

## Across Aisles, Accidental Pas de Deux

As newer art fairs crowd the spring calendar, the Art Show wears its age proudly and well. Now in its 24th year, this annual showcase of the Art Dealers Association of America combines polish and relevance. It offers current hits from the museums and galleries as well as historical

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**ART REVIEW**

goodies in one tasteful and increasingly manageable package.

This year the fair has a record 35 solo and two-person exhibits, up from 29 last year. And the remaining exhibitors have organized thematic shows, several of which are excellent. (Though some of the rubrics, like “20th-Century Abstraction” or “Figure and Landscape,” are impossibly broad.)

In general the shows of just one or two artists work so beautifully that the association ought to consider enforcing this standard across the board, along the lines of what is done at newer fairs like Volta or certain sections of Art Basel Miami Beach.

Timeliness helps. Three of the artists with full booths here also have solos at New York museums right now: Cindy Sherman (at MoMA), Sarah Sze (Asia Society) and Henry Taylor (MoMA PS1). And then there’s Francesca Woodman; a touring survey of her brief but influential career opens at the Guggenheim Museum next week.

But only at the fair can you see mini-shows of all of these artists in close proximity to one another: Ms. Sherman’s vampy “Murder Mystery” photo collages (at the Metro Pictures booth) across the aisle from Ms. Woodman’s hiding-in-plain-sight self-portraits (at Marian Goodman), for example.

Nearby, L&M’s display of early work by John Baldessari — black-and-white street photographs modified with hand-drawn red arrows — lends some context to Lühring Augustine’s booth of smart-alecky conceptual photography and sculpture by the much younger Elad Lassry.

No support is needed for Peter Freeman’s outstanding exhibition of paintings and prints by James Ensor (1860-1949), or for Tibor de Nagy’s enchanting cele-

*The Art Show continues through Sunday at the Park Avenue Armory, 643 Park Avenue, at 67th Street; (212) 777-5218, [artdealers.org](http://artdealers.org).*



MARILYNN K. YEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

**The Art Show** Louise Bourgeois’s “Rectory,” with mirrors at left, and Jennifer Bartlett’s “At Sea” are among the various works in this annual fair, now in its 24th year, at the Park Avenue Armory through Sunday.

bration of the photographer Rudy Burckhardt. As rarely happens at art fairs, both shows draw you deeply into their respective worlds: Ensor’s crowds massing before Jesus, Napoleon and Roman gladiators; Burckhardt’s studio and street shots from Abstract Expressionism’s heyday.

The art world of right this minute is the focus of Pace’s drawings of moody imps by Yoshitomo Nara, D’Amelio’s array of women with gouged-out eyes painted by Daniel Hesidence, and Blum & Poe’s selection of Mr. Taylor’s portraits of writers, curators and artists. But all of them take part in a conversation about the figure that goes back to Philip Pearlstein (at Betty Cuninghame), Alice Neel (at Richard L. Feigen), Francis Picabia (at Michael Werner) and Egon Schiele (at Galerie St. Etienne).

The fair’s two-artist shows make some matches that, while clearly looks-based, aren’t as shallow as they might seem. At Cheim & Read, Adam Fuss’s brightly colored photograms of rabbit entrails play off of Lynda Benglis’s equally convoluted sculptures in stainless steel and polyurethane-coated mesh.

With a slightly puerile sense of humor Fraenkel has paired recent Mel Bochner paintings of words, numbers and symbols with older Lee Friedlander photographs that spotlight signs and

slogans around the city. The coded message of Mr. Bochner’s “Dollar Hash Exclamation Plus,” for instance, is reinforced by a Friedlander shot of some scatological graffiti.

The most serious of the two-person shows, in mood as well as substance, is at P.P.O.W., where recent works by the artist and AIDS activist Hunter Reynolds accompany a nearly complete set

The specialized dealers don’t need much of a theme in any case. Pavel Zoubok mines its stock of collages for clever Fluxus and Pop-era wordplay by Al Hansen and Joe Brainard; Menconi & Schoelkopf unearths three Charles Biederman paintings, all made in the 1930s but flaunting an impressive range of styles, from its holdings of 20th-century American abstraction.

Where does the solo strategy leave the exhibitors who have a little bit of everything? Pretty well off, in the case of Acquavella, which covers several bases with a commanding green-and-black Ellsworth Kelly wall piece from the 1970s, an austere Morandi still life, and a sinuous Degas pastel (“La danse greque,” 1885-90).

Others, however, may have a hard time competing with their more concentrated neighbors. Barbara Mathes, for instance, has an exceptionally colorful display that includes works by John Chamberlain, Yayoi Kusama and Oscar Bluemner, but it’s opposite a row of solos that includes Allan McCollum at Sperone Westwater, Dave Muller at the shared booth of Gladstone and Anthony Meier, and the Ensor at Freeman.

The shift to one- and two-artist shows, though, is definitely a good move for this fair and possibly a sign that collectors are expecting more from fairs in general.

### Dealers mix, match and try out simple formulas.

of David Wojnarowicz’s “Rimbaud in New York” photographs. Wojnarowicz’s work offers an enchanted look at city life just before the epidemic; Mr. Reynolds assembles chilling news coverage from the height of the crisis.

Don’t expect as much depth from the thematic shows; this is an art fair, after all, not Documenta. But even a simple formula can be rewarding when the mix is just right, as at Pace/MacGill’s “In the cloud,” in which Stieglitz’s “Equivalents” meet Paul Graham’s shots of the skies over troubled areas of Northern Ireland.