

Art in America

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The Lookout: A Weekly Guide to Shows You Won't Want to Miss
aia staff 04/18/12

With an ever-growing number of galleries scattered around New York, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Where to begin? Here at A.i.A., we are always on the hunt for thought-provoking, clever and memorable shows that stand out in a crowded field. Below is a selection of current shows our team of editors can't stop talking about.

This week we check out Cordy Ryman's painted wood abstractions and sculptural installations at Dodge Gallery, Hilary Harkness's detailed, chaotic battleship paintings at the Flag Art Foundation, and new paintings and videos by Sadie Benning at Callicoon Fine Arts.

Sadie Benning at Callicoon Fine Arts, through May 12

Though Sadie Benning is better known as a filmmaker, she makes multi-part paintings, which draw your attention away from the two black-and-white videos installed in Callicoon's bright, narrow space. The surfaces of the compositions (one an angular blue and white, the other a swirling red and white) look almost leathery, or as if they were made of fondant. In reality, a combination of plaster, milk paint and acrylic on fiberboard imbues her works with a sculptural form and tactile finish.

Cordy Ryman at Dodge Gallery, through May 12

Painted wood—whether 2x4s or stacked blocks—is the backbone of Cordy Ryman's exhibition, his first with Dodge). The front room of "Adaptive Radiation" features mainly modestly sized wall-hung works: Ryman attaches pieces of wood together in squarish formations, and paints them with various types of pigment (acrylic, spray paint, enamel, etc.). In the gallery's lower level is a rough-hewn sculptural installation of wood blocks that spreads from the very top of the wall down onto the floor.

Susan Wides at Kim Foster, through Apr. 27

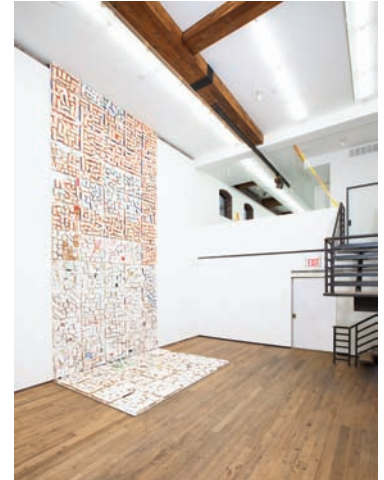
"All the Worlds" features nine large and mesmerizing panoramic photos that are the latest in Susan Wides's ongoing "Mannahatta" series. In these works, she documents New York City and environs using a distinctive manipulated lens technique that she was one of the first to popularize. Consistently disorienting and exhilarating, the images convey the crowded realities and unrealities of city life, from an Occupy Wall Street demonstration to tourists posing with a likeness of drag superstar RuPaul at Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum.

Soonja Han at De Buck Gallery, through May 11

For the past three decades this Korean-born artist has lived in Paris, where her studio is awash from floor to ceiling with her signature motif: bright circles—and multiple circles within circles—in myriad sizes and colors. Han's materials range from pencil on paper to acrylic on canvas to found objects such as jar lids, plates, coasters and Hula Hoops. Guest curators Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath have brought sections of the delightful piebald jumble to De Buck Gallery, where they are interspersed with contemplative, formally pure compositions that seem to hover on the walls like spiritual effusions.

Hilary Harkness at the Flag Art Foundation, through May 18

All hands on deck! This survey of Hilary Harkness's meticulously rendered battleship paintings of the past decade offers cutaway views inside cabins and other confines where all manner of nautical—and naughty—mayhem unfolds. Harkness here explores a fantasy realm, populated with countless small uniformed or nude schematic figures—mainly an all-female cast—where orgies are the norm, power struggles ensue and a new social order emerges.



Cordy Ryman, Installation view, DODGEgallery, 2013