

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

By Max Lakin, Martha Schwendener and Jillian Steinhauer

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This week in Newly Reviewed, Max Lakin covers Christopher Wool's sculptures in a dilapidated setting, Paa Joe's reimagined New York icons and C'naan Hamburger's contemporary vanitas paintings.

Christopher Wool

Through July 31. 101 Greenwich Street (entrance on Rector Street), Manhattan; seestoprun.com.



A view of Christopher Wool's show "See Stop Run" at 101 Greenwich Street. Christopher Wool

The dilapidated 19th-floor office space hosting Christopher Wool's recent sculptures and paintings could not be more simpatico with them. In its state of abandoned tear-down, the venue offers melodious visual rhymes: electrical cords dangling from the ceiling ape Wool's snarls of found-wire sculpture; crumbling plaster mirrors the attitudinal blotches of his oils and inks. Scrawls of crude graffiti or quickly penciled notes left by workmen emulate the tendril-like lines dragged through Wool's globular masses of spray paint. The space is a horseshoe-shaped echo of Wool's work — raw, agitated — and the restless elegance he wrenches from a feeling of decay.

Wool said he started to think about how environment affects the experience of looking at art when he began splitting his time between New York and Marfa, in West Texas. Photographic series he made there, like "Westexaspsychosculpture," depict forlorn whorls of fencing-wire debris that look like uncanny mimics of Wool's own writhing scribbles, and which inspired scaled-up versions cast in bronze. (The Marfa landscape is fertile ground for New York artists. Rauschenberg made his scrap metal assemblages after witnessing the oil-ruined landscape of 1980s Texas, what he called "souvenirs without nostalgia," a designation that's appropriate here, too.)

Place has always seeped into Wool's work. His photographs of the grime and trash-strewn streets of the Lower East Side in the 1990s — compiled as "East Broadway Breakdown" — aren't included here, but "Incident on 9th Street" (1997), of his own burned-out studio, are. The chaos of those scenes repeat here, the wraparound floor plan and endless windows letting the city permeate the work, just as it did in their making.