

G L A D S T O N E

The Vandals opens at Gladstone in New York this June,
bringing together more than thirty artists

Inspired by Edith Wharton and Honoré de Balzac, the exhibition
examines the tensions between possession, ownership, and the act of
looking

“The vandals,’ he muttered, ‘the desecrators of beauty; if I thought it would ever get
into their hands I’d burn it first.’”—*The House of the Dead Hand*, Edith Wharton

Drawn to objects that bind aesthetic pleasure to larger questions about privacy,
possession and refusal, writers across centuries have returned again and again to the
strange psycho-spiritual force of the masterpiece. *The Vandals*, a group exhibition at
Gladstone’s 24th Street location, takes its theme from two short stories—Edith
Wharton’s *The House of the Dead Hand* (1904) and Honoré de Balzac’s *The Unknown
Masterpiece* (1831)—both of which revolve around artworks hidden from public view
and the destabilizing consequences that accompany their revelation.

In both Wharton and Balzac, the concealed artwork acquires an almost occult charge.
Artists and collectors alike become custodians of objects whose exposure threatens to
destroy the delicate conditions that sustain their power. Blurring the boundaries
between desire and love, the power of art and the impulse to possess and see it, these
texts propose that to fully apprehend art may itself constitute a form of vandalism.
Looking becomes inseparable from domination; admiration slips toward desecration;
ultimately an image can harm or be harmed through being seen. Great works appear
less as stable objects than as volatile psychic containers, things that perhaps require
protection not only from the world, but from our need to consume them.

Organized by Alissa Bennett and Julian Ehrlich

Featured artists: Weegee, Joseph Cornell, Huguette Clark, George Platt Lynes, Robert
H. Colescott, Vivian Maier, Alex Katz, Lee Friedlander, David Hammons, Pope.L, Celia
Paul, Arthur Jafa, Mark Leckey, Kai Althoff and Yair Oelbaum, Rachel Harrison, Graham
Little, Aaron Gilbert, Christopher Culver, Marcus Leotaud, Joseph Yaeger, Brook Hsu,
Giangiacomo Rossetti, Matt Hilvers, Somaya Critchlow, Adam Alessi, Jake Grewal,
Tamo Jugeli, Sang Woo Kim, Melle van Herwaarden, Marc Prats-Quintana, Taína H.
Cruz, Ella Rose Flood, Arisa Yoshioka

Exhibition Details

The Vandals

June 24 – August 8, 2026

Opening Reception: June 24, 6–8pm

515 West 24th Street

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New York, NY 10011

About Gladstone Gallery

Gladstone is known for its commitment to artists whose prescient approaches and experimental practices have defined the contours of contemporary art. The gallery has long been an active partner in the cultivation of iconoclastic careers, fostering a roster of artists recognized for their ground-breaking contributions. Headquartered in New York and including outposts in both Brussels and Seoul, Gladstone's impact extends globally, enabling both the presentation of new bodies of work, and an amplification of the international reach of its artists. Alongside its work with contemporary artists, the gallery is steward to the legacies of pivotal historical artists and serves as an advocate for the enduring power of art. Gladstone is led by a team of partners who spearhead its long-term vision and program, building on the values of its founder Barbara Gladstone.

Press Contact

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