

# Thomas Erben Gallery



Clockwise from top left: RJ Messineo, Wang Chen, Sarah Faux, Haley Josephs

## ***Pleasure in Precariousness***

Sarah Faux, Haley Josephs

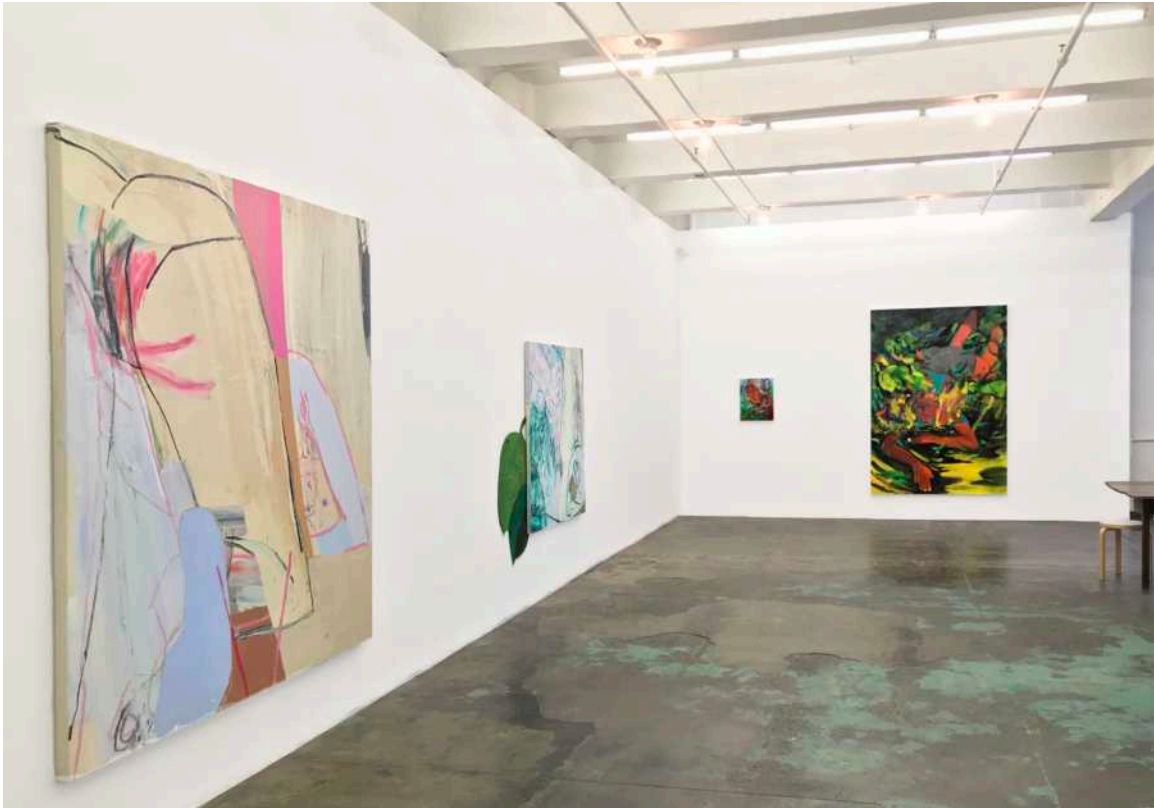
RJ Messineo, Wang Chen

June 27 - July 26, 2019

Opening reception: Thursday, June 27, 6 - 8:30pm

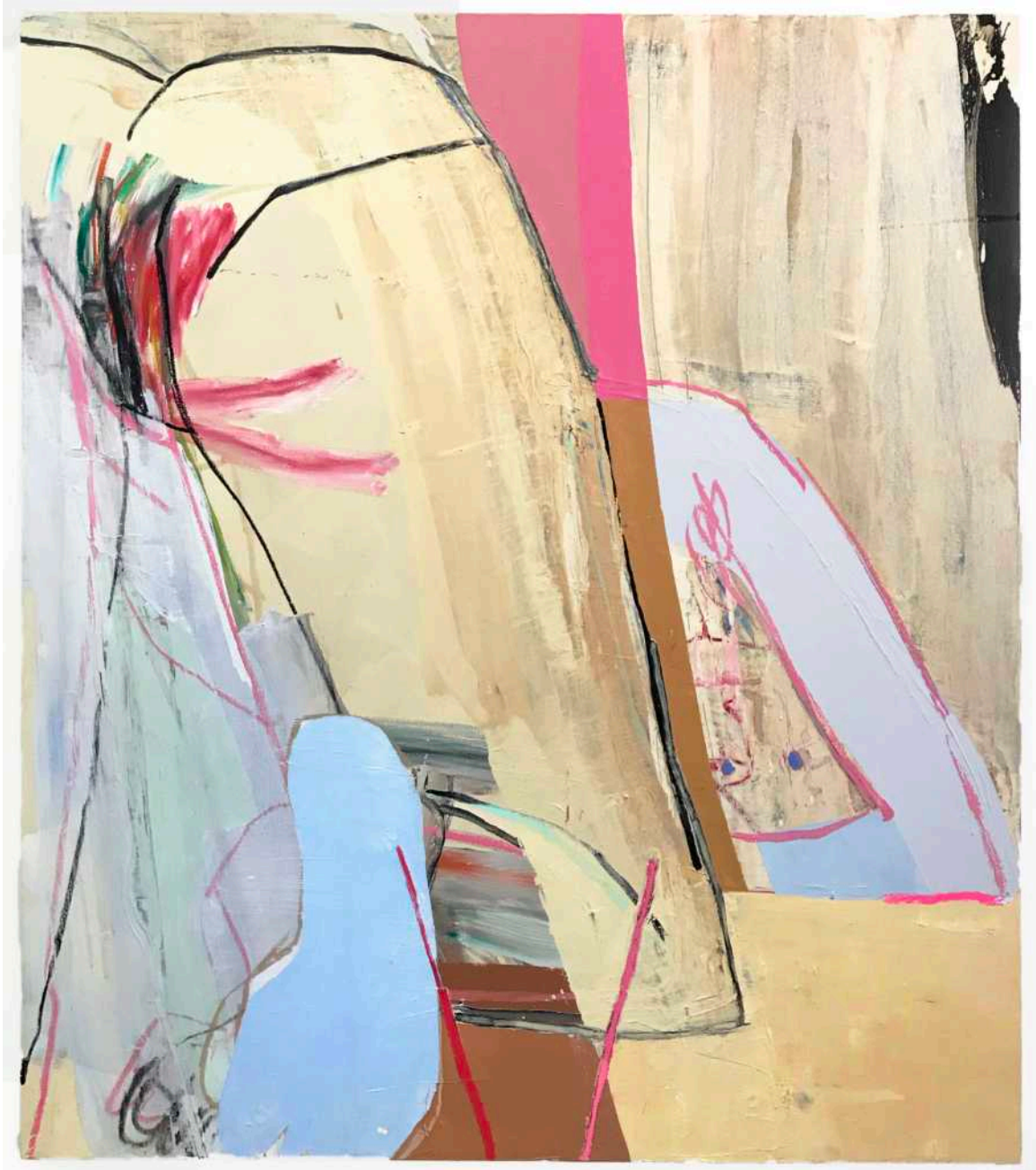
Thomas Erben is excited to present *Pleasure in Precariousness*, an exhibition of works by Sarah Faux, Haley Josephs, RJ Messineo, and Wang Chen. Across painting, video, and collage, *Pleasure in Precariousness* surveys a slippery and open corporeality, rendering the self/body/subject as variously disembodied, fragmented, agape, multiplied, absent, or implied. A searching quality threads the works, aided by the artists' respective (and often shared) explorations into eros, play, touch, and interiority, as does a common inclination for painting.

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Installation view: *Symbol-life*, *Untitled (Greens)* & *Float Tank*, *Late June*, and *Fallen*.

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**Sarah Faux, *Symbol-life*, 2018. Oil on canvas, 80 × 70 in.**



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**Sarah Faux**, *Untitled (Greens) & Float Tank*, 2019. dye on cut canvas and oil on canvas. 54 x 48 in.

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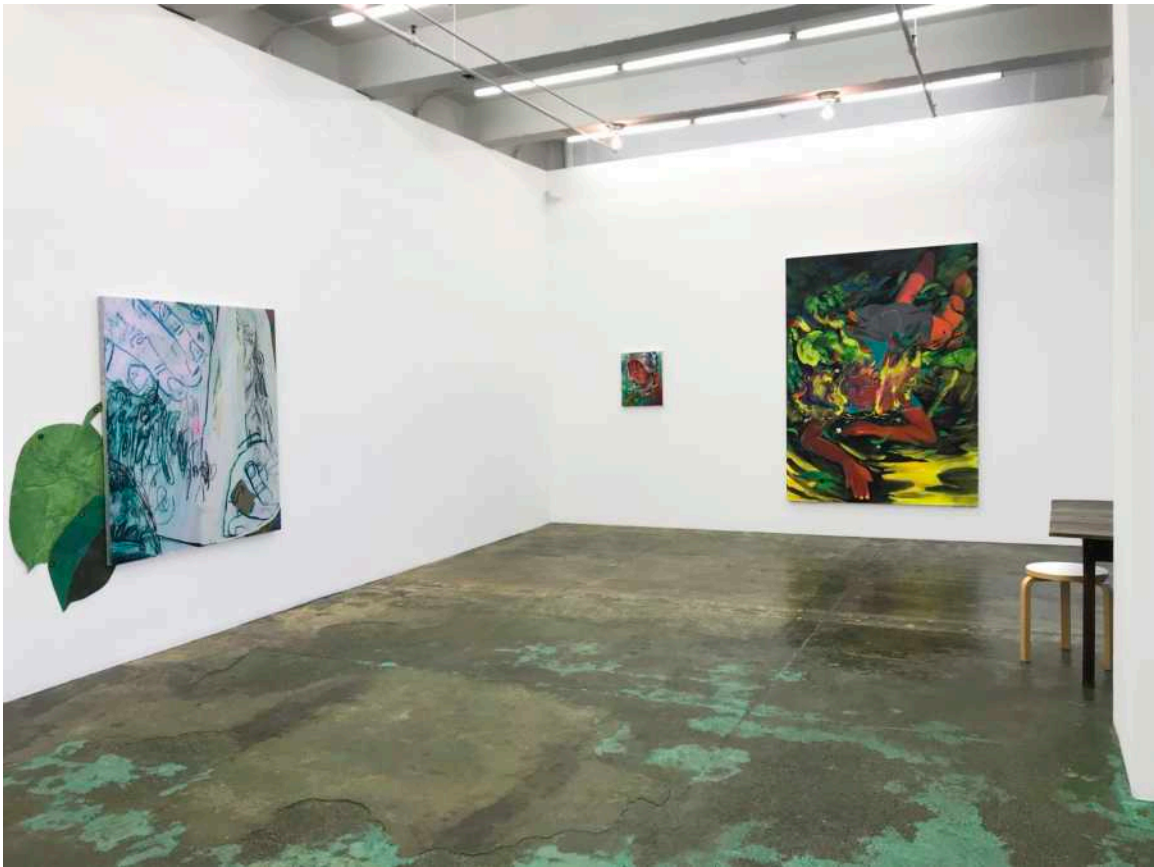


Installation view: *Symbol-life*, *Untitled (Greens)* & *Float Tank*.

Apprehending “the canvas as analogous to a body,”<sup>(1)</sup> **Sarah Faux’s** (b. 1986, Boston, MA) work in painting and cut-outs (collaged canvas works) conjure scenes of a shifty, somatic nature. Entering into the sensual, the flowing lines in her cropped paintings echo shivering states of desire. In *Float Tank* (2019), two boldly outlined hands run over a hirsute chest, green and black swirling marks suggesting tangles of hair, while a tenderly rendered face rests quietly in the bottom-left corner. How all these body parts add up or not (two, three, or more people?) remains an ongoing question left elusively unanswered.

(1) Sisto, Elena. "Sex and Play and Painting: Sarah Faux in Conversation with Elena Sisto." *artcritical*, February 22, 2018. <http://www.artcritical.com/2018/02/22/elena-sisto-with-sarah-faux/>

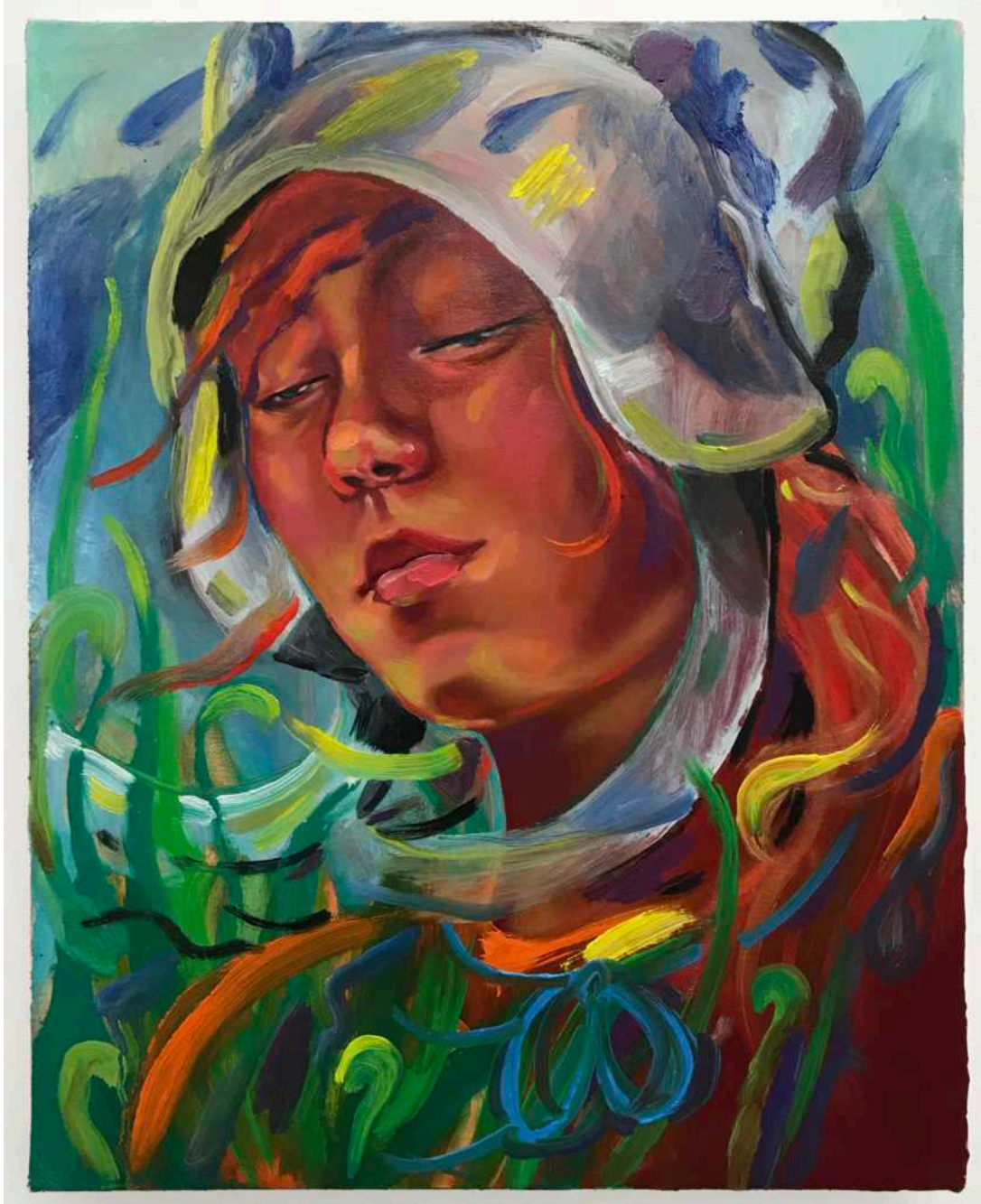
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Installation view: *Untitled (Greens)* & *Float Tank*, *Late June*, and *Fallen*.

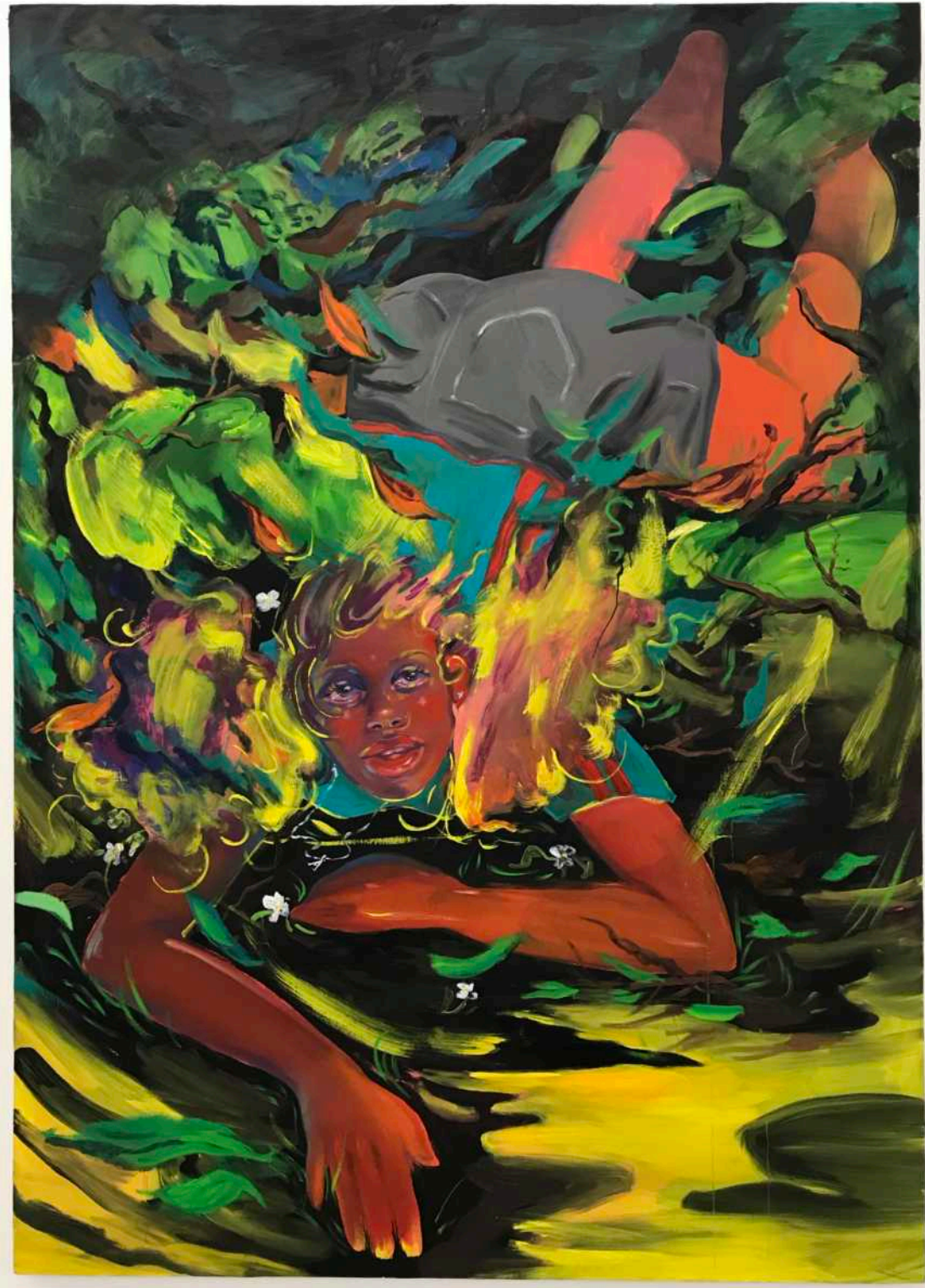


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**Haley Josephs**, *Late June*, 2019. Oil on canvas, 20 × 16 in.

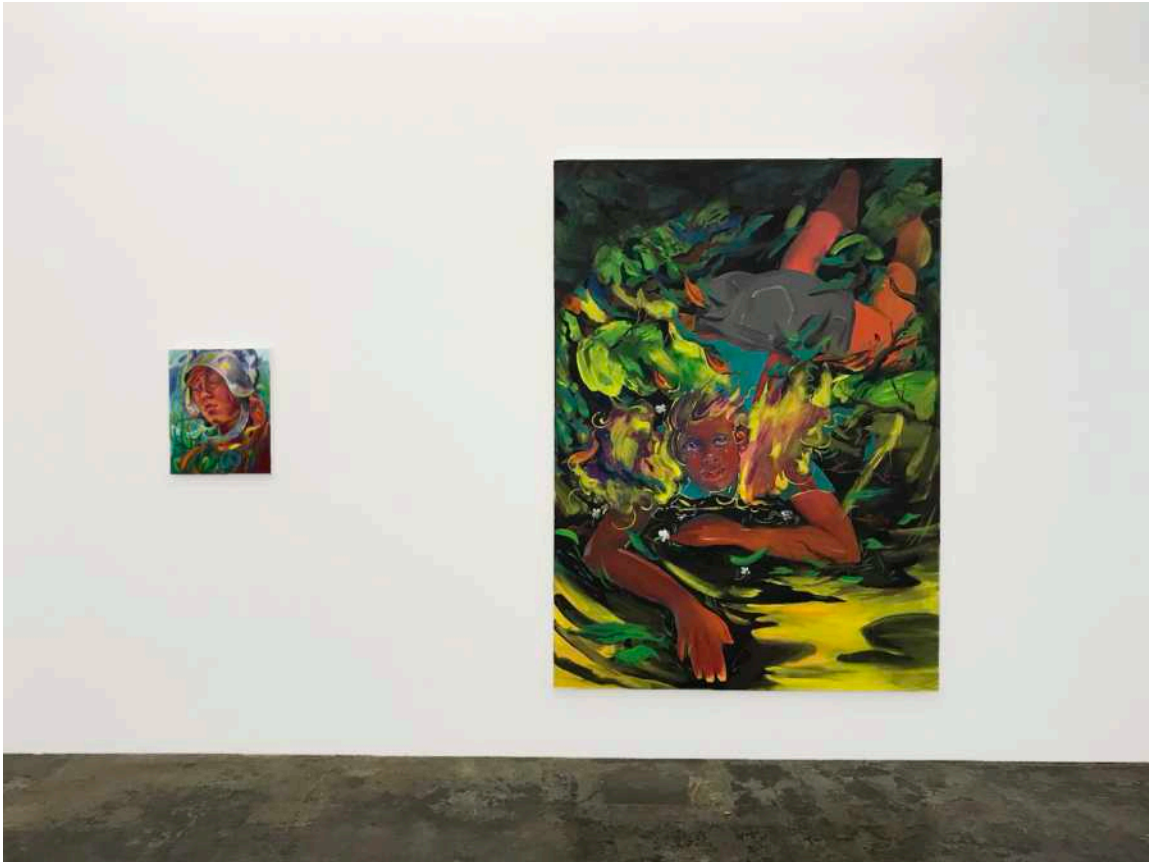
# Thomas Erben Gallery



**Haley Josephs, *Fallen*, 2019. Oil on canvas, 20 × 16 in.**



# Thomas Erben Gallery



Installation view: *Late June*, and *Fallen*.

Similarly moving through internal, emotional landscapes, **Haley Josephs'** (b. 1987, Seattle, WA) paintings radiate with saturated colors and engrossed female figures. In *Fallen* (2018) a spotlighted figure lies stomach down on a lawn of smeary green foliage, streaks of blues and orange, and a pool of yellow. Flushed-faced, hazily unworried in the wake of the title's implied stumble, the youthful subject's defined eyes look vacantly up to meet the viewer. Expressionistic with a keen sense for color, *Fallen* manifests a psychedelic, private worldview.

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Installation view: *Rose Window*, *Rabbit Hole*, *Blue Cloud*, and *This Is How It Looked*.

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**RJ Messineo, *Rose Window*, 2019. Oil and wood on canvas, 67 × 48 1/2 in.**



# Thomas Erben Gallery



Installation view: *Rose Window*, *Rabbit Hole*.

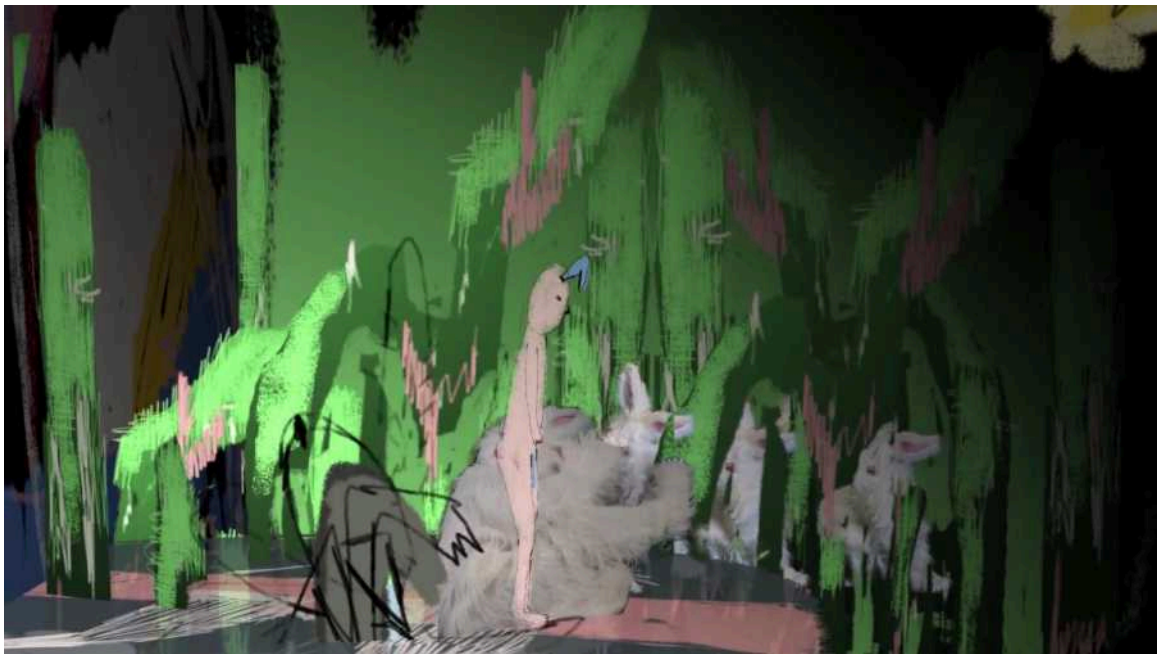
Exploring sexuality, gender, and self within morphing, immersive, amusement park-esque digital worlds, **Wang Chen** (b. 1991, Hohhot, China) creates paradoxically personal video and installation works. Presented as a single-channel video, *The Rabbit Hole* (2015) descends, hovers, and veers through a series of colorful, raster graphic chambers. Mixing cuteness and violence, drawn and painterly gestures, embodied and animated rabbit figures, the video is a beguiling trip into Wang's own Wonderland.

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**Wang Chen**, stills from *Rabbit Hole*, 2015. Digital Video, 1 minute 8 seconds, edition of 5.

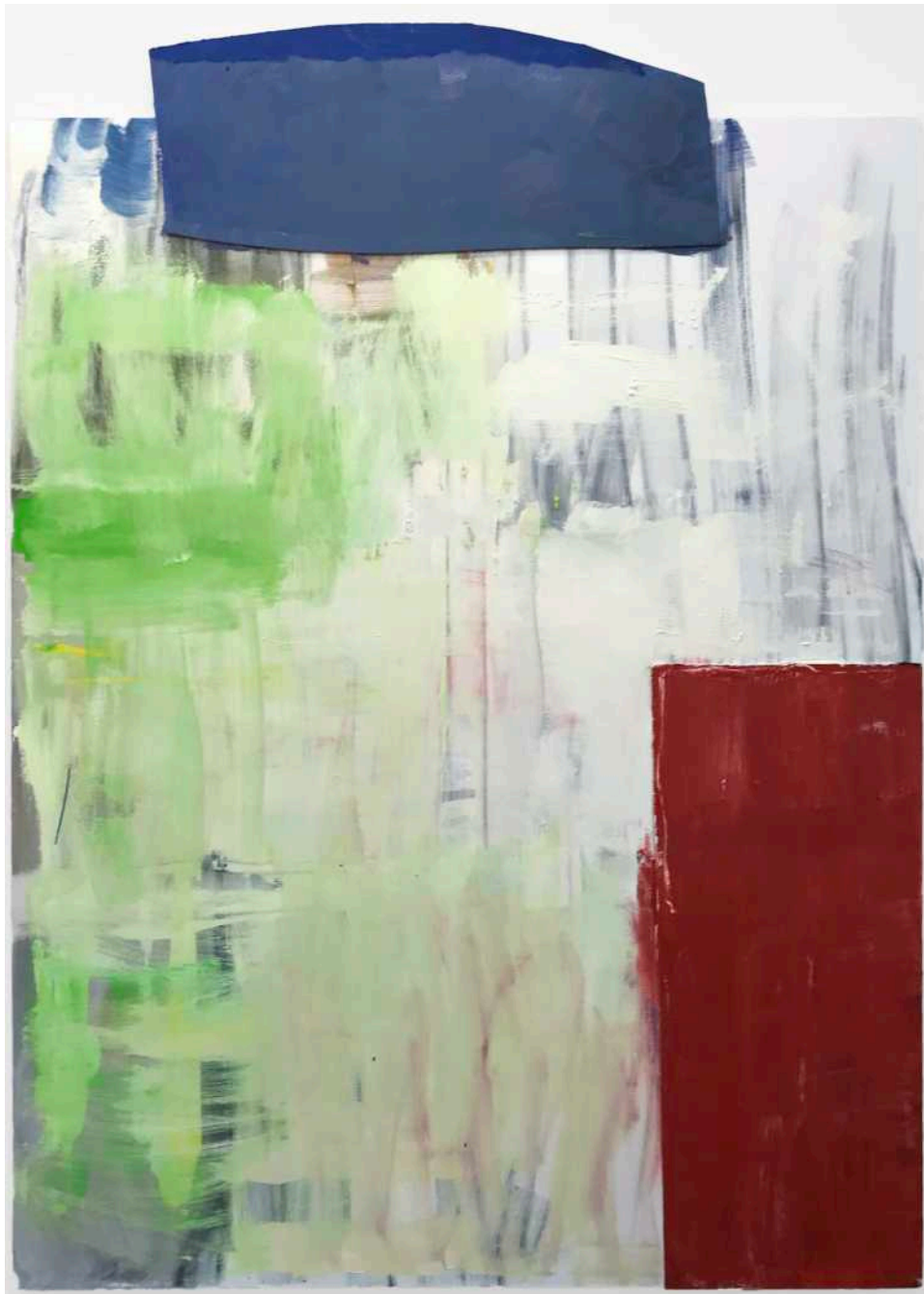
# Thomas Erben Gallery



**Wang Chen**, stills from *Rabbit Hole*, 2015. Digital Video, 1 minute 8 seconds, edition of 5.



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**RJ Messineo**, *Blue Cloud*, 2019. Oil and wood on canvas, 97 × 70 1/2 in.

Conspicuously abstract amid the figurative works of the other artists in the exhibition, **RJ Messineo's** (b. 1980, Hartford, CT) paintings nevertheless chart both inner-states and outward encounters with the built world. Attaching shaped sheets of thin plywood onto often large stretched canvases — creating paintings in paintings — Messineo's "second surfaces" make reference to windows, blankets, and the experience of looking at painting and at the city.

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**Sarah Faux**, *This Is How It Looked*, 2019. Oil on canvas, 22 x 20 in.

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Installation view: *Rose Window*, *Rabbit Hole*, *Blue Cloud*, and *This Is How It Looked*.

Whether it be the gestural washes, lines, and strokes in Wang's video works; Josephs' saturated, exalted portraits; Faux's sensual, bodily entanglements; or the abstract approaches to spatiality in Messineo's canvases, painting offers all of these artists a means for revelation, transformation, and, often, what RJ Messineo has called, "pleasure alongside precarity."<sup>(2)</sup>

(2) Burr, Tom. "Second Surfaces: RJ Messineo Interviewed by Tom Burr." Bomb Magazine, March 30, 2018.  
<https://bombmagazine.org/articles/second-surfaces-rj-messineo-interviewed/>