

Artlyst

Five New York Exhibitions Not To Miss

by Ilka Scobie
February 13, 2023



Stefan Bondell "Dark Marks" at Vito Schnabel Gallery

In probably Chelsea's biggest post-pandemic opening, one thousand New Yorkers braved the February freeze to view Stefan Bondell's "Dark Marks." The seventeen paintings, gessoed canvas with black acrylic, propel the tradition of chiaroscuro and tenebrous to a coolly contemporary and historically harrowing vision.

New Yorker and lifelong Metropolitan Museum enthusiast, Bondell mines classical figures from the collection, ranging from classical Greek, Roman, Mayan and African statuary collaged next to images of political figures ranging from Giuliani to Trump to oligarchs. Interspersed among a swirling and hypnotic background.... think Aubrey Beardsley on acid..... are images of protests, the beleaguered White House, and blind justice teetering after the Insurrectionist onslaught.

Bondell's unswerving mark-making never falters, from the tight brushstroke arabesques, straight to the intubated and masked New Yorkers in the midst of the pandemic. All these works were created during the past few years, a visual diary of these turbulent times and perhaps that contributes to the power and urgency of the monumental masterpieces.

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STEFAN BONDELL
