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3 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

Assume Vivid Astro Focus at Tibor de Nagy, “Field of Vision” at Peter Blum and “The Poet-Engineers” at Miguel Abreu.

‘Field of Vision’

Through July 30. Peter Blum Gallery, 176 Grand Street, Manhattan; 212-244-6055; peterblumgallery.com.

I started the elegant five-artist show “Field of Vision” with Kamrooz Aram’s “Maghreb Drapery,” a pale green diptych filled with wax-pencil arabesques. Because these patterns carry such different weight in American abstraction and Islamic design, but Aram is so clearly referring to both, I couldn’t quite get my bearings. How was I to decide if the work was any good? And what did it say about my standards that the very qualities that made his paintings so pleasurable to look at — rough brush strokes, extra pencil lines, flat blocks of color that don’t quite reach their edges — could also, in a different context, simply be evidence that they were unfinished?

Tweaking the pretensions of American painting, it turns out, is a great way to set up work by four other American painters who flirt with the boundary between art and design. With colorful large squiggles like musical rests, Patricia Treib plays a game similar to Aram’s, setting ambiguous large squiggles that look almost like musical rests — or asterisks, fleurs-de-lis, or any number of other signs — against off-white backgrounds. Sarah Crouner and Rebecca Ward sew together pieces of painted canvas — boldly colored for Crouner, muted for Ward — and let seams form their patterns’ hard edges. Three pieces by Suzan Frecon, filled with muted red and burnished gold, confidently cast off the top-heavy shadow of 20th-century abstraction and simply glow.

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Kamrooz Aram’s “Maghreb Drapery” (2020), a diptych filled with wax-pencil arabesques, in the group show “Field of Vision.” Kamrooz Aram and Peter Blum Gallery