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Let the Madness Begin: Previewing NYC's Armory Week

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Every March for the last ten years, art lovers flock to New York's Piers 92 and 94 on the Hudson River to attend The Armory Show, hosting more than 250 modern and contemporary galleries from around the world.

The Armory Show, which opens tomorrow and runs through Sunday, is among the handful of art fairs closely watched as a barometer for the health of the art market. Named for the historic 1913 exhibition held at the 69th Regiment Armory where Americans were introduced en masse to European Modern art, the Armory Show was co-founded in 1994 by gallerists Paul Morris and Matthew Marks as a modest meet-and-greet event in the suites at the old (pre-Schrager) Gramercy Park hotel. It moved from Gramercy to Chelsea and in 2001, moved again, this time to its current location, the massive 208,000-square-foot venue at Piers 92 and 94. It now draws hundreds of dealers and thousands of visitors, an annual art world event involving wheeling and dealing between some of the world's biggest galleries and high profile collectors, art advisors and institutions but more importantly aisles and aisles of art--works by emerging artists to blue-chip works by established names.

As with most of the big art fairs, what is even more overwhelming than the maze-like interior of the Armory is the week-long panoply of events that take place during this week --from smaller satellite fairs to talks, openings, happenings of all kinds. The amount of options you have in one day is overwhelming. To help our readers manage this week's madness, I've included a list of highlights for each major fair, below, along with a list of concurrent exhibitions open to the public this week.

The truly intrepid (and undaunted) art lover should continue the contemporary art fair tour, getting to the dozen or so other art fairs also taking place this week and over the weekend including -- in addition to the ADAA's Art Show and the INDEPENDENT art fair, two high profile fairs (some even say that the INDEPENDENT is quickly gaining ground on The Armory with its more open model, having lured a few big name galleries to their side this year) -- Pulse, at the Metropolitan Pavilion, 125 West 18th Street; Scope New York at 320 West St (West Side Highway) across from Pier 40; the Fountain Art Fair on Pier 66 at 26th Street and the West Side Highway, Chelsea; Red Dot New York with the Korean Art Show at 82 Mercer Street; Verge Art Brooklyn at various locations in DUMBO, Brooklyn; the inaugural Moving Image Art Fair of Contemporary Video Art, at the Waterfront Tunnel event space between 27th and 28th Streets with an entrance on 11th Avenue in Chelsea; a new "alternative thinking" art fair Salon Zürcher, 33 Bleecker Street between Lafayette and Bowery; PooL at the Gershwin Hotel, 7 East 27th Street; and Volta at 7 West 34th Street.

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
THE ARMORY SHOW

March 2-6, Piers 92 and 94

Featuring more than 250 modern and contemporary galleries

What not to miss at the 2011 Armory Show:

- New York gallery Lehmann Maupin is presenting a solo exhibition of never-before-seen Urethra Postcard Pictures by Gilbert & George.