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What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in February

By [Jillian Steinhauer](#), [Martha Schwendener](#), [Travis Diehl](#) and [Holland Cotter](#)

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This week in Newly Reviewed, Jillian Steinhauer covers Brenda Miller’s streaming sisal, the group show “Screen Memories” and Sylvia Sleigh’s riffs on art history.

TRIBECA

Sylvia Sleigh

Through April 5. Ortuzar, 5 White Street, Manhattan; 212-257-0033, ortuzar.com.

[Sylvia Sleigh](#) (1916-2010) had a particular fondness for body hair, tan lines, plants and decorative patterns. This [exhibition](#) gathers 13 of her paintings, which are marvels of vibrancy and detail.

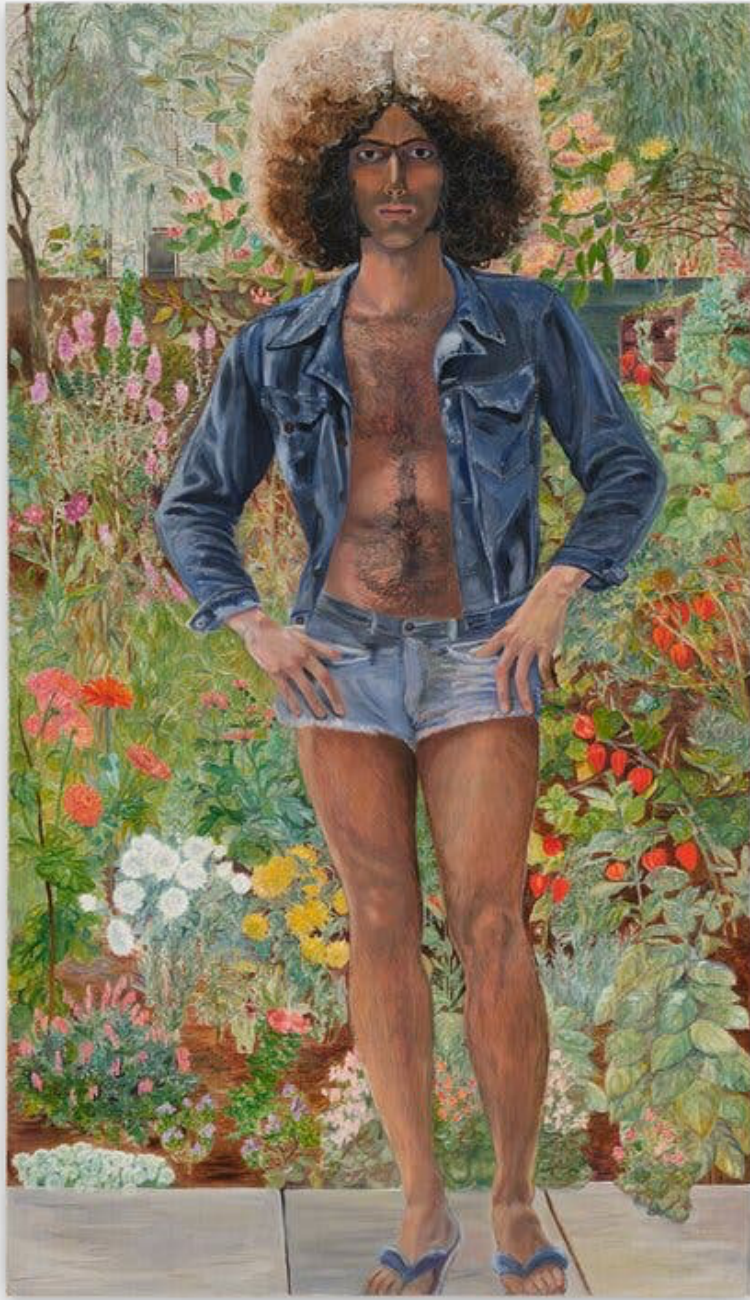
In the 7.5-foot-tall “Annunciation: Paul Rosano” (1975), the titular model appears as a countercultural angel, standing in a plush garden with his abundantly curly hair aglow. The strokes of green paint that compose flowers and leaves grass echo the black strokes of hair that mark Rosano’s chest and legs, which are barely covered by an open button-down and cheeky cutoffs.

The Welsh-born Sleigh was already an artist when she moved to New York in 1961 with her husband, the critic and curator Lawrence Alloway. Amid the currents of Conceptualism and Pop art, she continued to paint, and as second-wave feminism flourished, so did her work.

Riffing on the art historical canon, Sleigh made portraits of friends and family, with an emphasis on male nudes — her way of reversing gender norms that positioned women as sex objects. Because of that, she is often remembered as a kind of one-note artist, but this show emphasizes the complexity of her work.

The blasphemous “Annunciation” is just one example. It offers up both secularity and sensuality as something sacred — and perhaps androgyny too, given the floral background and luxuriant hair. The work is confrontational, but its style is suffused with loving attention. Sleigh captures an individual with skillful specificity, while also making them signify so much more. *JILLIAN*

STEINHAUER



Sylvia Sleigh, "Annunciation: Paul Rosano," 1975, oil on canvas. Estate of Sylvia Sleigh and Ortuzar, New York; Photo by Steven Probert