

ART & DESIGN

# What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

By ROBERTA SMITH, MARTHA SCHWENDENER and WILL HEINRICH OCT. 4, 2017

## Magdalena Suarez Frimkess

Through Oct. 21. Kaufmann Repetto, 535 West 22nd Street, Manhattan; 917-388-3580, [kaufmannrepetto.com](http://kaufmannrepetto.com).



"Untitled," from 2009, is among the nearly 55 works by the ceramic artist Magdalena Suarez Frimkess at Kaufmann Repetto. Credit Adam Kremer

Magdalena Suarez Frimkess is some kind of genius. Her medium is glazed ceramic, with special emphasis on the glazes, expertly drawn and painted in numerous styles and indebted to popular art, folk art and an astounding array of other historical references. In Ms. Suarez Frimkess's survey of nearly 55 works at Kaufmann Repetto, Minnie Mouse, Popeye and Krazy Kat keep company with Maya warrior gods. There are frequent forays into blue-and-white ware, which can depict Chinese-looking landscapes, mischievous kids on bicycles and more. Other decorations include village scenes that recall South American folk painting. (Ms. Suarez Frimkess, who has lived in this country since 1963, was born in Venezuela in 1929 and started her artistic career in Chile.)

Over the years she has often collaborated with her husband, Michael Frimkess, glazing vessels that he threw on a wheel. (They made a point of



"Untitled," from 2014,  
by Magdalena Suarez  
Frimkess. Credit Dawn  
Blackman

not consulting each other.) There are some of their collaborations here, with Mr. Frimkess's contributions distinguished by their relative symmetry and finish. But Ms. Suarez Frimkess is at her best when glazing her own small hand-built vessels – plates, bowls, tiles, Japanese-influenced boxes, teacups and teapots – as well as small figurines. Marvelously irregular and sometimes almost as thin as leaves, they have a delicate looseness well-matched with glazes that often leave the clay body showing through. Their spontaneity can evoke Peter Voulkos's towering, more Expressionistic forms, but on a small scale that is at once worldly, exquisite and laced with humor. They suggest an artist in love with her medium and buzzing with ideas.

Ms. Suarez Frimkess is fairly well known in her hometown, Los Angeles, but this is only her second solo show in New York, following her 2014 debut at White Columns. With works dating back to 1970, this selection is the first in these parts to delve into her past. It proves that she has been a genius for a while.

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