

# Galerie

Isaac Julien: "8 Must-See Solo Gallery Shows Across America in July"

By Paul Laster

July 5, 2023



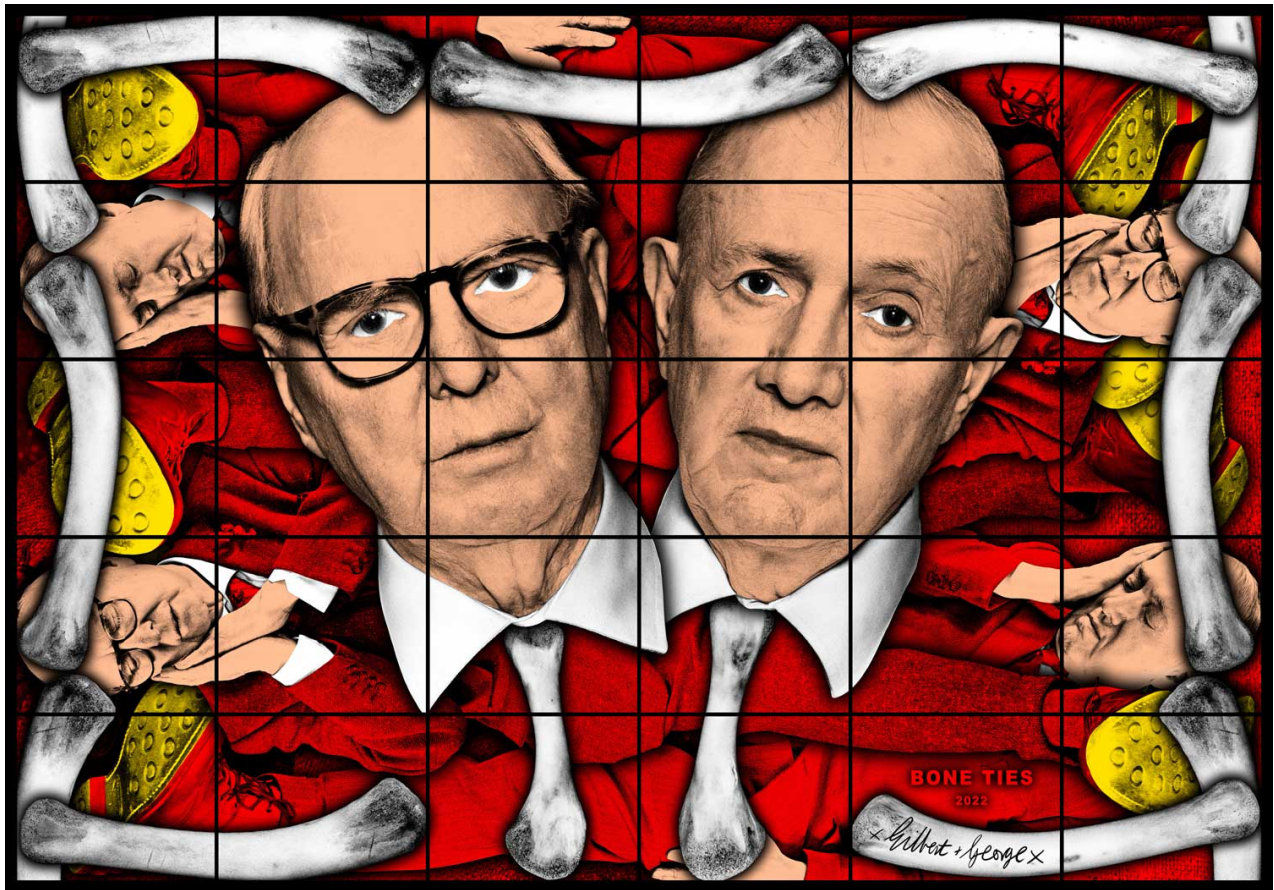
Installation view of Zhang Zipiao. PHOTO: COURTESY OF LGDR

**From Gilbert & George's ghoulish self-portraits at Lehmann Maupin and the rediscovery of Brigid Berlin's personal style of Pop Art at Vito Schnabel Gallery in New York**

Rounding up the best gallery exhibitions across the United States each month, *Galerie* journeyed from New York and Chicago to San Francisco and Los Angeles to discover the top solo shows for July. From Antonius-Tin Bui cut-paper pieces portraying gender fluid lifestyles at Monique Meloche in Chicago and Remedios Varo surrealist visions at Gallery Wendi Norris in San Francisco, these shows are not to be missed.

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Gilbert & George, *Bone Ties*, 2022. © Gilbert & George .PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTISTS AND LEHMANN MAUPIN

## 1. Gilbert & George at Lehmann Maupin, New York

Working collaboratively for more than 50 years, Gilbert & George have consistently been at the forefront of British contemporary art. Starting out as "living sculpture," they evolved into fearless picture-makers who are willing to tackle a broad range of social subjects. For their tenth solo show with the gallery—chillingly titled "[The Corpsing Pictures](#)"—the duo confronts their own mortality with a series of large-scale self-portraits that depict the smartly groomed artists entombed by bones, cords, chains, and elements of nature.

Following the recent opening of the Gilbert & George Centre in London, where their legacy will be forever enshrined through the collection and evolving exhibitions of their work, the gridded photographic imagery—with embedded titles like *Bone Ties*, *Dump* and *Gagged*—present their gallows humor with panache. Punning on the word corpsing, which is a theatrical term for when an actor breaks out into unscripted laughter, the pugnacious pair seem to be inviting viewers to join them in snickering at the ways that they humorously envision their eventual demise.

Through August 18

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Wonmin Park, Plain Cuts Remediated Floor Light, 2022. PHOTO: COURTESY CARPENTERS WORKSHOP GALLERY

## 2. Wonmin Park at Carpenters Workshop Gallery, New York

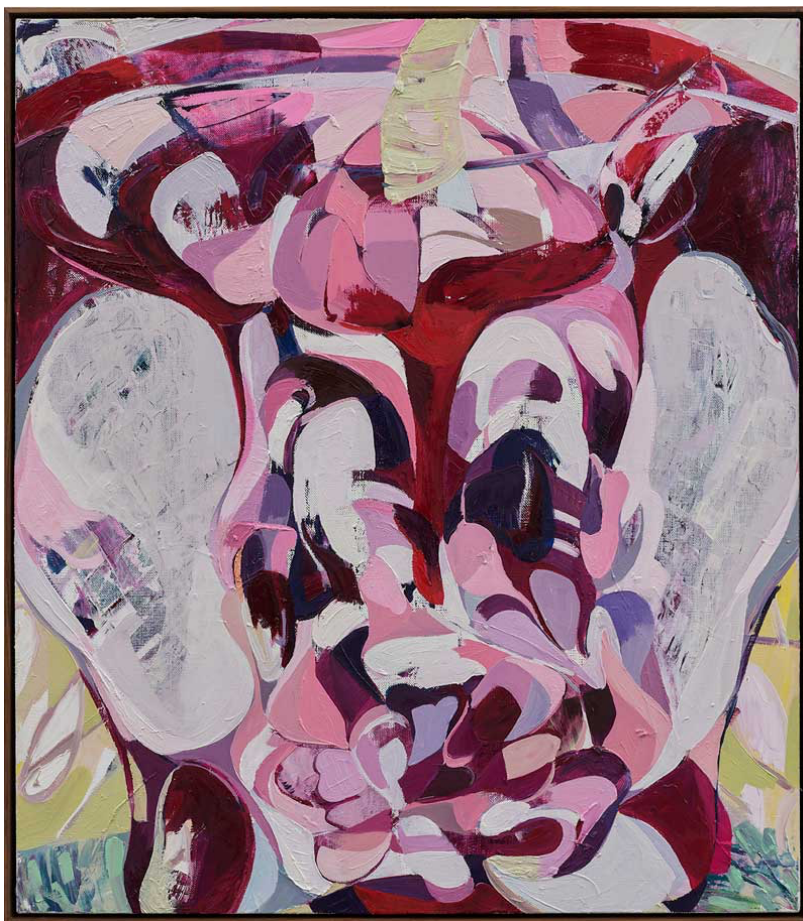
Blurring the boundary between art and design, Wonmin Park creates sculptural furniture with an amazing "sense of lightness and purity." Constructing minimalist pieces from soft-colored resin, volcanic rocks, frosted glass, and industrial steel, the Seoul-born artist and designer constructs dynamic objects that are both functional and sublime. Trained at the Design Academy Eindhoven, where he graduated in 2011, and more recently at London's Royal College of Art, where he received a master's degree in architecture in 2020, the Paris-based practitioner's pieces can function as tables, chairs, shelves and lamps—even though he thinks of them as art.

Park's sculptures in his "Unding: Restoration of Existence" exhibition at the gallery explore the philosophical concept of Unding—the idea of the work being a non-thing, which is based on a theory devised by German-Korean philosopher Byung-Chul Han—by contrasting materials, like stone and steel or resin and glass, where one material emphasizes the qualities of the other. Combining opposites that mutually define one another, Park creates usable artworks that look as though they were beautifully forged by the ancient gods for some form of stylish utilization in the far-off future, and that future is now.

*Through July 27*

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Zhang Zipiao, Apple 02, 2023. PHOTO: COURTESY LGDR

### 3. Zhang Zipiao at LGDR, New York

Born in China and schooled in the United States, Zhang Zipiao has been building a following for her large-scale abstract canvases in China and the U.S. ever since earning her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2015. Creating gestural abstractions with twisting forms that reference aspects of nature, the Beijing-based artist's all-over compositions keep our eyes in motion while simultaneously engaging our minds, as we seek to identify corporal forms in otherworldly canvases that are defined by such titles as *Calla Lily 10*, *Spider 03* and *Brain 04*.

The monumental paintings and the smaller-scaled canvases in her appropriately titled "[Swallow Whole](#)" solo show pull the viewer into their pulsating swaths of color and energetic brushwork; a realm of raw emotion. Oscillating between figuration and abstraction, the paintings capture and reveal the complex thoughts racing through the mind of the artist as she reimagines flowers and fruit, spirits and beasts, in the isolation of her studio. Working spontaneously, instinctually and physically, she starts without a plan yet ends up with a process-oriented painting that invites analysis.

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Brigid Berlin, *Untitled (Self Portrait with Willem de Kooning, Double Exposure)*, 1971  
 PHOTO: © VINCENT FREMONT/VINCENT FREMONT ENTERPRISES, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

#### 4. Brigid Berlin at Vito Schnabel Gallery, New York

A central member of Andy Warhol's entourage, Brigid Berlin was the daughter of the CEO of the Hearst media empire and a New York socialite but preferred the life of an artist in the city's bohemian cultural scene of the 1960s. After befriending Warhol in 1964, Berlin became part of the in-crowd at Andy Warhol's Silver Factory, where she starred in Warhol's films and made Polaroid portraits and tape recordings of the artists and celebrities who hung out there and at downtown's famous haunt, Max's Kansas City.

For audiences who know little or nothing of Berlin's life and art, "[The Heaviest](#)" exhibition offers an eye-opening overview. Impressively organized by Alison M. Gingeras, the compact-yet-comprehensive installation presents a selection of Berlin's photos, tapes, legendary *Tit Prints* (made by pressing her paint-dipped breasts onto paper), one-of-a-kind scrapbooks—including her huge *Topical Bible (Cock Book)*—and handcrafted needlepoint pillows of sensational newspaper covers, alongside a fascinating array ephemera and portraits of Berlin made by her peers (including Ray Johnson and Larry Rivers) and several touching homages by contemporary artists.

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Antonius-Tin Bui, *There's Nothing Left Here for You*, 2022. PHOTO: COURTESY MONIQUE MELOCHE

## 5. Antonius-Tin Bui at Monique Meloche, Chicago

A Bronx-born, New Haven-based artist, Antonius-Tin Bui utilizes the traditional Chinese craft of hand-cut paper to make large-scale, monochromatic images of friends, relatives, artists, porn stars and historic figures that are intricately cut from a singular piece of paper. A standout at Monique Meloche's Independent New York art fair presentation in May, the gender binary artist returns to the gallery for their second Chicago solo show with works exploring their Vietnamese heritage, identity politics, queer culture and gender fluidity.

The exhibition "[There are many ways to hold water without being called a vase](#)" offers a look at the various ways the artist approaches the traditional craft in new and exciting ways. Portraits capture individuals and couples in patterned interiors, surrounded by Asian ceramics and hanging artworks. Taking a more intimate turn, the artist's porn pictures expose same sex orgies, masculine men masturbating and more feminine males woven into wildly hairy-textured compositions with depictions of broken Asian artefacts from Western museum collections symbolically floating around them. In a couple of stand-alone pieces, the shattered Asian artworks represent a fractured past that Bui has learned to live with by integrating it into their art.

*Through July 29*

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Isaac Julien, *Le Musée Imaginaire, Redux (Once Again... Statues Never Die)*, 2022. Photo: Phillip Maisel.  
 PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTIST, VICTORIA MIRO AND JESSICA SILVERMAN

## 6. Isaac Julien at Jessica Silverman, San Francisco

A contemporary master of the mediums of film, photography, and installation art, Sir Isaac Julien makes art that equally moves the mind, heart and eye. Knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2022 for services to diversity and inclusion in art, Julien was born in London in 1960 to immigrant parents from Caribbean Saint Lucia. The subject of a current retrospective at the Tate Gallery in London, the artist studied painting and film Saint Martin's School of Art, graduating in 1985 and then quickly gained a following with films that blurred artistic disciplines while exploring issues of class, sexuality and cultural history.

Presenting the U.S. debut of a new series of photographs based on a five-screen film installation, which was commissioned and exhibited by the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia and is on view in his Tate show, the eponymous "Once Again. . . (Statues Never Die)" examines the relationship between Alain Locke, a Harlem Renaissance philosopher and Albert C. Barnes, an entrepreneurial chemist, art collector and champion of African culture. Julien employed seasoned actors in his lifelike film and photos, which were staged in referential settings, including the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford, where Locke was the first African American Rhodes Scholar in 1907, with the goal of questioning what it means to interpret Black art and how such interpretations impact archival memory.

*Through July 22*

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Remedios Varo, *Encuentro*, 1959. PHOTO: COURTESY GALLERY WENDI NORRIS

## 7. Remedios Varo at Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco

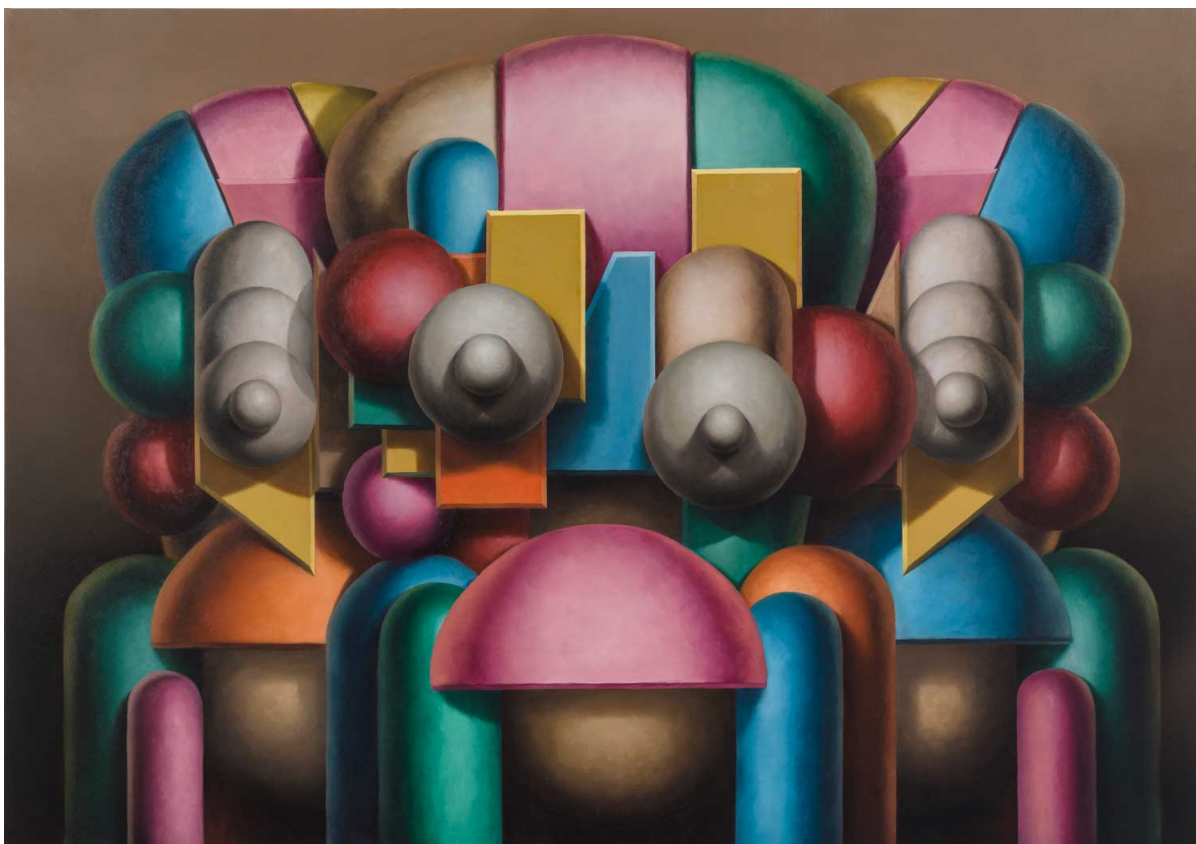
An enchanting painter and sculptor, who seems to have been almost forgotten until New York's Museum of Modern Art acquired her 1956 painting *The Juggler (The Magician)* in 2018 and prominently displayed it for the reopening of its expanded space in 2019, Remedios Varo was born in Spain but made her biggest mark in Mexico, where she worked during the last years of a relatively short life. Raised in Madrid, Varo first gained attention when she collaborated on an exquisite corpse collage in Barcelona in 1935. Fleeing the city during the Spanish Civil War, she joined the surrealists in Paris, but was forced to escape to Mexico during the Nazi invasion of France in 1941.

Presenting twelve paintings and works on paper made between 1947 and 1963 (the year of her death at age 55), the ["Encuentros \(Encounters\)"](#) exhibition offers a rare look at the feminine surrealist artist's dreamlike works. Her 1959 painting *Encuentros* portrays a supernatural woman seated at a table while opening a box that contains her own face glaring back at her, while her work on paper *Apártalos que voy de paso* (Take them away, I'm passing through), also from 1959, depicts a woman enigmatically encompassed by dark clouds and a rain shower when passing through the forest. Equally eccentric psychological encounters fill the other remaining works on view, highlighting Varo's technical mastery and fantastical vision.

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Devon DeJardin, *Mind Body Spirit*, 2023. Photo: Jeff McLane. PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTIST AND UTA ARTIST SPACE

## 8. Devon DeJardin at UTA Artist Space, Los Angeles

A talented self-taught artist who has recently made a name for himself as an abstract painter and sculptor, Devon DeJardin, constructs large-scale spiritual narratives from puzzle-like forms. Born in Portland, Oregon and based in Los Angeles, the artist found refuge in painting as an adolescent while suffering from anxiety and depression. He now uses art and art history to better understand society and his part in it. Building on previous studies of spiritual traditions from around the world (he has a degree in communication and religious studies), DeJardin's artworks reference the body, aspects of nature and philosophical points of view through geometry and architectural forms.

The exhibition "In The Shadows," his first with the Los Angeles and Atlanta-based gallery, presents ten large-scale paintings, four medium sized drawings and a large brass sculpture. Referencing biblical stories related to themes of temptation and redemption, the pieces portray abstract figures as guardians, warriors and protectors. Inviting viewers to contemplate the consequences of their actions through abstract interpretations of traditional tales, the artist envisions his works—like the paintings *BEFORE THE FALL*, which captures a buildup of modular forms in a Garden of Eden environment, and *Mind Body Spirit*, a gathering of three geometric characters—as an aesthetic means to a better end.

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