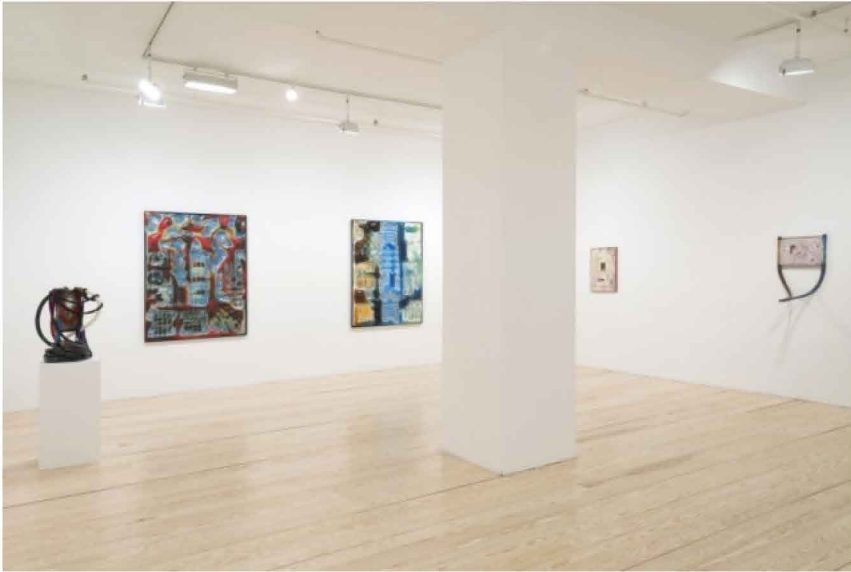


# Flowers and Mad Max in Chelsea: Travess Smalley and Jesse Greenberg

by Corinna Kirsch



Installation view of Jesse Greenberg at Derek Eller Gallery. Image courtesy of the gallery.

**Jesse Greenberg: Face Scan** (<http://www.derekeller.com/exhibitions/jesse-greenberg>)

Derek Eller Gallery

615 West 27th Street

New York, NY 10001

Runs through May 30, 2015

**What's on view:** *Several puffy, abstract paintings that look like they're filled with colorful gel; sculptures assembled out of household-size objects in steel, sometimes coated with beads and materials that look like straw and resin; often, they're outfitted with holes in them*

**Corinna:** These artworks look like they come from the end of the world. Maybe it's because I just saw *Mad Max: Fury Road*, the latest dystopian-survivalist film in the Mad Max series, but these broken, goeey objects seem to be made from recovered materials. What would art look like when the entire world has gone to shit? Greenberg's exhibition poses an answer.

Some works were more successful than others, the paintings in particular. Not that they're actually paint on canvas. ("Paintings without paint" is a trend that AFC's Michael Farley picked up on in his review of NADA New York 2015 (<http://artcity.com/2015/05/15/nada-trend-watch-everyone-loves-paintings-no-one-is-painting/>.) "Body Scan 4," 2015, looks like a long, maze-like trail formed by a worm-y creature—maybe one of those terrifying sandworms from *Beetlejuice* ([http://img2.wikia.nocookie.net/\\_\\_cb20120610185620/villains/images/d/d5/Sandworms.jpg](http://img2.wikia.nocookie.net/__cb20120610185620/villains/images/d/d5/Sandworms.jpg))—bulging out of a chemical-filled waterbed. Some works read as omens, like in "Registration Mark 2," (<http://www.derekeller.com/exhibitions/jesse-greenberg/selected-works#19>) 2015, where a resin circle and sunburst mysteriously emerge from materials seemingly in decay. The prettier works, though, like "Power Supply 3," (<http://www.derekeller.com/exhibitions/jesse-greenberg/selected-works#9>) 2015, didn't convey complexity so much as preciousness.

I kept on thinking about other artists that deal with materials in decay, from the bleached-on fabric of Sterling Ruby to anything by Eva Hesse. I bet these works will be a pain for conservators to deal with over the decades, as the materials become more volatile and decay.