

# DAVID NOLAN **NEW YORK**

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## **Art review**

### **Jim Nutt, “Trim and Other Works: 1967–2010”**

A founder of Chicago’s Hairy Who group presents a little bit of his past and his present.

By Paul Laster

A Pop artist with a Surrealistic bent, Jim Nutt is widely recognized as a founding member of the Hairy Who, a group of artists who were part of the Chicago Imagists movement of the 1960s and '70s. Influenced by cartoons and advertisements, Nutt started out making comical and erotically charged paintings and drawings that wryly commented on the human condition. For his third solo show at David Nolan Gallery, the artist presents eight offbeat works from his early career, plus ten peculiar portraits from the past decade of imaginary women.

*Coursing* (circa 1966)—portraying a funky female lacing up her corset while spewing smoke from a cigar or cigarette—is a classic example of Nutt’s sensibility. A tennis shoe grows out of this pinup princess’s shoulder; her long, flowing hair wraps behind her, creating tongue and tonsil shapes; and her knees reveal fleshy, feminine faces and torsos in profile. Painted on the wall-facing side of a Plexiglas sheet, the piece exhibits the part-insider, part-outsider nature that is an important characteristic of all of Nutt’s work.

Newer paintings, such as *Pin*, *Plumb* and *Trim*, distort female portraiture in uncanny ways. Shifting planes and patterns define faces filled with sublimated sexual forms; their large angular noses and sculptural hairdos are especially notable for their visual innuendo. Equally, Nutt’s drawings, which dominate the show, pack a powerful punch, illustrating the delicate, sensuous line that keeps the artist’s work sublime.