

Armory Show 2022: the Young Galleries That Stole the Show

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Some of the most exciting presentations at this year's fair came from the Presents section dedicated to galleries ten years old and younger.



Following a precarious but promising edition in 2021, The Armory Show is most definitely back.

The fair drew 42,000 visitors to the Javits Center and sales were strong. Victoria Miro sold a work for US \$3.25 million, and James Cohan, David Zwirner, Galleria Massimo Minini, Kasmin, Templon, Almine Rech, Galeria Nara Roesler, and Sean Kelly all sold works for prices over \$200,000.

There were 247 exhibitors at this year's fair, up from 157 in 2021. The Presents section—dedicated to galleries ten years old or younger—had the most interesting booths. Among the highlights were Fabian Lang (Zurich), Lyles & King (New York), Mother Gallery (New York), and The Pit (Los Angeles).

Mother Gallery was arguably the star of the show with a solo booth of Brooklyn-based artist Jenny Morgan. The fair later announced that one of her larger works on show, *The Lineage* (2022) had been purchased by ICA Miami.

In the main galleries section, Kohn Gallery had some of the hottest young talent, including London-based artist William Brickel and Chinese artist Li Hei Di.

'The success of this year's fair exceeded our most optimistic expectations,' said Nicole Berry, who has served as Armory's Executive Director since 2017, managing the fair's moves from the piers to the Javits Center and from March to September.



Speaking to Berry in her office, with the sun beating down on the glass building, I immediately regretted my hat, scarf, and gloves.

'This is September in New York', she laughed sympathetically. 'March was tricky. It could be 70 degrees, or it could be a blizzard. And it could be that within a week. On a beautiful September day like today, people will take advantage of going to galleries in the morning, come to the fair, and then go see museum shows in the afternoon.'

Berry was similarly upbeat about the move to the Javits Center in 2021.

'The piers were very industrial and served their purpose while we were there, however, with just two straight piers, the structure was limiting', she explained. 'There wasn't a lot of room to play with layout or floor plan.'

'The Javits Center serves who we want to be as a fair,' she continued. 'We feel we've elevated the level of the fair, both in the venue, and the calibre of presentations'.

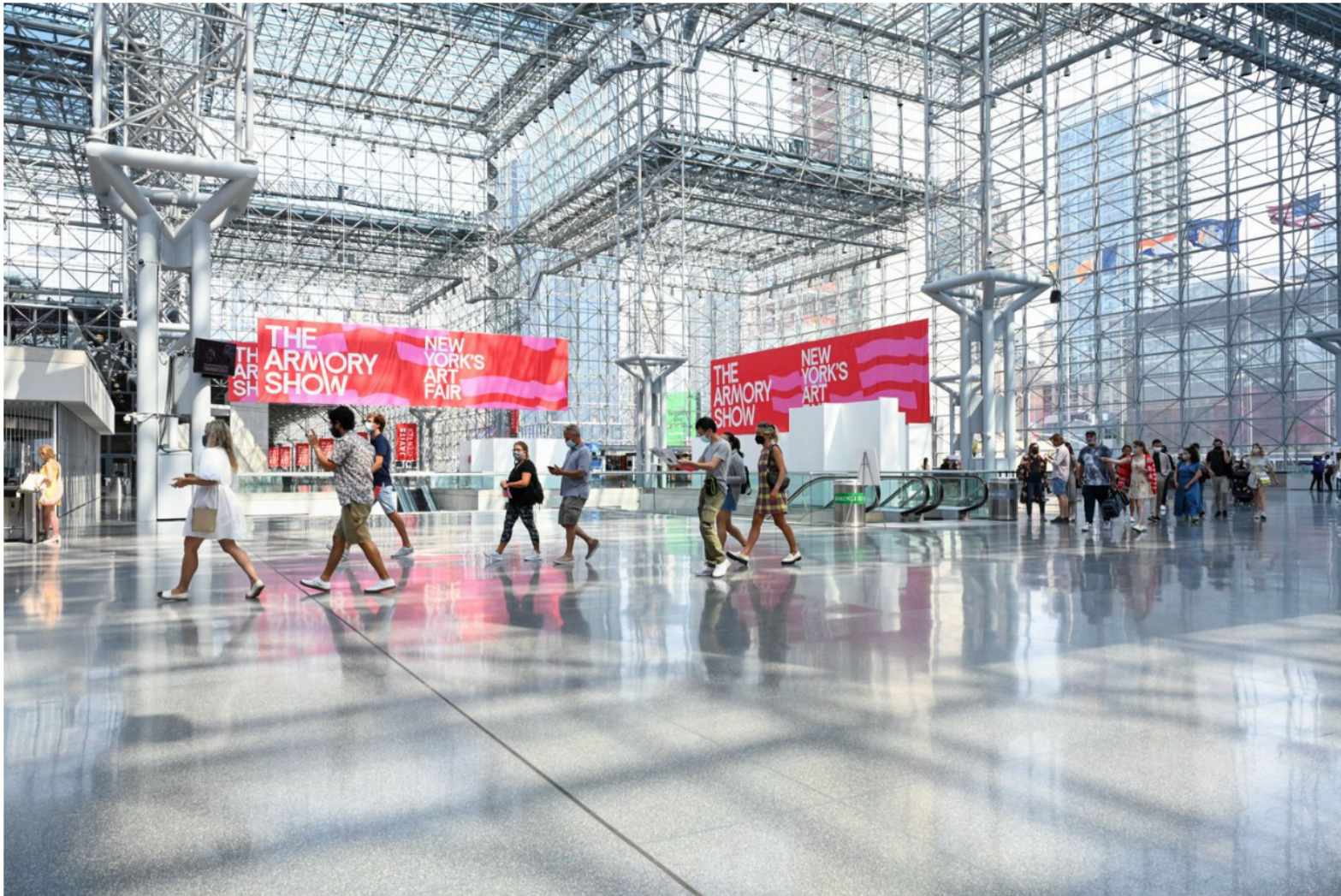


Photo: Casey Kelbaugh. Courtesy The Armory Show.

Berry persisted with the fair's Focus section — a regional emphasis that this year turned to Latin America — after her predecessor, Ben Genocchio questioned its relevance.

'As popular as it is and how important it is for the media, it just doesn't make sense to organise artists and galleries around a geographical region,' Genocchio told *Ocula Magazine* in 2016. 'Artists don't live very often, in the countries where they make art'.

'It's not solely Latin American art that we're showing, or Latinx Art,' Berry countered. 'Rather our three curators have infused Latin America into their art fair vision. It's about having a synergy and a thread'.

An afternoon spent scouting out the opulent gold hanging work of Colombian artist Olga de Amaral at Richard Saltoun Gallery and exploring Millan's homage to the late Macuxi artist Jaider Esbell were testament to the efforts of Armory curators Carla Acevado-Yates, Tobias Ostrander, and Mari Carmen Ramirez.

With high energy, strong younger galleries, and much more relaxed clientele than you find at Frieze or Art Basel, this year's Armory Show felt resilient to the rise of new fairs in Seoul and Paris and the digital sales channels that proliferated over the pandemic.

'New York is one of the cultural capitals,' Berry said. 'There's many galleries participating in the recent fairs in Seoul that are now here, so there's room for everybody'. —[O]



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