

HYPERALLERGIC

ARTICLES

Best of 2017: Our Top 15 Brooklyn Art Shows

From project spaces off the beaten track to nonprofits in Dumbo, galleries in Bushwick, and the Brooklyn Museum, there was so much strong work in the borough this year.



Hyperallergic | December 19, 2017



(illustration by Hrag Vartanian/Hyperallergic)

It's been an exceptionally good year for art in Brooklyn, from the borough's flagship museum and the

galleries in Bushwick to the nonprofits in Dumbo and Red Hook. Some galleries in neighborhoods not typically associated with contemporary art grew into their own this year, making regular visits to Bed-Stuy and Park Slope essential. Here are our favorite shows we saw in 2017 without crossing a river, creek, or other borough border.

1. We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85 at the Brooklyn Museum



Lorraine O'Grady, "Mlle Bourgeoise Noire Costume" (1980) in *We Wanted a Revolution* (Benjamin Sutton/Hyperallergic)

April 21–September 17

3. *Race and Revolution: Still Separate — Still Unequal* at Smack Mellon



je lenochan, "Unfinished Business: 'What You Think Matters Too.' (Part III)" (2017)
(Seph Rodney/Hyperallergic)

June 24–August 6

This exhibition was the second iteration of a show curated by Katie Fuller last year: *Race and Revolution: Exploring Racial Injustices Through Art*. That exhibition used visual art to illustrate deeply problematic historical events, many of them precipitated by the US government. This version was well served by the addition of a second curator, Larry Ossei-Mensah, who helped to find

artists who would extend and deepen the critiques of the first show, to move beyond simple illustration to posing probing queries and haunting polemics. —*Seph Rodney*

4. Postcommodity, *Coyo* at Art in General



Installation view of Postcommodity's *Coyotaje* at Art in General (Benjamin Sutton/Hyperallergic)

March 25–June 3

To say that Postcommodity is having a moment is an understatement; they've come to represent part of the zeitgeist with their poignant work that straddles (often literally) the border regions of national identity and spatial politics. Composed of artists Raven Chacon, Cristóbal Martínez,



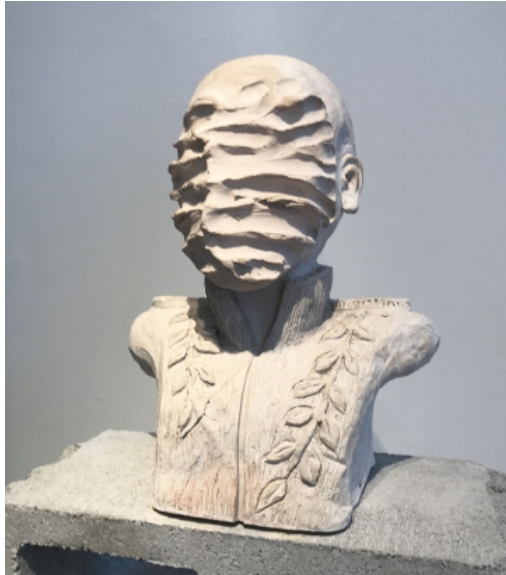
Installation view of Ron Baron's *Beyond-Beyond* at Smack Mellon (Benjamin Sutton/Hyperallergic)

on parenthood, generational divides, and transmission. My interest in this exhibition was partly in the way the artist was able to expertly suggest a myriad of narratives that never fully emerge into a coherent whole even as seeds of new narratives suggested themselves throughout. Where did the people go? Are they safe? Who is missing? We don't know but we feel their loss. —*HV*

15. Otherwise, you don't see me at SOHO20

June 1–July 2

In a year that witnessed multiple



Deborah Castillo, "Slapping Power" (2016)
at SOHO20 (Benjamin
Sutton/Hyperallergic)

iterations of a blatantly discriminatory travel ban, a campaign to take healthcare away from millions, and countless other acts of administrative cruelty, [this exhibition](#) bringing together works by artists working with the material traces of bureaucratic violence felt painfully pertinent. Curated by SOHO20's Rachel Steinberg, it spanned works very specifically taking up the imagery of visas and identification cards, like Andrea Arrubla's pile of painted Social Security cards, to pieces that offered more cathartic relief, like the video by Deborah Castillo in which she slaps a wet clay bust of Simón Bolívar until it's disfigured. Though Bushwick galleries can sometimes

feel like they're taking refuge from reality in formalism (especially in summer), this show and several others this year (including our number five, *Nasty Stitches*) brought together very smart, seemingly disparate works into very successful and cohesive frameworks. —*BS*

Honorable Mentions

CLUE: Mr. Drury with Eyes Wide Open at Urban Glass



Helena Parriott, "Citadel" (2017) at UrbanGlass (Benjamin Sutton/Hyperallergic)

September 6–October 28