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Art Basel Viewing Rooms: Editorial Selections

By Ocula Magazine
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19 June 2020

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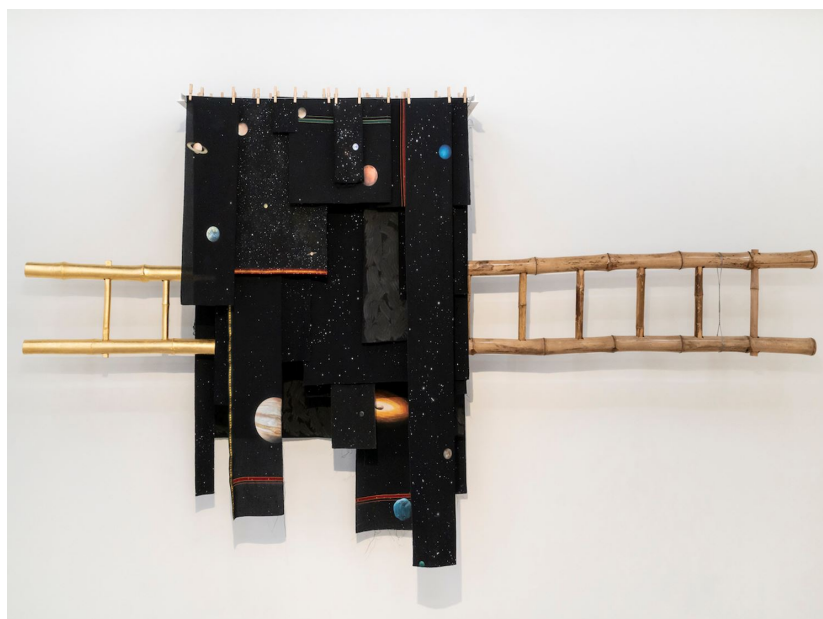
Art Basel Viewing Rooms: Advisory Highlights

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Ocula Magazine's editors present their picks from [Art Basel's Online Viewing Rooms](#), on view between 17 and 26 June 2020.



NS Harsha, *Ascent or Descent to Reality* (2018). Courtesy the artist and Chemould Prescott Road.

NS Harsha, *Ascent or Descent to Reality* (2018) at Chemould Prescott Road

[NS Harsha's](#) discordant compositions interrogate systems of knowledge, power, and belief. Reworking the tradition of Indian miniature painting, surfaces are filled with figures performing repeated actions, their seriality recalling the artist's childhood interest in comics. From afar, these detailed paintings resemble the cosmos. In *Ascent or Descent to Reality* (2018), however, the cosmos is actually depicted on dark pieces of cloth draped over a bamboo ladder hung horizontally—a composition drawn from observations of clothes drying on bamboo poles that extend from the windows of public housing estates in [Hong Kong](#). (The work was shown in Harsha's first solo exhibition in the city at the Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile in 2019.) One end of the ladder is wrapped in gold leaf, suggesting ascent might lead to 'absolute truth', yet the ladder's horizontality refutes hierarchical orders between above and below. *TM*



Dorothy Iannone, *All Our Strength and All Our Sweetness* (2019). Acrylic (Liquitex), graphite and India ink on wood. 180.0 x 143.0 cm. Courtesy the artist and Air de Paris.

Dorothy Iannone, *All Our Strength and All Our Sweetness* (2019) at Air de Paris

Born in 1933, Dorothy Iannone's style feels ahead of its time, refreshingly unencumbered by its place in art and social history. Painted in acrylic, graphite, and India ink on wood, at a glance her works look as if they could've been drawn using the pencil and paint bucket tools on a desktop computer, but in fact her flat style, as disinterested in depth and perspective as William Blake's paintings, derives from her exploration of Hindu erotica, Japanese woodcuts, and Greek vases. Iannone gave up a fellowship to study a doctorate in English literature at Stanford when she married painter James Upham and moved to New York in 1958, but her work still speaks to her fascination with words. The work's text comes from the final couplets of Andrew Marvell's unsexy but urgent poem 'To His Coy Mistress' (1681): 'Let us roll all our strength and all / Our sweetness up into one ball, / And tear our pleasures with rough strife / Through the iron gates of life [...] Thus, though we cannot make our sun / Stand still, yet we will make him run.' SG