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The Best Booths at Independent 20th Century



BY **ANNE DORAN** September 25, 2026 4:19pm



Raphael Soyer, *Jackson Park*, c. 1930
FORUM GALLERY.



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It's a big year for Independent, the art world's favorite contemporary art fair, and its more art-historically minded sister, Independent 20th Century. On the heels of Independent's move earlier this year from Spring Studios in New York's Tribeca to the much larger Pier 36 on the Lower East Side, its 20th Century edition, which opens to the public today, has also relocated, shifting from its Lower Manhattan location to Marcel Breuer's 1960s brutalist building on Madison Avenue and East 75th Street, formerly home to the Whitney Museum and now headquarters for Sotheby's auction house.

The move has allowed the fair to expand from 31 participating exhibitors in 2025 to this year's 57 and to more closely approximate a museum experience, with discrete "galleries" rather than the usual corridors lined with booths. Despite nearly doubling in size, the fair remains viewer friendly, in contrast to the tired and bloated Armory Show, which is running concurrently with an exhausting 230-plus exhibitors.

While other New York art fairs like TEFAF and ADAA also deal in historical work, Independent 20th Century has a specific focus: art made in the 100 years between 1900 and 2000, with particular attention paid to expanding the art-historical canon. In this it reflects a growing art world impulse toward inclusivity, as witnessed by the increased presence of female artists, outsider artists, queer artists, and artists of the Global South at auctions, biennials, and museum exhibitions.

At the same time, the fair troubles the boundary between historical and contemporary, with booths devoted to Jenny Holzer (at Sprüth Magers) and Relational Aesthetics (at Esther Schipper) rubbing shoulders with those featuring works by Picasso (at John Szoke) and Raphael Soyer (at Forum Gallery).

Standout presentations this year include "Black Soho," curated by galleries Ryan Lee and Salon 94 and featuring works made in NYC between 1961 and 1984 by African-American artists such as Emma Amos, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Camille Billops, Frederick J. Brown, Vivian Browne, Ed Clark, David Hammons, and Norman Lewis. Elsewhere, Berry Campbell is showing a selection of pieces by the women artists of the famed Stable Gallery (1953–1970), including Elaine de Kooning, Joan Mitchell, Charlotte Park, and Janice Biala. (More works by Joan Mitchell are on view in a pairing of her work and that of Kimber Smith at Bueno & Co.)

Among the solo booths, look for Nahmad Contemporary's showing of punctured, Murano glass-encrusted, and sand-sprinkled works by Lucio Fontana, which predate his better-known slashed canvases; Alison Jacques's presentation of surrealist works by self-taught artist Bona de Mandiargues (1926–2000); and Mitchell-Innes & Nash's grouping of the darkly humorous and always political work of Canadian artist collective General Idea.

See eight other not-to-be-missed presentations below.

The **Independent 20th Century** (<https://www.independenthq.com/fair2>) art fair runs from September 24–27 at 945 Madison Avenue, New York.