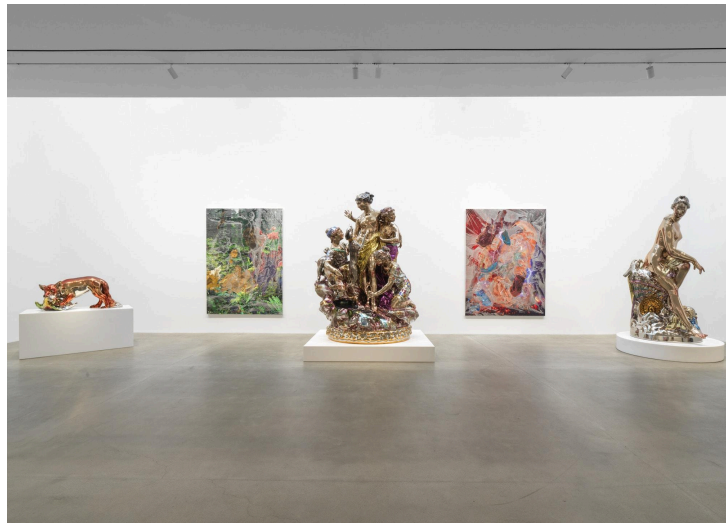


Galerie

8 Must-See Solo Gallery Shows in January

From Jeff Koons's monumental stainless-steel sculptures depicting gods, goddesses, and hunting beasts at Gagosian in New York, to the legendary Marisol's lively self-portrait drawings and lithographs at Matthew Marks Gallery in Los Angeles

BY PAUL LASTER JANUARY 5, 2026



Installation view, "Jeff Koons: Porcelain Series," Gagosian, New York.
PHOTO: MARIS HUTCHINSON. © JEFF KOONS. COURTESY OF GAGOSIAN

Rounding up the best gallery exhibitions across the United States each month, *Galerie* traveled from the East Coast to the West Coast to highlight the top solo shows for January. From Jeff Koons's monumental stainless-steel sculptures depicting gods, goddesses, and hunting beasts modeled after porcelain figurines and layered paintings blending landscapes with the artist's gestural brushstrokes and historical prints at Gagosian in New York to the legendary Marisol's lively self-portrait drawings and lithographs at Matthew Marks Gallery in Los Angeles, these are the not-to-be-missed shows this month.



Jeff Koons, *Kissing Lovers*, (2016-25).

PHOTO: MARIS HUTCHINSON. © JEFF KOONS. COURTESY OF GAGOSIAN

1. Jeff Koons | Gagosian, New York

Celebrated for elevating low-culture objects like inflatable toy rabbits, balloon dogs, and gazing balls to the status of fine art, Jeff Koons creates large-scale paintings and sculptures that continue to influence contemporary art. Equally recognized for contributing to the Duchampian dialogue around the readymade, continuing Warhol's engagement with consumerism, and embracing Kierkegaard's and Sartre's ideas on acceptance and transcendence, the New York-based artist returns to Gagosian with a sensational selection of new and recent works.

The stainless-steel sculptures, created over a 10-year span, depict gods, goddesses, and hunting beasts modeled after antique porcelain figurines. Monumental in size, their mirror-polished, vividly painted surfaces portray animals and lovers entwined in an eternal embrace, as well as Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt. Related paintings—layering landscapes with the artist's gestural brushstrokes and historical aluminum-leafed prints—accompany the larger-than-life, reflective figurines. Recalling Sigmar Polke's postmodern canvases with their experimental pairing of imagery and expressive gestures, they add a new style of picture-making to Koons's extensive body of work, while serving as a perfect contrast to his beauty-embracing deities and creatures in pursuit.

Through February 28



Giorgio Griffa, *Quattro colori*, (2012).

PHOTO: DAN BRADICA STUDIO. © GIORGIO GRIFFA. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND CASEY KAPLAN.

2. Giorgio Griffa | Casey Kaplan, New York

An Italian artist linked to the Analytical Painting, Arte Povera, and Minimalism movements, Giorgio Griffa is widely known for his straightforward, process-driven approach to painting that focuses on the act of mark-making rather than the final artwork. Describing his process as “constant and never finished,” he deliberately pauses his brushstrokes mid-sentence, perceiving painting as a continuous dialogue rather than a completed story. When he’s not exhibiting his work, his canvases are folded and stacked, leaving permanent creases that become a crucial part of the composition, creating a structural grid that signifies the passage of time.

His seventh solo show with the gallery since 2012, the survey “Consistently Through Variation” features more than 20 paintings from the last five decades. The striking exhibit showcases works created between 1969 and 2025 by the Turin-based artist, painted in acrylic or watercolor on raw, unprimed canvases, burlap, or linen—hung directly on the wall rather than stretched or framed. The show highlights his various series or cycles, including his *Primary Signs* works, which emphasize simple horizontal, vertical, and diagonal marks. It also features *Numbers and the Golden Ratio* pieces, referencing the Fibonacci sequence—where each number is the sum of the two preceding ones—or the Golden Ratio, a system used to develop visually balanced and pleasing designs by mimicking natural proportions. Regardless of the system used, the end result is as pleasing to the eye as it is to the mind.

Through January 10



Julian Schnabel, *Number 6 (Van Gogh Self-Portrait Musee d'Orsay, Vincent)*, (2020).

PHOTO: TOM POWEL IMAGING. PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK. © JULIAN SCHNABEL STUDIO. COURTESY OF MNUCHIN GALLERY.

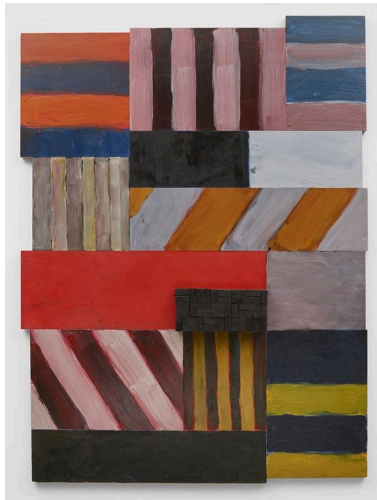
3. Julian Schnabel | Mnuchin Gallery, New York

One of the American artists credited with spearheading the return to painting after years of dominance by Minimalism and Conceptual Art, Julian Schnabel first gained recognition for his innovative plate paintings when they were exhibited in a sold-out show at New York's Mary Boone Gallery in Soho in 1979. Among the leading figures of the Neo-Expressionist movement, known for paintings with bold brushwork, heroic size, and emotional imagery, the Brooklyn-born artist, who was educated at the University of Houston and through the Whitney Independent Study Program, quickly gained attention with his larger-than-life public persona—long before he added filmmaking to his illustrious career.

Showcasing 19 expressive works, the exhibition "Plate Paintings, 1978–2025" is the most comprehensive survey of these groundbreaking paintings to date. Inspired by Antonio Gaudí's mosaics in Barcelona, the earliest paintings were made with plates Schnabel bought at a Salvation Army store and shattered with a hammer before adhering them to wooden panels with Bondo and paint. Standout works on view range from the artist's first plate painting, *The Patients and the Doctors*, from 1978, and his 1985 reclining nude odalique of his first wife, *The Red Hills Near Fez (Portrait of Jacqueline)*, to *Number 6 (Van Gogh Self-Portrait Musee d'Orsay, Vincent)*, from 2020, which he painted after making his critically acclaimed

2018 film about Vincent van Gogh, *At Eternity's Gate*, starring Willem Dafoe as the prized Post-Impressionist painter.

Through January 31



Sean Scully, *Orange Tower*, (2025).

PHOTO: © SEAN SCULLY, COURTESY OF LISSON GALLERY.

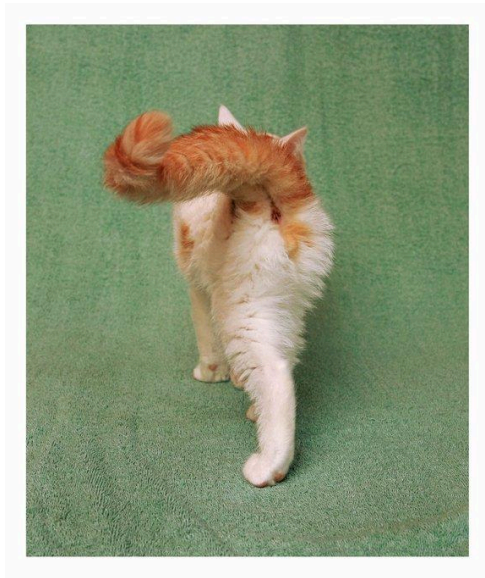
4. Sean Scully | Lisson Gallery, New York

A widely recognized Irish-born American artist, Sean Scully moved from London to New York in 1975, during the height of Minimalism, challenging it to develop a more personal painterly vocabulary he calls emotional abstraction. Exploring how geometric forms can express powerful human emotion and spiritual experience, he employs soft-edged blocks, stripes, and grids with thick, visible brushstrokes and blurred edges to create shapes that seem to breathe, imparting a tactile and sensual quality to the work. Expanding his abstract painting into sculpture, he stacks materials such as stone, steel, and painted wood, layering them to create massive solid towers, open lattices, and smaller cubes.

Returning to Lisson for his eighth solo show since 2019, the exhibition “Tower” features three interconnected bodies of work. The large-scale *Tower* paintings are made up of smaller painted wood, felt, and aluminum panels, highlighting a variety of styles, colors, and textures from different periods of the artist’s work, creating a vertical narrative of his artistic development. On a smaller scale, eight new paintings on copper, a material Scully has used since 2016, continue a European tradition dating back to the 16th century of using copper as a luminous painting surface. The third part of the related works on

display features three handcrafted stone cube sculptures, with skillfully stacked elements that create an engaging geometric interaction between various natural materials.

Through January 24



Arne Svenson, *Strays 55*, (2010).
PHOTO: COURTESY OF ROBERT KLEIN GALLERY
5. Arne Svenson | Robert Klein Gallery, Boston

A self-taught American photographer known for a voyeuristic style that blends documentary realism with classical composition, Arne Svenson explores the inner life and unconscious essence of his subjects, including both people and inanimate objects. Transforming everyday actions into universal human symbols, his most acclaimed series—each published as a book—are *The Neighbors*, where he used a telephoto lens to photograph people in the glass-walled apartment building opposite his Manhattan studio; *Sock Monkeys*, a series of black-and-white portraits of handmade sock monkeys that emphasize their unique personalities; and *The Prisoners*, which includes found mugshots from the turn of the century, where he attributed stories to the images by researching and narrating the prisoners' crimes.

The New York-based artist's exhibition "Sock Monkeys and Strays," his third solo show with the gallery, features a small selection of his photographs of the monkeys, along with a larger collection of color photographs of kittens shot on vibrant, patterned thrift-store fabrics. Dolls crafted during the Great Depression, initially using red-heeled "Rockford" work socks, the folk-art monkeys, which Svenson

photographed with a large-format camera in the style of 19th-century portraiture, are from the private collection of Ron Warren, a former director at Mary Boone Gallery. *The Strays*, however, showcase real-life kittens borrowed from an Upstate New York animal rescue, perceptively emphasizing—in a distinctive way—the unseen, the ignored, and the overlooked.

Through January 31



Studio Lenca, Costa, (2025).
PHOTO: COURTESY DAVID CASTILLO
6. Studio Lenca | David Castillo, Miami

Studio Lenca, the alias of José Campos, is a Salvadoran-born contemporary artist now living in Margate, UK, where he has a studio at Tracey Emin's TKE Studios—with the name Lenca honoring his indigenous ancestors from eastern El Salvador. Dedicated to highlighting and empowering marginalized Latin American communities, he creates paintings, sculptures, performances, and videos, drawing on experience as a queer, formerly undocumented migrant who fled the Salvadoran Civil War. He is best known for his large-scale paintings depicting figures in sharp suits and extravagant, wide-brimmed hats, which he portrays as crowns of nobility, demanding attention for a community often forced to hide in plain sight.

His first solo exhibition with the gallery, “Landscapes” features 20 colorful figurative paintings of the artist’s recurring motif of the *historiantes*, figures rooted in the Salvadoran tradition of dancers re-enacting oral histories introduced during the colonial era to instill Spanish Catholic narratives among the indigenous population. In the paintings in this exhibit, the colorful figures blend with their environment, which the artist envisions as an equal player in the scenarios. The exhibition also features *Rutas*(Routes), Studio Lenca’s ongoing project with communities that documents journeys into the United States through painting.

Through January 31



Marina Stern, *Bull and Bear*, (1967).

PHOTO: PAUL SALVESON. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST'S ESTATE AND BEL AMI

7. Marina Stern | Bel Ami, Los Angeles

An Italian-American painter known for her detailed, luminous depictions of industrial landscapes, architecture, and still lifes, the late Marina Stern was born in Venice, Italy, and fled to the United States in 1941 to escape racial and religious oppression. Based in New York, she built a 50-year career spanning movements from Pop Art to Neo-Immaculate Realism, characterized by sharply detailed, austere paintings and prints focused on the built environment and the modern American landscape. She cultivated a lifelong fascination with the interplay of light and shadow, resulting in imaginative paintings featuring warping patterns and frames, alongside pristine depictions of barns, cityscapes, and industrial sites.

The first retrospective dedicated to her work since her passing in 2017, the two-part exhibition “Luminary,” is presented by Bel Ami and CW American Modernism, with works on view at both galleries. The former displays a selection of whimsically surreal paintings from the 1960s, along with Stern’s 1980s still lifes, while the latter showcases the artist’s well-known American scenes. Standout paintings at Bel Ami include interior views of repeating rooms with checkerboard floors and windows or doorways opening to surreal scenes—one with a Renaissance maiden leading to a blue sky, another revealing three moons, and a third depicting a bull and a bear—along with sublime still lifes of a group of crumpled paper bags and a vase of red tulips on a reflective tabletop.

Through February 14



Marisol, *Untitled*, (1979).

PHOTO: © ESTATE OF MARISOL. COURTESY OF MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY.

8. Marisol | Matthew Marks Gallery, Los Angeles

Born María Sol Escobar, the late Marisol was a trailblazing Venezuelan-American artist who became a star of the 1960s New York art scene. Celebrated as the “Queen of Pop Art,” she was a friend of Andy Warhol and gained fame for her striking beauty and mysterious, often silent, persona. Despite her early rise to fame, she stepped away from the spotlight in the late 1960s to travel, leading to decades of relative obscurity until a major retrospective at the Buffalo AKG Art Museum in 2024 reignited interest in her art. Her best-known work includes witty portraits of world leaders and celebrities, including the Kennedy family, John Wayne, and Queen Elizabeth II. Later in her career, her focus shifted to marine life, inspired by her scuba-diving experiences in Tahiti, and to social concerns.

An exhibition of self-portrait drawings and lithographs, “Marisol: Works on Paper” features six pieces from 1971 to 1979. The two-part black-and-white lithographic print *Diptych* depicts the artist’s full nude figure, using her own body as a living stamp after inking it and pressing it directly against the lithographic stone or paper, while the colorful *Catalpa Maiden About to Touch Herself* reproduces her head and arms above a torso made of printed leaves. The remaining four works are drawings: three poetically titled colored-pencil pieces that trace and layer parts of her body as if to convey the energy being emitted, and a final *Untitled* crayon piece that captures her aura on a white sheet of paper, almost like a spiritual transmission.

Through January 31