

frieze

Critic's Guide: New York

From re-examined positions, to explorations of gender and energy: a roundup of the best shows across the city

BY JOSEPHINE GRAF



Lewis Stein, *Untitled* c.1972/2017, installation view, 'Works from 1968-1979', ESSEX STREET, New York. Courtesy: ESSEX STREET, New York; photograph: Jason Mandella

Lewis Stein, 'Works from 1968–1979'

ESSEX STREET

29 October – 22 December 2017

Having found success as a painter in the 1960s, New York-based artist Lewis Stein went on to reconsider the readymade by coolly transplanting overlooked urban objects – a street lamp, stanchions, a wooden billy club – into the gallery. This show gathers key works from 1968 to 1979 and makes a compelling argument for revisiting Stein's oeuvre. Stein separates the readymade from its Duchampian irony, revealing instead how everyday objects can guide visibility and delimit movement in a subtle and concise form of policing. The exhibition's force resides less in the objects themselves than in their effect on the body of the viewer that must negotiate them, for example skirting a barrier (*Untitled*, c.1972) or squinting against a blinding street light (*Untitled*, c.1979–80). There's a productive relationship to younger artists on the gallery's roster, too, such as Park McArthur and Cameron Rowland, each of whom mine histories of control held within the seemingly benign.