

ARTS

# Five Pieces Not to Miss at EXPO CHICAGO 2024

If you're headed to the Windy City for its annual art exposition, be on the lookout for these standout artworks.

By [Dan Duray](#) • 04/12/24 11:59am



A view of last year's EXPO CHICAGO. Photo: Kyle Flubacker

When I pitched my editor on sending me to EXPO CHICAGO I tried to hype it up for her by calling it “the fifth most important art fair in America.” It was kind of a joke, but in retrospect sounds even sillier. We’re not on the coasts; superlatives feel out of sync with the slower Midwestern way of life.

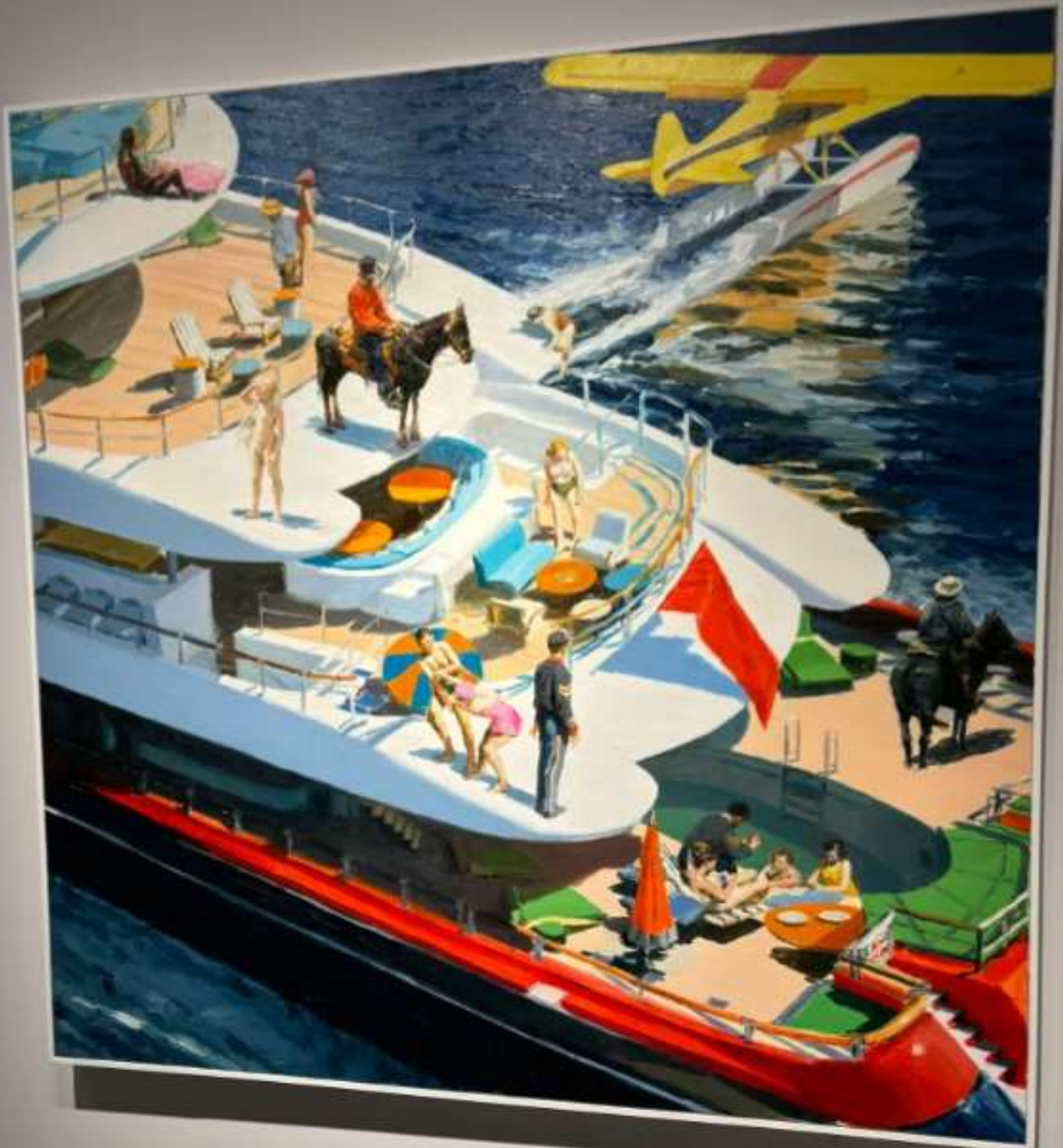
Here, even the explosive playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins is reserved—as demonstrated by his excellent new play at the Steppenwolf Theatre, *Purpose*, which is a relatively restrained family drama about legacy and respectability politics staged on a sitcom set and directed by, of all people, [Phylicia Rashad](#). Here, [Nicole Eisenman's](#) work in her survey at the Museum of Contemporary Art feels less acerbic than usual. I lingered longer on the ones where people were just hanging out.

So, with the understanding that rankings are antithetical to the Chicago ethos I've striven to adopt on my visit, here's a rundown of my favorite EXPO CHICAGO artworks—complete with my own photos—in no particular order.

## **Ariel Cabrera, *All-inclusive Trip* (2024), El Apartamento**

My favorite part of *Less Than Zero* is when a girl takes the main character home from a bar and then hands him a pair of sunglasses and sunscreen, but refuses to touch him as they each pleasure themselves on opposite sides of the bed. Were I a proper critic, I'd group Cabrera's works in this fair alongside the new [Eric Fischl show at Skarstedt](#) and Philip Pearlstein at Bortolami. Surreal luxury forces you to ask yourself: Is it ever *not* surreal? I like the concept of civil war as a fantasy luxury commodity, too.

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Ariel Cabrera, 'All-inclusive Trip' (2024). Dan Duray

# Amy Stober, *Crying Girl* (2024), MICKEY



Amy Stober, 'Crying Girl' (2024). Dan Duray

On the plane to Chicago, the guy sitting next to me spent most of the time watching reviews for different backpacks that he'd downloaded from YouTube. Allow me to review this bag: it's manipulative. It looks like a regular duffel hung on a wall but is, in fact, cast polyurethane and hollow when you knock it. The artist was on hand at the booth and did this for me, explaining that she came to be interested in our era of bags because of what they represent in terms of simultaneous "exhibition and privacy." You want people to see your bag, but not know what's inside it. The image of the woman is taken from a graphic t-shirt from Forever 21, chosen for its easy legibility.

## **Michael Rakowitz, *The Breakup* (2010), the men's room**

Visitors to one of the men's rooms at the fair will sometimes be treated to the dulcet tones of George Harrison tuning up in this fascinating audio piece by the Chicago-based Rakowitz. This work—installed as part of the fair's IN SITU non-selling curation—was originally a ten-part radio miniseries commissioned by Al Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art, Jerusalem for Radio Amwaj in Ramallah, using 150 hours of unreleased audio tapes from Michael Lindsay-Hogg's documentary *Let It Be* to examine the 1969 disbanding of the Beatles, which included a scuttled tour to Africa, in the context of the simultaneous contemporary failure of Pan-Arabism. Even in the bathroom, this piece holds stirring new relevance in light of Peter Jackson's *Get Back*, the investigative podcast boom and probably some other stuff that I'm forgetting.



A speaker broadcasting Michael Rakowitz's 'The Breakup' (2010) in the CHICAGO EXPO men's room. Dan Duray

# Andie Dinkin, *Holiday Feast* (2024), Half Gallery



Andie Dinkin, 'Holiday Feast' (2024). Dan Duray

It's harder to get a seat at the Bemelmans Bar bar since the Carlyle became inexplicably popular with influencers but it's never going to change, not really. Dinkin's work feels like an update on those murals, though, bringing the crazed surrounding atmosphere of it into the work itself. She has shown her work at the Carlyle, but—this is just my personal association—the great Florine Stettheimer comes into play here too. This one seems to have a lot of disjointed narratives, but then it might just be a really good party.

**Tessa Perutz, *Cap Ferret Forest in Violet and Varied Cool Tones* (2020-2023), Ruttkowski;68**



Tessa Perutz, 'Cap Ferret Forest in Violet and Varied Cool Tones' (2020-2023). Dan Duray

If you Google the words “Cap Ferret Forest” one of the most asked questions is: “Is Cap Ferret chic?” (Answer: Undoubtedly.) I wanted to see the real thing because this work by Chicago native Perutz is magnetic. At just 9 by 7 inches, its shapes and subject matter call to mind Henri Matisse’s cut-outs, though it is in fact oil and pencil on paper, with the paint thick in certain areas like a lush undergrowth. I’m a sucker for alien landscapes but it’s not too strange. Note how the purples are kept in check, where they threaten to predominate. There’s a formula to its density. It doesn’t feel flat at all, does it?

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