Artisan Global Unconstrained Strategy

QUARTERLY
Commentary

As of 31 December 2023

Investment Process

We employ in-depth fundamental research and robust operational capabilities across a broad opportunity set to uncover knowledge gaps that can lead to idiosyncratic opportunities with compelling risk-adjusted return potential.

Organizational Structure

We have a flat and collaborative organization where portfolio managers and analysts communicate daily and share the responsibility of idea generation. Portfolio managers and analysts determine their own focus areas and pursue them from an idea generation perspective. Trading and implementation is embedded within the investment team, as trading capabilities and infrastructure are considered important components of our investment process.

Idea Generation Through Broad Investment Universe

Our team covers a broad spectrum of global markets comprising investable assets across more than 100 countries. We constantly perform fundamental country research and monitor financial markets in order to understand each countries' policy environments and how important policy moments may alter their investment environment. Our corporate analysis includes decomposing yields and examining corporate liquidity and solvency risks. We integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) analysis at the country and corporate levels.

Portfolio Implementation

We analyze investment opportunities from a risk factor perspective—the forces that drive securities and instruments prices. The investment team and trading and implementation team work together to consider which instruments may provide optimal risk-adjusted returns. The trading and implementation team expands our investment universe by understanding and overcoming investment barriers.

Team Overview

We are a seasoned investment team with strong continuity across decision makers. Our group's core has been together for more than 10 years prior to its evolution at Artisan Partners, and our group's leadership has been investing in emerging markets since 2005. Our coverage areas are generally defined geographically, with some PM/Analysts and research associates focused on corporates.

Portfolio Management

Michael A. Cirami, CFA
Portfolio Manager

Sarah C. Orvin, CFA
Portfolio Manager

Investment Results (% USD)

As of 31 December 2023	QTD	YTD	1 Yr	3 Yr	5 Yr	10 Yr	Inception[1]
			Average Annual Total Returns				
Composite — Gross	**1.77**	**8.94**	**8.94**	—	—	—	**9.97**
Composite — Net	**1.53**	**7.92**	**7.92**	—	—	—	**8.92**
ICE BofA 3-Month U.S. Treasury Bill Index	1.37	5.01	5.01	—	—	—	3.67

Annual Returns (% USD) Trailing 12 months ended 31 December

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Composite — Net	—	—	—	—	**7.92**

Source: Artisan Partners/ICE BofA. Returns for periods less than one year are not annualized. [1]Composite inception: 1 April 2022.

Past performance does not guarantee and is not a reliable indicator of future results. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance shown. Composite performance has been presented in both gross and net of investment management fees.

Investment Risks: Investments will rise and fall with market fluctuations and investor capital is at risk. Investors investing in strategies denominated in non-local currency should be aware of the risk of currency exchange fluctuations that may cause a loss of principal. These risks, among others, are further described near the back of this document, which should be read in conjunction with this material.

Performance Discussion

The portfolio trended higher in Q4 as US Treasury yields sold off and risk assets rallied. The portfolio outperformed the ICE BofA 3-Month Treasury Bill Index for the quarter and calendar year 2023. During the quarter, the 10-year US Treasury yield fell by more than 100bps. The ICE BofA 3-Month Treasury Bill Index returned 1.37% for Q4 and 5.01% for the calendar year.

Investing Environment

After two consecutive years of negative fixed income returns, 2023 was stacking up to be a positive, but lackluster, year until Q4. Signs of moderation in the labor market and favorable inflation prints drove a departure from the higher-for-longer outlook on rates in the final two months of the year. The possibility of a soft landing came back into view, and the market began pricing in expectations for rate cuts in 2024. The 10-year US Treasury yields dropped by more than 100bps—coincidentally ending the year only a few basis points from where they started it—after briefly touching 5% in October. Against this backdrop, credit spreads tightened, the US dollar weakened, and risk assets, including emerging markets debt, soared.

Inflation continued to ease throughout the quarter, which prompted developed market central banks to hold rates steady, and many have indicated they are at or near the end of their rate hiking cycles. The Fed branched off from its peers when it delivered a more dovish outlook for rates at its December meeting, which included forecasting multiple rate cuts in 2024. This is at odds with its counterparts across the Atlantic, who remain reticent to declare victory against inflation. The ECB and BOE continue to push back against rate-cutting speculation and are stern that their work is not done yet. The Bank of Japan is the clear outlier, only just beginning its tightening cycle.

At the other end of the spectrum, many emerging markets central banks are well into their rate-cutting cycles, though dispersion within the cohort persists. Emerging markets countries reacted quickly to the spike in inflation following the COVID-19 pandemic and employed tight monetary and fiscal policy to keep inflation contained. Latin American and Eastern European countries led the pack with Brazil, Peru, Chile, Hungary and the Czech Republic all delivering rate cuts during the quarter. Inflation in many of these countries has even returned to its targeted range. In contrast, Angola, Kenya and Turkey all raised rates throughout the quarter. Indonesia unexpectedly hiked rates after foreign currency reserves declined at a historic pace.

US Treasurys provided a strong backdrop for risk assets in Q4, but local events across the globe continued to drive idiosyncratic returns. Argentina sovereign bonds had their best performance in years after the country elected Javier Milei to be its next president. His unorthodox policies, which include slashing public spending and eliminating the central bank, bring hope for the seemingly irreparable economy. After securing a Stand-By Arrangement from the International Monetary Fund in July, Pakistan made significant reforms that reduce the risk of default in 2024 and in response lifted its sovereign bonds. Suriname made advances in its quest to restructure debt, finalizing an agreement with its private creditors, and Venezuela received partial sanction relief from the US but has a long way to go in its restructuring process. On the losing side, Bolivia's sovereign bonds suffered losses during Q4 as declining exports, limited liquid international reserves and high fiscal deficits prompted a ratings downgrade. Ecuador saw the collapse of a reform-minded president and the beginning of a new and extended political cycle driving down the value of its bonds. Zambia printed strong returns in October on the heels of news that creditors have reached an agreement with bondholders under the Common Framework; however, most of that performance reverted in November when the agreement later fell through.

Currency performance for the quarter was generally positive as expectations for Fed rate cuts led to a weaker US dollar and stronger emerging markets currencies. In Colombia, high interest rates, declining imports and strong tourism supported the peso, which ended the year up by more than 25% in 2023. Elsewhere, certain currencies stumbled in response to local policy changes and macro pressures. The Argentine peso was devalued by 54% as President Milei's proposals included dollarizing the economy. After winning re-election earlier in the year, President Erdogan of Turkey shifted to more orthodox monetary policies and aggressively raised rates, resulting in a weakening Turkish lira. The Nigerian naira slumped further after the central bank failed to clear a backlog of matured foreign exchange contracts.

Emerging markets assets were at the mercy of movements in US Treasury yields for most of the year but remained resilient despite the uncertain macro environment. The outbreak of war in Israel at the beginning of Q4 added to the already precarious geopolitical environment. The EMsights team expects this landscape of elevated volatility and geopolitical uncertainty to continue into 2024, creating an environment that is ripe for active management and favors fundamental research.

Portfolio Positioning

The portfolio continues to be conservatively positioned given repricing events during Q4 and the uncertain geopolitical environment. The portfolio ended the quarter long emerging markets rates and short developed market rates on the back of inflation dynamics. Currency exposure increased throughout the quarter, specifically exposure to Eastern European countries where high real rates continue to present attractive opportunities. Throughout Q4, the portfolio increased its overall short exposure to investment grade sovereign credit positioning but increased its long allocation to countries with improving fundamental stories, specifically in Latin America.

The team continues to search for countries with improving storylines where market prices are not fully reflecting fundamentals. The global economy will face challenges in 2024, but there are several tailwinds that are likely to keep the emerging markets debt outlook strong. Expectations for declining inflation and fiscal consolidation in emerging markets will support the asset class, as well as monetary support from the official and private sectors. Sovereign defaults remain an ever-present risk, and geopolitical tensions will create exploitable volatility events. Additionally, the upcoming year will be one of the largest election years on record, presenting ample opportunities for reforms to be made across the developed and emerging worlds.

The EMsights team currently sees the best opportunities in sovereign and corporate credit, specifically the high yield segment of sovereign credit. Corporate credit also remains an attractive part of the market. The team is neutral on the opportunity set within emerging markets local debt but is seeking to take advantage of numerous dislocations that occurred in the currency market in 2023.

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Unless otherwise indicated, the Artisan Strategy characteristics relate to that of an investment composite or a representative account managed within a composite. It is intended to provide a general illustration of the investment strategy and considerations used by Artisan Partners in managing that strategy. Individual accounts may differ, at times significantly, from the reference data shown due to varying account restrictions, fees and expenses, and since-inception time periods, among others. Where applicable, this information is supplemental to, and not to be construed with, a current or prospective client's investment account information. References to individual security performance relate to a representative account in the composite. Individual holding periods may differ.

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Net-of-fees composite returns were calculated using the highest model investment advisory fees applicable to portfolios within the composite. Fees may be higher for certain pooled vehicles and the composite may include accounts with performance-based fees. All performance results are net of commissions and transaction costs, and have been presented gross and net of investment advisory fees. Dividend income is recorded net of foreign withholding taxes on ex-dividend date or as soon after the ex-dividend date as the information becomes available to Artisan Partners. Interest income is recorded on the accrual basis. Performance results for the Index include reinvested dividends and are presented net of foreign withholding taxes but, unlike the portfolio's returns, do not reflect the payment of sales commissions or other expenses incurred in the purchase or sale of the securities included in the indices.

The ICE BofA 3-Month U.S. Treasury Bill Index is an unmanaged index that comprises a single U.S. Treasury issue with approximately three months to final maturity, purchased at the beginning of each month and held for one full month. The index(es) are unmanaged; include net reinvested dividends; do not reflect fees or expenses; and are not available for direct investment.

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Notional value represents the portfolio's exposures based on the economic value of investments by adjusting for derivatives exposure to the market value of the contract's underlying security and accounts for the sensitivity to changes in price of the underlying security. In comparison, measuring the exposure of a derivative contract at market value or notional value can understate or overstate, respectively, the economic exposure and risk. This estimate of portfolio exposure is only an approximation of the portfolio at a point in time.

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