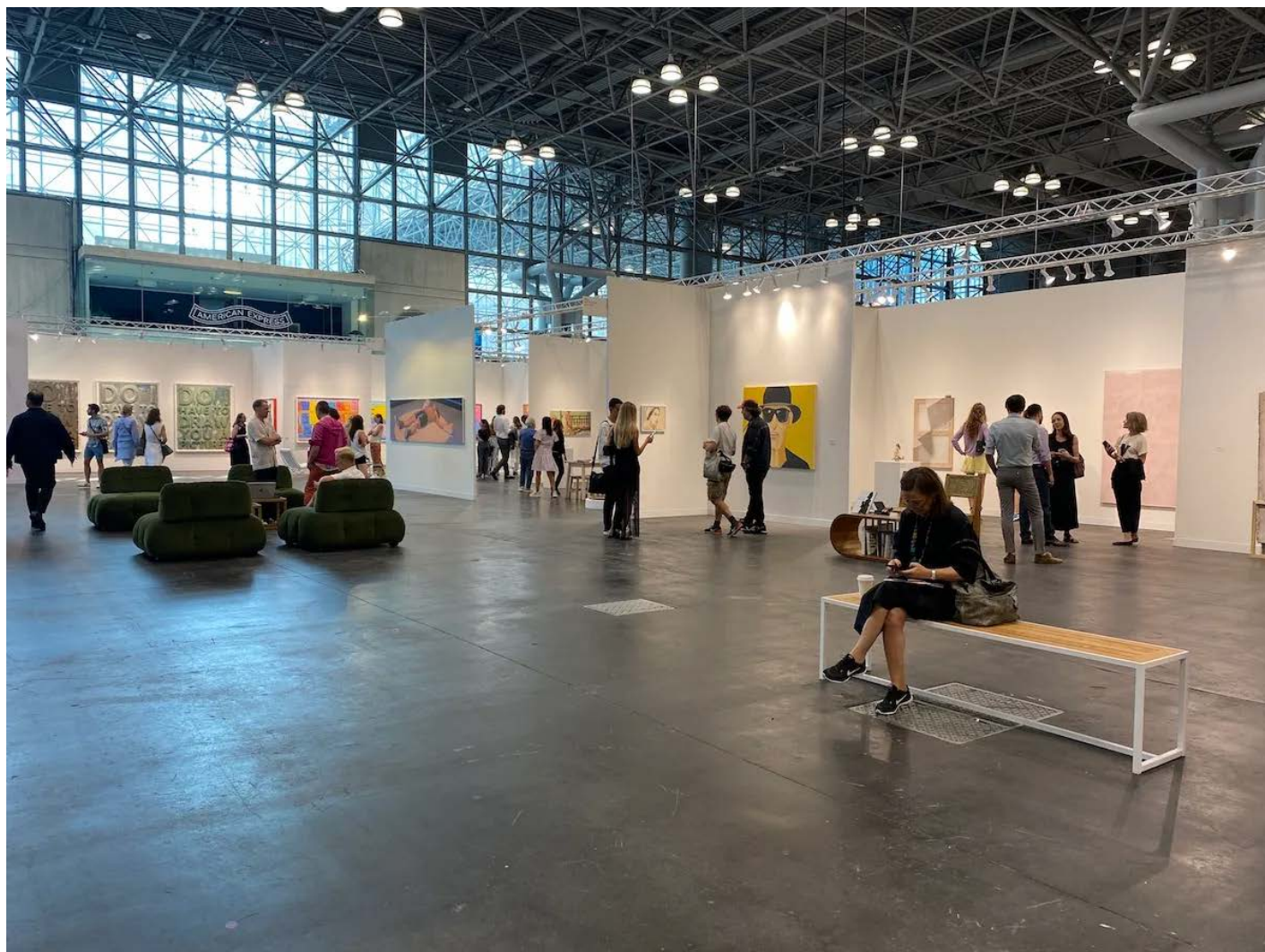


home • artnews • market

The Best Booths at the Armory Show, Where Under-Recognized Giants and Rising Stars Collide

BY **ALEX GREENBERGER**

September 7, 2023 11:00pm



The scene at the 2023 Armory Show.
ALEX GREENBERGER FOR ARTNEWS

There is no shortage of art to see in New York this week, but the big event most will attend is the Armory Show, the sprawling art fair that has once again touched down at the Javits Center. In 2021, when the fair first relocated there, a pandemic-driven anxiety accompanied the proceedings. Now, the mood is lighter, and the art is, too.

Many of the 225-plus galleries exhibiting here have trotted out paintings and sculptures with the hope of currying favor with collectors, advisers, and other dealers. The fair is, after all, a market event whose art is meant for selling first, appreciation second. But the offerings this year thankfully

skew slightly more ambitious than usual, with under-recognized artists deserving more attention and difficult conceptual artwork in need of thoughtful viewing.

Curator Candice Hopkins's "Focus" section, for single- and two-person presentations, is this fair's high point. Many galleries in it are spotlighting Indigenous and First Nation artists; some of them also appear in **Hopkins's exhibition "Indian Theater"** (<https://www.artnews.com/list/art-news/reviews/indian-theater-bard-college-candice-hopkins-performance-art-review-1234678340/>) at Bard College upstate. Meanwhile, the "Presents" section, for younger galleries, is also strong.

How best to approach this fair's multitude of booths? Below are 10 of the finest ones.

Sonia Boyce at Apalazzo



Apalazzo's Sonia Boyce booth.

Photo : Alex Greenberger for ARTnews

Having won the Golden Lion at the 2022 Venice Biennale and just this week **joined Hauser & Wirth** (<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/market/sonia-boyce-hauser-and-wirth-representation-1234678453/>), Sonia Boyce is on a hot streak. Her success continues with this booth by her Italian gallery. She is showing three pieces having to do with hair, which Boyce, a leading figure of the British Black Arts Movement of the 1980s, asserts as a defining feature of one's identity.

The booth is anchored by *The Audition*, a work that Boyce first staged at Home, an art space in Manchester, in 1997. For that work, participants were asked to try on an Afro wig and were then photographed with and without it. The pictures of them can seem so markedly different as to portray two different people—a particularly complicated knot in Boyce's concept, given that a number of the participants appear to have been white. She was questioning what truly counted as Black representation, and only continued to do so in another piece here, the 2005 video *Exquisite Tension*, in which a Black woman and a white man's hair are tied together, leaving them inseparable from one another.

Cathy Lu at Micki Meng



Cathy Lu, *Peripheral Visions*, 2022.

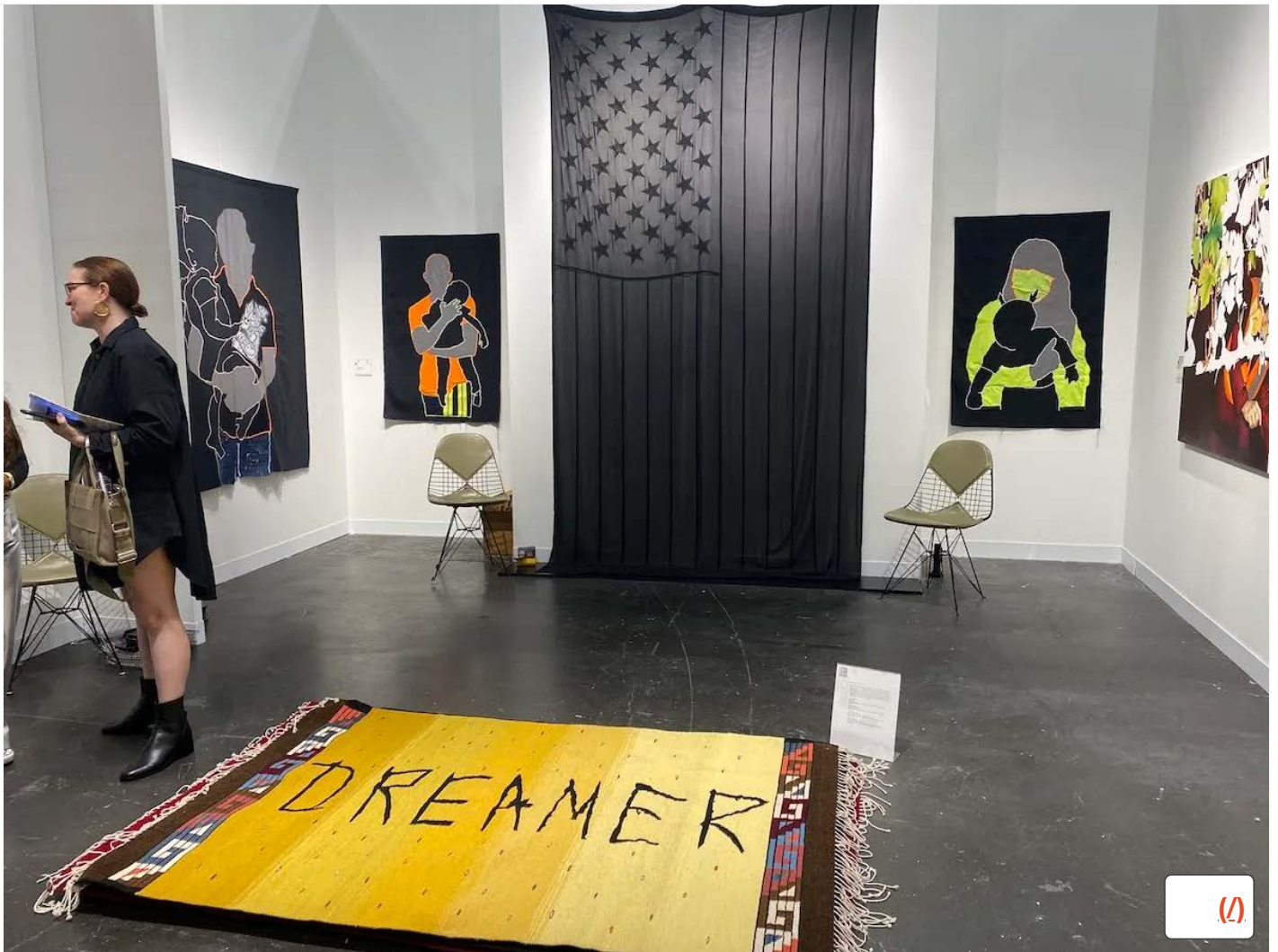
Photo : Alex Greenberger for ARTnews

This booth, arguably the most visually stunning one of the entire fair, is filled by a single installation: *Peripheral Visions* (2022), an expanded version of which previously appeared at San Francisco's Chinese Culture Center last year. Set against blue walls, the installation features ceramic eyes that spout streams of water tinged yellow by onion skins; Lu has called these flows "yellow tears." Each pair of peepers is modeled on those of a famous Asian American—the artist Ruth Asawa, the figure skater Michelle Kwan, and the author Cathy Park Hong, to name a few.

It would be easy to read Lu's installation as a representation of the sadness felt amid a recent surge in violence against Asian Americans, but the work is more complex than that. The soothing burble of water spewing into buckets and bowls—all of them based on Lu's grandmother's kitchenware—

provides a respite in a chaotic world.

Arlene Correa Valencia and Stephanie Syjuco at Catherine Clark Gallery



Work by Arlene Correa Valencia and Stephanie Syjuco at Catherine Clark Gallery's booth.

Photo : Alex Greenberger for ARTnews

San Francisco's Catherine Clark Gallery has paired two artists whose work piercingly takes up the pain and loss associated with the immigrant experience in the US. Those losses, these artists suggest, are not merely physical but psychological as well. Arlene Correa Valencia, who was born in Mexico and is now based in California's Napa Valley, represents this by way of images of migrant farm workers on the job. One depicted behind a tree melts away into their labor, their face disappearing behind a tree whose leaves are left blank. All that remains is an orange vest whose zipper dangles off the canvas.

The Manila-born artist Stephanie Syjuco, meanwhile, focuses on the Philippines, photographing official documents that have been corrected to account for mistakes made by Dean Conant Worcester, an American who helped colonize the country during the 19th century. Alongside those pictures, she is exhibiting a translucent American flag printed on sheer black fabric. This symbol of national pride is here turned see-through.

Gio' Pomodoro and Joan Witek at Secci Gallery



Work by Gio' Pomodoro and Joan Witek at Secci Gallery's booth.

Photo : Alex Greenberger for ARTnews

The centerpiece of Secci Gallery's spare booth is a giant black cube whose sides are bent inward. Reflective and mysterious, it looks like an artifact from an alien civilization, although it is in fact something much more modest: a work from the '60s by Italian avant-gardist Gio' Pomodoro, whose work is here also represented by compelling bronze slabs that zag in and out.

Beside Pomodoro's sculptures, there are transfixing works by the largely under-recognized American painter Joan Witek. Many of her paintings are composed of black capsules lined up in rows. Some are left pristine, others rendered as though they were shaking or blurring. Notice how Witek has scrawled neat straight lines for her pill-like forms and then sometimes extended their tips just beyond them. She's setting up a pleasant contrast between order and chaos, and showing that the two are not always mutually exclusive.

Women of Abstract Expressionism at Berry Campbell



Berry Campbell's booth.

Photo : Alex Greenberger for ARTnews

The masculinist narrative around Abstract Expressionism has gradually imploded in the past few decades, thanks to the labor of feminist art historians who have upheld artists like Joan Mitchell, Janet Sobel, and Lee Krasner. There's still much more work to be done, however, and Berry Campbell's booth showcases how many more female Abstract Expressionists are still in need of greater recognition.

Might a Perle Fine retrospective be in order? It would certainly seem so, based on one terrific canvas composed of glyphs set interrupting neat lines. Or how about an Alice Baber survey? That, too, seems appealing, based on the deliciously titled 1966 painting *The Green Red*, a Sonia Delaunay-like arrangement of red, orange, and yellow discs refracted through glimmers of emerald green. (More of Baber's rapturous work can also be found at Luxembourg & Co.'s Independent 20th Century booth.) A host of other treasures, by Bernice Bing, Lynne Drexler, and Grace Hartigan, also hang here.

Abel Rodríguez and Zé Carlos Garcia at Instituto de Visión and Galeria Marilia Razuk



Works by Abel Rodríguez and Zé Carlos Garcia at Instituto de Visión and Galeria Marilia Razuk's booth.

Photo : Alex Greenberger for ARTnews

Abel Rodríguez, an up-and-comer of the biennial circuit, is here showing his idyllic images of forests where animals commune with shrubs and trees. They depict the region of the Amazon from which Rodríguez hails, and they are largely devoid of any interventions by humanity. Notably, Rodríguez has signed them not only with his Western moniker but also with Mogaje Guihu, the name he was given when he was being raised in the Muinane community.

These are being shown by the Bogotá-based gallery Instituto de Visión, which, rather than exhibiting solo, has shared its space with São Paulo's Galeria Marilia Razuk, whose contribution is carved wooden sculptures by Zé Carlos Garcia. Some resemble pupas that have yet to complete their transformation.

Yhonnie Scarce and Johnathon World Peace Bush at This Is No Fantasy



Work by Johnathon World Peace Bush at the 2023 Armory Show.

Photo : Alex Greenberger for ARTnews

Amazingly, the Fitzroy-based This Is No Fantasy is the few Australian enterprises ever to have taken part in the Armory Show, and the gallery certainly did not put its booth to waste. Johnathon World Peace Bush's paintings are the stars here. They represent timeworn Catholic imagery—penitent saints, Bible-carrying men with halos—but rather than adhering to traditional Western modes, Bush represents through beige and white stripes meant to mimic *jilamara*, a body painting technique utilized by the artist's Tiwi community. This is his first New York presentation, and hopefully it will not be his last.

Bush's works are being shown alongside Yhonnie Scarce, whose 2023 piece *Point Pearce, South Australia* alludes to the displacement of the Narungga people by British settlers during the 19th century. Beneath a screenprinted image of a structure bearing a sign referring to the Narungga, Scarce has included an old box filled with icicle-like glass elements—a reference to the bush foods that once nourished Aboriginals before the flora were permanently altered by nuclear testing in the region.

Sagarika Sundaram at Nature Morte



Sagarika Sundaram, *Iris*, 2023.

Photo : Alex Greenberger for ARTnews

Nature Morte's booth has plenty to offer, from a Jitish Kallat piece playing on a famed Marcel Duchamp work to intriguing works by Martand Khosla made with burnt paint, but it is a Sagarika Sundaram piece that steals the show. Titled *Iris* (2023), the piece is a gorgeous piece of mustard-colored wool that has been sliced open to reveal layers of red and white beneath. This young artist's deft handiwork shines in this piece where, despite its modest fibers, the red textile appears ever so fleshy.

Gisela McDaniel at Pilar Corrias



Gisela McDaniel's work at Pilar Corrias's booth.

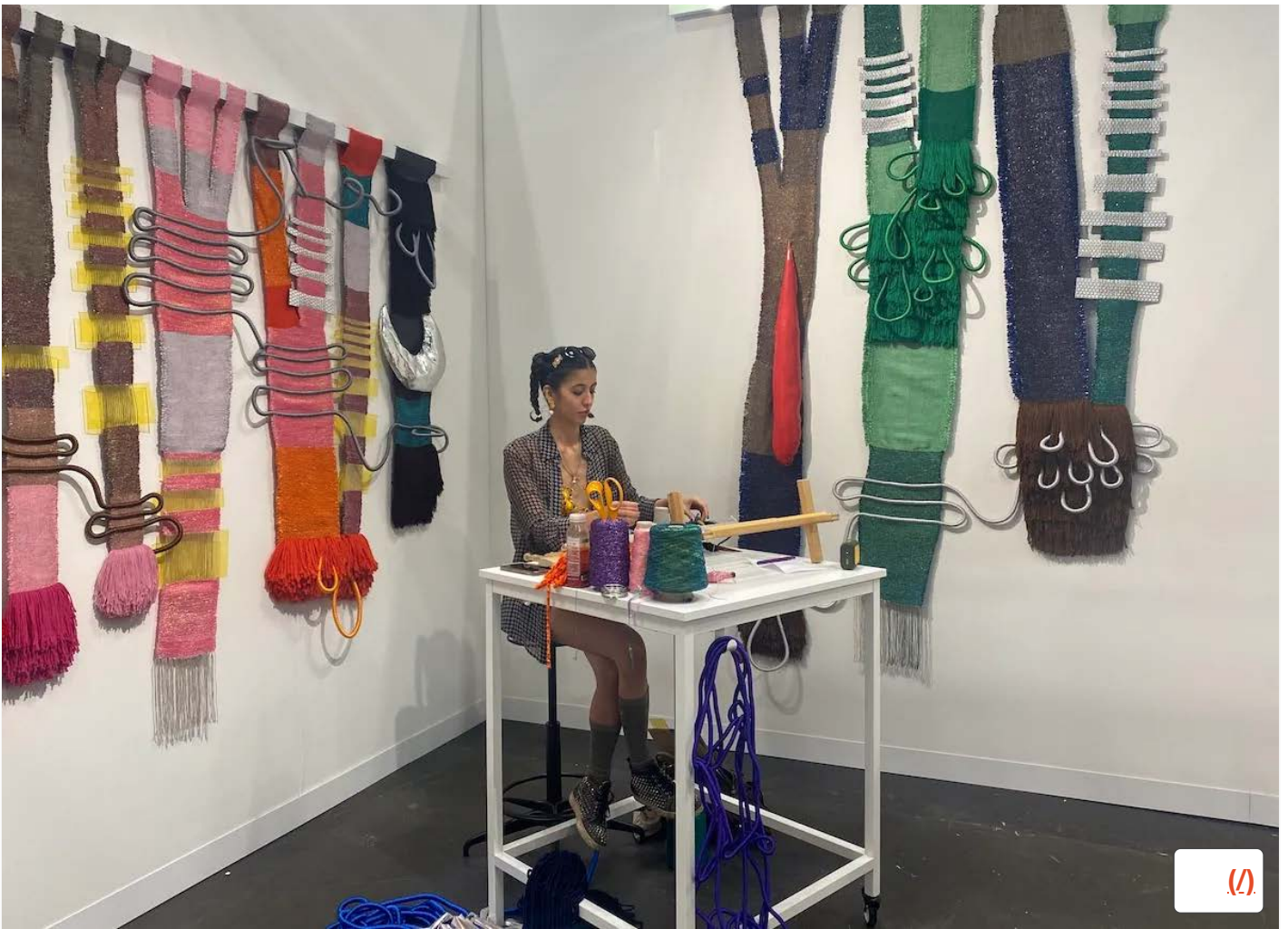
Photo : Alex Greenberger for ARTnews

This fair contains a tidal wave of market-ready figurative painting, and in that way, it's emblematic of what's being shown in galleries across the world today. But even in a crowded field, Gisela McDaniel's maximalist portraiture stands out. JPEGs cannot do justice to this young CHamoru artist's work, which offers a multisensory experience. Some paintings contain flowers and shells, others conceal elements that emit sounds. One even has a poem posted to its side.

Bigger Than Me (2023), one of the works in this booth, may appear to be a double portrait, but in fact, it represents them same sitter multiple times. That it so effortlessly tricks the eye, representing a woman in ways that evade simplifying gazes, is a testament to McDaniel's talent.

Desire Moheb-Zandi at Dio Horia





Desire Moheb-Zandi at Dio Horia's booth.

Photo : Alex Greenberger for ARTnews

Desire Moheb-Zandi was herself on hand at Dio Horia's booth, where during the VIP preview she could be seen weaving and knotting her sculptures. Having transformed her booth into a makeshift studio, she allowed fair attendees to watch her at her loom—the German-born artist experienced something similar herself as a child in Turkey, where she witnessed her grandmother weaving. This craft has long been considered women's work, and indeed, Moheb-Zandi exposes it as just that—a tough, physical kind of labor that can result in beauty. Her wall-hung works, whose fibers are strung through with twined loops, offer plenty to admire.

PMC