

Frieze

Stead, Chloe: *What to See in Europe This Winter*

7 February 2024

What to See in Europe This Winter

From Grace Weaver's brazen female travellers at Max Hetzler, Paris, to an extensive retrospective of Emilio Prini's dematerialized practice at MACRO, Rome



Grace Weaver, *Touriste au Maroc* (Tourist in Morocco), 2022, mixed media on paper, 41 × 30 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Max Hetzler

There is an undeniable charm to be found in the way that Weaver paints female bodies. Brought to life with masonry brushes commonly used for concrete, each torso on view is an hourglass-shaped swirl of dusty pink and white oil paint accented with black dashes demarcating the back of a knee or the nape of a neck. Perversely, it's the weirdness of these characters' mitten-shaped hands, long necks and sloping shoulders that really bring them to life, a pleasant reminder that beauty is more than being possessed of a symmetrical face or a thigh gap. – *Chloe Stead*

Mathias Toubro / Lagune Ouest, Copenhagen / 19 January – 17 February



Mathias Toubro, *Wet Spectre*, 2024, oil, pencil, bees wax on MDF, 1.3 × 2.1 m. Courtesy: the artist and Lagune Ouest, Copenhagen; photograph: Malle Madsen

When it opened its doors in 1984, Café Krasnapolsky embodied the cultural zeitgeist of 1980s Copenhagen. Clad in cement, steel and glass, the New York-style cafe quickly became the favoured haunt of writers such as Poul Borum and Carsten Jensen who, alongside a host of Danish artists and intellectuals, could often be found propping up the distinctive oval bar, vying to see and be seen. For 'Showers', his solo exhibition at Lagune Ouest, Mathias Toubro has conjured the memory of this legendary space, transposing the bar's essence into the minimalist, white cube gallery. It's a restrained appraisal that avoids garish re-enactment, but whose elusive signposts might leave some visitors mystified. – *Alice Godwin*

Caspar David Friedrich / Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg / 15 December – 1 April



Kehinde Wiley, *The Prelude (Babacar Mané)*, 2021, installation view. Courtesy: the artist, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London and Rennie Collection, Vancouver; photograph: Fred Dott

Like many people who love to hike, I have retained my faith in the softness of the dewy earth; I revel in the halting silence and unrushed creations that envelop the landscape. 'Kunst für eine neue Zeit', or 'Art for a New Time', at Hamburger Kunsthalle is currently the most comprehensive exhibition featuring David Caspar Friedrich's works. But to my surprise, it was not his paintings of mist-furled mountains that caught my eye but the work of another in which I saw a version of myself reflected.

Standing four metres tall, Kehinde Wiley's *The Prelude (Babacar Mané)* (2021) is somewhat incongruous with the 19th-century canvases typically on display in the Kunsthalle. Based on Friedrich's *The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (1818), Wiley used a digital photograph to inform his oil painting and, provocatively, replaced the iconic (white) explorer with a Black male figure adorned with cornrows. Most noted for his presidential portrait of Barack Obama, Wiley is skilled at depicting a panoply of melanin-rich people in art historical contexts, yet seeing his solitary figure standing proud in a German institution still feels like an extraordinary event. – *Edna Bonhomme*

Steven Shearer / The George Economou Collection, Athens / 18 June – 15 March



Steven Shearer, *Atheist's Commission*, 2018, oil and ink on poly canvas, 1.8 x 1.3 m. Courtesy: © Steven Shearer, Galerie Eva Presenhuber and David Zwirner Gallery

I've never had insomnia, but Steven Shearer's paintings are a good indication of what it must feel like. Red-eyed, his protagonists stare pleadingly out at the viewer or hide from their gaze under veils of lank hair, shoulders hunched, cigarette in mouth. Rendered with luminous blue-, yellow- and green-tinged skin, these men – visually coded as artist and musician types through their personal style and twilight activities – are clearly in need of some quality shut-eye.

Curated by Dieter Roelstraete in collaboration with the artist and Skarlet Smatana, 'Sleep, Death's Own Brother' brings together works from the holdings of The George Economou Collection under the 'transgressive thematic perspective of the lifeless body', according to exhibition materials. These include several oil paintings for which the Vancouver-based artist is best known, such as the magnificent *Working from Life* (2018), which shows a cadaverous young painter at an easel. Rendered yet more sickly looking by the heavy weave of the linen canvas – which lends his face and hands a prickly, rash-like texture – he nevertheless retains the foppish elegance shared by all of Shearer's sitters. – *Chloe Stead*

Emilio Prini / MACRO, Rome / 7 October – 31 March



Emilio Prini, '...E Prini', 2023, exhibition view. Courtesy: MACRO, Rome; photograph: Melania Dalle Grave, DSL Studio

Hailed in Italy as a nonconformist artistic genius, Emilio Prini – who died in 2016 aged 73 – pursued a relentlessly conceptual practice intrinsically linked to his enigmatic and impossibly cool persona. Comprising more than 250 works installed chronologically, ‘...E Prini’ attempts to pin down the artist’s subversively ephemeral actions – which included confirming his attendance at an exhibition via telegram and communicating works of art through telepathy – but, instead, offers a seemingly unedited trove of archival documentation that threatens to overwhelm the handful of works he left behind.

Like many fellow artists and students of his generation who came of age during Italy’s 1960s economic boom, Prini was anti-establishment and critical of the nascent consumerism of the era. One of the earliest works in the show is *Perimetro misura a studio stanza* (Perimeter of a Studio Space, 1967), a reel wrapped with neon light that the artist created for the seminal exhibition ‘Arte povera e IM spazio’, curated by Germano Celant at Bertesca Gallery in Genoa, which launched one of Italy’s most celebrated and revered contemporary art movements. Using commonly found materials, the work was an early example of Prini’s ongoing concern with measuring, inhabiting and documenting space. – *Ana Vukadin*

Main image: Steven Shearer, Sleep II (detail), 2015, ink on canvas, 2.9 × 7 m. Courtesy: the artist, Galerie Eva Presenhuber and David Zwirner Gallery