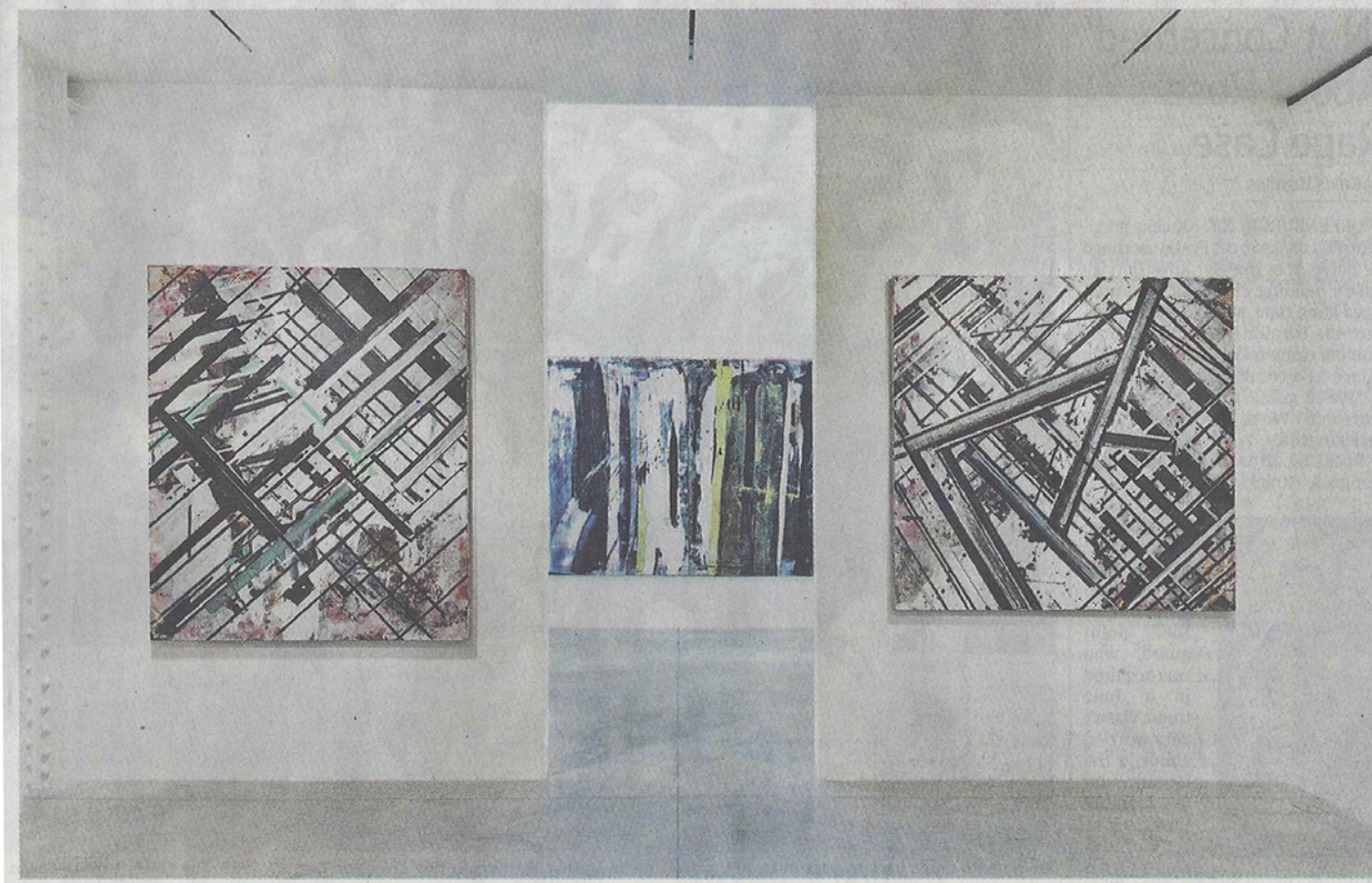


HEARD & SCENE

Wonder Woman, a Painter's Painter and a Self-Made Artist



ED MOSES/ALBERTZ BENDA

Plagens, Peter. "Wonder Woman, a Painter's Painter and a Self-Made Artist," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 24-25, 2016.

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FINE ART
PETER PLAGENS

**Ed Moses:
Painting as Process**

◆ **Albertz Benda**

515 W. 26th St.,

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Through Oct. 15

I knew Ed Moses (b. 1926) fairly well back in the ancient 1970s in Los Angeles. He phoned me, a then-frequent contributor to one of the "important" art magazines, suggesting that we meet to talk about a possible feature on him. Mr. Moses was a gnarly, abstract-painter artistic exception to his fellow Ferus Gallery (of Andy Warhol soup-can fame) crew, and I liked the idea. So there we were, sitting on the beach a couple of blocks from his modest house, smoking something other than tobacco and chatting about his new paintings, when suddenly he stood up and said: "Look, if I have to ask you to write something about me, then I'm not really worth writing about." And that—integrity trumping opportunity—was that.

As that anecdote suggests, Mr. Moses has always been a painter's painter in the extreme. He practically bleeds paint, and he's used every device imaginable—Piranesi-esque latticeworks of diagonal stripes (like peering down through 10 floors of fire escapes), horizontal rows of vertical blobs, surprise insertions of hard edges, and elegantly wormy trails of puddled paint—to try to get both variety and punch into his pictures. In this disconcertingly informal retrospective (it's on two floors, with drawings starting in the 1950s downstairs), selected by the eminent art historian Barbara Rose, he succeeds almost all the time.

Why then, is this the first "comprehensive East Coast Solo show" of such an artist? Perhaps it's because Mr. Moses hasn't pounded one single style into the ground—i.e., sufficiently "branded" himself as the stripe guy or the bubbly-trail guy. Or maybe, one suspects, it's because New York, the putative world capital of modern art, can be as provincial as Dubuque.

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