

## OCULA REPORT

### Top 5 Booths at The Armory Show 2016

Brienne Walsh New York 11 March 2016



Image: Installation view, Kapwani Kiwanga at Galerie Jerome Poggi and Galerie Tanja Wagner. Courtesy Galerie Tanja Wagner.

Art fairs, like The Armory Show, get a bad rap for being poor places to actually see art, and there's good reason for it. Understandably, galleries are focused on sales—TEFAF Art Market Report 2015 found that art fairs drive 40% of annual gallery revenue—and as a result, dealers tend to present a mish-mash of available works by their top selling artists rather than attempting to establish a curatorial perspective. There is also the issue of the sheer volume of works displayed—at The Armory Show 2016, 205 galleries from 36 countries presented booths. It would be impossible to see it all, let alone appreciate it all.

The booths that stood out at The Armory Show 2016, which ran from 3 to 6 March, tended to either focus in depth on a single artist, or to present works in mediums not usually seen at an art fair, where photographs, paintings and works on paper reign supreme. Below we round up our top five booths at The Armory Show 2016.

## Ryan Mrozowski and Julia Bland at On Stellar Rays

Although there was nothing in either the works or the setting that made such a comparison likely, the dual presentation of works by Ryan Mrozowski and Julia Bland by New York-based gallery On Stellar Rays read something like a cloister in a medieval convent. *Untitled (Orange)* (2016) by Mrozowski, a figurative painting of verdant green leaves and glowing oranges, was the fragrant fruit tree in the center courtyard. *Swan's Island* (2016) by Bland, a woven tapestry of canvas, silk, wool, linen thread, wax, fabric dye and oil paint, resembled a stained glass tableau behind the altar of a chapel. *Untitled (dot)* (2016) by Mrozowski, an inlaid plywood and stain composition of white dots on a black background, a representation of the night sky as yet unpolluted by the industrial revolution.

Reading so much into the works might be a mistake, especially something so romantic, but there was something beautiful about the raw simplicity and craft in the presentations by young artists in a tiny booth tucked into a deep corner of the fair. In such a setting, one can't take for granted the moments when art work actually evokes anything beyond name recognition. —[O]



Image: Julia Bland, *Swan's Island*, 2016. Canvas, silk, wool, linen thread, wax, fabric dye, and oil paint. 100 x 77 inches. Courtesy On Stellar Rays.