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Independent's Spring Edition Demonstrates the Market's Turn Toward Diverse, Thoughtful Work Over Trophies

The fair saw a significant uptick in sold-out booths and attendance.

Caroline Goldstein, May 19, 2023



The scene at Independent New York 2023. Courtesy of Independent.

As New York continues to barrel through a two-week marathon of fairs, auctions, and events, moments of reflection are hard won. In the wake of its presentation at Spring Studios May 11–14, Independent has issued its 2023 Market Report, which outlines key takeaways that offer clues to where the market is headed more broadly.

Distinguished by its curated, invitation-only model, the fair saw a marked uptick in attendance and sales this year. Twenty-five percent of the booths sold out completely, double the amount from the 2022 edition. The highest reported transaction was \$150,000, which was the selling price for sculptor Richard Van Buren's historical installation *Untitled* (1969/2023), consisting of resin and fiberglass works dangling like talismanic feathers from Garth Greenan's booth wall.

While the major auction houses are seeing a dip in sales for multimillion-dollar trophies, it appears that interest in more accessibly priced works is the sweet spot for both seasoned and new collectors. Independent has carved a niche for itself within the crowded fair landscape as a source of discoveries, whether by emerging ultra-contemporary artists (defined by Artnet News as artists born after 1974) or by artists of the 20th century who were passed over because of their race, gender identity, or access to the prevailing establishments.

As institutions and individuals take stock and reassess what had previously been cemented as art-historical canon, “the market is leading, or sometimes following, some of the evolving value questions that set criteria for change,” observed Independent founder Elizabeth Dee in the report. “Much of this important and time intensive work is a partnership between gallerists, curators, and collectors that can be accelerated by or be a result of a strong exhibition at Independent.”

At Magenta Plains booth, works by the late experimental filmmaker and artist Stan VanDerBeek capped off a triumvirate of presentations around the city focused on 1960s Surrealist-inflected collages, which were the foundation of his radical animated films.



Stan VanDerBeek, *Untitled* (1964). Courtesy of the artist, Magenta Plains, and Independent New York.

“We are seeing an extraordinary reaction to a Stan VanDerBeek moment in New York right now,” gallery director Olivia Smith told Artnet News, pointing to his 1960s films running at the Canal Street gallery; his seminal *Movie-Drome* on view as part of the exhibition “Signals: How Video Transformed the World” at the Museum of Modern Art; and the handmade collages on the stand at Independent. The gallery sold six collages for \$20,000 each, with one placed a major institution, Smith said. “VanDerBeek’s ideas around visual velocity and immersive image networks predicted how we consume media today.”

The NYTimes

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ART FAIR REVIEW

The Independent, More Inclusive Than Ever

Important lessons absorbed from cultural upheavals have translated into a more thoughtful fair around issues of representation.

By Martha Schwendener

May 11, 2023

If you were holding your breath for another art fair filled to the steel-girder ceilings with contemporary painting, you can let go. The [Independent](#), the local-brand fair that features art ranging from emerging to the radical old-guard, is not it. The current edition at Spring Studios in TriBeCa, which opens to the public Friday, includes 69 exhibitors from 11 countries, lots of photography and ephemera, idiosyncratic installations, and career resets — and yes, a healthy dose of painting.

You do feel a shift here, though. This fair feels more thoughtful, even reflective. Artists of color are celebrated and several presentations focus on older artists, trying to refine old narratives and biases. Here are some of the booths and tendencies that caught my eye.

Reconsidering Careers

Two other artists getting a refined look are [Stan VanDerBeek](#) at [Magenta Plains \(Booth B. 6\)](#) and [Eleanor Antin](#) at [Richard Saltoun \(Booth C. 6\)](#). VanDerBeek's recreated "[Movie-Drome](#)" (1964-65) of projected images is in "[Signals: How Video Transformed the World](#)" at the Museum of Modern Art and a current show at Magenta Plains. However, his collages, made for his animations, are potent art works on their own. Antin's photographic-conceptual project "[100 Boots](#)" — black rubber boots photographed in public spaces — are a terrific project, and Saltoun is showing "[100 Boots Head East](#)" (1973), in which the boots sit like eerie, funny witnesses and participants around New York.