

# The New York Times

## What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

JULY 14, 2016



Alice Tippit's "Vane."

Courtesy of the artist and Nicelle  
Beauchene Gallery, NY

### Alice Tippit

'Ess Envy'

*Nicelle Beauchene*  
327 Broome Street  
Lower East Side  
Through Aug. 12

In her magnetic small paintings at Nicelle Beauchene, the Chicago artist Alice Tippit slyly juggles dualities of figure and ground, and abstraction and representation. Painted in mostly flat planes of suavely muted colors, these works are metaphorically piquant, subtly funny and often erotically suggestive. In "Vane," an off-white triangle pointing downward on a tan background reads

like an abstracted bikini bottom thanks to a red fingernail-tipped digit overlapping its upper edge. The finger's placement seems a pointed, possibly sexual gesture but remains teasingly enigmatic. Like Ms. Tippit's other works, "Vane" recalls Modernist graphic design of the 1950s — that of Paul Rand, for example — while projecting its own personally resonant visual poetry.

The red-nailed finger turns up again in "Token," as the tail of a winding, pale snake on a dark background. A rotund blue vase shape in the upper-right corner might read like a female counterpart — vagina, womb — to the phallic serpent. There are mythic overtones to that image, as there are in "Iris," in which a bright-yellow banana oriented like a smile rhymes with a small white dome shape above that's like a clipped moon in the night sky. It's a sweet haiku of a picture.

KEN JOHNSON

CRITICS' PICKS

## New York

### Alice Tippit

**NICELLE BEAUCHENE GALLERY**

327 Broome Street

June 30–August 12

Alice Tippit's boldly graphic, hard-edge paintings are refined and puzzle-like. In these sketchbook-scale works, she offsets a cool, formal harmony with a wry and cryptic language of symbols, arabesques, and geometry. Irregular vases, decontextualized fruit, elongated hands, and weird animals populate her spare compositions, evoking vintage textile design and antique sign painting as well as art history. In *Iris* (all works 2016), a Victorian crescent moon hangs facing down—like a happy, Cyclopean eyelid—in a velvety-black sky. A canary-yellow banana under it makes a big clownish smile. *Flat* is the profile of a forest-green boob with an inverted nipple, set against a coral-flesh background. Or is the nipple-dip not negative space but a protruding part of a concave object in green space instead? Tippit's paintings ask us to toggle between myriad readings. And hues of sepia, peach, and terra-cotta pop up in most of the works on view, so we seek out the body everywhere.

Up close, you see the paintings are carefully, subtly constructed, containing rich areas of barely-there color gradients and cross-fades. *Part* might be the most detailed piece. Rendered in a vaguely familiar illustrational style, a sullen face with precise features emerges from a field of beige. The “part”—a midpoint of the subject's striking hairstyle—doubles as a butt crack. It's hard not to notice that the dark, wavy shoulder-length hair looks like the silhouette of a person from the back, bent over. Pointed toes and shapely calves raise an ass into the air. Such genial lasciviousness along with painterly lushness lends the artist's unsolvable riddles rare appeal.



Alice Tippit, *Part*, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 20"

— Johanna Fateman

BLOUINARTINFO

MODERN PAINTERS

## 24 ARTISTS TO WATCH

December 2014

New talent is continually springing up in unanticipated places, approaching the world in unexpected ways. Instead of harkening back to the last 12 months in our year-end issue, we prefer to look forward. In that spirit, we present our annual list of the most compelling artists to emerge from around the globe. However, it is our conviction that artists are the best assessors of their peers. Thus, we've asked a select group of more established artists to let us know who among their younger colleagues they are excited about. We are thrilled to share their recommendations with you below.



*Slip*, 2014. Oil on canvas, 18x15in.

### Alice Tippit

LIVES IN CHICAGO.

#### Describe your process

I make paintings, but I don't identify myself as a painter, mostly because I'm not as invested in the process of painting but more in how the resulting image may be understood, with the history and visual language of painting operating as a potential factor. The paintings themselves are typically created very quickly. All decisions—color, form, degree of painterliness—are worked out beforehand with an eye toward how these choices will affect the reception of the image. Ultimately, I seek to produce images that function as signs in which the interaction of elements produces visual relationships that seem to project specificity while remaining ambiguous enough to allow interpretation and inquiry.

**What inspires you?**

I have an ongoing romance with *Popular Photography*, but only the years 1950 to 1970. I love the mix of advice for amateurs and reader submissions. At that time, amateurs striving for artistry still took their cues from painting, and the results are often mildly terrible and/or modestly weird. The zone of poor decision making vis-à-vis the image is consistently inspiring to me.

**What's on your cultural radar for 2015?**

I dream of making it to the Pierre Huyghe show at LACMA before it departs in February. And I've been making an assault on the Russian Novel (currently, *The Brothers Karamazov*).

**How would you characterize the art scene in your city?**

Chicago is very livable for artists. It's easy to make work here. Will it be seen by anyone besides your friends? Perhaps not. To put it simply, the art pH of the city is out of whack. New York is too acidic, Chicago is too base. L.A. might be the perfect neutral, but then, I hate driving—so Chicago it is.

**What do you have coming up?**

At this point in my life, the future doesn't stretch far beyond the next six months. I will be in a group show at Hap Gallery in Portland, Oregon, in early 2015. The outlines of other opportunities remain a bit blurry.