

Galerie

Victoria Morton: "8 Must-See Solo Gallery Shows in July"

By Paul Laster

July 3, 2024



Installation view, "Julian Schnabel: Paintings from 1978-1987", Vito Schnabel Gallery, 19th Street, New York.

PHOTO: ARGENIS APOLINARIO; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND VITO

From a curated survey of major paintings by Julian Schnabel at Vito Schnabel Gallery in New York to painter Emily Ferguson's striking portraits of femme fatales at Nicodim Gallery in L.A.

Journeying from New York to Aspen and then to San Francisco and Los Angeles, *Galerie* has rounded up the top solo gallery shows across America this month. From a curated survey of major paintings by Julian Schnabel at Vito Schnabel Gallery in New York to talented painter Emily Ferguson's striking portraits of femme fatales at Nicodim Gallery in L.A., these are the not-to-be-missed exhibitions in July.

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508



Julian Schnabel, *Australia*, (1986). PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTIST AND VITO SCHNABEL GALLERY

1. Julian Schnabel at Vito Schnabel Gallery, New York

Proclaimed "the most significant artist of his generation" by British art historian and Pablo Picasso biographer John Richardson and credited with "transforming the realities and possibilities of what a painting is, what it can be, and how it can be done" by Max Hollein, director of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, [Julian Schnabel](#) has been at the center of the international art world since 1978, when he debuted his groundbreaking plate-paintings at Mary Boone Gallery in SoHo.

The subject of a survey of paintings from 1978 to '87 curated by legendary art dealer Bruno Bischofberger at his son's Chelsea gallery and another presentation of a recent series of plate-paintings referencing trees painted by Vincent Van Gogh, the New York artist is giving his hometown audience an in-depth look into an arresting selection of works that have defined his experimental, chance-based process. Blurring the boundary between abstraction and figuration while aesthetically transforming found objects and distinctive materials in poetic ways, Schnabel's paintings on plates, wood, velvet, burlap, tarps, canvas, and theater backdrops have opened a painterly portal for a new generation of artists to explore.

Through July 26

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Liz Collins, *Lightning Wheel*, (2024). PHOTO: KUNNING HUANG; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND CANDICE MADEY

2. Liz Collins at Candice Madey, New York

A knitwear fashion designer before adding art-making to her design practice while teaching at RISD in the early 2000s, Liz Collins has forged a formidable career as a textile artist over the past two decades. Creating colorfully woven tapestries, fiber-art sculptures, and intimate drawing-size embroideries, the Brooklyn-based artist is celebrated for working between art and design to produce a range of pieces animated by vibrant optical energy and queer feminist sensibilities.

A standout in "Foreigners Everywhere," the primary exhibition of this year's Venice Biennale, and the traveling exhibition "Woven Histories: Textiles and Modern Abstraction," currently on view at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., Collins is having her first solo show with Candice Madey, after its two-person pairing of her textiles with Gabrielle Shelton, a sculptor working in steel, in 2022. In her new show in the gallery's new Freeman Alley space, the visionary artist offers one of her giant *Rainbow Mountain* tapestries, which are on view in Venice, alongside several *Lightning Wheel* works, that bring Collins's infectious energy into the collector's home, and a series of smaller pieces that show how stitches can be as powerful as brushstrokes when guided by a creative mind and hand.

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Rita Ackermann, *Without Narrative*, (2023). PHOTO: SARAH MUEHLBAUER; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND HAUSER & WIRTH

3. Rita Ackermann at Hauser & Wirth, New York

After only a few years of studying art in her native Hungary and a year at the New York Studio School, Rita Ackermann became a darling of the downtown art scene in the 1990s with her irreverent depictions of partying nymphets engaging in self-destructive and hazardous activities. Since then, she's shown paintings and drawings that marry the figurative with the abstract while exploring themes of anthropomorphism and femininity at major galleries and museums worldwide.

Fresh off a 2023 survey show at MASI Lugano that paired her early compositions of adolescent female figures with her later, more expressive canvases featuring painterly flourishes, Ackermann's new, double-solo show—her 11th and 12th one-person exhibitions with Hauser & Wirth—presents split compositions that mix her clonelike female figures with gestural brushwork at the powerhouse's 22nd Street flagship space and a combination of the artist's recent paintings and silkscreen prints exploring similar themes at its 18th Street location, which is dedicated to the editions and multifaceted practices of the gallery's artists. In both shows, Ackermann fuses automatic drawing and action painting on canvas, which is strikingly simulated in the prints, to reveal a love of line, color, and girlish form—pushing her otherworldly vision to new, exciting heights.

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Matthew Barney, *Power Rack / Iron Inversion*, (2024), PHOTO: DAVID REGEN; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND GLADSTONE GALLERY

4. Matthew Barney at Gladstone Gallery, New York

A celebrated artist and filmmaker best known for his cinematic *Cremaster Cycle*, which repeatedly returned to moments of early sexual development in relation to creativity through photographs, drawings, sculptures, installations, and—of course—his five metaphoric, feature-length films, Matthew Barney had more recently gone under the art world's radar until the acclaimed premiere of his video installation, *SECONDARY*, which was filmed in the artist's Long Island City sculpture studio and exhibited in Europe in 2023. Exploring the nature of the American psyche, violence, and football, the plot of the film revolves around an accident that occurred during a 1978 football game in which a defensive back for the Oakland Raiders delivered an open-field hit on a wide receiver for the New England Patriots that left the latter player paralyzed.

The symbolic sculptures in the show were constructed with ceramics, aluminum, polymers, lead, and readymade objects related to bodybuilding and core strengthening, while the drawings and paintings illustrate physical movement and abstract forces at play. A sense of supernatural phenomenon is most evident, however, in the markings on the gallery walls, which ritualistically encircle the lower gallery space. Employing a weight-lifting bar with an attached chunk of clay, Barney tapped into a previous series of *Drawing Restraints* to subtly leave his mark in the gallery while dressed as an aging football player, which was documented as a key ingredient of the show.

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Charles Hascoët, *The Waves*, (2024).PHOTO: GUILLAUME ZICCARELLI; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND PERROTIN

5. Charles Hascoët at Perrotin, New York

A figurative painter with a love of storytelling through his work, Charles Hascoët has been exhibiting his art internationally since shortly after completing his studies at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2014. Born in Paris and currently living and working in New York, Hascoët draws from historical imagery, popular movies, and childhood memories to paint representational scenes. Painting storybook portraits (including self-portraits in dreamlike settings), still lifes of everyday objects, and imaginary landscapes, the artist shares his personal vision of the contemporary world.

For his first solo show with Perrotin, Hascoët created a series of surreal paintings in a variety of sizes depicting diverse subjects. From self-portraits of the artist awakening in bed in the shadows of a raging volcano, which references a television storyline from *Star Trek*, and his being lost at sea in troubled waters, while obviously playing on his Gameboy, to still lifes of vibrant bottles of Listerine juxtaposed with a bonsai tree and a PlayStation joystick, and scenes of birds of prey and sharks in the wild, Hascoët presents the visual memories of a joyful dreamer—a sort of Jacques Tati who paints his playful-yet-sometimes-somber-thoughts rather than putting them on film.

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Ghada Amer, *The Red Portrait*, (2021). PHOTO: COURTESY MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

6. Ghada Amer at Marianne Boesky Gallery, Aspen

Since she first emerged as a fast-rising artist in 1990, Ghada Amer has filtered her work through her own life experiences as an Egyptian woman brought up by Muslim parents in France. This background accounts for her particular take on feminism: a fearless mix of politics, pornography, Arabic tradition, and Western liberalism, which became most notable in her signature stitched-canvas "paintings" of women in moments of ecstasy. Working more recently with ceramics, Amer created freestanding slab plates, which she figuratively drew upon from both sides. This led to the use of cardboard boxes to make maquettes for a series of sculptural women presented like folding screens, which she then began casting in bronze.

Titled *Paravent Girls*, several of these two-side portraits, which turn tawdry materials and risqué subject matter into enchanting works of art, are featured in the show, paired with the New York-based artist's whimsical word works, created with cotton appliqué on canvas and styled after QR codes. Her painting *A WOMAN'S VOICE* ironically alters the lettering of the Arabic proverb "A woman's voice is shameful" to read "A woman's voice is revolution," while two differently designed word works appropriate a famous quote—"plastic surgery is a postmodern veil"—from Egyptian feminist activist Nawal El Saadawi to make a new, more meaningful, form of concrete poetry on canvas.

Through July 27

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Victoria Morton, *Kiosk*, (2024). PHOTO: PATRICK JAMIESON; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND THE MODERN INSTITUTE/ TOBY WEBSTER LTD.

7. Victoria Morton at Jessica Silverman, San Francisco

A seasoned painter who is having her first solo show with Jessica Silverman gallery, Victoria Morton creates lyrical abstractions that flirt with figuration. Her paintings are structured on “a narrative of sensations” and informed by her observation of the biological structures of organic forms and—as she is also a musician—her perception of rhythm, dissonance, and time in music.

Her vivid exhibition features 26 large and small-scale paintings, including ones in oil on linen, acrylic on linen, and oil on canvas. Highly skilled in handling paint and the visual tricks of the trade, Morton layers transparent pours with scumbled brushwork and juxtaposes canvases, brushstrokes, and geometric forms to make paintings that keep the eye in motion while also providing peaceful places for it to rest. A master at marrying color, line, and form, the Scottish painter—who splits her time between Glasgow and a small village in central Italy—was inspired to make this body of work from her research at cultural sites in Bologna, where faded frescos and worn walls provided a unique sense of beauty.

Through July 20

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Emily Ferguson, *It Girl*, (2024). PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTIST AND NICODIM GALLERY.

8. Emily Ferguson at Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles

A talented painter who left college early to assist other artists rather than learning in an academic context, Emily Ferguson quickly caught the eye of adventurous collectors with a series of stunning portraits of young women in her first solo show at L.A.'s Kantor Gallery in 2022. At 25, the California-based artist had her second one-person exhibition in 2023 at collector Leo Rogath's project space, Prince & Wooster, in New York with 26 fresh portraits of tightly cropped, gorgeously painted femme fatales.

Now she's back in her hometown for her third solo outing with 15 alluring canvases from 2024, including a self-portrait titled *It Girl* (also the title of the show), which captures the artist as a classic reclining figure in a sublime field of earthy colors and textures. Her canvas *Single and Fabulous* portrays another stylish it girl, Sarah Jessica Parker as Carrie Bradshaw on the cover of *New York Magazine*, while other paintings in the show offer wispy views of striking women and fashion accessories frozen in ideal moments of contemplation, which invite the viewer's gaze.

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