

**The New York Times**

# What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

Helen Mirra's complex weavings reverberate; Magalie Comeau's monochromes have architectural allusions; and Jennifer Wynne Reeves's work speaks in a voice shaped by Facebook.

## 'For Opacity'

Through Feb. 3.

The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster Street, Manhattan; 212-219-2166, [drawingcenter.org](http://drawingcenter.org).



Elijah Burgher's "Eden Flag With Solar-Anal Emblems," in a show at the Drawing Center, features both overtly sexual symbols and mysterious ones. Credit Elijah Burgher Western Exhibitions, Chicago

Complex and colorful drawings by Toyin Ojih Odutola, Nathaniel Mary Quinn and Elijah Burgher make for an unusually rich show in "For Opacity," curated by Claire Gilman at the Drawing Center.

The show's title is borrowed from a 1990 essay in which Édouard Glissant argues for the right of colonized or oppressed peoples to occupy space in Western society without explaining themselves. This type of politically charged "opacity" does come up in the work, but the concept raises an equally interesting question about the relationship of artwork to viewer: What do they owe each other?

Mr. Burgher's "Eden Flag With Solar-Anal Emblems and Hexes," a colored-pencil conglomeration of graphic devices that suggests esoteric magic and queer desire, is charming in its evasiveness. Wondering about the specific significance of the symbols doesn't prevent you from enjoying their overall effect. But several portraits of young men against backgrounds of similar symbols are more uncomfortable: The figures are so meticulously rendered that the ambiguity behind them makes you feel snubbed.

Ms. Ojih Odutola's use of black ink to draw white faces in half a dozen striking small works emphasizes the political weight of color without committing to a specific position. Her large charcoal and pastel portrait, "A Guarded Intimacy," in which a watchful young man's face is framed by walls, windows and a patterned sweater, demonstrates how a distant affect can express its own kind of vulnerability.

Mr. Quinn takes this paradoxical performance of truth to a brilliant height with large multimedia drawings that look like collages. In "Elephant Feet," an adult forehead, eyes and nose that look as if they were taken from torn photographs and a miniature but still oversize fur coat combine to form a defiantly heartbreaking figure whose patchwork composition is really a way of being whole. *WILL HEINRICH*