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With New Owner and Energy, Outsider Art Fair Heads to Chelsea

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There's something captivating about outsider art. The energy of it feels different somehow. In the past two decades, the field has grown enormously, and in the process, it's become more integrated with the contemporary art world. Unknown artists have been discovered, more galleries devoted to self-taught and folk artists have opened their doors, and outsider art has gained both an increasingly devoted following and, in accordance with that demand, its own fair.

Founded by Sanford Smith in 1993, the [Outsider Art Fair](#) quickly became a critical and commercial success, as well as the leading event in the field of outsider, self-taught, and folk art. The fair was recognized for its maverick spirit, and crowds began to flock annually to New York's Puck Building, the event's location for its first 15 years.

This year, under the leadership of Wide Open Arts, a new company formed by art dealer Andrew Edlin, the Outsider Art Fair is moving to Chelsea, to the site of the former Dia Art Foundation. It will continue to provide a dynamic atmosphere for dealers to showcase compelling and unusual artworks, and visitors can expect to find prime examples of art by both legendary and newly discovered artists.



George Widener, "Titanic" (2012) (image courtesy Henry Boxer Gallery, London)

The upcoming edition of the fair will host 40 dealers, 10 of whom will be exhibiting for the first time. They include former SITE Santa Fe director Laura Steward, New York's Laurel Gitlen, Feature Inc., Kinz + Tillou, and Vito Schnabel. You can see a full list of exhibitors at [outsiderartfair.com](#).

Also for the first time, the fair will also host two guest-curated booths, featuring solo exhibitions of renowned Swiss photographer Mario Del Curto and North Carolina-based artist Renaldo Kuhler, who is known for his creation of the fictitious country Rocaterrania.

There will be a daily program of panel discussions organized by art historian and curator Valérie Rousseau. Participants will include curators Daniel Baumann, Massimiliano Gioni, and Ralph Rugoff, as well as scholars Dr. Gail A. Hornstein, Dr. Thomas Röske, and Dr. Kent Minturn. The full list of talks and panels can be found [online](#).

Use the promo code "hyperallergic" to [reserve a complimentary 1-day ticket](#) to the fair.

The [Outsider Art Fair](#) will take place from January 31 through February 3 at Center 548 (548 West 22nd Street, Chelsea, Manhattan).