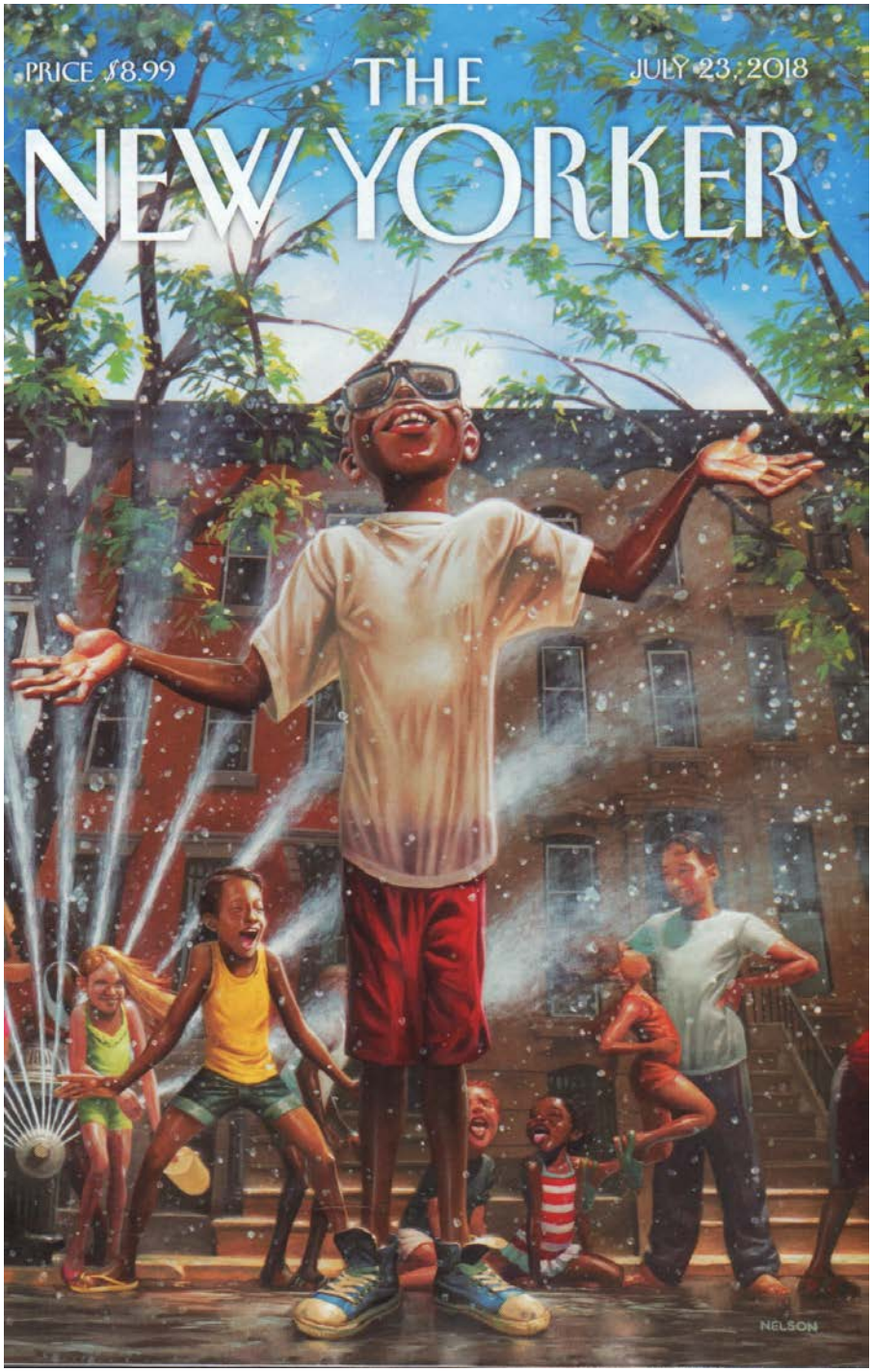
Swiss Institute /
Contemporary Art

38 St. Marks Pl
New York, NY 10003

info@swissinstitute.net
swissinstitute.net

Tel +1 212 925 2035
Fax +1 212 925 2040

NEW YORKER
38 ST MARKS PL
July 23, 2018



ART

"Canova's George Washington"
Frick Collection

"I wasn't aware that was something a person could do," trills King George III, in "Hamilton," on learning that George Washington will give up the helm of the United States. In 1816, North Carolina commissioned Europe's leading sculptor, Antonio Canova, to memorialize the event. The marble carving perished in a fire in 1831; the Frick borrows the artist's full-scale plaster version from Italy for this richly detailed historical show. The President sits in imperial Roman garb—at the suggestion of Thomas Jefferson—and gazes into space, like a poet seeking inspiration, as he starts to compose his Farewell Address. The rendering, by a neoclassical master overdue for reappraisal, is a tad daffily idealized, but also beautiful and, perhaps, stirring. As on Broadway recently, we remember a man who earned immense authority and gave it away for the sake of a newfangled nation.—*Peter Schjeldahl (Through Sept. 23.)*

"Mary Corse: A Survey in Light"
Whitney Museum

The industrial precision of Corse's "light paintings," from the mid-nineteen-sixties—plexiglass illuminated by fluorescent tubes—are in tune with the West Coast Light and Space movement of the same period. But, later that decade, she achieved a more sensuous quality by using flickering argon light, as seen here in the apparitional "Untitled (Space + Electric Light)." Suspended invisibly from the ceiling and powered wirelessly through an electromagnetic field with a concealed Tesla coil, the feat of painterly engineering is the subtle centerpiece of this retrospective, which is, remarkably, Corse's first solo museum exhibition. In 1968, while driving in Malibu at night, Corse realized that the reflective glass microspheres used to paint lines on roads held untapped potential, and the tiny beads became the defining material of her career-spanning "White Light" series: big color-field paintings that appear to morph with the slightest shift of vantage point, their brushstrokes emerging and disappearing in satiny expanses that abut crisp panels of matte acrylic paint. These shimmering works are impossible to capture in photographs—a breathtaking antidote to Instagram bait.—*Johanna Fateman (Through Nov. 25.)*

Martha Diamond
Presenhuber

DOWNTOWN The veteran abstracter of Manhattan cityscapes—long esteemed by her fellow-artists and deserving of wider fame—shows intimately grand paintings from the past two decades. Working fast and loose—she is right-handed but, to avert facility, paints with her left—Diamond romances the town in darting and slashing strokes. Her buildings, seen as if from the street, are as zestfully urbane as the perambulatory poems of Frank O'Hara. Most striking is a suite of vertical canvases entitled "New York with Purple," each eight feet tall and four feet wide, which vary the colors of a skyscraper against a cloud-raddled sky. Their dynamic is like a cross between John Marin's watercolors of the city and Monet's "Rouen Cathedrals": giddily celebratory and drunk on daylight.—*P.S. (Through July 28.)*

JR
Galerie Perrotin

DOWNTOWN The French street artist, who won't reveal his birth name, has won international renown as a tech-canny paladin of humanistic public art; in the U.S., he's best known for a billboard-size photograph of a Mexican toddler, which peered over a border wall in California, in 2017. This large show presents portable variants of several recent projects (the aforementioned included). They utilize glass and big motorized sculptures: electric trains, tiered on walls, shuttle back and forth at seemingly random intervals, until they pause in alignments that reveal a grainy photograph of gazing eyes, or an immense container ship with cranes that rearrange the containers to the same effect. The art's political pathos registers rather limply, as against the fascination of the whiz-bang gimmickry—the medium trounces the message. Everything looks very expensive.—*P.S. (Through Aug. 17.)*

"Readymades Belong to Everyone"
Swiss Institute

DOWNTOWN The Swiss Institute inaugurates its elegant new digs—three floors and a roof garden, in a former bank on St. Mark's Pl.—with a foray in what might be termed radical gemütlichkeit. This peculiarly tidy clutter of off-kilter works by more than fifty international artists, architects, and collectives includes a big, freestanding cut-out photograph of a fire engine, a Kewpie doll paired with a cheese grater, a video of lunch at a Subway sandwich shop, a sinister besuited mannequin with a Pinocchio nose, a huge supine heart shape composed of wooden blocks painted purple, and many other mildly roguish divertissements. It's like a crowded party of inanimate sophisticates. The mannerly effect is enhanced, amusingly, by the Institute's location on a street of youth-misspending bars, tattoo

AT THE GALLERIES

© JACK SMITH ARCHIVE / COURTESY GLADSTONE GALLERY, NEW YORK AND BRUSSELS

There is more to Jack Smith than "Flaming Creatures," the pangender fever dream of a B movie he directed in 1963, which drew obscenity charges (eventually dropped) and inspired Susan Sontag to write "Notes on Camp." For the next twenty-five years, the obstreperous artist, who died of AIDS-related pneumonia in 1989, worked in decreasingly stable conditions, making films, slide shows, and performances of exquisitely pointed artifice, in which extravagantly gowned landlords have lobster claws instead of hands and a crumbling loft is the apotheosis of glamour. It's impossible to imagine so much of the culture we still call "downtown"—from Nan Goldin's "Ballad of Sexual Dependency" to "RuPaul's Drag Race"—without Smith's sweet, bitter genius. Artists Space bids farewell to its (fittingly) provisional gallery, before relocating to a permanent home one block south, with the exhibition **"Jack Smith: Art Crust of Spiritual Oasis,"** through Sept. 9.—*Andrea K. Scott*