

What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in June

Want to see new art in the city? Check out Bang Geul Han's "Land of Tenderness" at The 8th Floor; Michael E. Smith's sculptures at Andrew Kreps; and "Beautiful, Vivid, Self-Contained" at the Hill Art Foundation.

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Newly Reviewed

CHELSEA

'Beautiful, Vivid, Self-Contained'

Through July 21. Hill Art Foundation, 239 10th Avenue, Manhattan. 212-337-4455; hillartfoundation.org.



Left, Edgar Degas's "Cavaliers Sur une Route," 1864–68, in juxtaposition with Walter Price's "Discomfort" (2022). via Hill Art Foundation; Photo by Matthew Herrmann

In the catalog for "Beautiful, Vivid, Self-Contained," a group show he curated at the Hill Art Foundation, the painter David Salle cites a remark the dealer Joe Helman used to make: "Ellsworth [Kelly] is our Matisse." Salle goes on to unspool his ambivalence about Helman's comparison, disparaging it, on the one hand, as glib and superficial, but conceding, on the other, that it's also pretty compelling. Ambivalent or not, it's exactly this kind of juxtaposition — brisk, intuitive and, for a person as steeped in critical minutiae as Salle, painfully reductive — that gives the show its energy.

One striking, insightful, precarious pairing follows another in this frankly incredible group of paintings that Salle has managed to call in. Red stippling in a recent Walter Price echoes the gray atmosphere of an Edgar Degas; abstraction by Amy Sillman looks like a color negative of Albert Oehlen's, or vice versa; and Martha Diamond, Willem de Kooning and Brice Marden all use wavering, expressive lines — to very different effects, if you think of their individual contexts, but as mere variations on a theme when they're side by side. (There are also works by Twombly, Picasso, Matisse, even Peter Paul Rubens.)

It's true, as Salle fears, that this kind of thing risks being tendentious, and that it may come at the expense of subtlety or art-historical detail. But it's also surprising and delightful, and after all, neither language nor curation can avoid being at least a little reductive. You might as well make it snappy. *WILL HEINRICH*