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Key Hiraga

Through Nov. 9. Ortuzar Projects, 9 White Street, Manhattan; 212-257-0033, ortuzarprojects.com.

By Will Heinrich

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Key Hiraga's "The Elegant Life of Mr. H," from 1967.
via Ortuzar Projects, New York

A self-taught artist who spent the 1960s in Paris and the rest of his life (he died in 2000) in Japan, Key Hiraga liked to paint [an electric-mauve menagerie](#) of vulvic eyeballs, googly-eyed sperm, cartoonish bowler hats, and serpentine penises with teeth. It sounds like dorm-room depravity, and in some smaller pieces in his show "Works 1958—1993," it does come across that way. In larger paintings, though, the sexual monomania transcends itself and flips over into an enthralling, almost innocent exuberance. I tried to count the split and doubled faces, and splayed-open carnal conjunctions, in "The Elegant Life of Mr. H," but their sheer quantity overwhelmed me: All I could do was marvel at the piece's bright colors and explosive sense of motion.
