

# VENUS

MANHATTAN LOS ANGELES

Guiducci, Mark, "How the Independent Art Fair Is Changing the Game," *Vogue*, March 3, 2016.

## VOGUE

### How the Independent Art Fair Is Changing the Game



Peter Saul, *Untitled*, 1973, Acrylic on canvas, 68 x 84 inches

The Independent art fair will host its seventh iteration this weekend in a light-bathed hall at Spring Studios, the Tribeca event venue/production house/soon-to-be members club best known to the fashion world as the setting for the Calvin Klein show. It's the first time since the fair was founded in 2010 that Independent will not occupy its original, more intimate space on West 22nd Street, which was previously home to the Dia Art Foundation (and, again for the fashion crowd, where Rodarte shows each season). But its organizers, including cofounders Elizabeth Dee and Darren Flook, promise that Independent will remain true to its curated roots. The fair will still house fewer than 50 booths, with each gallery presenting

thoughtfully conceived mini exhibitions. “If we accept that fairs are a necessary evil, then we should at least try to make them more interesting,” says Independent creative advisor Matthew Higgs. “Instead of a trade fair, we’re trying to approximate what artists can do in galleries.”

The continuity between the booths at Independent and the galleries themselves is as appealing to dealers as it is for the rest of us. Mitchell-Innes & Nash, which has in the past shown at the Armory and ADAA shows and which will present at Independent for the first time this year, is showing a solo booth of sculpture and paintings by performance artist Pope.L. “The gallery schedule is booked through at least 2017,” says Lucy Mitchell-Innes, referring to her West 26th Street space. “This is a mini show.” Taylor Trabulus, director of the understated Martos Gallery, agrees: “We think of Independent as more of a show than an art fair.” Martos will show work by artists experimenting in new mediums this weekend, including wallpaper by Michel Auder and sculptural chairs from painter Jess Fuller. Adam Lindemann’s Venus Over Manhattan gallery is bringing a solo booth of early work by California artist Peter Saul.

Independent’s hybrid of established galleries, more maverick programming, and a significant contingent of outsider art creates something that mimics the actual gallery scene. “The goal is to create a rhythm that’s similar to how we look at art the rest of the year,” Higgs says. With that in mind, consulting architect Jonathan Caplan has removed any hierarchical arrangement between booths. Whereas bigger fairs are highly stratified—blue chip in the front, party in the back—Independent engenders a more equalized setting (though some say that with only 50 booths, the fair is actually *more exclusive* than its competitors). It’s a far cry from the typically cacophonous art fair, which groups together artworks that, as Lindemann puts it, “have nothing in common except that they want to get sold.”