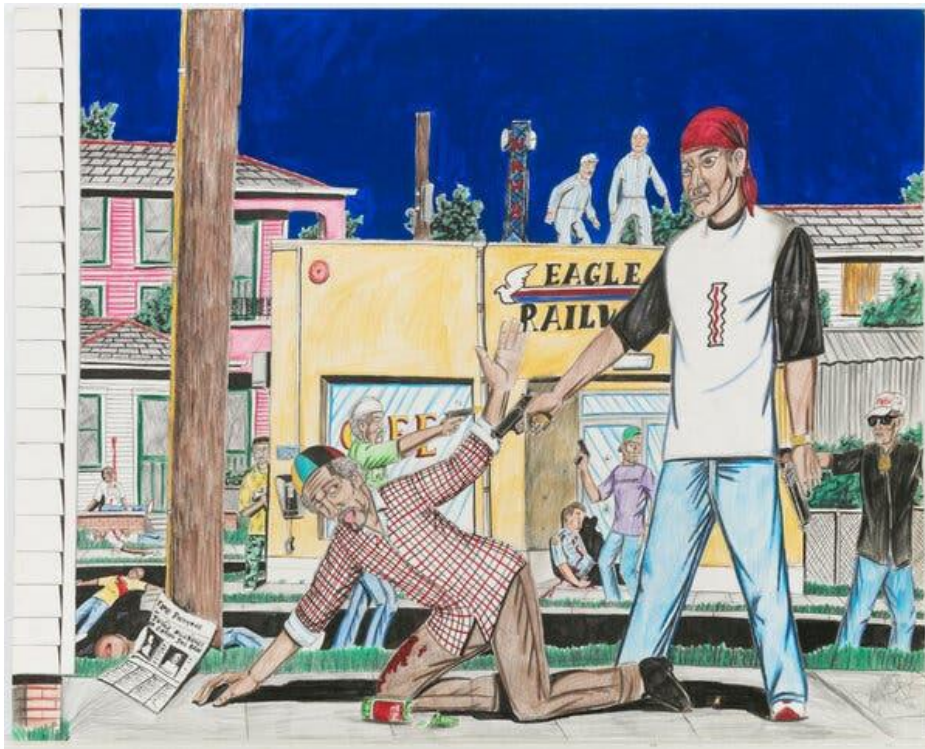


# The New York Times

N.Y.C. GALLERY GUIDE

## What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now



Roy Ferdinand, "Untitled," 2000, watercolor, pen, marker, crayon and graphite on paper.

The artist Roy Ferdinand was a big deal in his hometown, New Orleans, where he showed with Barristers Gallery until his death, from cancer, at the age of 45 in 2004. He was also a favorite of the New York dealer Martina Batan. But the 28 shocking watercolor and marker drawings on display at Andrew Edlin constitute his first New York solo. Documenting an impoverished neighborhood at the height of the crack epidemic, Ferdinand filled the scenes he drew with malt liquor and automatic weapons. Young men pose with assault rifles while their elders panhandle or disconsolately wait for the bus; young women are generally depicted naked, and often pornographically, but sometimes they, too, pose with machine guns.

What's really astonishing, though, is Ferdinand's mastery of detail. He was self-taught, which you can see in the tilt many of his drawings exhibit and in a slightly obsessive fondness for shutters, clapboard and other such excuses for parallel lines. But one unforgettable drawing, just over 2 feet by 3 feet, contains a dozen vividly realized human characters, four of them lying dead of gunshot wounds and two, in prison uniforms, sneaking across a roof. There's a sameness about the faces — most of them have an expression of resigned detachment, if not traumatized numbness, whether they're shooting someone or being shot themselves. But there's also an extraordinary variation in their details, a distinct individuality to his subjects that makes their shared fatalism all the more unnerving.

WILL HEINRICH