

As of Sunday, April 16th, [EXPO Chicago 2023](#) has concluded successfully. After a week of thought-provoking dialogues, fascinating art, and unforgettable interactions, EXPO Art Week: 10th Anniversary Edition has left a permanent mark on how we regard art, the creative community, and art fairs. Naturally, the exposition was a celebration of creativity. However, it was also a tribute to every artist, curator, and organization who took their communities to the heart of their creations and exhibitions. That human touch made this year's EXPO Art Week the experience of a lifetime.

Whenever there is an art fair, we tend to focus on what is to be seen: the best booths to visit and the most promising emerging artists to watch... But not so much on what there is to think about. Needless to say, EXPO Chicago has all the core elements to please everyone from passers-by to serious collectors. But we also saw something from this year's programming that was rare to see at any other Art Fair: a clear sense of accountability in leveraging the exposition as a platform to shed light on pressing social issues, under-represented communities, and uncomfortable but intimate conversations that need to happen.

Featuring 170 galleries, artists, and organizations worldwide, a viewer will easily locate some of our most familiar local names, from famed Chicago galleries, including Bert Green Fine Art and Kavi Gupta, to non-profit organizations like Chicago Printmakers Collaborative and Center for Native Futures. Each local participant carefully curated a unique exhibition showcasing their cause, mission, and action, displaying their collections' most meaningful and finest-crafted pieces. Beyond a simple trading post between collectors and galleries/organizations, the exposition also provided the perfect stage for these local galleries and organizations to share their stories, speak of what drives them, and raise curiosity.

These well-crafted narratives are another element that made EXPO Chicago 2023 stand out from the many art fairs we've been to. As an exposition for galleries and organizations instead of individual artists, EXPO didn't treat every booth as a mere sales display going after the dollars. While sales happened, transactions were initiated after an organic connection was built via the thoughtful curatorship behind each display. "it's the thought that matters" became the golden rule at EXPO Chicago, and "What am I looking at" has gained new meaning when each booth is a mini exhibition striking an intimate conversation with the viewer.

Continuing to encourage meaningful reflections, this year's Dialogues series at EXPO Chicago is tailored toward the latest happenings in the art society and the real world. From using art as a form of protest to a deep dive into the diaspora identity, this year's programming demonstrated the fair's significant commitment to holding art industry

thought leaders accountable for providing an insightful perspective into ongoing matters in society and promoting compassion and understanding.

And if we're talking about the fair, how can we not mention the dynamic alignment across the city? This year's EXPO Art Week line-up perfectly summarizes the compassionate nature of Chicago's art community. Let's use art to open the conversation if something hasn't been discussed. Following this core principle, we see an alignment focusing on illustrating Chicago's history in a new light, shedding light on under-represented communities, and building a safe space for difficult private and public conversations.

For example: when was the last time we saw an exhibition focusing on the diabetic population, regardless of the disease's high prevalence? This year, the Museum of Surgical Science brought light to what it really looks like living with diabetes during art week, giving the human voice back to patients and care providers. On the other hand, emotions like sadness, grief, frustration, and loss are brought to the front stage as various exhibitions navigated how living with trauma and reshaping your identity afterward looks in different ways. It's like all the conversations we should have had as a society, but haven't fully had, gathered over the past week and waved at us, saying: Hey, come on in. Take a stroll and hear what we have to say. And sit on the feelings and thoughts you had during the walkthrough. Just sit on it and think about it."

With everything said, if we must pick a pair of keywords to summarize EXPO Chicago 2023 with, they will be accountability and compassion. Frankly, the fair and art week programming was way beyond our expectations for any art fair. We are so proud of Chicago for putting up an exposition that focuses on connecting collectors with galleries and provides a stage second to none for organizations and curators to bring attention to under-represented communities and long-overdue conversations.

In conclusion, every moment during EXPO Art Week shone Windy City's diverse, vibrant, and inclusive essence. EXPO Chicago 2023 was the experience of a lifetime, and we cannot wait to see what 2024 has in store for us.