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A Trippy Group Show at BARRO East Hampton

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Installation view "Unconscious Waves" at BARRO East Hampton. Courtesy of the gallery.

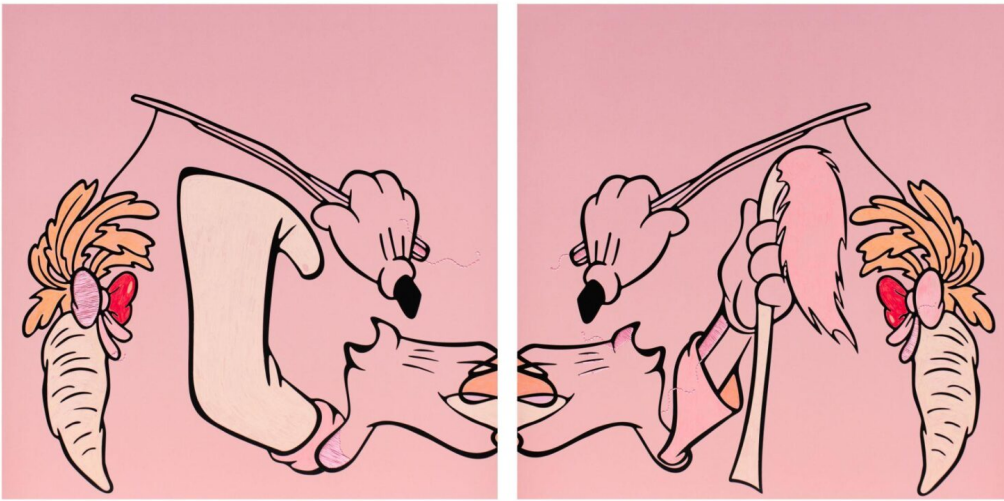
Tucked away on a beautiful East Hampton property in a tastefully designed studio and with works extending into its garden BARRO's temporary exhibition *Unconscious Waves* interrogates fact and fiction, offering a commentary on how technologies (from painting and photography to medical equipment and AI) can be used to misrepresent reality. As some works show, not always with ill intentions.

More reminiscent of a museum exhibition than a gallery show, *Unconscious Waves* brings together a combination of new and historical work by nine artists. Upon entering visitors are met with two seminal series from the late 80s and early 90s by Warren Neidich that engage with falsehoods. Next to enlarged archival photographs from U.S.-based Japanese re-education camps depicting residents doing happy things—like girls playing baseball, exhibited with the upbeat archival caption—in the series *News from No-Place* (1989) Neidich has staged photographs featuring black middle-class families doing middle-class things, with similar captions. The re-education camps were not serene places so it is clear that the archival photographs are staged—Neidich's works further bring attention to the fact that societies can work to do better, instead of going to great lengths to pretend.



Warren Neidich. "News from No-Place, Black Beauties Strutt Their Stuff," 1989. Polaroid prints. 157.5 x 60.9 cm / 62 x 24 in. Courtesy of BARRO.

On the right, a wall of stained paintbrushes according to the color scheme in which romantic landscape artists like Caspar David Friedrich painted the rainbow—apty titled *Wrong Rainbow* (1991). Friedrich situated the landscape in his work as a site for spiritual and emotional exploration, conveying magnitude, majesty, and awe. It is not a documentary. Should we care if the artist put blue next to red instead of purple to impress upon his viewers? The inclusion of Neidich's 'mirror box' used in the medical field to alleviate phantom limb pains by letting the user see a mirrored image of their existing limb as a stand-in for their lost one shows us that mind tricks can sometimes be useful. Neidich's works remind us that art is not scientific, but that it can be instrumentalized to enhance or obstruct reality.



Catalina Schliebener-Muñoz. "Pinocchio, Coloring Book Series," 2023. Oil on panel. 170 x 4.6 cm / 66.6 x 33.3 in. Courtesy of BARRO.

Referencing a cherished liar meant to teach children a lesson, Catalina Schliebener-Muñoz *Pinocchio*, *Coloring Book Series* (2023) is painted in her signature style of fragmented elements from cartoons: gloves and arms, this time with a carrot attached to a stick. The "carrot and stick" method mixes reward with punishment, common in childrearing, but perhaps also a metaphor for the mixed messages that the queer community is met with from society. For Plato truth depended on being, Descartes expressed that truth is only beyond any doubt, while Nussbaum, taking a moral stance, believed that ethical life is about embracing uncertainty—Schliebener-Muñoz's work encourages viewers to shift their attention.

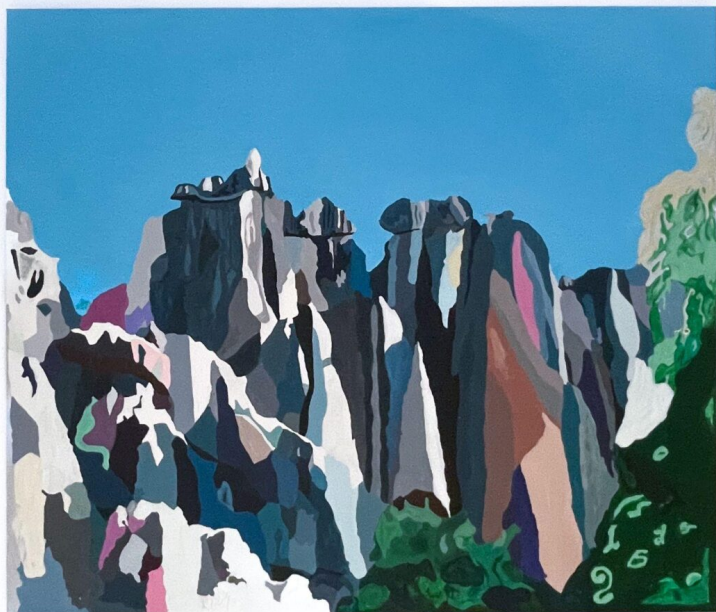


Pedro Wainer. "8 Lentes (8 Lenses)," 2019. Direct exposure on silver gelatin, single copy. 28 x 35.6 cm/ 11 x 14 in each. Courtesy of BARRO.

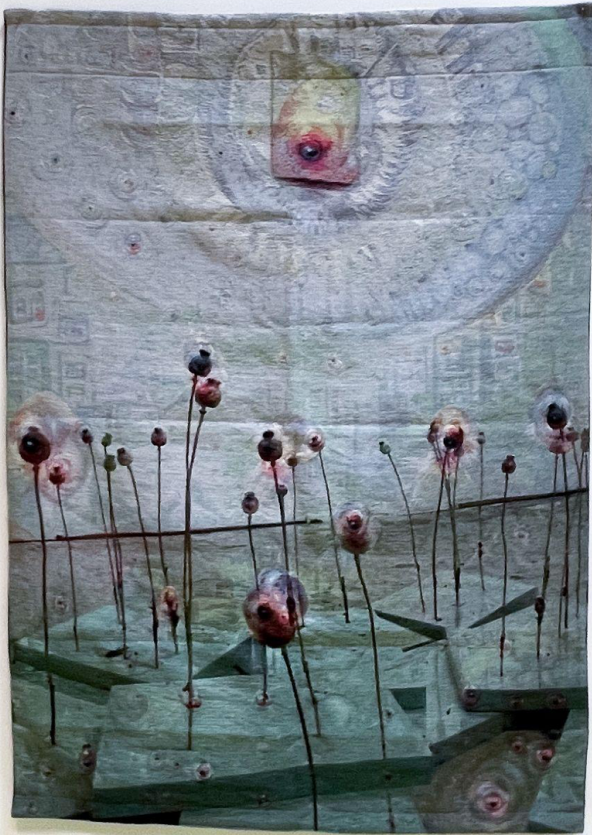
In the next room, Pedro Wainer's eight portraits of lenses center on the materiality of the camera instead of its function. These direct-exposure works on silver gelatin celebrate the lens as well as the process of analog photography—which in an increasingly digital world is becoming obsolete. His work is grounding, with a deep air of sincerity. A visually pleasing object shrouded in a similar sensation of suspension and uncertainty is Raul Martinez's textile floor work which upon closer inspection is comprised of U.S. American 9mm bullet casings. During the opening it was installed outside on the deck, catching the rays of the sun—beautiful and loaded.

Those who know the Argentinian gallery's program will recognize smaller oil paintings on wood panels by Boz, who had a solo show at their New York outpost (<https://cultbytes.com/painting-fluid-boundaries-joaquin-boz-and-josefina-barcia-in-conversation/>) in the spring, and a drawing by Duville, whose collection of large-scale imagined dystopian landscapes rendered in red sanguine on paper are on view in the galleries current exhibition *Vertices of Time*. While Alejandra Seebar is on view in a solo show at Americas Society/Council of the Americas, with equally amusing work included in the East Hamptons show in both the garden and gallery and Schliebener-Muñoz (who is Chilean but used to live in Argentina and not represented by the

gallery) exhibited together with Ad Minoliti in the gallery last year is on view at Queens Museum. Many galleries use their summer slots to try out new artists in group shows. It is fresh that the gallery's director Syd Krochmalny brings some of his most prescient artists to the Hamptons to show with Elena Bajo, Martinez, Neidich, Wainer, and his works, i.e. artists not part of the gallery's roster. BARRO certainly has a track record for having their finger on the pulse as artist La Chola Poblete received a special mention ([_wp_link_placeholder](#)) for her participation in this year's Venice Biennial and Gabriel Chaile was celebrated for his work at the 2022 biennial, both BARRO artists.



Syd Krochmalny. "Synthetism," 2021. Acrylic on canvas. 180 x 120 cm / 70.8 x 47.2 in. Courtesy of BARRO.



Elena Bajo. "Opium Poppy Studies N.1," 2021. Cotton woven on Jacquard. Loom traces of poppy pods, petals, seeds, and papaver tincture. 147 x 96.5 cm / 58 x 38 in. Courtesy of BARRO.

Krochmalny's work *Synthetism* leans into the style launched in 1889 by Paul Gauguin and Emile Schuffenecker of the same name. A flatter extension of impressionism preoccupied with the experience of seeing, but also with attempting to convey the artist's emotions. Krochmalny's mountain landscape is both soft and hard, static and moving with its flat shading with some unexpected redder hues and green bush. His surrealist painting evoking a plant, an inner body part, and a chessboard titled *Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music*, 2018, created confusion and evoked inquiry and whimsy. Leading in the exhibition as it attended to perception, from many directions, is *Opium Poppy Studies N.1*, 2021 a work by Bajo that explores hallucinogens and AI—a brilliant combination. Bajo uses Deep Dream Generator to create work with prompts based on her past dreams, all while under the influence of the plant medicine Datura. After she has finalized her AI work in the generator she brings old and new technology together by weaving it on a Jacquard loom—which uses punchcards, an early computer. The eerie and enigmatic work depicts poppies growing under a sun, breast, or comet-like painting. Mind blown.

Unconscious Waves at BARRO East Hampton is open by appointment through July 31, 2024, at 10 Walton Street, East Hampton, NY 11937. To schedule your visit please email Alexandra Goldman at alexandra@barro.cc (<mailto:alexandra@barro.cc>).

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Anna Mikaela Ekstrand is editor-in-chief and founder of Cultbytes. She mediates art through writing, curating, and lecturing. Her latest books are *Assuming Asymmetries: Conversations on Curating Public Art Projects of the 1980s and 1990s* (<https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1660442/FULLTEXT01.pdf>), and *Curating Beyond the Mainstream* (<https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1660414/FULLTEXT01.pdf>). Send your inquiries, tips, and pitches to info@cultbytes.com.

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