

CHINATOWN

Mathieu Malouf

Through Jan. 21. Jenny's, 9 Pell Street, 2B, Manhattan; 646-861-1581, jennys.us.



Mathieu Malouf's "Prototype for a Traditional Catholic 5G Tower in the City of Dresden With a Human-Size Reproduction of the Hand-Crafted Christ Stollen as the Central Emitter Mounted on a Simple Wood and Nails Construction," (2022). Mathieu Malouf; Photo by Joerg Lohse/Jenny's

The young painter Mathieu Malouf is known for roasting subjects like Jesse Helms and Jack Dorsey with his portraits, piling art-historical references and online idioms to make crude feasts of genius. He's also known for spats on social media. So when he attaches broken mushrooms to his canvases, burying them under fresh squidges of sky- and hay-toned oils, you know that he's trolling Julian Schnabel and his shattered plates. The 11 paintings in his show "Sculpture" seem sarcastic, ungainly and inebriated — but also sincere and committed to a quixotic kind of beauty. The hunching thinker contemplating a blotchy rose in "The Psychologist (Virgil)," after Magritte, wears ocher muscles like baguettes in a Cezanne still life, ready to slide off the world. "The Bountiful Harvest," where a goldminer bon vivant presents an eggplant to two donkeys, is a giddy, allusive stew.

Then, the syntax of text-to-image software like Dall-E echoes in the works' titles. The shiitake-studded composition of a crucified rag doll in "Prototype for a Traditional Catholic 5G Tower in the City of Dresden With a Human-Size Reproduction of the Hand-Crafted Christ Stollen as the Central Emitter Mounted on a Simple Wood and Nails Construction" feels planned by A.I., yet only a flesh-and-blood artist could execute its musky reality. A painting in the style of Francis Bacon's "Lying Figure" gives itself away: In Malouf's version, the nude draped on the striped divan is a streaky strip of pork. A machine wouldn't get the joke. **TRAVIS DIEHL**

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