

NEW YORK

Three-Sentence Reviews: Peter Saul's Fake News, Trevor Paglen's Zombie Conceptualism, and 7 More September Shows

By Jerry Saltz

September 19, 2017

Helen Rae

White Columns

320 W. 13th Street / through October 21

Confession: I only went to the packed opening of White Columns (by now there's no way not to count this venerable not-for-profit space among the strongest, most individualistic, and free-minded places in America), but there I was instantly smitten by and wanted one of the gnarly, bejeweled colored-pencil drawings of abstract shapes that morph into fashion pictures — including one of Rihanna — all by the deaf, 77-year-old Helen Rae. Her tiny areas of carefully worked prismatic color refracting and playing off one another in tightly packed optical clusters transform and expand into larger constellations of shapes and spaces and then congeal once again into new wholes that mushroom with pictorial imagination. Rae, who is part of the great First Street Gallery & Art Center in Claremont, California, should be a candidate for the next set of biennials — that is if brainy curators can loosen their sphincters and accept that not all artists have to come from the same places and make art about the same things and that the world contains multitudes.