

PHOTO ESSAYS

The Good, the Bad, and the Forgettable at Frieze New York

The latest edition of the mega-fair is full of extremes, from the very high temperatures during the first day of previews to impressively bad booths and plenty of strong, thoughtful presentations.



Works by Daniel Buren and Lawrence Weiner on the exterior of the Lisson Gallery booth at Frieze New York (all photos by the author for Hyperallergic)

Frieze New York is back, and the 2018 edition of the mega-fair may be the most underwhelming ever. There was plenty of griping at yesterday's very-VIP and press preview about the sweltering temperatures inside the fair and its confusing new layout, but the bigger problem was the lackluster work on view. As ever, there are strong individual works peppered throughout and some standout solo and thematic booths, but by and large the fair feels very by-the-numbers, with major galleries playing it extremely safe and smaller outfits struggling to stand out.



One of the two main entrances to the newly revamped Frieze New York tent

The most immediately evident change at Frieze this year is the new tent, by [Universal Design Studio](#), which consists of a series of discrete and interconnected clusters instead of one continuous, curving space. The result, simply put, is that Frieze now feels a bit more like every other art fair. It also means that visitors can't easily look up, judge the proximity of the end of the tent, and gauge how many booths they still have to see before the fair closes. The booths themselves are airy and spacious for the most part, and a few galleries (including Gagosian and Stephen Friedman Gallery) even have more than one.



Works by Tom Friedman in one of the Stephen Friedman Gallery booths at Frieze New York

What's being shown in the booths is, in general, no different from what you'd see on a given day of gallery-hopping in Chelsea, but there are exceptions to this of course. New York's Donald Ellis Gallery has devoted its booth to a superb selection of Native American ledger drawings.

São Paulo-based [Galeria Marília Razuk](#) is showing an array of amazing sculptures by the late Mestre Didi based on the sacred objects used in Brazil's Afro-Brazilian *Candomblé* religion. New York's [Lyles & King](#) and [Ryan Lee](#) galleries have solo showcases of incredibly fresh, decades-old paintings by Mira Schor and Emma Amos, respectively. Toronto gallery Cooper Cole has a booth of very tactile and uncanny figurative sculptures by Tau Lewis — which, happily, were totally sold out after the

fair's first day. Glasgow-based [Mary Mary](#) has a fantastic booth of ceramic, iron, and wood sculptures by Jesse Wine. And Brussels gallery [Rodolphe Janssen](#) has an array of lovely woodcuts, paintings, and ceramic sculptures by the twin artist duo of Gert and Uwe Tobias.

Other booths distinguished themselves with special projects and show-stopping individual works. New York-based [Anton Kern Gallery](#) is presenting a solo project by Lara Schnitger as part of the fair's [Live program](#) that will be intermittently activated by a feminist procession through the fair. And there are individual works that rise above the din, like Ann Agee's delightful spread of ceramic shoe sculptures ("Hand Warmers," 2017–18) in the PPOW Gallery booth and Krzysztof Wodiczko's whimsical prototype for vehicles for the homeless ("Poliscar Variant 2," 1991/2017) in the Galerie Lelong booth. The back side of Marian Goodman's booth is hosting a fundraising display for [Downtown for Democracy](#), a political action committee offering works by Marilyn Minter and others. Such works and installations make the trek to Randall's Island worthwhile.



Installation view of Lara Schnitger's "Suffragette City" project at Frieze New York

However, for every memorable solo presentation, there are dozens of forgettable booths and plenty of outright bad ones. And, as luck would have it, the fair's most shameless peddlers of mediocrity are some of the biggest galleries in the world. [Almine Rech Gallery](#) has a sad, half-empty booth showcasing Joseph Kosuth neon sculptures and little else. [Pace Gallery](#) has an entire booth of David Hockney's iPad and iPhone drawings, each more uninteresting the next — which didn't keep collectors from snapping up 30 of them in the fair's first day. [Gagosian](#), as mentioned earlier, has two booths: one is largely devoted to an installation by Robert Therrien that consists of large-scale and very realistic sculptures of folding furniture that bring the [Museum of Selfies](#)

sensibility to Frieze; the gallery's other booth, in a part of the fair devoted to a multi-booth tribute to the late dealer Hudson, features large-scale sculptures and paintings by Takashi Murakami, an artist who showed at Hudson's gallery, [Feature Inc.](#), in the 1980s and '90s.

For my money, though, the fair's worst booth belongs to [David Zwirner](#). Devoted to new works by [Jordan Wolfson](#) and [Josh Smith](#), it features the latter's riffs on images of the grim reaper, and sculptures by the former that evoke some pre-digital computers, printed with photographs of difficult or painful subjects — including the car of James Alex Fields plowing into protesters in Charlottesville in August 2017. I strongly advise steering clear of the Zwirner booth, though the fair's revamped configuration makes that virtually impossible.

Between its generic new layout and the bravura badness of some of its biggest exhibitors, the latest edition of Frieze New York offers plenty of lessons for how *not* to tweak a winning fair formula. With any luck, by the time May 2019 rolls around the organizers will have reevaluated their decisions and made more changes.



Jordan Wolfson, "Untitled" (2018) in the David Zwirner booth at Frieze New York

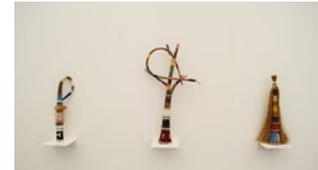
The Good



Ledger drawings by the Lakota artist Oliver Good Shield (aka Oliver Newton) in the Donald Ellis Gallery booth at Frieze New York



A page from the Creek Ledger Book (ca 1870) in the Donald Ellis Gallery booth at Frieze New York



Sculptures by Mestre Didi in the Galeria Marilia Razuk booth at Frieze New York



Sculptures by Mestre Didi in the Galeria Marilia Razuk booth at Frieze New York



Mira Schor's monumental paintings "Strange Fruit" (1988, left) and "Dicks of the Impregnation of the Universe" (1988, right) in the Lyles & King booth at Frieze New York



Paintings by Emma Amos, "Seated Figure and Nude" (1966, left) and "Baby" (1966, right), in the Ryan Lee Gallery booth at Frieze New York



Jesse Wine, "The simple things, things you don't even, you know..." (2018) in the Mary Mary booth at Frieze New York



Jesse Wine, "Alternate Side Parking" (2018) in the Mary Mary booth at Frieze New York



Albertz Benda's booth at Frieze New York is devoted to whimsical sculptures from the 1980s by Bill Beckley.



Paintings by David Simpson in the Haines Gallery booth at Frieze New York



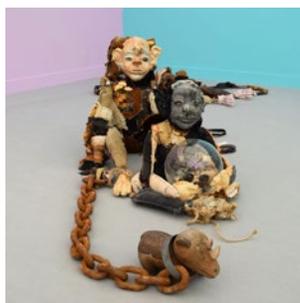
Lara Schnitger's "Suffragette City" procession winding its way through the aisles at Frieze New York



Summer Wheat, "Sinking Teeth" (2018) in the Andrew Edlin Gallery booth at Frieze New York



Summer Wheat, "Lifting a Lion" (2018) in the Andrew Edlin Gallery booth at Frieze New York



Sculptures by Tau Lewis in the Cooper Cole booth at Frieze New York



Tau Lewis, "Unity (Negros Historical Information Systems in Every Dark Corner)" (2018) in the Cooper Cole booth at Frieze New York



A display of ceramic sculptures by Tobias Kasper in the VI, VII booth at Frieze New York



Ceramic sculptures by Tobias Kasper in the VI, VII booth at Frieze New York



Works by Gert and Uwe Tobias in the Rodolphe Janssen booth at Frieze New York



Works by Gert and Uwe Tobias in the Rodolphe Janssen booth at Frieze New York



Krzysztof Wodiczko, "Poliscar Variant 2" (1991/2017) in the Galerie Lelong booth at Frieze New York



Krzysztof Wodiczko, "Poliscar Variant 2" (1991/2017) in the Galerie Lelong booth at Frieze New York



Krzysztof Wodiczko, "Drawing for Poliscar" (1991), picturing his vehicle prototypes for homeless individuals passing by Trump Tower



Ann Agee, "Hand Warmers" (2017-18) in the PPOW Gallery booth at Frieze New York



A Hugh Hayden sculpture in the White Columns booth at Frieze New York



A Hugh Hayden sculpture in the White Columns booth at Frieze New York



Luis Flores, "Powerbomb" (2018) in the Salon 94 booth at Frieze New York



Tom Friedman, "Untitled (Self-Portrait)" (1999, sugar cubes and sugar), in the Stephen Friedman Gallery booth at Frieze New York



Louise Bourgeois, "COUPLE" (2004) in the Cheim & Read booth at Frieze New York



Miao Ying, "Satie bought seven identical velvet suits complete with matching hats that he wore uninterruptedly for seven years" (2018) in the Boers-Li Gallery booth at Frieze New York



"Shady" (2018) by Frieze Artist Award winner Kapwani Kiwanga in the outdoor area at Frieze New York



Tony Tasset, "Mood Sculptures" (2018), presented by Kavi Gupta in the outdoor area at Frieze New York

The Bad



Paintings by Josh Smith in the David Zwirner booth at Frieze New York



New neon sculptures by Joseph Kosuth in the Almine Rech Gallery booth at Frieze New York



Robert Therrien, "No title (folding table and chairs, green)" (2008) in one of the Gagolian booths at Frieze New York



Paintings and sculptures by Takashi Murakami in one of Gagolian's booths at Frieze New York



Exterior view of Pace Gallery's booth of iPad and iPhone drawings by David Hockney

Frieze New York 2018 continues through Sunday, May 6 in Randall's Island Park (Randall's Island, Manhattan).