

Artforum

January 31, 2019

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS



Sayre Gomez, *Behind Door #9*, 2018, acrylic- and urethane-based paints on canvas over panel, 84 x 120".

NEW YORK

"Make Believe"

MAGENTA PLAINS

94 Allen St

January 13–February 17

"Ladies and gentleman, by way of introduction, this is a film about trickery and fraud, about lies," purrs [Orson Welles](#) in *F for Fake*, his 1973 paean to art as illusion and the nebulous nature of authenticity. Films, he suggests, are elaborate sleight-of-hand

deceptions, but their fictions can ring truer than reality. "Make Believe," a selection of works spanning more than six decades and deftly curated by [Bruce W. Ferguson](#), takes artifice and cinematic alchemy as its themes.

[Meg Cranston](#)'s installation based on a performance, *Women Who Would Play Me If I Paid Them (Partial Facsimile)*, 1994, presents the headshots and tragicomic résumés of actors who responded to her casting call for a surrogate. (One eager hopeful lists "badminton," "office machines," and "forklift driving" among several dozen "special skills.") The project probes the strange business of pretending to be someone else, in a compelling if ethically murky manner that recalls [Sophie Calle](#). *Behind Door #9*, 2018, a life-size trompe-l'oeil painting of a derelict deli by [Sayre Gomez](#), could pass for an actual facade, complete with lovingly rendered gray sticker residue on the glass. A sun-bleached image of a tropical bay, a faded fantasy, fills the storefront window. The work, with its game-show title, evokes luck, longing, and the market for escapism. In *Master Study: Snow White Clapping*, 2018, [Elliott Jamal Robbins](#) superimposes a cartoony black child over the Disney princess. Whether the animation effectively employs, as the press release claims, "a slapstick style to explore the intersection of societal readings of black and queer identity" is questionable, but its hypnotic loops do make one aware of one's own passivity as a viewer. *The Six Minute Drown*, 1977, a seven-inch record by the late [Jack Goldstein](#), delivers desperate splashes, gulps, and splutters. At first the sounds cue pathos, but one soon detects the artificiality of this sonic death. Certain effects are repeated; the choking is overdone. For millennia, audiences have sought the catharsis of simulated trauma in art. Vicarious tragedies are therapeutic, and so is this exhibition. For those viewers suffering from heightened exposure to scatterbrained group shows, this elegant, discerning effort is an antidote.

—[Zoë Lescaze](#)

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The New York Times

January 30, 2019

The New York Times

What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

Erica Baum's photographs of sewing patterns; Leah Guadagnoli's sculptural paintings; Anna Plesset and Fred and Daniel Terna reckon with loss; 'Make Believe' takes on the movies.

'Make Believe'

Through Feb. 17. Magenta Plains, 94 Allen Street, Manhattan; 917-388-2464, magentaplains.com.



Left, Kerry Tribe's "Ceiling Light (Monstera deliciosa)," from 2018, modified lighting equipment and potted plant; and right, Sayre Gomez's "Behind Door #9" (2018), acrylic and urethane-based paints on canvas over panel. Magenta Plains

Works by 11 artists, in a variety of media, all have something to do with the movies, in "[Make Believe](#)," curated by Bruce W. Ferguson at Magenta Plains. In nearly every case, some ordinary aspect of filmmaking, like set design, takes on a weirdly unnerving quality when isolated from its context and presented in a gallery.

Jennifer Bolande's plywood-patterned curtains in the gallery's front windows and Sayre Gomez's life-size trompe l'oeil storefront, installed against the back wall, make you uncertain whether you've just stepped into a gallery or out of one. Then a large potted plant, installed by Kerry Tribe under an enormous ceiling lamp, draws your attention magnetically, only to rebuff it again just as quickly.

Two lush 1956 photographs taken by the movie star Yul Brynner, behind-the-scenes shots of "The King and I" and "The Ten Commandments," look as overproduced and artificial as the movies themselves, while Teresa Hubbard and Alexander Birchler's 2009 video, "Grand Paris Texas," is a master class in elliptical understatement. Comprised entirely of interviews with residents of Paris, Texas, it circles around their relationships to the movies — to the town's decaying theater, to Wim Wenders's "Paris, Texas" — to expose the medium's seductive power to falsify.

Brilliantly encapsulating the concurrent menace and pathos of American entertainment generally is Walter Robinson's "Strange Journey," a rough acrylic painting of a dark-eyed man and blond woman ripped from some forgotten noir poster: Instead of using canvas, Mr. Robinson painted them on a Smurf-themed bedsheet. *WILL HEINRICH*

Time Out New York

January 16, 2019

TimeOut NEW YORK ▾

The top five New York art shows this week

Check out our suggestions for the best art exhibitions you don't want to miss, including gallery openings and more

Photograph: Courtesy Ortuzar Projects

By Howard Halle | Posted: Wednesday January 16 2019

With New York's art scene being so prominent yet ever changing, you'll want to be sure to catch significant shows. *Time Out New York* rounds up the top five art exhibitions of the week, from offerings at the [best photography](#) and [art galleries in NYC](#) to shows at renowned institutions like the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), the [Museum of Modern Art](#) and the [Guggenheim](#).

Top 5 Monday, Jan 7–Sunday, Jan 13



Photograph: Courtesy Magenta Plains

Art, Contemporary art

“Make Believe”

📍 Magenta Plains, Midtown West 📅 Until Feb 17 2019

Eleven artists meditate on the notion of cinema, borrowing filmic tropes (“camera angles, props, casting, lighting and stage design”) to delve into the dichotomous nature of a medium where fiction and reality reside side by side. Jennifer Bolande, Jack Goldstein and Walter Robinson are among the contributors, along with Hollywood legend Yul Brynner, an avid photographer who often took pictures while on set.

[Read more](#)