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New York Forever: 5 Painting Shows That Prove the City and Its Artists Can Thrive No Matter What

These shows by five young artists will make you love painting—and New York—all over again.

Every few seasons the art world wonders if painting is over.

And every few seasons, we're reminded it's not. Fall 2024 is shaping up to be the latter. In back rooms and upstairs spaces, galleries are hanging high-energy painting shows that are both serious and fun—the fact that they are easy to love does nothing to diminish the rigor behind their making. And of the five artists included here, four live and work in New York, reminding us that no matter how filthy and expensive the city may get, like painting, New York will never die. The market may not know what it's doing, but the artists do.

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Kemar Keanu Wynter: “Rücken–” at Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery

With references as disparate as the German Romantics, the Hudson River School, and Color Field painting, Kemar Keanu Wynter's latest body of work is part metaphor, part material experimentation. After pouring paint on the horizontal surface, the Brooklyn-based artist allows the paint to form its own relationships with the surrounding colors. “Over two or so days the paintings will dry, and the pigments spread out and erode and transpose and translate to the other side of the surface and that will cause new marks to be formed and new color relationships—and there is a certain aspect to that that relates to how I think about relationships in my life,” he explains. What viewers actually see on the wall would traditionally be considered the work's verso. Here, it's a reference to the Rückenfigure found prominently in German Romantic painting, à la Caspar David Friedrich, representative of the search for the sublime.



Kemar Keanu Wynter, *I Find Rest in the Curve of Your Embrace (Fatoot wa Haleeb)*, 2024. Courtesy the artist and Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery.