

What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in October

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This week in Newly Reviewed, Travis Diehl covers Samuel Hindolo’s bohemian atmospheres, Kristin Walsh’s shiny engines and Janiva Ellis’s cataclysm and pop.

SOHO

Janiva Ellis

Through Oct. 26. 47 Canal, 59 Wooster Street, 2nd Floor, Manhattan; 646-415-7712, 47canal.us.



Janiva Ellis, “Primitive Prophecy,” 2024, oil on canvas. via Janiva Ellis and 47 Canal, New York; Photo by Joerg Lohse

The six new paintings in Janiva Ellis's show "Stacked Plot" present palimpsests of cataclysm and pop. Churning compositions mix hyper-contemporary memes with fragments of arch masterworks, juxtaposing sketchy, psychedelic stutters of figures, faces and buildings. The panoramic "Primitive Prophecy," reminiscent of socialist murals, depicts a ghostly orchestra rushing from an exploding city rendered in brushy warm grays that recall the gravy palette of Courbet.

To the right is a jagged jolt of color, a figure standing on a globe in a royal blue pantsuit, with Cheshire cat teeth and bangs blown back, superimposed on the chaos like a meteorologist on a green screen. A girlboss, politician or pundit, the figure seems oblivious, distant from the suffering on their backdrop — or maybe simply glad to seem oblivious.

Another canvas, "Girl," deepens these bitter vibes. Here it's a so-called Stacey — a femme meme queen, blond-haired and sheathed in pink — who provides an incongruous smash of color beside the brown ruin. A trashed viola and a pair of high-heeled legs lie in a nearby pile of debris. High culture meets base destruction.

Vertigo of a more directly political sort shows up in "20-24," a murky canvas channeling Goya's black period. The title nods to the current presidential term, but the piece seems encrusted with most of human history. The darkness is so thick that you have to look sideways to see a rudimentary face, drawn in matte paint on the bleak, glossy ground.