

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Brooklyn Museum

"We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965-85"

The several dozen artists whose work is featured in this superlative survey did not conform to one style, but they did share urgent concerns, often addressing issues of bias and exclusion in their art—and in their art-world organizing. The Just Above Midtown Gallery (JAM), a crucial New York institution of the black avant-garde, was instrumental to the careers of a number of them, including Lorraine O'Grady, whose sardonic pageant gown made of countless white gloves—the artist wore it in guerrilla performances at gallery openings—is a wonder. There is much powerful photography on view, from Coreen Smith's spontaneous portraits of Harlemites in the seventies to Lorna Simpson and Carrie Mae Weems's poignant pairings of image and text, from the eighties. But the ephemera—the fascinating documentation and spirited newsletters—provide the exhibition's glue, presenting women not as anomalous achievers but as part of a formidable movement. *Through Sept. 17.*

Neue Galerie

"Richard Gerstl"

Born in Vienna, in 1883, Gerstl, the precocious third son of a banker, never exhibited his portraits or

landscapes during his lifetime. But it wasn't for want of connections. The prolific painter declined an invitation to show with Gustav Klimt, and spent his summer vacations with the composer Arnold Schoenberg, before hanging himself, at the age of twenty-five, several months after he was caught in an affair with Schoenberg's wife, Mathilde. The first U.S. museum show devoted to the painter's work reveals that he anticipated a number of Expressionist innovations in brushwork and color. Portraits of his father and his older brother, Alois, both pictured with the light behind them, are broken up into thick dashes of color. In "Semi-Nude Self-Portrait," in which the artist stands in a kind of white sarong against a bluish-green background, proportions are distinctly exaggerated for emotional effect. Tragically, it was only in his final work, "Nude Self-Portrait," that Gerstl really found his voice, portraying himself as a kind of living cadaver composed of long, bonelike, white-on-gray brushstrokes marked with crimson smudges. *Through Sept. 25.*

Whitney Museum

"Bunny Rogers: Brig Und Ladder"

In her impressive museum debut, the twenty-six-year-old Texas-born artist builds on a melancholic personal lexicon, culled from the headlines, pop-cultural phenomena, and online communities of her childhood. The 1999 Columbine High School massacre is one enduring fixation. In this

new installation, two rows of theatre seats face a large video projection titled "A Very Special Holiday Performance in Columbine Auditorium." It's a static shot of a softly lit stage, on which a trio of cartoon girls (characters from the now-defunct MTV series "Clone High") give a solemn musical recital. Around the corner, in a dim room, Rogers's sculptures elaborate on her poetic cosmology. Among the objects on view are pastel-colored ladders, mops with bright rag-doll hair in lieu of their customary white cotton string, a dusty-rose version of the train from the children's classic "The Little Engine That Could," and three office chairs, altered to look as if they had hearts that have been ripped out. With "Brig Und Ladder," Rogers once again exquisitely portrays a troubled mythic realm, quiet in the wake of violence. *Through Oct. 9.*

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Mary Heilmann

The artist, whose paintings are like songs for the eyes, aimed to be a post-Minimalist sculptor when she first arrived in New York, from San Francisco, in 1968. But the scene's hard men rebuffed her. So Heilmann did what, at the time, you weren't supposed to: she put brush to canvas. This succinct, terrific show samples the early results of her efforts, in red, yellow, and blue, made between 1975 and 1978. The concentric compositions are minimalistic but also promisingly wobbly. The colors are as clarion as French horns in the morning. There's a retrospective, vicarious thrill of art history on the turn. Take that, fellas! *Through Oct. 28. (Starr, 5 E. 73rd St. 212-570-1739.)*



The renowned French theorist Jean Baudrillard was also a photographer, whose picture "Saint Clément, 1987" (above) evokes one of his quotes: "Driving is a spectacular form of amnesia." The piece is on view, through July 28, at the Foxy Production gallery, as part of "Condo: New York," an alternative art fair in which sixteen local spaces host exhibitions organized by their out-of-town counterparts (in this case, the Château Shatto gallery, in L.A.).