

16 AND 18 ART REVIEWS

Art fairs abound, including important contemporary work at the Armory Show and cutting-edge pieces at the Independent.



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BY TOBIAS GREY

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WILL HEINRICH | ART REVIEW

The Don't-Misses at Two Art Fairs

What to see at events held by the Independent and the New Art Dealers Alliance.

IF, LIKE ME, you find the full-tilt art fairs a little overwhelming, the formally ambitious but modestly scaled Independent is a godsend. With just 54 exhibits, many of them solo presentations, arranged over four spacious floors at Spring Studios in TriBeCa, it's like a leisurely all-star game: It's not exactly representative of the year in art, perhaps, but it feels as if it ought to be.

Black and white is in vogue, from the fair co-founder Elizabeth Dee's presentation of Carl Ostendorf's cheerful paintings of the existential void (fifth floor, Booth 22) to Canada gallery's extraordinary onslaught of inky drawings and ceramics by Elisabeth Kley (sixth floor, 20). A London dealer, The Sunday Painter, is making its fair debut with Cynthia Daignault's attempt to capture the American century in a series of small, gray-tone oils (first floor, 5).

But explosive color is in evidence, too, from exuberant drawings and paintings by Derrick Alexis Coard and Gerassimos Floratos at White Columns (seventh floor, 1) to Clearing's show of vivid abstractions painted on small plywood handball courts by Harold Ancart (sixth floor, 10). And outside art is well represented, with highlights including Leopold Strobl's colored-pencil drawings of pretty landscapes interrupted by ominous mountains of shadow, at Ricco/Maresca, and Kerry Schuss's show of wild sunlit scenes by Aaron Birnbaum (fifth floor, 8).

Here's a small selection of the very best booths to anchor your stroll:

CHAPTER NY & CARLOS/ISHIKAWA Start on the fifth floor with the psychological tension of a joint exhibit mounted by the London gallery Carlos/Ishikawa and a Lower East Side stalwart, Chapter NY (Booths 1-2). The luxuriously overdetermined texture of Issy Wood's large oil-on-velvet paintings of clothing provide a perfect backing for the primordial shock of Ann Greene Kelly's aesthetically bifurcated folding chair — an ordinary steel chair, spangled with rust, that Ms. Kelly sliced and reconstructed with curving ersatz masonry.

DELMES & ZANDER Continue next door to Alexandru Chira (1947-2011) in his first solo show outside Romania. A professor of painting in Bucharest, Mr. Chira spent years building a colorful installation called "Designs toward the sky for rain and rainbow" in his native village in Transylvania. A series of hazy but elaborate diagrams and drawings, some on a truncated hexagon shape that he thought would promote the land's fertility, are dreamily enrapturing.

INVISIBLE EXPORTS Nearby, at Booth 11, is a



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group of Cary Leibowitz's hilariously lacerating latex-on-wood pie charts — one is divided between "low self-esteem" and "excessive self-confidence," another among five wedges all labeled "me" — hung against checkered red oilcloth, as if for a picnic of performative self-hatred.

303 Work by the Conceptualist Hans-Peter Feldmann is disarmingly understated. Several found black and white photos of posing couples, mounted against raw wood and with the faces carefully sliced out, could say



any number of things about identity, nostalgia or the confinement of social roles — but he lets the material speak for itself (Sixth floor, 9).

DAVID KORDANSKY Ruby Neri's over-the-top ceramic sex dreams are two- to three-foot-high sculpted and glazed vases that would look like blonde blowup dolls if they weren't so winningly innocent. It's a generous kind of satire that gives other people's unconscious fantasies the benefit of the doubt. (Sixth floor, 13)

Clockwise from top: at the Independent fair, ceramics by Milena Muzquiz and paintings by Charlie Billingham at Travesia Cuatro; at NADA, work by Farah Al Qasimi; at Independent, a ceramic sculpture by Ruby Neri.

SPRUETH MAGERS Elaborately constructed digital photographs framed in imitation animal skins by Ryan Trecartin play havoc with viewers' emotions and sense of stability. (Sixth floor, 14)

MARTOS Kathleen White's "love letter" paintings, tall and narrow canvases in nail-polish shades of rouge and pink, are surprisingly evocative. A few streaky lines on each bring to mind the expressiveness of finger painting. (Seventh floor, 5)

TRAVESIA CUATRO The Spanish and Mexican gallery, making its debut here, pairs ceramics and paintings by Milena Muzquiz with work by the young English painter Charlie Billingham, whose discreetly mysterious oils look like outtakes from 19th-century cartoons. (First floor, 7)

New Art Dealers Alliance

There's plenty worth seeing in the chaotic, single-floor maelstrom that is the nearby New Art Dealers Alliance fair, or NADA, at Skylight Clarkson Square on Washington Street. **Reyes Projects** is not to be missed, with a solo presentation of the Detroit artist James Benjamin Franklin, who builds flat, shaped forms out of plaster cloth. Some of them, covered in loud patterns of bright color and epoxy and with other flat objects glued on, look like Papuan spirit boards from the future (Booth 2.03).

Among the other winners: Alex Bradley Cohen's charming figurative paintings at Nicelle Beauchene (1.00), Marley Freeman's luminous small abstractions at Parker (2.02), Farah Al Qasimi's complex and beguiling photographs of life in the United Arab Emirates at Helena Anrather (4.02), Jenna Westra's cerebrally suggestive black and white photographs at Hassla (4.16), and Graham Anderson's sepia-toned retro-futurist figurative painting at Klaus von Nichtsagend (2.05).

Several pixelated landscape drawings that the young German artist Arno Beck made with an Olivetti typewriter are strikingly handsome at Golestani gallery (4.10). Sebastian Utzmi's thought-provoking installation "M-Maybe," showing with the Zurich gallery Counter Space (1.28), comprises pre-Sept. 11 comic books the artist collected that feature the destruction of the World Trade Center. Like Mr. Beck's drawings, this piece will stay with you: The last comic is an issue of Superman that was printed in August 2001 but couldn't be released.

Independent 2018

Through Sunday, Spring Studios, TriBeCa; independenthq.com.

NADA

Through Sunday, Skylight Clarkson Square, SoHo; newartdealers.org.