Benglis." Through June 19. • "A Museum as Hub: An Accord Is First and Foremost Only a Proposition," Through May 1. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Wednesdays evenings until 9.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM


GALLERIES—UPTOWN

"MALEVICH AND THE AMERICAN LEGACY"

Kazimir Malevich was the first great artist to make art look like something your kid could do—"if your kid had thought of doing it in war-isolated Moscow, you might have fifty works by twenty-five Americans, ranging in time from 1949 Barnett Newman to a 2011 Mark Grotjahn. Like radio waves, Malevich's cracking simplicities of geometric shapes on white grounds seem to have been picked up by the antennae of artists who may or may not have had him conscious in mind. The show proves that those messages are still beaming. Through April 30. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 212-744-2313.)

Short List


GALLERIES—CHELSEA

DAVIS, CHERUBINI

Is it ever a compliment to describe a work of art as "draughtsmanship," or to say that "every line has its exception, and, in this case, the wetland houseplant ceramic-wood sculptures—a collaboration between Taylor Davis and Nicole Cherubini—are it. Amorphous, the outer colors of clay are mounted onto wooden bases and hung on the wall; freestanding square ceramic pendants with holes (rolled posters are casually stuck in them) are the color of burnt toast. There are a few smoky grace notes crumpled forms glazed in red, white, and blue suggest an e{-ussian French flag, and a rectangular pink box appears to split the surface of a log. The overall mood suggests a punk-rock George Ohr. Through May 14. (Newman Popi-ays, 204 W. 22nd St. 212-274-9166.)

SAUL FLETCHER

Allusive, enigmatic, and deeply personal, Fletcher's work—color and black-and-white photographs of his friends and family, landscapes, interiors, and his collaborate, "The Disorient," is really a self-portrait. In this exceptionally strong show of new and old material, the mood is even more meditative than usual, as if the artist were reasserting not just his own career development but his own development as a person. Fletcher also returns to the paint-splattered studio wall that's sur- pected by his more recent installation work to record his rich, rough-hewn private iconography. Through April 30. (Kern, 532 W. 21st St. 212-367-9633.)

CHARLES MOORE

The intrepid Alabama-born photographer, who died last year at seventy-six, took many of the most memorable images of the sits, demonstrations, marches, and confrontations that defined the civil-rights struggles in the sixties. All those photographs are here, in an important and affecting show that focuses on a number of key events, including an 1968 arrest of Martin Luther King, Jr., the forceful resistance to the enrollment of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi, and the brutal police response to young protesters in Birmingham. As a Life photographer with a wide audience, Moore was one of the period's key witnesses and the very model of an engaged photojournalist. Through May 7. (Kasher, 521 W. 23rd St. 212-966-3978.)

SUSAN PAULSEN

If the aura of cozy domesticity in Paulsen's photographs sometimes seems a bit self-satisfied, it's also unexpectedly ingratiating. This is the good life, centered around family and a house on Block Island, and filled out with still life details: an antique water pitcher, a trio of gleaming pears, a jar of zinnias under a yellow plastic flyswatter. The repeated presence of a nude young woman throws things off at first, especially since she looks so much like Andrew Wyeth's famous neighbor and late-life collabora- tion, Helga, but she never steps out of the role of artist's muse to disturb the tranquil mood. Through April 30. (Bell, 511 W. 23rd St. 212-691-3883.)

Short List


GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

ALICE CHANNER / JAMIE ISENSTEIN / J. PARKER VALENTINE

This ensemble of three women sculptors is a bit ponderous—all loosely refer to the body—but the artists' differences give the show its frisson. Valentine's handmade vessels are infused with pathos, her mother, who died when Valentine was a girl, made the scratchy line drawings adhered to their surfaces. Isenstein's assemblage sculptures are double entendres: two red and white flowers rooted in lensless black glasses suggest cartoon bloodshot eyes (those aren't specs, they're a vase); the drinking end of a straw, jutting from a glass bottle, has burst into flames (that's the o{"et, but the water sprays forth through post-minimalist paces by casting a pair of elastic wisps in aluminum and installing the results on the wall. Through May 1. (Coales, 34 Or- chard St. 212-680-0674.)

ROCHelle FEINSTEIN

Even if Feinsteins new paintings didn't have such a great backstory, this would still be the most rol- lering show in town. A group of drawings in- stalled in the office (and reproduced in a zine-like card) dotted out the scene while consolidating her studio—and fretting about her twenty-year care- er—Feinstein hit on a scheme to make a new body of work using only materials she had at hand. This belt-tightening, bricolage resulted in a series of paintings that incorporate items as various as Styrofoam, a scrim embossed with gold and silver leaf, a birthday present from the sculptor Rachel Harrison (complete with the box that it came in), and a Craigslist ad seeking a nude model to pose for an abstract painting. Rauschenberg's "Com- bines" go refectionists. Through May 1. (On Ste- lar Rays, 133 Orchard St. 212-598-3012.)

KATY GRAHAM

Graham's latest series of portraits, made on the streets of San Francisco and Los Angeles, are real knockouts—among the most powerfully iconic images of this new century, even if they recall the steadiness and desperation of Hollywood and circa "The Day of the Locust." Graham's subjects, all identified as "Anonymous," are a mix of drunks, shoplifters, drunks,

African life—tenement stoops, jazz clubs, jungle scenes—are supreme art, as fresh as this morning. From late phases of his long career, before his death, in 1988, at the age of seventy-six, they teed a besetting weakness of his paintings: an eternal emulator's will to synthesize all his revered influences, from early-Renaissance fresco to Picasso. Here, the heroes are forgotten in choral cadenzas. Most apt are Bearden's roots in satirical cartooning (he studied with George Grosz in the thirties) and pictorial strategies that are part Cubist and part Netherlandish (Brueghel, de Hooch). A naturalistic scale reign: big shapes are nearby and small ones are faraway, though all mob the picture plane. This lends coherence to wild disjunctures of photographic and painted elements, with pleasures of tonal color and cunning texture that stagger the eye and stir the soul. At last, Bearden joins the modern pantheon.

—Peter Schjeldahl