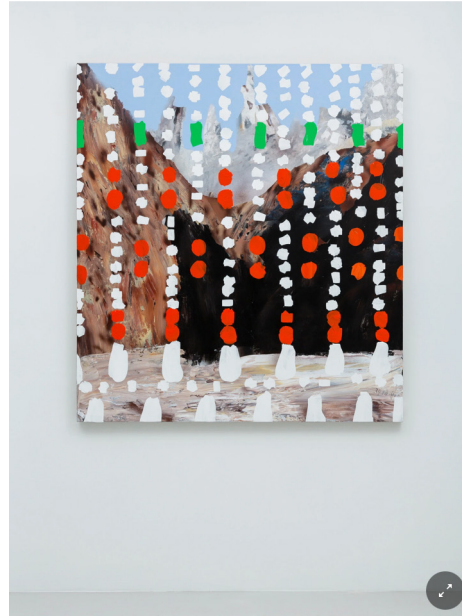


# The New York Times

## 4 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

Kitaoji Rosanjin's graceful pottery; a dual show of Martin Wong and Aaron Gilbert paintings; the group exhibition "Latinx Abstract"; and Hou Zichao's pixelized landscapes.

April 21, 2021 Updated 2:15 p.m. ET



Hou Zichao's "Mountain hotel, yelling & shouting, the world in color" (2021). Hou Zichao and Downs & Ross; Daniel Terna

It's a truism that painters change the way we see the world. So do computers. But while artists of all sorts have been wrestling with digital technology for decades now — thinking about how the internet alters our thinking, wondering what it can do for them technically — I haven't seen many attend to its purely visual effects like Hou Zichao.

A young Chinese painter who trained in London and lives in Beijing, Hou fills the landscapes of "Everlasting" at Downs & Ross, his debut American exhibition, with snowy slopes and mountainous chasms. The skies above them, whether apocalyptic orange or subtly unreal blue, are flat and unvarying, like a Photoshop effect, though still dense enough to hold their own in a painting.

The occasional figurative elements — a pair of rats with red ears, a misshapen tree — bring to mind digital technology, too, because they look like they were drawn with a computer mouse. But that's just a distraction from Hou's real insight, which is to have found, with marbled splashes of paint and ragged edges, the ambiguous spot where pixelized reality meets abstract expressionist painting.

In "Mountain hotel, yelling & shouting, the world in color," icy peaks cross a pale blue sky between rearing black and spotty brown rocks. Scores of red, green and white blotches fall over the scene like a beaded curtain. It isn't quite the real world, but it's not a screen, either. It's that moment of cognitive dissonance when you glance up at nature over the edge of your phone. WILL HEINRICH