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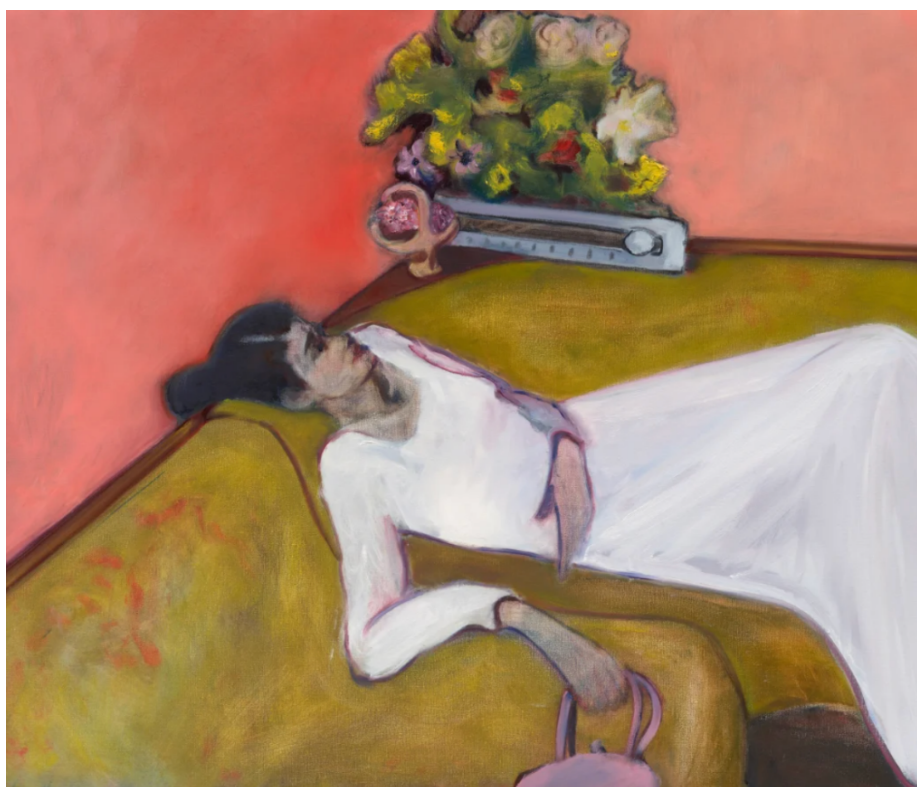
Hiura, Sam, "Northern California picks from Sam Hiura; Cliff Notes," *Variable West*, July 17, 2024

## Northern California picks from Sam Hiura

Sam Hiura  
July 17, 2024  
Cliff Notes

### Cliff Notes

Each week, our regional Cliff Notes columnists [Christine Miller](#), [Rachel Elizabeth Jones](#), [Sam Hiura](#), and [Nia-Amina Minor](#) pick the most exciting events and exhibitions on the West Coast.



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## **Magicians less prone to mental disorders than other artists, finds research**

Altman Siegel, San Francisco, CA

July 18 to August 23, 2024

Opening simultaneously with the **SF Art Book Fair**, ***Magicians less prone to mental disorders than other artists, finds research*** explores ideas of social decency, aesthetic narrative, and the limitations of image. The exhibition features the work of Justin Caguiat & Rafael Delacruz, Merlin James, and Rosalind Nashashibi, curated by Quintessa Matranga.

Art and artists have long been shrouded in mythology of the troubled genius, of a kind of parallel inhabitants of reality—being in the world in a literal way, similar to anyone else, yet different entirely in a more epistemological sense. While this is a notion that I have come to detest, *Magicians* seems to almost parody this stereotype. Instead of regarding artists as magician-like mythological figures, the exhibition treats the works themselves as kinds of microcosms where reality is made and re-made; Nashashibi reworks the myth of Oedipus to question the contemporary role of legendary narrative, while James uses the iconic traditional of seascape painting by “cannibalizing” older, extant works on canvas. Exhibiting artist Rafael Delacruz also recently had a conceptually and materially complex solo exhibition entitled **Xerox** at Cushion Works featuring paintings, photographs, and projected images. Within *Magicians*, Delacruz is set to present a collaborative work with fellow exhibiting artist Justin Caguiat, blending their shared material interests, and an interest in representing narrative. Though abstracted through vibrant and meticulous brush strokes, the feeling of the everyday is somehow captured.

While I wonder if the ultimate effect of recalling art historical tropes and narratives does more to uphold than truly dismantle or question them, I am interested in how the work included in *Magicians less prone to mental disorders than other artists, finds research* find their way into contemporary conversations around narrative, the mundane, and creative (in)decency.