

## 10 Must-See Summer Group Shows

by Scott Indrisek 07/07/14 7:59 AM EDT

Summer can be slow in New York's art world, but that doesn't mean that it's a wasteland of lackluster group shows—there's actually some terrific curating to be found out there, as gallerists loosen up and get creative. For your convenience, here's a necessarily incomplete taxonomy of some of the current offerings, including shows inspired by Smiths songs and struggling American cities.

### **Rachel Uffner Gallery** **“The Crystal Palace,” through August 18**



**Geographical displacement:** “In an attempt to infuse the growing contemporary art district of the Lower East Side with the historical weight of Upper East Side institutions, Rachel Uffner Gallery will exhibit artwork from the vast archives of Richard L. Feigen & Co., and additional private lenders and Estates, in conjunction with contemporary artists conversing with their fore-bearers in a thoughtful manner.”

**Deceased artists included in show:** Joseph Cornell, Ray Johnson, Balthus, Stan VanDerBeek

**Artist in show who is officially confirmed as coolest man alive:** Peter Saul

**Artists in show who moonlight as magazine editors:** Dushko Petrovich, Roger White

**Keywords:** Feline imagery; mail art; Upper/Lower East Side Friendship Society.

### **Paula Cooper Gallery**

**“Boursier-Mougenot, Conner, Echakhch, Gaines, Marclay, Oldenburg/van Bruggen,” through July 16**

**Conceit:** “The intersection of and symbiotic relationship between music and the visual arts.” A bit phoned-in, and it could be spun with more panache, but it works.

**Highlights:** Two limp instruments: Christian Marclay's silicone “Prosthesis,” which reimagines the traditionally phallic guitar as a droopingly impotent ax; and Claes Oldenburg/Coosje van Bruggen's “Soft Harp, Scale C, Harp Sail,” which hangs like a regal but dejected shower curtain. Bruce Conner's “Thirteen Color Punk Photos” are also pretty terrific.

**Keywords:** Bodily sculpture; synesthesia.

### **ZieherSmith Gallery**

**“All a tremulous heart requires,” through August 15**

**Conceit:** “Inspired by the 1985 song 'Rusholme Ruffians' by the Smiths, a rollicking reminiscence and a lonely, caustic celebration of the revels and bedevilments of Manchester youths' annual summer fair.”

**Highlights:** John McAllister's colorful—and yes, Matisse-inspired—painting of an interior-with-cat; Rose Wylie's strange cut-up female portraits; a pair of large charcoals by Dana Schutz.

**Inclusion of painting element that doubles as furniture:**

Ida Ekblad's covetable ceramic tile tables.

**Keywords:** Painting's not dead; small-scale Carroll Dunham genitalia.

### **Marlborough Chelsea and Marianne Boesky**

**“Another Look At Detroit: Parts 1 and 2,” through August 8**

**Conceit:** A wild, jam-packed celebration of the Motor City, curated by Todd Levin.

**Curatorial idiosyncrasies:** The front spaces are darkened, and contain only a small handful of works, illuminated by lightbulbs hanging from the ceiling; the back spaces are more of a caffeinated salon-style hanging, jumbling media and time periods.

**Significant press:** This extensive Randy Kennedy piece in the New York Times, which focuses on Levin's involvement with Detroit and a number of artists who have migrated to the city in recent years.

**Keywords:** Mike Kelley and the destruction of monsters; economic crisis; Ray Johnson.

### **Hauser & Wirth**

**“The Photographic Object, 1970” (uptown) and “Fixed Variable” (Chelsea), both through July 25**

**Questions addressed, directly or otherwise:** How far can the photographic medium be pushed while still remaining photography? Is Robert Heinecken actually a misogynist, as Martha Rosler once proclaimed on my Facebook wall?

**Highlights:** Pieces by Heinecken, Ellen Brooks, and Robert Watts in the former, historical show; Letha Wilson and Ethan Greenbaum in “Fixed Variable” (though all of the young artists in this tightly curated show are fantastic).

**Keywords:** 1970s plastic fetish; C-print mutilation; puzzle-piece nudes; medium confusion.

### **Zach Feuer**

**“Don't Look Now,” through July 26**

**Geographical dislocation:** The duo behind Brooklyn's 247365 bring their friends to Chelsea.

**Exhibition manifesto:** “After years of process abstraction in painting we once again come full circle to the picture. In New York City, a renewed interest in classical themes has emerged—most notably the portrait, the landscape, and the still life. Approaches to painting that were once doomed to languish in obscurity on the walls of coffee shops are making a triumphant return to relevance in young and established galleries alike.”

**Highlights:** A lumpy lobster by Gina Beavers; two works from omnipresent Ted Gahl, who also has work at ZieherSmith and Suzanne Geiss Company; the amazingly insane Jamian Juliano-Villani.

**Keywords:** Painting's still not dead; marketability of Brooklyn; Donut District.

### **Catinca Tabacaru**

**“Make It Big, Make It Red, Put A Crown On It,” through August 31**

**Conceit:** A shared pigment unites these pieces at a relatively new space on the Lower East Side: “From red-light districts to French nobility, Indian weddings to Catholic insignia, the color has continued to serve one bold statement to the next—sometimes seductive, sometimes terrifying, but never an accident.”

**Highlights:** The bloody abstractions of Barnaby Furnas.

**Keywords:** Crimson solidarity; exhibition titles that could double as hip-hop lyrics.

### **David Zwirner**

**“To do as one would,” through July 25**

**Conceit:** A Christopher Williams photograph of a brick grounds this grouping of artists exploring “utilitarian objects.”

**Opening night drama:** Visitors were slightly perplexed by the two shirtless, Abercrombie-style male models standing by the gallery entrance. This wasn't Zwirner's attempt to sex up the Chelsea scene; it was an artwork, entitled “Guardian Lions,” by Zachary Susskind and Alex Perweiler. (The beefcake performance will recur throughout the run of the show.)

**Highlights:** John Dante Bianchi's ghostly floor sculpture; Charles Harlan's materially diverse Minimalist structure.

**Keywords:** Heavy metal; industrial chic; Still House; unexpected abs.

### **James Cohan Gallery**

**“The Fifth Season,” through August 8**

**Conceit:** A show about “the seasonal rhythms of natural systems, the human disruptions of these once-balanced cycles, and the increasing alarms of global climate change.” Could also be called “Hey, Remember Hurricane Sandy?”

**Representative work:** Erik Wysocan's “Untitled (iPhone mine)”: What appears to be a disorderly pile of stones is actually a conceptual piece which “replicates the amounts of organic minerals required to build an iPhone.”

**Keywords:** Environmental apocalypse; green art; art-as-activism.

**Venus Over Manhattan**

**“LIFE,” through July 25**

**Geographical displacement:** Williamsburg, Brooklyn gallery The Journal stages a retrospective on the Upper East Side.

**Highlights:** A Plexi-and-file-cabinet sculpture by Sarah Braman; paintings by Ida Ekblad, Jeff Elrod, and Michael Williams.

**Money quote:** “It doesn’t really make sense—but why not?” (Adam Lindemann on the reasons behind an exhibition like this in a gallery like his.)

**Keywords:** Investment potential; the new abstraction; vitrines; Joe Bradley.

**Also worth seeing:** Marlborough Broome's paean to the bicycle, through August 3; Klaus von Nichtssagend's “Daughter of 'Bad Girls',” with Ann Hirsch, Alice Mackler, and many more, through July 26; “Unrealism Part I,” through July 24 at Fredericks & Freiser; a massive group show of 40 women artists at Sargent's Daughters, also titled “Sargent's Daughters,” all of them somehow influenced by the titular painter.