

ARTINFO

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Ewan Gibbs in London

LONDON—Legend has it that New York is the city that never sleeps. The city of bright lights, of Broadway, of 24-hour subway service is so vibrant that it inspired even Piet Mondrian, strict Neo-Plasticist that he was, to let go of his black lines and rigid color palette long enough to paint *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942–43). In the drawings of British artist Ewan Gibbs, however, New York becomes a different place — one of blurred, fading sights that exist solely in black, white, and gray.

Gibbs started out recasting photographs he found in holiday brochures as detailed grisaille drawings on graph paper. In 2000, he began working from his own shots, creating series that focused on the interiors of Mediterranean villas, hotel exteriors, and baseball pitchers. Now, in his latest series, “New York,” on view at London’s Timothy Taylor Gallery through October 18, he examines the storied buildings and scenes of the city. (These works also garnered him a commission for the 2009 Armory Show.)

The rows of tiny slashes from which Gibbs creates his drawings function like the dots in Pointillist paintings: From far away, they come together to create a cohesive picture, but viewed up close, they dissolve into a blur of repeat markings. This effect serves to deconstruct the people and places in the pictures, suggesting a more vulnerable reality lurking just below the polished surface. The “New York” series is particularly affecting in a post-September 11 world, where the city feels a little less unbreakable and a little more wearied than before. The statue of Atlas at Rockefeller Center, St. Patrick’s Cathedral, an NYPD officer, and other iconic images look muted and distant in Gibbs’s art, as if viewed through a scrim, a misty rainfall, or even a cloud of smoke.

Here are Gibbs’s picks for other shows to see around London this weekend:

“Rather than giving Damien Hirst’s mind-boggling show at Sotheby’s a plug, I thought I might use this platform to draw attention to artists and galleries that are a little more off the beaten track.

“Set up in 1991 by Emma Hill, the Eagle Gallery, above the Eagle pub in Faringdon, was one of the first alternative spaces in London. The current show is of paintings by British artist Tom Hammick (through October 4), who conjures up images in much the same spirit as Richard Diebenkorn, Alex Katz, and Peter Doig, while remaining very much his own man. He is a versatile artist who is just as adept as a printmaker and maker of tapes-tries as he is as a painter.

“Moving east, a trip to Vyner Street always gives you a chance to see a few galleries in

lora reynolds gallery

close proximity, which is to be welcomed in London where galleries are generally many and far between. I am going to suggest a break with tradition, that instead of walking east down the street and ending up in the cavernous Wilkinson space, you start at that end and head back the (one in the) other way. Currently on show at One in the Other gallery is a group exhibition called 'Travelogue' curated by Sotiris Kyriacou (through October 5). I was spellbound by Anna Barham's poetic projection in the far corner of the gallery. Modest in scale and set within a rigorous structure, Barham's work leads you along a fragmented canal of consciousness that is unlocked but not undermined by the supporting drawings.

"My next recommendation is an exhibition of paintings by Michele Del Campo at the Mark Jason Gallery (through October 3), which is near the Lisson Gallery and Edgware Road tube station. To pigeonhole this artist for the sake of a sound bite review, I would say his work is Eric Fischl meets early Franz Gertsch. Del Campo's compositions employ cropped snapshot photography characterized by a naturalism that has its roots in the precision of the source image without being a slave to the photograph. The images and language have dynamism, immediacy, and a satisfying lightness of touch that are neither precious nor labored.

"From Edgware Road you can head down on the Bakerloo Line to Elephant and Castle, where Roger Hiorns is exhibiting his most ambitious work to date in a vacant flat on a housing estate near London Bridge (through November 2). Hiorns is like a mad professor with an 'in-Klein-ation' for blue crystals. Over the last decade he has experimented with cardboard, ceramics, compressors, chairs, carbon, copper sulphate, metal powders, milled steel, galvanized steel, amyl nitrate, sterling silver, aluminum, bronze, copper, car engines, light bulbs, contact lenses, enamel, wood, window panes, brains, hardware, semen, salt, silicone, foam, Plexiglas, Velcro, nylon, alabaster, paint, perfume, disinfectant, wax, organic matter, oak, thistles, fire, resin, tape, and pencil on paper. If this show gets you feeling Hiorny, you can see more of his work at Corvi-Mora (through November 1), which is in the same neck of the woods.

"Finally, I would recommend that anyone, at anytime, visit the Wallace Collection, which is several stones' throw from Selfridges and has a wonderful collection of paintings by the likes of Frans Hals and Fragonard and a truly stunning collection of arms and armor, not to mention the ceramics, furniture, and a very nice cafe."