

What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

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An image from Georges Hugnet's fake Michelin Guide in "Huit Jours à Trébaumec," at Ubu Gallery. 2016 Georges Hugnet/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Ubu Gallery, New York

Georges Hugnet

'Huit jours à Trébaumec'

Ubu Gallery
416 East 59th Street, Manhattan
Through Sept. 30

In 1900, two French businessmen, the brothers André and Édouard Michelin, published a guide to help sell automobiles — or, more specifically, the tires they manufactured for them. By the late 1940s, the Michelin Guide, which rated historical sites, hotels and restaurants on a star system, was a French institution

and perfect fodder for a Surrealist-style parody, which [Georges Hugnet](#) (1906-74) began in 1947. It took Mr. Hugnet 22 years to complete his faux Michelin guide, but it is a small masterpiece. [Ubu](#) Gallery is showing original collages from the guide, as well as maquettes of it and versions that were published by the bookbinder Henri Mercher in 1969.

Mr. Hugnet's guide centers on a fictional town in Brittany called Trébaumec, whose name is a French pun that roughly translates as "good-looking guy." Rather than the customary Michelin Man, Mr. Hugnet provides a Michelin woman as a guide. Per the Surrealist ethos, there are lots of uncanny juxtapositions and odd setups involving castles, beaches and banquets. Day converges with night; people cavort nude or in absurd military costumes; familial, class and animal-human relationships are turned upside down.

Mr. Hugnet's Michelin Guide is mostly madcap fun, but underneath ripple the legacies of colonialism, which introduced "exotic" foreign lands and generally paved the way for tourism. (Some of Michelin's earliest guides were for French colonies, like Algeria and Tunisia.) And now that we live in an era in which online guides and apps rate everything from beaches and food trucks to doctors, the hardcover Michelin Guide looks quaint, but Mr. Hugnet's gonzo approach to culture is oddly prescient.

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