

White Columns

6 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

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Daisy May Sheff's "Stiff and Tawny Wavelets," from 2021, at White Columns. Credit...
Daisy May Sheff

Gerald Jackson and Daisy May Sheff

Through May 15. White Columns, 91 Horatio Street, Manhattan, (212) 924-4212, whitecolumns.org.

In its pairings of large and small shows, White Columns has come up with some extraordinary combinations, but its present one is especially excellent. The larger exhibition reintroduces the veteran artist and poet Gerald Jackson, now in his mid-80s, whose work was fearlessly multimedia long before it became the thing to do. The smaller show, "A Mountain Girl With Skyblue Teeth," is the New York debut of a young painter, Daisy May Sheff, whose layered fantasies exude an overheated Fauvism of oranges, pinks, purples and greens populated by eccentric personages — all in a style best described as fluid-state Florine Stettheimer. Jackson's abstract paintings were featured last fall



Gerald Jackson, "Untitled." Fabric appliqué and spray paint on found clothing. Credit...
Marc Tatti

in an exhibition at Kenkeleba House, and will also figure in a show at Gordon Robichaux in the fall. The White Columns presentation examines his pervasive use of collage in two or three dimensions. Five large pieces alternate words, either red/black in one case or white/black in others, written in large letters on individual sheets of typing paper that are then glued into wrinkly grids. The words bounce in and out of focus, in seemingly alternating but actually unpredictable rhythms. Three imposing collages — two of which say "Divine Providence" — combine enlarged photocopies of magazine images (including portraits of the artist) with more vigorous color names as well as handwritten poems and motifs from Egyptian art.

The show's highlight consists of four jackets-pants ensemble that Jackson has unerringly embellished with stenciled images, paint, appliquéd embroideries or larger pieces of fabric, patterned or solid. Multicultural in their references and dazzling in their colors, these garments suggest a global sophistication. They are made for citizens of the world.

The complexity of Jackson's distinctive garments underscores the pieced-together nature of Sheff's larger compositions, with their accumulations of disparate objects, patterns, characters and scenes, nominally united by paint.

ROBERTA SMITH