

ART FAIR REVIEW

At NADA, a Glorious Collision of Paintings and Ceramics

The New Art Dealers Alliance brings together more than 120 galleries and nonprofit organizations from 37 cities.

By Martha Schwendener

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Two things can be found everywhere at NADA New York in Lower Manhattan: painting and ceramics. This makes sense, since the younger generation of digital natives (people who grew up with the internet and social media) that NADA generally features tend to favor art that is pointedly nondigital and handcrafted. But I'm getting ahead of myself. First, NADA.

The New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) is a group of new and mostly young art dealers. This is the eighth edition of NADA New York (the last New York fair was in 2018, although they appeared in Miami last December). Eighty-one members are represented in this fair, with a total of 120 galleries and nonprofits from the U.S. and around the world.

Younger dealers presumably take greater risks, and you see plenty of that here — in tone and attitude, mostly. The work ranges from scruffy, comic and irreverent to smartly polished — albeit with an edge. The last thing anyone wants to do is look old or irrelevant before their time. And yet, artists and dealers need to make a living, hence the prevalence of painting and sellable crafts that knowingly copy the normcore aesthetic of thrift shops and folk art.



From left, Ye Qin Zhu's "Mediated Meditation"; Jacques Louis Vidal's "Just as scared of you as you are of it"; and Timo Fahler's "Death is our eternal companion..." at Sebastian Gladstone + Harkawik. Jeenah Moon for The New York Times

Painting and Ceramics

What's called pluralism — simultaneous strains of art — extends to painting and everything under that umbrella is represented here: figurative painting, abstraction, paintings made without paint, and what might be called “punk” painting, or art works in which the artist appears too cool to expend much effort. New York's **Kapp Kapp** (Booth 2.02) covers this range, with a lineup of crisp, botanically inspired paintings by Molly Greene and homages to graffiti-and-collage by Hannah Beerman. Occupying the opposite pole of painting are the socially engaged works of Karla Diaz at the Los Angeles gallery **Luis De Jesus** (Booth 5.03). Diaz's deep, color-saturated canvases tell personal stories of migration from Mexico to the United States, as well as preserve folklore from her heritage. Ryan Crotty at the Lower Manhattan gallery **High Noon** (Booth 6.15) does a spin on modernist formalism, making translucent abstractions with an acrylic gel medium that creates ethereal and iridescent results that look almost holographic. Other notable galleries showing paintings include Stephen Thorpe at **Denny Dimin** (Booth 6.14); Mickey Lee at **One Trick Pony** (Booth 6.01) and a group show at **The Pit** (1.01)

Then there are the paintings paired with ceramics. Anna Valdez at the Los Angeles gallery **Ochi** (Booth 4.14) is showing both mediums. Brightly colored paintings based on tableau made with books, plants, and animal heads or horns that she arranges in her studio include ceramic vases that she also created; some are displayed nearby, causing a kind of feedback loop between objects and images. Gustav Hamilton at the Denver gallery **David B. Smith** (Booth 4.09) simply collapses the two: his wall reliefs are part painting, part ceramic.



From left, Anna Valdez's "Magritte Inspired" and "Elk Antler with Taxidermy Alligator Head" at Ochi gallery. Jeenah Moon for The New York Times

Other galleries showing ceramics — many of them wildly inventive takes on the traditional clay vessel — include the joint presentation of the Lower East Side gallery neighbors **Fierman** and **Situations** (Booth 6.10); the Los Angeles gallery **Emma Gray HQ** (Booth 2.06); **Gaa Gallery**, representing Provincetown and Cologne; **Lefebvre & Fils** (Booth 3.13) from Paris; **secret project robot** (Booth P18); and **Sebastian Gladstone** and **Harkawik** (Booth 2.03). It's a lot of ceramics.

Other Media and Projects

While digital art is relatively scarce at NADA there is one tour-de-force digital work, a Metaverse “Petshop” created by the artist duo Exonemo (Kensuke Sembo and Yae Akaiwa), mounted at **NowHere** (Booth 3.15), a gallery devoted to Japanese artists in New York. The installation includes stacked cages with computer monitors in them on which appear uncanny animals “owned” by various people — sometimes anonymous. (You can, predictably, track the progress of these pets online at <https://metaversepet.zone>.)

Elsewhere, the focus on craft reigns. Jessica Campbell offers carpets that nod to spirits and deities at **Western Exhibitions** (Booth 3.02). Al Freeman's simultaneously lovable and ominous soft-sculpture men-without-pants hang at **56 Henry** (Booth 4.07); and fronds of bear grass, horsehair and copper are curled into elegant mobile sculptures, made by Aranda/Lasch and Terrol Dew Johnson, at Chicago's **Volume Gallery** (Booth 5.02).



Exonemo's "Metaverse Pet shop beta" at NowHere gallery. Jeenah Moon for The New York Times

The fair also includes a number of nonprofit and curatorial initiatives. One that deserves mention is the **Children's Museum of the Arts** in New York (Booth C6), which has a pocket-size installation in the section devoted to Cultural Partners. I imagined the proceeds from the works for sale here would benefit the Children's Museum — but no. In fact, the children were allowed to name their own prices for their works. One child is requesting a chocolate Easter bunny. Another wants three shoes (a pair and a half, apparently). And then there is the 5-year-old whose work is priced at \$55,555. I wouldn't be surprised to see this enterprising youngster running a booth at NADA in, say, five years.

NADA New York

May 5-8, at Pier 36, 299 South Street, Manhattan; newartdealers.org.