

Art & Object

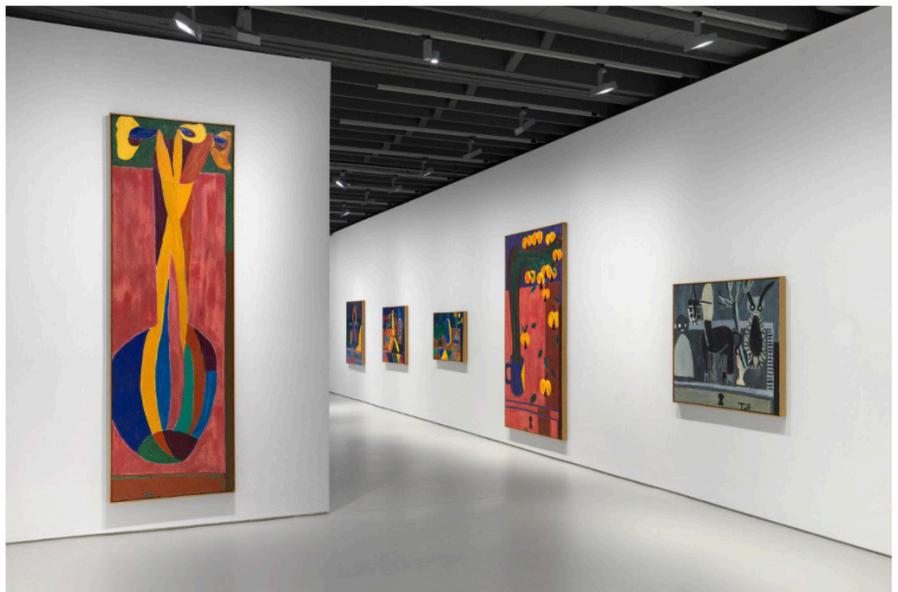
Reality Rendered Raw: 6 New York Solo Shows

GALLERY SEPTEMBER 25, 2020 PAUL LASTER

Over the past few years representational painting has been at the forefront of the gallery scene in both America and Europe. Although some artists prefer painting from life with a fine line, there are others who find a looser, rawer portrayal of reality more to their liking—and those are the artists we are focusing on today.

Rounding up six New York solo shows that highlight reality rendered raw, we take you around the town for a look at some of the best paintings and sculpture being made today.

A Tel Aviv-born Danish artist who lives and works in Copenhagen, Tal R has an encyclopedic knowledge of European modernism, which he playfully taps into when making his colorful paintings and sculptures. With more than a hundred one-person exhibitions worldwide since 1994, the artist is making his solo show debut with Anton Kern Gallery, after nine previous one-person outings in New York.



COURTESY ANTON KERN GALLERY

Installation view, *Tal R: Boy Walking and Cinnamon: Sculptures and Paintings*, Anton Kern Gallery, New York.

Presenting 15 recent, large-scale still life paintings and 12 bronze sculptures, Tal R turns the first two floors of the dynamically designed gallery into a lively playground of color and form. Rendered in a crude, childlike manner akin to the work of an Outsider artist, his flatly composed paintings feature toys on tabletops, flowers in vessels, and birds in cages. Inspired by the soul-searching short stories of Polish writer Bruno Schultz that were compiled



COURTESY ANTON KERN GALLERY

Tal R, *Untitled Flowers*, 2020.

into the 1934 book *The Cinnamon Shops*, the introspective paintings take us back in time—both in the objects portrayed, which have a straightforward, folksy quality to them, and the simple, color-saturated depictions of the still life subjects and their semi-abstract settings.

People and animals are the point of departure for the larger-than-life bronzes. Capturing such imaginary characters as a headless drummer boy, a circular-winged bat, and Copenhagen's celebrated harbor statue of the little mermaid from Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale in mashed-together clumps of hand-modeled clay, the artist eternally preserves these random relics in the high-art material of bronze. Speaking about the sculptures on a video walkthrough of the show, Tal R proclaimed "...they are all, somehow, walking from somewhere that has no language—where all the words that we have in our pockets are difficult to pull up—and I think that's what art should be about, something that starts where language stops."



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