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ART FAIR REVIEW

Six Unforgettable Artists at the Biggest Independent Fair

A dependably stylish fair expands and reappears on the far side of Chinatown.



Installation view of John Brooks at Diane Rosenstein Gallery, INDEPENDENT / Photo by Alexa Hoyer



By **Will Heinrich**

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Independent takes a big leap this year: With 76 exhibitors, most of them bringing solo or two-person shows, it's now bigger than Frieze (about 68 galleries), and it's moved to Pier 36, a hangar-like space on the far end of Chinatown, to accommodate the change. (They even hired the architects [So-Il](#), who previously did Frieze's tent on Randall's Island.) The fair remains tightly curated and aesthetically consistent. The downside is that it can be hard for work that breaks the mold to stand out, like Johan Samboni's carved-brick figures in an installation at **SGR Galería (110)** or Chakaia Booker's recycled rubber-tire sculptures, paired with Miguel Rio Branco's vivid photographs of street scenes presented by **David Nolan and Almeida & Dale (303)**. But the upside, which is considerable, is that you can count on a broad vista of strong, tasteful, harmoniously colorful work. Here are some other standout artists.

John Brooks (508)

The poet and artist John Brooks of Los Angeles titles each of the 6-foot-high colored pencil drawings that line the walls of **Diane Rosenstein Gallery's booth (508)** with a phrase, "Islands Are not Forever," from a W.S. Merwin poem, a meditation on impermanence and pleasure. Together they show a continuous panorama of the pop and art historical celebrities and sites that inhabit the background of the artist's imagination: Marlene Dietrich, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's cabin in Davos, John Wayne in a bunny suit, Miss Piggy. With workmanlike drawing, neon colors, wallpapery backgrounds and meme-like knowingness, they feel very of the moment — so much so that I felt as if I were still looking at them after I left.

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