

Second-Year Fair Hopes to Stay an Upstart

Independent, last year's much-lauded upstart of an art fair, is back in the former Dia Center building on West 22nd Street in Chelsea. But it's hard to

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ART REVIEW

be an upstart the second time around, as evinced by a preview in *Vogue* and the launch of an affiliated mini-fair called the *Dependent* at the Sheraton Hotel on West 25th Street.

The inaugural *Independent* attracted a lot of attention, critical and commercial, for its don't-fence-me-in installation and well-edited mix of contemporary art. It even garnered the dubious honor of a Rob Pruitt Art Award for alternative project of the year. The fair's cachet was such that it managed to poach a couple of dealers from the Armory, the city's biggest art fair, including *WallSpace* and *Harris Lieberman*, for this year's edition.

So *Independent*'s founders, Elizabeth Dee (of the eponymous Chelsea gallery) and Darren Flook (from *Hotel in London*), assisted by the co-directors Jayne Drost and Laura Mitterrand and the creative adviser Matthew Higgs, have quite sensibly tried not to fix what wasn't broken. The design still boasts few walls, staggered sightlines and a lot of communal floor space.

The art too has some uncanny echoes. Last year the big statement piece was Duncan Campbell's *DeLorean* at *Artists Space*; this year it's a Saab 900 at *Jack Hanley Gallery* that's been gutted and converted into two motorbikes by Folke Köbberling



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CALEB FERGUSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

and Martin Kaltwasser.

And there is, as before, some overlap with the Armory Show. Andrew Kreps, Bortolami, and Stuart Shave/Modern Art are among the dealers with a foot in each fair. But you could never mistake *Independent*, with its open and decentered layout, for the Armory's territorial aisles.

One change for the better is the increased input of Mr. Higgs, the director of the West Village alternative space *White Columns*. (Last year he shared the advisory role with Stefan Kalmar of *Artists Space* and Thea Westreich, who have returned to the fair as exhibitors.) Mr. Higgs has ensured that not-for-profit institutions remain a strong presence despite exhibitor turnover. And his eye for outsider art, as in art by the self-taught, the mentally challenged and more generally by anyone working far away from an artistic center, is apparent throughout. That's refreshing because contemporary art fairs can seem like one inside joke af-

Independent

Dia Center building

has a riveting selection of drawings by Oskar Voll — an artist who was included in Hans Prinzhorn's pioneering 1922 anthology of art by the insane, and who was later killed by the Nazis. His renderings of broad-shouldered men in uniform and spearlike trees seem to borrow equally from Egyptian painting and the *Jugendstil*.

Air de Paris, another new addition, has an unusual display of glittering sculptures by Sarah Pucci. Ms. Pucci, the mother of artist Dorothy Iannone, made these small, devotional objects by sticking beaded and sequined pins into plastic foam and sent them to her daughter at regular intervals. The zest for ornament may be genetic, to judge from Ms. Iannone's own paintings.

Gavin Brown, meanwhile, is showing paintings by the autistic

the names of artists and brands like Ellsworth Kelly, Pantone and *Comme des Garçons*. Mr. Knowles's marker-on-canvas compositions show N.F.L. teams in action. These bodies of work talk very different games but look great together.

The overall scheme, in a fair with few walls, is harder to control. As at a dinner party with assigned seating, some neighbors hit it off and some don't. On the second floor *Feature's* funky abstract *mélange* seems to loosen up Maureen Paley's Armory-ready installation of David Salle, Rebecca Warren and James Welling. Upstairs on three, Michel François's imposing cube sculpture at Bortolami dwarfs *White Columns's* corner of editioned prints and other small works.

Anton Kern and *Modern Art* make good use of the windows along the building's south walls, with light-flooded displays of sculpture. Although the fair's ethos is democratic, the real estate isn't so easily apportioned.

profit *Hard Hat*) that's possibly bigger than its shoebox of a gallery on the Lower East Side. Most everything in it, including Erica Baum's cleverly illusionist photographs of ruffled paperbacks and Tom Holmes's shrines to sugary breakfast cereals, is worthy of attention.

Elsewhere plenty of space is al-

Featuring few walls and lots of communal space.

lotted to charismatic painting: *Delaunay*-esque abstractions by Victoria Morton at *Modern Institute*, spooky figuration by Miriam Cahn at *Dee* and *Galerie Jocelyn Wolff*, and understated *trompe l'oeil* by Helene Appel at *The Approach*.

Video is deployed sparingly.

Far left, a work by Folke Köbberling and Martin Kaltwasser from *Jack Hanley Gallery*. Near left, a work by Sarah Pucci, at *Air de Paris*.