

12 Artists On the Rise at The Armory Show

Anchoring the city's fall Art Week, the behemoth Armory Show at the Javits Center has nearly 250 contemporary art galleries, and a focus on the Caribbean.



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By Will Heinrich and Aruna D'Souza

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The Armory Show

The Armory Show, in the cavernous crystal halls of the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, is enormous, bringing together, in this year's edition, nearly 250 galleries from more than 30 countries. (The mega-galleries don't generally participate, but many small and midsize Manhattan galleries do.) What makes it more overwhelming still is that most of those exhibitors, having made significant investments to be here, are doing their best to stand out without rocking the boat. The vibe is noisy but conservative, with plenty of bright, bouncy color and most booths showing a little of everything.

But the show remains a big deal for the artists, particularly if they're not based in New York. Exhibiting in the city's largest art fair, during the art world's busiest week, may be the most efficient way to an audience there is. This year, we went looking for the dozen that most stayed with us, but of course there are hundreds more, all hoping to catch your eye.

Karl Haendel (Booth 223, Vielmetter Los Angeles)



Karl Haendel, "The Old-New Synagogue in Prague Annotated by My Daughter," 2026, Pencil and ink on paper. Vielmetter Gallery. Aleksey Kondratyev for The New York Times

Haendel may not be the only man in Los Angeles pulling off oversize feats of technical wizardry with an ordinary pencil. But he's probably got the single best supply of ideas for funny, ingenious or just plain sensually delightful drawings. A life-size knight in armor, in this presentation, really shows off the silvery appeal of graphite, but the nearby defensive palisade adorned with stick-figure doodles by Haendel's young daughter wins for charm. *WILL HEINRICH*

Stan Dann (Booth 234, Seven Sisters)



Stan Dann's "Ridge Trail #3" (2006). Seven Sisters

Working in the San Francisco Bay Area after an earlier career in advertising and graphic design, Stan Dann (1931-2013) made some of the weirdest wooden reliefs I've ever seen. Still lifes, landscapes, domestic scenes and abstract fever dreams rendered in bulbous, brightly colored wooden puzzle pieces, they look as if you'd find them in a Gahan Wilson cartoon, or at the bottom of an absinthe bottle.

HEINRICH

Nikoleta Sekulovic (Booth 240, Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery)



Nikoleta Sekulovic, "Daphne du Maurier," 2024, acrylic and oil stick on linen at Rebecca Hossack Gallery. Aleksey Kondratyev for The New York Times

Born in Rome to a German mother and a father from Montenegro, Sekulovic worked as a jazz singer in Paris and New York before moving to Madrid. Needing a new creative outlet there, she started painting large, fictional portraits of historical women, like the novelist Daphne du Maurier. Depicted here with watchful eyes, a 1920s bob and short, vigorous brushstrokes that made me think of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, du Maurier stops you in your tracks, daring you to resist. *HEINRICH*

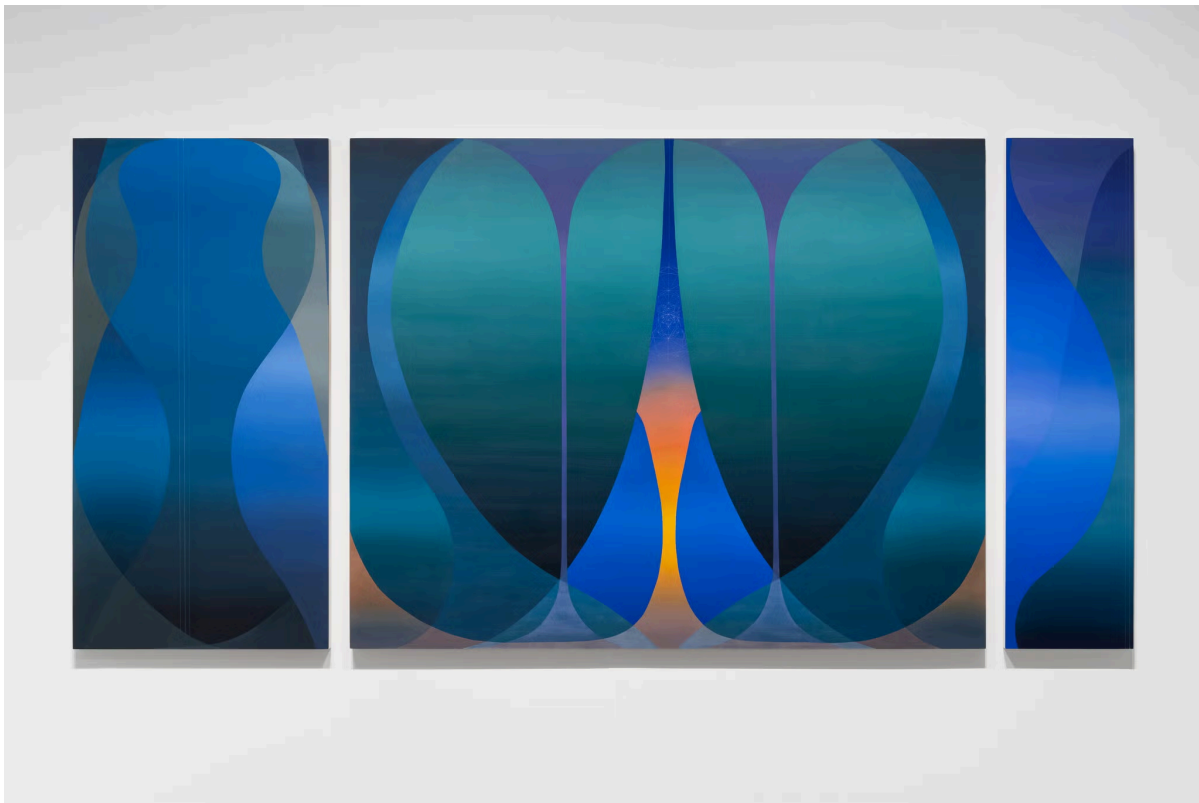
Shafei Xia (Booth 120, P420)



Shafei Xia, "Summer Time," 2026, watercolor on sandal paper mounted on canvas. Shafei Xia/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome; Photograph by Aleksey Kondratyev for The New York Times

Currently based in Bologna, Italy, where she earned her master's, Xia (b. 1989, Shaoxing, China) is manifestly aware of the peculiar position of Chinese artists working in Western vernaculars. But she wears that awareness lightly. A large erotic watercolor in this presentation winkingly recalls European Chinoiserie, but is also perfectly entrancing in its own right. A single ceramic breast mounted on the wall is equally funny — or unnerving — with or without its art-historical resonance. *HEINRICH*

Minako Iwamura (Booth P21, JDJ)



Minako Iwamura, "Sea," 2026. Oil and white charcoal on cradled wood panel. Aleksey Kondratyev for The New York Times

Iwamura's oil paintings are easy to look at but hard to make out. Are they flowers, genitals, Op Art, lava lamps or psychedelic geometry? Are those little white lines Cabalistic diagrams or cobwebs? And exactly how does the artist, who was born in Sydney and lives in Brooklyn, make her paintings so unmistakably painterly without leaving a single brushstroke visible? *HEINRICH*

Hilla Rebay (Booth 119, Durazzo)



Hilla Rebay, "Untitled (portrait of a woman)," circa 1948, collage on paper. Galerie Raphael Durazzo. Aleksey Kondratyev for The New York Times

Best remembered as a driving force behind what became the Guggenheim Museum, the Baroness Hilla Rebay was also, of course, a painter of spiritual abstraction, though you don't often get to see what she was up to. It's Rebay's strange collages, in which elfin women and men dance in otherworldly fashions colored yellow and brown, that carry the day. I don't know what they mean but I'd certainly like to see more of them. *HEINRICH*

Darvish Fakhr (Booth 238, Leila Heller Gallery)



Darvish Fakhr, “Sufi Stratis,” 2026. Oil on linen. Leila Heller Gallery. Aleksey Kondratyev for The New York Times

A man, dressed in the clothing of a dervish, hangs in the air (“Sufi Stratis,” 2026). Is he rising or falling? (He’s certainly not whirling.) There is some serious whimsy going on in the work of the London-based artist known as Darvish, who is half-Iranian, half-American — a pink pickup truck balanced precariously on the edge of a cliff, a rhino in a life preserver about to be overtaken by a wave — but there is also a deep sensitivity to the state of the world. Faced with an apocalypse, what is there to do but laugh? *ARUNA D’SOUZA*

Sandra Brewster (Platform Section and Southern Guild, Booth 210)



Sandra Brewster, “Make Trouble,” 2024. Southern Guild. Aleksey Kondratyev for The New York Times

In a work titled “Make Trouble” (2024), the Canadian artist uses a gel transfer technique to reprint family photographs onto wood panels propped on a steel frame — in this case, a picture of her and her sisters playing in their suburban neighborhood. The imperfections (gaps, folds, abrasions, blurring) are a poetic stand-in for the gaps in memory that mark her Black diasporic experience. In addition to this installation in the fair’s “Platform” section, Brewster has work in Southern Guild’s group presentation (Booth 210) — easily the best showing at the Armory this year. (Southern Guild is in Cape Town and New York.) **D’SOUZA**

Marie Watt (Booth 304, Marc Straus Gallery)



Marie Watt, "Homage to the Square (Precursor)," 2026.
Marc Straus Gallery. Aleksey Kondratyev for The New York Times

Watt, a Turtle Clan member of the Seneca Nation of Indians, takes modern art back to its roots: Her "Homage to the Square (Precursor)" (2026) is a canny reminder that, just as settlers and immigrants weren't the first to get to North America, they weren't the first to get to geometric abstraction. Joseph Albers's color studies are joyfully reimaged in glass beads and tin jingles, materials central to multiple Native American art and craft traditions. *D'SOUZA*

Oluwasemilore Delano (Booth P35, Adegbola Gallery)



Oluwasemilore Delano, “The Life of a Few, IV,” oil on wood, iron nails, charcoal, 2026.
Adegbola Gallery. Aleksey Kondratyev for The New York Times

The artist, who works between Nigeria and London, sneaked into an abattoir in Lagos and photographed the cattle being prepared for slaughter. She then turned those photographs into portraits of a sort, tenderly rendered in oil paint and charcoal on grainy, pieced-together plywood panels, often with nails jutting out of them. We see the creatures only in parts — haunches, horns, hooves. The effect is disorienting, made more so because of the haunting sense that we are not just looking at animals, we’re looking at ourselves. *D’SOUZA*

Kesewa Aboah (Booth P20, Hannah Traore Gallery)



Kesewa Aboah, “Self Portrait: KA-18.07.26,” 2026, 15
magnesium stamped plates. Hannah Traore Gallery. Aleksey
Kondratyev for The New York Times

The Ghanaian British artist and model Kesewa Aboah uses magnesium plates — commonly employed in the 20th century for letterpress printing — to make abstracted self-portraits, etching parts of her body (a repeated thumbprint, breasts and limbs, hands and lips) into the soft metal to create ghostly images. The warm patina of the silvery plates and the etched imprints create a weird tension between animate and inanimate — the body starts to read like a topographical map, the pitted surfaces suggesting decay. *D’SOUZA*

Manuel Mathieu (Booth AS2, Galerie Hugues Charbonneau)



Manuel Mathieu, “Shhrine,” 2025. Olfactive installation (burned textile, ceramic, oil perfume). Galerie Hugues Charbonneau. Aleksey Kondratyev for The New York Times

The Haitian Canadian artist, whose work was featured in this year’s Venice Biennale, brings scent into the picture. “Shhrine” (2025) is a tentlike structure composed of strips of tattered fabric, containing enigmatic, abstract ceramic objects — bones, perhaps, or maybe tools, animal horns, tree branches. But linger a while and discover the real secret within — a subtle perfume emanating from a bowl placed at the center, like a makeshift altar, reminding us of how important scent is in rituals of gathering and spiritual encounters. *D’SOUZA*

The Armory Show

Through Sunday, at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, 429 11th Avenue, Midtown West, thearmoryshow.com.

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