

ARTFORUM

DIARY

BEGIN AGAIN

September 09, 2016 • New York • Michael Wilson on the fall season kickoff in New York



Left: Artist Meleko Mokgosi at Jack Shainman. (Photo: [Nicole Casamento](#)) Right: Katherine Hubbard's opening at The Kitchen. (Photo: Michael Wilson)

SHIFTING FROM THE START of a new school year in the morning to the season's first round of Chelsea gallery openings in the evening was never going to be an entirely smooth transition, but there was at least a measure of common feeling among those who, on a Thursday evening, flooded the dozen blocks of former taxi garages that so many of us in the biz call home. There was a wholly expected though sometimes still jarring mix of excitement and resignation among the crowds wandering from one space to the next that made for a telling barometer of status and mindset, as the prospect of a new raft of encounters with the sublime and the ridiculous loomed.

Where to begin? With something like 130 openings uptown and down, coinciding with the bustle of New York Fashion Week, this was hardly an inconsequential question. After a pit stop for empty calories at the Tenth Avenue CVS—surely the area's most vital professional resource—I headed south to Petzel Gallery for the opening of Kiwi artist

Simon Denny's "Blockchain Future States." A sleek tripartite installation of computer case-mods, supersize board games, and infographics confronting the machinations of Bitcoin-era geopolitics, it would have been a sobering start to proceedings had there not been a bucket of trash beer to hand. Cracking open a can, I bumped into artists Davide Cantoni and Alexi Worth, the latter of whom rated one of Denny's strategies in particular ("Wherever I see a speech bubble, I'm happy"), but was already planning a next move. I accompanied the pair down the block to Hauser & Wirth, the venue for Rashid Johnson's similarly grand-scale "Fly Away."



Left: Artist Lorna Simpson with Common. (Photo: [Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn](#)) Right: Artist Lynda Benglis. (Photo: [Cheim & Read](#))

Skirting an air-kissing Jerry Saltz and Scott Rothkopf on the way up the gallery's none-more-dramatic stepped entrance, I fetched up in another grand-scale installation, this one notably clogged with Instagrammers. Johnson held court as visitors orbited *Within Our Gates*, a massive arrangement of black steel shelves stocked with books, monitors, plants, and shea butter. From somewhere inside the work emerged the muffled sound of Antoine Baldwin playing the piano. Already shadowed by the sense that I might be running late, I headed out and over to the Kitchen, where Katherine Hubbard's "Bring your own lights" was opening. An elegant and much more low-key affair, it also made for a useful interlude of relative quiet—even incorporating artist-designed seating—before the real crush began, a block north.

Festivities at Jack Shainman Gallery, Bortolami, Anton Kern, and ZieherSmith made for a hectic scene as the boldface names—a Thelma Golden there, a Jon Hamm there—began to accumulate. Matthew Marks, presenting a show of paintings by Peter Cain, was, characteristically, a lot more restrained. Over at Sikkema Jenkins, which was hosting new work by Leonardo Drew and Jennie C. Jones, the Guggenheim Museum’s Christina Yang directed me to what sounded like the center of the center—Matthew Barney’s opening at Barbara Gladstone: “There’s only a *short* line to get in.” Sure enough, not only was there a bouncer-administered one-in, one-out system in effect, but further queuing was required inside for admittance to the artist’s vintage refrigerated-room-filling installation *DRILL TEAM: screw BOLUS*. Three burly guys in summer dresses—not inappropriate garb given the inclusion of Barney’s sculpture *TRANSEXUALIS*—snaked through the space while a pair of adolescent skater bois admired the complex hardware of its complementary work, *REPRESSIA*. The authenticity of Björk’s tag in the guest book, however, felt doubtful.

Having clocked the Brooklyn Museum’s Nancy Spector heading, with laser-like focus, to check in on her guy (Spector curated Barney’s Guggenheim exhibition in 2002), I dipped into the westernmost of Marianne Boesky’s twin locations for half of Donald Moffett’s “any fallow field.” Then, finally, it was over to Tanya Bonakdar for a delicious warm, frothy tin cup of Turkish yogurt drink *ayran*, served at a “bacteria bar” in honor of collective Slavs and Tatars’ first show there, a meditation on the microscopic “original Other.” At a subsequent dinner, the group’s Berlin dealer Amadeo Kraupa-Tuskany talked far-flung travel while I did my best to edge away from the restaurant’s roaring fire (really), and another guest rested his forehead on the table. The next day we’d do it all again.

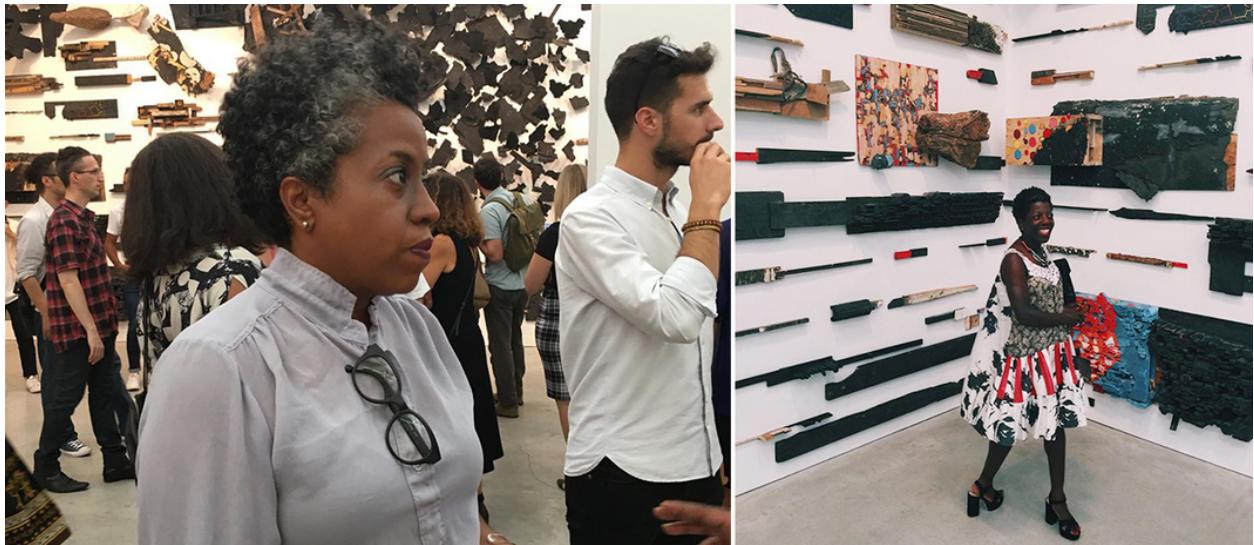
— Michael Wilson



Left: Artist Rashid Johnson. (Photo: [Robert Davis](#)) Right: Artists Derek Lerner, Graham Anderson, and Caitlin Keogh with Collected Together's Randall L Jane. (Photo: [Collected Together](#))



Left: OSGEMEOS with Pharrell Williams at Lehmann Maupin. (Photo: [Tattoodo](#)) Right: Howard Stern at Anton Kern. (Photo: [Mark Billy](#))



Left: Artist Jennie C. Jones at Sikkema Jenkins. (Photo: [Art Index TV](#)) Right: Studio Museum director Thelma Golden. (Photo: [New York Sunshine](#))



Left: Jon Hamm and Rashid Johnson. (Photo: [Karin Nelson](#)) Right: Serpentine director Hans Ulrich Obrist with artist Simon Denny. (Photo: [Giles Thackway](#))