

HESSE FLATOW

Abdessamad, Farah. *What not to miss at PHOTOFAIRS New York*. Observer. September 8, 2023. <https://observer.com/2023/09/what-not-to-miss-at-photofairs-new-york/>

OBSERVER

ARTS

What Not to Miss at PHOTOFAIRS New York

With fifty-six exhibitors from several countries, there's a lot to see, but these are the booths to prioritize during your visit to the inaugural fair.

By Farah Abdessamad • 09/08/23 1:06pm

Few mediums have so radically impacted visual culture as photography, yet its prominence has often been downplayed at biennales and fairs. But things are thankfully shifting, and art world events are catching up. This year's Art Basel saw a rise in the number of galleries showing photos, and the inaugural edition of PHOTOFAIRS New York is attracting a great deal of positive attention.

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PHOTOFAIRS New York opened with a VIP day on September 7. Image by Casey Kelbaugh/CKA, courtesy of PHOTOFAIRS New York

“We can’t understand the story of art making without the story of photography,” PHOTOFAIRS director Helen Toomer told *Observer* in a recent interview. With fifty-six exhibitors from several countries, the fair shows the growing space and appetite that exist for photo-based and digital art. It also reminds us of the versatility of photography—and its place as an authoritative, playful and connecting medium that informs global conversations.

Booth 302: HESSE FLATOW

Chelsea gallery HESSE FLATOW presents a solo show of West African American visual artist and Columbia professor Adama Delphine Fawundu, which includes a series of intimate depictions of family, transmission and indigenization. The artist, who is of Mende, Krim, Bamileke and Bubi descent, engages with diasporic discontinuities and ancestral memory through her work, which she envisions as a continued conversation with her grandmother. We recognize this affective memory in *Passageways #1, Secrets, Traditions, Spoken and Unspoken Truths or Not* (2017), as well as *Passageways #2, Secrets, Traditions, Spoken and Unspoken Truths or Not* (2017), both intergenerational female portraits of intimacy. In the former, two women share a secret, a gossip or a sacred word more fundamental—we can only guess. The youngest gazes at the camera, as if to make us a witness to the scene. She wants us to know that it happened. In the latter, the two subjects are lying on a tired sofa; the composition reminds one of a possible social history on the meanings of home through its objects and their placement. The child fell asleep against the other woman’s legs in a serene surrender. They are united despite wars and exile. Both images are framed with patterns of fabric, which anchors

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storytelling with a strong sense of space. Note: More of Fawundu's work is currently on view at the Newark Museum of Art.