

Johnson, Ken. "Review: 'The Art Show' at the Park Avenue Armory Covers the Creative Map." 5 March, 2015.

The New York Times



Barry X Ball's machine-carved and hand-finished work, made of Belgian black marble, is on display at "The Art Show" at the Park Avenue Armory. Credit Linda Rosier for The New York Times

What you see on entering "The Art Show," the annual fair of the Art Dealers Association of America, is yourself and other visitors reflected in a giant mirror. Displayed in Luhring Augustine's booth, "Cords," by the veteran Italian conceptualist Michelangelo Pistoletto, consists of four mirrored panels with a cutout, photographic rendering of stanchions connected by fat ropes. The ropes evoke the atmosphere of exclusivity fostered by high-end galleries like the 72 convened here. On the other hand, the mirror inclusively reflects viewers themselves and, by extension, the broader public they belong to. In art, the public might find reflections of itself and its own, ever-evolving cultural identity.

The show's 39 single-artist and 33 theme exhibitions zigzag all over the art historical map, sometimes with and sometimes against the putatively mainstream grain of European and American modern art history.

At Sperone Westwater, two of Barry X Ball's technically amazing, machine-carved and hand-finished sculptures look back to early in the 20th century, when the future seemed tremendously promising to some avant-gardists. Both are copies of Umberto Boccioni's immortal Futurist sculpture *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, (1913), which resembles a man in flames striding toward a heroic destiny. Mr. Ball's sculptures — one in Belgian black marble, the other plated in mirror-bright gold — revisit a deliriously optimistic history that was blown off course by greater historical forces. What they look forward to is a history yet to be written.