

Museums & Institutions

The Almost-Canonized: A Closer Look at the Artists Museums Are Showing Now

Digging into who is rising, who is resonant, and who is resurgent.





Still from Martine Gutierrez and Julio Torres in *Marina* (2026). Photo: Daniel Arnold.

Ben Davis • Jul 2, 2026 • [Share This Article](#)

As I mentioned in [my post](#) listing the Museum Artists of June 2026, I've found that the top ranks have remained pretty stable over the last year. Having spent so many hours looking through the data of which artists were showing where, I thought it was worth digging a little farther down to see if any other patterns popped out.

Entering the Canon?

In yesterday's article, I mentioned a few names that almost made the cut, just behind the 18 artists from the main list. These included **Ai Weiwei**, **Carol Bove**, **Nick Cave**, **Glenn Ligon**, **Mickalene**

Thomas, Dyani White Hawk, Deborah Roberts, Fritz Scholder, and **Alison Saar.** You could add the likes of **Dawoud Bey, Mark Bradford, David Hammons, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Senga Nengudi, Wangechi Mutu, Wendy Red Star,** and the 98-year-old **Alex Katz,** as having a great June. All were in half a dozen shows across the country.

For the most part, those figures are either firmly in the art history books or have recently had very-visible major exhibitions of their work. Are there other artists who are being picked widely but who have *not* yet been canonized with a big retrospective or touring show in the U.S.? Are there artists on the rise?

I think **Martine Gutierrez** is in that position. She first gained major attention in 2018 for her *Indigenous Woman* magazine project, using herself as a model. Gutierrez features in the current **Whitney Biennial** (her performance with HBO comedian **Julio Torres** is next month), and in five other June group shows. That includes a spot representing the “now” in the **Guggenheim New York’s** “Guggenheim Pop: 1960 to Now.” Over at the **Huis Marseille** photography museum in Amsterdam, Gutierrez has just opened a solo exhibition, “Martine Gutierrez: Wunderkind,” but she has yet to have a serious survey in the United States.



Stephanie Syjuco, *Tender, Sifter, Keeper, Center* (2024). Commissioned by the Frye Art Museum; courtesy of the artist. Photo: Jueqian Fang

Another artist who seems ascendant is **Stephanie Syjuco**. Born in the Philippines and based in Oakland, she specializes in work dealing with the history of photography as an instrument of domination. Syjuco's largest-ever wall piece is currently at the **Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive**, and she's in group shows including the sprawling "A Nation of Artists" in Philadelphia. Her 2024 show in Seattle at the **Frye Art Museum**, "After/Images," was her most substantial bow so far. Based on how much I've seen her name, I imagine she's likely to get even more curatorial attention in the future.

Some other artists to watch because they are getting multiple spotlights right now, even if they don't appear widely in group shows:

Iranian-born **Ali Banisadr** is currently doing the **Buffalo AKG's** first-ever collection intervention, inserting his paintings into the galleries, even as he has his first substantial survey, "Ali Banisadr: The Alchemist," at the **Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg** in Florida.

Chicago artist **Mike Cloud** has two big spotlights on his materially eccentric assemblages, one at the Hammer Museum, the other in his hometown, at the MCA Chicago.

Martine Syms had two museums showing off work by her from their collections in June: the Saint Louis Art Museum put the focus on *Soliloquy* (2021), while the Walker Art Center put *The Borrowed Lady* (2016) on view until next year.

And **Lucy Raven** has her experimental films spotlighted concurrently both at the ICA Boston and the Allen Memorial Art Museum at **Oberlin College** in Ohio.

The Sturdiness of Glass



Einar and Jamex de la Torre, *Llorando de Felicidad* (2010). Courtesy of the artists and Traver Gallery.

Brothers **Einar and Jamex de la Torre** are getting a lot of attention for their ambitious glass sculptures, featured in shows at the **Riverside Art Museum** in California, the **Hallie Ford Museum of Art** in Salem, Oregon, and the **Mint Museum** in New Orleans. Their touring retrospective “Collidoscope: de la Torre Brothers Retro-Perspective” is now at the

Wichita Art Museum in Kansas, organized the **National Museum of the American Latino** and the **Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture**.

But don't underestimate **Dale Chihuly**! Seattle's venerable maestro of psychedelic glass has a big, showy presentation at the **Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park** in Michigan. Chihuly's one-time student, **Toots Zynsky**, also gets a lot of museum love. She appears alongside him in shows at the **Baker Museum** in Naples, Florida, the **Flint Institute of Arts**, and the **Grand Rapids Art Museum** in Michigan, while also starring in shows like "Tough Stuff: Women in the American Glass Studio" at the **Corning Museum of Glass** in upstate New York.

Red Alert



American multimedia artist Red Grooms photographed in his Lower East Side studio in 1972. Photo: Jack Mitchell/Getty Images.

Here is a figure whose present-day cachet surprises me: **Red Grooms**.

The 89-year-old maker of colorful and poppy dioramas has not exactly inspired a lot of critical attention of late. But then again, his well-loved opus, *Ruckus, Manhattan*, just closed out its run at the **Brooklyn Museum**. Meanwhile, across the country, the Grooms corpus seems to be resonating with an Americana vibe.

He is featuring in “What Does Independence Mean to You?” at the **Alaska State Museum** in Juneau, as well as in “Pasture to Present” at the **Sioux City Art Museum** in Iowa, featuring works that respond to *American Gothic* painter **Grant Wood**. The **Morgan Library & Museum** is showing his work as part of poet **John Ashbery**’s collection. The **Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts** features him as an ambassador for “the liberatory power of figurative art.”

Are we on the cusp of a Groom-aissance? Probably not, but it’s interesting to see that he’s in the mix.

A Focus on the U.S.



Graciela Iturbide, *La Senora de las Iguanas* (1979). Courtesy of Throckmorton Fine Art,

U.S. museums are intensely focused on Black and Indigenous artists, and on reconsidering U.S. history and U.S. art history alike. An

unexpected flip side of this is that focus on any artists from outside the United States is very, very diffuse.

In the 2000s, the rise of China brought a new cast of characters into high rotation. Today, Ai Weiwei is the main figure from that era who remains in demand at U.S. museums. Just a small handful of Chinese artists featured in even a couple of shows in June: **Cang Xin, Qiu Zhijie, Rong Rong, Song Dong, and Xu Bing**. “Beyond Boundaries: Three Decades of Contemporary Chinese Art” at the **Smart Museum of Art** in Chicago included almost most of them.

From Latin America, there were strikingly few figures in June with widespread U.S. visibility. At 84, Mexico’s **Graciela Iturbide** was celebrated with a large show at the **San Diego Museum of Art** featuring more than 100 of her signature images from the **Fundación Mapfre**, even as the **Tucson Museum of Art** in Arizona has a show placing her work alongside that of several other renowned Latin-American women photographers: **Lola Álvarez Bravo, Flor Garduño, and Mariana Yampolsky**.

British painter **Lynette Yiadom-Boakye** appeared in (at least) six group shows. But there just aren’t that many other highly visible figures from the UK, and interest in Yiadom-Boakye’s work seems connected to U.S. museums’ interest in the African diaspora and the Black figure, suggested by her presence in “Giants,” the touring exhibition of the art collection of **Swizz Beats** and **Alicia Keys**, now at the **Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego**, as well as “From Now: A Collection in Context,” the debut show from the expanded **Studio Museum in Harlem**.

There are exceptions—but as a rule, anyone who has been circulating a lot in U.S. museums is rooted in the United States.



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