

Dozier, Ayanna, Arun Kakar, Casey Lesser, "The Best Booths of New York Art Week 2023," Artsy, 13 May 2023.



## Independent New York

### May 11–14, Spring Studios, 50 Varick Street

The popular New York Metro account on Twitter described Thursday's forecast as such: "80-degree weather with a light breeze and comfortable dew points....The vibes are VERY good." These "very good" vibes fully permeated into the refurbished industrial space of Spring Studios, where Independent fair has been located for the past decade. The fair attendees, which was heavily dominated by New York-based galleries, seemed to have fully embraced spring's weather, reflected in the high volume of floral sundresses.

Despite the peppy zeal that the sunshiner brought to the city, the artwork at Independent often reflected the anxiety about the growing legislative violence against women. In particular, Los Angeles-based [Night Gallery's two-person booth](#) of sculptures by [Daniel Tyree Gaitor-Lomack](#) and paintings by [Christine Wang](#) aptly captured the dark zeitgeist of meme culture. In particular, Wang's paintings of demented memes did the unthinkable, capturing, in the way only memes can, what these strange political times feel like. Her work, and others, reminds us that even with "VERY good vibe" weather, sometimes the best representation of the moment is a diagram of a uterus that looks like a horned, fire-breathing devil.

Below are Artsy's five best booths at Independent 2023.

### Kapp Kapp Fifth Floor, Booth 14, With works by Stanley Stellar and Beverly Semmes



Beverly Semmes, installation view in Kapp Kapp's booth at Independent New York, 2023. Photo by Adam Reich. Courtesy of Kapp Kapp.

Housed in a somewhat enclosed room at the fair is New York-based gallery [Kapp Kapp](#), which presented a two-person booth of photographs by [Stanley Stellar](#) and paintings and collages by [Beverly Semmes](#). "We've been calling this our little Kapp Kapp lounge," Sam Kapp, co-owner of the gallery, told Artsy. This "lounge" is located up a separate slate of stairs on the fifth floor. The extra space allowed the gallery to bring a larger sculptural painting by Semmes while also displaying plenty of research materials related to Stellar's legendary body of work. The intimacy of the space removes the gallery from the mayhem below and enables attendees to have some much-needed time to reflect and discuss the works on view.

Semmes's large-scale sculptural painting is part of her ongoing "feminist responsibility project" series, in which the artist rearranges images from 1970s and '80s pornographic magazines. In Semmes's work, these intricate displays of women's bodies are remixed to comment on consumer culture.

Meanwhile, Stellar's black-and-white studio portraits of gay men adorn the walls of the exhibition lounge. The legendary photographer is most known for his works documenting queer culture on the New York piers in the 1970s. The photographs at Independent are from his rarely exhibited studio portraits of gay men in the 1990s during the height of the visibility of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Although some of the portraits feature nudity, Stellar's photographs capture a tender erotics of care rather than an explicit one. As Kapp said to Artsy, "The works are a commentary on the body and the extension of it....I feel that freedom of the body is the underlying approach for both of these artists."