the commercial world, including fairs like Frieze, which could be described as "experimental" or "innovative" but are still mainly economically motivated. Thus, I don't want to suggest that the lack of "experiment" means Condo didn't present something spectacularly immersive, but perhaps in this case the idea doesn't lie as much in the works, which one might like or doesn't like, as much as it does on the opportunity on working collaboratively on a shared project and concept, not two or more separate ones.



Installation view, mother's tankstation London hosting Château Shatto. Dublin | London Courtesy of mother's tankstation

mother's tankstation - Subtle and Symphonious

Showing Zeinab Saleh

Hosting Château Shatto, Los Angeles with Yuko Mohri

This graceful exhibition brings together Zeinab Saleh's paintings and Yuko Mohri's delicate constellations. Mohri's Fluxus sculptures are an overall highlight within Condo with a poetic punchline in their every detail. They create a delightful dialogue to Saleh's large-scale, dreamy paintings on patterned traditional dresses and shawls - *Sadly* (not pictured) with its neon candlelight brings out the subtle yellow brush strokes in the painting *Blue* (not pictured). The most intriguing aspect of this exhibition lies in its details. It encourages exactly what Condo claims to encourage as opposed to a large art fair: indulging in a closer look.