

What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

July 27, 2017



"Irm Herman" (2016), one in a series of portraits by Dawn Mellor at Gladstone Gallery. Courtesy of the artist and Team Gallery

'LYRIC ON A BATTLEFIELD'

Through Aug. 4. Gladstone Gallery, 515 West 24th Street, Manhattan; 212-

206-9300, gladstonegallery.com.

More gallery group shows should have the rich connective tissue of [this one](#). It brings together works by 13 artists of different nationalities, ages and mediums, some unknown here, and has been organized by Miciah Hussey, director of artist relations at the Gladstone Gallery. The title comes from a line of Adrienne Rich's 2009 poem "[Quarto](#)": "No one writes lyric on a battlefield." But of course we all do, especially artists: Lyric is poetry as autobiography and the battlefield is life. The desires and tensions of the struggle, usually pertaining to women or gay men, are felt throughout this show. Anne Collier's large color photograph of vintage cue cards — perhaps for teachers of fiction writing — sets the stage by asking, "Are there other ways to interpret this information?" Indeed.

Some works outshine the others. Senga Nengudi's "Rapunzel," a large staged photograph from 1981, pushes fairy tale into nightmare, and Ellen Berkenblit's painting shows her signature pointy-nosed heroine, who blends with and confronts an abstract jangle of color and fabric. Kandis Williams's "Cervical Smile" takes on the feigned happiness demanded of women from pre-Freudian times forward; it might be titled "From Hysteria to Hollywood." The three paintings from Dawn Mellor's series of exuberantly vandalized celebrity portraits are among her best, ambiguously balancing what has been done to the canvas and to its subject. In her painting "Reg Park and the Hard Gainers," Suzanne McClelland scatters cyclones of dark marks and smears with contrasting body measurements and weights. Maybe competing boxers? Reg Park is the father of modern bodybuilding; hardgainers are devotees who don't achieve results. The painting portrays a man desperate to be manlier.

Seen in New York for the first time, the work by the Canadian artist Liz Magor consists of two sculptures: enigmatic, seemingly lost parcels on the floor. Each is a paper bag containing a large wrapped box and a pair of old-fashioned hosiery still in cellophane. The colors and surfaces of the papers

are overly intense and matched to the hosiery; secrets of the flesh are sensed, displaced and remain hidden. Also new to New York are the extraordinary little tableaux of f.maquespenteado, a Brazilian-born artist based in Portugal. Assembling texts, found objects and materials — some of them embroidered with gorgeously colored portraits — he creates exquisite vignettes that are arch yet poignant studies in loneliness, companioned or not.

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