

TIF SIGFRIDS

PAPER

WELCOME TO THE ART WORLD LORD OF THE FLIES: EVERYTHING WE SAW AND HEARD AT NYC'S ART FAIR OPENINGS

In the middle of New York city's Art Week, it's hard to tell where the art ends and the party begins. Held in hard-to-access locations, like an island (Frieze) or a giant basketball court on the East River (NADA), the fairs become their own isolated ecosystems. Surrounded by so much art, so many art people, and no bodegas for miles, our primal instincts start to show. We start drinking a lot of champagne regardless of the early hour or outrageous prices. We start making bonds and alliances with unlikely fair goers. The leaders begin to emerge. And after hours of being in the same place, the panic sets in. Will you make it on the ferry back? Which one of your allies will split an Uber with you instead? Does anyone have a cigarette!? It's Lord of the Flies, but with million dollar paintings instead of palm trees.



Zachary Leener at Frieze

The day began with a ferry ride to Randall's Island for Frieze's first day open to the public. Most of the VIPs had come for the preview the day before, but there were still some collector types in attendance -- their appearance is easy to pick out in the crowd (bowties and expensive looking hats, usually). The fair had the usual onslaught of neon word art and mirror sculptures ready for Instagramming, but interesting new works by emerging contemporary talent like Math Bass and Zachary Leener gave Frieze an edge that you won't see in a more traditional setting like the Armory art fair. Even more so, a surprising amount of work had an interactive quality. Climb up a velcro half pipe in a velcro suit, take a personality test in the form of a maze created by Aki Sasamoto, sit in Korakrit Arunanondchai's paint splattered luxury massage chairs; Frieze was like a carnival except you could buy craft beer and an artisanal charcuterie board instead of cotton candy and corn dogs.