

PRICE  
**SENATE-SEAT FOLLIES**  
by Hendrik Hertzberg

# THE NEW YORKER

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## CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK FOR THE AGES

There are two Cindy Sherman exhibitions in town right now—one, at Skarstedt, of the terrific “History Portraits” she made nearly twenty years ago, and another, of entirely new work, at Metro Pictures. How does a working artist



compete with her own greatest hits? By remaining as shrewd as she is witty, and by putting more of herself back in the picture. The “History” photographs are based—sometimes literally, sometimes loosely—on Old Master paintings of many periods; they use a slew of comic and theatrical devices, including crude prosthetics, wigs, and props. The staging of the new work is no less cheesy or hilarious, but Sherman’s subject is closer to home: advancing age and eroding beauty. She thinks of the women she inhabits here as “really tough broads who have lived through a lot and are kind of sad”—but are not about to betray it. The makeup is clownish and the satire blunt, but Sherman finds something fragile and frightened behind these brittle façades, and, ever so subtly, she lets it bleed through.

—Vince Aletti

(Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5, Fridays, 10:30 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

### NEW MUSEUM

235 Bowery, at Prince St. (212-219-1222)—“Mary Heilmann: To Be Someone.” Through Jan. 26. ♦ “Live Forever: Elizabeth Peyton.” Through Jan. 11. ♦ “Museum as Hub: Six Degrees.” Through Jan. 11. (Open Wednesdays and weekends, noon to 6, and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 10.)

### PALITZ GALLERY

11 E. 61st St. (212-754-5121)—“Michelangelo: The Man and the Myth.” A handful of graphite drawings—“Study for a Christ in Limbo,” “Sacrifice of Isaac,” and “Studies for the Head of Leda,” all on loan from the Casa Buonarroti, in Florence—make this show worth a visit. But a regrettable 1982 bronze cast of Michelangelo’s 1499 masterpiece “Pietà” and ephemera, such as a note scrawled by the artist to his assistants, seem more about stoking the cult of Michelangelo than about showcasing significant discoveries. We already know that Michelangelo was a genius, made immortal by admirers like Vasari; a wall label exhorting visitors to “pause for a moment to reflect on the sheer beauty” of the art seems absurdly superfluous. Through Jan. 4. (Open daily. For hours and to buy tickets, visit [ticketweb.com](http://ticketweb.com).)

### P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER

22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—“NeoHooDoo: Art for a Forgotten Faith.” Through Jan. 26. ♦ “Gino de Dominicis.” Through Feb. 9. ♦ “Leandro Erlich: Swimming Pool.” Through April 13. ♦ “Yael Bartana.” Through Jan. 19. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

### QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART

Flushing Meadows—Corona Park (718-592-9700)—“Reason’s Clue.” With a title borrowed from Lao Tzu, the show features works by eight artists—Xu Bing, Michael Cherney, and Hong Hao among them—who mine the relationship between China and the West. Through Jan. 4. ♦ “Stephen Talasnik, Panorama: The Mapping of Prediction.” Through Jan. 25. ♦ “Pedro Meyer: Heresies.” Through Jan. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

### STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM

144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—“Barkley L. Hendricks: Birth of the Cool.” Through March 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6, and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

### DUANE MICHALS

Most of Michals’s “Photographs from the Floating World” are shaped like the stylized fans seen in Japanese prints. Set in dark backgrounds, they look like arched windows onto a world that, even at its most ordinary, veers giddily into fantasy. Michals depends a bit too heavily on charm, which stretches thin in the playfully sentimental texts scrawled around each image. But there is genuine pleasure here, and it buoys the works, which include photographs of fireworks and fireflies, geese and morning glories, a figure with a parasol in a snowy landscape, and a dashing young van Gogh character striding across a field of sunflowers. Through Jan. 10. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 212-759-7999.)

### Short List

**JOHN BALDESSARI:** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 212-977-7160. Through Jan. 10. **JOHN MARIN:** Ward, 44 E. 74th St. 212-744-7306. Through Dec. 20. **CINDY SHERMAN:** Skarstedt, 20 E. 79th St. 212-737-2060. Through Dec. 20. **JEFF SONHOUSE:** Tilton, 8 E. 76th St. 212-737-2221. Through Dec. 23. **ALEXI WORTH:** D. C. Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-247-2111. Through Jan. 3. **HELEN FRANKENTHALER AT EIGHTY:** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 212-794-0550. Through Jan. 10.

## GALLERIES—CHELSEA

### RICHARD AVEDON

Avedon understood that every portrait sitting was a performance, both in front of and behind the camera, and he knew how to use the drama of confrontation and collaboration to get at something real. With patience, artifice could yield authenticity. Some of the nearly sixty photographs gathered in this major mini-retrospective are merely spectacular—vivid, theatrical coups. Others feel quietly revelatory, full of empathy and soul. None are boring. Included are a number of his greatest portraits (Michelangelo Antonioni, Marilyn Monroe, the Windsors, the Everly Brothers) and many of his most appealing (Anna Mag-nani, Rudolf Nureyev, Bob Dylan, the Beatles). Through Jan. 3. (PaceWildenstein, 545 W. 22nd St. 212-989-4258.)

### JOYCE PEN SATO

Pensato’s stripped-down, charcoal-on-paper portraits—of Mickey Mouse, Felix the Cat, Donald Duck, Homer Simpson, and Stan from “South Park”—marry Pop banality with Ab-Ex angst. Her figures grin, grimace, and perform macabre jigs. Step close and you can see how the artist has applied herself to the task: the paper is worn and distressed—even shredded. Titles like “On the Way” and “Get Me to the Other Side” suggest transportation, perhaps of a spiritual bent. In this context, gazing into the bulging eyes of cartoon characters can be more challenging than reading Sartre. Through Jan. 3. (Petzel, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9467.)

### JULIA SCHMIDT

Schmidt trained in Leipzig, but her paintings have more in common with the allusive canvases of the Belgian artist Luc Tuymans than with the narrative extravaganzas for which the Leipzig school is best known (think Neo Rauch). Executed in oil on fibreboard, Schmidt’s works depict ambiguous found images—a microscopic view of paintbrush bristles, a row of the headless mannequins used for jewelry display, the underpainting of a Botticelli. Her scumbly, pale rendering transforms her subjects into something simultaneously glorious and pedestrian. Accordingly, she’s titled this show “Lavoro,” Italian for “work,” an insistent word that at once underscores the effort spent and romanticizes it. Through Dec. 20. (Kaplan, 525 W. 21st St. 212-645-7335.)

### AARON YOUNG

This aggressive young artist, who has turned out graffiti-covered boulders and orchestrated motorcycle performances that result in Pollock-like panels, has built a small white room inside the gallery. Walk in, and you are greeted by three grubby yellowish canvases and a metal box taking quarters. Your twenty-five cents buys sixty seconds of darkness, revealing glowing images of mushroom clouds on the paintings. It’s not a new trick (Philippe Parreno has used it, for one), and it underwhelms here. But a pile of bronze replicas of defaced N.Y.P.D. barriers suggests that Young hasn’t abandoned his interest in uncivil disobedience. Through Dec. 20. (Bortolami, 510 W. 25th St. 212-727-2050.)

### Short List

**TOMMA ABTS:** Zwirner, 525 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070. Through Dec. 23. **NATHALIE DJURBERG:** Feuer, 530 W. 24th St. 212-989-7700. Through Jan. 24. **ROBERT GOBER / FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES:** Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. Through Jan. 31. **DANA HOEY:** Petzel, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9467. Through Jan. 24. **JÁN MANČUŠKA:** Kreps, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-741-8849. Through Jan. 10. **KAY ROSEN:** Gray, 526 W. 26th St. 212-399-2636. Through Jan. 10; Lambert, 550 W. 21st St. 212-242-3611. Through Jan. 3. **ERIK SCHMIDT:** Dee, 545 W. 20th St. 212-924-7545. Through Jan. 10. **CINDY SHERMAN:** Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 212-206-7100. Through Dec. 23. **ZOE STRAUSS:** Silverstein, 535 W. 24th St. 212-627-3930. Through Jan. 10. **“THE WORLD IS ALL THAT IS THE CASE”:** Hudson Franklin, 508 W. 26th St. 212-741-1189. Through Dec. 20.