

HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE



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4 Top LES Shows: Jonathan Allen, David Gilbert, Tomaz Hipolito and Matthew Craven

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The DIY spirit of the Lower East Side neighborhood almost always provides refreshing contrast against the polish and politeness of Chelsea. Artists are being supported for experimenting and taking risks and for the most part curating is still treated as a responsibility to be taken seriously and it shows. Up until the end of October, these four shows at Lu Magnus, Rooster Gallery, Klaus von Nichtssagend, and DCKT all represent the innovative, quirky, authentic and engaging character of the LES scene.

In his first solo show with DCKT Contemporary titled *Oblivious Path*, Matthew Craven flattens history and turns it into an endlessly interchangeable puzzle. Craven arranges grids of images and geometric pattern into cryptic grids latent with imagination and glimpsed connections. Dangerously flirting with the tendencies of similar (and often mediocre) design based art, Craven hits a sweet spot between the disappearing and already disappeared. Like Jonathan Allen's work, Craven engages with the ever present digital world; his works bear a striking resemblance to blogs on Tumblr that 'archive' and 'curate' the images of the web. Yet these have more ambition towards captivation and storytelling and they remain defiantly analog. They are the size of large paintings and they have as much mysterious stoicism as the Eastern Island heads depicted within. The arrangements are felt but not self-conscious, and like David Gilbert's photo paintings they are light and feel almost as authorless and believable as an ancient artifact. Matthew Craven's works unearth questions of authorship; who holds claim to the images of the past and what does our continued remembrance say about them? *Oblivious Path* runs through October 20th.