

Time Out

New York

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Yael Bartana

INVESTIGATES THE SOCIETY AND POLITICS OF HER NATIVE ISRAEL IN FIVE VIDEOS, BOTH PLAYFUL AND SERIOUS, IN HER FIRST SOLO MUSEUM SHOW IN NEW YORK. THROUGH JANUARY 19

P.S.1 MOMA

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HAIA BARTANA, TREMORING TIME, 2004, MIXED MEDIA, PAL, COLOR, SOUND. COURTESY OF ANNE F. KELLY GALLERY BY AMSTERDAM, SOMMER CONTEMPORARY AND THE ARCADE AND THE ARCADE

Time Out New York

Judith Eisler, "I Don't Believe It. I Won't Let It Happen"

★★★★★

Cohan and Leslie, through Nov 15
(see Chelsea)

Judith Eisler bases her paintings on photos of movies playing on her TV set or computer screen, choosing moments when the image seems to break down into something unrecognizable. In the diptych *Double Alain*, for example, she stacks two views of a backlit Alain Delon riding away on an unseen motorcycle, one canvas atop the other like frames in a film. Fluid brushstrokes render bright flashes and streaks of white that both define and dissolve the figure in an atmospheric haze, while a halo of blurred red lights glows in the upper left corner.

Three large canvases titled *Johnny* depict three instants from a YouTube clip of Johnny Thunders, former lead guitarist for the New York Dolls. Closely sequenced, the pictures of him in profile, drinking from a bottle, disintegrate into near abstraction: Modulated areas read half as solarized film, half as amoebic sculpture. A palette of smoky gray and indigo further



marks the degradation of the images translated from black-and-white footage to Flash file to snapshot to painting. The artist's touch approximates the appearance of spilled ink or deposited soot.

In *James*, we see the top of actor James Fox's head in the movie *Performance* as he looks over his shoulder, face buried in shadow. A crimson background sets off his closely cropped blond hair and the lovely salmon-pink passages of his arms and shoulders, simultaneously solidly volumetric and as immaterial as a cloud. Gorgeously, Eisler makes paint capture the way film records form while obliterating it.

—Joseph R. Wolin

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Don't Forget: Photography, 1998. Collection of the Estate of Fritz Scholder.

Liza Lou

★★★★★

L&M Arts, through Nov 15;
Lever House Lobby Gallery,
through Nov 29 (both, see Uptown)

In her first New York solo show since 2002, when she won a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant and exhibited her life-size-trailer-turned-film-noir-set at Deitch Projects, Liza Lou triumphantly steps back into the limelight. Seventeen elaborate sculptures, reliefs and works on paper take up space at L&M Arts, while a new monumental sculpture can be found at Lever House. What's clear from this prodigious output is that while Lou retains her signature mode of overlaying everyday objects with glass beads, her over-the-top decorative treatment has been replaced by a more minimal and socially engaged aesthetic.

Central to this transformation is *Security Fence*, an eight-by-eight-foot chain-link cage, topped with razor wire and lavishly covered with individual silver beads. Prominently displayed in its own room, it evokes the threat of violence and confinement even as it dazzles the eye. Similarly, *Maximum Security Fence*—another beaded enclosure, nearly three times larger and shaped like a cross—confidently commands



the Lever House lobby, bringing a taste of Guantánamo to Park Avenue.

While the works at L&M also include two mysterious well-like structures (one black and one white, each woven from a continuous mile of bead-adorned cotton) and a big barricade seductively covered in 24-karat gold-plated beads, the real surprise is the series of large, densely beaded reliefs. Based on Islamic prayer rugs and titled after U.S. military strategies in Iraq, they most completely signal Lou's new direction, in which she wraps the iron fist of political commentary in a velvet glove of luxury. —Paul Laster