

The New York Times

What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

by Roberta Smith – March 7, 2018

This show brings [the painter Edith Schloss](#) (1919-2011) one step closer to the small but definite niche that is her due. Following a larger, somewhat confusing retrospective at the Sundaram Tagore Gallery in 2015, this show, “By the Sea,” zeros in on her best work: a group of small, delightful still lifes from the 1960s and ’70s. They were made in Italy, to which Schloss decamped for good in 1964, after about 18 years of marriage to the photographer/filmmaker Rudy Burckhardt and active participation in the nascent downtown New York art scene.

These paintings make good on Schloss’s longtime interest in still life, partly by taking cues from the painters Cy Twombly and Giorgio Morandi, both of whom she knew in Italy. The canvases feature a set cast of vases, pitchers and occasional toys (her son’s) that Schloss was never without, even when traveling. She would fill the vessels with blooms — thick circles in hearty shades of blue, orange or red balanced by whites and pinks and sometimes by patches of bare canvas. Especially in paintings from 1967 and ’68 titled “Rignalla” and “On the Ledge” from 1976, she lines up the vases on a high horizon, giving them a personable lean and monumental scale reminiscent of Philip Guston’s late works. In others, the bouquets line the bottom edge of the canvas or paper, as if on a windowsill overlooking a beach or the sea stretching beyond. At this point in her life, Schloss painted with consummate ease and abundant charm, sketching in her subjects and then applying color as needed. But don’t be fooled. Her best works are primers on the shortest route to a good, original painting.