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What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in August

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This week in Newly Reviewed, Jillian Steinhauer covers Paula Wilson’s intricately layered work, Paul Gagner’s art of mordant anxiety and Molly Zuckerman Hartung’s “Menopause Recalls Puberty (M.R.P.)”

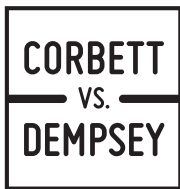
Molly Zuckerman-Hartung

Through Aug. 25. Below Grand, 53 Orchard Street, Manhattan; belowgrandnyc.com.



Detail of Molly Zuckerman-Hartung’s “(2019-2024),” comprising more than 500 4-inch-by-6-inch photographs that capture artworks, experiments, sketches, snippets of text and more. Credit via Molly Zuckerman-Hartung and Below Grand Gallery, New York; Photo by Andrew Woolbright

Molly Zuckerman-Hartung’s exhibition “Menopause Recalls Puberty (M.R.P.)” starts on the street, where you can see a pair of large paintings hanging in the gallery window. They are gestural and abstract, with colorful, blocky shapes emerging from swaths of layered paint or splotchy, stain-like marks. Fittingly, the paintings are imperfectly aligned with each other and hanging just off-center. They seem to disavow any legible system of order.



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That rejection is interesting enough, but it's more compelling once you have seen the heart of the show: "(2019-2024)," a collection of some 500 photographs from Zuckerman-Hartung's studio installed in a grid in the gallery's back space. The pictures capture artworks, experiments, sketches, snippets of text and more. You may notice a selfie or the moody shadows of her work space. Images of figures crawling and pointing recur, in the photographs and in a series of printed collages hanging perpendicular to the wall. The installation discloses just enough to create a sense of mysterious intimacy; it's personal without being confessional.

Zuckerman-Hartung was part of the feminist punk riot grrrl movement in the 1990s and 2000s. Later, she helped found an experimental artist-run space in Chicago. Now she makes and teaches art and writes about it with a heavy dose of theory.

All these identities inform her work, which feels somehow both carefully considered and provisional. "(2019-2024)" is a portrait not of the artist herself but of her process of art making. While poring over the sprawling grid, I found a phrase that felt like a clue to decoding it: "a recurrent experience of being ... existential rhythm over representation."