

What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now

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Newly Reviewed

CHELSEA

‘Feminism and the Legacy of Surrealism’

Through Feb. 19. Thomas Erben Gallery, 526 West 26th Street; Manhattan. 212-645-8701; thomaserben.com.

Writing about the Metropolitan Museum’s thought-provoking “Surrealism Beyond Borders” exhibition, Jason Farago recently described Surrealism as less a movement than a “language of refusal” that pushes back at “constraints on the human subconscious, and on human freedom.” In a gratifying complement to the Met show, “Feminism and the Legacy of Surrealism” at Thomas Erben Gallery brings together art works from the 1970s to the present by eight women who, while they postdate the movement proper, are all conversant in this slippery but potent language.



Brenda Goodman’s “Untitled” (1973) is included in the show “Feminism and the Legacy of Surrealism” at Thomas Erben Gallery. Brenda Goodman and Thomas Erben Gallery

Elizabeth Murray’s 1972 painting “Madame Cézanne Falling Out of Her Chair,” a gaudily colored cartoon-strip that shows the artist’s wife collapsing during one of his famously endless sittings, is a joke that conceals a jab. An untitled self-portrait by Brenda Goodman, from the following year, shows the artist as a tortured cloud of moving arms, but gray winglike forms suggest that she’s the swan as well as her own Leda. In “Studies for ‘Nudes Moving an Abstract Painting,’” a 2013 series of black-and-white snapshots by Elaine Stocki, naked women handle a canvas whose faded imagery is harder to make out than the shadows they inevitably cast against it.

Synthesizing jabs, jokes, allusions and evasions is **June Leaf’s** delicate portrait of the human being as a mysterious compromise between body and mind: A foot-high wire sculpture of what looks like a sewing machine, it sits on a metal plate labeled “The Machine That Makes Itself.” **WILL HEINRICH**