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## DIANA: a model for gallery cooperation at the grassroots?

By Dennis Jarrett



These for DIANA: Sarah Macaulay of Macaulay & Co, Kourosh Nouri and Nadine Knotzer of CARBON 12, David Fierman of FIERMAN

The art market seems to be recovering nicely from the pandemic, with the art fairs apparently unfazed and the buyers continuing to spend. According to the last Art Basel /UBS [Global Art Market Report](#), global sales recovered strongly in 2021, up 29 percent from the year before to hit more than \$65 billion. But for the seller it's a world where resources (especially cash) provide both opportunity and security, and the report indicates that the smaller dealers are both the most vulnerable and the least optimistic.

From their point of view, something has to change. As the Art Market Report put it: "Although new developments were part of longer-term shifts already well underway, the last two years have also provided an opportunity for restructuring and innovation as dealers were forced to review their business models to adapt to new economic realities."

Here's one reaction to the new economic realities, though the founders aren't quite using those terms: it's DIANA, New York, a new Lower East Side gallery. Or rather, it's not new, since it takes over [the space currently occupied by Fierman](#); and it's not actually just one gallery, since three will be showing there – one of which is [FIERMAN](#).

The other two are [Macaulay & Co Fine Art](#) from Vancouver, and Alserkal Avenue's very own [CARBON 12](#) (capitalisation is de rigeur this year).

FIERMAN the gallery is actually moving to a larger space around the corner (opening 19 September at 19 Pike Street, if you're in town) but David Fierman [told Artnet News](#) that he wanted to find a way to hang on to the original gallery. So he floated the idea of a collaboration to his friends Sarah Macaulay (of the eponymous Macaulay & Co) and Nadine Knotzer and Kourosh Nouri from CARBON 12.

"It all happened very organically," Kourosh Nouri told magpie. "We are all members of NADA, the New Art Dealers Alliance, we have participated in many fairs simultaneously, and we've had a respectful collegial relationship from the very beginning. Together we've already brought to completion a few very successful projects. We get along very well, and are all ethically strong out there, and appreciate each other's programmes ... "

New York remains a hot art market, but real estate there is extravagantly expensive. This kind of collaboration would seem one sensible option for smaller galleries looking for a foothold – if the gallerists can get on, and if they can show sympathetic work, it makes good sense.

Fierman says he intends to use DIANA for artists that he doesn't normally show, and DIANA will serve as a New York satellite for Macaulay and CARBON 12. The three galleries will be organising their own exhibitions there on a rotating basis, and inbetween times they'll listen to proposals from other independent curators and galleries interested in hosting shows there. "The cost for doing a one-to-two month exhibition at Diana is essentially the same as a low-priced regional art fair booth," Fierman told Artnews.



Amba Sayal-Bennett, *Blur* (2020). Image courtesy of CARBON 12 and the artist

DIANA will open on 7 September with *Introducing DIANA*, a group show featuring one or two works each from artists associated with the three galleries – [Amba Sayal-Bennett](#) (her first New York show) and [Philip Mueller](#) from Carbon 12's roster, Rachel Martin and Tyler Bright Hilton from Macauley, and Matthew Kirk and Jimmy Wright from FIERMAN.

Thereafter Macauley will show in October, CARBON 12 gets December for a solo show of new works by Philip Mueller, and FIERMAN will open the 2023 season in January.

Kourosh Nouri is enthusiastic about the deal, and especially the space itself. "The compact architecture of the space will allow one of our most exhibited (and successful) artists to show different formats and build curatorially a very different exhibition. Great for everyone!"

Each one of the founding partners will do at least two shows there per year. "This allows each of us to extend the artistic programme of the gallery in a new and solid context," he said. "At this stage sales aren't the top priority – instead it's all about showing our artists in New York in completely different spacial settings.

"And being in New York brings quite naturally a small focus on our art scene in Dubai. I firmly believe an international presence is good for our local art scene as well."

"Two to four times a year we will select outside projects from curators and other galleries, too. The idea is to have permanently solid shows in the space, not just a chance to rent real estate. The selection of the galleries and projects will be purely on a qualitative basis, remote from any agendas. This is what makes our collaborative space so exciting, and different from the current trends. It has a very positive old school (analogue) element to it, yet on an international level."

So why 'DIANA'? It seems Fierman is somewhat obsessed with the late Princess Di ("which all of my friends and anyone who looks at my Instagram will know") and Nadine Knotzer suggested the name. "Initially we wanted to start with five founding partners, hence the five-letter name" (and the capitalisation) said Kourosh. "Mythologically, Diana is a solid goddess too. So it all has worked out well."