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## Armory Show Spills Art Over Two Huge Piers: Our Guide

By Katya Kazakina - Mar 10, 2012

The [Armory Show](#) spreads over two hangar-size piers along the [Hudson River](#) in [New York](#). It's crowded and confusing.

Pier 94 features 157 contemporary galleries from 30 countries. Paintings, sculptures, video, installations, performances bombard you from every direction.

Pier 92's modern section includes 71 galleries from nine countries.

Here's some help:

**Pier 94:** The lounge area by the bar at the entrance is a good place to meet people, grab a \$16 flute of Pommery Brut NV and contemplate the 40-foot-long pink neon sign "Scandinavian Pain" hanging above.

The sign is by Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson, whose gallery, i8, is offering it for \$55,000. If you are looking at "Pain," the group of 19 Scandinavian dealers is to your left.

It has an informal, laid-back feel and stacks of artsy posters on the floor, free for anyone to take.

Every couple of minutes, you hear a whooshy sound, which brings to mind waves beating against the shore.

### Towering Totems

The source is a kinetic sculpture featuring little steel balls by Finnish artist duo Tommi Gronlund and Petteri Nisunen at Helsinki's Galerie Anhava booth. The structure shifts every couple of minutes, creating the meditative sounds. The work is \$28,000.

Nearby, David Risley Gallery from Denmark displays towering totems by Oslo-based American artist Charlie Roberts. Carved with an ax from 12-foot-tall wooden beams, they mix primitivism with hip-hop and gangsta imagery. Prices range from \$6,700 to \$22,000.

Head to the right of the Pommery bar to see the sculptures by Chicago-based artist Theaster Gates at the booth of Kavi Gupta Gallery.

Made with salvaged materials from gutted houses in poor black communities, they have been

quickly snapped up by collectors on opening day, with prices ranging from \$15,000 to \$50,000.

Gates, who is the official artist of the Armory Show, will chat with visitors at the booth daily from noon to 4 p.m.

The space resembles a makeshift classroom with green chalk boards, small yellow chairs and a giant table welded together by school desks.

## Hanged Man

Down the aisle, the silhouettes of a hanged man, the Statue of Liberty and [Jesus Christ](#) surrounded by paparazzi are shown in the stark new photographs by Andres Serrano at the booth of Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art. Prices range from \$30,000 to \$50,000.

At Derek Eller's booth, a fiery canvas by Tom Thayer, who is also represented at the [Whitney Biennial](#), caught my eye. Layered with red paint, it also has cutout cardboard figures of birds, men and geometric shapes hanging on the string. The work sold for \$10,000.

The main section of the fair starts with blue-chip photos by [Cindy Sherman](#) and [Andreas Gursky](#) at the booth of Sprueth Magers as well as black-and-white text-based silkscreens by Michael Riedel at [David Zwirner](#).

Things get more unexpected from there. Galerie Laurent Godin displays 30 plaster heads of [Osama bin Laden](#) on the floor. They are by Chinese Paris-based artist Wang Du and cost \$15,000 each or \$320,000 as a group.

There were no early takers.

## Creepy Dolls

Shamanism is palpable in pastel pink dolls hand-sewn by Evgeny Antufiev, a young Russian artist shown by Moscow-based Regina Gallery. The creepy and adorable dolls include crystal and animal bones, coarse embroidery and fluffy fabrics. Prices range from \$3,000 to \$15,000.

Take a passage to the quieter Pier 92 (thankfully, the scary rickety staircase is gone).

One of the priciest pieces here is an abstract painting by [Gerhard Richter](#), which has the asking price of \$13.5 million at [Tokyo's](#) Galerie Sho Contemporary Art.

Among the early sales was Vik Muniz's vibrant photograph of pigments arranged to mimic Picasso's "Weeping Woman" painting. Its asking price was \$110,000 at Chowaiki & Co.

The booth of [Italy's](#) Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M. feels like a tiny museum, with paintings by [Leger](#), [Delvaux](#), [Magritte](#) and [Morandi](#), priced well below the Richter.

Around the corner, at Munich-based Galerie Thomas Modern, there's [Anselm Kiefer's](#) "Elisabeth,"

which evokes the murdered Austrian empress with a ship and lumps of dark hair. Its asking price: \$1.85 million.

The Armory Show runs March 8-11 at Twelfth Avenue and 55th Street. General admission is \$30; <http://www.thearmoryshow.com>.

(Katya Kazakina is a reporter for Muse, the arts and leisure section of Bloomberg News. The opinions expressed are her own.)

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