

The Most Influential Artists of 2024

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Jeffrey Gibson, installation view of *WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT*, 2024 in “the space in which to place me” at the U.S. pavilion at the 60th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, 2024. Photo by Timothy Schenck. Courtesy of the U.S. pavilion.

In 2024, there were major shifts in the art world. The first headline event came in April, when the Venice Biennale opened, projecting a new cadre of artists into the spotlight. The international exhibition “Foreigners Everywhere,” curated by Adriano Pedrosa, highlighted Indigenous and queer artists outside the Western art world, many of whom went on to receive international gallery shows, rolling the show’s influence across the globe. With underrecognized artists such as these gaining new acclaim, 2024 looked like a year of adjustment towards a canon that is, thankfully, growing all the time.

As art fairs have proliferated across the world and emerging markets develop in importance, art world power is shifting globally, with Middle Eastern and Asian metropolises growing in stature. Against this backdrop, in 2024, artists were often vocal activists for the causes that mattered to them. Influence, for artists this year, was measured not just by what they did within the walls of the gallery, but the collaborations, statements, and impact they made in the outside world.

Here are Artsy's most influential artists of 2024.

Julie Mehretu

B. 1970, Addis Ababa. Lives and works in New York and Berlin.

Portrait of Julie Mehretu by Josefina Santos for the *New York Times*. ©Josefina Santos. Courtesy of White Cube.

Known for her frenetic markmaking and meticulously layered paintings, [Julie Mehretu](#) cemented her place as one of the preeminent abstract artists in the world this year.

Her high-profile year was marked by both market and institutional milestones. *Insile* (2013) [sold for \\$9.5 million](#) at the third edition of [Art Basel Paris](#), while her largest European exhibition to date, "[Ensemble](#)," opened at Palazzo Grassi just before the [2024 Venice Biennale](#) and will run through January 2025.

Julie Mehretu, installation view of *TRANSpaintings, 2023–24*, in "Julie Mehretu. Ensemble" at Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2024. Photo by Marco Cappelletti. © Palazzo Grassi, Pinault Collection. Courtesy of the artist and White Cube.

If that wasn't enough to make her one of the most influential names of the year, Mehretu was tapped to create an installation for the new [Obama Presidential Center in Chicago](#), which will adorn the museum's façade when the campus opens in 2026. In New York, where the artist is based, she contributed [\\$2.25 million to the Whitney Museum's](#) new "Free 25 and Under" program, ensuring greater accessibility for the next generation of art enthusiasts.

Potentially the flashiest landmark of Mehretu's year is [her design for the 20th BMW Art Car](#). Unveiled in May at the Centre Pompidou, her design for the BMW M Hybrid V8 represents her explosive aesthetic, drawing directly from her painting *Everywhen* (2021–23), which is currently on view in her Palazzo Grassi retrospective.

—Maxwell Rabb

Jeffrey Gibson

B. 1972, Colorado Springs. Lives and works in Hudson, New York.

Portrait of Jeffrey Gibson by Inez & Vinoodh. Courtesy of Hauser & Wirth.

Jeffrey Gibson, *SPIRIT AND MATTER*, 2023. Courtesy of Jeffrey Gibson Studio and Sikkema Jenkins & Co.

The first Native American artist to represent the U.S. in a solo presentation at the Venice Biennale, [Jeffrey Gibson](#) made sure his solo pavilion had a critical edge. His installation, an explosion of color and geometric forms, challenged restrictive colonial narratives and celebrated Indigenous and queer identities. The show was named by Artsy as one of the [10 best pavilions at the 2024 biennale](#), featuring sculptures adorned with bright tassels and colorful, text-laden paintings.

The year began auspiciously for Gibson as he opened “They Teach Love” at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art in Oregon. [This major exhibition](#), showcasing 15 years of his work, ran from just before the new year through March 2024. By October, mega-gallery [Hauser & Wirth](#) had announced [global representation](#) of the artist in collaboration with [Sikkema Jenkins & Co.](#)

Jeffrey Gibson, installation view, from left to right, of *IF NOT NOW THEN WHEN*, 2024; *The Enforcer*, 2024; and *WE WANT TO BE FREE*, 2024, in the U.S. pavilion at the 60th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 2024. Photo by Timothy Schenck. Courtesy of Hauser & Wirth.

If representing the U.S. at the Venice Biennale wasn’t enough, Gibson secured one of the most prestigious commissions of his career: [The Met’s Fifth Avenue façade](#). His contribution, set to feature four monumental “ancestral spirit figures,” will be on view from September 2025 to May 2026. Additionally, this fall, Gibson debuted [a series of public installations during Climate Week New York](#). These large-scale projections were shown at Union Square, the Brooklyn Bridge, and Columbus Circle, among other locations.

—Maxwell Rabb

Isabella Ducrot

B. 1931, Naples, Italy. Lives and works in Rome.

Portrait of Isabella Ducrot in Rome, 2021. © Albrecht Fuchs. Courtesy of the artist, Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne, and Petzel, New York

Isabella Ducrot, *Tendernesses on grill IX*, 2023. Photo by Daniel Greer. Courtesy of the artist and Petzel, New York.

[Isabella Ducrot’s](#) debut solo show with [Petzel Gallery](#) in New York this past January opened with a quote from the artist: “You can make a drawing of two people in love, but the tenderness doesn’t always come out. I’m trying to make tenderness come out, tenderness and the possibility of touch.” This feeling radiates through Ducrot’s luminous depictions of flowers, lovers, and landscapes. It also describes the way she transforms rare, centuries-old papers and fabrics sourced from across the globe in her collages and works on paper—and the way she has gently enchanted the art world.

Hardly a month passed this year without a major moment for the Rome-based artist, whose rise to renown primarily took place after she turned 90. Ducrot's Petzel show coincided with *Big Aura* (2024), her stunning installation that enveloped [Dior's spring/summer runway show](#) at the [Musée Rodin](#) in Paris. In April, her solo show at Le Consortium in Dijon, France, marked her first major international museum exhibition. By June, her second solo show with Sadie Coles HQ opened in London, followed in August by another exhibition at the Museo delle Civiltà in Rome.

Isabella Ducrot, installation view of "No Words" at Petzel, 2024. Photo by Daniel Greer. Courtesy of the artist and Petzel, New York.

In October and November, Ducrot's work was presented in solo booths at [Frieze Masters](#) and [ADAA's The Art Show](#)—she is represented by Petzel, Sadie Coles, Galerie Gisela Capitain, and Standard (Oslo)—cementing her status as a favorite among collectors. Yet it may well have been a widely admired *New Yorker* profile by Rebecca Mead that really catapulted Ducrot into the public consciousness this year. Ultimately, her work transcends trends, offering a timelessness that is delightfully seductive.

—Casey Lesser

Maurizio Cattelan

B. 1960, Padua, Italy. Lives and works in New York and Milan.

Portrait of Maurizio Cattelan. Courtesy of Maurizio Cattelan Archive and Perrotin.

Maurizio Cattelan, *Comedian*, 2019. Courtesy of Sotheby's.

Gunshot-riddled gold panels, the return of the banana, and a major museum show—this was a vintage year for [Maurizio Cattelan](#). Often dismissed as the art world's perennial prankster, Cattelan this year reaffirmed not only his unique ability to generate fiery mainstream debate, but also his status as arguably one of the most important artists working today.

At the turn of the year, a solo presentation of the artist opened at Stockholm's [Moderna Museet](#) featuring some of the artist's most iconic works. In April, he created a mural in the [Vatican's standout national pavilion](#) during the Venice Biennale. Then in May, his solo show "[Sunday](#)," at [Gagosian](#) in New York's Chelsea—his debut with the mega-gallery—held an uncompromising and controversial mirror to contemporary American society. Featuring works such as a 17-foot-tall wall of gold-plated panels riddled with gunshots, and a sculpture of a figure urinating on the ground, it was the artist in trademark form: brazen, confrontational, and laced with a streak of dark humor.

And then there was the return of the banana. Initially conceived in 2019, where it caused a sensation at [Perrotin's](#) Art Basel Miami Beach booth, one of three editions of *Comedian* (2019)—a literal banana, duct-taped to a wall—was put up for auction in November at Sotheby's. Estimated at \$1 million–\$1.5 million, it eventually sold for \$6.2 million (with fees) to crypto entrepreneur Justin Sun, who paid in crypto. The work also inspired a meme coin of its own, and a few weeks after the sale, Sun ate the banana. The turn of events could have been written by Cattelan himself.

—Arun Kakar

Alvaro Barrington

B. 1983, Caracas. Lives and works in London.

Portrait of Alvaro Barrington by Adama Jalloh. Courtesy of Thaddaeus Ropac.

Ever since completing his MFA at the Slade School of Art in 2017, [Alvaro Barrington](#) has gone from strength to strength. [BLUM](#), [Thaddaeus Ropac](#), and [MASSIMODECARLO](#) are just a few solo show venues for the Venezuelan-born artist, whose paintings often incorporate burlap, postcards, and clothing.

This year, however, Barrington's biggest moment was not a top-tier gallery show (though he had some of those, at [Mendes Wood DM](#) and Thaddaeus Ropac, for instance). Instead, it was a monumental commission at Tate Britain. His installation, titled *Grace*, is a three-part project that uses sound, painting, and sculpture to celebrate the influence of women in Black culture. It also serves as a personal tribute, honoring women from his own life: his grandmother, mother, and a close friend, Samantha. At the heart of the installation is a 4-meter-tall aluminum sculpture of a dancing woman.

Alvaro Barrington, installation view of *Grace*, 2024, in "Tate Britain Commission: Alvaro Barrington: GRACE" at Tate Britain, 2024. Photo by Seraphina Neville. © Tate. Courtesy of Tate.

All the while, the London artist's presence has been felt worldwide, from inclusion in group shows at El Espacio 23 in Miami and [James Fuentes](#) in New York to his colorful installations at the Glastonbury Festival in England. Perhaps most notably, in the Parcours sector of [Art Basel](#) in June, Barrington unveiled *Come Home* (2024), an architectural installation inside the city's Tropical Zone supermarket—a space serving the local Afro and Latin American communities. This structure, built from traditional Caribbean materials like burlap and timber, featured new abstract paintings from his "Hibiscus" series.

—Maxwell Rabb

Joan Jonas

B. 1936, New York. Lives and works in New York and Nova Scotia, Canada.

Portrait of Joan Jonas by Toby Coulson. Courtesy of Gladstone Gallery.

Portrait of Joan Jonas posing for an unrealized poster for a performance of *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* at LoGiudice Gallery, New York, 1972. © Joan Jonas/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Richard Serra. Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.

Video and performance art owe much to New York artist Joan Jonas. During the 1960s and '70s, Jonas was at the forefront of establishing video performance as a medium. However, as she modestly insisted in a recent *Vogue* interview, she never considered herself a “pioneer.” Mirrors, the wind, and her alter ego, named “Organic Honey,” are the subjects in her boundary-pushing videos. And this year, these significant works were featured in a major retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, titled “Good Night Good Morning.”

It was unmistakably the season of Jonas in New York. Coinciding with the MoMA retrospective, the Drawing Center mounted “Joan Jonas: Animal, Vegetable, Mineral,” presenting 300 drawings from the artist’s collection of some 2,000 works spanning her 60-year career. Elsewhere, Jonas’s work appeared on clothing in Rachel Comey’s spring 2024 collection.

Joan Jonas, installation view of “Good Night Good Morning” at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2024. Photo by Jonathan Dorado. Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.

Just last month, Jonas was awarded the 2024 Nam June Paik Prize by the Nam June Paik Art Center in Korea. Frances Morris, former director of Tate Modern and chair of the international jury, commented on the decision: “Jonas not only played a key role in shaping early video and performance art but continues to explore urgent new terrain.”

—Maxwell Rabb

Kim Yun Shin

B. 1935, Wonsan, North Korea. Lives and works in Buenos Aires and Yanggu, South Korea.

Portrait of Kim Yun Shin in Venice, 2024. Photo by Lucy Emms, ArtDrunk. Courtesy of the artist, Lehmann Maupin, New York, Seoul, and London; and Kukje Gallery, Seoul and Busan.

Kim Yun Shin

Add Two Add One Divide Two Divide One 2015-20, 2015

Lehmann Maupin

Inquire about availability.

Kim Yun Shin emerged dramatically on the global art scene this year at the age of 88, after spending more than six decades crafting kaleidoscopic paintings and chainsaw-carved wooden sculptures largely outside the limelight. This noteworthy year for Kim kicked off after gaining dual representation at Lehmann Maupin and Kukje Gallery, with solo exhibitions in New York and Seoul, respectively.

Kim's work, now known for exploring themes like natural harmony, stood out at the 60th Venice Biennale's main exhibition. The display featured eight sculptures, four carved from wood between 1979 and 1986 and four sculpted from stone between 1991 and 2001. These pieces are part of her long-standing series "Add Two Add One, Divide Two Divide One," inspired by the Chinese philosophy of yin and yang.

Kim Yun Shin, installation view in "Foreigners Everywhere" at the Venice Biennale, 2024. Photo by Andrea Rossetti. Courtesy of the artist; Lehmann Maupin, New York, Seoul, and London; and Kukje Gallery, Seoul and Busan.

Lehmann Maupin debuted Kim's work at Frieze L.A. in February. Since then, the artist has become a mainstay at art fairs around the world, featured in major booths at KIAF, Frieze Seoul, and Art Basel Miami Beach, among others.

—Maxwell Rabb

Steve McQueen

B. 1969, London. Lives and works in Amsterdam.

Portrait of Steve McQueen by James Stopforth. Courtesy of Thomas Dane Gallery and Marian Goodman Gallery.

With one foot in film and the other in art, Steve McQueen is a household name across creative industries. From headline-grabbing exhibitions to critically acclaimed movies, his rising clout is hard to miss—evident in his climb to fourth place on this year's ArtReview Power 100 list, up from eighth in 2023.

McQueen's concurrent exhibitions at Dia Beacon and Dia Chelsea generated quite a buzz this May. At the Beacon show, on view through May 2025, McQueen presented a newly commissioned, site-specific work, *Bass* (2024), where the ceiling is adorned with 60 LED

lightboxes. Meanwhile, in Chelsea, he is showing three film-based works: *Exodus* (1992–97), *Sunshine State* (2022), and *Bounty* (2024). *Exodus* is the artist's first film, rarely shown, and comprises a Super 8 reel featuring two men carrying palm trees through London.

Steve McQueen, installation view of *Sunshine State*, 2022, at Dia Chelsea, New York, 2024. © Steve McQueen. Photo by Don Stahl. Courtesy of Dia Art Foundation.

This November, McQueen premiered his latest film, *Blitz*, a war drama starring Saoirse Ronan and Harris Dickinson that follows the stories of Londoners during the German bombings of World War II. The release came shortly after his 2023 documentary film, *Occupied City*, which focussed on the Nazi occupation of Amsterdam.

The British filmmaker and artist will also be curating a forthcoming exhibition at [Turner Contemporary](#) titled “Resistance.” The show, which will open on February 22nd, explores acts of political activism throughout U.K. history and the role of photography in documenting social change.

—Maxwell Rabb

Jasleen Kaur

B. 1986, Glasgow. Lives and works in London.

Portrait of Jasleen Kaur at the Turner Prize 2024 ceremony at Tate Britain. Photo by David Parry, PA Media Assignments. Courtesy of Tate.

Jasleen Kaur's Turner Prize–winning installation *Alter Altar* (2023–24) is a monument to the everyday objects of her life growing up in a Sikh community in Glasgow. The eclectic piece includes an orange Ford Escort covered in a white doily alongside sculptures of outstretched hands.

When accepting the award at Tate Britain, Kaur noted the significance of her upbringing to her work. However, she spent the larger part of her acceptance speech expressing support with the Palestinian cause. Dressed in the colors of the Palestinian flag, she demanded the Tate divest from organizations with links to Israel and called for a ceasefire.

It was an apt way to end a year in which some artists have very visibly wielded their cultural capital to attempt to change institutions' political attitudes to the war in Gaza, which has caused polarizing rifts across all levels of the art world. Just a few weeks earlier, [Nan Goldin](#), at the opening of her retrospective at Berlin's Neue Nationalgalerie, gave a powerful speech condemning Germany's role in supporting Israel, as she was cheered by protesters both inside and outside the museum's glass walls. Outside the Turner Prize award ceremony, too, there was a large protest against the Tate's links to

Israel, which Kaur joined before she went in to be awarded her prize. As the artist put it at the end of her acceptance speech, “If you want us inside, you need to listen to us outside.”

—Josie Thaddeus-Johns

Shahzia Sikander

B. 1969, Lahore. Lives and works in New York.

Portrait of Shahzia Sikander in “Collective Behavior” at Palazzo Van Axel, Venice, Italy, 2024. Courtesy of Agostino Osio - Alto//Piano.

Shahzia Sikander, installation view of *Witness*, 2023, in “Havah . . . to breathe, air, life” at Madison Square Park, New York, 2023. Photo by Lynda Churilla. Courtesy of Sikander Studio.

In April, [Shahzia Sikander](#) opened the most comprehensive survey of her three-and-a-half-decade career to date. An exhibition of this scale, mounted as a collateral event to the Venice Biennale, would have been the headlining event in most artists’ years. But Sikander was unwittingly thrust into an even bigger spotlight in July, when her 2023 sculpture *Witness* was violently defaced after getting caught in the crosshairs of the culture wars.

Originally [installed](#) in New York’s Madison Square Park, where it stood in the shadow of the Manhattan Appellate Courthouse, *Witness* symbolizes women’s strength in the context of a legal system that has historically failed us. The towering metallic figure’s coiled braids evoke the ram’s horn motif—a symbol of power—found in the courthouse’s architecture. Its lace jabot honors Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who often wore decorative collars with her judicial robes.

Shahzia Sikander, installation view of *Witness*, 2023, after vandalism, at the University of Houston, 2024. Photo by Abdurrahman Danquah. Courtesy of Sikander Studio.

The invocation of Ginsburg, and references to the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in an [artist’s statement](#) that accompanied the installation, caught the attention of conservative media and anti-choice advocates, who interpreted the work as pro-abortion and “satanic.” There were protests when it was installed in University of Houston earlier this year; a vandal, presumed to be ideologically motivated, ultimately decapitated the sculpture with a hammer.

Rather than repair it, Sikander allowed the figure to remain headless—a gesture that underscored the work’s feminist message by laying bare the violence that is inflicted upon women who attempt to assert their own agency. The episode was a salient reminder of

art's power to stir emotions and inspire debate—and of the uncanny ways in which life and art mirror one another.

—Olivia Horn

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Artsy Editorial

Correction: A previous version of this article incorrectly stated that the storyline of Steve McQueen’s film *Blitz* (2024) explores the Nazi occupation of Amsterdam. The film follows a group of Londoners during World War II.