

The New York Times

3 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

Check out Paul Thek's "meat piece," Julia Bland's textile paintings and "Modern: Ancient: Brown" by McArthur Binion.

Julia Bland

Through Oct. 9. Derek Eller Gallery, 300 Broome Street, Manhattan. 212-206-6411; derekeller.com.



Julia Bland's "Canyon," 2020, linen, denim, canvas, silk, wool, ink, oil, paint. Julia Bland and Derek Eller Gallery, Adam Reich

Looking at Julia Bland's artworks up close can be a little adventure. In one piece — for example, "Canyon" (2020), in her current exhibition at Derek Eller Gallery — you might find hand-woven linen alongside premade denim, silk, and a repurposed Hudson Bay coat, with ink and paint applied to various fabrics, all of which have been cut, stitched, woven or braided together. Your eye can get caught up in an aesthetic treasure hunt, marveling at how many textures, colors, shapes, and processes can comfortably coexist.

Bland, who studied painting and printmaking in bachelor's and master's programs, has been making collagelike textile works for several years. For her first solo show at Derek Eller, titled "Some Love Holds Water," she's scaled up in both size and complexity, with three monumental pieces (including "Canyon") presiding over the main gallery space. They're the undeniable stars of the exhibition, ambitious formal experiments that merge elements of Western fiber art, traditional Islamic textiles, modern abstract painting and more.

Unfortunately, the rest of the show suffers a bit by comparison: Three small drawings made with linen thread and oil paint and a series of linen and wool blankets start to look tame. But those pieces still capture some of the totemic quality that makes the larger trio so enthralling. The geometric shapes at the core of Bland's work and her iterative layering and riffing on them radiate a kind of psychedelic power. You don't need to know their precise meanings to feel it.

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