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ART

BEST IN SHOW: 6 OF THE MOST REMARKABLE WORKS AT THIS YEAR'S ARMORY FAIR

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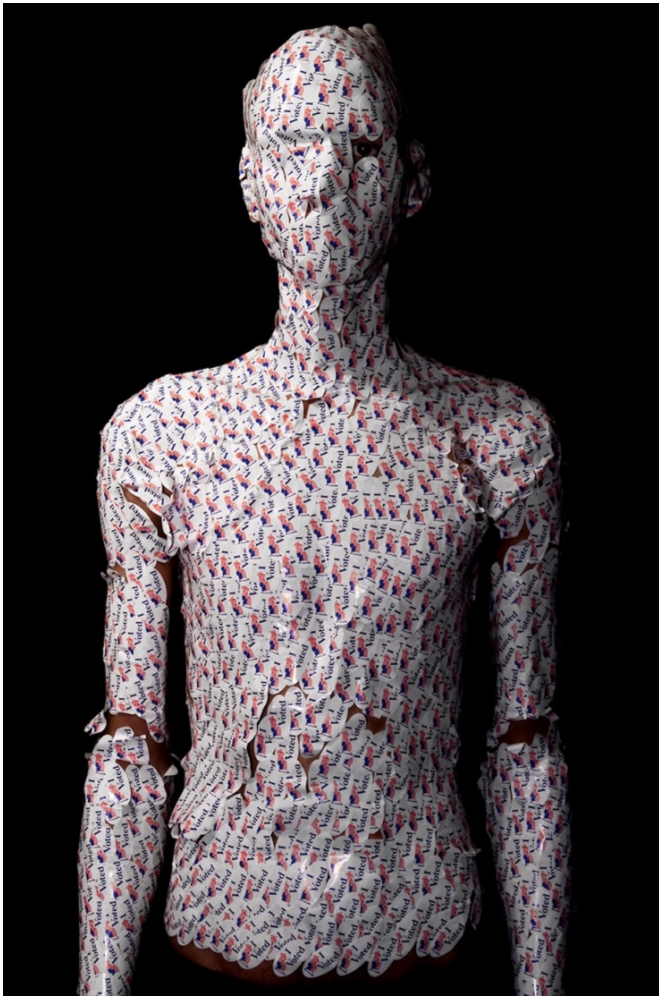
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This year marks the 25th anniversary of New York's [Armory Show](#), the anchor event of the city's sprawling art deluge—often called Armory Week—that includes numerous satellite fairs, cultural programming, and public art openings. Founded in 1994, the show started with just five dealers displaying works in Gramercy Hotel rooms, then called The Gramercy International Art Fair. Prohibited from hanging art on the walls, exhibitors arrayed pieces across hotel beds instead. In fact, during the first show, Tracey Emin, known for her neon and provocatively personal sculpture, was indeed laying *in* one of the beds, under the covers.

A quarter century later, the Armory is an international fixture hosting 198 galleries from 33 countries, with booths and site-specific installations along Manhattan's west side. Through Sunday, modern and contemporary art, alongside the fair's signature large-scale, site-responses *Platform* projects, populate the architecture of Piers 90, 92 and 94. Fairgoers should not miss this year's specially commissioned passageway, *Star Ceiling* by [Leo Villareal](#), who executes custom computer codes to create mesmerizing light patterns. Presented with Pace Gallery—and already an Instagram ado—the 75-foot LED canopy re-invents a tented corridor between Pier 92 and 94. Villareal's cosmic plafond is the largest digital artwork in the fair's history.

There are ample standouts this week, but among the fair's most remarkable single-artist presentations are socially and politically engaged artworks that reflect the tenor of omnipresent realities, from commentary on consumerism and pollution to gender representation and race. A gateway to the North American collector, the Armory show, like the World's Fair in 1939—the departure for this year's *Platform* section, *Worlds of Tomorrow*, curated by [Sally Tallant](#), newly appointed executive director of the Queens Museum—offers hope and resilience in the face of geopolitical uncertainty, explains Armory director Nicole Berry. Here are *Cultured's* 6 Armory selections highlighted for the 25th Armory.

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WILMER WILSON IV, SELF PORTRAIT AS A MODEL CITIZEN (2012).
ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT. 45 X 30 INCHES. EDITION: 5

Wilmer Wilson IV at CONNERSMITH. Shy of thirty, [Wilmer Wilson IV](#) has already performed at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, as part of their IDENTIFY series, focusing on experimentation through portrayal. He's described finding his voice through three-dimensionality, making pieces at first with Post-it notes and plastic utensils. For his sticker series—including *Self Portrait as a Modern Citizen* (2012)—he covers his entire body in a kind of second skin and engages in an abstract dialogue, as much with himself as the audience. Presented by DC's Connersmith Gallery, the sculpture, *Shed Skin (I Voted)* (2012), is the aftermath of a New York performance in March, 2012. At the time, he [described his process](#) to *The Washington Post*, "I'm interested in the notion of voting politically but also voting through the actions that we make...the decisions I make— visible for everybody to see, literally." Of course, Armory viewers will be hard pressed to distinguish the artwork from its current context, where the pile of discarded "I Voted stickers" manifests disillusionment and outrage fatigue.

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