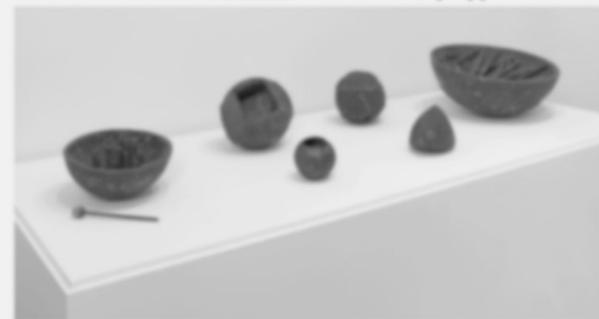


Aeronautics Aimed for Altitude, Even, curated by Marco Bene, Foreign & Domestic, Sept. 5–Oct. 5. I've been visiting Foreign & Domestic for some time, walking down a few more steep steps from Reena Spaulings across the street, but it was only this year that I began to feel the cumulative effect of Alex Meurice's remarkable programming, a highly subjective mix of eclectic solo artists and invited curators, to whom Meurice seems equally devoted. Marco Bene's trip of an exhibition was a perfect instance of a show unimaginable almost anywhere else in the city, save maybe The Emily Harvey Foundation, where the exhibition "took flight" just prior to the F & D opening. Exhilarating, baffling, and shot through with images, actions and verbal iterations of our collective and individual urge to fly, or as Bene prefers, "take flight," ranging from precipitous to Dada-esque and lyrical. The F & D install was strewn with downed paper airplanes and chock full of spot-on, wildly disparate works—seventy-one, to be precise—and is the second of five planned by Bene.

RUTH VOLLMER, *Tilton*, Nov.–Dec. (by appointment).



Connie Rogers's *Tilton* finale—the gallery's last formal show and a chance to see a substantial variety of Vollmer's engrossing sculptural investigations. (*Tilton* has the artist's estate.) Having first encountered Vollmer's ideas and influence in writings of Eva Hesse, Robert Smithson, and Sol LeWitt, it's always a treat to see the work itself, up close and carefully displayed. Sad to see both Rogers and the gallery closing.

MONIKA BAER, *Schweine, Steine, Scherben*, Greene Naftali, Dec. 2025–Jan. 24, 2026.

Terrific show of oversized paintings, scumbly walls of ersatz brick and stucco, ready to receive Baer's invented graffiti incursions, which ventriloquized "the obscenities of our times," to borrow the words of her press release. Jujed up with washes of lilac, but fun to follow and read—and positioned as they were at my (short-person) eye-level—these got most of my attention.

PEGGY AHWESH, *Navigations*, Microscope Gallery, Nov. 6–Dec. 13.

No one is better than Peggy Ahwesh at sorting through the sediments underfoot and in the air to reveal and reconstruct censored histories, unspoken power relations, enforced borders, and serendipitous minglings here in the U.S. or in her ancestral Syria and neighboring territories. In the five-video projections she titles, *Wayfinders*, 2025, Ahwesh took a cue from Haroun Farocki's great *Parallel 1–IV* videos, enlisting a pilot brother-in-law to help her command and then mess with play-throughs from the game *Flight Simulator 2004: A Century of Flight*—beloved among other things for its great cloud formations—in order to revisit and rethink her own memories of time in Ramallah circa 2011 and current circumstances.

Her two-channel video, *Qalandia*, uses live footage from that visit to reference an abandoned airport in the West Bank, once host to a miscellany of notables, then overtaken by no less than three governments, none of which were Palestinian. Israel currently controls it.

As ever with Ahwesh, the mix of play, indulgent beauty, and earnest outrage in her multi-channel weavings of clear-eyed observation and simulation-based videos—and in her on-the-ground photos—unsettle preconceptions. She asks kid-like questions around topics that most people wield like weapons—Gaza, Palestine, Syria, the West Bank ...Atlantic City, our Kansas Heartland, crack cocaine, Wilhelm Reich. Her question in *Navigations*? "What does it mean to be free to fly? To take to the skies? To cross borders without concern ..." And then she focuses her filmic attention on a host of individually compelling details and experiential effects that somehow rejigger deep-seated assumptions on topics that mostly refuse rethinking.

ALEX DA CORTE, *Parade*, Matthew Marks, Nov. 7–Dec. 20.



Da Corte's medium might well be pathos, abject and earnest. He's tracked the self-inflicted suffering of early friends and all manner of pop personae, but his most moving scenographic essay, for me, was in memory of his father. At Matthew Marks, in a series of fastidiously staged room-scale "sets," the homages were mostly to artists, as in his reconstruction of Paul Thek's long lost *The Tomb*. Best here was a tiny King Friday XIII, posed as Socrates, alone in its own room, dead in a doll's bed, his chalice of poison spilled on the floor beside him. It might well have been an homage to both Mr. Rogers and Jean-Louis David, whose famed painting of the historic subject was on view in a Paris retrospective at the same time.

R.H. QUAYTMAN, *Ones*, Chapter 0.2, Miguel Abreu, May 8–July 12.

R.H. Quaytman has made chapters the units by which she measures ...what? Her thinking? Perhaps. This exhibition, one of my favorites of hers, felt uncharacteristically spacious both physically and intellectually, less a series of propositions; more like an invitation to join Quaytman in her painterly think-throughs of its *Modern Subjects*, the title of a neat little book made in parallel with the paintings. The subtitle, Chapter Zero, underscored that invitation. A beginning again, this time with us along.

SINGLE WORKS

A few works from impressive shows, lodged like "eye worms" in my head:

SUSAN ROTHENBERG, *The Weather*, Hauser & Wirth, Sept. 4–Oct. 18.

An unexpectedly spare show with a lot of surprises, especially in Rothenberg's colored fields and grounds, two paintings kept me studying surfaces and strokes; wondering where the painting began; what Rothenberg let happen; where she intervened. Blue cartoony painting of chasing foxes atop a pointy hill in a field of Giotto-blue and under a swathe of hovering ghostly-white; and the exhibition's iconic centerpiece, a monumental white painting with a Rothenberg signature-style, glyphy, crocodile-head or glove, craning up from bottom center to the right, and two cryptic, vertical smudges toward the top on right and left edges which, having later heard Alexis Lowry and Lynne Tillman address this painting in a wonderful online conversation, I now read as the marks of Rothenberg's paint-stained hands, carrying the painting, then left as registers of that action.

SANYA KANTAROVSKY, *Cold*, 2025.



From his two-site May exhibition at Michael Werner. A very large, haunting painting of two bodies on a lumpy, white bed, gaunt walls of pale gray: an elegantly contoured, slim, naked woman, asleep and seen from the back, her flesh naturalistic in shades of beige pink; to her right, a sullen boy (man?), on his back, partly dressed, and Picassoid in his Blue Period, abstracted expression and blue-gray skin, save for an alarmingly other, delicate pink on the right hand held against his heart. The bodies are as if borrowed from two different painters, rendered entirely differently, as is the dim yellow of a lamp on the bedside table. It's an extraordinary meditation on the capacity of oil paint to render material stuff—flesh, clothes, the color and transparency of light—transcendent, while Kantarovsky's appropriation of disparate painterly styles and scale works similar wonders to amplify the intensity of emotion in this simple scene.

Shout out to KAI MATSUMIYA and three radically different, equally "on" shows this past year: NOBU AOZAKI, CRAIG KALPAKJIAN, and ZOE PETTIJOHN. Also to ADAM SHOPKORN at Fort Gansevoort, especially for the WILLIE BIRCH exhibition.

EVENTS

FLORIAN MEISENBERG, ANNA K.E., HENRY GUNDERSON, *Das Loft* at A365. Three artists, a German, a Georgian, and an American, in a long-term shared Canal Street residency, A365, began organizing drawing parties, readings, performances,

and an ongoing on-site exhibition of work by artist friends and then friends of friends, and friends of friends of friends, using the residency space to make dinners and enable conversations, spawn projects, give feedback in ways artists are often hard put to find.

Properties: Talks, PATRICIA EKPO, AISHA FINCH, and ZAKIYYAH IMAN JACKSON, Dia Programming, organized by CAMERON ROWLAND, in conjunction with his Beacon installation, *Offsite*, Sat., June 14. Three of the most ambitious, exploratory, critically developed and original papers I've heard in ages riveted everyone who made the trip. At Rowland's request, the event was not recorded or documented, which makes sense for an artist whose project takes on memory and responsibility. But chances are good that the care with which the talks were prepared, delivered, and discussed means that, for the attentive group that sat that June day under an open tent along the Hudson, the ideas shared will be deeply etched for some time.

ONLY IN NEW YORK

RAF WOLLAERT, *Secret Session*, Broodthaers Society of America.

A lecture—on a 90-plus-degree day in July in the Society's un-air conditioned Harlem Brownstone—by a Dutch scholar on Marcel Broodthaers' only ever trip to the U.S., to NYC, for reasons unknown, in the early 1970s, where he stayed at the Chelsea Hotel, took pictures, and did enough to explain the numerous references to America that show up in his art and have heretofore gone unexplained. Unauthorized, but the result of five years of extensive research by a scholar who ended the lecture by saying he would now cease to study Broodthaers.

PASSAGES

ROBERT GROSVENOR, BOB MONK, MARIO DIACONO.

In retrospect, it feels as if a cluster of terrific shows—a grand and precise installation at Paula Cooper in February, at T Space in Rhinebeck last summer, and in 2024 at Karma—offered a fanfare exit, not unlike the last big blasts of a 4th of July fireworks display. A memorial service for Grosvenor at P.S.1 spoke to an artist who'd managed to maintain a life—a private life—while continuing to make his out-there art, right up to the end. (In the epigraph on the press release for his last show, Grosvenor is quoted saying "until recently, I kept the things I made recreational, just for fun.") The tributes from Alanna Heiss and Paula Cooper were joyous and heartbreaking, and an aside from Cooper, who called Grosvenor "a private guy" and showed pictures of him with his family as well as in his studio, offered a perfect image to bring this home: "Sometimes," she said laughing, "it was if there were only kids at his openings."

Another huge loss this year, a longtime colleague and friend, the gallerist Bob Monk, whose devotion to the artists he cared most about—Richard Artschwager, Laurie Parsons, Ed Ruscha—ran deeper than deep.

And the great Mario Diacono, whose newly opened gallery I put at the top of my 2024 Best Of list, died this fall, at 95. Who but Mario, I wrote last year, could re-open a gallery at 95. He will be massively missed by many—in Boston, and in Rome, and here in New York—by all the artists and art people he spun into his orbit.