

The 30 Most Exciting Artists in North America Right Now: Part One

From new blood to established voices, here's who made the cut.

[Alyssa Buffenstein](#), December 23, 2015



Juliana Huxtable, *Untitled* (2014). Courtesy of the New Museum, 235 Bowery, New York, NY.

Presented by *Cartier*

It has been an exciting year for contemporary art, with a young generation of artists pushing the boundaries both in terms of materials and subject matters. But with so much going on it's easy to miss out.

In an effort to capture the moment, we at artnet News have put together a directory of the most exciting artists showing, living, and working in the United States, Canada, and Mexico at the moment. ([See Part Two here.](#))



Nicole Eisenman, *Beasley Street* (2007).

Image: Courtesy of Christie's.

1. Nicole Eisenman

Eisenman started 2015 off strong with work featured in the MoMA exhibition "The Forever Now: Contemporary Painting in an Atemporal World." Then, more institutional love arrived from the new Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, which included Eisenman in its inaugural show, "America is Hard to See."

Artforum put her work on the cover of their September issue, which is the

same month the 50-year-old artist won a MacArthur Foundation fellowship, aka a “genius grant,” for, as it states on their [website](#), “expanding the critical and expressive capacity of the Western figurative tradition.”



Catherine Opie, *Krupp Diamond* (2010-11), from the “700 Nimes Road” portfolio.
Image: Courtesy of Lehmann Maupin Gallery.

2. Catherine Opie

The photographer’s work was featured in 21 group exhibitions this year, including “America is Hard to See” at the new Whitney Museum of American Art. She also joined the board of the Andy Warhol Foundation.

In 2016, Lehmann Maupin Gallery in New York will show “700 Nimes Road,” Opie’s series of 50 photographs of the late Elizabeth Taylor’s home. Taylor died while the project was in progress, so the series documents the dismantling of the beloved actress’ home.

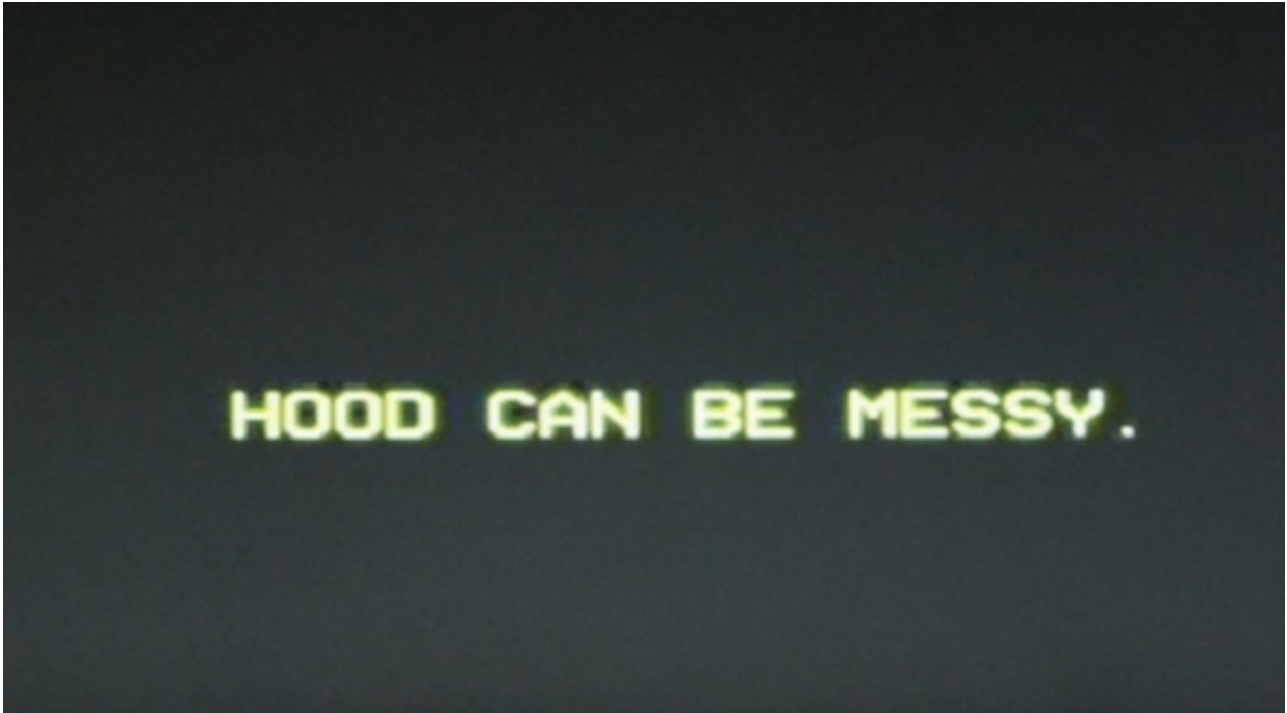
3. Marcel Dzama

The Winnipeg-born, New York-based artist is known for having friends in high places. He's buddies with filmmaker Spike Jonze, and is reportedly collected by Brad Pitt and Gus Van Sant. Dzama recently teamed up with Amy Sedaris for his latest video *A Flower of Evil*, which will debut at David Zwirner gallery in New York.

Night trailer for "Hippias Minor" exhibition by Paul Chan (June 15 - S...

4. Paul Chan

The artist's return to the art world is a welcome one; he's been busy since his self-imposed exile ended. After accepting the Hugo Boss Prize in 2014, he debuted "Hippias Minor" this summer at Desde Foundation Project Space in Athens.

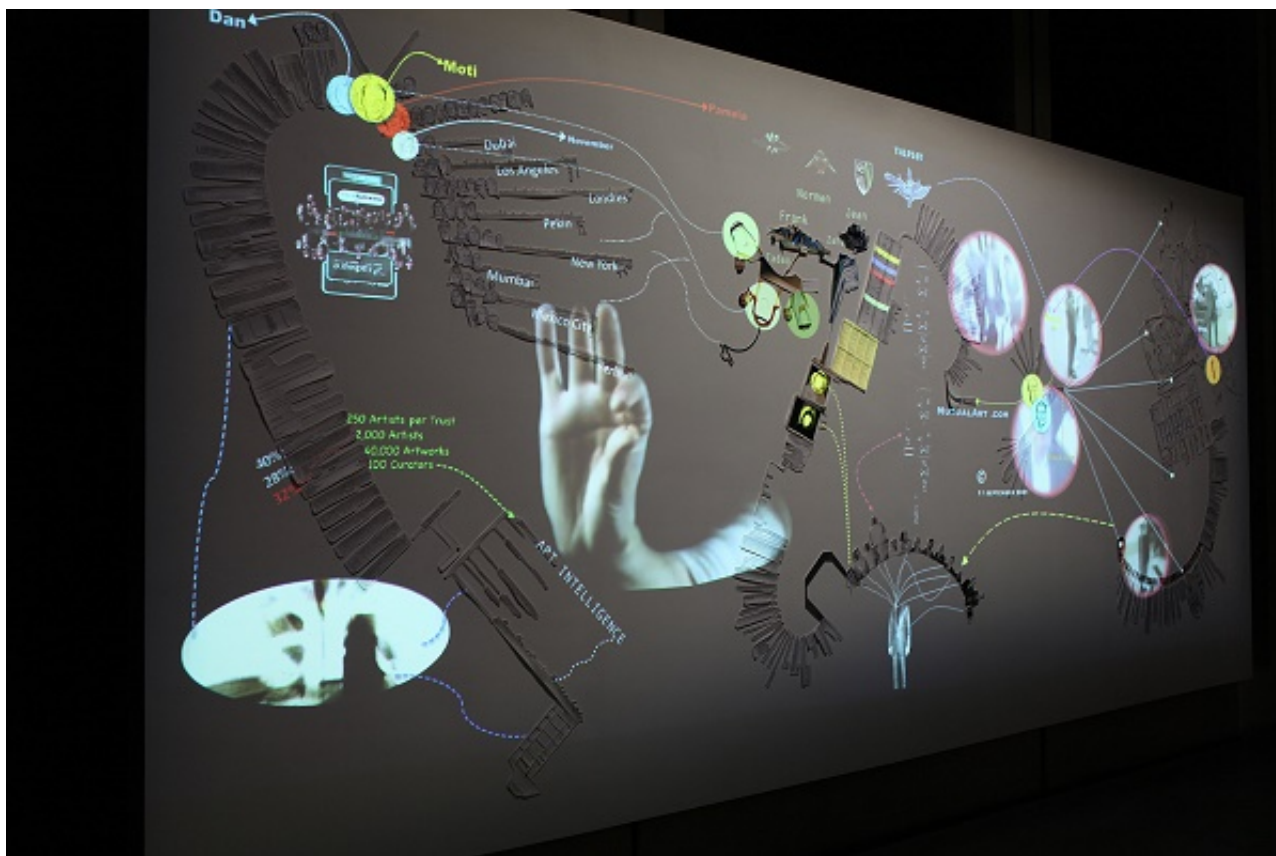


Mark Bradford, *Spiderman (film still)* (2015).

Image: Courtesy of Hauser & Wirth.

5. Mark Bradford

Hauser & Wirth showed Bradford's latest work this year, a multimedia exhibition, "Be Strong Boquan," featuring painting, sculpture, and video. "Spiderman," an installation exploring themes of black identity, gender, and cultural misrepresentations, was also featured in a solo show at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.



Walid Raad, *Translator's Introduction: Pension Arts in Dubai* (2012).

Image: Courtesy of MoMA.

6. Walid Raad

The artist's [genius show at MoMA](#) this year included a survey of the his photographic, video, and sculptural work. But the genius part was the performance, *Walkthrough*, where Raad unraveled a geopolitical web of ties in front of the audience to reveal a tale of shrinking artworks and mystical colors. Mark Lombardi would have been proud.



Toba Khedoori, *Untitled (mountains 1)* (2010-11).

Image: Courtesy of David Zwirner.

7. Toba Khedoori

Khedoori's delicate, grisaille paintings and drawings were featured in group shows at the Albertina in Vienna, the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, and the Schaulager in Basel. Next year, she will have a solo show at Regen Projects in Los Angeles.



Joan Jonas, *They Come to Us without a Word* (2015).
Image: Moira Ricci.

8. Joan Jonas

Representing the United States at the [2015 Venice Biennale](#), the 79-year-old artist created a five-gallery extravaganza of video projections, fun house mirrors, drawings, and objects. Next year, her Biennale installation will be displayed at the [NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore](#).



Kehinde Wiley, *Saint Remi* (2014).

Image: Courtesy of Galerie Daniel Templon.

9. Kehinde Wiley

The Brooklyn Museum gave Wiley a solo show this year, "[Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic](#)." It included the artist's distinct style of everyday black subjects portrayed in the monumental style of European Old Master portraits.



Juliana Huxtable, *There Are Certain Facts that Cannot Be Disputed* (2015).

Image: Courtesy of MoMA.

10. Juliana Huxtable

Juliana Huxtable was the queen of a lot of New York institutions this year, stealing the show at the [New Museum Triennial](#) and [Performa 15](#). She was also the definitive DJ of the New York nightlife; you could spot her at MoMA by day and queer performance- and party spot Spectrum the same night.



Martha Rosler, *Red Stripe Kitchen* (1967-72).

Image: Courtesy of the artist and Mitchel-Innes & Nash.

11. Martha Rosler

The legendary conceptual feminist artist was still going strong in 2015, with work displayed at the Brooklyn Museum, the Tate Modern, MoMA, the Whitney, the Smithsonian, and more.

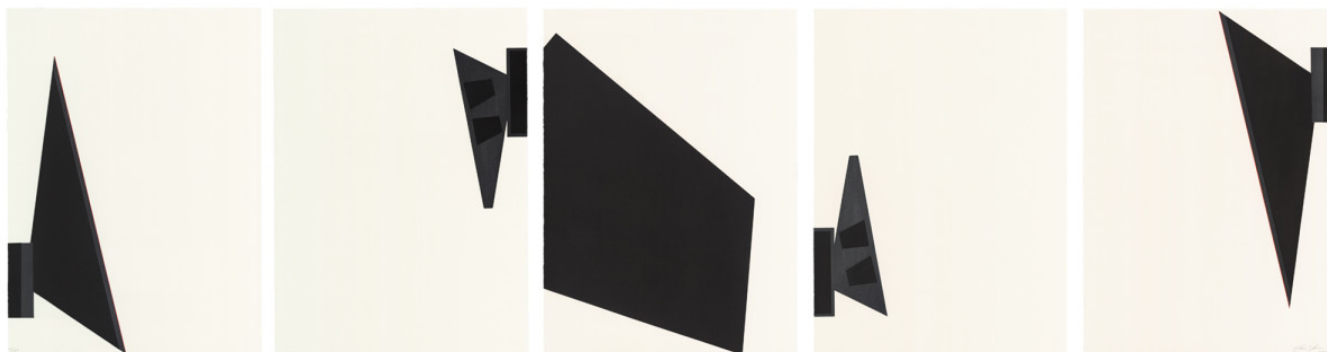
In 2016, the Seattle Art Museum will host an exhibition, "[Martha Rosler: Below the Surface](#)," in tandem with "[If You Lived Here Still](#)," part of the New Foundation Seattle's project "Housing Is a Human Right."



Pia Camil in a "habitable painting" poncho.
Photo: Courtesy of Kate Shanley.

12. Pia Camil

The Mexico City-based artist caused a stir at Frieze New York this year, [offering up "habitable paintings"](#) (aka colorful ponchos) to the first 800 guest at the fair. In January, the New Museum will exhibit the artist's first solo museum presentation, "[A Pot for a Latch](#)," which [lucky visitors got a chance to experience in December](#). On designated days, visitors can exchange a personal item for a part of the installation.



Jennie C Jones, *Five Point One Surround* (2014).
Courtesy of Hiram Butler Gallery.

13. Jennie C. Jones

The minimalist artist's work is currently on view at Houston's

Contemporary Arts Museum. In 2016, "Jennie C. Jones: Editions" will make an appearance at Hiram Butler Gallery in New York, and will feature prints, etchings, and lithographs that riff on jazz themes.



Ebony G. Patterson, *Dead Trees* (installation view), (2015).

Image: Courtesy of Butcher Walsh © and Museum of Arts and Design.

14. Ebony G. Patterson

The Museum of Arts and Design in New York hosted Patterson's first New York museum show, [Dead Treez](#), this year, a colorful mixed-media extravaganza probing the media's representation of class, gender, and race.

In 2016, the Studio Museum in Harlem will host another solo exhibition, and Patterson's work will also be featured in the 32nd Bienal de São Paulo.



Wyatt Kahn, *Work Puppet* (2015).

Image: Genevieve Hanson, courtesy of the artist.

15. Wyatt Kahn

For “Work,” his contribution to [Performa 15](#), Kahn brought his paintings to life and argued with them. He also had solo shows at Rosenfeld Art Projects in Los Angeles, Tanya Leighton in Berlin, and at the Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis.

Next year, Kahn has a solo show at Xavier Hufkens in Brussels planned.

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