

Artist profiles: the names you should know at Armory

[James H. Miller](#)



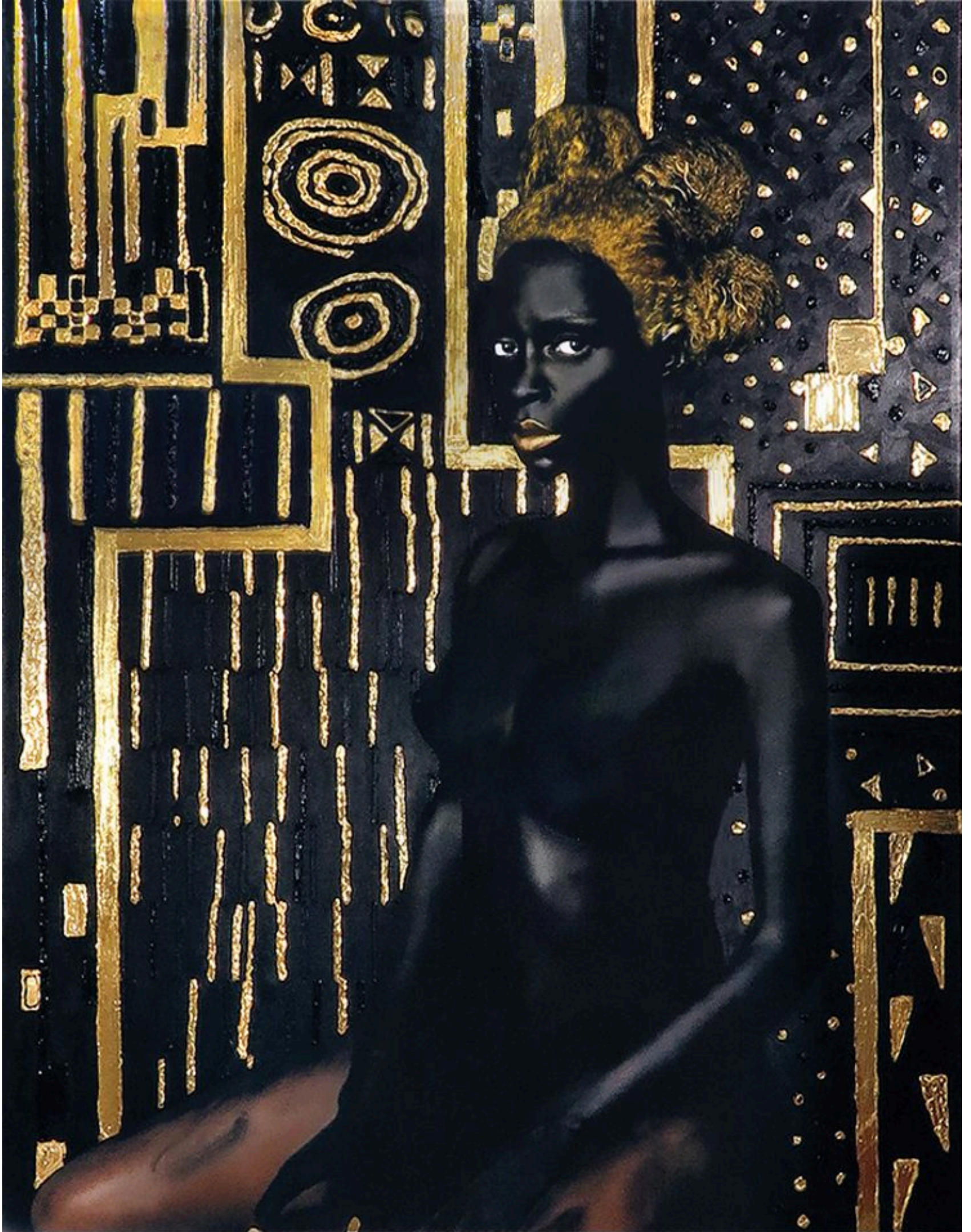
Image courtesy of Athi-Patra Ruga and WHATIFTHEWORLD

Athi-Patra Ruga (b. 1984), showing with WHATIFTHEWORLD, Cape Town. One might not immediately guess from Athi-Patra Ruga's lush, technicolour tapestries, installations and photographs—a bouquet of balloons sprouting from red-stockinged legs, or a regal figure in a lace catsuit on a floral throne—that South Africa's grim legacy of apartheid was his ultimate source material. Creating what he describes as a “mythical metaverse” populated by a cast of queer characters (all portrayed by Ruga), the artist stages narrative works as a way of proposing alternative political and social realities. Above, Athi-Patra Ruga, *Lizalis Indinga Lakho* / *Autistik Imperium* (2017)



Photo: Jaka Babnik

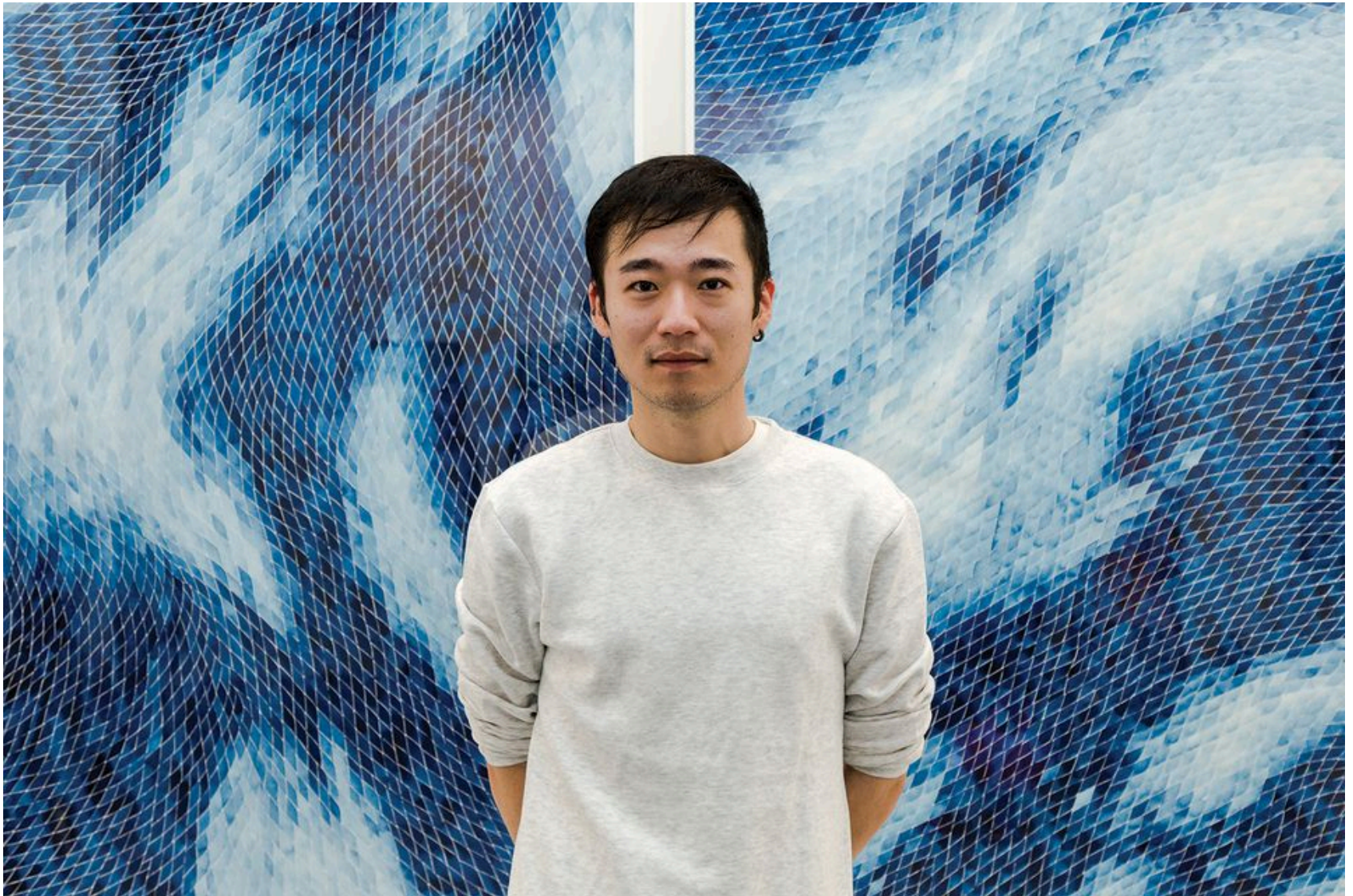
Ebecho Muslimova (b. 1984), showing with Galerie Maria Bernheim, Zurich. Muslimova was studying sculpture at Cooper Union when she began sketching ribald cartoons of a grinning, gymnastic alter ego she dubbed Fatebe in the back of her notebook. The character is defined by her flesh: crouching Fatebe offers up her breasts in her hands, prone Fatebe uses a rope-and-pulley system to sprinkle Gold Bond body powder on her itchy nether regions. "They're not self-portraits, but her body relates to my body. Things that I can't say or do or perform myself, she can do for me." Above, Ebecho Muslimova, *How the Sensuality in Me Scatters* (2017)



Lina Iris Viktor

Lina Iris Viktor (b. 1987), showing with Mariane Ibrahim Gallery, Seattle. The Liberian-British painter and performer's new works for the Armory are cited as one of the reasons she recently sued the hip hop performers Kendrick Lamar and SZA for copyright infringement, claiming their music video *All the Stars*, for the movie *Black Panther*, heavily copies her black and gold *Constellation* series. At the fair, Viktor is showing five new pieces in her signature colour scheme, including a translucent work (2018) suspended in the center of a Mashrabiya-style installation "to be viewed as both sculpture and painting", she says. "I think in the future the works will become increasingly sculptural, and the spaces the work is presented in will become increasingly controlled to heighten the viewers experience. I want to start

building my environment. What we are creating for Armory is a step in that direction." Above, Lina Iris Viktor, Constellation VI (2017-2018)



Courtesy of the artist and Sabrina Amrani Gallery (Madrid)

Timothy Hyunsoo Lee (b. 1990), showing with Sabrina Amrani Gallery, Madrid. Originally studying for a career in medicine, the Korean-American Timothy Hyunsoo Lee changed paths after graduation to become an artist and now splits his time working between Seoul, Madrid and New York. This early background can be seen in the repetitive cell-like patterns and precise lines of his work—watercolour paintings, sculptures and neon pieces—but his aim is to explore the spiritual rather than scientific side of the world. Works from Lee's newest series at the Armory are made on gold leaf-covered canvases. Above, the artist with his work “A tremor, a touch, a ripple (han, sun, man, keum)” (2018)



Helen Escobedo with maquette for Coatl (1979) in her studio.

Helen Escobedo (1934-2010), showing with Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City. The late Mexican-British conceptualist Helen Mescobedo created monolithic public installations inspired by natural forms. Proyectos Monclova is showing her lacquered aluminium maquette (1979) for the work Coatl (1980), one of her best-known installations. Titled after the Aztec word for “serpent” and made of 15ft-tall orange and yellow serpentine girders, the work is installed at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Around this period, Escobedo also created contrasting ephemeral public works of art made of natural materials that aimed to address the impermanence of artistic artefacts.



Photo: Christian Werner

Julian Charrière (b. 1987), showing with Dittrich & Schlechtriem, Berlin. “The point where beauty and atrocity coalesce within the unknown is sometimes the right terrain to start a new project,” says the Swiss artist Julian Charrière of his research-based work, which has increasingly focused on technology and geology. Here, he is showing Future Fossil Spaces (2017), an installation of lithium vats and salt-brick towers from Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia, the largest salt flat in the world. The Bolivian government plans to mine the site for lithium, a necessary component in batteries, which would upend the landscape.



Photo: Becket Logan. Courtesy of the artist and Ryan Lee Gallery, New York

Emma Amos (b. 1938), showing with Ryan Lee Gallery, New York. Born in Atlanta and now working in New York, Emma Amos was the only woman included in the 1960s black activist collective Spiral. Amos has consistently pushed her practice across five decades—she introduced phototransfer and collage in the 1990s—while remaining committed to questions of the body. Ryan Lee is presenting *Work Suit* (1994), for example, in which Amos depicts herself wearing Lucian Freud’s “skin” to inject both social and formal instability into his white-male brand of realism.



Park Hyun-Ki (1942-2000), showing with Gallery Hyundai, Seoul. While Nam June Paik, considered the father of video art, might be better known internationally, Park Hyun-Ki is one of the earliest artists inside Korea to experiment with new media. Studying painting and architecture at Hongik University, he supported himself as an interior designer but started creating works using video monitors as sculptural elements in the 1970s after seeing Paik's *Global Groove* at the Daegu American Cultural Center. Park's pieces often approach technology through a decidedly Eastern lens, such as his carefully stacked *Untitled (TV Stone Tower)*, or his kaleidoscopic *Mandala* video projections. Above, a c-print of Park Hyun-Ki's performance *Video Inclining Water* (1979/2018)



Jaanus Samma (b. 1982), showing with Temnikova & Kasela Gallery, Tallinn A PhD candidate at the Estonian Academy of the Arts, Jaanus Samma has conducted sociological fieldwork in Estonia and elsewhere in Europe that directly informs his art on gender, queer subculture and public space. Recently, that work has addressed the public restroom. “These are places where the boundary between public and personal can easily fade,” says Samma. Temnikova & Kasela Gallery is showing *Flaminio Station I and II* (2017), wall constructions fashioned from ceramic tiles and chain-suspended toilet plugs.



Tabita Rezaire (b. 1989), showing with Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg. The French artist Tabita Rezaire produces digital works and acrylic mounted prints that deal with race and feminism—what she calls “digital healing activism”. Rezaire says the internet, like the world outside, is “exploitative, exclusionary, classicist, patriarchal, racist, homophobic, coercive and manipulative”. Typically featuring herself as the subject, her works are scattered with text like “exotic exhaustion”, “#reparations” and, as she is also a Kemetic yoga teacher, positive affirmations, such as “vibrate the cosmos and the cosmos shall steer the path”. Above, Tabita Rezaire, *Hoetep Blessings* (2016)



© Sarah Cain, Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co, New York. Photo: David Broach

Sarah Cain (b. 1979), showing with Galerie Lelong, Paris and New York and Honor Fraser, Los Angeles. Sarah Cain's feverishly colourful paintings recall work by some of the graffiti-inflected artists of the Bay Area Mission School, and she brings that energy to life with *two day painting* (2018), an installation at the entrance of Pier 94, which the artist created just before the fair opened as part of its Platform exhibition of large-scale works. A kind of painterly disobedience is essential to the artist's practice: consider the bold geometric works at Honor Fraser's booth, painted on dollar bills, music sheets, book jackets and stretcher bars, and her patchwork painting *Sky and Sea* at Galerie Lelong.