

# At The Armory Show, International Dealers Find Refuge in New York Market's Strength



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*Installation view of Paul Kasmin Gallery's booth at The Armory Show, 2016. Photo by Adam Reich for Artsy.*

The Armory Show opened to VIPs on Wednesday at Piers 92 and 94 on Manhattan's west side. The 22nd edition of the New York institution welcomes 205 galleries from 36 countries on every continent save Antarctica and Australia—the motherland of its new director, Benjamin Genocchio. Over 700 galleries applied to participate in The Armory Show this year, 200 of whom were vying for the mere 22 spots in the



Those galleries' enthusiasm was met equally by that of collectors queueing for entry today ahead of the fair's high-noon start, with notables like Anderson Cooper (fresh from covering the Super Tuesday of Trump), Steve Martin, Neil Patrick Harris, and John Waters commingling with the many New York buyers and those from around the country that make The Armory Show a reliable sales platform for domestic dealers and its increasingly international set of participants alike.



Can Benjamin Genocchio Make The Armory Show the World's Best Art Fair? He Certainly Thinks So

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*Installation view of the Focus: African Perspectives section at The Armory Show, 2016. Photo by Adam Reich for Artsy.*

Much of the fair's international expansion in 2016 is thanks to its [Focus](#) section. Called "African Perspectives" and organized by curators Julia Grosse and Yvette Mutumba, the section brings galleries from Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and the Ivory Coast to The Armory Show for the first







as strategic marketing efforts—where discounted booths get dealers from new regions hooked. However, “African Perspectives” is a true achievement for The Armory Show, serving up a number of its best booths and most intriguing emerging artists.

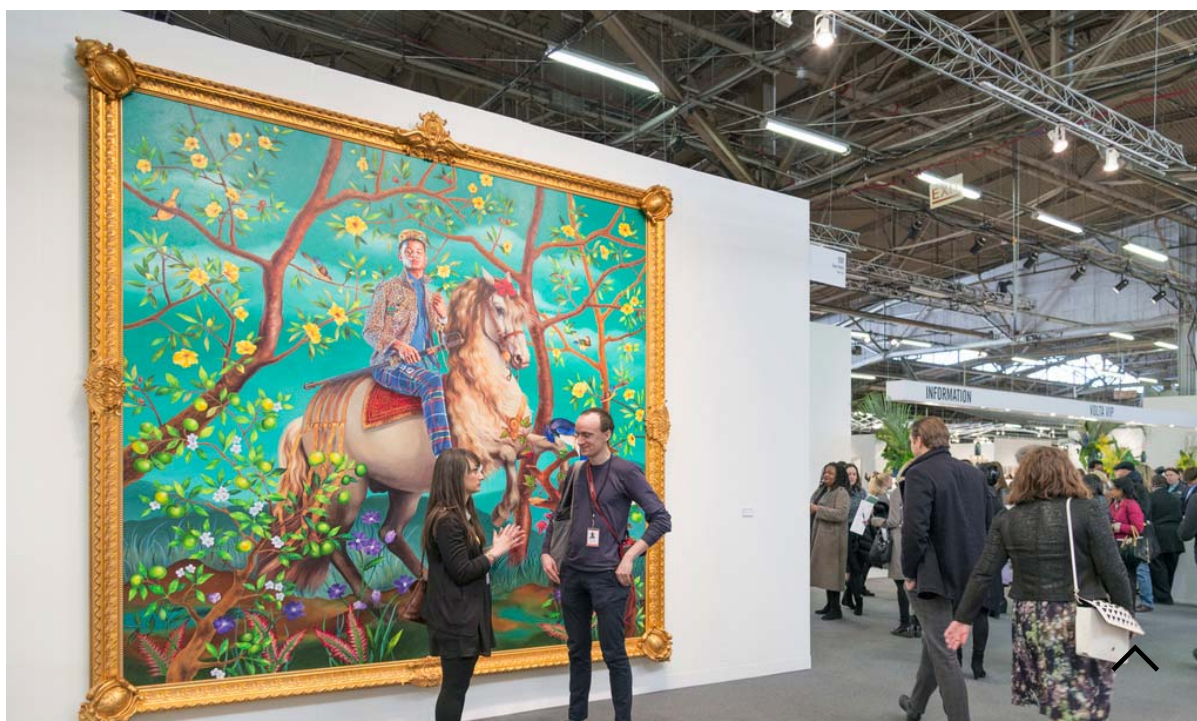
Among those is [Armory Show](#) commissioned artist [Kapwani Kiwanga](#), who, aside from an installation on Pier 92, enjoys a solo presentation at a joint booth by Berlin’s Galerie Tanja Wagner and Paris’ Jérôme Poggi. “It’s been very exciting,” said first-time Armory exhibitor Wagner of the fair’s first few hours, which saw art fair

regulars and Miami mega-collectors Don and Mera Rubell, among others, take a particular shine to Kiwanga’s sculptural works presented at the booth. (No sales had been confirmed at the time.) “When Kapwani visited her family in Tanzania, she was very interested in the sisal plantations there,” said Wagner of the booth’s central work, *The Drying Fields*. “They call sisal ‘white gold’ because of how important it is to the local economy. Like much of her work it’s about deconstructing production and the economy,” she added, pointing to a video work in the middle of the booth in which Kiwanga slowly un-weaves a sisal rug.



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*Installation view of Sean Kelly's booth at The Armory Show, 2016. Photo by Adam Reich for Artsy.*

Whether due to the Focus section itself or the increased interest in contemporary art from Africa and the African Diaspora on the art market, African—and African-American—perspectives were prevalent throughout Pier 94. Sean Kelly Gallery wracked up some of the vernissage's most impressive sales, topped with two works by red-hot Brooklyn-based artist Kehinde Wiley. A nearly 11-foot-wide painting in the artist's signature style of regal portraiture, *Equestrian Portrait of Philip III* (2016) sold quickly for \$300,000. Wiley's first sculpture of women, *Bound* (2015), which featured prominently in the artist's Brooklyn Museum show last spring and sees three black women facing outwards and tied together by their braided hair, sold for \$375,000. From James Cohan, who sold the large Elias Sime work that anchors the outside of his booth, to Victoria Miro, who sold work by Njideka Akunyili Crosby and Kara Walker, to Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, who sold two pieces by late pioneering painter Alma Thomas, to Stevenson, who returned to The Armory Show after five years to sell out of their edition of Zanele Muholi, collectors were primed for purchase of such artists.





Latin American galleries also exhibited at The Armory Show in greater numbers this year. From Brazil alone [SIM Galeria](#), [Galeria Fortes Vilaça](#), and [Galeria Luisa Strina](#) have joined (or rejoined) the Armory's ranks. (Six more Brazilian galleries have committed for 2017.) It's an infusion that longtime Armory Show participant and committee member Daniel Roesler of [Galeria Nara Roesler](#) helped initiate. And one that couldn't come at a better time for the country's dealers and artists.

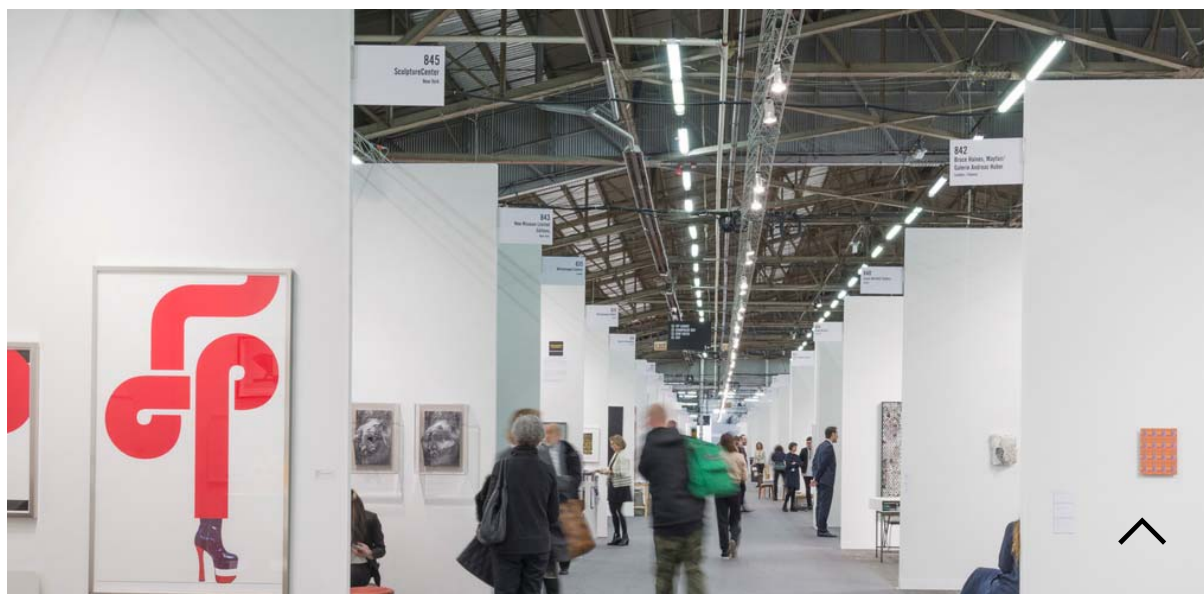
For their part, Galeria Nara Roesler debuted a New York showroom just two days before the Armory opened its gates. "Brazil and the U.S. are very similar," explained artistic director Alexandra Garcia Waldman of the move. "Our

artists back home have a very strong market in the same way that New York-based artists have a very strong market in New York. So part of our role is to bring these staples of the market where we're from to a very similar market here. It's interesting to create that bridge." That bridge bore sales of [Vik Muniz's](#) c-print *Postcards from Nowhere: São Paulo* (2014) for \$55,000 and [Artur Lescher's](#) delicate brass and fishing-line sculpture *Maggi* (2015) for \$17,000 on opening day. The booth, with which Waldman says she hopes to "portray a different vision of Brazil than what you're currently hearing in the news," focuses on artists from the famed Geração 80 just as a new generation of figurative painters gains traction in Brazil.



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*Installation view of The Armory Show, 2016. Photo by Adam Reich for Artsy.*

New European additions to the fair were also quick to sell. “The last time we did Armory was 2009,” said Sascha Welchering of Berlin’s [Wentrup](#). “We started getting back into the American market in Miami, but today was even busier, to be honest.” The assessment was confirmed as gallery owner Jan Wentrup swept over to confirm the sale of Karl Haendel’s wall-spanning, photorealistic pencil-on-paper work *Rodeo* (2016), for which they were asking \$40,000. “Okay, two more works and we’re sold out,” updated Welchering. Successfully sold pieces included [Gregor Hildebrandt](#)’s “*Cross the Border*” (2016) from a new series of cut vinyl record works, for \$36,000; [Olaf Metzel](#)’s *Yona Friedmann* (2011) for \$54,000; and [David Renggli](#)’s *Floorplan Desire Painting (Left/Center)* (2016) for \$27,000.

And even for dealers who didn’t sell out, a surprise sale or two often appeared unannounced. “It’s a good start, but just okay, nothing too exciting,” said Nicolò Cardi of the eponymous Milan gallery. He had sold three works by [Pino Pinelli](#) for between \$30,000–85,000 by mid-way through Wednesday afternoon. And, while many dealers would have considered that quite a successful day, for Cardi, it didn’t match up to the two \$2 million [Fontana](#) works he sold on opening day the year before. But, no sooner had the words left his mouth than a collector strutted into the booth, reintroducing himself from half its span away and asking, “Hey, did you get my offer on the 18-inch white Fontana?” With a smile back to me, Cardi swooped over to close the deal.

—Alexander Forbes

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