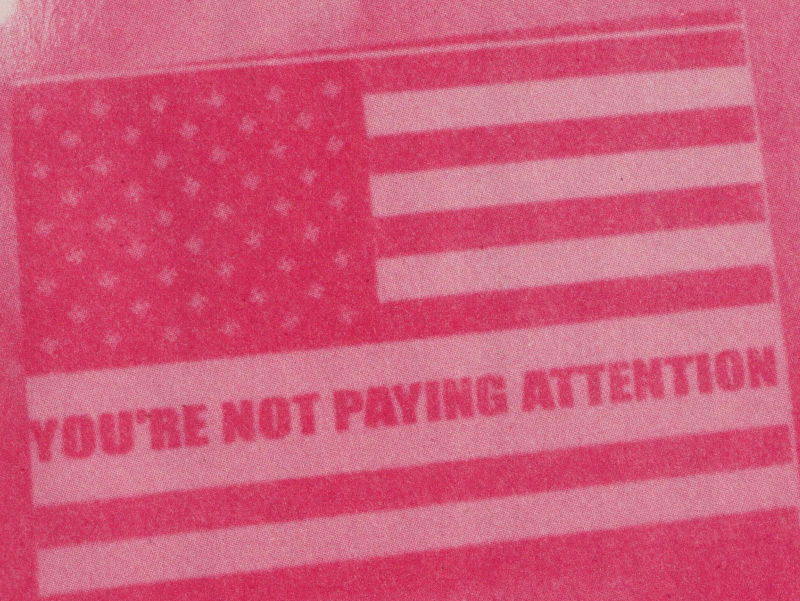


Ghost Vol. 2, No. 2 NYACA New York Art Critics Association Best of 2025

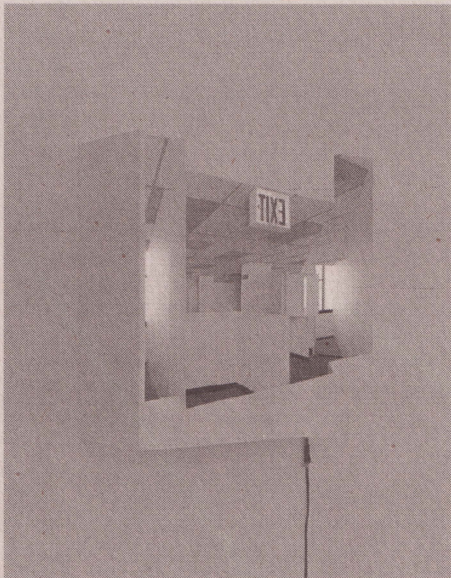


Linda Norden

In what otherwise felt like the very worst of years, and with an art market pleading poverty, it was all the more gratifying to find so much great, meaningful art being made and shown. This, despite the fact that I was limited to New York, save for two brief trips to Boston, thereby missing a long list of exhibitions I'd have given my eye-teeth to see ... in Los Angeles, Jose-Luis Blondet's fabulously theatrical collection show, *Fictions of Display*, at MoCA; the long-awaited, twin-engined, *Monuments*, also at MoCA and at The Brick; this year's iteration of *Made in L.A.* at the Hammer; the celebration of ten years at JOAN, a place I've put a lot of energy, time, and love into. In Munich, at the Brandhorst, I missed *Five Friends: Cage, Cunningham, Johns, Rauschenberg, Twombly*, a show that fixed on a model of friendship and exchange. And in Basel, I'd hoped to see the second iteration of Steve McQueen's immersive and transporting *Bass* at the Schaulager, and Jordan Wolfson's participatory provocation at the Beyeler. But it was Paris I most wanted to be in this past fall: Wolfgang Tillmans closing down the Pompidou; Jean Jacques David and the chance to see not just one, but FIVE takes on his *Death of Marat*; Guston at the Picasso Museum; and an installation of Walter De Maria's posthumously completed pick-up trucks set against a slew of his terrific, under-known drawings at Gagosian.

Aside from two Boston entries, the list here is drawn entirely from shows I saw in NYC. There's a through line of sorts this year—a preoccupation with art/life, on artists who've been in it for years and are still pushing; or younger artists, not of independent means, who are finding ways to make their art and build community in a city our new mayor reminds us has long been unaffordable. But there's a bunch else, too. And though I think it's fair to say that everyone invited to write for NYACA puts artists at the center of their interest in art, I also want to give a shout-out to some of the galleries who reliably support their artists, build programs that speak to something more than "success," and find ways to keep it all going. While I've not avoided the mega-galleries, as several of the best shows I saw in 2025 were at some of these, I've made an effort to include galleries who make things work in more enterprising ways, and a few great museum shows that surprised and delighted.

MEREDITH JAMES, The Exit, Marinaro, Oct. 30.-
Dec. 13.



James's deadpan capture of “the architecture of the abandoned office”—a trope of post-Covid workspace—feels almost like a contradiction in terms: exquisitely hand-crafted 3-D scale reliefs which meticulously mimic the seemingly machine-generated interiors of these anonymous, now ghostly spaces. Her working photographs, also exhibited, underscored the smoke and mirrors those interiors rely on.