



# THE NEW YORKER

ART

## Man Ray & Picabia

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Nine paintings by two canonical artists face off at the Vito Schnabel gallery (appointments required). The ambience of the aseptic space, with its gleaming white floor, has a rather diminishing effect on the modestly sized modernist works, which were made between the nineteen-twenties and the mid-fifties. But if the show is more a curt essay than a conspiratorial tête-à-tête, that's not really a problem—the mood suits the teasing, post-Dadaist rigor of the works on view. Man Ray, best known for photographs that challenged painting's monopoly on abstraction, here appears as a very fine abstract painter; Picabia is shown as a radical chameleon dipping into a range of figurative styles. His wonderful, dreamily layered, sepia-hued "Helias," made circa 1930, and Man Ray's sharp, bright "Non-Abstraction," from 1947, both feature floating faces and hands, but otherwise could not be more different. They form a poetic odd couple you want to nudge closer—a high note in this intriguing exhibition.