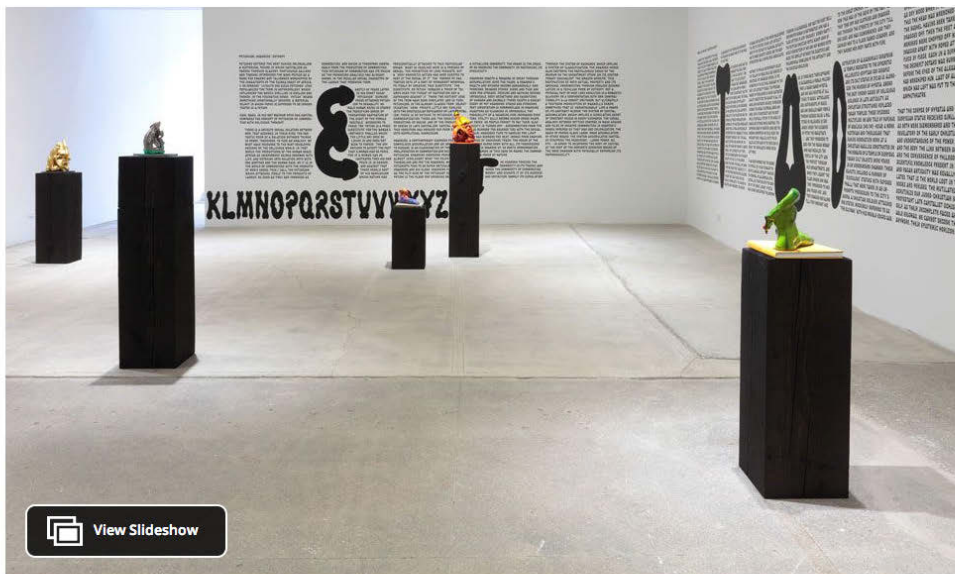


7 Must-See Gallery Shows: From MFA Students to Warhol and Puryear

BY SCOTT INDRISEK | DECEMBER 15, 2014



Nicolás Guagnini at Bortolami Gallery.
(Courtesy of Bortolami Gallery)

RELATED

ARTISTS

Andy Warhol

Martin Puryear

Ted Gahl at Zach Feuer Gallery, through December 20 (548 West 22nd Street)

The title of this side-gallery solo—“Three Twains, Roads, a Beauty”—might sound airily poetic, but it’s actually strangely literal. Gahl, a young Connecticut-based painter who has cut his teeth in umpteen group shows around town, presents three very different types of paintings here. A series of monochromatic textile works (dye on linen over wood on canvas) entitled “Norfolk Road” perhaps try to capture the kinetic activities on that particular street—an abstraction of traffic patterns? The Twains of the exhibition title appear in two large-scale paintings that are closer to Gahl’s signature, if he has one: Repurposed imagery from childhood drawings; a sort of jumbling of foreground and background; and a surface that is complicatedly roughed and scuffed up, lending it the appearance of an advertising hoarding that someone’s unsuccessfully tried to shred and remove. Beauty rounds out this trifecta, with a tiny, realistic painting of a hand holding a rose against a belly—with a delicately rendered sticker just above the thumb identifying the image’s source, the cover of some cultural artifact scored at Goodwill for \$1.

Andy Warhol at Anton Kern Gallery, through December 20 (532 West 20th Street)

Hung salon-style on a Pepto-pink wall, this is a terrific show of Warhol's drawings, mostly from the 1950s. As a draftsman, his economy of line in these illustrations—of faces or outlines of things—has resonances with work by Michael Craig-Martin or Alex Katz. The subject matter, happily, is all over the map: peacocks, actual cocks, feet, hands, little Egon Schiele-esque village scenes, sketches from Bali, a cat, a crotch.

Hunter MFA Thesis Fall Exhibition, Part II, through December 27 (205 Hudson Street)

A very solid round-up from this New York institution whose alumni roster includes the likes of Jules de Balincourt, Michael Hilsman, Omer Fast, and Tom Sanford. Highlights this time around include paintings by Wei Xiaoguang—realist depictions of brush strokes, the Chili's restaurant logo, and Klaus Biesenbach, among other things—and a stop-motion video by Margeaux Walter in which we watch the trashed living room of a luxury apartment slowly repair itself while a robotic voice intones upmarket real-estate platitudes.

Maya Bloch at Thierry Goldberg Gallery, through December 21 (103 Norfolk Street)

Bloch has a thing for melting faces. It's a flair for grotesque physiognomy she shares with peers like Natalie Frank. But for her latest show at this L.E.S. gallery, it's the series of smaller-scale drawing-paintings that are the most interesting. Using graphite, ink, and color pencil on canvas, she conjures unnerving, timeless—dare I say, atemporal—compositions that put me in mind of Kai Althoff, at least in spirit.

Matt Hoyt at Bureau, through December 21 (178 Norfolk Street)

So tiny, so graceful, but never twee, Hoyt's little objects composed of "various putties, epoxy, polyurethane" and other materials mimic natural forms, for the most part: shag bark chestnuts, animal bones, thorns, and so on. Arrayed on simple colored slabs, they're like items in a natural history museum dedicated to the small and interesting.

Martin Puryear at Matthew Marks Gallery, through January 10 (522 and 502 West 22nd Street)

Puryear's forms are as simple and evocative as Hoyt's, albeit on a much larger scale. Using a variety of woods, as well as iron and other materials, he makes pieces that resemble the sinuous, curved tops of letters, or pleasantly bloated bodily appendages. A large work in the front of the gallery—a sort of upended, barebones Horn of Plenty—updates the bound-together quality of one of Mario Merz's igloos; another sculpture recalls a Donald Judd aluminum piece warped and melted into postmodern architecture.

Nicolas Guagnini at Bortolami Gallery, through January 10 (520 West 20th Street)

Where, you ask, is it currently possible to see a fine selection of glazed-ceramic foot-and-dick-and-ear hybrids resting atop a selection of art monographs which are balanced on blackened-looking wooden plinths? Look no further than Bortolami, where Argentinian-born, New York-based Guagnini has a rather excellent assortment. For this exhibition he's also commissioned the design of a font, called Dickface, which—as one might imagine—features letters hewn from cartoon penises. (What it lacks in readability it makes up for in whimsy.) In the back gallery, two enormous heads sprouting penises out of their eyes stare each other down. Somehow, despite what an astounding, juvenile failure this could all be, it works.

ALSO WORTH SEEING: Joseph Montgomery's mixed-media sculptural collages and wall assemblages at [Laurel Gitlen](#), through December 21; and three artists from Detroit at [Jack Hanley Gallery](#), through December 21, including newcomer Jonathan Rajewski, who does awesome things with caulk.