

New York: Art on Paper

United States, written by Andi Potamkin

Art on Paper is located far downtown on a Pier by Southstreet Seaport. The city is covered in slush and snow, blurs of white and grey out of the window as my car flies around the southern tip of Manhattan. The moment I walk into Pier 36, I am welcomed by four mammoth Wayne White puppets seated just behind the entrance. There is a sweet little jazz band playing and what I notice is the smell of grilled cheese wafting through the air. It smells so good.

One puppet begins to pull on his boots, swaying back and forth and as I walk closer I see it is the artist himself pulling the strings. [A, A1] I really need to find that grilled cheese. I've been running between fairs and meetings all day and I'm starving. But I want to go say hi to Wayne. If you haven't seen his documentary *Beauty is Embarrassing*, I highly suggest you do. It's a fantastic film and Wayne is a really funny guy. [A2] And I see a table of Rose Eken ceramic smoking paraphernalia just a few booths away [B] singing a siren song. I've been wanting one of her cigarette packs to go with my John G Slaby Parliaments I found at Pulse a few years back. [B1, B2] I'm torn because every direction I look, I see something awesome. Nobody puts on a fair like Max and Jeffrey and they've done it again. Bravo, boys.

This is Art on Paper's first year. The concept is that everything shown in the fair is made of, based on, or inspired by paper. It's a different fair concept than the norm and I'm sure it was a bit risky. It works. It's really good. The experience is like the jazz music, moving smoothly, sometimes taking surprising turns, but always with the base note of the media tying it all together. [C, C1, C2, C3]

I see a few familiar favorites: John Baldessari [D], Dave Eggers [E, E1, E2], Julian Opie [F], Michael Scoggins [G, G1], and Julie Blackmon [H, H1] but much of the fair was on the high end of emerging so I'm introduced to a lot of new artists. Megan Hitchcock was chosen as the image for the invitation and the VIP card. I think this was a very good choice. I love her work. [I, I2]

I notice that many works are clever. I am a big fan of art with words, intellectual art that is a bit flirtatious. It was a book lover's dream. [J, J1, J2] I don't like art that makes me feel stupid but I do enjoy conceptual art that makes me feel like I'm in on the joke. [K, K1, K2, K3] I really like the energy of this fair. It's young. It's super hip. [L, L2, L3] Eric Firestone, the Hamptons' coolest dealer, brought two walls of colorful work by Bast [M] and some newly released Tseng Kwong Chi photographs. [N,O] I want the whole booth.

One of my favorite pieces at the fair is a photograph by Pablo Zuleta Zahr which shows a grid of random people against a grey backdrop; the tee shirts they are wearing create a spectrum of color: white, pink, yellow, orange, red. [P] Zahr sets up a video camera in the Chilean subway and leaves it running for ten hours. He then goes through each frame, separating passersby by gender and color of clothing, and creates digital collages such as this one. I fall in love with a surrealist black & white photograph at Stephen Bulger Gallery [Q] and am enamored, as always, with a wall of augmented photographs by **Carolle Bénitah [R, S, T]** at **Sous Les Etoiles Gallery**.

At this point I've been walking around the fair for a good hour and a half and I am beyond starving. I head upstairs and past some tables selling limited edition art books [U, V] to get a grilled cheese sandwich and a glass of wine. The sandwich is delicious and as I look over my notes from the evening, I laugh at the concept that I've been "working".

<http://www.loeildelaphotographie.com/2015/03/16/festival/27525/new-york-art-on-paper>



R: *Carolle Bénitah* at *Sous Les Etoiles Gallery*