

NEW YORK

“Devotion”

Catinca Tabacaru Gallery // November 11, 2015–January 17, 2016

THE WALLS OF this little gallery have been painted shades of royal blue, and waist-high gold-hued molding now runs the length of the room. In this revamped space, paintings, sculptures, photographs, and site-specific installations are arranged to give the impression that this shoebox location has been transformed into a miniature art chapel. Little of the work is outwardly religious, but the underlying themes of any religion—such as ritual, transcendence, and spirituality—are magnified by the show's context.

Curated by William Corwin, the exhibition includes 16 artists and more than twice as many artworks. Paintings and photographs hang cheek by jowl, while sculptures and installation pieces overlap. The show's layout loosely invokes the format of an Orthodox Christian chapel, lending certain pieces overt associations. Rico Gatson's brightly colored *Throne*, 2013, is positioned like a bishop's seat on Michael Ballou's paint-encrusted *Rug*, 2013/2015, which covers most of the gallery's floor. These works literally glitter and sparkle, and in this context blend a quasi-solemnity with a sense of glistening light.

Much of the show functions in a metaphorical capacity. Roxy Paine's sculptures of consciousness-expanding fungi (*Cowpatty*, 1997, and *Dead Amanita no. 6*, 2006) are set up on plinths and placed in neat glass vitrines, like some kind of reliquaries. Elizabeth Ferry's glass-orb head, *Nothing As Tender As an Eyelid*, 2015, which has seashell lids and lashes made of peacock feathers, can be envisioned here as a statue of a female saint. The tendency to probe each artwork for an underlying relationship to something divine, or at least otherworldly, becomes irresistible, and in this sense, every work acts as some type of gateway.

The most literal and hard-hitting installation is placed in the rear of the gallery, directly across from the show's silliest piece, paint-caked Elmo dolls by Joyce Pensato. Sophia Wallace contributes a shrine for two Afghani girls stoned to death according to the ritual punishment for supposed moral crimes. It's a devastating piece that serves as a potent reminder of the capacity for religion to be used as a tool of bitter hostility. Her shrine turns the mode of the exhibition away from metaphor and into a dimension of sharp and sobering critique. Beside it—as if in defiance of its tragic nature—stands a large fiberglass sculpture, also by Wallace, *First and sole anatomically correct sculpture of the clitoris: Αδάμας (unconquerable)*, 2015. This proud and uncompromising symbol of femininity acts as the reigning icon of Corwin's art chapel. —Charles M. Schultz

Installation view of
“Devotion,” 2015.



NEW YORK

Robert Ryman

Dia: Chelsea // December 9, 2015–June 18, 2016

RYMAN WAS NOT the first American to paint a white monochrome, though it has since become his calling card. Predating Ryman's work, Robert Rauschenberg completed his "White Paintings" in 1951, when he insisted that the group be immediately whisked into the gallery, calling them "almost an emergency." By inviting dust, light, and shadows to be the subject of the white canvases, Rauschenberg had discovered the end point to art's minimal reduction, in much the same way John Cage's *4'33"* transformed the concert

Robert Ryman
Installation view
of "Robert
Ryman," 2015.

hall into a forum for the muffled cough or baby's cry. (Cage's work was in fact inspired

