

# rachel uffner

## The New York Times

CRITIC'S PICK

### At the Shed, Frieze II Takes Off

The world's largest, most luxurious and hard-to-get-to art fair embraces its new manageable size and accessible location. Thank the art fair gods.

By **Roberta Smith**

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Among the changes wrought in the art world by the continuing pandemic is the downsizing and relocation of the Frieze New York art fair. The original Frieze swaggered into town in 2012 — the art-fair Everest. It came with its own architecture — a large and glamorous white tent — ferry line and land mass, Randalls Island in the East River (hence, the ferry). It had an array of indoor and outdoor dining opportunities; lots places to rest and regroup and ingeniously gussied-up porta-potties. But with as many as 190 participants it was an ordeal with benefits, the art-fair version of the New York Marathon.

Then came the pandemic. In 2020, the fair happened only online. In 2021, a shrunken, pale, nervous version limped into the Shed, hard by Hudson Yards on the Far West Side of Manhattan. It didn't quite fill the available space and was somewhat short on amenities. But, manageable in size and accessible by subway, bus and car, it wasn't the least arduous (unless you consider being anywhere near Hudson Yards an ordeal). With 66 galleries, it was less than one-third in size.

Now Frieze is once more back at the Shed, which is beginning to feel like home. Call it Frieze II. The Randalls Island original is a past glory, and praise to the art-fair gods. Whatever one thinks of the Shed, originally conceived as an outpost for avant-garde art forms, behaving like a satellite of the nearby Javits Center is another matter entirely.

Frieze II fully inhabits the Shed's three gallery levels — 2, 4, 6 — and the architecture has been used to subdivide the proceedings into five sections of 10-20 galleries each, imaginatively titled A, B, C, D and Frames (which contains most of the fair's kink). Each

Rachel Uffner Gallery  
170 Suffolk Street  
New York, NY 10002

+1 212 274 0064  
info@racheluffnergallery.com  
racheluffnergallery.com

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has its own look and feel, which adds some clarity. Here are some of the best booths and works.

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## **Level 4: Two by Two**

Things seem to dip slightly in Section C, but there are several pairings of artists that perk them up again. **Rachel Uffner (C9)**, for example, has hung her walls with small gouache on panel paintings of Anne Buckwalter: these faux-naïve, exquisitely precise, carefully appointed interiors can initially seem slightly bland, but each contains some detail referring to sex between women. They surround the also small sculptures of Bianca Beck in carved wood painted — doused really — in bright rude colors whose curves and angles have a distinctly postcoital horizontality.

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