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ART & DESIGN

15 Group Shows Not to Miss

Art Exhibitions From Chelsea to the Lower East Side

By ROBERTA SMITH JAN. 29, 2015

Group shows are a staple of the New York gallery scene, but right now they are not only more plentiful than usual, they are especially good. The 15 group shows reviewed or mentioned here form a welcome antidote to the deluge of monolithic, big-name, single-artist shows that have drawn most of the air in the art world over the last year. They take us to a place where money is not king and give us small snapshots from the gigantic disorderly sprawl that is contemporary art. These shows often represent dealers, their gallery directors or invited curators — usually artists or critics — thinking slightly or very outside the box, putting together disparate works often by younger or lesser-known artists, in new and illuminating combinations. The dizzying bounty here reveals not only the elastic nature of the words “art” and “artist” but also of the group-show format itself.

ARTISTIC DISSONANCE

If there is a group-show look at the moment, it is one of emphatic diversity in which nearly every work on view seems to be in a different, not necessarily identifiable medium. The Lower East Side harbors several worthwhile iterations, including the elegant “Zabriskie Point” at the **Jack Hanley Gallery** (327 Broome Street), where that 1970 film’s surreal, ultracontemporary sense of displacement prevails. “It Rained Again” at **Bureau** (178 Norfolk Street, through Feb. 15) is an appealing assortment. “Proper Nouns” at **Rachel Uffner** (170 Suffolk Street, through Feb. 22), organized by Wyatt Kahn, an artist and the gallery’s director, remains closely focused on the body in different guises. Especially sparse but rewarding variations are “Eraser” at **Laurel Gitlen** (122 Norfolk Street, through Feb. 15) and “Believe You Me” at **247365** (131 Eldridge Street, through Feb. 15), a hole-in-the-wall arrival from Brooklyn.