

THE NEW YORKER

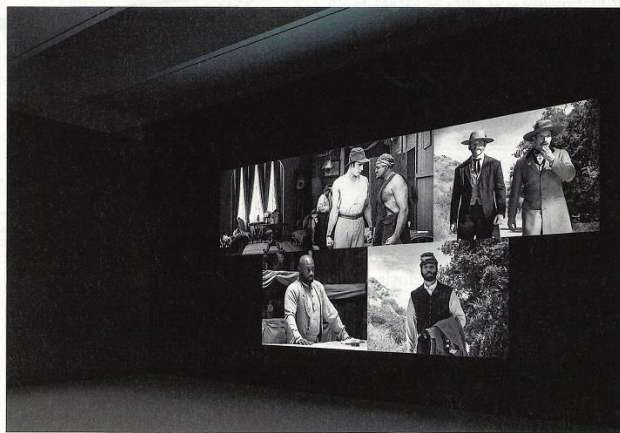
GOINGS ON

AUGUST 6 - 12, 2025



What we're watching, listening to, and doing this week.

In Stan Douglas's outstanding and ambitious show "Ghostlight" (on view at the Hessel Museum of Art, at Bard College, in Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y., through Nov. 30), the sixty-four-year-old Vancouver-based artist treats photographs and films as documents about storytelling, and uses them to evoke historical *bigness*. His piece "Birth of a Nation" (2025; an installation view is pictured) is the show's pièce de résistance. It's a deconstruction of D. W. Griffith's amazing film "The Birth of a Nation," from 1915, considered by many to be the birth of modern cinema—and which introduced racist tropes that infect "entertainment" to this day. Douglas takes the pain and confusion of some of those images out of your heart by showing both the real feeling and the artificiality that go into telling any kind of story at all. —*Hilton Als*



ABOUT TOWN

OFF BROADWAY | "Lord Nil: 7 Deadly Sins" consists of harrowing escape acts executed by the titular creator and star, an Italian who, after earning a degree in political science, naturally turned to illusionism. The stunts here are purportedly real, though, and each is tied, sometimes tenuously, to a cardinal sin. Between dodging axe blades and wriggling free of chains, the limber lord explains his intent: to inspire people to face their own terrors. A nice message, but for most of us that doesn't involve dangling straitjacketed above flaming spikes, so practical applications are limited. More stirring, perhaps, is Lord Nil's generously bared torso, a glistening invitation to test our prowess at escaping the snares of lust or envy. —*Dan Stahl* (Stage 42; through Aug. 31.)

CLASSICAL | As part of Summer for the City, Brooklyn Rider takes the stage at Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park to kick off the celebration of the ensemble's twentieth season. Special guests include the Syrian-born, Brooklyn-based clarinetist and composer Kinan Azmeh and the percussionist Mathias Kunzli, who may be the only common collaborator between Lauryn Hill and Yo-Yo Ma. Brooklyn Rider's fête continues with five additional concerts at various Lincoln Center venues, including a performance of Kayhan Kalhor's "Silent City," written in remembrance of the massacre of Halabja; a meditation on Schoenberg's pivotal Second String Quartet; and an ode to the four elements. —*Jane Bua* (Lincoln Center; Aug. 7-9.)

OFF BROADWAY | The 1988 movie "Heathers" came out when teens killing their classmates could still play as dark comedy, without darker echoes of reality. The current production of "Heathers: The Musical," which premiered in 2013, offsets its disturbing subject with Crayola-bright costumes and performances to match, a fast-paced, funny score, and an even funnier book. At an archetypal American high school, the resourceful Veronica (Lorna Courtney) ingratiates herself with the popular girls—the Heathers—complicating her relationship with her unpopular best friend (an endearing Erin Morton) and with a Baudelaire-quoting bad boy (Casey Likes), who wants to uncomplicate things through murder. The first casualty is the Heather-in-chief (a majestically merciless McKenzie Kurtz); then, anything—or anyone—goes. —*D.S.* (New World Stages; open run.)

DANCE | The enterprising Tiler Peck has been a leading dancer at New York City Ballet for more than fifteen years, played a neurotic ballerina on Amy Sherman-Palladino's "Etoile," and created a number of ballets of her own. Now she curates "Ballet Festival: Jerome Robbins," an array of miniatures, distributed over three programs. These include the charming pas de deux "Four Bagatelles," to Beethoven; the seldom performed duo for two women "Rondo," to Mozart; and "Suite of Dances," a solo meditation on Bach that Robbins whipped up for Baryshnikov in 1994. The last will be performed on alternate nights by Roman Mejía (Peck's husband) and Peck herself—the first time this solo has been taken on by a woman. —*Marina Harss* (Joyce; Aug. 12-17.)

ART | One of the great takeaways from the small, elegant, and wonder-filled show "Arresting Beauty: Julia Margaret Cameron" is how much fun Cameron must have been. Born in Calcutta to a trader father, she married Charles Hay Cameron, an investor in plantations in modern-day Sri Lanka, and raised eleven children; after moving to England in 1848, they became part of an art scene that included Alfred Tennyson. (Cameron was Virginia Woolf's great-aunt.) One of her kids gave her a camera, and with it Cameron revolutionized photography by manipulating her exposures to soften and blur, for dramatic results. Among the best pictures here are of the botanical painter Marianne North, and of a pensive young boy named Freddy Gould, who looks at the lens with the calm certainty of knowing who he is. —*Hilton Als* (Morgan Library & Museum; through Sept. 14.)

MOVIES | Fear not: "The Naked Gun" hits the target, but barely. This reboot of the beloved franchise, centered on the Los Angeles Police Squad, is funny enough to sustain patience without rivaling the original's wild charm. Liam Neeson plays Lt. Frank Drebin, Jr., whose overly violent response to a bank robbery gets him demoted; his investigation of a car accident connects to the robbery, and both lead him to an evil billionaire (Danny Huston) with a diabolical scheme. To thwart it, Frank teams up with a fellow-officer (Paul Walter Hauser) and a victim's sister (Pamela Anderson), and some of the boisterous humor is playfully ribald. But, in Akiva Schaffer's direction, the gleefully exaggerated slapstick doesn't astonish, it only amuses; the film hardly achieves liftoff from its script. —*Richard Brody* (In wide release.)

© STAN DOUGLAS / COURTESY THE ARTIST / VICTORIA MIRO / DAVID ZWIRNER PHOTOGRAPH BY OLYMPIA SHANNON