

# Artspace

## 10 of the Best Artworks at EXPO Chicago 2016

By Andrew M. Goldstein

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David Kordansky's booth at EXPO Chicago provided a showcase for Sam Gilliam and Betty Woodman.

Did somebody order delivery? This weekend, lucky Chicago collectors have once again gotten to enjoy the fruits of global contemporary art, brought to their beautifully architected doorstep by EXPO Chicago. And there was plenty to make the yearlong wait worthwhile. Here's some of the best artworks to be found at this year's edition of the fair.

DERRICK ADAMS

*Floater No. 2* (2016)

Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago

\$24,000



Jessica Silverman Gallery

488 Ellis Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

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Over the past few summers the news has been boiling over with scenes of fear, anger, and protest in the America's black community in the wake of incessant police violence, and so the multitalented artist Derrick Adams responded by creating a series of paintings that show scenes you don't often see: black people at leisure, bobbing along on colorful, whimsical floaters in supernally azure pools. Embellished with collaged-in fabric swatches from local African and Caribbean stores in his gentrifying Brooklyn neighborhood, the popular paintings are lovely—but, looking at the figures expressions, aren't their eyes and mouths just a little too wide? They seem dazed, in shock. This December, when Adams's "Floater" series gets a solo presentation at Art Basel Miami Beach, they may have even more to be shocked about.

JAN SCHOONHOVEN  
*R72-38* (1972)  
David Zwirner, New York  
\$425,000



Working as a postal officer in The Hague, Jan Schoonhoven lived a precisely regimented life, getting dressed in the morning (he kept his left shoes in one place, his right shoes in another), taking the same train to his post, and returning at the end of the day to sit down at his kitchen table at 5 p.m. and make his art. These pieces, built out of pieces of discarded wood and cardboard that he collected, were not quite paintings and not quite sculptures, but really devices optimized to capture and play with the famous Delft light that had so fascinated Vermeer; after a conversation with Piero Manzoni and Lucio Fontana of the Zero Group, Schoonhoven painted all of these pieces a pristine white.

Enthusiastically collected during his lifetime, the artist had inventory remaining after his death in 1994 and so left no estate, which has made obtaining his works a challenge—his paintings sell for over a million dollars at auction. However, that has hardly deterred David Zwirner from building a specialty in dealing Schoonhoven's work, driven by a determination to have historic pieces to fill in the gaps for clients who collect the advanced art of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. As a result, every Schoonhoven piece that the gallery shows has been sourced privately at significant expense—a similar process that Zwirner is pursuing at the moment to become the preeminent source for Giorgio Morandi in the United States.

ANNIE LEIBOVITZ  
*Bob Dylan, Los Angeles (1977)*  
Weinstein Gallery, Minneapolis  
\$21,000



Back in 1977, Annie Leibovitz was a thrillingly clued-in photographer for *Rolling Stone* and Bob Dylan was in a highly productive shambles, coming out of the desperate recordings of *Blood on the Tracks* and *Desire*, which chronicled the inferno of his marriage to Sara Lowndes, and heading into the raspy, grasping religiosity of *Street-Legal* and the Christian trilogy. In a series of photos taken in L.A., Leibovitz captured Dylan looking both intimidating and playful, and this one, with its Ray Bans and stiff leather jacket, gets to the heart of his flinty, Lee Van Cleef toughness.

DEBORAH REMINGTON  
*Dorset (1972)*  
Kimmerich, Berlin  
\$80,000



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An artist who studied with the irascible Clyfford Still in California and then spent two years in Japan immersing herself in the world-flattening tradition of woodcut prints, Deborah Remington established herself as a Beat artist in San Francisco, making gesture-less paintings of spooky-colored shapes that seem to barely hover into view. She was also a co-founder of her city's influential Six Gallery, showing in New York at Klaus Kertess's Bykert, but when she passed away in 2010 she was remembered mainly as someone who had been difficult to work with.

Her friend Jay Gorney, the celebrated art advisor, is now trying to change that, and he arranged a showcase of her paintings—which fit the contemporary moment quite nicely—at EXPO through Berlin's Kimmerich Gallery, and he's organizing another show of her work at Franklin Parrasch next month.

**JESSICA STOCKHOLDER**  
*Tear Here (2016)*  
Kavi Gupta, Chicago  
\$8,000



Lauded for her large, intricate, brightly colorful assemblage sculptures and installations, Jessica Stockholder occasionally works out her ideas for big, site-specific pieces by thinking small, making diminutive tests on board that are tantamount to sculptural sketches. These studies are a good place to observe new directions coming into view, and here she does something different, and unexpected: she takes a printer-ink cartridge, one of the most thuddingly mundane bits of life in the digital era, and hammers a bolt through it so that a bit of the ink bleeds out to rhyme with the blue-on-black painted board; in the corner, an arrow on the packaging perfectly aligns with the support's edge, inspiring the work's title. It's a weird little piece, a haiku with dark undertones.

**SANDOW BIRK**  
*Triumph of Fear* (2016)  
P.P.O.W., New York  
\$40,000



The Detroit-born L.A. artist Sandow Birk works as an illustrator, dipping into art and literary history to make technically excellent “updatings” of classics with an acerbically political, ripped-from-the-headlines edge. A harrowing example is this painting at EXPO, which takes the composition of Brueghel’s downright scary 1562 *Triumph of Death*, flips its orientation, and detournes it to be about police brutality, racism, and Gitmo torture in America. While Brueghel’s painting was a response to life in the plague years, this sequel offers an uncanny number of chillingly appropriate parallels, finding new apt scenarios that fit the script of the hellish original. Take a moment to compare the two closely, and it might make you a bit uncomfortable.

**YUNHEE MIN**  
*Movements (Surge 1)* (2016)  
Ameringer McEnergy Yohe, New York  
\$28,000



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Is there anything wrong with beauty, pure and simple? Peter Schjeldahl, an avowed fan of the subject, wrote that “beauty is a melting away of uncertainty in a state of pleasure.” It doesn’t have to be too thinky—sometimes that’s the point, an end in itself. The Korean artist Yunhee Min studied painting and art theory at Harvard, but then put that on one side and became a wonderfully intuitive colorist, pouring and pulling her thinned acrylic paints on upright stretched canvases (unlike Helen Frankenthaler, who did it all on the floor). Min also teaches art at the University of California Riverside. Can you teach beauty?

**JUDY CHICAGO**  
***Optical Shapes (1969)***  
**Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco**



The 77-year-old feminist-art icon Judy Chicago only had her first career retrospective last year, at the CAPC Musée d’Art Contemporain Bourdeaux, which prompts the question: how is it possible for an artist to be so famous and at the same time so little known? The dealer Jessica Silverman saw the staggeringly obvious potential there and started working with Chicago this summer, traveling to visit her at her home outside Albuquerque and finding a hoard of exciting unseen from over the decades, like some very sexy cast-paper butterflies that she uncovered in cardboard boxes and also these paint-on-paper studies, which contain a funny moment of art history.

Made in 1969, when hard-minded minimalism made by austere male artists was all the rage, Chicago made a few productive gestures in that direction, such as these works on paper and their related “Pasadena Lifesaver” paintings, which fit the vogue. But then she decided to make them into sculptures, creating colorful domes... that looked like breasts. Oops, #sorrynotsorry.

Soon, happily, American audiences will also be able to see that the maker of *The Dinner Party* was not a

one-hit-wonder. Another major retrospective is being prepared at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C., for 2018 or 2019, and Silverman is working with them on a catalogue that will relate her under-known career.

CECILY BROWN  
*Blue Vox* (2015-16)  
Maccarone  
\$500,000



A week ago Cecily Brown made headlines when the former Gagosian artist—one of the many high-profile defections from that mega-gallery over the past couple of years—announced that she was returning to New York to work with [Paula Cooper](#), adding her art's frenetic sex appeal to that intellectually rigorous gallery. She's also working with Michelle Maccarone in L.A., and this piece that the dealer brought to the fair gives a good indication of where her work is going these days.

Painted after reading Nicholson Baker's *Vox*, which the *New York Times* describes as "a phone-sex novel so steamy that Monica Lewinsky gave it as a gift to Bill Clinton," Brown was gripped by a scene in which a woman dreams of participating in two orgies in different rooms simultaneously, and she mixed that in with imagery taken from Poussin's umbrageous *Venus and Adonis* at the Kimbell Art Museum.

The result is far thicker in brushstroke than her previous work, with the lines carrying weight and suggesting multi-dimensionality, like a fusion of de Kooning's Springs abstractions and Picasso's neoclassical paintings, or maybe Cézanne. It's sensational enough to require a new look at Cecily Brown.

SADIE BENNING  
*Telephone Drawing* (2016)  
Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects  
\$60,000



In the early 1920s the Hungarian avant-gardist László Moholy-Nagy made a series of paintings by using the exciting new technology of the telephone to dictate the steps of their manufacture to the foreman of a sign factory, who executed them there. The artist called these "Telephone Pictures."

Now times have changed, and when Sadie Benning makes one of her "Telephone Drawings," she starts out by doodling a design in a paint app on her iPhone; she then enlarges that drawing into one of her irresistibly tactile paintings, which she constructs by jigsawing pieces of wood from a board, covering each piece with resin and paint, and fitting them back together like a puzzle.

The ensuing piece that she showed at EXPO, one her larger paintings, shows the artist breaking into new terrain, creating a feeling of architectural depth and layered vistas. It's just gorgeous.