

# BROADWAY

## The New York Times

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

Adrienne Rubenstein

*Magic Show*

By Will Heinrich

Feb. 21, 2024



Adrienne Rubenstein, *Flower, Grapes and Fish*, 2024, oil on canvas, 72 x 60 inches

In “Magic Show,” her [second solo exhibition](#) of recent paintings at Broadway gallery, Adrienne Rubenstein throws the last century or two of Western art history into a cozy acid bath. Loose figurative still-life motifs skate over lush torrents of abstract color; the action is largely on the surface, but it’s punctuated by tantalizing glimpses of depth.

You can see what’s happening most easily in the comparatively spare “Flower, Grapes and Fish,” in which five petals on an impossibly curly, midnight-blue stem share some hues with their pink and gray background before getting yellower; three phallic fish shapes squiggle down from the blossom; and a bunch of grapes, their blues and yellows just on the expressionist side of plausible, spill past their outlines.

None of this ambiguity makes the still life less convincing. On the contrary, the grapes are distinctly tempting, and the fish, whether or not you can identify them as such, wriggle with life. What it does instead is to spread the figurative vitality across the whole canvas, letting you see color, the primary engine of Rubenstein’s work, as a painter might see it — shimmering with the history of everything ever depicted, pregnant with the shapes and gestures to come.