

David Ebony, "David Ebony's NYC Autumn TOP 10," *snapSHOT of the Art World*, October 1, 2020.



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Rivane Neuenschwander, *Fear of*, 2020, fabric, thread, acrylic paint
24 3/8 x 35 inches (62 x 89 cm). Photo courtesy Tanya Bonakdar Gallery.

As New York City galleries and museums begin to reopen this fall, masks and social distancing are mandatory. Some proprietors have implemented added precautions, asking to take visitors' temperatures as they enter the gallery, or requesting names and phone numbers for possible contact tracing in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the larger Chelsea galleries, such as David Zwirner, Pace, and Metro Pictures, are requesting timed entrance notifications, to avoid crowds, which you can schedule online free of charge.

The various safety precautions are meant to put visitors at ease in order to better experience firsthand what is proving to be an extraordinary art season. Here below are comments on some of the outstanding and unforgettable contemporary art exhibitions currently on view. It was difficult to select just ten exhibitions to highlight, but I tried to choose shows featuring a variety of mediums and thematic concerns, plus a range of artists, from celebrated veterans and mid-career artists, to talented newcomers deserving of greater attention.

Petzel

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Pieter Schoolwerth, *Shifted Sims #6 (Tropical Romance Island Community Event)*, 2020, Oil, acrylic, inkjet on canvas, 70 x 58 1/2 inches (177.8 x 148.6 cm). Photo courtesy Petzel Gallery.

5.) Pieter Schoolwerth at [Petzel Gallery](#) through October 31.

The St. Louis-born, New York artist Pieter Schoolwerth is known for a unique hybrid of photo-enhanced painting construction, featuring riotous figure groupings, fractured spaces, and ambiguous narratives that reflect in one way or another our turbulent and largely irrational times. He based the images for this fantastic show, *Shifted Sims*, on screenshots from the strategic life-simulation computer game *The Sims 4*, in which players create and control people. In these vibrant, large-scale works, Schoolwerth offers a scathing critique of the godlike presumptuousness of video games, virtual reality, and computer CGI in general. Here, the avatars he lets loose are protagonists in various outlandish tableaux, such as a sexy *Baywatch*-like scene in *Shifted Sims #6 (Tropical Romance Island Community Event)*, 2020. The people on the beach, however, with faces rendered in Francis Bacon swooshes of paint, can hardly conjure erotic content. An existentialist dilemma unfolds here, where attempts to save an apparently drowning male figure leave behind a woman's transparent silhouette hovering along the shore. This ghostly countenance, which can barely register as human, has apparently just entered another dimension.

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Pieter Schoolwerth, *Shifted Sims #10 (Male Pregnancy Mod)*, 2020, Oil, acrylic, inkjet on canvas, 85 x 115 inches (215.9 x 292.1 cm). Photo courtesy Petzel Gallery.

There are large doses of humor throughout the exhibition, as in *Shifted Sims #10 (Male Pregnancy Mod)*, 2020, which shows a hospital's elaborate medical procedure to assist pregnant males in the birthing process. Schoolwerth may be prescient, or simply a renegade upstart, but the visually arresting and conceptually stimulating works he presents in this show make an indelible impression on all who dare to come near. ●

<https://snapeditions.com/2020/10/01/david-ebonys-nyc-autumn-top-10/>