

Smith, Roberta, "ART IN REVIEW: The Ankle Bones are Higher on the Inside," THE NEW YORK TIMES, 31  
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## The New York Times

Museum 52  
4 East Second Street,  
East Village  
Through Aug. 7

"The Ankle Bones Are Higher on the Inside" takes its title from an anatomical description of the human body, as befits an exhibition of figurative works. This one provides updates on three artists and introduces a fourth.

In Benjamin Degen's Neo-Pointillist painting "New Man," a figure in a tree seems ambivalent about joining the rest of us. He could almost be spying on the forthright female nude in a neighboring painting, Mr. Degen's "Pleasures and Horrors," who reclines on green grass while reading an ominous-looking newspaper. On the opposite wall, Dana Schutz's "Girl and Dog" shows the painter taking up a new, almost breezy style of paint handling, depicting her subjects in dark scattered lines and stippled colors that make the results all but abstract.

Anya Kielar's "Wall Hanging Scene 1" might be a moment from a Greek tragedy, given that an aghast blue nude sits, cradling a large eyeball in her hand while an equally alarmed disembodied face (or sun or god) looks on. Radiating lines, intensified with little shards of color, add pressure to the already forceful image. Ms. Kielar's style improves on Neo-Expressionism by returning to its purer Modernist roots. The entire image is made from cut fabric, glued or grommeted to canvas.

Three small oil paintings by Julia Goldman, the youngest, least-known artist here, depict the heads of girls in a traditional portrait format but with an empowering bluntness that puts paint, color and process first. Ms. Goldman's work brings to mind Milton Avery, David Park, Joan Brown and Alex Katz, as well as Ms. Schutz. She seems to be rummaging through the last century of figure painting and finding plenty left to do.