

# Pop Erotica and 8 Centuries of Fantasy: NYC's Fall Gallery Season Is Its Best in Years

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Paddy Johnson

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With recent reports of stagnant to slow arts industry growth and a shift to nearly 50 percent of all sales coming from fairs (costly ventures themselves to take part in), art galleries are going to need more than just a reduction in renting space at those fairs to stay afloat. One strategy is

simply to reduce their reliance on the events in general by launching higher caliber exhibitions that can't be produced in cramped, temporary booths. Luring the collectors in with museum quality shows seems to be a very new tactic on the part of dealers.

As if on cue, Chelsea galleries (and museums too, for that matter) have given us a better fall season than we've seen in years. In fact, there's so much good work on view, I actually found myself wondering how I was going to list it all. That's not a bad problem to have, but it gives gallery goers even more ground to cover than usual. Time to get to it. Here's the best of New York's fall 2018 gallery season.

## ADVERTISING



## David Zwirner, "Endless Enigma: Eight Centuries Of Fantastic Art"

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Let's start with the one show you absolutely shouldn't miss. Art just doesn't get any better than what's on view in Chelsea at David Zwirner's "Endless Enigma: Eight Centuries of Fantastic Art" (through Oct 27), an exhibition that brings together three floors of psychologically charged artwork from historical giants such as Titian, Hieronymous Bosch and Francisco de Goya to contemporary masters like Louise Bourgeois and Sherrie Levine. It's hard to overstate the sheer ambition and impressiveness of the 800 years' worth of work curator Nicholas Hall brought together—much of which has been borrowed from museums and private collections. (In fact, it's so impressive, I overheard a collector in Chelsea gossiping that the gallery had borrowed works from the Louvre—a rumor dismissed as untrue by a press representative from Zwirner.)

Of the more than 60 works on display, most are vaguely unsettling. Near the entrance of the show, crowds swarmed around the famed 16th century painting, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, by a contemporary follower of Hieronymus Bosch. It pictures dozens of naked figures generally having a good time with strange beasts and flora. On a neighboring wall, two Lisa Yuskavage paintings turn heads. In one, a queen-like figure with cereal box-shaped breasts stares stoically into the void. In another, a crouching naked woman with a dog nose fully exposes her crotch. It's classic Yuskavage, seductively painted and simultaneously creepy.

That creep is everywhere in the exhibition. There's a 16th century gilded bronze clock-cum-chariot driven by a charioteer who looks like a clown, a Robert Gober flesh blob filling a laundry basket and a Francis Alÿs painting of a skeleton running away with his own detached forearm. Everything in this show is weird.