

VANITY FAIR

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By Nate Freeman

Can Eric Adams’s New York Finally Make “Art Week” Happen?

The city has decided to brand the first full stretch of May as a week devoted to the visual arts, reviving an idea not seen since the late days of the Bloomberg administration. Will this time be different? Our new mayor says so—now that he’s back from Los Angeles.



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Greetings from New York, where—as I’m sure you’re aware—it’s currently New York Art Week. What’s that? You’ve never heard of New York Art Week? You are probably not alone! The last time the city attempted to give us a New York Art Week, it was those halcyon days of March 2012.

Then [mayor Michael Bloomberg](#) kicked things off at the Park Avenue Armory, which was hosting the Art Show, the annual fair put on by the Art Dealers Association of America. Bloomberg was already a regular at the fair, as it’s an exceedingly comfortable 16-minute walk down Park Avenue from his mansion at 17 East 79th Street.

“I always like to boast that New York is the art and cultural capital of the world. If you’re looking for proof of that, this is your lucky week,” Bloomberg, worth \$22 billion at the time, said to the collected group of art dealers and reporters.

Then he launched into something resembling a joke.

“The Art Show hangs in the Armory on Park, and the Armory Show is parked in a hangar on the river. Now you have to work very hard to get that right,” said Bloomberg, expecting laughs.

Bloomberg's enthusiasm for the arts has come in the form of check writing, which is how the 18-month-old **Jasper Bloomberg**, grandson to the former mayor and financial-news and intelligence magnate, was able to get [his name on the wall of The Whitney](#) back in 2015. Thanks, grandpa! Mayor Mike spent time on the boards of The Met and The Serpentine in London, and he built quite the collection himself. After starting out buying paintings by the Hudson River School folks, he started working with the adviser **Nancy Rosen** to acquire works by Andy Warhol, **Jasper Johns**, Roy Lichtenstein, and many others.

Ten years later, we have another New York Art Week, and another mayor who is extremely enthusiastic about cultural happenings in the city. So much so that after attending his first fundraiser for The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute on Monday evening, **Eric Adams**—the Tito's-and-soda-in-hand, out-all-night mayor—proudly boasted that “The Met needed some swag and I brought that swag,” [while at an after-party hosted by Instagram](#) at the James B. Duke mansion, before he headed to his regular haunt, Zero Bond, to party with **Bella Hadid**, **Hailey Bieber**, **Kendall Jenner**, and **Paloma Elsesser**.

This go at reviving New York Art Week had some great timing, in other words. The Met Gala [this year raised \\$17.4 million](#), a record amount, for the Costume Institute. With such winds in the city's cultural sails, it would be open waters to the fairs and galleries from there, right? Maybe Adams would pop into a gallery dinner at The Odeon and yuk it up with the Hauser & Wirth guys? Or maybe he'd be more into swinging by Rock Center to hang with the Christie's execs in town before the historic sale of Andy Warhol's portrait of Marilyn Monroe goes down next week? Mayor Adams, are you going to the afters at Paul's Casablanca?

True Colors emailed hizzoner to find out.

“I appreciate your recommendations. We haven't confirmed anything yet but will be sure to give you any updates when we have them,” Mayor Adams wrote Friday through a rep. “New York City has always lured visitors from across the globe for its world-renowned art and culture. Events like the Met Gala drive tourism in this city, which has long been an engine of economic prosperity that impacts all New Yorkers.”

As it happens Adams had taken a little jaunt out of town after his after-party appearances. On Tuesday, he flew to Los Angeles, where he [took in Dave Chappelle's](#) fateful show at the Hollywood Bowl and attended a black-tie event at the mansion that onetime “homeless billionaire” **Nicolas Berggruen** bought for \$63.1 million last year. Berggruen, who recently snapped up multiple palazzos in Venice, was hosting a party for his annual namesake prize at the estate, once owned by newsprint baron William Randolph Hearst. Adams was there alongside California governor **Gavin Newsom**; L.A. mayor **Eric Garcetti**; **Beck**; **Elon Musk's** mom, **Maye**; collector **Elaine Wynn**; artists **Alex Israel** and **Sterling Ruby**; the novelist **Siri Hustvedt**; Snap billionaire **Evan Spiegel** and his wife, **Miranda Kerr**; plus, also straight from the Met Gala, **Wendi Deng Murdoch**. Adams's flight home on Thursday was delayed and he had to scrap most of his public schedule in New York for the day. Still, per city and state, [he planned to attend the New York City Ballet's spring gala](#) that night.

While we had him on email, we couldn't pass up the chance to ask about a little bit of art news from city hall this week. On Tuesday, [word broke](#) that Adams had appointed **Scott Sartiano**, the founder of Zero Bond, as his representative to the board of The Met, one of the most sought-after seats of philanthropic power on the planet. It came as a bit of a surprise for some observers in the art world that a guy who founded a water-park-themed bottle-service club called Spa might now be going to acquisitions meetings with **John Pritzker**, **Samantha Boardman**, and **Tom Hill**.

To Adams, the appointment makes perfect sense.

“Transformative, bold ideas come when you bring diverse ideas to the table. I look forward to seeing a fresh perspective on New York's high art society,” Adams told me.

While the mayor was out of town, his cultural commissioner, **Laurie Cumbo**, was around to chat, and got on the phone just days after her fiancé got down on one knee and [proposed to her as they walked the carpet to the Met Gala](#), with the whole world watching. (“When he fell to his knees, I thought he died at first!” Cumbo told me.) She caught True Colors on the phone while we were stalking the aisles at the European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF). She was in the office, but said she planned to hit up as many events this week as she could. She had just been to the Whitney Biennial—Cumbo was a big fan of the open hang, with amorphous walls on the lower, light-filled floor—and was heading to check out shows at the Drawing Center later this week.

“I *am* the visual arts in New York—this is in my *blood*,” she said. “With the art fairs that are happening, it’s going to show the city and the world we’re not just bringing New York back, we’re bringing New York forward.”

There certainly was a lot going on. On Wednesday, openings lit up Chelsea, and Lisson Gallery hosted a dinner at The Odeon to celebrate openings for **Carmen Herrera** and **Bernard Pifferetti**. A few blocks north, Gladstone Gallery had taken over the newest of the established New York art boîtes—Café Altro Paradiso, the site of perhaps a half dozen different dinners this week. **Barbara Gladstone** and crew had scored a monumental show of rarely seen work by the American legend Robert Rauschenberg.

While sadly, Rauschenberg, who would have been 97 this year, was not around to see the show, his son, **Chris**, gave a rousing toast to all the artists who did show up to honor his father’s legacy, including **Ugo Rondinone**, **Wade Guyton**, **Mel Bochner**, **Leigh Ledare**, **Precious Okoyomon**, **Gedi Sibony**, and **Matthew Barney**, who let slip that the show-stopping performance he unveiled at The Schaulager in Basel in 2021 was coming to the Park Avenue Armory, gunshots and all, next year. “It’s going to be totally different than it was in Basel—can you imagine the shooting performance in the Park Avenue Armory?” he said.

On Thursday, down by the river at Basketball City on Pier 36, was NADA, the scruffy fair that draws dealers with spaces in the downtowns of many global cities, and first thing in the morning, big-shot advisers such as **Lisa Schiff** and the collector **Josh Abraham** were crawling around snapping up works. Among the booths was a gallery from, of all places, Moscow, its booth manned by two vehemently anti-Putin art dealers who were trying to sell a not-so-subtle painting of the Russian president in a coffin.

“We hate him as much as you do,” said one of the workers at the booth, pointing to the piece.

Next up was Independent, one of the most stylish and well-curated art fairs the world over, founded by the erstwhile Chelsea dealer **Elizabeth Dee** along with White Columns director **Matthew Higgs**. Dee was seen drawing a group of curators and trustees from the Brooklyn Museum up to the top floor while collectors and artists bumped up against the scion of collectors and the scion of artists, including **Bernard Ruiz-Picasso** and **Sandy Rower**, grandson of Calder.

Next up was TEFAF, the Maastricht fair that’s had a presence at the Park Avenue Armory the last few years. Monegasque dealer **David Nahmad** installed an astounding Francis Bacon *Screaming Pope* painting that is more likely to feature in marquee auctions than on the wall of a booth at a fair. The sense of extreme quality pervaded through the whole enterprise, from the newer works by **Eric Fischl** at Skarstedt to the *Wunderzeichenbuch (Book of Miracles)*, a book of gorgeous illustrations from 1552 being sold by David Zwirner from the collection of **Mickey Cartin**. And it was all enhanced by the fact that the Champagne started flowing at 1 p.m., and the oyster shuckers came around with buckets of the best bivalves up and down the coast.

And while former mayor Bloomberg did not appear to have made it to the Armory this time, LVMH heir **Alex Arnault** was walking the aisles alongside his wife. As we were leaving, **Ashley Olsen** was checking out the Bacon, which she might even be able to afford.

For the art world lifers, the fairs were just the first part of the day—starting at six sharp, Chelsea was chockablock with people trying to get a peek at the blockbuster shows unveiled by the world’s biggest galleries. Gagosian staged its first big New York show of work by the photo-manipulating madman **Andreas Gursky** in years, drawing crowds to 24th Street. Two blocks down, Hauser & Wirth had some of the largest, most-show-stopping paintings **Nicole Eisenman** has ever made, and elsewhere on 22nd Street **Matthew Marks** had staged two shows of work by Ellsworth Kelly, including a gigantic floor relief that crested over a large swath of the gallery.

David Kordansky Gallery, which has long been one of the most important contemporary art concerns, commercial or otherwise, on the West Coast, now has a sparkly new gallery on West 20th Street that will open later Friday. The space was built out by architect **Kulapat Yantrasast** and his firm, Why, and boasts a series of private viewing rooms that shoot off a stylish office area. For the first show, Kordansky brought new work by **Lauren Halsey**, the Angeleno artist who scored the coveted commission to install work on the roof of The Met, opening later this year.

“L.A. is the city that made me, and Lauren is one of the best L.A. artists of her generation,” **David Kordansky** told me as we walked through the space.

Later on Friday, the night will end at the same place where it started: A few days after [Cardi B performed at the Boom Boom Room](#) for a Met Gala after-party, **Ms. Lauryn Hill** will perform atop The Standard for the gallery’s opening party. The dealer says he’s just getting started in the Big Apple. If New York Art Week comes back next year, he’ll still be here, and then some.

“I think the space is a little small,” said Kordansky, the L.A. transplant. “We could go bigger.”

The Rundown

Your crib sheet for comings and goings in the art world this week and beyond...

...**Drake** was papped the other day with what appeared to be a new addition to his art collection. The guys behind the bygone service Supreme Saint—a bot-made algorithm that helped true Supreme heads cop grails without having to wait in line—dropped a pic of Drizzy in front of **Henry Taylor’s Hush Now...You Won** (2018), a giant painting of golfer **Ben Crenshaw** winning the 1995 Masters and being embraced by [his caddie, Carl Jackson](#). The work was last seen in Taylor’s solo show at Hauser & Wirth’s Southampton space in the summer of 2021.

...**Thom Browne** unveiled his sprawling surrealist set of looks at the Javits Center last Friday. In addition to the fashion royalty, magazine editors, and set of starlets and It boys in attendance—per usual, the kids in the reboot of *Gossip Girl* and assorted cast members of whatever buzzy movie A24 is distributing this month—a number of artists showed up to sit front-row and take in some fashion before New York Art Week. Among those we spotted were **Amy Sberald, Chloe Wise, Genesis Tramaine, and Maurizio Cattelan**.

...Thousands of **Takashi Murakami’s Flower** NFTs have sold since their release in late March, with the average price hovering around 6 ether (ETH), or about \$16,000. And it’s clear from looking at transactions on OpenSea that the digital works—inspired by Japanese video games from the 1970s, and trading on the flower trope that has long been a staple of Murakami’s Pop art-meets-amine ethos, Superflat—are trading like hotcakes, with different whales acquiring works from different *Flower* series. It all leads up to Wednesday, when Murakami stages his first show at Gagosian’s New York spaces in eight years. For good measure, he is also taking over the gallery at 980 Madison to stage a sprawling show of works inspired by *CloneX*, another one of his NFT series. He launched those works with Rtfkt, the studio that’s building streetwear for the metaverse, as the digital avatars become physical sculptures and paintings on the walls at Gagosian. Perhaps there’s no artist better suited to taking on the current slate of zeitgeists—NFTs, the metaverse, streetwear drops, sneaker-collecting culture, social media personalities and the contemporary art market—than Takashi Murakami.

...It's been just over six months since a painting by **Lauren Quin** incited a frenzy during the charity auction at Two x Two for AIDS and Art, the annual Dallas-society gala and fundraiser. Estimated to sell for \$14,000, the painting—a typical work of hers, a woolly abstraction of tubes and bacterial growths, all meticulously rendered in vibrant color—instead sold for a massive \$210,000, immediately minting a new star painter in Los Angeles. Now she'll be repped by one of the city's best galleries, Blum & Poe, and her first solo show at the gallery will go down a week from Saturday.

...In other representation news, **Anna Weyant**, the celebrated, deeply in-demand young artist who paints Botticelli-esque portraits, witty still lifes, and otherworldly dollhouses, will be represented by Gagosian Gallery, which had two Weyant works on view at the booth at Art Basel Miami Beach. Weyant's first solo show at the gallery will be in the fall. The timing of the announcement is auspicious. Christie's 21st Century Evening Sale on Tuesday opens with a Weyant painting that is estimated to sell for \$200,000 but widely expected to go way way higher.

...Now that it's nice in New York, it's time to start thinking about the Hamptons and environs. Out in Montauk this summer, The Ranch, a sprawling exhibition space founded last year by **Max Levai** on the nation's oldest working horse ranch, will stage a massive retrospective of work by the German artist **Werner Büttner** that is traveling from the Hamburger Kunsthalle in Germany, followed by a show of work by **Frank Stella** that will include examples of some of his largest sculptures ever made. Following those, there will be a show by the painter **Jo Messer**, a two-person presentation of works by **Jamian Juliano-Villani** and Mike Kelley, and a solo show by **Aaron Curry** in October.

...And Canada, the long-running downtown gallery that currently has a smashing show by the artist **Mary Manning**, will open a space in East Hampton—at 98 Newton Lane, right across from Harper's—sharing a building with **Jack Hanley**'s out-east space. In addition, it's taking over a space across the street from its gallery in Tribeca, annexing 61 Lispenard to be part of the Canadian landmass. The new building will be accessible from both Lispenard and Canal and will also feature a bookstore.

...And in Southampton, the Parrish Art Museum—which has not named an acting director since **Kelly Taxter** resigned in December 2021—will open its season with a show curated by **Mickalene Thomas** and **Racquel Chevremont**, featuring artists such as a **Leilah Babirye**, **Torkwase Dyson**, **February James**, **Kameelah Janan Rasheed**, **Karyn Olivier**, and **Kennedy Yanko**. The season starts May 22.

And that's a wrap on this week's [True Colors!](#) Like what you're seeing? Hate what you're reading? Have a tip? Drop me a line at nate_freeman@condenast.com.