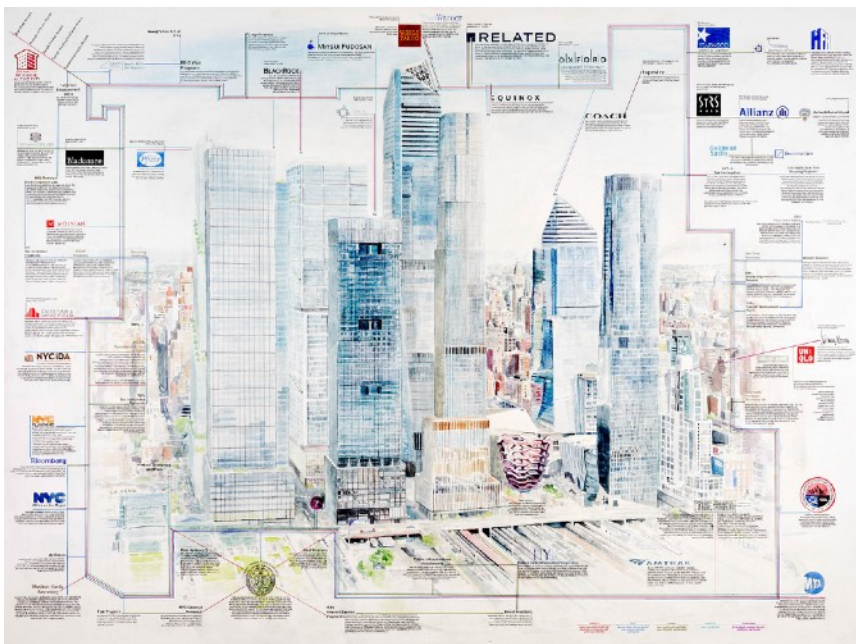


New York Galleries: What to See Right Now



William Powhida



William Powhida's "Hudson Yards (Phase I)" (2019); watercolor; graphite; colored pencil; PVA glue; ink; the internet; and "The Cost of the Hudson Yards Redevelopment Project" by Bridget Fisher and Flávia Leite; on paper mounted on panel. William Powhida and Postmasters Gallery

Despite the art world's progressive reputation, the networks of money and power that dominate it are vexingly opaque. In response, some artists have worked hard to let in the light. Among them is [William Powhida](#), who uses research, text and a realist style to marry flippant social commentary with trenchant political critique.

Mr. Powhida has been pursuing his form of truth telling [for years](#), but his exhibition "[Complicities](#)" at Postmasters feels like a breakthrough. Whereas previous efforts could seem insular or nihilistic, the new show sees Mr. Powhida earnestly broadening his scope and digging deeper than before. The artist hasn't lost his sense of humor, but he has gained a better idea of when to tell a joke.

Here the jokes are delicate paintings of memes made by Mr. Powhida and [first posted on Instagram](#); in one, a scene from the horror movie "Halloween" is captioned, "When you find out how your collector makes money." These punctuate the stars of the show: seven chart-paintings that map out such subjects as the family tree of the Sacklers, whose pharmaceutical company helped fuel the opioid epidemic, and decades of neoliberal economic and legislative policies under the last six United States presidents. There are fewer quips in these artworks than dense layers of information tracing an inordinately complex web of capital, culture and corruption. Spend time with them. The more you do, the more implicated and motivated you may become.

JILLIAN STEINHAUER