

AT THE GALLERIES



White Columns is New York City's oldest alternative gallery, founded in 1970 by a cohort of downtown experimentalists. Its current director, the incomparable Matthew Higgs—a British-born curator, artist, writer, and d.j.—has burnished that indie-insider legacy, supporting fresh M.F.A. grads and rock stars alike. More crucially, Higgs has an impeccable eye for free spirits working at a remove from the system. Shortly before the ferociously talented Kwakwaka'wakw artist **Beau Dick** died, in British Columbia in 2017, at the age of sixty-one, he and Higgs planned his first solo show in New York, a convocation of ceremonial masks so visceral they might as well be breathing. Carved from Western red cedar, painted red, blue, green, and black, and embellished with horsehair and bark, they are rooted in centuries of tribal tradition (Dick was a hereditary chief) and informed by concerns about disregard for the planet and rapacious consumerism. One skull-pale ghost wears banknotes in place of a headdress, poised to wage what the artist described as “nonviolent but spiritual warfare.”—*Andrea K. Scott*