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News



NEWS

Three to see: New York

From a weird and wild ride through past presidential elections, to the calming canvases of Agnes Martin

by VICTORIA STAPLEY-BROWN | 13 October 2016



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Check out a snapshot of the droll-duo Elmgreen & Dragset's career in [Changing Subjects](#), a solo show at the **Flag Art Foundation** (until 17 December). The exhibition includes works like *Powerless Structures*, Fig. 19 (1998)—a "readymade" of Calvin Klein underwear inside a pair of Levi's jeans puddled on the floor—and a new site-specific sculpture of a lifeguard surveying the skyline and Hudson River from the foundation's terrace. A recent work titled *Side Effects* (2015), however, steals the show. It is made of an eerily peaceful arrangement of glass vases filled with the pastel-colored powders used to colour HIV medication. Michael Elmgreen says the work addresses the ongoing stigma of HIV/AIDS "even within the gay community itself."

Insults are flinging in this US presidential election, but did you know that there was once toilet paper with Richard Nixon's face printed on it? Discover this relic and other bizarre objects and archival materials in [Campaigning for the Presidency, 1960-72: Selections from the Museum of Democracy](#) at the **New-York Historical Society** (until 27 November), a show of around 120 campaign materials. The show ranges from the first presidential election with a televised debate—John F. Kennedy versus Richard Nixon in 1960—through Nixon's landslide 1972 victory against George McGovern. The quirky exhibition shows how candidates crafted their public personas before Donald Trump's 5AM Twitter posts, as when the campaign of Lyndon B. Johnson produced miniature bales of hay to cement his image as a Texan cowboy. (Johnson won his 1964 election against Barry Goldwater, who had much in common with Trump.)

Those looking for a complete escape should head to the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum** to be soothed by the work of the American artist [Agnes Martin](#) (until 7 January 2017). This show of around 115 paintings, sculptures, drawings and prints from the 1950s through the 2000s is the first major survey of her oeuvre since her death in 2004. The quiet power of Martin's depictions of "abstract emotions" in her gridded (later striped) canvases transforms the ramp around the museum's atrium into a slow, contemplative walk. One kinetic work, *The Wave* (1963), speaks out loud: it is a light blue, wooden and Plexiglas box with beads inside that mimics the sound of the ocean when moved.

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