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# 5 Must-See Gallery Shows: Maayan Strauss, Samuel T. Adams, and More

BY SCOTT INDRISEK | MAY 20, 2015



An installation view of Maayan Strauss's "I Love The Way You Use It" at Louis B. James.  
(Courtesy the artist )

## Maayan Strauss at Louis B. James, through June 21 (143b Orchard Street)

This Israeli artist was an architecture student before earning her MFA from Yale's photography program, so it's not surprising that her practice is hard to categorize. For a 2012 piece, she collaborated with the brand Kohler to create a [sculptural assemblage](#) of seven high-end sinks and marble (an interesting precursor to the DIS installation in the current New Museum Triennial). Strauss has also spent

weeks creating work as an embedded artist on a commercial shipping vessel, an experience that she's in the process of parlaying into an actual [residency program](#). For this exhibition in the L.E.S. gallery's basement space, she weds personal, poetic, occasionally eroticized photographs with a system of display borrowed from the Apple store. Visitors are encouraged to handle — and reorder — chunky slabs of MDF printed on both sides with various images: handwritten notes (“I Love The Way You Use This,” which doubles as the show's title); shirtless male selfies; the artist herself, bundled in bed. Throughout, the intimations of a narrative come into hazy focus — one that you're free to engage with and manipulate yourself.

### **Samuel T. Adams at Dutton, through May 31 (100 Gansevoort Street)**

Ever-resourceful gallerist Sonia Dutton was presented with an intriguing opportunity — the use of a hulking, former meat-processing plant directly across from the new Whitney Museum, coinciding with Frieze week — and she wisely took it. The space is a stunner in its own right, with sweeping views of New Jersey across the Hudson clashing with the walls' industrial grit (soaked in history and, in one case, with years of congealed animal fat). It's an impressive setting for these abstract works by Samuel T. Adams, made by sanding and squeezing water-diluted paint until it bleeds from one side of the canvas, settling into geometric forms created via a process that's a bit too complex to get into within this small space. Suffice it to say that the result is worth the effort. Geometric motifs (arrowheads, lines of squat bricks) repeat across occasionally shaped canvases, with Adams settling on a single color for each composition — a cool blue, a rusty maroon. (The way they shine here makes you really dread the day when this temporary exhibition space will morph into the inevitable Prada store.) An equally thrilling exhibition of paintings by Daniel Noonan runs alongside Adams's.



### **Ida Applebroog at Hauser & Wirth, through July 31 (511 West 18th Street)**

The New York-based artist presents a series of oversized portraits on Mylar which hang from the ceiling, creating an aggressive (and very nude) crowd for visitors to navigate. The barebones figures begin their life digitally — designed on the computer and then printed on the Mylar, and then altered and augmented by hand while the ink is still wet. This gallery of anonymous, genital-flaunting strangers is joined by the show's strangest and most effective work: a multi-panel depiction of nine topless women, wearing high-heels and practicing what's either a choreographed line dance or Fascist goosestep. Also on view: older cut-paper shadow-puppets that appear in an accompanying film.

### **Christine Rebet at Bureau, through June 14 (178 Norfolk Street)**

These ink-on-paper drawings celebrate brilliant color and the wobbly line; the compositions rest somewhere between Ellsworth Kelly's plant drawings and Mika Rottenberg's abstract enigmas. (The exhibition's title, “Paysage fautif,” a Duchamp painting incorporating semen.) Snippets of masks, machinery, and organic matter mingle in spare still lifes; the same imagery gets animated (and overlaid with gushes of explosive ink) in a related film, “In The Soldier's Head.”

### **Alex Katz at Gavin Brown's Enterprise, through June 13 (620 Greenwich Street)**

This show of huge landscapes put me in mind of a strange intersection between Charles Burchfield and Wolf Kahn. Houses are too small, trees are too big, skies are infiltrated by blue blobs that are either clouds or alien blimps, nature is just gleefully freaking out in the face of all boring laws of realism. Occasionally the cheery, popping palette turns bleak, as in a pair of paintings that offer nearly identical views of a night-drenched house: sinister, lonesome.

**ALSO WORTH SEEING:** Jessica Jackson Hutchins's experiments with ceramics, paint, and furniture at [Marianne Boesky](#), through June 6; Yoko Ono's wild, occasionally interactive [1961-70 survey](#) at MoMA; and the kinda-sorta-not-really-appointment-only "First Show Last Show," curated by Vito Schnabel — and widely lambasted for including seven white dudes of varying ages — staged on the ground floor of the famed 190 Bowery Building, through May 29.

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