An abstract, geometric pattern composed of overlapping, irregular shapes in two shades of purple and white. The shapes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is a complex, non-representational design.

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The Best of 2024

New York Art Critics Association NYACA

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By Way of Introduction

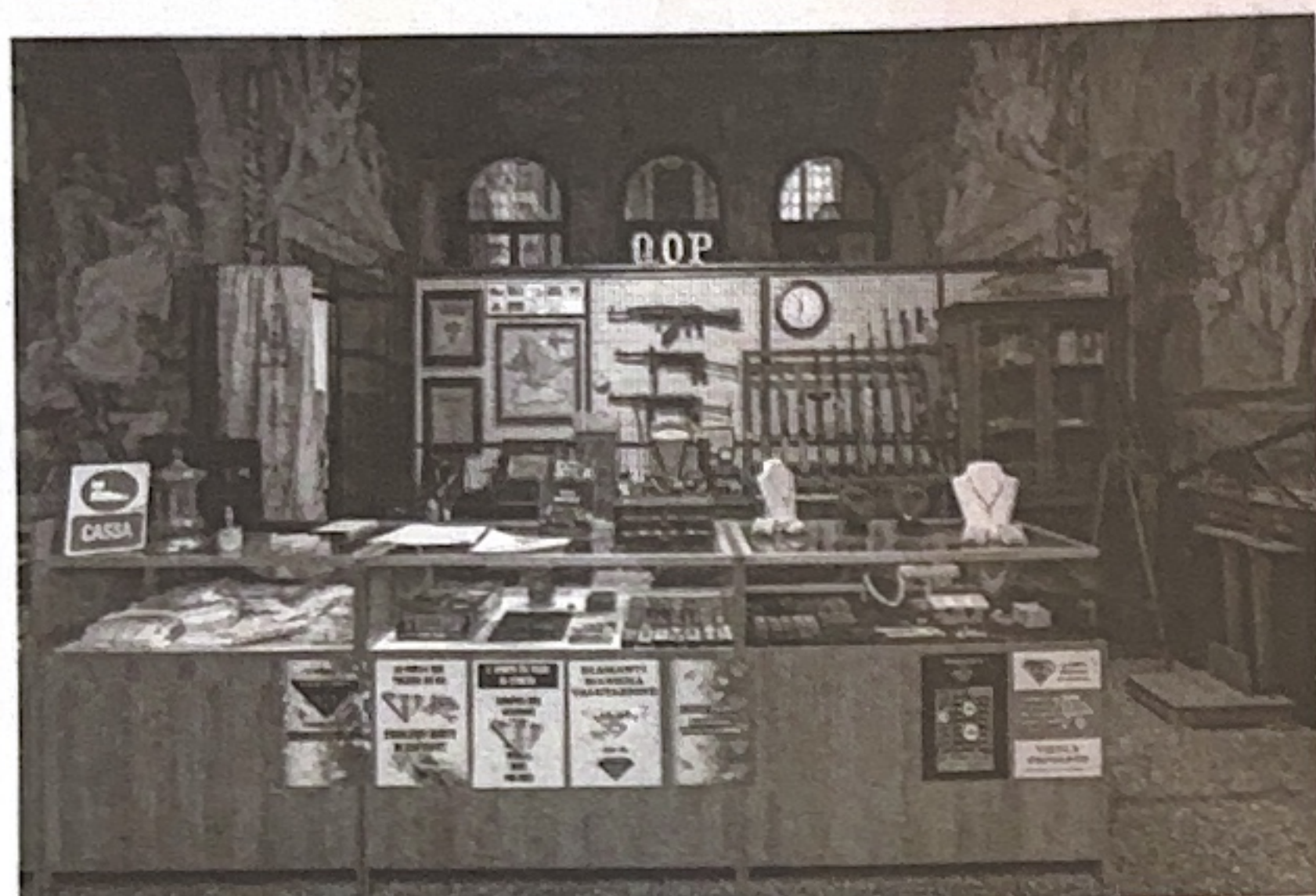
The New York Art Critics Association. We have no meetings, except for randomly running into one another as we go around town to see shows, compare notes, not always in agreement, and “take the temperature,” so to speak. In this respect, by both our locality and mobility, as we also travel, we acknowledge that criticism today, rather than appearing in print, is often spread by word of mouth. It is not always written. Criticism may take the form of an exhibition. The chosen works don’t appear in reproduction: they are immediately before your eyes. The curator is equally a critic, or can be.

In this association, we pay no dues for membership; dues are what one pays in the art world over a lifetime, although no pension fund exists upon which we may later draw.

With the paper now in your hands, given away freely or at nominal cost, we present our first publication, a Best Of 2024 that should be seen as an affirmation that art criticism, which is neither a matter of publicists nor the cheerleading Instagram posts of consultants, collectors, and dealers, all of whom promote and protect their own interests, remains independent. Art criticism is positively allergic to auction catalog hyperbole, the crowing of sales results, records broken, and a buoyant museum press release—all a matter of spin. Never, we may imagine, has so much wool been pulled over so many eyes. And yet perfectly understandable in a time when, whether in business, politics, or the art market, controlling the narrative is paramount. Here, we don’t aim to control anything. We simply mean to have our say. And so can you.

A note on the order. Contributors, alphabetically. The exhibitions, events, and so on, are predominantly listed as they were encountered over the course of the year, January to December, or were recalled in retrospect, rather than given any particular hierarchy.

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CHRISTOPHER BÜCHEL, *Monte di Pietà*, Fondazione Prada, Venice.
 This year, I am thankful for Christopher Büchel. With an installation that included a pawnshop, a diamond lab, an NFT farm, and more, Büchel's overwhelming accumulation of material excess was contrasted by his allusions to theft, war, brutality, class abuse, and the empty promises of technology. The resulting exhibition highlighted the profound hypocrisy of an art world obsessed with justice only in-so-far as it can be commodified. God Bless.



ALFRED HITCHCOCK, *Vertigo*, Paris Theater, New York.

I know that the Paris Theater was bought by Netflix and maybe some people think that's kind of tacky, but I don't care. Their Big and Loud series blew my mind, and I don't regret making it my number one! Attending a screening of the newly restored 70 mm print of *Vertigo* was one of the cinematic highlights OF MY LIFE, and I actually feel sorry for anyone who missed it. Seeing a film like this projected in large format of course makes it easier for a person to wander around inside of it, and I felt like I could almost count the rings on that poor dead tree in the Muir Forest when Kim Novak traced her glamorous glove across it. The only thing that would have made it better was if they double featured it with Hitchcock's other missing girl masterpiece, *Rebecca*, which I have come to consider as *Vertigo*'s Patty Duke-type identical cousin. 10/10, 5 Stars, A+++.



Skeletal Hand on the Glass Harmonica, Snow Gallery, Brooklyn.

I'm just going to come out and say that I love mischief making above all else, and there simply is not enough of it in the art world because everyone is afraid they will hurt someone's good-taste type feelings and lose money. It's a good thing for all of us who value Bad Behavior that Snow Gallery has recently reopened in Greenpoint, and their first official show in their new space did not disappoint. With a raucous, anything goes, thirteen-artist group show that posited the timeless question: "What if the cemeteries in New York were full of bodies rolling in their graves?" Snow reminded everyone that there is still some fun to be had in this cultural desert.



CAITLIN MACQUEEN, *Fascination*, Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles.
 I met Caitlin MacQueen in a first-year sociology class at the New School in, like, 2000 or something. I remember thinking she was cool and funny, but also that I was surprised that she seemed to know so much about the New Jersey hardcore band, Lifetime. I recall that we had some laughs over the course of that one semester, and then I never saw her again! Imagine my surprise when I put the pieces together and realized she was an artist and was showing with my old friend Hannah Hoffman in LA. Caitlin's paintings and drawings somehow manage to indicate persona while circumventing personhood, which is something I think about a lot in my own work, and the cinematic weft of her concerns makes me think a lot about performance and impression and memory. Go figure that two obsessives like us would find each other again after all this time.



JIMMY WRIGHT and CHRISTOPHER CULVER, *Jimmy & Christopher*, Diana, New York.
 Fierman and its sister gallery, Diana, regularly mount some of my favorite shows, and *Jimmy & Christopher* makes my list this year. The exhibition joined a group of Jimmy Wright's 1970s drawings of men doing it in New York subway bathrooms with Christopher Culver's pastels of men doing it on a farm. Addressing the interplay between the public and the private in both erotic fantasy AND LIFE, the show reminded me how bullshit it is that there are no fun subcultural spaces for anyone anymore! Wedging notions of sexual freedom against our historical understanding of the AIDS crisis, *Jimmy & Christopher* offered a record of both what has been lost, and what hasn't yet been found.