

NADA Art Fair Offers the Wacky and the Political, Plus Basketball

By KEN JOHNSON • MAY 5, 2016



"Del bomber babe" by Gear Patterson includes 714 baseballs, a nod to Babe Ruth's career home runs. Gear Patterson, Rod Bianco (Oslo)

If you're deciding which art fairs to attend this weekend, consider this. In addition to its assembly of 105 dealers of art by the young, restless and eager to please, [NADA](#) (New Art Dealers Alliance) New York has something no others have: basketball. In recognition of the exhibition's temporary occupation of [Basketball City](#), NADA Hoops is organizing a three-on-three pickup basketball tournament on outdoor courts. The artist [Tyson Reeder](#) has designed balls for the occasion. His limited edition "[4-Color Pen Ball](#)" (2016)

has each of its panels filled in with scribbles in one of four standard, ballpoint pen colors: red, green, black and blue. Examples are on display in the fair and will be used on the courts. As for art, it's a fun show. Here are a few highlights, listed by gallery:



Sally Saul's sculpture "The Attack," at the Landing, depicts the Koch brothers, tarantulas and a tsunami. Sally Saul, the Landing (Los Angeles)

The Landing The most arresting piece in an excellent, five-artist show of funky ceramic sculptures is [Sally Saul](#)'s "The Attack" (2016), a politically wishful arrangement in six parts on a square pedestal. At the center is a richly glazed double portrait of the billionaire Koch brothers tongue kissing while five tarantulas surround them and a tsunami looms in the background. Ms.

Saul, who happens to be married to the painter Peter Saul, is an artist past due for wider recognition. Also here is an unusual collaboration between the ceramist Clayton Bailey and Mr. Saul. “The Mad Doctor’s Operation” (1974) is an approximately half life-size representation of cartoon surgeons cutting a female patient to pieces on a hospital operating table. It looks as if it materialized out of the deranged mind of an underground comic book artist. Noteworthy as well are the small, subtly comical representations of biblical scenes by [Hannah Greely](#).

[Neochrome](#) In a solo presentation, the sculptor Jamie Sneider offers an elegant, obliquely feminist contribution to the never-ending tradition of riffing on Marcel Duchamp’s [“Fountain”](#) of 1917. “Untitled (Black/White)” consists of three nearly identical paintings made of fine, loosely stretched and slightly wrinkled fabric, a rectangle of black above one of white. These are separated by two metal partitions of the sort you see between men’s room urinals, making the whole thing a suave allegory of male privilege.



Eleanor Antin's "100 Boots Entering the Museum." Eleanor Antin, Alden Projects (New York)

Alden Projects The centerpiece of a historical show of mail art is Eleanor Antin's "[100 Boots](#)" (1971-73). Each of 51 postcards depicts a different stage in the journey of 100 black rubber boots that Ms. Antin set up and photographed in places from California to New York. The penultimate card shows them lined up on the sidewalk outside the Museum of Modern Art waiting to get in. This is a classic work of 1970s avant-gardism.



Daniel Boccato's "blogface" vaguely resembles a one-eyed, big-mouthed cartoon monster. Daniel Boccato, Formato Comodo (Madrid)

Formato Comodo The bracingly bumptious sculpture "blogface" (2016), by [Daniel Boccato](#), is a crudely made, all-green construction of epoxy, fiberglass and polyurethane vaguely resembling the visage of a one-eyed, big-mouthed cartoon monster. It's dumb in a smart way.

The Pit Testing the limits of sophisticated taste is a trio of wacky sculptures

made with old-world craftsmanship by [Andrew Sexton](#). “[Fantasy Forging Station](#)” (2016) is a squat figure with a bronze head in the form of an anvil with bugging eyes and a toothy grin. This goofy creature has a torso made from a stout, real log, and it has three splayed legs ending in bony feet with long-nailed toes. A skeletal hand holds up an eyeglasses frame and mustache like one the artist himself sports, making the whole sculpture a cheerfully demonic self-portrait.

[Edel Assanti](#) “Sunset,” 2016, one of Dale Lewis’s mural scale, panoramic paintings here, depicts a lounge at the Chateau Marmont, the famous West Hollywood hotel on Sunset Boulevard, populated by nearly a dozen disreputable-looking hedonists and two animated skeletons. The ghost of John Belushi, who died of a drug overdose at the hotel, is tending bar. In a slashing, cartoon expressionist style, Mr. Lewis conjures the mordant spirits of social satirists like James Ensor and George Grosz. He could be Red Grooms’s punk nephew.

11R An exceptionally resonant two-person show here features sculptures by [Sarah Peters](#) and works on paper by [Marsha Cottrell](#), both of whom traffic in mystery, albeit in different ways. Ms. Peters’s two works are bronze, hollow-eyed, open-mouthed heads resembling Art Deco versions of archaic Greek sculptures but with exaggerated coiffures adding a weird, surrealistic dimension. Ms. Cottrell uses a computer and printer to create light-suffused abstractions in black and off-white that look as if they’d been made by a 19th-century photographer-alchemist.

[Rod Bianco](#) Sports fans will appreciate Grear Patterson’s “Del bomber babe” (2016), which consists of a child-size Radio Flyer wheelbarrow and a pile of 714 baseballs, one for each of Babe Ruth’s career home runs. This is sculpture with a sense of history.