

# The New York Times

## What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

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January 30, 2019

### Leah Guadagnoli

Through Feb. 16. Asya Geisberg Gallery, 537B West 23rd Street, Manhattan; 212-675-7525, [asyageisberggallery.com](http://asyageisberggallery.com)



Leah Guadagnoli's "Dear Parvati" (2019) in her show of sculptural paintings, "Soft Violence." Leah Guadagnoli and Asya Geisberg Gallery

Late January is the dead of dull, gray winter in New York City, but Leah Guadagnoli's exhibition "Soft Violence" at Asya Geisberg Gallery will transport you — imaginatively, at least — to a warmer, carefree climate. Ms. Guadagnoli has filled the space with sculptural paintings in soothing pinks and blues and playful purples and yellows. They look like they would be equally at home in an Art Deco hotel in South Beach.

Ms. Guadagnoli's works challenge viewers to figure out what they are, or what they could be. They are paintings, because they hang on the wall, and with their triangles, circles and diamonds, they follow a long tradition of geometric abstraction. (Ellsworth Kelly is among the predecessors who come to mind.) At the same time, they borrow from sculpture by using a handful of materials — pumice stone, insulation board, upholstery foam — to create distinct parts. These elements come together in an intriguing interplay of textures that seems to inform the show's title (the hardness and implied violence of the stone is softened by the foam and canvas). Their clean lines and visual harmony make them suggest design flourishes (a riff on the Memphis Group, say), but also logos in search of brands.

Then, if you spend enough time with a work like "Pending" (2018), which contains a pale pink diamond in its center, touching another pink diamond that frames it, the suggestion of feminine spirituality arises — a kind of primal aura emanating from an abstracted orifice.

Ms. Guadagnoli's 2018 exhibition at Victori + Mo was louder and kitschier. The pared-down style on view here is a strong step. It offers the viewer more reference points and more imaginative possibilities.

- JILLIAN STEINHAUER