

Artspace

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“8 Rising Stars to Watch at EXPO CHICAGO”

by Andrew M. Goldstein

The amount of exciting art by young artists at EXPO CHICAGO this year is a problem, specifically for anyone who hopes to tour the fair for aesthetic enrichment alone and leave with their wallet intact. There are talents here that will be exciting to keep an eye on for quite some time, and the fact that their work is available at painfully reasonable price points (for the most part) means that someone stands to make some very smart acquisitions indeed. Here are a few names to look out for in the aisles.

A 37-year-old Art Center graduate who was in Sterling Ruby’s class, Joshua Nathanson is only now starting to get attention—he’s currently having his first solo show at Various Small Fires—but the timing is fortuitous, because if Ruby’s rambunctious sculptures and big-sky paintings capture the L.A. of the aughts, Nathanson’s thoughtful, computery, sleek, and telegraphic paintings exemplify the city’s present-day art moment. He makes paintings by going to public spaces around L.A., like the beach or the Americana mall, and quickly sketching what he sees there—tanners lounging in swimwear, dog-walkers, picknickers, etc.—on an iPad, then goes back to his studio and simply paints these scenes on canvas in acrylic, airbrush, and oil sticks that he melts on his stovetop.

If that sounds a bit like what the Impressionists were doing in Paris around the 1870s, setting up their easels in plein air to portray the conspicuous leisure of the ascendant bourgeoisie, that’s because



Like Three Ten, 2015, Acrylic and oil stick on canvas, 72 x 50”.

it is, and Seurat’s *Grand Jatte* (that Chicago landmark) and Ensor’s louche boulevards are other important touchstones. (How the paintings relate to today’s technology, characterized by intuitive interfaces and clean graphics, as opposed to how Impressionism relates to the camera of its day might be a fertile path to explore.)

Artists, it should be said, love Nathanson’s work. He came to the gallery’s attention when Sanya Kantarovsky went to the owner, Esther Kim Varet, and said, “Everyone’s rooting for this guy—he deserves some attention.” Laura Owens

is a big fan, too, and a very, very famous artist just bought two paintings that he plans to show in his own cutesily named project space. Collectors are paying attention now too: the works in the booth (titled Like Three 10 and Almost Five, and priced at \$7,500 apiece) presold, Nathanson's gallery show is sold out, and the waiting list is 60 people long.