

ART & DESIGN

What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

By HOLLAND COTTER, ROBERTA SMITH and MARTHA SCHWENDENER SEPT. 28, 2017

Tiffany Chung

Through Oct. 21. Tyler Rollins Fine Art, 529 West 20th Street, Manhattan; 212-229-4100, trfineart.com.

Decades before the present outward flood of people from Africa and the Middle East, there was another newsworthy exodus, equally catastrophic, the one from postwar Vietnam. Almost two million people fled; by some reckonings almost a third died at sea. The artist Tiffany Chung, born in Danang, Vietnam, in 1969, was among the refugees, and she has made the phenomenon of forced migration her primary subject.

“The Unwanted Population,” Ms. Chung’s solo show at Tyler Rollins, is an engrossing survey of work she’s produced over the past few years combining factual material (news reports, archival photographs, interviews) and fine-grained aesthetics. Her “Syria Project,” a highlight of the 2015 Venice Biennale, encapsulates statistical data on chemical warfare, refugee camps and ruined cities in that tortured nation in exquisitely drawn and painted maps that could be mistaken for floral still lifes.

Her focus on the refugee crisis in the Middle East seems to have given her a way to approach the emotionally loaded story of her own past, as she now does in “The Vietnam Exodus Project.” Visually more varied than her previous work, it includes time-stained documents, heart-rending videos, and a series of large-

scale watercolors. These watercolors are based on her own photo-collages but painted by young artists in Ho Chi Minh City who work in a program associated with San Art, an alternative space she co-founded in that city.

Finally, to give the Syria and Vietnam projects context, she has made large world maps, embroidered on canvas, with the global routes of many diasporas stitched in bright-colored thread. In Ms. Chung's case, scientific method and painstaking craft serve as both distancing devices and surgical tools. As with tattoos, images that seem to be decoratively superficial are personal, political and ineradicable.

HOLLAND COTTER

Louis Fratino

Through Oct. 8. Thierry Goldberg, 103 Norfolk Street, Manhattan; 212-967-2260, thierrygoldberg.com.

Louis Fratino's paintings are hot and not just because they focus primarily on muscly young men who are scantily clad, if at all. Seemingly painted mostly in the same interior, they are also hot with the pleasure of lying-around-the-house domesticity, of shared privacy. And they are hot too with painterly attention and erudition — inviting a similar scrutiny from the viewer. Nearly every brush stroke and mark, every detail of furnishings and body hair, has a life of its own.

Mr. Fratino's early promise was apparent in "With Everyone," a solo show of small canvases in this gallery's project room last year. "So, I've Got You" is his second effort here, its title suggesting that the artist now has everything where he wants it: his friends and lovers, his variegated painting style and his audience, mixed together in a new closeness.

The show's untitled masterpiece is a life-size vertical image of a young man lying naked on a box settle, hands clasped behind his head, his body highlighted by the raking light of a lamp. He is talking, caught midsentence while the painter seems to hover above, as do we, tantalized. Especially arresting is the subject's chest, on which different planes, tints and dots of paint suggest a kind of reassembled Cubism, but also harbor at least two landscapes, with strands of chest and abdominal hair serving as trees. Something similar occurs on the back

of the man in “Asleep on Laundry.” In the puzzlelike “Dolphin Street,” the surprise image is a young man lying with his head in the lap of another.

Mr. Fratino’s stylized figuration draws from Marsden Hartley, Dana Schutz and Elizabeth Murray. The head bathed in red in “Tristan Dancing, Venus” might belong to a Matisse faun. Mr. Fratino also splits the difference between two British painters of nude men, bringing together Lucian Freud’s faceted flesh and David Hockney’s languid homoeroticism.

ROBERTA SMITH

‘The Overworked Body’

Through Oct. 14 at Mathew, 46 Canal Street, Manhattan; 929-229-9156, mathew-nyc.com. Through Oct. 15 at MINI/Goethe-Institut Curatorial Residencies Ludlow 38, 38 Ludlow Street, Manhattan; ludlow38.org.

The overlap between contemporary art and fashion has become more of a merger in recent decades, with artists creating garments and clothing lines and designers mounting runway shows in galleries. “The Overworked Body: An Anthology of 2000s Dress” at Mathew and the MINI/Goethe-Institut Curatorial Residencies Ludlow 38 represent the best of these marriages. Organized by Matthew Linde, the show includes over 50 designers from the 2000s and ranges from graduate student experiments to “fast fashion”: early collaborations with multinational corporations (such as Isaac Mizrahi for Target and Alexander McQueen and Viktor & Rolf for H&M).

Many of the garments have back stories, like a black sheath dress at Mathew by Narciso Rodriguez from a show scheduled for Sept. 11, 2001. It became a kind of lost collection, and here it is installed next to a dress with blow-torched sequins by the downtown designer Shelley Fox.

Some of the more outré objects include postapocalyptic survival wear from the Japanese collective Final Home ; knitted boots and gloves by BLESS; a Martin Margiela vest made with black ski gloves; and Bernhard Willhelm’s look-books featuring the French porn star François Sagat.

Artists inclined to present performance art at their openings could take instruction from the designers here. Both galleries have videos of nontraditional

runway shows. At Ludlow 38, visitors can watch Tom Ford's Gucci show with strippers lining the catwalk. At Mathew, there are examples of Carol Christian Poell's brilliantly imaginative shows: In one video models lie like corpses on stretchers in a morgue, and in another they float down a river in Milan with spectators standing on bridges, watching them pass below. Beautiful and perverse, the video is like a contemporary updating of John Everett Millais's 1850-51 painting of Shakespeare's Ophelia, a gesture that hovers perfectly between art and fashion, the subversive and sublime.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER

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