

# The New York Times

## ART & DESIGN

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### How to Make the Most of the Frieze Week Art Fairs

By Daniel McDermott



A visitor at last year's Frieze New York art fair. CreditMarco Scozzaro/Frieze

A tsunami of contemporary and modern art is arriving in New York City this week, and it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Running from now through the weekend are at least nine art fairs, with work by thousands of artists and dealers from dozens of countries. That's in addition to the city's standing array of art offerings, comprising hundreds of gallery and museum shows.

Not to mention the boatloads of public art on view.

There is far more than one person could see, much of it up for just a few days before it's trundled off to someone's private collection.

For a nonexpert, with an appetite for art but a limited amount of time and money, this situation calls for careful strategizing. So we asked some veteran fairgoers for tips on how to make the most of it.

“Dress to impress — the people-watching is half the fun,” said Melena Ryzik, a culture reporter who has covered several art fairs for The New York Times. “And don’t be shy about engaging the gallery assistants; often their seeming aloofness is just a mask for boredom, and they are happy to answer questions.”

Martha Schwendener, a critic for The Times, warned against trying too hard to see everything. “Even if you feel that you have been extraordinarily conscientious and thorough — and even if you’re an expert art viewer — one of your friends (or maybe one of your frenemies) is going to say: ‘Oh, you didn’t see X? That was incredible! You really missed out.’”

Other suggestions: Arrive early. The crowds get thicker in the afternoon. Your phone’s battery will not last all day, so carry a charger. And note that while admission prices can be steep, many fairs offer discounts for students, seniors or young people.

Now, what sort of experience are you looking for?



A ferry service from Manhattan is the easiest way to get to the enormous white tent housing Frieze, on Randalls Island. CreditMarco Scozzaro/Frieze

## **The Platinum Package**

Frieze New York, now in its fifth year, is the luxury option. It offers the broadest range of art, is the hardest to get to and charges the highest admission fee (standard tickets are \$49). And it takes place on Randalls Island, in a tent large enough for three decent circuses, with more than 200 galleries showing some of the bright lights among contemporary artists.

This seems to be a strong year for female artists, the organizers said, with gallery shows focused on Lisa Yuskavage and Isa Genzken at David Zwirner; Huma Bhabha, Judy Chicago and Betty Woodman at Salon 94; and works by Cornelia Parker, whose roof installation just opened at the Met, at London's Frith Street gallery.

Not everything is for sale. The fair, running Thursday through Sunday, also offers commissioned work through its Frieze Projects and Frieze Sounds series.

Performers carrying mirrored discs, positioned outside the tent, will track the movement of clouds as part of an Eduardo Navarro work, "Instructions From the Sky." In Anthea Hamilton's reinterpretation of a 1972 project by the Italian architect Mario Bellini, a futuristic car is to be stuffed with mimes who will, it is threatened, interact with viewers. And at least one professional pickpocket will be on hand, acting on behalf of the artist David Horvitz, to deposit small sculptures in the pockets of some visitors. (All other pickpocketing is unauthorized.)

As in previous years, the fair will also pay tribute to an artist project or art gallery that has had a lasting impact. This year, in homage to Daniel Newburg Gallery, which operated from 1984 to 1994 in Lower Manhattan, Maurizio Cattelan will restage his 1994 exhibition, "Warning! Enter at Your Own Risk. Do Not Touch, Do Not Feed, No Smoking, No Photographs, No Dogs, Thank You," the gallery's last. It consists of a donkey in a bare room, illuminated by a chandelier.

If this sounds like a lot, Frieze offers many chances to relax and indulge: Food vendors include Frankies Spuntino, Roberta's and Cosme, among others. And a series of talks organized by Tom Eccles, executive director of the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, promises to engage the brain while the body rests. The poet Eileen Myles speaks on Thursday afternoon; on Saturday, the novelist Ben Lerner will join in conversation with the critic Hal Foster.

Getting there can be tricky, so plan on making a day of it. The best way to go is the East River ferry service (\$19 round trip), which departs every 30 minutes from East 35th Street. An additional ferry runs Thursday and Friday only, departing from East 90th Street.

## **Other Fairs**

Most of these are easier to reach, with lower cost of admission.

Portal, in its first year, is organized by 4heads Inc., which also presents the Governors Island Art Fair. The focus is on emerging artists. It runs through Tuesday at the Federal Hall National Memorial at 26 Wall Street. Free.

**Spring Masters** offers fine art as well as design and jewelry, at the Park Avenue Armory, Friday through Monday. \$25 online, \$30 in person.

**NADA** features more than 70 funky galleries from a dozen countries., through Sunday at 299 South Street on the Lower East Side. \$20.

**Context New York and Art New York** share the same location, Pier 94 (12th Avenue at West 54th Street), and run through Sunday. Context is focused on early- to midcareer artists, while Art New York aims to showcase “important, never-before-exhibited works from both primary and secondary markets.” \$40.

**Contemporary African Art Fair** includes 17 galleries from nine countries, with work by 60 artists on view. It takes place at Pioneer Works in Red Hook, Brooklyn (159 Pioneer Street), Friday through Sunday. \$20.

**Flux** is a hybrid of art fair and public installations, with works and events across Harlem. Events take place through the end of May; some require tickets.

 **Collective Design** offers works of striking design from more than 30 galleries, through Sunday at 550 Washington Street, SoHo. \$32.

### **Alternatives**

With so much attention focused elsewhere, this could be a good weekend to crawl some neighborhood galleries. Here are some recent recommendations from Times critics.

**Betty Tompkins**, “Women Words, Phrases and Stories” at the Flag Art Foundation in Chelsea.

**“Jean Dubuffet: Anticultural Positions”** at Acquavella Galleries on the Upper East Side.

**Jessi Reaves** at Bridget Donahue on the Lower East Side.

**Akio Suzuki** at Southfirst gallery in Williamsburg.

**‘The 1970s: The Blossoming of a Queer Enlightenment’** at the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in SoHo.

Or take a peek at what’s on offer in next week’s evening art auctions.

**Christie’s** has three big evening sales next week, ranging from Impressionists to contemporary art, with works by Cindy Sherman, Jeff Koons and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Many will be on display in their Rockefeller Center showroom during business hours.

**Sotheby’s** will have two major evening sales next week, as well, including works by Claude Monet, Francis Bacon and Cy Twombly. Their showroom is at 1334 York Avenue (at East 71st Street).