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2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021

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Abby Schultz, "The Armory Show Adds Outdoor Public Art to Annual Fair," *Penta*, August 30, 2021.

PENTA

The Armory Show Adds Outdoor Public Art to Annual Fair

By **Abby Schultz** Aug. 30, 2021 5:59 pm ET

The Armory Show is returning to New York beginning Sept. 9 at the Javits Center—a new date and place for the contemporary art fair that, for the first time in its 27 years, also will include outdoor art installations at parks and other public spaces across the city.

The fair, which had been held in March on Manhattan's West Side Piers for 19 years, is the focal point of a new arts week that marks the beginning of the fall season. Among gallery openings and museum openings, there will be other art fairs, too, including the Independent and Art on Paper.

The Armory had announced the shift in date and location before its last fair was held in March 2020, and just ahead of the city being forced into lockdown because of the coronavirus pandemic. The fall date was an unexpectedly fortunate move that gave the fair time to adjust and allowed it to hold a 2021 fair when other major fairs shifted online, such as Tefaf Maastricht in the Netherlands, or scaled back, such as Frieze New York.

Yet the Delta variant continues to make the virus a factor to contend with. For instance, of 99 international galleries in the fair from 37 countries, 44 will be physically present and 55 that were unable to get to New York because of the pandemic and the related travel restrictions will be participating in Armory Online, the fair's digital platform, according to Nicole Berry, executive director of the fair.

The fair has layers of safety precautions including proof of vaccination or a negative Covid test taken within 72 hours of arriving for all visitors, mandatory masks, timed entry, social distancing, and crowd flow. The New York state-run Javits Center also has HEPA-grade filters and sensors that can adjust ventilation rates depending on crowd size, among other measures, according to the fair.

Once visitors step inside, the Armory Show will unfold throughout an open floor plan across three halls of the Javits Center. Architecture firm Frederick Fisher & Partners—specialists in museum design—reflected New York City's streets, neighborhoods, and proximity to the Hudson River in their design, Berry says.

The design also provides "amazing site lines to artwork" from the participating galleries, and plenty of space to reflect or grab a glass of Champagne, she says.

For fairgoers and those not ready to congregate indoors, Armory Off-Site will present four large-scale and interactive artworks, including some created solely for Off-Site, at Astor Place Plaza, Bella Abzug Park, Flatiron Plaza, and Pier 64 at Hudson River Park, the fair announced on Monday.

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The program is in partnership with several galleries, and New York City organizations and districts, such as the Department of Transportation, Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership, Hudson River Park Trust, and the Hudson Yards Hell’s Kitchen Alliance. Some of the works will be on display through December.

1969 Gallery in New York, for instance, will host the Guild of Adventure Painters’ *Adventure Paintings: NYC, 2021*, from Sept. 9–12 at Astor Place in the city’s East Village neighborhood—offering interactive painting sessions between visitors and artists from 10 a.m.–6 p.m. each day. The sessions will occur outside of a 31-foot Airstream recreational vehicle, while the exposed inside of the vehicle will serve as an outdoor exhibition space. Artists Johnny DeFeo and Aaron Zulpo will lead the work, which is being presented in partnership with Village Alliance.

At Flatiron Plaza near Madison Square Park, Los Angeles artist Josh Callaghan, represented by Night Gallery in Los Angeles, will be presenting *Social Block, 2021*. The exhibition consists of concrete cinder blocks that are 2.3 times normal scale with the intention of forming “a new relationship to the human body at the intersection of sculpture, furniture, and architecture,” according to the fair. It is being presented by the Armory Show with the New York City Department of Transportation and the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership.

At the fair itself, the Armory Show will offer familiar sections such as Presents, featuring emerging galleries that are 15 years old or less, and a new one titled Solo, offering 15 galleries the chance to feature a single artist in depth.

The sections Focus and Platform feature works selected by outside curators, both of which take the challenges of the last year-and-a-half as a starting off point, Focus curator Wassan Al-Khudhairi, chief curator of Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis in Missouri, looks at the artist’s role in shaping realities, while “Platform” curator Claudia Schmuckli, curator-in-charge of contemporary art and programming at Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, offers eight large-scale works under the theme *Can you hear the fault lines breathing?*

One of the Platform installations—which appear throughout the fair—is U.K. artist Grayson Perry’s *Very Large Very Expensive Abstract Painting (2020)*, that he created after visiting communities across the U.S. on a custom-built motorbike. The piece explores cultural and political fault lines in the U.S. and asks what can be done to overcome them, Berry says. It’s presented by the London art dealer Victoria Miro.

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The online portion of the fair, meanwhile, includes “selections” where four art industry experts— Cecilia Alemani, Legacy Russell, Rudy Austin, and Maria Brito —offer their take on 10 to 12 artworks each, which should make it easier to start exploring the online exhibitions offered by more than 200 galleries.

The Armory Show begins Thursday, Sept. 9 at the Javits Center, 429 11th Ave., between 35th and 37th streets, with a by-invitation-only VIP preview. Doors open to the public from 12-8 p.m. Sept. 10-11 and from 12-7 p.m. Sept. 12. Timed tickets are on sale online now.