

OBSERVER ARTS

Does NADA Foreland Indicate the Growth of an Upstate Art Market?

Art fairs are still proliferating, which could be the result of an evolving art market with more room for emerging artists and newer buyers.

By Dan Duray · 07/26/23 4:45pm

This past weekend saw the second edition of NADA Foreland, an art fair in Catskill, NY billed as “a collaborative exhibition cascading through Foreland’s historic Flagship Building, Waterfront, and Bookhouse” that began in 2021, and this year featured forty galleries and over sixty participating artists.



What fair fatigue? Courtesy Foreland

The fair was part of an “Upstate Art Weekend” that saw over 100 activations across 10 counties, including a preview of the Borscht Belt Museum set to open in Ellenville in 2025 and Beacon Open Studios. As such, the fair listed its participants by artists rather than by gallery. Participants included Whit Harris (DIMIN, New York), Sophia Belkin (Dinner Gallery, New York), Pedro Vaz (DOCUMENT, Chicago and Lisbon), Aine Vonnegut (EUROPA, New York), Heather Benjamin (New Discretions, New York), Carly Glovinski (Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York) and Adam Parker Smith (The Hole, New York and Los Angeles), among many others.

The idea of an art fair in upstate New York is admittedly a little curious. Art Basel was just a month ago, and when people head to their homes upstate they’re not necessarily looking to buy any more art. It was just five years ago that *The New York Times* wrote of “fair fatigue” and here we are with another, in a region traditionally associated with romantic getaways, not dealmaking. Still, whenever a new fair emerges, it’s traditional for members of the press to ask about the market in that region.

And it’s worth pointing out that for some, dealmaking holds its own kind of romance. The fair declined to give any idea of sales, but Jesse Greenberg, Foreland’s director of programming who also curated NADA Foreland, told *Observer*, “We were so thrilled to welcome over 2,000 visitors to Foreland’s arts campus throughout the weekend, where we officially debuted our new ‘Foreland Presents’ projects, which will continue to be on view to the public through the rest of the summer—with the bright and vibrant installation in our glass bridge by Rachel B. Hayes; Chris Bogia’s towering sculpture situated at the entrance of our campus; the curation of audio work echoing throughout our colossal spiral stairs; and our inaugural ‘Foreland Editions’ limited-edition lamp by Chris Beeston.”

Greenberg’s emphasis on artists and their installations clearly seeks to position the fair as different from others—NADA Foreland’s press release doesn’t call it a fair but rather a “weekend-long exhibition and community festival”—but this isn’t out of step with the current moment in the art market anyway. In Switzerland, dealers reported stronger sales for the “younger, comparatively cheaper” artists. Foregrounding emerging artists at NADA Foreland seems to fit not only with its place in Upstate Art Weekend but also with where collectors in this moment. People in the art world do talk about “fair fatigue,” but it does feel like fairs are still proliferating. The 2023 Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market Report reported only a slight increase in the number of global fairs planned for 2023: 377 compared to 408 in 2019. Fair fatigue? Maybe not. As for upstate, we’ll call that market “developing.”