

# What to See in New York Galleries This Week

By Roberta Smith, Will Heinrich, Karen Rosenberg and Martha Schwendener

Oct. 20, 2016

## Tomoo Gokita

### ‘Out of Sight’

*Mary Boone Gallery  
541 West 24th Street, Chelsea  
Through Oct. 29*

Tomoo Gokita, a polymath of drawing mediums and styles, turned to painting in 2005, basing his images on found photographs and working exclusively in the sharp whites, velvety blacks and myriad grays of gouache. They pack an unsettling visual punch.

In “Out of Sight,” at Mary Boone, the paintings’ neon glow and louche, vintage feel evoke the work of the Pop outlier Ed Paschke (1939-2004). Subjects include a pair of Playboy bunnies; nuclear families; couples out for the evening; a send-up of Manet’s “Olympia”; and “Madam,” a woman in a strapless, kaleidoscopically patterned cocktail dress. Faces are often disturbingly “out of sight,” masked with shaded curved visors suggestive of astronauts’ gear. They dehumanize, yet real emotions seep around their edges.

The paintings’ surfaces look seamlessly perfect at first, but on closer examination appear to have been quickly, almost loosely, made, which adds a sense of economy and verve. Some have strange distortions. The clumsy hands and feet of the man, two women and baby in “Another Happy Thought,” a kind of Adoration-picnic scene, recall children’s drawings. Others have expert details: The shiny curls and bouffant hairdos reflect the artist’s attention to sign painting.

In “I Don’t Like Karaoke,” a stiff, dowdy man — whose boxy suit and face seems to predate that form of entertainment — pulls back as a woman plies him with a hand mike. Her face is a large black mask, whose tiny eyes recall African sculpture and an artist under its influence, Modigliani.

With their outdated glamour, eerie glow, ambiguous emotions and descriptive quirks, these paintings are undeniably rich. I’d like them better if Mr. Gokita masked his men as often as he does his women.

ROBERTA SMITH



“All in All” (2016) by Arlene Shechet, part of her show “Turn Up the Bass” at Sikkema Jenkins & Company. Arlene Shechet; Phoebe d’Heurle, Sikkema Jenkins & Company, New York

## Arlene Shechet

### ‘Turn Up the Bass’

*Sikkema Jenkins & Company*  
*530 West 22nd Street, Chelsea*  
*Through Nov. 12*

This year, Arlene Shechet staged an unprecedented intervention at the Frick Collection, for which she made work in Germany’s venerable Meissen ceramics factory to be displayed alongside a collection of antique china from the same place.

But that will be up until next spring. What you should see first is “Turn Up the Bass” at Sikkema Jenkins. For her entertainingly inventive if not quite next-level show, this New York-born sculptor used wood collected from around her Woodstock studio and a special clay she developed

that barely shrinks when fired.

The wood is hewed into rough, chunky blocks, sometimes painted, sometimes not. The clay is impressed against these blocks or else modeled into shims, wedges, tubes or vaguely internal-organ-like sacs before being stippled with welts of white or yellow glaze. Using these off-kilter constituent parts, Ms. Shechet has constructed what amount to 18 diagrams of cognitive dissonance — or of just how complicated the world is.

“All in All,” for example, a 5-foot-tall stack of wood and clay pieces, is like a small monument to the fear of falling down. From one side extends a long clay tube, like Mr. Magoo’s cane; and on the topmost block, just close enough to the edge to make you nervous, sits another small cylinder of mottled clay, this one about the size of a pencil case. The whole thing seems about to fall over in every direction, but it’s not going anywhere.

WILL HEINRICH



An installation view of Lucky DeBellevue’s “Assignment,” at the Kai Matsumiya gallery.  
Lucky DeBellevue and Kai Matsumiya Fine Arts Gallery

## Lucky DeBellevue

### ‘Assignment’

*Kai Matsumiya  
153½ Stanton Street  
Lower East Side  
Through Nov. 5*

To be an artist with gallery representation in 2016 is to face unrelenting demand for new work, as dealers require fresh material for each one of the year’s many fairs. In his latest solo show, a quirky compendium of processy drawings from the past 20 years and new paintings based on clocks and date-stamped photographs, the painter and sculptor Lucky DeBellevue takes a

philosophical and self-scrutinizing look at this pressure to produce. (That, as the show's news release notes, may come from institutions and nonprofit spaces as well as the commercial sphere.) The results engender some sympathy for overworked artists, but come across as an epic fit of procrastination.

About 400 of Mr. DeBellevue's sketches, jottings and proposals — mostly relating to works that were never realized — paper the walls of the narrow gallery. Some are renderings of his signature sculptures of twisted pipe-cleaners; others appear to be installation diagrams or studio-wall mantras ("Art is all over"; "Anything can happen anywhere"). A couple of variations on Mr. DeBellevue's name contribute to the impression of a gifted but bored student doodling during a lecture.

So do the paintings, which mimic round-faced clocks and hang high on the wall as they would in a classroom. Another series of "time-based works" (as Mr. DeBellevue calls them) consists of rectangular panels evoking shadowy surveillance footage or aerial landscapes and bearing bright-orange, faux-digital time signatures. Mr. DeBellevue may be trying to conjure a brooding, Nauman-esque vision of the artist's life, with lots of productive puttering and vacillating in the studio. But you sense that his inspiration comes more from interaction with materials (like the pistachio shells and plaid plastic bags that make up another, more promising group of paintings) than from 3 a.m. ruminations.

KAREN ROSENBERG



Taraneh Fazeli's and Sick Time With Canaries's "Two Stage Transfer Drawing," included in "Wound: Mending Time and Attention" at 41 Cooper Gallery.  
Marget Long and the Cooper Union; courtesy of the artist

'Wound'

'Mending Time and Attention'

*41 Cooper Gallery*

*41 Cooper Square, East Village*

*Through Nov. 11*

Contemporary art is better known for critiquing situations rather than offering tangible solutions. Several current shows have sought to reverse this tendency, however. A. L. Steiner, an activist about art and labor issues, persuaded Koenig & Clinton to shorten its working hours during the run of her show, while Simon Denny at Friedrich Petzel proposes using Bitcoin-type currencies to create a more equitable world economy. Now comes “Wound: Mending Time and Attention” at Cooper Union, an exhibition and study center conceived by Caroline Woolard and organized by Stamatina Gregory, which offers remedies for repairing overworked psyches and models for building healthier communication.

Objects in the show are called tools, and include a 1962 Yoko Ono proposal with instructions to carry on a dialogue composed entirely of questions, hence, an open-ended exchange in which no one has the answers. Also here is Paul Ryan and Luis Berríos-Negrón’s “Rose Window” (2010-12), a handwoven diagram inspired by cybernetic theory that offers another prototype for communication. A host of free workshops range from Taraneh Fazeli’s “Calling In Sick,” focused on health, to Project 404’s tutorial on mindful smartphone use.

The tools and training techniques are wildly experimental. (I participated in the Order of the Third Bird’s fun and supremely geeky three-hour protocol for looking at art objects and a short but profound session with the longtime artist-shaman Linda Montano.) But “Wound” also shows how the art world’s breakneck schedule of exhibitions, fairs and biennials undercuts the ability of socially engaged artists to develop long-term strategies and practices. In this sense, the project works within the time-bound exhibition system while pushing back against it.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER

*Correction: October 25, 2016*

*A picture caption on Friday with an art review of “Wound: Mending Time and Attention,” at 41 Cooper Gallery, misstated the title of a work shown and carried an erroneous credit. The work is “Two Stage Transfer Drawing” by Taraneh Fazeli and Sick Time With Canaries — not “Sick Time With Canaries” by Ms. Faneli. The picture is from Marget Long and the Cooper Union, courtesy of the artist; the Murray Guy Gallery was erroneously included in the credit.*

A version of this article appears in print on October 21, 2016, on Page C22 of the New York edition with the headline: Art in Review