

rachel uffner

'UNTITLED BODY PARTS' AT SIMONE SUBAL

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Installation view of 'Untitled Body Parts,' 2016, showing work, from left by Sara Greenberger Rafferty, Mira Dancy, and Dora Budor.

SEAN FADER/COURTESY SIMONE SUBAL GALLERY

This quirky, nearly all-women exhibition, "Untitled Body Parts," shows some of the many ways in which the body can be represented. It opens with Kiki Kogelnik's *Untitled (Hanging)* (ca. 1970), consisting of three floppy cutouts of human bodies slung over a hanger. Each of the pieces is a different color—off-gray, carrot orange, creamy pink. By making each a different hue, Kogelnik emphasizes that no two bodies are alike.

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The Austrian artist's work here predates everything

else in this elegant show by more than four decades. It was a smart curatorial decision if not a little forced. Kogelnik, who died in 1997, is the only nonliving artist in this show, and her approach to the body is a subtle inspiration for the other artists here, all of whom hail from the Americas or Europe.

European modernism is the obvious counterpoint for much of the work, perhaps because most of the movement leaders were male, and their portrayals of women tended to be unnuanced. Mira Dancy's *Red Rita* (2016), a fiery painting of a naked woman looking out at the viewer, turns modernism's male gaze back on itself. Unlike Matisse or Cézanne's bathers, this Fauve-inspired hot-pink femme looks pissed to be there.



Emily Mae Smith, *Paris Magazine (for Picabia)*, 2013, oil on linen, 38 x 27 inches.
SEAN FADER/COURTESY THE ARTIST AND SIMONE SUBAL GALLERY

Nearby is Emily Mae Smith's painting *Paris Magazine (for Picabia)* (2013), a take on Francis Picabia's paintings based on

magazine images. The only work in “Untitled Body Parts” to depict a male body, it takes a picture of a twisted, muscular torso and dots it with circular machine parts. Putting holes all over a hard, masculine image makes it feminine, even vaginal. Another Smith painting with just the sprockets isn’t quite as exciting, proof that compromises between abstraction and figuration work better here. An untitled construction by Sara Greenberger Rafferty featuring prints and a stocking sandwiched between Plexiglas sheets strikes the right balance, as does Alisa Baremboym’s *Substitute Impression* (2015), a ceramic wall work that, with its veiny patterning and clear shell, looks like muscle and skin.

And then there’s Dora Budor’s *Slow Ticking of the Callous Mind* (2015), a wacky, freestanding sculpture that includes a miniature set from the film *Batman Returns* (one wonders how Budor even bought this), metal, and prosthetics. With its combination of what looks like capillaries and industrial matter, the work evokes the heart of a cyborg. If Budor’s work is any proof, the next bodies in art may not even be human.