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An Insider Meets An Outsider

by *Blake Gopnik* Oct 23, 2012 6:22 PM EDT

The Daily Pic: Beverly Semmes's clay and Freddie Brice's paint collide in New York.



(Courtesy Kerry Schuss)

A show at Kerry Schuss gallery in New York collides new works by the excellent ceramic artist Beverly Semmes and somewhat older pieces by the untrained painter Freddie Brice (1920-1998). I'm pretty sure that most works by outsider artists only get their aesthetic worth once they have been shipped into the discourse of modern art – they are something like artistic readymades, closer to Duchamp's bottlerack than to his "Nude Descending". On the other hand, work from the Art Brut tradition where Semmes has her roots depends on outsider art for its inspiration – there's some sense that artists like Semmes couldn't exist without the example of the Brices of this world. I admire Schuss's pairing, because it puts these tensions on view.