

# rachel uffner

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## 5 Must-See Shows in New York: Graham Collins, Rachel Rossin, and More

BY SCOTT INDRISEK | OCTOBER 22, 2015

**Graham Collins at The Journal Gallery, through November 1 (106 North 1st Street, Brooklyn)**

Having established a reputation for himself as a sort of collagist-of-tinted-glass, it's thrilling to see Collins going bigger, and much weirder, with "Stadiums." The biggest works are composed of deconstructed above-ground swimming pools ("anti-monuments in backyards across America," reads the press release), which have been contorted and twisted, draped with blue-vinyl tarps vandalized with messy, gestural blasts of acrylic and oil paint. These modified readymades take various shapes: one resembles a skateboard half-pipe, while another, installed near the front doorway, assumes the appearance of an oversized letter "J." Collins's epic sculptures are paired with a series of small, diorama-like shadowboxes — recalling the quasi-archeological aesthetic of Nick van Woert or Matthew Day Jackson — in which various semi-abstract tableaux appear, their surfaces fuzzy and scuzzy, in some cases resembling the green baize on a pool table. "Japanese Kōgei: Future Forward" at the Museum of Arts and Design, through February 7, 2016 (2 Columbus Circle)

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Kōgei, meaning "artisan crafts," have a rich history in Japan, and the curators of this exhibition of a dozen practitioners seek to spotlight those who are pushing against conservative boundaries. Don't expect anything too outwardly radical, though: What we get are variations on mainstays like incense boxes, tea cups, and other cultural staples. Takurō Kuwata is a standout, with his garishly colored vessels, many of which are augmented with what appear to be alien warts.

Katsuyo Aoki — responding, wall labels note, to Japanese horror films like “Ringu” — uses her mastery of porcelain craftsmanship to conjure elegant mutant skulls, as if human bone itself began replicating according to some byzantine, fractal logic.

**Rachel Rossin at Zieher Smith & Horton, through November 14 (516 West 20th Street)**

The Oculus Rift is having its contemporary art moment: a headset-enabled virtual sculpture was in the New Museum Triennial (Daniel Steegman Mangrane); Jon Rafman brought one to Miami; Jeremy Coillard programmed a New Age-inflected experience in the basement of Louis B. James gallery. With “Lossy,” Rossin adds her own spin to the technology, presenting paintings whose creation is interwoven with Oculus-enabled virtual realities based on IRL environments (her apartment, her studio). Spend some time wearing the headset, which takes you through a vertiginous artificial space — the experience is on a roughly two-minute loop, but it feels infinitely longer, as you’re free to move around any which way you’d like, discovering new elements as you float up staircases and through walls. The virtual world itself is seen in fragments and shards, as if a legion of digital termites have gorged on the information architecture. The accompanying paintings feature recognizable elements — a bull, some flowers — but with perspectives stretched, shadows oddly flung, figures elongated, and dimensions occasionally flattened.

**Jan-Ole Schiemann at Half Gallery, through November 13 (43 East 78th Street)**

I first saw this young German painter’s work at EXPO Chicago, where LA-based MIER Gallery gave him a solo outing. The paintings, made with ink on unprimed linen, are all based on gestural moments borrowed from early “Betty Boop” films — a quirky genesis, but one that you don’t need any clue about in order to appreciate the squiggly, kinetic energy of the works. While the large-scale paintings are terrific, there’s a serial sameness to them that, however intentional, can exhaust. Schiemann’s drawings — looser, with the gridded composition of comic strips in which nothing explicable happens — are the highlight.

**Davina Semo at Lyles & King, through November 15 (106 Forsyth Street)**

Launched over the summer, this fledgling L.E.S. gallery continues a season of solid programming with Semo, recently decamped from her former home at Marlborough Chelsea. The artist has slowly added materials to her practice, from safety glass to spraypaint, concrete, and brass, and most recently she’s been working with leather — combining it with concrete, whose drying process has wild and unpredictable effects on the animal hide. For this show, though, it’s time for something quite different: slabs of concrete — their form based on readymade urban architecture, which the artist discusses in this ARTINFO video — which have pointed cylinders of colored glass embedded into them. The bulky square masses are propped up on lengths of industrial pipe and illuminated by intentionally glaring spotlights. During my visit, one couple admiringly compared the effect of the colored glass to the beloved Hasbro toy Lite-Brite. That’s an interestingly innocent reflection, considering the sinister edge of the show overall: one sculpture in the back gallery, easy to miss if you’re not looking, is composed of several folding chairs tied together with plastic zip-ties; underneath, a series of cast sculptures of box cutters await.

**ALSO WORTH SEEING:** Through October 25, Sean Kennedy’s sculptures —incorporating folding tables, corporate logos, and aerial platforms, among other things — at Rachel Uffner Gallery.