

The 6 most important NYC art happenings in May

By [Mark Ellwood](#)

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1:54 CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART FAIR

May 6-8, \$20; [1-54.com](#)



Touria El Glaoui founded 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, whose Brooklyn show will feature “Oumy Ndour” (above), by Senegalese artist Omar Victor Diop, via Magnin-A gallery. Photo: courtesy of gallery

Where: Artist Dustin Yellin’s Pioneer Works, in Red Hook, Brooklyn

Debuted: 2013 (London), 2015 (NYC)

TV spirit animal: “Fame”



Touria El Glaoui. Photo: Sasha Arutyunov

Don't miss: Pieces from Ghanaian urban-installation artist Zohra Opoku and **portraits of Africa's contemporary urban creatives by Senegalese artist Omar Victor Diop** — they're among more than 60 artists of African heritage (from Angola to Zimbabwe) who will be represented at the fair, founded by Moroccan Touria El Glaoui.

Dig in: Senegalese chef Pierre Thiam will helm a pop-up garden cafe here that spotlights his signature ingredient: fonio, the nutty West African counterpart to quinoa.

Fun fact: This fair's unusual name is a nod to the 54 countries that make up the African continent.

FRIEZE NEW YORK

May 5-8, \$10; frieze.com



Frieze's New York director Victoria Siddall hopes to draw creative types and A-listers alike this year with projects, talks and endless art — including “Untitled (Spread),” by Robert Rauschenberg, via Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac. Photo: Courtesy Thaddaeus Ropac

Where: Randalls Island; hop the free ferry that docks on the East River at 34th Street

Debuted: 2003 (London); 2012 (NYC)

TV spirit animal: Late-era “Sex and the City,” when everyone copied Carrie’s style



Leonardo DiCaprio. Photo: Frazer Harrison/Getty Images

Don’t miss: The A-list. The new Frieze New York director, wunderkind Christies’ alum Victoria Siddall, hopes to buttress its reputation as a star magnet by luring the likes of Mark Ruffalo and Leonardo DiCaprio back to the big tent. She’s also reinvigorating the fair’s signature Frame exhibit, focusing on galleries in business for less than eight years.

Dig in: Frieze is known for power noshing; this year’s offerings include Mexican chef Enrique Olvera’s pop-up version of Cosme, and — in the VIP room — socialite-friendly salads from Sant Ambroeus.

Fun fact: Frieze’s funky Projects program is always arresting — this year, almost literally. Artist David Horvitz has hired a pro pickpocket to surreptitiously deposit mini sculptures in fairgoers’ bags and pockets.

THE MET ROOFTOP

Daily through Oct. 31, \$25 (suggested donation); metmuseum.org



Cornelia Parker's new "PsychoBarn" installation looms on the Met's rooftop — which also serves cocktails (below). Photo: Hyla Skopitz

Where: In the Upper East Side, atop the Met Museum (bonus: killer views of Central Park)

Debuted: 2004

TV spirit animal: "Bates Motel"



Photo: Handout

Don't miss: British artist Cornelia Parker, known for her site-specific installations, has built an eerie, mansard-roofed Victorian mansion here — albeit a backless version, a la film-set facade — inspired by the Bates house in "Psycho," Hitchcock's classic 1960 screamer. She's called the result "Transitional Object (PsychoBarn)."

Dig in: Skip the snacks and down a drink at the museum's Martini Bar on the rooftop, which operates during the institution's later-evening openings on Fridays and Saturdays.

Fun fact: If you're keen to take home a piece of Parker's work, pick up one of the scarves or fashion accessories produced by the artist, in conjunction with design firm WeR2, at the museum gift store.

COLLECTIVE DESIGN FAIR

May 4-8, \$17; collectivedesignfair.com



Finn Juhl's colorful "Glove Cabinet" will be on offer at the Collective Design Fair, via Lost City Arts gallery. Photo: Handout

Where: Skylight Clarkson Square in west Soho

Debuted: 2013

TV spirit animal: Modern-day "Mad Men"

Don't miss: The entrance — this year's portal is by Japanese minimalist designer Nendo, whose past commissions have included a bird box large enough for humans to nest in.

Dig in: For see-and-be-seen snacking, duck out for fried artichokes and oysters at nearby Giorgione, a Soho staple with an all-day menu and party-all-night ethos.



Eldorado Brougham. Photo: Getty Images

Fun fact: Yes, that's really an Eldorado Brougham parked over there — the ultra-rare car was one of only 400 ever made, and it cost as much as a house back in 1957. It's part of sponsor Cadillac's auto-design exhibition.

ART NEW YORK & CONTEXT

May 3-8, \$25; artnyfair.com; contextnyfair.com



"JV16" by Danny Rolph will be shown at CONTEXT fair, via 532 Gallery Thomas Jaeckel. Photo: Courtesy of Gallery Danny Rolph

Debuted: 2015

Where: Pier 94 on the West Side, longtime home of the Armory Show

TV spirit animal: “Girls” (if they lived in Manhattan)



Katelijne de Backer. Photo: MG Vander Elst Photography

Don’t miss: These dual shows are offshoots of southern satellite Art Miami; Art NY, returning for a second year, will be joined for the first time by the edgier CONTEXT. Browse its special section dedicated to art from Berlin and a series of noise installations curated by sound artist Christoph Cox.

Dig in: UES staple Butterfield Market (erstwhile grocer to Golden Age Rockefellers and Astors) will keep modern-day art barons fed with an onsite cafe.

Fun fact: This neophyte fair has more in common with the Armory Show than just its location — its director is former Armory czarina Katelijne De Backer, so expect a major uptick in quality and impact.

HIGH LINE ART

Daily, free; art.thehighline.org



This year’s High Line public-art commissions include Nari Ward’s “Smart Tree.” Photo: Timothy Schenck

Where: West Chelsea, north along the Hudson River from the new Whitney Museum

Debuted: 2009

TV spirit animal: “Million Dollar Listing New York”

Don't miss: “Smart Tree,” a real apple tree growing out of the roof of a car, installed by Jamaican artist Nari Ward (see page 11). It's among this year's engaging public-art commissions — including the “Wanderlust” group show, which explores the theme of walking — all organized by the High Line's charming Italian in charge, Cecilia Alemani.

Dig in: For something between the glass-box Italian sit-down joint Santina and the gourmet food carts dotting the park paths, try a sunset toast amid the greenery at Terroir High Line.

Fun fact: Those toddlers stumbling around? They're part of the show. Performance artist Roman Ondak will invite kids 12 months and under to participate in “Teaching To Walk,” a piece inspired by his own son's first steps.

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