

**BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART**

200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—“Basquiat” is an important, intensely enjoyable retrospective of the neo-expressionist, who died in 1988, at the age of twenty-seven. Jean-Michel Basquiat turns out to be the essential American painter of the early eighties, who brought lyrical truth to a largely facetious revival of showily subjective modern styles. He did his best work in an early rush, in 1982: paintings of furious and hilarious masked heads, strewn with verbal and visual quotations from many sources. Room after room, the viewer rafts a stream of consciousness so acute as to suggest Virginia Woolf’s “Mrs. Dalloway,” jazzified. Through June 5. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

**FRICK COLLECTION**

1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—The British collection “Renaissance and Baroque Bronzes from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge” arrives for its first American tour with thirty-six small statues, by mostly little-known French, Dutch, German, and Italian artists, dating from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Through April 24. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

**NATIONAL ACADEMY MUSEUM**

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-369-4880)—“Surrealism U.S.A.” is a superb roundup of paintings and sculptures from the nineteen-thirties and forties surveying modernism’s version of punk. Through May 8. (Open Wednesdays and Thursdays, noon to 5, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

**P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER**

22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—“Greater New York 2005,” a co-production with the Museum of Modern Art, collects more than a hundred and sixty artists from around the city who have emerged in the last five years. Through Sept. 26. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

**GALLERIES-uptown**

*Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.*

**BRUCE MCCALL**

McCall, a frequent contributor to this magazine, makes impeccably detailed paintings that combine the relentless optimism of the American dream in the nineteen-forties and fifties with laugh-inducing surrealism. He imagines New York City, already wondrous, as a place where one might ice-fish in the Rockefeller rink or buy caviar and live octopus at the corner deli—neither of which looks impossible in his brightly deadpan renderings. Opens April 5. (James Goodman, 41 E. 57th St. 212-593-3737.)

**JOEL SHAPIRO**

Shapiro’s current show is like a walk through the artist’s atelier, packed with objects in various states of completion; even some of the “finished” work looks semi-constructed, as if the ideas were still being hashed out. Rough blocks of wood held together with wire and painted with bright, dripping color are the major motif. The multicolored “Study (20 Elements)” (2004) is a model for a work that will be on view this month in the Musée d’Orsay, in Paris. All told, a surprising number of ideas shoehorned into a modest-sized space. Through April 16. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292.)

**UNICA ZÜRN**

Surrealism stretched well into the nineteen-sixties for Zürn, who died in 1970, after a long cohabitation with the German artist Hans Bellmer (famed for his unsettling photographs of papier-mâché dolls). Her ink-on-paper drawings—which have uncanny affinities with those produced by today’s young doodle-obsessed artists—feature snakelike figures and fantastic, fossilized forms culled, theoretically, from the depths of her unconscious through

automatic drawing. They hover on the page, unburdened by horizon lines or academic notions of composition. Zürn’s deteriorating mental health during this period and ultimate suicide by defenestration further add to the sense of these works as sad, failed forms of art therapy. Through April 16. (Ubu, 416 E. 59th St. 212-753-4444.)

**GALLERIES-CHelsea****DAVID CLAERBOUT**

Claerbout gives extra meaning to the term “moving pictures.” One single-channel video starts with an old black-and-white photo, to which the artist added contemporary footage (filmed at the same site) of a tree’s moving leaves and branches. The effect is a stunning contrast of motion and stillness (and, ultimately, life and death). The achingly lush “Bordeaux Piece” is a thirteen-hour-long video set in the French countryside accompanied by the sound of birds and insects and occasional dialogue. Its length makes following the narrative virtually impossible, but it has a warming charm amid the dull concrete and steel of Chelsea. Through April 16. (Lambert, 564 W. 25th St. 212-242-3611.)

**RACHEL FEINSTEIN**

The sculptures recede a bit in Feinstein’s new show, overshadowed by the pastels and paintings-on-mirror of elderly coquettes that line the walls. Dressed in corsets, powdered wigs, and pearls, the aged beauties pose with parasols, teacups, and phallic fawns, like Fragonard subjects captured a half-century on. The ladies look canny, regal, and tougher than you. One of the sculptures, a large white form in polyurethaned foam, echoes the paintings, and it is perhaps this affinity, combined with the dramatic lighting that casts its shadow into an alcove, that makes this the most engaging of the three-dimensional items. Through April 23. (Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9889.)