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SEE THIS

A Brian Buczak Retrospective Across Two New York Galleries



Brian Buczak's "Drawing the Universe" (1987). © Brian Buczak Estate. Courtesy of the Geoffrey Hendricks and Brian Buczak Estate. Photo: Timothy Doyon

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In the mid-1970s and '80s, the Detroit-born artist Brian Buczak was among a group of New York-based conceptual artists whose work interrogated the symbols, language and systems of contemporary American life. In 1986, he was diagnosed with AIDS, and he died from related complications the following year at the age of 32. Now, his work has been assembled for "Man Looks at the World," a retrospective across two galleries and the artist's first solo show since 1989.

The exhibition occupies the two ninth-floor office suites just west of Union Square that make up Gordon Robichaux gallery. The first includes a series of Buczak's painted diptychs and triptychs from the early '80s, which combine allusive imagery like Buddhist flames, Communist stars and re-creations of canonical works like Caspar David Friedrich's 1818 painting "Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog." Such graphic and stylistically varied

imagery. At Tribeca's Ortuzar Projects, larger-scale canvases are on view from later in the artist's career, when spiritual and metaphysical themes entered into his work. In 1986's "Untitled (Winter Trees Triptych)," a mass of snow-blanketed branches are rendered in shades of pink, purple and teal that give the painting a sense of pulsing psychic energy. "Flags I," painted the same year, depicts a jumble of stars and stripes waving in the wind. A patriotic tribute at first glance, the flags feel more somber in the context of Buczak's exploration of his identity as a gay American at the height of the AIDS epidemic. Both galleries complement the artist's works with ephemera from throughout his career, including photographs, letters, stencils and designs for posters and fliers. The second suite at Gordon Robichaux plays a recording of the Kronos Quartet performing Philip Glass's 1989 piece "String Quartet No. 4," alternately titled "Buczak" in memory of the artist. "Man Looks at the World" is on view [until Feb. 17](#), [ortuzarprojects.com](#); [gordonrobichaux.com](#).