

ARTFORUM

“Zombie Formalism, 1970–2016”

by Nicholas Chittenden Morgan
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“Zombie Formalism, 1970–2016” is a group exhibition that switches out Clement Greenberg for Roger Corman and skewers the work of all those (mostly) hot young dudes of recent vintage who’ve made process-based abstraction so insufferable. Mark Prent’s morbidly hilarious sculptures of desiccated, flesh-hungry creatures, *His Final Statement* and *Five Stuffed Crows* (both 1970), reimagine aesthetics as a horror show and artistic production as brain-eating. They also broaden the much-maligned term under which these pieces are being shown, helpfully putrefying notions of fashion and market cool.

Nods to this stripe of making’s sleekness and chicness, however, are here, but they’re decades old: Boyd Rice’s diamond-shaped swath of enamel-sprayed cotton that looks almost photographic, *Untitled*, 1975, and Jeff Way’s psychedelically striated *Untitled (Red-Green)*, 1971, are juxtaposed with more recent iterations of zombie styling, cleverly perverting what could be mistaken as an exhibition of homages to something more incestuous, necrophilic, interesting. **Megan Marrin’s** juicy rendering of a corpse flower, *Those three days (titan arum)*, 2015, imprints itself quite indelibly upon the mind. Her take on large-scale Photorealism is shot through with a Novalisesque romanticism that revels in the erotics of absurd phallocentrism.

The younger generation’s works on display are not critical of zombie art. And they certainly aren’t dismissive of their senior peers, either. Here, many queer minds gather together to inhabit all kinds of worlds—idiosyncratic, camp, and hallucinatory—in ways that your typical walking-dead crapstractionist could never imagine. Amalgams that inhabit them, reminiscent of those in some of Cora Cohen’s paintings. Like Cohen, Dodd invests a lot of her considerable energy in craftily evading the imposition of her own will on her work.