

Gift Guide

Art in New York City Right Now: A Definitive Guide

Ivan Gaytan tells you what to see
by Kaitlin Phillips

Ivan Gaytan (who you can follow on Instagram at @947291) has great taste. And despite not being gay or tan, he's very tapped in. He knows all the secret things—where to eat, what wine to drink, what art to buy, what things to see, who is cool, who is not cool—in New York and Connecticut and Los Angeles and Paris and, as I found out this summer, the Hamptons. (He's dating a woman in my group chat, and it's been a pleasure to have him join our vacation pod.) Professionally, he works in the art world in all capacities with artists and galleries and collectors, buying, selling, writing, editing, and archiving. Everything except hanging art on the walls?

Tonight Ivan's got a sold-out event with TrueAnon, one of my husband's favorite podcasts, maybe you can gate crash?

Ivan's Guide to Art in New York City:



[Michael Asher](#), at **Artists Space**, is the best exhibition in NYC right now. They do not even get points knocked off for turning me away last Tuesday in the freezing cold (I had the date wrong, my fault). I went back two days later and was floored by what's on view.

Let's start at the beginning. Michael Asher's [Writings 1973-1983 on works 1969-1979](#) is a lot of people's favorite publication, it's also one of mine. It is a model for how an artist might properly catalogue their own work with thorough documentation and writing. It has been out of print for a long time, and for many of us existed only as a low resolution PDF that would circulate among those who wanted to try and read it on a screen. For this reason it was much to our excitement when a certain great artist who will remain nameless here perfectly bootlegged the catalogue and distributed it through a select few channels. I read it front to back the day I got my copy and I'm sure everyone else who received one cherished it just as much. The thing is, many good and not so good artists have had page after page written about them such that those pages could fill whole rooms of small libraries. For Asher, where first there is often nothing to see, there is unfortunately also very little to read. Even ten years ago there was only a handful compared to what we have now. Go ahead and check me on that. Anne Rorimer and [Buchloh's](#) writings about him in magazines and journals in the 80s and 90s were one thing (often not scanned or online), [Kirsi Peltomäki's Situation Aesthetics](#), [Jennifer King's thesis](#), and the [October Files](#) were another, and finally there were the hard-to-find exhibition catalogues (always a

fight with the other obsessives over Ebay alerts), and that was it. This was, of course, a part of the work, but it didn't stop others from hearsaying at you about specific projects that sounded too good or rare to be true. It is hard to not view the Artists Space exhibition as the excellent culmination of everyone's desire to get as close as possible to work that by its nature makes closeness a nearly impossible task. Seeing the work's evidence in fragments and attendant documentation is like being greeted by a friend you haven't seen in a long time or meeting someone you have previously only read about. Beyond that, there are the hits: the steel checkers and checkerboard that Donald Judd bought after seeing it at [The Egg and the Eye](#), hilarious television broadcast stills, a blown-up slide of the Grinstein wall, stationery (!!) and advertisements, garbage truck postcards, and the famous steel blocks reading: *SE LOGER EST UN DROIT! N'ACCEPTÉZ PAS L'EXPULSION OU LA DISCRIMINATION*. It's nice to compare the bootlegged quality of the *Writings* to the copy they have here. In fact, I think they have all of the publications and have even set up a nice table near some windows (with a computer charger?) for you to peruse and study: EXCELLENT. Read their extended checklist while seated at the table or load up their website on your phone and listen to some of the interviews (very entertaining). The extended checklist contains writings on the works by Stella Cilman, Annie Ochmanek, and Jay Sanders, and are as fun to read as looking at all the assembled materials. It is designed by Eric Wrenn in a nicely bound size to take with you. (BONUS RECOMMENDATION: The show is well timed if you'd like to also see perhaps Asher's biggest fan, [Cameron Rowland](#), up at Dia:Beacon. Rowland is another artist who adeptly writes about his work and who signs all of his own artwork documents. I appreciate this—some artists wouldn't put pen to paper like that.) (Editor's note: I placed [this piece](#) on Eric Wrenn, my favorite guy.)