Galleries

"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 sonnets to create spare new poems like this one, from Sonnet 14: "Painting to each constant/from this/that." Visual art analogues, many of which also use text, include Samuel Jablon’s scrabbled red painting "Hall 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 feeds a muddy new color in a hazy 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 "Rainbow," and it stands for gentrification in Loren Munk’s "An Attempted Documentation of 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 reenacts Morrubinstein’s similarly titled poem about the solitude of writing by painting over the word "poetry," whenever it appears, with "painting."

WILL HENNICH

"SOPHIE VON HELLELMANN"

Through Feb. 2, Greene Naftali, 508 West 26th Street, Manhattan; 212-463-7770, greeneenachtaily.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 inspired by Ileden’s natural surroundings as well as by stories that reached her ears while she was there. "Ileden Winds" (all works are from 2018), "Buzzard," "Phœcian" 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 down Ileden Manor, or people dancing the night away in disco somewhere in the 1960s, based on his work partly on Song dynasty landscape paintings.

"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 his 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, 1011 Avenue of the Americas, Manhattan; 212-247-0082, michaelrosenfeldart.com