

The New York Times

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

*Want to see new art in New York this weekend?
Check out “Luxe, Calme, Volupté” on the Lower
East Side...*

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For many young artists in the cash-poor, art-rich East Village of the 1970s and very early 1980s, bathtub-in-kitchen tenement apartments were also studios. You get an immediate sense of forced spatial economy in “Luxe, Calme, Volupté,” a salon-style group show of some 70 works from that time and place, each small enough to have been done on a kitchen table.

The show is a piquant tasting menu of a moment when realist art was suddenly in high flood after a long Minimalist/Conceptualist-induced drought. For a sense of new possibilities explored, or revisited, check out a 1981 Times Square cityscape by Jane Dickson, or Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt’s 1986 altar boy valentine, or a sculpted pair of spike heels (real spikes!) by the great Greer Lankton, or a companionable 1988 trifecta in the form of Gail Thacker’s photograph of Mark Morrisroe photographing Rafael Sánchez.

More than anything, this is a portrait show, of artists’ lovers and friends, almost all artists themselves. Together they define a brief, bright community occupying a gentrifying bit of turf, and



Greer Lankton’s “Jesus’s Cha Cha Heels,” 1986, in the group show “Luxe, Calme, Volupté.” Credit via Greer Lankton Archives Museum and Company Gallery, New York

a dolorous passage in time: Several of the artists represented here would die of AIDS, with Richard Brintzenhofe, Luis Frangella, Peter Hujar, Nicolas Moufarrege and the experimental photographer Darrel Ellis among the early losses. (The Madey show has been organized by Antonio Sergio Bessa and Allen Frame, curators of the Darrel Ellis retrospective now at the Bronx Museum of the Arts.) Happily, illusions of “luxe, calme and volupté” were still possible when much of what’s here was made.

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