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# At the Outsider Art Fair, Artists at the Margins Become the Market Stars

From Sam Doyle and Janet Sobel to Frank Diaz Escalet, the artists generating the most excitement at this year's edition are long overdue for their time in the spotlight.

By [Elisa Carollo](#) • 03/21/26 11:00am



Outsider Art Fair is at the Metropolitan Pavilion in New York through March 22, 2026. Courtesy Outsider Art Fair

If you're tired of seeing the same names circulating at fairs across geographies, the Outsider Art Fair is where you can still discover alternative minds that are often more radical, more intuitive and, at times, more visionary, all while remaining refreshingly accessible in price. What begins as a quick visit might easily stretch into hours, or pull you back the next day, as each booth opens onto a distinct and often deeply personal universe that resists easy categorization, with unique stories and world-building practices. As the notion of outsider art has expanded beyond its origins in Art Brut, so too has its institutional and market recognition. Today, the category encompasses folk, outsider and progressive art, as well as self-taught artists once relegated to the margins. Outsider artists are now increasingly featured in major museum exhibitions and biennials; some are even represented by blue-chip galleries, reflecting a cultural appetite for alternative perspectives.

The Outsider Art Fair, now in its 34th edition, has played a key role in redefining the category's perception, establishing an entire market for it and creating the necessary critical and curatorial context alongside a specialized commercial platform that brings significant figures to the spotlight and contributes to their reappraisal. It returns this year to the Metropolitan Pavilion in New York with 68 exhibitors—two more than last year—that run the gamut from galleries and independent dealers to progressive studios and nonprofit organizations, all under the direction of Elizabeth Denny, who was appointed as director last September. At the preview, the level of engagement and enthusiasm in the room was palpable, continuing until the doors closed and leaving a constellation of red dots across the booths.

“There was a tremendous amount of energy and joy in the room on our first day,” Andrew Edlin, the fair's owner, told Observer, pointing out how the new configuration—with two special sections at the front of the fair—made this year's edition feel fresh. Since taking over the fair in the 2000s, Edlin, who also runs one of the most respected galleries in the category, has made it a priority to establish higher standards, not only in terms of the quality of the work presented but also in how it is displayed and contextualized—something crucial to fostering appreciation and elevating outsider art alongside other artistic expressions.

Edlin is also presenting at the fair, offering an overview of the rich program of his eponymous gallery. Particularly striking were the meticulously drawn, psychedelic entanglements of Domenico Zindato, which conjure entire imaginative worlds. Although they may recall the symbolic languages of various Indigenous traditions, Zindato is in fact a self-taught artist

from southern Italy whose practice draws on instinct and a kind of psychic logic rather than formal training, resulting in works that are both emotionally and spiritually resonant—populated by hybrid human-animal figures, fragmented bodies and symbolic forms that feel at once deeply personal and mythic.

Also on view were other artists from the gallery's program, many of whom Edlin has championed beyond so-called outsider circuits, including the visionary work of Abraham Lincoln Walker, whom he spotlighted at Art Basel Paris in October. "Visitors at our booth were mesmerized by the paintings of both Abraham Lincoln Walker and Domenico Zindato. This is also our first year showing Nicole Appel, who is universally beloved," Edlin said.