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Galleries

BEN PEDERSON

Through Feb. 3. Ortega y Gasset Projects, 363 Third Avenue, Brooklyn; oygprojects.com.

Entering Ben Pederson's solo exhibition, "Some Stuff You Forgot About," at Ortega y Gasset Projects, feels like stepping into a dream world: You see familiar forms, but they don't adhere to a logic you understand. There's a pair of jean shorts (part of a work called "Jorts," from 2017) dangling upside down and fitted on painted cardboard stumps that look like cactuses. In "Sup?" (2017), a short, speckled ladder hangs in midair. Recurring rectangles covered with bright streaks and blobs of color look like miniature abstract paintings or clay tablets or even photo frames.

Many of these objects are sculptural remnants from Mr. Pederson's studio. They're connected by hooks, chains and strands of beads in a series of dazzling mobiles that fill the hallway leading to the gallery's main space. Hanging floor to ceiling and obstructing the path, the mobiles form a kind of web that seems to evoke Mr. Pederson's wacky artistic subconscious. Visitors are both invited and forced to navigate it.

The tone in the main gallery is more sober. A book displays 28 watercolors, each one a distinct shape awash in pattern and color. Mr. Pederson, who says ideas often come to him from an "Alien Platonic Realm," created the forms while in a meditative state. They reappear in three dimensions in a set of sculptures suspended from the ceiling and a line of "Shape Trees" (2018) displayed on pedestals, where they seem to sprout from artificial branches. Mr. Pederson's work can seem purely playful, but at his best, he mines the limits of recognizability to challenge our perception. His shapes and sculptural scraps are like pictographs in an artistic language that's still unfolding.

JILLIAN STEINHAEUER



SOPHIE VON HELLERMANN AND GREENE NAFTALI



LARSON HARLEY

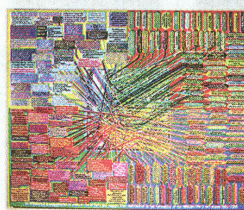
'UNDER ERASURE'

Through Sunday. Pierogi, 155 Suffolk Street, Manhattan; 646-429-9073, pierogi2000.com.

More than 80 artworks, by as many artists, use erasure and deletion as positive techniques in "Under Erasure," curated by Heather and Raphael Rubinstein at Pierogi Gallery. Text pieces range from Tom Phillips's "A Humument," an elaborately painted-over found novel that the artist has been reworking since 1966, to Jen Bervin's "Nets" (2004), which grays out most of the words in Shakespeare's son-

nets to create spare new poems like this one, from Sonnet 14: "Pointing to each/constant/from this/date." Visual art analogues, many of which also use text, include Samuel Jablon's scribbly red painting "Half Destroyed," in which the piece's title is reduced to a set of free-form wavy lines, and a small abstraction by Charline von Heyl that finds a muddy new color in a hasty smear.

Erasure is protest in Ariana Boussard-Reifel's "Between the Lines," for which the artist individually excised every word from a white supremacist book called "RaHoWa," and it stands for gentrification in Loren Munk's "An Attempted Documentation of



LOREN MUNK AND PIEROGI

Williamsburg 1981-2008." But the piece that best captures this encyclopedic show's central insight — that creation is inseparable from destruction, because you can't get one thing without losing another — is Ms. Rubinstein's canvas "Painting as a Non-Professional Experiment." In it, she repurposes Mr. Rubinstein's similarly titled poem about the solitude of writing by painting over the word "poetry," whenever it appears, with "painting."

WILL HEINRICH

SOPHIE VON HELLERMANN

Through Feb. 2. Greene Naftali, 508 West 26th Street, Manhattan; 212-463-7770, greenenaftaligallery.com.

History and place are treated like fantasies in Sophie von Hellermann's group of new paintings at Greene Naftali, "Ileden," which takes its title from a bucolic hamlet in Kent, England. Working in a new studio there, Ms. von Hellermann was motivated by Ileden's natural surroundings as well as by stories that reached her ears while she was there.

"Ileden Woods" (all works are from 2018), "Buzzard," "Pheasant" and "Moonrise" seem painted from life experience — albeit in bright acid colors and in a flat, illustrative style. "Viking Sword" relates the story, which Ms. von Hellermann heard while working in Ileden, about a girl finding a 3,000-year-old pre-Viking sword in a Swedish lake. Other works were inspired by a local World War II plane crash in which the Polish pilot miraculously survived, a fire that burned

Above, an installation view of "Ileden," a show of Sophie von Hellermann's works at Greene Naftali. Far left, Ben Pederson's "Shape Trees" (2018) in "Some Stuff You Forgot About," his solo show at Ortega y Gasset Projects. Left, Loren Munk's "An Attempted Documentation of Williamsburg 1981-2008," from 2008-11, in the show "Under Erasure" at Pierogi Gallery.

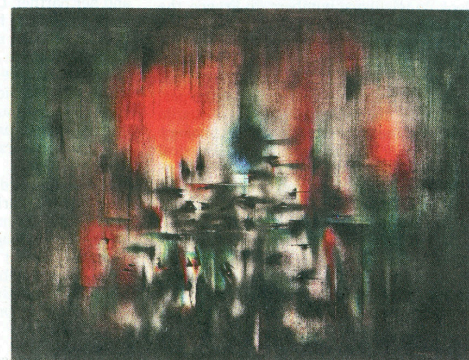
down Ileden Manor, or people dancing the night away in discos somewhere in the world.

Ms. von Hellermann's quick, immediate-looking approach has the breathlessness and dynamism of an old Disney animation film, but she draws from a panoply of historical painting styles, from old masters to Marc Chagall. (Similarly, Tyrus Wong, who helped create Disney's recognizable style in the 1940s, based his work partly on Song dynasty landscape

paintings.)

Ms. von Hellermann, who is based in London, remains self-deprecating about her process, saying in an accompanying gallery release that she is always aware "that being a painter is ridiculous." That sense of play, of unserious-seriousness, translates into joyous, ecstatic compositions, and turns painting into a fantasy space, supported by stories that sound like modern fairy tales.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER



VIA MICHAEL ROSENFELD GALLERY

LAST CHANCE

NORMAN LEWIS Tracing the influence of Asian art and thought on the American abstract painter Norman Lewis (1909-1979), this lavish, personal exhibition called "Looking East" includes ink drawings, oil paintings and rare notebooks, along with well-worn books on Chinese philosophy, calligraphy and art that Lewis once owned. Few artists have given the drawn line as many meanings as Lewis. On paper its dizzying suggestions include calligraphy, figure and abstraction; natural growth, runaway cursive and mapping. On canvases like "Industrial Night" (above) and "Orpheus" and some marvelous untitled ones, Lewis's lines flicker — bolts of tensile energy amid clouds of atmospheric color — expressing a vision at once opulent and disciplined, modest and encompassing.

ROBERTA SMITH

Through Saturday. Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 100 11th Avenue, Manhattan; 212-247-0082, michaelrosenfeldart.com.

