

THE BAER FAXT

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The Bare Facts

I was recently on the phone (note to Millennials, Gen Zers, Alphas: the phone is still the best way to work) with Jeffrey Deitch, one of the true art world OGs. He has seen it all—from artist to gallery to auction house partner to museum director.

He made a point about "now vs. then". He described a time when there was a genuine community of collectors who went to shows and galleries together, shared information about what they loved, made introductions, and knew each other—or at least knew of each other.

Cut to today: collectors are largely in their own silos, flying private to the World Cup or the next art event, experiencing art primarily through a screen. It's a major change affecting all of us, drip by drip.

So how do we get it back? As always, the answer is counterintuitive. We think that because we are all connected through Instagram and TikTok, we have built community—but it's a false one, built less on reality than on the life we wish we were living. I'm certainly not the first person to say that, but it bears repeating. We have to make conscious, individual choices, project by project, person by person. We are starting to see that, as described in yesterday's issue of This Month in the Market with two rising Londoners, Rose Easton and Huma Kabackı.

PS: I'm in California this week, so the Baer Faxt team reported from the fairs. Read their thoughts below.

Dispatches from the Armory Show and Independent 20th Century

It's not a shock, but the works on view at Independent 20th Century look great in the Breuer Building. This year marks the first time the fair has taken over the historic space—formerly the home of the Whitney Museum, now Sotheby's headquarters—and it felt right at home. Galleries have room to breathe, traffic flows naturally, and the building's modernist signatures form a natural dialogue with Independent's 20th-century highlights, elevating what is otherwise a rather routine event. It all throws into stark contrast just how awkward a fit the building is for an auction house.

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We all know the Armory Show is not what it once was. Fewer collectors travel to be there, and many brand-name galleries no longer participate (certainly not the megas). But the move to late September was clever, as it frees up the gridlock of post-Labor Day openings that once required antacid to cope with all the visual stimuli. Plus, it gets to ride on the coattails of the elegant, upmarket Independent 20th Century.

But the Armory's strength this year lay in the Focus and Presents sectors, where young galleries could shine, and were generally more compelling than all the more recognizable names. These sectors can sometimes feel a bit undergraduate, but this time they felt more like...promise? A generation of young galleries (many from NYC) are coming into their own and thinking creatively about how to be cost-effective without compromising on flair. But that doesn't mean fairs are any easier for them. To all our collectors out there: your support goes a long way. Shout out to LA's Vielmetter and Bucharest's gæp gallery for two very different but similarly alluring installations of works on paper. In other ways, the Armory is still the Armory: weird and wacky hats abound.

News/People

New representations:

- Jane Swavely with kaufmann repetto. Prices range from \$15,000-\$40,000 USD.
- Quentin James McCaffrey with Alison Jacques. Prices range from \$20,000-\$85,000 USD.
- David Smalling with TEMPLON. Prices range from \$8,000-\$46,000 USD.
- The estate of Hermann Nitsch with MARUANI MERCIER. Prices range from €25,000-€650,000 EUR.
- Sarah Ball with Pilar Corrias; Hopie Hill with Charles Moffett.

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Appointments/Departures:

- Jonathan Abbott, CEO and Director of MOCA Los Angeles (formerly GBH).
- Haley Shaw, Senior Director of Gazelli Art House (formerly Timothy Taylor).
- Candice Madey, US Senior Director at Josh Lilley (formerly On Stellar Rays).
- Rachel Atkinson Marrin, Managing Director at Gurr Johns, Inc. (formerly Phillips).
- Cédric Fauq, Curator of Contemporary International Art at Moderna Museet (formerly Capc Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux).
- César García-Alvarez, Q+ Art Curator-at-Large at the Palm Springs Art Museum.
- Daria Foner, Vice President, Specialist, and Head of the Old Master Paintings Part I Sale at Christie's in New York (formerly Sotheby's).
- Nick Orchard, promoted to Head of Private Sales, Impressionist and Modern Art in EMEA, and Chairman of Modern British Art; and Cristian Albu, promoted to Head of Private Sales and 20th and 21st-Century Art in Asia Pacific, in addition to his role as Deputy Chairman and Head of Auctions at Christie's.
- Ben Willis, promoted to Head of Private Sales for EMEA, based in London; and Rupert Banner, promoted to Head of Private Sales for the Americas, based in New York at Gooding Christie's.
- Chloë Reith, promoted to Director of The Common Guild.
- Hannah Grossman, promoted to Executive Director at High Desert Test Sites.

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Auctions/Other:

- In Hong Kong, Sotheby's Important Watches auction achieved a record-breaking HK\$426 million (\$55 million USD) with 98% sold by lot, marking the highest-total watch sale in the company's history and the most valuable watch auction ever held in Asia—just topping Phillips record \$51.5m earlier this year.
- In Paris, Christie's sale of the Graziella Patiño de Ortiz Linares Collection totaled €38.7m, with 86% sold by lot, while Artcurial's auction The Rothschild Taste: A Legacy totaled €4.38m, with a white-glove result.
- Heritage Auctions has launched its new Stamps category under the leadership of Charles F. Shreve, Vice President, Stamps, and Tracy L. Carey, Consignment Director.
- Mexico's first international contemporary art biennial, Bienal de Yucatán, will open at the end of November.
- **Old Master dealer De Jonckheere will return to Paris this October after a ten-year absence, opening a new space at 65 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré.**
- Mennour will open a new location at 26 Avenue Matignon in Paris this October.
- Brussels's Harlan Levey Projects is now Levey Kwok, cementing the longstanding collaboration between Harlan Levey and Winnie Kwok.
- In London, two new "micro galleries" have opened in Bow Wharf: Room 10 and Permanent Location.
- Brazilian artist Lucia Laguna (1941–2026) has passed away.