

MIDTOWN

Tommy Malekoff

Through June 3. Presented by New Canons. International Building, 630 Fifth Avenue, concourse level, Manhattan. newcanons.com.



Tommy Malekoff's multichannel video installation, which the artist shot in Florida's Everglades. Cody Ranaldo and New Canons

An artist looking for visual metaphors can do worse than visiting Florida, a place that can seem to exist like a dream, and not always a good one. Over the past two years, the artist Tommy Malekoff has been filming in and around the Everglades, where images of intense beauty crash into abject horror with astonishing regularity.

Six wall-size screens pulsate with his footage, a kaleidoscopic, at times punishing array of natural splendor punctuated by ecological calamity. The usual players of human encroachment figure here — burning planes, belching smokestacks, unregulated development — but the tenor is less polemic than balletic. Malekoff depicts a danse macabre, the way nature adapts to our havoc, or doesn't: Manatees, a popular tourist attraction, are drawn to waters warmed by chemical runoff, where they starve to death; raging fires are deliberately set to control sugar cane crops, an agricultural shortcut banned most everywhere except Florida, where it attracts gawking tourists, and chokes the poor communities nearby. Set to a droning score by Joe Williams that fills the space like a dissonant sound bath, the effect is like channel surfing through the apocalypse.

Situating the work in a spooky, disused storage room in the bowels of the Rockefeller Plaza's International Building is a neat coup. Malekoff's looping nightmare disturbs the building's Deco-gentility, its own kind of touristic ecosystem plunked in the center of Midtown, where grace and garishness are inextricable. The non-place heightens the subject matter's otherworldliness, and the infinite loops in which we trap ourselves.

MAX LAKIN

Galleries

Evelyn Statsinger

Through June 18. Gray New York, 1018 Madison Avenue, Second Floor, Manhattan; 212-472-8787, richardgraygallery.com.

Evelyn Statsinger's art is making its stunning New York debut at Gray New York, six years after the artist, who was born in Brooklyn, died in Chicago at the age of 88. On hand are 10 oils and five drawings from the 1980s and early '90s.

The show's title, "Currents," reflects Statsinger's diverse cultural sources: Surrealism as well as Native American, prehistoric and Japanese arts and crafts. And it may also indicate the conduit-like elements that course through her compositions, pulsing with energy. The independence of her art derives from its inventive use of highly refined textures and patterns, their abundant associations and their peculiar balance of real and unreal. Her paintings are essentially representations of abstractions.

Associations with nature and design are especially strong: Various textures suggest bark, wave patterns, Formica and, frequently, custom molding. In "Central Forces" these moldings are full of undulating lines that suggest something like changing moisture levels. They frame a central area whose pattern of phthalo blue, black and red on a cream background mesmerizingly evokes Pollock, endpapers, Ken Price's sanded ceramic surfaces and paisley.

Catalogs from some of Statsinger's gallery shows in Chicago suggest that this presentation barely scratches the surface of the different ways she marshaled her motifs, patterns and color schemes from around 1950 forward. Her work was in the early Monster Roster exhibitions that prepared the ground for the Chicago Imagists. Her achievement is a great addition to the history of modern American art.

ROBERTA SMITH

Tommy Malekoff

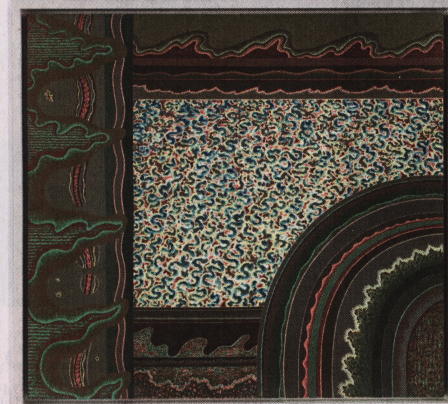
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Tommy Malekoff's multichannel video installation, shot in the Florida Everglades and set to a score by Joe Williams, is being shown by New Canons at Rockefeller Plaza's International Building.



Evelyn Statsinger's "Central Forces" (1985) is at Gray New York.

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starve to death; raging fires are deliberately set to control sugar cane crops, an agricultural short-cut banned most everywhere except Florida, where it attracts gawking tourists, and chokes the poor communities nearby. Set to a droning score by Joe Williams that fills the space like a dissonant sound bath, the effect is like channel surfing through the apocalypse.

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lander women. The nine participating artists grapple with personal and communal traumas in complementary ways, from Maia Ruth Lee's paintings of atomized sewing patterns, from her series "Language of Grief," to Hong-An Truong's stills of anonymous Vietnamese women in videos shot by American soldiers in the '60s — '70s. "My mother could have been captured on this footage," Truong writes in the catalog. The show's title, too, refers to tragedy: It comes from "Dictee," an experimental novel by the artist and writer Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, who was also murdered in Lower Manhattan, in 1982.

The gallery is suffused with loss, but the artworks are open and layered. Their existence and convening offer a small counter-measure of hope.

JILLIAN STEINHAUER

Michaël Borremans

Through June 4. David Zwirner, 525 West 19th Street, Manhattan. 212-727-2070, davidzwirner.com.

Michaël Borremans may be the greatest living figurative painter. Based in Ghent, Belgium, home to Jan and Hubert van Eyck's epic altarpiece, "Adoration of the Mystic Lamb" (1432), he has subsumed 500 years of painting into his art. Yet his work is in-

formed by history, not mired in it.

"The Acrobats" provides an opportunity — all too rare on this side of the Atlantic — to see the genius of Borremans in the flesh. He renders skin with such intensity that the living, breathing, blood-coursing nature of the human being becomes vividly alive. In "The Witch," Borremans seems to be teasing the viewer with a knowing contradiction: The left hand — hands being famously difficult to paint — is awkwardly held before the ambiguously gendered figure's chest to suggest the form of a witch's broom, while at once being meticulously rendered with sinew, tendon and veins. In "The Double," the sifter is costumed in a metallic quilted suit, as if offering protection from an immense heat, with a pink-orange glow reflected off its surface. The face glistens: pink in a pink balaclava, eyes slightly closed. But the magma heat also seems to be creeping up and radiating from an under-painted layer on the canvas. Borremans's paintings all seem to stop at a near-final moment, with just enough of the brush work and layering left observable. As if a solid thing suddenly has emerged from some elusive vaporous material. It's painterly magic. A major New York museum retrospective is long overdue.

JOHN VINCLER

Judith Linhares

Through May 27. PPOW Gallery, 392 Broadway, Manhattan; 212-647-1044, ppowgallery.com.

Judith Linhares's show at PPOW, "Banshee Sunrise," is part of a wave of downtown exhibitions that celebrate women's history, bodies and power: Mary Beth Edelson at David Lewis and Squeak Carnwath at Jane Lombard are two other notable examples. What Linhares brings to the conversation is a carefully cultivated simplicity and naïveté that



Judith Linhares's 2021 painting "Banshee Sunrise" is at PPOW.

recalls ancient talismanic figures and traditions. She paints vibrantly hued nudes, and this show pays homage to the banshee, a traditional female Irish spirit whose nocturnal, mournful wailing foretold the death of a family member.

In canvases like "Banshee Sunrise" (2021) and "Falcon" (2022), nude women painted in Linhares's thick, chunky style, with confident stripes of color, inhabit natural settings, climbing trees or communing with wildlife. Other paintings focus on animals or still lifes that call to mind those of van Gogh or Cézanne. Two still lifes feature images near the base of the flower vases: one of Abraham Lincoln and another, an ancient sculptural figure with bulging eyes.

Acid-colored and with a subtle politics that celebrates the historic power of women — and specifically women's relation to the natural world — Linhares's figures are wide-eyed and spectral. They are deeply contemporary, yet reminiscent of prehistoric stone carvings of women or the Sheela na gigs — female figures on medieval European churches that expose exaggerated vulvas — meant to ward off evil spirits. Painting is power too, and Linhares treats the canvas as a method for raising a ruckus, like a true banshee.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER



"The Witch" (2021), an oil painting by Michaël Borremans that is in his show at David Zwirner.

'With Her Voice, Penetrate Earth's Floor'

Through June 5. Eli Klein Gallery, 398 West Street, Manhattan; 212-255-4388, ealleryek.com.



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