

## What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in August

‘Schema: World as Diagram’

**Martha Schwendener**

August 4, 2023

When the paintings of the blockbuster Swedish artist Hilma af Klint, who died in 1944, were first shown publicly in the 1980s, some critics argued that the works looked more like diagrams illustrating occult ideas than abstract paintings. Later audiences and critics disagreed. Tastes have changed perhaps — but so has our relationship to diagrams, as John Bender and Michael Marrinan asserted in their book “The Culture of Diagram” (2010).

“Schema: World as Diagram” focuses on artists — mostly painters — who use the diagram in formal, conceptual and sometimes playful ways. Some use it to describe social, political and personal structures, such as Mike Cloud, Alan Davie, David Dia, Thomas Hirschhorn, Mark Lombardi and Loren Munk. Grids, networks and circuit boards appear in works by Alfred Jensen, Paul Pagk, Miguel Angel Ríos. Maps are a touchstone for Joanne Greenbaum and the aboriginal painters Jimmy and Angie Tchooga. More cosmic diagrams appear in paintings by Chris Martin, Karla Knight, Paul Laffoley, Trevor Winkfield and Hilma’s Ghost (the artists Dannielle Tegeder and Sharmistha Ray), who take af Klint as an inspiration.

For Raphael Rubinstein, who organized the show with his wife, Heather Bause Rubinstein, the diagram, which only became important in the 20th century in European and American art, closes the gap between abstract and representational art. Maybe this rich, dense show signals a shift, though: Who cares about abstraction anymore? Viva the diagram! Like painting itself, diagramming is a way of thinking and organizing information — speedier than the written word, more graphic and visual. In a chaotic, overstimulating world, no wonder diagrams are so popular.



“Shake off your chains! ...” (2023) by Hilma’s Ghost, a feminist artist collective established by Dannielle Tegeder and Sharmistha Ray, in the exhibition “Schema: World as Diagram.” Credit...via Dannielle Tegeder and Sharmistha Ray and Marlborough Gallery, New York

**Marlborough**

545 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10001 / +1 212 541 4900 / marlboroughnewyork.com