

ART REVIEW

Cheeky Hipsters in the Halls of Victorian Brigadiers



Suzanne DeChillo/The New York Times

A visitor examines Carl Andre's "Passport" at the Andrea Rosen booth at the Art Show.

By KAREN ROSENBERG
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Correction Appended

The Park Avenue Armory has been undergoing a striking makeover overseen by a dedicated conservancy. Last fall it was the backdrop for a performance involving a fleet of motorcycles by the emerging artist Aaron Young; next month it will serve as a satellite location for the [Whitney Biennial](#). This weekend old and new coexist happily there at the Art Show, the annual fair held by the Art Dealers Association of America.

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Suzanne DeChillo/The New York Times
Soccer anyone? Referees with a rice ball in a tableau vivant by Pietro Roccasalva in the Mary Diver Room at the Armory.

The event, now in its 20th year, offers works dating from the 19th century to the present. Yet more and more, the emphasis is on contemporary art. In addition to 18 single-artist shows spread over the 70 dealers' booths, this year's fair has a separate area devoted to video art and three site-specific installations by contemporary artists (for which no admission fee is required). The artists in that section, Spencer Finch, Lisi Raskin and Pietro Roccasalva, were selected by Tom Eccles, executive director of the Center for Curatorial Studies at [Bard College](#), and the independent curator Trevor Smith. The videos, by Joan Jonas, Mike Smith, Paper Rad and many others, were chosen by Bard graduate students from the archives of Electronic Arts Intermix.

Even with these credentials the Art Show could never be mistaken for the Armory Show, which next month will fill Pier 94 with dealers from London, Zurich, Beijing and elsewhere.

In the Park Avenue fair secondary-market "classic contemporary" works drive much of the business, although the single-artist shows and thematic exhibits lend a dignified air to the dealmaking.

A large trove of early John Baldessari (from the mid-1970s) at Marian Goodman is a treat. Likewise the late Lucio Fontana's that fill Sperone Westwater's booth. A piece of punctured copper from Fontana's "New York" series of the early '60s is at once seductive and, with its jagged edges, threatening. Another memorably textured painting, from the '50s, features shards of milky glass affixed to burlap.

At the more contemporary fairs, new work often appears to have been rushed from the studio, but Amy Sillman's chromatically exuberant paintings at Sikkema Jenkins have an appealing

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freshness. The armory setting does not do much for Olafur Eliasson, whose touring retrospective comes to the Museum of Modern Art and P.S. 1 in Queens in April. At Bonakdar his atomlike sculptures — composed of mirrored rings and intersecting discs — look more trinketlike than transcendent.

Sculptors fare better at Andrea Rosen, with a sensuous Robert Morris felt piece, and D'Amelio Terras, where works by Cornelia Parker, Christian Holstad and others share a crafty magpie aesthetic. The continuing popularity of ceramics is suggested by Andrew Lord's lumpy vessels at Barbara Gladstone and Lynda Benglis's glaze-splashed knots at Cheim & Read.

Painting dominates, as always, but several photography dealers vie for attention. Tina Barney's colorful photographs of people in upscale surroundings line the royal-blue walls of Janet Borden's booth. Among them are "The Trustee and the Curator," which shows two distinguished gentlemen in a gallery of the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#). The David Frankel gallery of San Francisco has a selection of photographs recently released by the estate of [Richard Avedon](#), including his famous images of Warhol's surgery-scarred torso and a subdued [Marilyn Monroe](#).

The award for the most superfluously elegant presentation goes to PaceWildenstein's immaculate beige-carpeted salon of petite Richard Tuttle paintings on wood panels from 1999. Mr. Tuttle's art has always foregrounded its preciousness, but this installation would be better suited to handbags or stiletto sandals in one of the boutiques a block away.

Those seeking a modern rather than contemporary fix might enjoy the Calder sculptures and mobiles at O'Hara's booth, the [Picasso](#) still life at Feigen or [Marsden Hartley](#)'s portrait of a muscular sunbather at Babcock. Michael Werner has devoted an entire booth to visceral earth-tone paintings and sculptures by the School of Paris member Jean Fautrier.

The New York School is celebrated at Ameringer & Yohe's booth, a tribute to André Emmerich, a founding member and two-time president of the Art Dealers Association of America. Works by abstract artists in Emmerich's circle, including a sculpture by Anthony Caro and canvases by [Helen Frankenthaler](#) and Hans Hoffmann, are displayed alongside archival photographs taken by the dealer.

After the congestion of the fair, the spacious site-specific installations organized by Mr. Eccles and Mr. Smith come as a relief. Spencer Finch's drawings of atmospheric conditions around his studio are swallowed up by the Armory's 19th-century interiors, but he also transforms a small room at the top of a narrow staircase with light filters that approximate the portion of the spectrum visible to bees.

The thrill of the secret chamber gets a sinister twist from Lisi Raskin's command station in the Colonel's Room of the armory. With control panels, surveillance monitors and a red emergency phone constructed from paper and paste, it's pointedly outdated cold-war child's play.

In the most ambitious installation Mr. Roccasalva, who is Italian-born and works in Madrid, has created a tableau vivant in the armory's elegantly appointed Mary Diver Room. Twin brothers and their father, all dressed as referees, stand around a soccer-ball-size "arancino" (a Sicilian rice ball) placed atop a waist-high stack of paper. Across the hall a muddy-looking monochrome painting has been inserted among the armory's portraits of uniformed brigadiers.

Mr. Roccasalva's stated references (to Giorgione, Jacques Lacan and Felix Gonzales-Torres, among others) don't quite add up. Still, this is the sort of nationally and architecturally conscious project one might expect to see in a Venice pavilion rather than on Park Avenue.

The Art Show, presented by the Art Dealers Association of America, at the Seventh Regiment Armory, Park Avenue at 67th Street. Friday and Saturday, noon to 8 p.m.; Sunday and Monday, noon to 6 p.m. \$20 per day. (212) 472-0590, [artdealers.org](#).

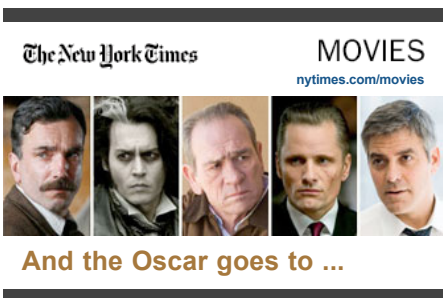
This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: February 23, 2008

An art review in Weekend on Friday about the Art Show fair, at the Park Avenue Armory, contained an outdated reference to the Armory Show, an annual fair that opens on March 27 this year. It is held solely at Pier 94 — not at two piers, as was the case from 2001 to 2006.

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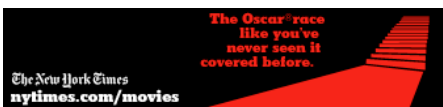
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