

## John Miller

WOLFGANG TILLMANS, *Nothing could have prepared us—Everything could have prepared us*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, June 3–Sept. 22.



Not least among Tillmans's many achievements in this encyclopedic installation was the mapping of photographic possibilities onto academic and archival categories of knowledge. The opportunity to exhibit his work in the Pompidou's Bibliothèque Publique d'Information—ahead of the museum's renovation—set the stage for the confrontation of word and image.

NINA KÖNNEMANN, *BLOCKEN / Further Reductions*, Haus am Waldsee, Berlin, May 25–Sept. 14.



Nina Könnemann's exhibition, *BLOCKEN / Further Reductions*, was, like its title, split between two parts.

On the museum's ground floor, Könnemann showed ambient video footage from the sidelines of events such as marathons in Berlin and Frankfurt, which, in turn, she overlays with footage from other sites. As such, she draws viewers' attention toward actions and materials one might otherwise overlook. Moreover, she does so without the promise of revelation, leaving simply a sheer sense of two or more otherwise non-signifying spaces intersecting. During the opening, this included a live feed, shot by the artist herself. And one room was devoted to a large monitor displaying a rotating "loading" icon. After waiting a while, I concluded this was a technical problem, but I was wrong. The icon was the work.

The sculpture on the floor above originated in Könnemann's arcane practice of collecting discarded bathroom fixtures in Los Angeles. The artist explained she gathered these shortly after the city mandated conversion to low-flush toilets. This resulted in a surplus of discarded fixtures. She favored the colored ceramics: blue-green, beige, yellow, and avocado. Her 2024 work, *Knapping: Haben Frauen Steinwerkzeuge hergestellt? (Knapping: Did Women Make Stone Tools?)*, is a dark-olive pile of rubble which sets the stage for her *Lithic Reduction* series. The series consists of chipped fragments, reminiscent of Stone Age weapons and implements such as crude knives or arrowheads. An audio work augments the *Lithic Reduction* displays on tables, low pedestals, and shelves: steady chinks, the sound of determined chipping. The resulting quasi-artifacts poke fun at anthropological displays and patriarchal/matriarchal social inquiries. Nonetheless, these improbable tools possessed an almost inadvertent beauty.

SYLVIE FLEURY, *Instructions for Twilight*, Performa Biennial 2025, Nov. 22 and 23.



Fleury's performance took place against a panoramic sunset view of Brooklyn, seen from the 39th floor of the WSA building in Manhattan's Financial District. It comprised a series of vignettes in which performers enacted rituals often involving muscle cars and stiletto heels—two of Fleury's favorite tropes. These sometimes reference the artist's early works. As the Brooklyn skyline turned to dusk, a soundscape enveloped the onlookers.

TRAVIS FAIRCLOUGH, *Casino Pier*, Foreign & Domestic, Nov. 13–Dec. 21.



Travis Fairclough's inaugural solo exhibition in New York was marked by a low-key, yet incisive, formalism. The artist titled it *Casino Pier*, after a historic Jersey Shore amusement park that was destroyed twice by fire and once by hurricane, then rebuilt on each occasion.

Fairclough's installation at Foreign & Domestic was simple and straightforward. The central work is a pile of leaves, also titled *Casino Pier*. That the leaves look simultaneously artificial and natural creates a puzzling effect. This is because the artist carefully gathered oak leaves of a near-uniform shade of brown and soaked them in lanolin. So the leaves are real after all, but unlike other real leaves they lie completely flat and look supple. The "mound" of leaves is perfectly circular with a modest diameter of about thirty inches.

Toward the back of the gallery were renditions of Piet Mondrian's *New York City* (1942), the study and the finished painting. Instead of using primary colors, Fairclough painted them in earth tones on linen, leaving a generous margin of unpainted surface above Mondrian's compositions.

The two other works in the main space, *Planar Table Setting I* and *II*, were near monochromes produced by gluing tablecloths and printer paper together. The compositions, as such, are largely happenstance spots and stains, which play well against the monochrome's presumptive uniformity and "purity."

Sequestered in the gallery's back room was *Star Powered Bandits*, a small montage of office stationery, cotton, and construction paper. On the latter, Fairclough has drawn an assortment of eyes and lips, sometimes framed by raccoon-like masks.

JAMES SIENA, Miles McEnery Gallery, Oct. 30–Dec. 20.



In this new show, James Siena seemingly upped the resolution of his characteristically intricate and eccentric patterns and shapes. The result is pleasingly paradoxical: more detailed and involuted than ever before, yet as such the overall composition begins to take on the effect of a monochrome.

EMILY JANOWICK, *Obsession*, Kate Werble Gallery, September 6–October 11.



How refreshing to have found three rows of corn growing in a SoHo art gallery!