

# The New York Times

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SARAH PETERS, ELEVEN RIVINGTON

11 Rivington Street, Lower East Side, Through May 17

By Ken Johnson



Two of Sarah Peters's bronze heads at Eleven Rivington. Eleven Rivington, NY

With the haunting bronze heads in this elegant show, the Brooklyn sculptor Sarah Peters scores an aesthetic hat trick: making works that appear antique, Modern and post-Modern all at once.

Each of the five heads is displayed on a gray pedestal. All have smoothly and sensitively modeled faces with deep openings for eyes. There are two men with close-cropped hair and long, full beards textured by finely incised, wavy lines. A jug-eared, short-haired boy has eye holes into a hollow interior. A woman with long hair seems to be singing or violently crying. Another woman sports a cowl-shaped headdress like a ceremonial wig.

Though eyeless, they give the impression that they've had their vision turned inward or toward a metaphysical plane. They might represent members of an ancient mystery cult attuned to transcendental vibes. All look as if they'd been made 2,000 or more years ago in Greece, Mesopotamia or Egypt and unearthed by modern archaeologists. But they also call to mind works by Elie Nadelman, Paul Manship and other early-20th-century figurative sculptors who drew inspiration from and reanimated archaic and Classical styles.

There's more to Ms. Peters's art, however, than academic pastiche. These heads appear lively and freshly contemporary in their sophisticated play with familiar sculptural traditions, and they have a mysterious emotional expressivity. They seem possessed by a sort of ecstatic mournfulness, as if they were grieving for humanity's feckless, self-destructive histories and prophesying divine retribution for the wayward and the wicked