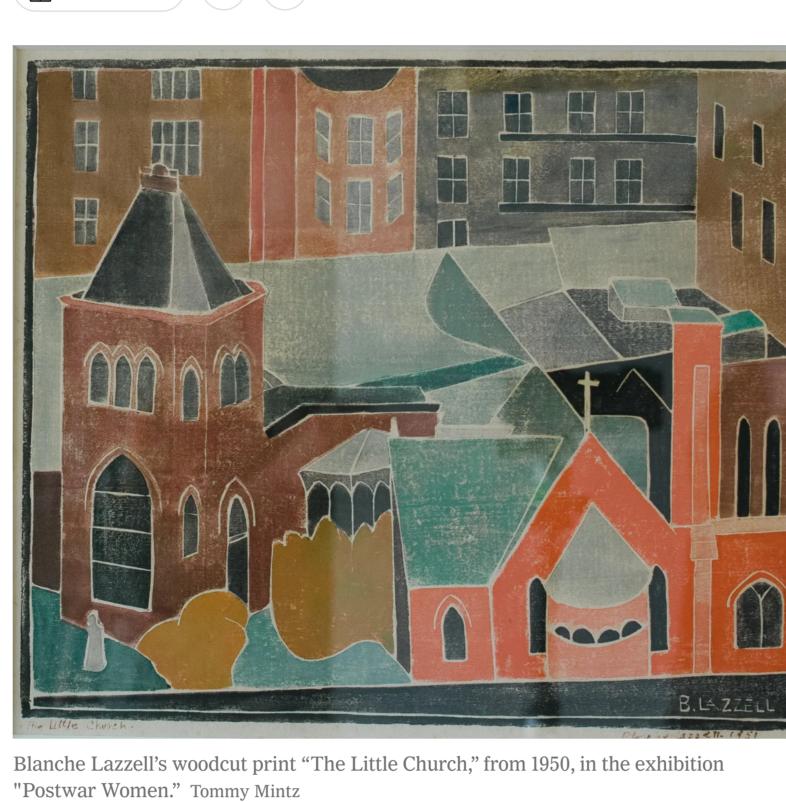
ART REVIEWS

New York Galleries: What to

See Right Now

"Postwar Women" at the Art Students League; "Japan Is America"; Howardena Pindell's "Autobiography" series; Man Ray's paintings; and Ebecho Muslimova's comic, fearless muse.

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Nov. 20, 2019

'Postwar Women'

Through Dec. 1. The Art Students League, 215 West 57th Street, Manhattan; 212-247-4510, theartstudentsleague.org.

A surprising number of 20th-century female artists, if they spent any time in New York, had something to do with the Art Students League, a coeducational institution since its founding in 1875. Ahead of next year's centennial of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, the sculptor Will Corwin put together "Postwar Women," an impeccable show of work by alumnae, former models and other connections of the league, in its Phyllis Harriman Mason gallery. Mr. Corwin narrowed his focus to women who were active from 1945 to 1965 but he still came up with a profusion of names and styles: more than 40 artists making everything from social documentary to winsome portraiture to the most stereotypically muscular sort of Abstract Expressionism. A brace of powerful lithographs by Elizabeth Catlett, a totemic bronze by Louise Bourgeois and Joyce Pensato's wonderfully spooky charcoal drawing of Mickey Mouse sit happily alongside Lazzell's woodcut print "The Little Church" has a strangely

work by less famous names: The red and green church in Blanche childlike innocence, and Lenita Manry's delicate but committed oilon-canvas view of the city from her studio window made me think of the New York School painter Jane Freilicher. The overall effect is to make the ongoing process of rethinking the art-historical canon to remedy discriminatory exclusions feel as exciting as a treasure hunt. WILL HEINRICH Howardena Pindell

Through Dec. 7. Garth Greenan Gallery, 545 West 20th Street, Manhattan; 212-929-

1351, garthgreenan.com.



shift in her artistic practice. Before, she had been a formalist experimenting with abstraction. After the crash, as she struggled

with memory loss, her work turned more subjective and overtly

In 1979, Howardena Pindell was in a car accident that spurred a

political, grappling with, among other issues, the racism she faced as an African-American. "I decided to make my work more viscerally personal, reflecting the impact of my direct experience," she explains in a booklet for her current show at <u>Garth Greenan</u> Gallery. Although they look abstract, the paintings here, from Ms. Pindell's "Autobiography" series, represent that transition. In most, bits of postcards and photographs taken and collected during her world travels float like islands amid multicolored, textural seas. For works like "Autobiography: Fire (Suttee)," from 1986-87, which contains the outline of the artist's body, Ms. Pindell pushed thick

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strips of paint through homemade stencils, creating ritualistic marks. In others, like "Autobiography: Japan (Shisen-dō, Kyoto)" (1982), she punched holes in paper and embedded the dots throughout her painted surfaces. She used imperfectly shaped canvases made by cutting up and sewing pieces together. The paintings have a hands-on specificity yet evoke vast associations, including scrapbooks, archaeology, maps, the cosmos, dreams, sutures and trauma. That's what gives them their scintillating power: Ms. Pindell's ability to conjure so many other worlds from deep within her own. JILLIAN STEINHAUER

didonna.com.

Man Ray

Through Dec. 13. Di Donna. 744 Madison Avenue, Manhattan; 212-259-0444,



always viewed himself primarily as a painter. So he would no doubt be pleased by the retrospective, "Enigma & Desire: Man Ray Paintings," which, spanning the course of his 60-year career, excludes photographs and objects to focus solely on paintings.

Like most art students, Man Ray began by depicting what was in front of him. A still life of pitchers and brushes from 1914, made when he was just 24, is representative of the realistic style that he abandoned that year, in the belief (as he writes in his autobiography) that depicting what he saw "might be a hindrance to really creative work." By the end of the year, he had progressed to a colorful variant of Cubism, exemplified here by "Two Figures (The Lovers)" and "The Rug." In 1919, using a pressurized spraypaint tank and stencils, he produced "aerographs"— two are in the show — with delicately modulated but mechanically impersonal As a painter, Man Ray never surpassed the exuberant inventiveness of that youthful period in New York and New Jersey. He moved to Paris in 1921, remaining there except for a warimposed decade of exile in Los Angeles. One of the strongest

jagged fleeing figures read alternately as shadows or fissures, an ominous portent of his own flight and the impending catastrophe. ARTHUR LUBOW 'Japan Is America' Through Dec. 14. Fergus McCaffrey, 514 West 26th Street, Manhattan; 212-988-2200, fergusmccaffrey.com.



respect in Paris, London or Turin. Where did Abstract Expressionism have its first, greatest impact outside the United States? In Osaka, Japan — where the avant-garde Gutai group drew on the American example (among others from East and West) to renounce classical composition and to forge a free,

experimental artistic language in the years after the bomb. The United States occupied Japan for seven years, from 1945 to 1952, and the effervescent "Japan Is America," with major works by 30 artists from both countries, offers us an intertwined art history of the postwar era. Gutai artists like Kazuo Shiraga, who painted Pollock-style allover abstractions with his feet, or Natsuyuki Nakanishi, who needled Japan's Americanized culture by imprisoning consumer goods in egg-shaped resin coffins, share space with American artists whose art changed when they traveled across the Pacific. Ken Price left Los Angeles to attend tea ceremonies across Japan; the imperfect, wabi-sabi aesthetic of that ritual's vessels found its way into his gently off-kilter ceramic cups and wobbly, nonfunctional sculpture "Pink Egg." Jasper Johns, stationed in Japan during the Korean War, returned to Tokyo in 1964, where he saw a shop that printed photographs on dinner plates. He had his picture taken, and fastened the plate to a blackout of encaustic to make a rare self-portrait. (Mr. Johns still owns this work, entitled "Souvenir"; it's a generous loan.) Noriyuki Haraguchi, a leading figure of the deep-thinking Mono-ha movement, was born in 1946 in Yokosuka, right when the United States Navy set up a base at that port city south of Tokyo. Seventy years after the war, the base is still operational. Mr. Haraguchi's sculpture "A-7 E Corsair II" (2011), a full-scale section of a fighter plane rendered in untreated canvas, lords over the upstairs gallery like a stumbling block — and a reminder that national art histories

JASON FARAGO Ebecho Muslimova Through Dec. 18. Magenta Plains, 94 Allen Street, Manhattan; 917-388-2464, magentaplains.com.

are always more entangled than we admit.



The subject of the Russian-born, New York-based Ms. Muslimova confronts you fully exposed. Facing the gallery entrance is "Fatebe Bent Grill" (all works are from 2019), in which Ms. Muslimova's alter-ego (that is, "Fatebe") thrusts her buttocks at the viewer, so the first thing you see is an elegantly drawn pair of labia and an anus drawn with flick-like brush strokes. The rest of the painting, however — like several here — is a Gestalt fantasy of gates and M.C. Escher frogs that echo a painting across the room, "Fatebe

narrative and raucous joke, all wrapped into one.

Deep Frog Organza." Another eye-catcher is "Fatebe Lightning in the Mezzanine" (2019), in which the artist's doppelgänger lies naked in an armchair, with lightning striking outside, seemingly flowing through her body. More than mere provocation, there is a luminous body-positive politics to these paintings. Fleshy, female and flagrantly nude, "Fatebe" is simultaneously comic, absurd and fearless. Painted with obvious love and rigor, she becomes a kind of Everywoman superhero. MARTHA SCHWENDENER

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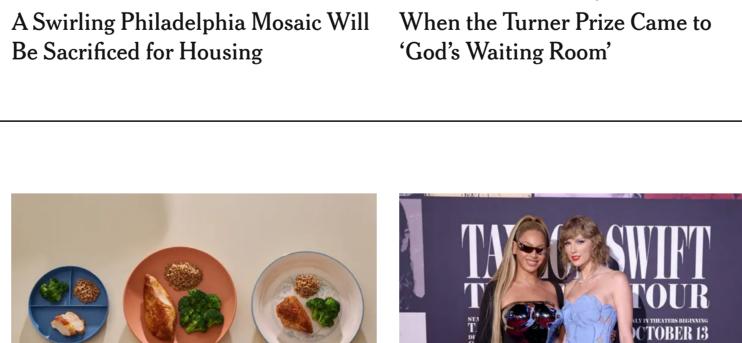
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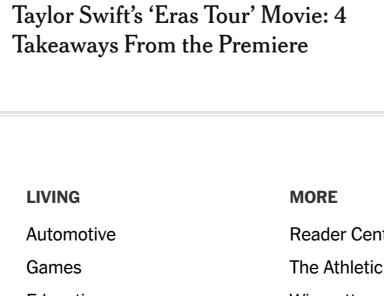
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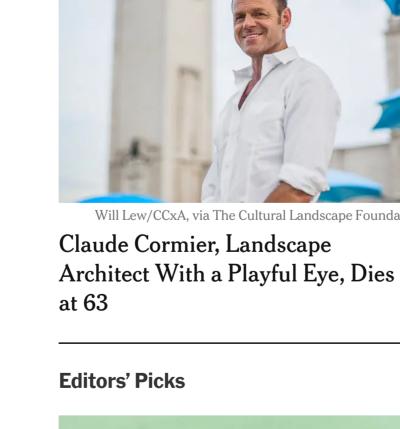
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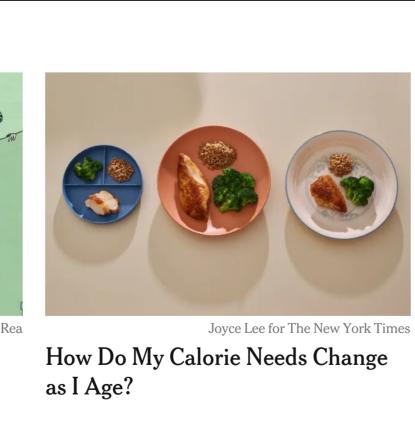
fields of color. paintings in this impressive show is "The Wall" (1938), in which

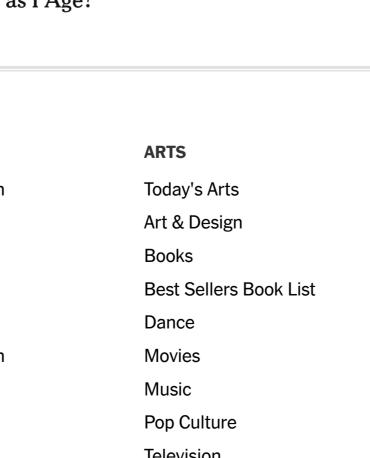
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