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Critic's Guide: New York

The best shows to see across town during Frieze Week New York
BY EVAN MOFFITT

Rat Bastard Protective Association

Susan Inglett Gallery

27 April – 3 June



It's 1957: Charlie Parker has died, Jack Kerouac has just published *On the Road*, and Bruce Conner has arrived in San Francisco. Conner, a native Kansan, found the Bay City teeming with junkies and dropouts, artists and outcasts; it was the perfect backdrop for his early found-object assemblages. Soon after, Conner met fellow artists Wallace Berman, Joan Brown, Jay DeFeo, George Herms and Wally Hedrick; the group moved into an apartment building at 2322 Fillmore, dubbed it 'Painterland', and formed the Rat Bastard Protective Association, named for a San Francisco trash collection company and a slur overheard at the gym. The Rat Bastards – who numbered more than a dozen at one point – came to define the art of Northern California,

and in turn, the postwar United States. Their work spanned various media: Conner and Herms with sculptural assemblage, Brown and DeFeo with painting, Berman with collage and Jerry Burchard with photography. This compact exhibition at Susan Inglett Gallery, organized by Dr. Anastasia Aukeman – author of the recent *Welcome to Painterland: Bruce Conner and the Rat Bastard Protective Association* – is only the collective's second show since 1958.