

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

ARTFORUM

Scene and Heard: When It Rains It pours, New York

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THE FIFTH EDITION of Frieze New York arrived last week in a frenzy of the best gallery exhibitions in years. Gerhard Richter? Whoa. Anish Kapoor? Okay, wow. Richard Serra? Gotta say. Josh Kline, Jordan Wolfson, Alicja Kwade, and more. Way more. Way!

The air was ten degrees cooler than it should have been on Wednesday, May 4th, when Frieze opened for VIP previews, raining as usual. Everyone complained. No one stayed home.

Getting through midtown gridlock to the East Ninetieth Street ferry for Randall's Island took an hour. On the ferry, I closed my eyes and tried to imagine it was Venice.

That didn't work.

Next year, maybe Frieze can set up in the ruins of the loony bin on Roosevelt island. Seems fitting. And reachable by tram.

Inside the big tent, people wanted to know what the new Frieze/IMG partnership was really about. Many hoped it would bring the fair closer to Manhattan. The Javits Center, one rumor had it. IMG produces sports events. Should we be thinking Madison Square Garden?

At Marlow & Son's, one of the overcrowded and overpriced popup canteens at the fair, Frieze cofounders Matthew Slotover and Amanda Sharp were talking to a reporter and playing their cards close to the chest. "I like to underpromise and overdeliver in life," Sharp allowed.

Maybe Frieze could move into the old, Eero Saarinen-designed TWA terminal at JFK? It's farther away, but at least it's an artwork.

Sascha Bauer, a collector, positioned himself at the front of the Massimo De Carlo stand, as if he were the dealer. "It's nice that they keep the number of VIPs here for the preview low," Bauer remarked. What? The aisles were nearly impassable. I saw swarms of others from New York, Dallas, London, San Francisco, Basel, and Turin. They were dressed better than usual this year. Does that mean anything?



Dealer Kate Werble.

Somewhere in the crowd was a pickpocket whom Frieze Projects artist David Horovitz hired to "gift" unsuspecting fairgoers with small sculptures. Moving targets, all. **Speaking of targets, it was only a matter of time before someone brought a firearm into the fair. Artist Christopher Chiappa hid a rifle trained on the aisle behind the peephole in a wall at Kate Werble's stand. "I think it's good for a fair," Werble said. "There's always an undercurrent." Of what? Violence? Perversity?**

In the fair's Spotlight section—for twentieth-century art—museums were among the first-line buyers. At P420 Gallery, MoMA landed two "acoustic drawings" from 1973 by ninety-year-old Milan Grygar. The Pompidou Foundation snapped up the 1970s Mary Kellys at Pippy Houldsworth. That was a long time coming.

Foksal Foundation Gallery had not-to-be-missed drawings by Henryk Stażewski and the late, Polish surrealist Erna Rosenstein. Stażewski was an important figure in Warsaw. He also painted his shoes. Near the south entrance, MCA Chicago chief curator Michael Darling was conferring with Stéphane Aquin, his counterpart at the Hirshhorn. Art fairs really are best for talking about art.

What if Frieze pitched its tent in Central Park, at Wollman Rink? Let Donald Trump pay for it.

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In the Frame section—"the kindergarten of the fair," as one dealer put it—Portikus curator Fabian Schöneich, who organized it with curator Jacob Proctor, said, "This is not a group show. It's eighteen solo proposals."

One artist, Liu Shiyuan, created an immersive House of Propaganda for Leo Xu's booth, where sayings like "Take Great Care Not to Miss the Small Things" were printed on an array of gaily patterned fabrics. I felt lost in translation.

The grid is far from dead. But for her American debut on the floor of São Paulo's Jacqueline Martins booth, Brazilian artist Deborah Bolsani installed paintings on standing lids from cardboard boxes to look like tilted headstones.

Newly minted author Simon de Pury, at the fair to promote *The Auctioneers: Adventures in the Art Trade*, stopped to Instagram the gold-toothed Michele Lamy, who was dressed in Rick Owens topped by a headdress of stubby antlers.

But wait. Clothing designer Nhu Duong, wearing a voluminous, black leather Comme des Garçons motorcycle jacket, was standing on Cooper Jacoby's steel mesh platform at David Lieske's Mathew Gallery when who should swoop into the Jack Shainman booth across the aisle but Rei Kawakubo—in a gold motorcycle jacket. Moment!

Seconds later, *Hamilton* producer Jeffrey Seller swung into view with Art Production Fund cofounder Yvonne Force Villareal. "Congratulations!" I said, wondering if I could ask for tickets. "Thank you!" he said, friendly as all get-out. Then he was gone.

Société's booth was wall-to-wall refrigerators filled with white bottles of Soylent. What's Soylent? It's gag-worthy, liquid food designed by and for millennials who think sitting down to wonderful meals with friends is a waste of time.

Artist Sean Raspet, whose invisible subjects are flavors and smells, had mixed a new prototype for Soylent. Dressed in wrinkle-free, temperature-resistant gray uniforms by Duong, he and the gallery staff were giving the stuff away. "Nothing for sale!" shouted dealer Daniel Wichelhaus. Good luck with that.

It's all about timing. "I've been dragging this around for years," said dealer Toby Webster of a wall-bound ceramic by Liz Larner at the Modern Institute stand. "Today I could have sold it six times."

Even though he isn't mayor anymore, Michael Bloomberg made his ritual circumnavigation of the fair, shaking hands and waving hello. The current mayor, Bill de Blasio, did not appear. Probably, he couldn't get there. No limo.

Back in Manhattan, Metro Pictures opened its doors after several months' renovation with a show of new photographs by Cindy Sherman. New Yorker critic Peter Schjeldahl, heartily approved. "There's a new vulnerability," he said. "Did you see the pickpocket?" asked Frieze Projects director Cecilia Alemani? I hadn't. "Check your purse," she replied. When I got home, I found a silver sculpture—of kissing seahorses. Never knew!

Sherman wore red to her opening, and clothes she put together from junk-shop finds in her pictures, which she printed on metal using a heat-transfer process that is very like ironing a patch on a T-shirt. That relieved the images of frames and distorting glass, leaving no barriers between viewer and subject. Each, including one picture that features multiple personalities, looked just like women from my high school graduating class, forty years on. Uncanny.

Eric Bogosian came to the dinner at La Sirena in the Maritime Hotel. So did Pictures Generation peeps Louise Lawler and Robert Longo, and Sherman's older sister Betsy Leite, who had their own room in the restaurant while the other seated a passel of museum people—the New Museum's Lisa Phillips and Massimiliano Gioni, the Whitney's Adam Weinberg and Donna De Salvo, MoMA's Roxana Marcoci and Klaus Biesenbach, the Studio Museum's Thelma Golden, and collector Eli Broad, whose museum in Los Angeles is staging a Sherman retrospective from his own collection. "We're really happy," he said, and looked it.

Meanwhile, downtown, the Cultivist was celebrating its first anniversary in the Church Street Boxing Club, where the evening's curator, artist Cheryl Pope, started things off in a knockdown sparring match with Shaun Leonardo. Way to vent!

Thursday brought such a bonanza it was hard to know where to go first. Before heading up to Gavin Brown to see new portrait drawings by Alex Katz, collectors Alain Servais and Eva Ruiz stopped into Josh Kline's posthuman show at 47 Canal, and pronounced it the best in town – all too soon!

Daniel Buchholz had Cerith Wyn Evans. The twins Gert and Uwe Tobias made ceramics and tattoo-ready paintings for Team. Josephine Meckseper launched a new book at Printed Matter. Roni Horn and Julie Ault curated a text-only Félix González-Torres show for Andrea Rosen that was all about the ballooning presence of absence. Lehmann Maupin had a bright new crop of neons, paintings, drawings, and bronzes by Tracey Emin. And Tom Sachs had one of his best shows of lovingly handmade, common objects at Jeffrey Deitch. "It's very neat," commented collector Sandy Brant. "Tom has a reverence for clean," Deitch replied.