All eyes on art fair

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Jeremy Epstein lives in London. But he loves flying to North Texas each April for the Dallas Art Fair. He revels in the chance to chew down on "the world's best Tex-Mex" and groove out on heavy metal in Deep Ellum.

This will be the third April in a row that Epstein has journeyed from his wined and dined gallery in London to Fashion Industry Gallery on Ross Avenue, where the fair will open its eighth edition on Friday. It closes next Sunday.

He flies to art fairs all over the world, including such heavyweights as Art Basel and Frieze New York, but when it comes to Dallas, he says, "We don't make any secret that it's our favorite."

He says he loves the trip to Texas because the gallery ownership feels valued by the fair's enterprising co-founders, art curator and consultant Chris Byrne, 54, and businessman John Sughrue, 55. Epstein credits the pair with both staging an engaging fair and cultivating extraordinary activities that enhance the work of dealers.

More than any fair anywhere in the world, he says, the Dallas Art Fair facilitates after-hours, off-campus excursions with the city's "rich supply" of collectors and museum heads that he says help sustain and embolden the careers of a gallery's artists.

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