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Tuesday, December 29th, 2015

“Cyborg” at Zürcher Gallery, “Devotion” at Catinca Tabacaru Gallery

[print](#)

by David Cohen

[Frank Benson, Juliana, 2014-2015. Painted Accura® Xtreme Plastic rapid prototype, 54 x 48 x 24 inches. Courtesy of Andrew Kreps Gallery](#)

Frank Benson, Juliana, 2014-2015. Painted Accura® Xtreme Plastic rapid prototype, 54 x 48 x 24 inches. Courtesy of Andrew Kreps Gallery

To represent concurrent and complementary group exhibitions from curator William Corwin, here is a work by an artist in neither. Perverse, I know, but bear with me.

Cyborg, now in its closing week at Zürcher Gallery, does indeed include three photo/text pieces by Juliana Huxtable, the model of Frank Benson’s 3-D printed sculpture pictured here. (In the course of writing this article, Benson’s *Juliana* emerged as the final ARTCRITICAL PICK for 2015.) Benson’s work, voluptuous and ethereal in equal measure, was the presiding presence over the 2015 Triennial at the New Museum and feels a fitting cover image in the dwindling days of a year joyfully marked by increased transgender visibility. But that isn’t the theme of either of Corwin’s exhibitions.



Michel Huelin, *Xenobiosis 5*, 2007. 106 x 106 inches. Courtesy of Zürcher Gallery, New York

Cyborg unites disparate contemporary visions of man/machine hybrids, going well beyond cinema’s Vitruvian conception (Metropolis to Ex Machina) of the robot. The show encompasses everything from Michel Huelin’s visually overbearing computer renderings of post-nature environments to Cordy Ryman’s stark yet engrossing walk-in representation of the digital binary in relief panels of alternating and repeating bars of color; and from Tamar Ettun’s disconcertingly “other” casts of the artist’s isolated body parts to Corwin’s own sculptures eerily evocative of the phantasmagoric-vehicular vision of Ezekiel that, as he recounts in an essay, he found himself discussing with Huxtable in her studio during the planning stage of his show.

While Cyborg deals with the future of embodiment, with the literal conquest of death, Devotion, at Catinca Tabacaru Gallery, concerns itself with visual contemplations of afterlife in a traditional if uber-ecumenical religious way. It is a glorious jumble of contemporary works, ranging from Roxy Paine hyperrealist sculptures of mushrooms and Elizabeth Kley ceramic lanterns and Serra Victoria Bothwell Fels’s rood screen dividing and cramping the gallery’s commercial premises into an approximation of a sacred space to Mike Ballou friezes of birds and a psychedelic throne by Rico Gatson, among others, with Russian and Romanian icons from the Tabacaru family collection thrown in for good measure. Some of the works are overtly spiritual, but many are joyously press-ganged into ritualistic duties in a curatorial installation that is itself a hybrid, to extend the metaphor of Cyborg, of chapel and *wunderkammer*. Taking a cue from Corwin’s curatorial energies, therefore, the Benson-Huxtable hermaphrodite thus presents itself as a connective tissue between the two shows, a vision of harmony of human will and biological grace.

Cyborg at Zürcher Gallery, December 1 to 29, 2015. William Corwin, Anthony Gormley, Katie Holten, Tamar Ettun, Juliana Huxtable, Michel Huelin, Mike Cloud, Cordy Ryman. 33 Bleecker St, between Lafayette Street and Bowery, New York City, (212) 777-0790

Devotion at Catinca Tabacaru Gallery, November 21, 2015 to January 17, 2016. Mike Ballou, Joe Brittain, William Corwin, Serra Victoria Bothwell Fels, Elizabeth Ferry, Rico Gatson Elisabeth Kley, Rachel Monosov, Roxy Paine, Joyce Pensato, Katie Bond Pretti, Carin Riley, Paul Anthony Smith, Justin Orvis Steimer, Gail Stoicheff, Sophia Wallace. 250 Broome St, between Orchard and Ludlow streets, New York City, (212) 260-2481



installation shot, Devotion, at Catinca Tabacaru Gallery, New York, 2015

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