

Best of 2024: According to Eight Artists

December 20, 2024 | By Editorial

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This year, Ocula has had the pleasure of sitting down with the artists we love. As an Aotearoa New Zealand-born magazine, we've long been admirers of Mataaho Collective, who received the Golden Lion for the best participant in the international exhibition—the first time a New Zealand artist has done so. It was at the Biennale, in fact, that we fell in love with the sculptures of Korean artist Kim Yun Shin, who later invited us into her studio in Paju, northwest of Seoul, and let us in on her collection of turtle memorabilia. And in Seoul, a visit to Rinus Van de Velde's solo show would set the grounds for an amusing interview with the Belgian painter ahead of his Paris debut later in the year.

Louise Giovanelli was a highlight of our trip to Hong Kong for Art Basel, where we slipped off to shoot her paintings of 1980s film stills at White Cube. On the other side of the globe, White Cube hosted the debut paintings of Donna Huddleston, with whom we met in a sunny courtyard in St James's in one of our most joyous conversations of the year.

As summer greeted London, the team spent a balmy Friday afternoon in Hyde Park at Heman Chong's Library of Unread Books, his literary contribution to architect Minsuk Cho's Serpentine Pavilion—a presentation which coincided with Lorna Robertson's summery, soft-hued exhibition of oil paintings at Alison Jacques. And of course, our list wouldn't be complete without the legendary Josh Smith. As 2024 draws to a close, Ocula caught up with the artists who topped our year to find out the sounds, exhibitions, restaurants, and trips that topped theirs.

Kim Yun Shin

'I love turtles because they live long, their lifespan often exceeding 100 or even 200 years. I also want to live forever.'—Kim Yun Shin in the Studio

At 90 years old, the Korean artist Kim Yun Shin shows no signs of hanging up her brush, or chainsaw for that matter. In January, Lehmann Maupin and Kukje Gallery announced their co-representation of Kim, marking the artist's first ever commercial-gallery partnership. Eight of her sculptures—four in wood, four in stone—took centre stage at Adriano Pedrosa's *Foreigners Everywhere* at Venice, and in October, Lehmann Maupin devoted their first Frieze Masters booth to Kim.



Kim Yun Shin in the studio. Photo: Jongchul Lee.

Best sound: Cats meowing and birds chirping—nothing better than that!

Best exhibition: I was particularly drawn to the works of Kay WalkingStick, Aref El Rayess, and Leopold Strobl at this year's Venice Biennale. Like me, they draw inspiration from the boundless beauty of nature, which resonated deeply with me.

Best restaurant: There's a cozy pasta spot called Better Protein near my studio in Paju. Their spaghetti is amazing.

Best trip: My favorite destination was Venice, which I had the privilege of visiting this summer as a participating artist in the Venice Biennale.

Best holiday season: I love this time of year, even though it gets chilly day by day. I don't think I have a special way to enjoy the holidays, but I celebrate every day by doing what I always do and working hard.

Best advice: Keep working hard, no matter what it is—that's the best advice I remind myself of every day.