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What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in June

'Painting Deconstructed'

Through Aug. 18. Ortega y Gasset Projects, 363 Third Avenue, Brooklyn;
oygprojects.com.



From left, Erika Raneë, "Selfie" (2024); Zahar Vaks, "Jumping Jack of all Raids" (2024); Dona Nelson, "Shorty A" (2019); Pol Morton, "Memorial for Babe" (2023); and Hannah Beerman, "Nightscape" (2023). Chanel Matsunami, via Ortega y Gasset Projects

What makes a painting a painting? Is it the application of color to canvas or board? The fact that it hangs on a wall? What about different types of art that are informed by painting's histories and conventions? Where should we draw the line (pun intended)?

These are some of the questions raised by "[Painting Deconstructed](#)," an exhibition featuring 46 contemporary artists who work in a wide range of mediums and materials. That's what makes the show equally smart and fun: You won't find a straightforward painting anywhere. Instead you'll find pieces made of ceramics, fabric, photography, and even balloons that evoke paintings, and paint applied to all manner of surfaces, including T-shirts and palm husk.

For me, looking back and forth between the artworks and checklist became a kind of treasure hunt. I wanted to find out what elements made up [Scott Vander Veen's](#) wonderfully tactile "Graft #2 (Thigmomorphogenesis)" (2023). Learning that [Jodi Hays](#) used a found plein-air painting kit in her weathered "Self Portrait at 61" (2024) made me chuckle.

[Kevin Umaña's](#) "Split Apple Core" (2023) is a technical marvel: a complex and sumptuous ceramic work that could be an abstract painting. I delighted in the conceptual cleverness of [Erika Raneë's](#) multimedia and nonrepresentational "Selfie" (2024), which includes black-eyed peas, a plant and the artist's hair dipped in acrylic.

There's remarkable skill on view throughout "Painting Deconstructed," but it doesn't feel like it's being deployed solely for technical ends. These artists experiment in order to open up the category of painting. They use what it has been to imagine what it might yet be.