

MARC STRAUS
NEW YORK

Galerie

Six Must-See
Figurative Painting
Shows in New York

by PAUL LASTER

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While figuration in painting is nothing new (the first instances appeared tens of thousands of years ago on cave walls), the way artists use it is constantly evolving. And at the moment, it's definitely in the air. Rounding up New York gallery shows by a group of living painters who prefer representation to abstraction, we take you around town—from Midtown and Chelsea to the Flower District and the Lower East Side—to catch six of the best practitioners of figurative painting working today.

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Paul Pretzer

[Marc Straus](#), 299 Grand Street

Through March 31, 2019

Referencing well-known Renaissance paintings, Paul Pretzer's works depict classical characters in surreal situations. Fruits and vegetables levitate over the headless bodies of friars and shirtless men caress porcupines and rabbits, while a bearded man in a cape and white underpants transports a mouse by its tail. Using traditional painting techniques, Pretzer casts his characters in ritualistic poses, but turns the outcome on its head with visionary riffs on historical genres. Primarily portraits, the hybrid scenes seem to be as much about still lifes as they are about people. Revealing the artist's black humor is a painting of an apple carved with a smiling face and balanced atop a human skull.

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