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ART

MUSEUMS SHORT LIST
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
"Cubism: The Leonard A. Lauder Collection."
Through Feb. 16.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
"The Forever Now: Contemporary Painting in an Atemporal World."
Opens Dec. 14.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
"Zero: Countdown to Tomorrow, 1950s-60s."
Through Jan. 7.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM
"Judith Scott: Bound and Unbound."
Through March 29.

COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM
"Beautiful Users."
Opens Dec. 12.

GALLERIES SHORT LIST
CHELSEA
Sean Landers
Petzel
456 W. 18th St. 212-680-9467.
Through Dec. 20.
Ann Lislegaard
Murray Guy
453 W. 17th St. 212-463-7372.
Through Dec. 20.

DOWNTOWN
Kiki Kogelnik
Subal
131 Bowersy. 917-409-0612.
Through Dec. 19.

Laura Poitras
Artists Space
38 Greene St. 212-226-3970.
Opens Dec. 13.

BROOKLYN
Ragnar Kjartansson and
The National
Luhning Augustine Bushwick
25 Knickerbocker Ave.
718-386-2766.
Through Dec. 21.
"More Than This"
Theodore
56 Bogart St., Bushwick.
212-966-4324.
Through Dec. 14.



GOINGS ON, ONLINE
More dance, including a grand "Nutcracker" by Gelsey Kirkland Ballet and another at the Knockabout, in Queens.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Museum of Modern Art
"Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities"

How to manage concurrent crises of wealth inequality, population growth, and climate change? With farmers' markets, apparently. This show, the end product of a yearlong huddle by six teams of architects, starts from an important premise: more than half the world's population will soon live in cities, and most of these people will be poor. Yet the groups offer only a series of TED-style, feel-good takeaways that are divorced from hard political truths. The Istanbul team proposes that Turks share Wi-Fi accounts and cook meals for one another; the Rio experts want to retrofit favelas with heat-reflecting tiles. As for New York, where ultra-luxury towers now glom MOMA's own block, the proposal is an air-rights bureaucracy to lower housing costs. The museum's architecture department is quite right to turn its attention to the slums and the gated communities of the world's megacities. But this arrogant show is hardly the answer. Through May 10.

Sculpture Center

"Puddle, Pothole, Portal"
Here's a trick: Draw a circle. Now you have a puddle, a pothole, and a portal—also a rabbit hole and a looking glass. This exceedingly clever group show, from the fertile minds of the curator Kuba Katrib and the artist Camille Henrot, gathers diverse works by twenty-two international artists to animate ideas about the threshold between two and three dimensions, harking back to time-honored ideas about sculpture as drawing in space. The dominant tone is cartoon-comedic, with the best punch line delivered by Win McCarthy, whose freeze-frame glass sculptures of gushing water appear, often unexpectedly, throughout. The maestro Saul Steinberg has pride of place, in a room of his own, save for the walls, whose sky blue is the conceptual contribution of Maria Loboda. The show inaugurates the nonprofit's beautiful new renovation—one of the city's most exciting contemporary

venues has just upped its game. (Anthology Film Archives hosts a related series of screenings, from a 1923 Walt Disney short of "Alice in Wonderland" to the feature-length "Who Framed Roger Rabbit," Dec. 12-14 at 7:30.) Through Jan. 5.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Eugene Atget

Twenty-nine small, sepia-toned views of Paris in the early years of the last century only hint at the French photographer's historic achievement. Determined to document the city before modernization swept it clean, Atget focussed on details: a massive iron door knocker, a wood-framed stairwell, a gnarled tree, an empty carriage. He photographed shopwindows and the gardens at Versailles, narrow alleyways and grand boulevards, and an organ grinder with his grinning daughter, who are now icons of Old Paris. Not all the images here are as luminous as the landscape of trees and stone busts under dappled light that opens the show, but they're marvellous nonetheless. Through Jan. 3. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 212-759-7999.)

Albert Oehlen

Skepticism has never looked as exhilarating as it does in these fifteen paintings on fabric from the mid-nineties, the work of an artist who finds abstract painting absurd yet remains completely in love with it. Most of the backgrounds incorporate multiple clashing fabrics, with paisley against stripes or floral print abutting plaid, in an echo of his teacher Sigmar Polke; he then defiles them with circuits and squiggles, spills of brown and mauve, and, in one case, multicolored scribbling that looks like a child's outburst. As with everything Oehlen paints, these works, most of them never before seen in New York, are somewhat self-critical. Yet, even when he wants to be dumb, he ends up virtuosic; every work here grips you with the force of Oehlen's faith in painting, in spite of himself. Through Dec. 20. (Skarstedt, 20 E. 79th St. 212-737-2060.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Brian Finke

Following series on football players, construction workers, and flight attendants, the Brooklyn-based photographer turned his attention to the U.S. Marshals. Finke's pictures, taken all over the country, document both sides of the law, but, whether we're looking at Baltimore, Las Vegas, or Houston, the mood remains the same: restrained and reportorial. Like the marshals themselves, Finke was collecting evidence, and his images of uniformed officers climbing a tenement fire escape

or wading into a sea of kudzu are as matter-of-fact as his still-life of a bundle of dynamite. Through Dec. 20. (Clamp Art, 531 W. 25th St. 646-230-0020.)

Martin Puryear

A quietly victorious show from one of the country's most thoughtful and meticulous sculptors. Puryear's new works, made of cast iron or hardwood, all start from a single shape: a soft cone whose apex curves into itself. The leitmotif derives from the Phrygian cap worn by revolutionaries in France and Haiti, subtly inflecting the abstract forms of Puryear's art with themes of Enlightenment virtue and black liberation. The largest sculpture here, made of red-painted cedar, elegantly tapers from its oval base to its drooping nose, an icon of craftsmanship and inspiring dignity. Through Jan. 10. (Marks, 502 and 522 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200.)

Michelle Stuart

These elliptical visual essays were constructed from reproduced photographs, some of them found and some of them taken by Stuart herself. Arranged in grids of as many as seventy individually framed elements, the images are often as indistinct as fading memories. Stuart is more interested in impressions than in specifics; even when a piece has an apparent theme (Paris, the South Seas, the cosmos), it tends to dissolve into dreamy free association. If the smaller pieces are poetic, the larger ones are cinematic (the show as a whole is called "Silent Movies"). One great, sprawling montage teeters between creation and destruction—from a nebula to a volcanic eruption to the mushroom cloud of an A-bomb. Through Dec. 20. (Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-255-8450.)

Lynette Yeang-Boakye

The young British realist fills two galleries with confident paintings, all featuring loose, incomplete brushwork and dark backgrounds that contrast by mere degrees with the skin of her subjects. Yeang-Boakye is not precisely a portraitist; her figures are figments of her imagination, although the fact can be hard to grasp in the vivid presence of smiling men in green and red tank tops, or the woman in a floral dress lounging in an armchair. Yeang-Boakye has created a rich vein of iconography, which simultaneously critiques and revels in the conventions of European painting. But she seems disinclined to make full use of her own gift, and one wonders what heights she could reach if she'd just slow down. Through Jan. 10. (Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 212-645-1701; 524 W. 24th St. 212-337-3372.)