

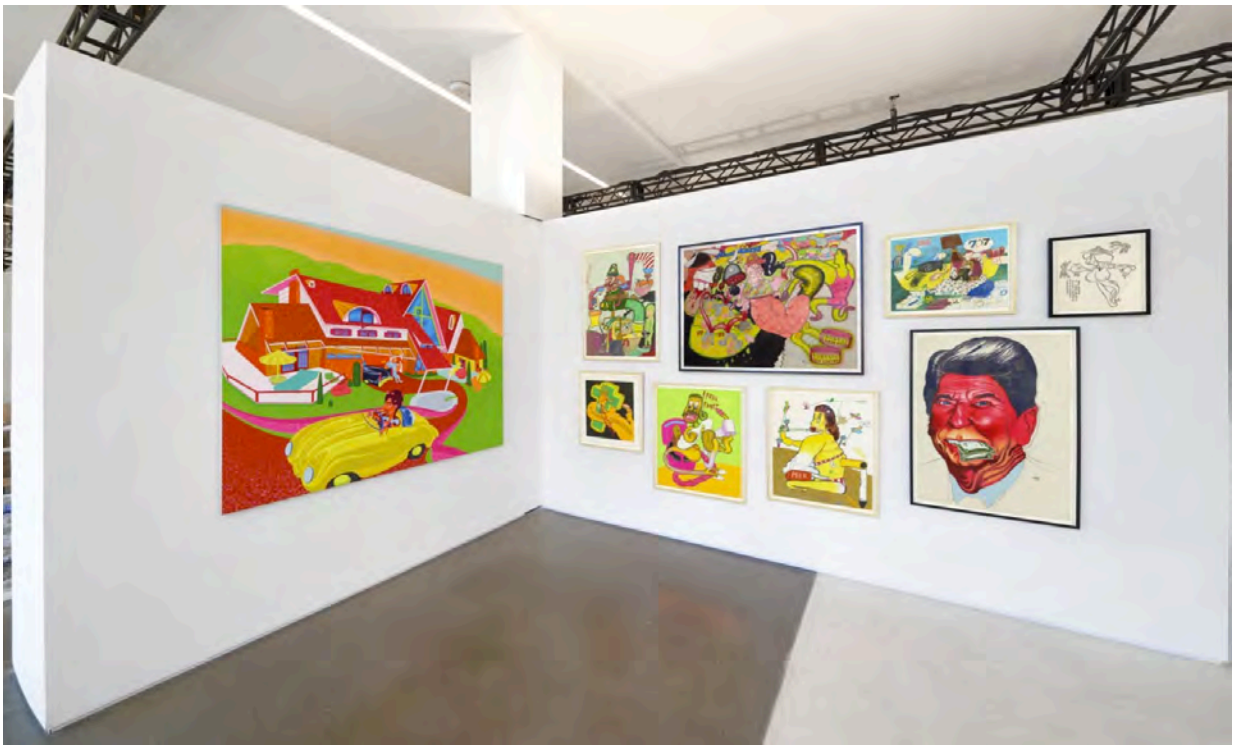
VENUS

MANHATTAN | LOS ANGELES

Voon, Claire, "In a New Location, the Independent Art Fair Feels Like Home," *Hyperallergic*, March 4, 2016

HYPERALLERGIC

In a New Location, the Independent Art Fair Feels Like Home



After spending six years in Chelsea, the Independent Art Fair has found a new home in Tribeca, in the incredibly sleek Spring Studios, usually host to fashion-related events. Spread across four floors, with rooms featuring floor-to-ceiling windows, the new exhibition space is airy and flooded with natural light. This year's edition of the fair, which was founded by gallerists Elizabeth Dee and Darren Flook, features over 40 exhibitors, and it's tough for a lot of their artworks not to look radiant in this setting. Marina Adams's vibrant, two-toned, gouache paintings of simple but slinky shapes at Karma's booth, for instance, make for an eye-popping, wall-covering series under a huge skylight; they serve as a cheerful welcome to the seventh-floor mezzanine. Venus (formerly known as Venus Over Manhattan), one of the exhibitors with the good fortune to snag a window-facing space, has dedicated its booth to the provocative works of Peter Saul, whose neon palette looks extra electric. Paintings tend to dominate at the fair — although those hungry for sculpture should head to White Columns's booth for a superb showing of Bruce M. Sherman's delightfully absurd humanoid ceramics. (If you'd

prefer #artselfies, check out Robert Barry's mirrored, word-covered works at Parra & Romero's booth; they'll make for easy social media likes).

Saul has one painting on view here that's never been shown publicly before— the largest one, which hangs on its own wall. Featuring a berry-colored mansion in a rainbow-layered landscape, it shows a woman driving away in a canary yellow car as a man hangs back in the garage. It's a typical view of suburban life that seems strangely off, drawing you in to survey the scene. I was reminded of this weird domestic dynamic just a few booths away, at Delmes & Zander, albeit in an extremely different work. Perhaps the oldest pieces at the fair, the series consists of three photographs from the 1870s. Proving just how bizarre some Victorians were, the black-and-white pictures show what seems to be a husband wielding a knife, while his wife appears calmly decapitated in various frames. It's a great example of trick photography that stands out at the fair for its age, made long before we were able to manipulate reality with the fast and simple clicks of a mouse.

Quite a number of works at the Independent transport you to the domestic sphere or contemplate personal ideas of home. At Martos Gallery's booth, two paintings by Alex Chaves show household scenes of, respectively, a plant and a woman; they mesmerize with rhythm and color, and hang against site-specific wallpaper by Michel Auder that makes the wall feel like part of the intimate space. Printed on fabric in muted tones, Auder's creation forms a retro, geometric pattern from afar; up close, however, it reveals itself as a collage of photo strips — carefully arranged by hand, rephotographed, and then digitally manipulated, representing a seemingly infinite ode to a friendship.

The same effect emerges in one particularly memorable painting on the ground floor, where the fair is highlighting its newcomers (unfortunately, this is also where the lighting is not as immaculate and works appear washed in a slight blue-gray tinge). At the booth of Fleisher/Ollman, which usually shows outsider art, artist Becky Suss has a huge painting titled "Living Room (six paintings, for plates)" (2015). Standing nine feet long and seven tall, it presents a couch below a number of framed artworks. Although the work itself is quite formal and rigid in perspective, the paintings within it display a diverse range of styles, forming a quirky collection of artworks that make the space personal — like it's really lived in, a feeling emphasized by the quilt draped over the couch. Suss's memories of her grandparents' homes informed the piece, but its subject is still relatable to outside viewers: it reminded me of living rooms I'm familiar with and prompted me to recall the odd and unique trinkets that embellish them. A pair of actual ceramic vases sculpted by Burlon Craig also stands in front of the painting, so the intimate space bleeds into that of the booth, really tugging you into another world — one of comfort, free of art fair anxieties.

Also at Fleisher/Ollman's booth is an intriguing painting by the artist couple Chris Johanson and Johanna Jackson that resembles the inside of a bathroom cabinet. Crammed with neatly organized, colorful objects, the shelves at first glance appear laden with perfume bottles and other beauty products, but in fact some are absurd — one looks like an upright, mustard-adorned hot dog; another, a car air freshener — or simply unidentifiable. A similar homage to our personal clutter emerges at Paula Cooper Gallery's booth, where four powder-coated steel boxes by Liz Glynn frame a number of white, 3D-printed objects in the shape of hand tools, from hammers to saws. They reminded me of reliquaries, and I was drawn to this reverence for such everyday, utilitarian objects, especially considering the time-consuming process that must have gone into the construction of each one.

More unexpected relics appear, this time on wooden pallets on the ground, at the booth of Mendes Wood DM. Over the years, Brazilian artist Paulo Nazareth has amassed ordinary tokens from his travels through different countries — unremarkable sugar packets or soap bars, some of which are used. He has spread these on clean butcher paper, organizing them like artifacts from an archaeological dig. This is an altar to the temporary homes of hotels and motels, with each item carrying some unspoken association for Nazareth. The collection of familiar objects from different sites suggests a ritual of finding comfort within the foreign. You could say Independent, as a whole, has achieved something similar, now transplanted to its new, spacious residence and perfectly fit for it.