

ARTS • ART FAIRS

ADAA's The Art Show Returns With Highly Curated Booths But Slow Sales

The fair opened with well-thought-out solo presentations that attracted plenty of attention from seasoned collectors, but these diversions didn't translate into dollars.

By [Elisa Carollo](#) • 10/30/24 5:40pm



The Art Show crowd on opening night. Photo credit: Scott Rudd Productions

ADAA's The Art Show opened last night (October 30) in the Park Avenue Armory, with the usual benefit gala to support Henry Street Settlement, one of the nation's oldest social services organizations. The 36th edition of one of the oldest fairs in the city has work brought by seventy-five ADAA

member galleries, many of which are presenting highly curated solo booths that put very focused spotlights on each artist's practice and narrative. This curatorial attention, coupled with the already present elegance of the well-dimensioned interiors of the Armory and the high-profile crowd, gave the fair a boutique feel.

Despite this, sales and negotiations unfolded slowly in the early hours, reflecting a current trend: collectors are increasingly contemplative and deliberate, requiring extended conversations and negotiations before finalizing deals even as prices at most booths seemed more reasonable than in previous editions. The abundant selection of hors d'oeuvres and drinks may not have helped, as much of the crowd's attention gravitated towards refreshments, diverting the focus away from art purchases.

Newly appointed ADAA executive director Kinsey Robb, however, expressed satisfaction with the first night's turnout, telling Observer that the benefit preview exceeded his expectations. "There was a stellar turnout and palpable excitement in the air for our exhibitors' presentations, many of whom debuted new works and artists for the first time," he said. "It was a joy to come together as a community, share in one another's work and celebrate our longstanding partnership with Henry Street, for whom we raised over \$1 million last night."

Among the fair's notable discoveries this year are the darkly surreal work of self-taught artist Abraham Lincoln Walker (1921-1993), originally from Kentucky and based in Saint Louis. Recently discovered and presented for the first time by Andrew Edlin Gallery, Walker's art nearly sold out in the early hours, with pieces priced between \$10,000 and \$40,000. His deeply dystopian works from the late 1960s to early 1970s depict elongated, masked figures and disjointed human forms, intertwining and hovering in ambiguous relationships in desolate, dark-toned landscapes.

ADAA's The Art Show continues at Armory Park Avenue through Saturday, November 2.