

THE NEW YORKER

ART

Wilder Alison / Esteban Jefferson

Neither of these conceptually complex painting shows skimps on visual pleasure. Alison's vibrant suite of sewn, dyed-wool abstractions is inspired by "The Lesbian Body," a novel, from 1973, by the French theorist Monique Wittig; the diagonal seams of the artist's geometric compositions echo the author's radical use of slashes. Clouds of color bleed into Alison's matte surfaces, serving as lush counterpoints to her precise patchworks. Jefferson's oneiric canvases are also studies in contrast: realist articulations punctuate otherwise washy, sepia-toned scenes of the Petit Palais museum, in Paris. His particular focus is on two busts of unidentified African subjects (both likely made in the late nineteenth century) that are situated in the museum's lobby. Rendering the sculptures hyper-visible amid faded signage and blurry ticket-counter activity, Jefferson strikes a melancholy, poetic tone as he questions colonialist conventions of museum display.

—*Johanna Fateman*

Through Jan. 11.

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