

TWO COATS OF PAINT

Award-winning NYC blogazine, primarily about painting

GALLERY SHOWS

Scene + Sensoria

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Installation view of William Downs' exhibition at Derek Eller. Photo courtesy of the gallery.

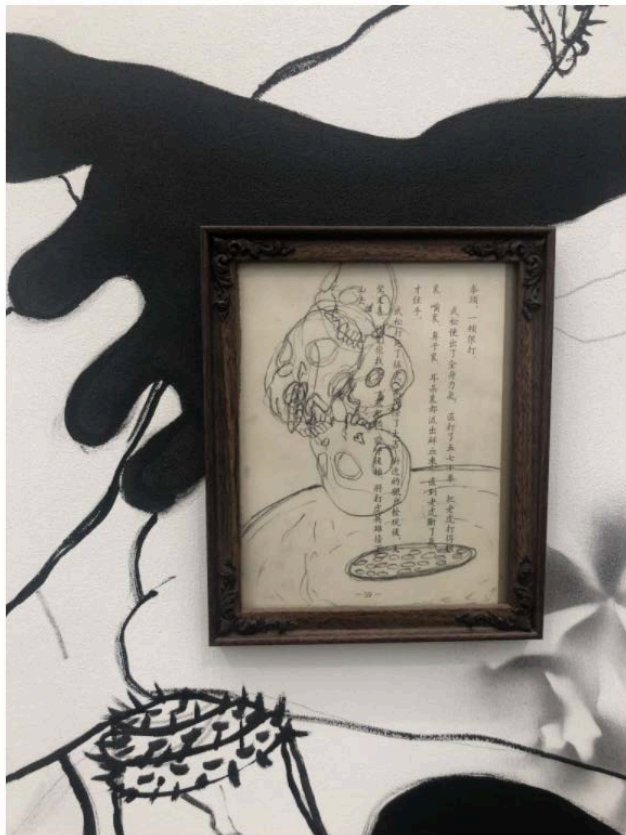
Don't miss William Downs at Derek Eller. The Georgia artists' large ink drawings pull off some spatial image-object trickery that is able to generate sculptural form through density and line; accomplishing an inky plasticity via graphic illusion. The approach in Downs' work is anti-individual, but the collectivist crowd actions depicted might not be towards any kind of sense making or harmony.

For *Reveling in Thorns*, Downs directly references the *Entombment of Christ* by Caravaggio through pathos formulae. The descending figures are wearing thorns or sackcloth, something uncomfortable that still leaves their asses exposed. Their long toes, fingers, and noses make them seem uniformly clumsy and inept. Thrown into the performance of a scene of this level of pathos, one they seem inadequate to comprehend or witness, we are endeared by their plodding. The pathos breaks to bathos and we are left with a confusing sympathy.



William Downs, *Reveling in Thorns*, 2021, India ink and spray paint on canvas. 107 x 145.5 inches

Hung on one of the pieces was a Chinese drawing of a collection of skulls, a telling group memento mori, and a charged metaphor for the way Downs depicts the figures in his scenes with the same anonymity and stacking.



Detail image from William Downs' *People living...on the wrong side...living outside*, 2021