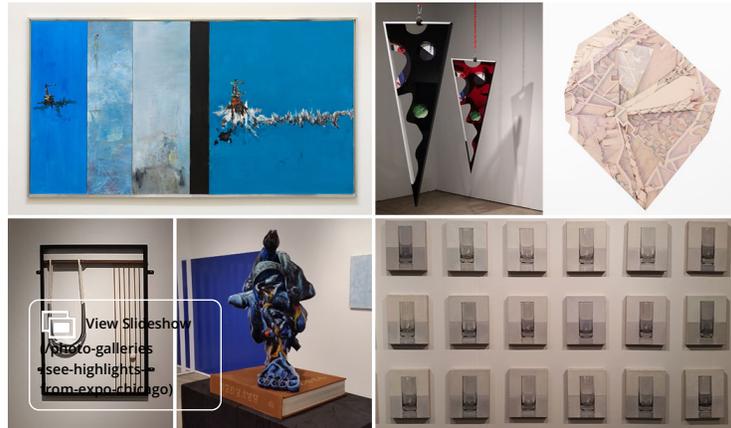


VISUAL ARTS / ((VISUAL-ARTS) FEATURES / ((VISUAL-ARTS) FEATURES) ARTICLE

At Expo Chicago, New Discoveries and Unexpected Deals

BY SCOTT INDRISEK | SEPTEMBER 18, 2015



Top row, from left: Markus Bacher's "o5P_bbbbb_2011_2015," 2015, photo-sculptures by Kate Steciw, and Megan Greene's "Ant Farm," 2015. Bottom row, from left: sculpture by Alex Chitty, sculpture by Nicolas Guagnini, and works by Peter Dreher.

(Top row, from left: Courtesy of the artist and Susanee Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Scott Indrisek, Regards Gallery. Bottom images: Scott Indrisek)

RELATED

EVENTS

Expo Chicago (/artfairs/detail/815627/expo-chicago)

VENUES

David Zwirner (/galleryguide/david-zwirner/overview)
White Cube (/galleryguide/white-cube/overview)

Expo Chicago (<http://www.expo-chicago.com/>), held in the almost charmingly down-at-heels Navy Pier, continues to be a solid contender on the never-ending art-fair circuit, drawing blue-chip galleries like David Zwirner and White Cube while giving ample attention, via its Exposure roster, to pluckier talent — which means revelatory finds at price points in the low thousands.

My favorite fair moments are among the least bombastic. You might not notice at first, but you enter this year's edition by walking beneath a sculptural reconstruction of the wing of a RQ-1 Predator drone, a strikingly ominous work by Chicago-based artist Inigo

Manglano-Ovalles that is part of the fair's curated In/Situ program. New York's Koenig & Clinton has a stunning wall of 10-by-8-inch paintings of the same water glass by 84-year-old Peter Dreher, from a 5,000-work series that the German artist began in 1974; some of the images were composed during the day, some at night, creating subtle tonal variations in the serially repeated composition. The paintings are priced at \$7,000 each, regardless of the year they were made; the gallery also has two graphite drawings of the glass, something of a rarity in the artist's practice and therefore priced at around \$10,000. Nearby, 1301PE, of Los Angeles, inadvertently strikes a chord with Dreher's quiet spareness with its pairing of Paul Winstanley's spare paintings of empty seminar rooms and art studios with Uta Barth's similarly minimalist photographs of light-and-shadow-soaked interiors. Jessica Silverman Gallery of San Francisco built its booth around a 1984 sculpture by London-based Israeli artist Amikam Toren, "Actuality 3," which was made by gently eroding the wooden frame of a thrift-store-purchased chair until it seems balanced precariously in space. This is the focal point of a display that includes three much more aggressive Toren pieces: A series titled "Hand in Glove" finds the artist obliterating one leather glove from each of three differently colored pairs in a coffee grinder, mixing the resulting mush with acrylic medium to form a DIY paint, and smearing this on three canvases in violent, abstract squiggles; one of the remaining, undamaged gloves is placed in front of each painting (Toren is a big fan of Gutai, Silverman noted). These works are complemented by mixed-media paintings from Hugh-Scott Douglas, a fur-coat-draped-chair sculpture by Nicole Wermers, and various chairs and assemblages by Julian Hoeber; the latter's wood-and-stretched-string wall sculpture is particularly striking, achieving a significant presence without shouting.

Bortolami wins points for a conceit that is simple without being hopelessly hokey: All the works in the gallery's booth engage in some way with the color blue (maybe someone has been crushing on [Maggie Nelson](http://www.amazon.com/Bluets-Maggie-Nelson/dp/1933517409) (<http://www.amazon.com/Bluets-Maggie-Nelson/dp/1933517409>)): An aqua-leaning Barbara Kasten photograph hangs near a Daniel Buren wall painting and a Richard Aldrich blue monochrome. Rounding things out are blue-imbued pieces by Will Benedict and Tom Burr and a cerulean-glazed-ceramic sculpture by Nicolás Guagnini, resembling a hive of serpentine cocks, that manages to give the grotesque patina of luxury. Kayne Griffin Corcoran's install is also notable for some adept juxtapositions. On one wall, a David Lynch drawing sidles up to a Joseph Cornell that is partnered with a recent sculpture by Rosha Yaghmai shaped like a heavily stylized doorframe and incorporating both "Aztec Secret healing clay" and Miracle-Gro. San Francisco's Anglim Gilbert Gallery has a Suprematist-influenced canvas by Clare Rojas, as well as a 1972 Joan Brown, "Adventures of a Woman #2," that looks a lot like Rojas's paintings did before she moved into abstraction.

Local exhibitors make a strong showing at the fair. Kavi Gupta Gallery has plenty of real estate to play with and takes full advantage, mixing photographs by Mickalene Thomas with paintings by Tony Tasset, Angel Otero, Jose Lerma, McArthur Binion, and Roxy Paine, as well as three small everything-and-the-kitchen-sink sculptures by Jessica Stockholder. Rhona Hoffman Gallery is all over the place, in a good way: a folded-paper piece by Sol Lewitt and some Gordon Matta-Clark photographs; three of Natalie Frank's "Grimm's Fairy Tales" drawings, previously seen at the Drawing Center in New York, and a massive, aggressive Leon Golub painting of two men caught mid-riot. Volume Gallery spotlights photographs by Daniel Arnold, most of them taken on the sly; two that stand out are a picture of the cluttered interior of the Billy Goat Tavern and an uncomfortably angled portrait of a young woman reading "Lolita" on the beach at Fort Tilden. Brand-new Chicago gallery Patron makes good use of a cubbyhole-size booth in the fair's "Exposure" section, displaying works on paper by Kadar Brock cheek by jowl with sculptures (in steel, brass, plaster, and other materials) by Alex Chitty.

Some other highlights on my personal fantasy shopping list: collage, colored-pencil, and ink works by Megan Greene, priced relatively modestly at one-year-old Chicago gallery Regards (\$8,000 for large works; \$2,200 for small ones); Ben Patterson's painted-ceramic "Pavilion" sculptures, which resemble utopian models for South American government buildings in the 1950s, at Ratio 3 (between \$5,000 and \$7,000); gender-straddling, superheroic crochet pieces by Caroline Wells Chandler, which crawl up the walls of Roberto Paradise's booth; Kate Steciw's photo-sculpture hybrids, which hang like dangerous blades in Higher Picture's booth; a large multipanel abstraction by Austrian painter Markus Bacher, at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects; a set of 67 woodcuts in a carved-wood box by Tal R, in an edition of 18, at Rene Schmitt Druckgraphik, a great choice, if you have a spare \$30,000 under your couch cushions. I also seriously covet Mier Gallery's graphite drawings (around \$3,000) by Cologne-based Jan-Ole Schiemann, which, culling their imagery from abstract shapes and forms in 1930s Bettie Boop movies, have the energy of comic-book pages with all the players removed and only the explosive remnants of the action left behind. (Large paintings mining the same left-field source material and incorporating washes of variously colored ink on raw canvas are priced between \$7,000 and \$16,000.)

If this sounds like a lot to take in, it is. For a respite, I suggest hiding out in Lisson Gallery's booth for a while. There you'll find one of Stanley Whitney's kinetic paintings—a wobbly grid of color-gushing squares—next to a Haroon Mirza sound sculpture that incorporates a solar panel. The Mirza's noise is all glitchy sputter, completely at odds with Whitney's graceful splurge of pigment, and something in that disjunction might provide the total mental reset needed to return to this sprawling, and rewarding, fair.

 [View Slideshow \(/photo-galleries/see-highlights-from-expo-chicago\)](#)



(/facebook)



(/twitter)



(/google_plus)



[Contemporary Arts \(/visual-arts/contemporary-arts\)](#)

[News \(/visual-arts/news-0\)](#)

[Features \(/visual-arts/features\)](#)

[Visual Arts \(/visual-arts\)](#)

[Expo Chicago \(/tags/expo-chicago\)](#)

[Scott Indrisek \(/tags/scott-indrisek\)](#)

RECOMMENDED