



The Stories Behind 5 of The Armory Show’s Largest Artworks

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It’s hard to miss The Armory Show’s new Platform section of large-scale artworks and installations. Enter the fair on Pier 92 and you’ll walk straight into Abigail DeVille’s *Sarcophagus Blue* (2017), a worn, wooden boat overflowing with mannequin legs in ripped tights. Kick the day off on Pier 94 and you’ll see Sebastian Errazuriz’s *The awareness of uncertainty* (2017), an upright piano hoisted high in the air. These are just two of the 13 Platform works sprinkled across the two piers.

Platform was curated by Eric Shiner, Sotheby’s senior vice president of contemporary art, who took it as an opportunity to reinvigorate the fair experience. “I wanted to break the monotony of the art fair,” Shiner said on opening day. “I wanted to create a few moments of surprise, respite, and energy, just to let people take a pause for as long as they can.” Here are the stories behind five of the highlights.

Patricia Cronin, *Tack Room*, 1997–98

Cronin’s contribution to Platform is her own take on the tack rooms found in horse stables; the installation is lined with bridles and saddles, paintings, and accessories, some more sexually suggestive than others. “You smell leather, wood, a few bales of hay; you see the riding crops, whips, chaps—it’s all there, and your mind’s eye will just fill in the rest,” Cronin said with a laugh.

In 1997, the artist’s wife was teaching at Maine’s Skowhegan School. While there, Cronin took up horseback riding and began painting portraits of the animals. “I wanted to be a successful artist so I could buy a horse, and I’m trying to relive an adolescence I never had,” she added. Cronin later purchased saddles and other equestrian accoutrements for still lifes, but felt drawn to the objects themselves—which led to her creation of *Tack Room* in the Skowhegan woodshop.



The work was first shown at White Columns in 1998, and has been featured in two more exhibitions since. However, it never sold, despite strong reviews. Now those reviews are framed and included in the installation at The Armory Show. Shiner said it's the work he's most proud to show, especially given its powerful female energy in the present political climate.

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