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Art Review



Alexander Ross, *Untitled*

“Morphological Mutiny: Steve DiBenedetto, Alexander Ross and James Siena”

David Nolan, through Jan 23

Seen separately, the paintings and drawings of Steve DiBenedetto, Alexander Ross and James Siena have nothing in common. DiBenedetto creates a furiously psychedelic iconography that’s as striking for its visual overload as for its grotesque color palette. Ross makes eye-popping microbiological compositions based on real-life clay models. Siena is known for his methodical, mazy geometric abstractions. But in this ingenious group show, the three artists’ works effortlessly coalesce.

“Morphological Mutiny” is in fact an apt description for the successful new direction each has undertaken. The most radical transformation can be found in the miniature drawings by Siena, who, in the past couple of years, has seemed to come unhinged, as if a valve has been loosened. The constrained, algorithm-obsessed mark-maker of yore has given way to a nutty fashioner of mutant figurative imagery. Ross’s introduction of a sinewy mass dangling from the heavens alludes to extraterrestrial encroachment, infusing his efforts with a disturbingly foreboding quality. Meanwhile, DiBenedetto appears to be headed in a somewhat opposite direction, restraining the hyperactive tendencies in his pieces, while allowing their Terry Winters–like webs and modernist structures to serve as stand-alone representations of mankind’s future annihilation (by squids, no less).

The best part is that each artist has staged his own mutiny without nudging the others out. Their pursuits stay distinct while appearing to draw closer to one another. —*Nana Asfour*