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Apollo,

What to expect from EXPO Chicago 2024

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Around the Galleries

EXPO Chicago

Contemporary works and medieval manuscripts sit side by side in the Windy City this month, writes *Isabella Smith*



1. *Turistas (Carlos I de España 5 de Alemania, Madrid, Parque el Retir)*, 2012, Iván Argote (b. 1983), c-print, 165 x 124.5cm. Perrotin, New York

It is hopeless for the occasional visitor to try to keep up with Chicago. She outgrows his prophecies faster than he can make them,' wrote Mark Twain in 1883. 'She is always a novelty; for she is never the Chicago you saw when you passed through the last time.' What was true then is, to some degree, still true today. One of the latest changes is one of ownership: last summer, EXPO Chicago joined Frieze's expanding empire.

This shouldn't be cause for concern among fans – far from it. 'We're going to see huge improvements in outreach and communications, and we've redesigned the floor plan,' says its president and director Tony Karman, who founded the fair in 2012. 'But it's all in service of the programming we've established and continue to build. For the most part, our patrons won't notice the difference.'

This year, EXPO Chicago will host 170 galleries at Navy Pier's Festival Hall – some 30 of whom are returning after a break, including Perrotin, Mariane Ibrahim and Harper's. They will be showing alongside 49 first-time exhibitors such as Jack Hanley Gallery, Donald Ellis

Gallery and Hannah Traore Gallery.

With a wealth of contemporary art in store, Karman is also pleased to welcome dealers offering work in areas less well represented at the fair. 'It will be wonderful to have some historic material on show through new exhibitors such as Thomas Gibson Fine Art or Les Enluminures, who will be showing medieval manuscripts,' he says. 'I love the fact that in a contemporary art fair, there's also going to be an opportunity to tap into, say, the Middle Ages.'

As in previous editions, the fair will include the special sections PROFILE, which features projects by single artists or collectives, and EXPOSURE, which focuses on solo or two-person presentations by younger galleries. This year, EXPOSURE is in the hands of Rosario Güiraldes, curator of visual arts at the Walker Art Center. Making links with the wider arts ecosystem is important to Karman, who describes the fair's programming as a 'core part' of its reputation. A key component is the Curatorial Forum (co-organised with Independent Curators International), which

hosts some 80 early- and mid-career curators. This year it will include a conference on the theme 'Curating and the Commons', as well as eight museum directors discussing issues facing the field in the Directors' Summit.

The fair continues beyond Navy Pier. There is Override, a collaboration with the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, in which billboards show art instead of advertisements. Another collaboration with the city, IN/SITU Outside, sees public art placed along the lakefront and in various Chicago neighbourhoods for over a year.

The fair 'very much has a Chicago flavour – we benefit from being in an incredible city. Our arts institutions here were built up by trustees that were actively searching for contemporary art from around the world,' says Karman. He adds: 'There's a depth of connoisseurship, which is one of the strongest reasons why we exist in Chicago.' **A**

EXPO Chicago takes place from 11–14 April at Navy Pier's Festival Hall (www.expochicago.com).

Gallery highlights

Fruit of Friendship: Portraits by Mary Beale

25 April–19 July

Philip Mould & Company, London

Research has revealed that Mary Beale (1633–99), one of the first women in Britain to become a professional painter, once lived and worked in the building that today houses Philip Mould Gallery – which is now hosting an exhibition of 25 works. These include a portrait of Anne Sotheby, which will travel after a fortnight to ‘Now You See Us: Women Artists in Britain, 1520–1920’ at Tate Britain (16 May–13 October).

Augustus John and the First Crisis of Brilliance

24 April–18 July

Piano Nobile, London

While Augustus John’s fortunes have waned of late, with his sister Gwen often seen as more sympathetic to contemporary eyes and mores, here Piano Nobile makes the case for Augustus’s early work. Some 30 paintings and drawings by the artist described by Virginia Woolf as the ‘saviour’ of British painting are paired with works by his contemporaries including William Orpen, Jacob Epstein and, yes, Gwen John.

Maggi Hambling: The Night

Until 16 May

Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong

‘You, darkness, of whom I am born –/I love you more than the flame’, wrote the poet Rainer Maria Rilke in one of his *Poems to Night* (1916). This exhibition, taking its cue from Rilke, sees Maggi Hambling in a nocturnal mood, with a selection of dark-hued, densely layered paintings inspired by the night sky. It also features two hitherto unseen bodies of work in a more carnal vein: titles include *Sexy, Sexy Dream* and *About to Kiss* (both 2023).

The New School of Paris through its Pioneering Women (1945–1964)

13 April–25 May

Perrotin, New York

The term ‘School of Paris’ was coined during the 1920s to describe the group of avant-garde artists who were flocking to France at the time. After the Second World War, the prefix ‘New’ was appended, updating the term to refer to the city’s abstract artists. This exhibition, curated by art historian Thomas Schlessler, explores the work of the female artists, gallerists and critics associated with the label.

Fairs in focus

Art Brussels

25–28 April

Brussels Expo

The contemporary art fair is back in the art deco halls of Brussels Expo, which will house 176 galleries from 31 countries. Though it may be the 40th edition of Art Brussels, the fair shouldn’t feel over-familiar: some 40 per cent of exhibitors are newcomers. Special sections include REDISCOVERY, which focuses on under-recognised 20th-century artists, and DISCOVERY, which is dedicated to solo or joint presentations by emerging artists.

Lisbon Art & Antiques Fair

12–21 April

Cordoaria Nacional, Lisbon

For its 21st edition, the Lisbon Art & Antiques Fair (LAAF) returns to the Cordoaria Nacional, a former naval rope-making factory in Belem. The fair, which is organised by the Associação Portuguesa dos Antiquários (APA), features objects ranging from medieval sculptures to paintings by Paula Rego. Among its 34 exhibitors are the Portuguese dealers Galeria da Arcada, Isabel Lopes da Silva, Galeria São Mamede and São Roque.



1. Silver hand washing set (ewer and basin), 17th century, Pedro Aguiar-Branco Gallery