

The ARMORY Art Week



Issue No.1, September 2025—Weaving history and culture in the art of MARTHA TUTTLE, talking Storefront for Art and Architecture with FRIDA ESCOBEDO and JOSÉ ESPARZA CHONG CUY, sharing masa pancakes and diasporic knowledge with Ghetto Gastro's JON GRAY, building a collection that speaks to you with EVERETTE TAYLOR, strutting your stuff when art and fashion weeks collide, and learning the art of discovery with LISA GOODMAN

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Welcome to the 2025 edition of The Armory Show!

The fair has always been reflective of its time and, this year, we continue that legacy. I'm inspired and motivated by our exhibitors who remain committed to showing today's best artists through experimental, thoughtful presentations.

As the contemporary art world landscape evolves, the importance of The Armory Show is constant. First and foremost, the fair is a platform for discovery. Whether you discover new artists, curators, galleries to watch, or new frameworks for considering art, the fair remains foundational in spotlighting vital work by artists of our time.

Kyla McMillan
Director, The Armory Show

EDITOR'S LETTER

I'm excited to share the inaugural issue of *The Armory Art Week*, and I thank all the individuals whose hard work made it possible. This magazine aims to capture the robust ecosystem surrounding The Armory Show, both in New York City and beyond, and to reflect how the fair has situated itself within a larger cultural landscape over its 31 years. Inside these pages, you can read tips for collecting new and exciting artworks, guides to culinary gems in Harlem and the Bronx, insights into the lives and work of many of today's key art world players, and more.

Marko Gluhaich
Editor, *The Armory Art Week*

A SHORT HISTORY OF JAVITS CENTER

The Indigenous and ecological histories inspiring the design of this year's Armory Show

Before there was a Javits Center, even before there was a New York, there were the Lenape, and there was *Manahatta*—which translates to “hilly island,” or “the island of many hills.” The Lenape had a very good connection, understanding, and relationship with the land: the plant life, where to hunt, where to lodge, etc.

The land beneath Javits Center was predominantly marsh and meadow. The area contained around 130 different native plant species.

The river beside it, *Muhheakantuck*, which is now referred to as the Hudson River, is an estuary, the meeting of two bodies of water that are going in different directions. The Lenape knew this, which is why their name for it means “the water that flows both ways.” It's because of this convergence that the area had such a diverse biome. An estuary creates a social and environmental cohesion.

Mzwakhe Ndlovu of ZOMUZI
Fair Designer, The Armory Show



On the cover
Frida Escobedo and José Esparza Chong Cuy
photographed by Heather Sten, 2025

CONTENTS

6

WHO'S WHO

Five people to know at this year's Armory Show

9

ART FAIR RUNWAY

An insider's guide to dressing for fashion and Armory weeks

12

ARTIST PROFILE

How Martha Tuttle weaves layers of meaning into her organic practice

16

INTERVIEW

Frida Escobedo and José Esparza Chong Cuy discuss the legacy of Armory Spotlight winner Storefront for Art and Architecture

22

FOOD TOUR

Ghetto Gastro's Jon Gray shows us his favorite spots around town

26

COLLECTING GUIDE

Navigating art fairs with Lisa Goodman

28

INTERVIEW

Everette Taylor leads us through his eclectic, personal collection

30

A QUICK WORD WITH...

Four artists and gallerists defining this year's Armory Show

WHO'S WHO

Five voices reshaping the art landscape

JESSICA BELL BROWN
Curator



When she was curator of contemporary art at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Jessica Bell Brown co-heralded the lauded exhibition, *A Movement in Every Direction: Legacies of the Great Migration* (2022–23), with works by Mark Bradford, Torkwase Dyson, Robert Pruitt, and Carrie Mae Weems. Last year, when Brown took over as Executive Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) at Virginia Commonwealth University, she had high ambitions again, among them to produce more traveling exhibitions and foster more diverse partnerships. Above all, she wanted to grow the ICA's audience and let artists lead: "We go where artists go, where artists enter... Our mission is to listen, to create and to make art public. Our programs, our exhibitions, our partnerships will create that opportunity," she told *Style Weekly* last year. So far, she has delivered.

Last summer, the ICA opened "Ayida," a group show celebrating the Caribbean and its diaspora through the lens of Haitian-born poet and AIDS activist, Assotto Saint (1957–94). Guest-curator by artist Serubiri Moses, the exhibition embodies the ICA under Bell, with its mission to innovate and envision programs that celebrate the fertile edges of the canon. This means embracing the diasporic communities of Richmond and introducing audiences to artists like Cassi Namoda, a figurative painter from Mozambique who will have her first US institutional survey at the ICA in 2026.

ERIN DORN
Gallerist



In the fall of 2023, Erin Dorn opened the doors of her Houston gallery, Seven Sisters, with

a show by artist Brie Ruais, titled "Penumbra." The site-specific sculptural installation centered around the elements of an eclipse—sun, moon, Earth—and reflected Dorn's longstanding interest in relationships between art and architectural history, "particularly their intersection in sacred spaces."

Dorn sees Seven Sisters as its own sacred space, one dedicated to women artists who've long been marginalized by ageism and sexism, among other market-driven systems that narrowly define value and relevance. The gallery aims to highlight collaboration and storytelling, celebrating work that, she told me, is "deeply connected to identity, craft, and resilience—often found in the practices of women who have never been invited into the spotlight yet who still create with unwavering dedication."

For this year's Armory Presents, this will manifest in a dual presentation of sculpture by Julia Kunin and Katarzyna Przewańska, both of whom explore fusions of organic and architectural forms that engage their materials in metaphoric ways. Kunin's iridescent ceramics blend human and architectural elements, reflecting on identity, gender, and spatial presence, while Przewańska transforms objects like eggs, rocks, and plants into otherworldly commentaries on human nature in the Anthropocene.

LUCIA HIERRO
Artist



The multimedia artist Lucia Hierro is a native New Yorker who was raised in Washington Heights, a neighborhood often fondly referred to as Little Dominican Republic. Both her mother and her grandmother were expert sewers of Dominican descent, and the artist's iconic soft sculptures have their roots in this matrilineage.

It was during her MFA at Yale School of Art that Hierro began to make her outsized objects, coupling her interests in conceptual still life and pop art with a tribute

to the bodegas and music of her youth. The series "Objetos" (2020–23), for example, features digitally printed large-scale fabric sculptures that resemble foods popular among the Dominican diaspora like Goya's Canilla rice and Café Bustelo coffee. More recent installations have incorporated field recordings of street life gathered from her local community.

Reflecting on relationships between consumer culture, architecture, and diaspora, Hierro's work critically employs scale to highlight the symbolic value of everyday products that are easily overlooked. She has exhibited in a variety of venues from MFA Boston and El Museo del Barrio to the Guggenheim, and is currently included in the group exhibition, "Traffic of Influences," in Puerto Rico's artist-run space, El Kilometro. Appropriating imagery that ranges from commerce to art history, Hierro underscores the ways cultural branding impacts our identity and shapes the aesthetics of 21st century capitalism.

ESTEBAN JEFFERSON
Artist



The son of architects, Esteban Jefferson learned early on how to draw, practicing his skills on regular visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a child. These influences have shaped a practice that centers the role played by artifacts—public, urban, and historical—in the formation of collective memory.

Turning photographic documents into paintings with schematic drawing, Jefferson's work deliberately juxtaposes highly detailed imagery with raw expanses of sketchy under-drawing or empty space. Whether limning a street memorial to a lost friend (*We Love You Devra Freeland*, 2021), the ruins of an unofficial Brooklyn skatepark (*Brooklyn Banks*, 2025), or two Venetian busts of Black subjects placed absentmindedly behind a ticket desk at a Paris museum (*Petit Palais*, 2019–21), this stylistic approach alludes to the shifting power

structures that determine what we remember and what we forget.

Nowhere was this more evident than the body of work Jefferson created in 2023 portraying the visual aftermath of nationwide protests sparked by the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Homing in on a burnt-out police van (*May 29, 2020*, 2023) or a defaced equestrian statue of Theodore Roosevelt before and after it was removed (*December 2, 2021*, 2022), the artist captured focal points that UK curator Natasha Hoare, in *Plaster* magazine, calls "fugitive moments of power trickling up."

AMITHA RAMAN
Collector



Amitha Raman is not your typical art collector. With a background in product development and a marketing degree from Emerson College, Raman built her company AMITHA—specializing in luxury cannabis accessories—from the ground up. A member of the Floret Coalition, an anti-racist collective of small businesses in the cannabis and cannabis-adjacent world, she regularly promotes equity-oriented actions and donates to campaigns for social justice.

Drawn to work that is connected to personal narratives with broader political resonance, she has focused on collecting artists like Jenny Holzer, Rashid Johnson, Jeffrey Gibson, Marilyn Minter, and Pipilotti Rist. She is "particularly interested in materiality," she told me when we spoke this summer: "how artists push the boundaries of their medium or use materials in unexpected ways" to tell their stories whether through abstraction, figuration, text, or video.

Raman has maintained strong ties to the visual arts as a trustee of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (since 2020); a co-chair of the Museum of Modern Art's Young Patrons Council; and a member of its Black Arts Council. Raman also co-hosts the podcast *Art from the Outside* with Will Paley, billed as a place "for anyone who wants an outside-in look at the art world."

Words
Jane Harris