

Some Shows for Escape, Some for Introspection

When the dog days arrive, many New York art galleries put their solo acts on ice and turn their exhibition spaces into pluralistic laboratories to test new

ART REVIEW

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talent and experiment with cool ideas. If you can stand the heat, it is a great time to be out looking at contemporary art.

An unscientific and incomplete survey of group shows already open — more openings will follow after the holiday weekend — finds a retiring, introspective mood. It looks as if the art world had gone into retreat from the endless barrage of bad news coming from the world at large.

The one politically motivated exhibition, at Zwirner & Wirth, is tellingly called “Quiet Politics.” Elsewhere, titles like “I Won’t Grow Up” (at Cheim & Read) and “Deep Comedy” (Marian Goodman) suggest escapist urges. Shows with enigmatic titles like “Not So Subtle Subtitle” (Casey Kaplan) and “Crop Rotation” (Marianne Boesky) reflect the obscurely personal tastes of their curators. “Retrospective” (Gagosian) takes an art historical turn, and “The Stranger” (Yvon Lambert) finds its inspiration in the nihilistic novel by Albert Camus.

ZWIRNER & WIRTH More elegant than inflammatory, “Quiet Politics” presents works expressing political impulses in understated ways. “‘Untitled’ Fear” by Felix Gonzalez-Torres is an inscrutable Minimalist box made of blue-tinted mirrors. David Hammons’s sumptuous rendition of the African-American flag — the United States flag but in black, red and green — is as laconic as it is suggestive. Among other possibilities, it might be a slyly subversive rejoinder to Jasper Johns’s flag paintings.

Walid Raad’s fictitious video showing sunsets supposedly recorded by a Lebanese surveillance-camera operator has an affecting, elegiac feeling, and Michael Brown’s stainless-steel simulation of a cracked mirror freezes an act of anarchic rage into a lovely, spidery web.

An Art Lover’s Summer Guide

ADAM BAUMGOLD “Road Works,” through Aug. 15 at 74 East 79th Street, Manhattan, (212) 861-7338, adambaumgoldgallery.com.

MARIANNE BOESKY “Crop Rotation,” through Aug. 15 at 509 West 24th Street, Chelsea, (212) 680-9889, marianneboeskygallery.com.

CHEIM & READ “I Won’t Grow Up,” through Aug. 29 at 547 West 25th Street, Chelsea, (212) 242-7727, cheimread.com.

GAGOSIAN GALLERY “Retrospective,” through Aug. 22 at 522 West 21st Street, Chelsea, (212) 741-1717, gagosian.com.

MARIAN GOODMAN “Deep Comedy,” through July 30 at 24 West 57th Street, Manhattan, (212) 977-7160, mariangoodman.com.

CASEY KAPLAN “Not So Subtle Subtitle,” through July 31 at 525 West 21st Street, Chelsea, (212) 645-7335, caseykaplangallery.com.

YVON LAMBERT “The Stranger,” through July 31 at 550 West 21st Street, Chelsea, (212) 242-3611, yvon-lambert.com.

ZWIRNER & WIRTH “Quiet Politics,” through Aug. 29 at 32 East 69th Street, Manhattan, (212) 517-8677, zwirnerandwirth.com.

CHEIM & READ Organized by the collector Beth Rudin DeWoody and the artist Donald Baechler, “I Won’t Grow Up” presents almost 60 pieces that look as if they were made by or for children, created by more than 30 artists. Why so many artists these days — including, here, Jeff Koons, Louise Bourgeois, Takashi Murakami, Jake and Dinos Chapman and Mike Kelley — should be so preoccupied by child-likeness remains unexplained, but it is an entertaining show.

Mark Fox’s video “Nutzilla,” in which a giant Mr. Peanut violently attacks the Cincinnati Art Museum, is hilarious. George Stoll’s hand-made, child-size costumes, one a skeleton and the other a clown, are delicately evocative. And Tim Liddy’s painted simulation of an old Twister game box is an extraordinary feat of trompe l’oeil realism.