

ARTS

# Visceral Gaze At Frieze New York: Women Artists Command Our Attention

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Cristina BanBan 'The Three Graces' (2022) Oil, oil stick on linen. 228.6 x 182.9 cm | 90 x 72 in. ... [+]  
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND PERROTIN.

Three topless women overlap, baring their ample breasts, pink washes over the breasts of the woman on the left, her nipples outlined in red. Pops of green, blue, and pink panties guide our gaze, red paint erupting from the lower left and less so from the lower right, contrasting with the shadowy light background that frames their faces. Their hands and fingernails exaggerated, their faces avoiding direct eye contact with the viewer.

Oil paint and oil stick on linen enhance the sensuality and intimacy, encouraging us to wonder what the women are thinking or feeling. We're drawn into their dialogue, yet they hold the secrets.

The large-scale *The Three Graces*, a new painting by Cristina BanBan, passionately weds European figuration with gestural brushstrokes, varying in texture to create depth. Energy surges from the figures and the composition, exuding feminine might. Her monumental work invigorates the viewer who walks away with lingering curiosity. Born in 1987 in Barcelona, BanBan now lives and works in Brooklyn, and is sure to rise quickly as the art world embraces her emotional narratives.

On view at Frieze New York, it's a highlight of the [Perrotin](#) booth which sold out at yesterday's preview amid robust attendance. The contemporary art gallery located on three continents is represented in United States on the Lower East Side, which is quickly rising a major New York City art destination. The fair, featuring more than 65 world-leading galleries opened to the public today and runs through Sunday at The Shed in Manhattan. Explore a wide range of works by globally-renowned masters and innovative emerging artists in a sprawling venue.



Frieze New York 2022 Installation View, L-R: Nancy Grossman (b.1940) H.U.F., 1980 leather, wood, ... [+] ©  
NANCY GROSSMAN; COURTESY OF MICHAEL ROSENFELD GALLERY LLC, NEW YORK, NY

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Few artists working today capture the visceral across genres, styles, and mediums, as much as Nancy Grossman. Viewers are enraptured, shocked, appalled, and confronted with an array of emotional responses that can't be ignored. From fast, furious lines that convey musculature and vascularity, to the meticulous stitching of leather screaming of human flesh, every work is provocative and impossible to forget.

It's always a guilty pleasure to watch others view Grossman's leather-covered wooded human heads, whether it's their initial reaction or the inability to look away, time after time.

Grossman created her subversive leather-wrapped head sculptures, which she refers to as self-portraits, between the late 1960s and the 1980s. Inspired in part by late 1960s liberation movements and the Vietnam War, they remain relevant amid ongoing social strife and terror, serving as silent witnesses to cruelty and chaos. The 82-year-old feminist is as vital as ever.

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The [Michael Rosenfeld Gallery](#) booth is dedicated to a solo exhibition of Grossman's works, tracing her depiction of the human figure across sculpture, collage, printmaking, and drawing. *Nancy Grossman: My Body*, showcasing three decades of Grossman's figural practice, extends to a show of the same name on view at the Chelsea gallery.

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**Pacita Abad** (1946–2004) 'How Mali lost her accent' (1991) Acrylic, oil on stitched and padded ... [+]  
 IMAGE COURTESY PACITA ABAD ART ESTATE, PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLES ROUSSEL

A visceral response conjures feelings and emotions that may obscure or overshadow reason. Erupting beyond thought, visceral reactions are onerous, if not impossible, to ignore or dismiss. Visceral is a term commonly assigned to visual art that provokes us, often with brazen imagery (representational, figurative, or abstract), symbolism, and colors. Viewing art isn't passive; we engage in a dialogue with the works and we may experience an array of physical responses such as weeping, gasping, sweating, squealing, or horripilation. Often, people cringe, look away, cough, or display other signs of nervousness or uneasiness that they can't conceal. Such reactions should draw us closer to the work, deepening our gaze, and compelling us to confront new ideas and perspectives.

Technique, composition, medium, subject, or any combination of those, can evoke a visceral response. Sometimes, it's subtle or unexpected, so take time to engage with every work.

**Pacita Abad's** large-scale, lavishly colored acrylic and oil on stitched and padded canvas, *How Mali lost her accent*, depicts a smiling, young Laotian and Vietnamese girl wearing a Benetton purse. It seems joyous, but there is a visceral dialogue that confronts racial identity politics. Mali dominates the center, surrounded by computers and banners and facades of leading U.S. universities such as Yale, Harvard, and University of California at Berkeley. She achieves Western success only by giving up her native language and culture.

**Tina Kim Gallery** presents the work of the Abad, who died in 2004, reminding us of the enduring struggle of welcoming and attaining the American dream.

"When Mali came here she didn't speak English, but when I saw her recently I said, 'Mali, how come you lost your accent?' She replied. This is how the kids talk in school.' She has to do it because she has to blend in," Abad revealed in *Women Artists of Color: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook to 20th Century Artists in the Americas* by Phoebe Farris.

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