

GLADSTONE GALLERY

D. Creahan, "New York – Carrol Dunham at Gladstone Through June 16th, 2018," *Art Observed*, May 22, 2018

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NEW YORK – CARROLL DUNHAM AT GLADSTONE THROUGH JUNE 16TH, 2018

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Carroll Dunham, *Any Day* (2017), via Gladstone

Embracing an elaboration and expansion of his interests in the nude form, and a continued interest in the possibilities for abstraction in exchange with approaches to portraiture and figuration, artist [Carroll Dunham](#) returns to [Gladstone Gallery](#) this month, bringing with him a body of new paintings created over the past year. Drawn from his *Wrestlers* series, Dunham uses the visual language of mythological depictions of wrestling, mined from art historical sources and his own memory, to propose new through lines in his practice that are both formal and autobiographical in nature.

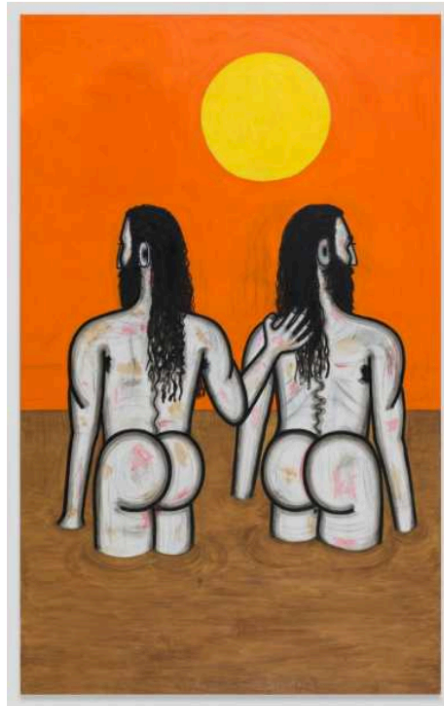


Carroll Dunham, (Installation View), via Gladstone

The nude body has appeared frequently throughout Dunham's work, always in a sort of distended, flowing abstraction the mixes together modern pop with a studied knowledge of painterly history. Yet Dunham's interest in history equally moves beyond

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the Western canon, moving into the languages of Eastern modes of depiction, early figurative techniques, and flat plane depictions that introduce a sort of abstracted movement and form to his bodies. Here, this interest in early modes of human depiction is crystallized through an equally ancient artistic tradition. Pulling from the language of the Greek heroic mythologies and depictions of the human body locked in combat, Dunham allows his approach to return to the same subject matter from which much of his technique seems to have emerged.



Carroll Dunham, *Mud Men* (2017), via Gladstone

Each composition provides a unique insight into the physical and mental struggles among these competing figures, either through straightforward scenes of men attacking each other, or through the documentation of defeated men left for dead. This psychology is intensified through the formal framing of the men within the rectangular bounds of the canvas, as well as through the repeated insertion of jet black birds that witness the violent matches and aftermath of each battle, predatorily looming over the turbulent scenes.

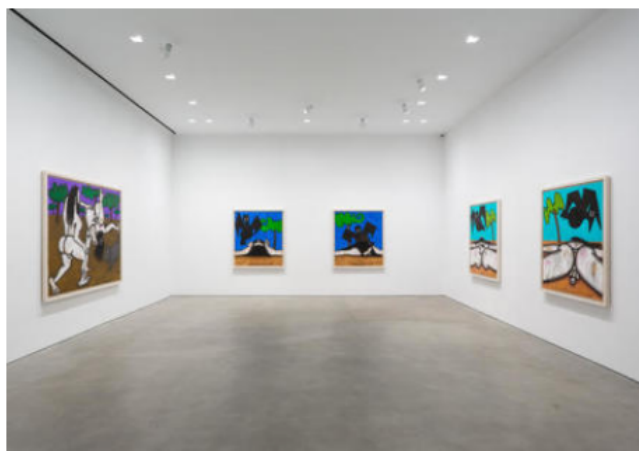


Carroll Dunham, *Left for Dead* (2017), via Gladstone

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The wrestlers here exude much of the thematic interest that has already marked so much of Dunham's work, namely the ideas of playfulness, violence, and sexuality bound up in images and iconographies that seem harmlessly familiar to us as art viewers. Yet Dunham's techniques, so rich in color and line, and reducing his figures to vectors of movement and energy, manages to imbue his compositions with this same energy, lent all the more energy and power through their particular sense of minimalism and pure movement. Images swirl and swell with color, leading to depictions that are as much representations of the energy of their subject matter as they are rote depictions. Dunham seems to fill in the gaps between gesture and form this way, leading to completed pieces that fill the canvas not only with sensuous bodies and scenes, but equally with the power and enthusiasm of their creation.

Dunham's work is on view through June 16th.



Carroll Dunham, (Installation View), via Gladstone

— D. Creahan

Read more:

Carroll Dunham at Gladstone [[Exhibition Site](#)]