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ART

Lynda Benglis

This renegade American sculptor, who emerged in the late nineteen-sixties, may be best known for her irreverent critiques of the era's male-dominated art world, including an infamous ad in *Artforum* magazine for which she posed nude with a dildo. But this terrific three-part presentation of Benglis's early works, made from 1967 to 1979, is a welcome reminder that her best-of-all-worlds approach produced mysterious and unrivalled objects. At the Cheim & Read gallery, examples of her colorful pours of latex and foam still have the power to deflate Abstract Expressionist bluster, and quieter wall-mounted pieces, composed of dripped wax, inject sex appeal into post-minimalism. Upstairs, Ortuzar Project's uptown outpost exhibits a suite of Benglis's gold-leaf sculptures from the late seventies, whose opulent finish lends their rumpled wire substrates a lofty, even religious air. Ortuzar's Tribeca gallery presents a selection of the artist's "Knots" series, scrunched and twisted objects made of wire and cotton bunting, encrusted with gesso, and dusted with glitter. The legendary *Artforum* photo, from 1974, is on view here, too, along with the related sculpture, which Benglis, true to tongue-in-cheek form, titled "Smile."—*Johanna Fateman* (cheimread.com and ortuzarprojects.com.)