



Art Market

How Being Represented by Multiple Galleries Impacts an Artist's Market

● Justin Kamp Oct 15, 2020



Genesis Tramaine

I Have All That I Need, 2020

Almine Rech



Genesis Tramaine

Be a Big Girl, 2018

Richard Beavers Gallery

In an increasingly interconnected and online art world, an artist showing with different galleries in distinct regions may seem like an archaic practice—a holdover from a less thoroughly globalized era of art buying. Yet this practice endures. While the internet and global fairs circuit have dissolved some of the art world's regional distinctions, dealers sharing representation offers multifaceted benefits for artists, galleries, and collectors alike.

“Pre-internet, having different galleries was more of a geographical decision,” said Jorg Grimm, owner of Grimm Gallery in Amsterdam and New York, which co-represents several artists on its roster including Loie Hollowell (with Pace Gallery), Daniel Richter (with Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac), and Matthew Day Jackson (with Hauser & Wirth). “If you had a gallery in London, or Paris, European collectors would buy the work there, [and] the gallery in New York would take care of the American collectors, for the most part.” While the advent of online sales may have made those geographic boundaries more fluid, the core advantage of joint representation for artists has remained the same: expanded access to collectors.

According to Richard Beavers, whose eponymous Brooklyn gallery recently began sharing representation of the painter Genesis Tramaine with international gallery Almine Rech, broader market access can be difficult to attain for early-career artists. “There’s so many incredibly important artists out there, under the radar,” Beavers said. “Sometimes the blue-chip galleries don’t have the time to invest in really building an artist’s career and establishing a market for them. That’s where a smaller gallery, such as mine, can come into place in the sense of an incubator-type gallery.”

In a worst-case scenario, that dynamic can lead to a larger gallery “poaching” an emerging artist from the roster of a small or mid-size gallery. Sharing representation can be a more equitable and sustainable arrangement for all parties involved.

Beavers started representing Tramaine in 2018, and in September of this year, the artist was picked up by the Paris-based gallery Almine Rech, who will represent her overseas. With Beavers championing her, Tramaine’s career developed to the point where she was ready to engage with the international art market on a more consistent basis. Ethan Buchsbaum, a senior director at Almine Rech, said the gallery is “careful to avoid superfluous overlap with Richard’s existing network when it comes to promotion of Genesis,” focusing instead on “helping expand her international footprint and presence in the regions where we have a physical presence.”

That presence entails more than just gallery space. For one thing, it often means greater financial capabilities. “We don’t have the reach or resources that Almine Rech has, we don’t have the relationships that they have,” Beavers said. “We’re not gaining access to a lot of the top-tier art fairs—we may not even be able to financially afford to participate in art fairs. It makes sense to be in a position to partner with Almine Rech, where your artist is being offered far more resources than a small program.” By maintaining representation with small, local galleries as well as larger international ones, artists can not only access new collector bases, but also the major fairs that smaller galleries may not have the bandwidth (or funds) to pursue.

The increased resources that come with joint representation can also help artists build institutional recognition and gain entry into biennials. “European artists may have closer relationships with their local FRAC or Kunsthalle, while an American gallery may be closer with the local museum trustees,” said art advisor Joe Sheftel. Grimm echoed this point, stating that when galleries work together, they can not only pool logistics and works for a museum exhibition, but can jointly sponsor publications that help increase scholarly interest in an artist’s practice.

Of course, with greater institutional and collector interest comes an increase in an artist’s pricing. “Prices automatically change when an artist starts working with an additional gallery, since their market expands,” Grimm said. “However, demand and institutional support both have to sustain price increases. With each additional solo exhibition, museum show, monograph, or biennial participation, prices can change.” Beavers expanded on that point, stating that any valuation increase is determined by both galleries looking at an artist’s historical pricing patterns to insure that, despite any increase in price, the artist “continues to build trust within the market and collectors.”

Monetary benefits and career recognition notwithstanding, Beavers pointed to another reason that an artist—especially one from an underrepresented community—should maintain an existing gallery relationship through joint representation.

“It’s important, from a cultural standpoint, that communities of color are not losing access to these artists that depict the narratives of our everyday life,” he said. “It’s so important that these artists stay grounded and connected to these communities....It’s a trendy thing right now, where the African American artist is sought-after, but where are we going to be 10 or 15 years from now?”

By maintaining relationships with smaller, local galleries in addition to large international ones, artists can not only achieve success, but ensure that other artists from their communities can someday do the same.