

NEWSLETTER

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## The Painter David Salle Curates an Exhibition of Unusual Pairings



Left: Francis Bacon's "Study for Figure II" (1953). Right: Kevin Beasley's "Untitled Slab (Concavity II)" (2018). Left: © The Estate of Francis Bacon. All rights reserved. DACS, London/ARS, NY 2023. Photo: Matthew Herrmann. Right: © Kevin Beasley. Courtesy of the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York. Photo: Jason Wyche

By M.H. Miller

The writer Janet Malcolm once described David Salle's paintings as "full of images that don't belong together." Since the 1970s, he has appropriated and remixed styles and iconography from a vast array of seemingly unconnected sources including commercial advertising, cartoons and old masters paintings. A new exhibition that Salle has organized at the Hill Art Foundation in New York, called "Beautiful, Vivid, Self-Contained," is dedicated to the memory of Malcolm, who died last year. Salle was given access to the private collection of the billionaire investor Tom Hill and his wife, Janine, in order to take the idea of what he referred to as "radical juxtaposition" to its unpredictable conclusion. For the exhibit, Salle has paired a Robert Gober sculpture with a Pablo Picasso charcoal drawing and Cy Twombly's "Solar Barge of Sesostri" (1985-88) with a Renaissance-era bronze statue of the Roman god of war. Salle's own work appears alongside that of Francis Bacon, a coupling inspired by a long-ago studio visit with the art dealer Joe Helman, who remarked that Salle's paintings were like "Bacon for straight people."

Merely listing the names of a few of the artists included here — some of whose works were lent from other private collections, or directly from artists — is enough to at least raise an eyebrow: Kevin Beasley, Cecily Brown, Willem de Kooning, Edgar Degas, Karen Kilimnik, Brice Marden, Henri Matisse. "What do these things have to do with each other, if anything?" Salle asked in an interview. He didn't have an answer but added, "The idea is that paintings are like modifiers in a line of poetry, stretching the meaning."

*"Beautiful, Vivid, Self-Contained" is on view from April 21 to July 21, [hillartfoundation.org](http://hillartfoundation.org).*