

Schjeldahl, Peter, "Benjamin Degen", THE NEW YORKER, 14 November 2013.



GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN: ART

BENJAMIN DEGEN

SUSAN INGLETT GALLERY
522 W. 24th St., New York, N.Y.
212-647-9111

Big, dense, garish paintings that mash up archaisms of Symbolism, Expressionism, Pointillism, and folk art are so far over the top, they defy stylistic gravity. Degen weaponizes poetic fancy with a secondary palette and lavishly patterned impasto. Flatly limned solitary figures dream by day or night in woodsy, watery, or starry realms. One work, in particular, piles it on: a girl in a windblown diaphanous dress stands barefoot in grass and contemplates a varicolored sea and a full-mooned, spangled sky. A mercifully funny detail—she dangles a beer bottle—clues us in that Degen knows how outré he is. Through Dec. 7.