

# Spike, 2023

## GALLERY WEEKEND BERLIN 2023

by Isabella Zamboni

**Spike editor Isabella Zamboni picks the six most vibrant shows from Gallery Weekend Berlin 2023. Home ghosts, Kurdish ropes, watery half animals, too-blue eyes, Neapolitan satyrs, hysterical bureaucrats: Indulge in the capital's most spirited visions.**

**Rhea Dillon, "We looked for eyes creased with concern, but saw only veils"**

**26 Apr – 10 Jun 2023**

**Sweetwater**

How much do credos bewitch? If you get the blondest hair, people will love you. Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) hijacks *Dick and Jane*, a mid-century book series with which US schoolboys and girls learned how to read, how houses are made, how red is the door, how mother, father, Dick, and Jane smile, how pretty they are, how all four are white and have blonde hair – unlike Morrison's little protagonist, Pecola, who is black, has brown eyes, and feels ugly.

Rhea Dillon's (\*1996) show at Sweetwater translates narrative ingredients from the novel into sculptures. On the wall left of the entry, copies of a *Dick and Jane* book are inset in frames made from mahogany – a wood indigenous to West Africa used to build slave ships – and coated in black with never-drying, anti-climb paint, except for cutouts that expose a drawn, blue eye and the plea "See me, Mother, see me!"

Pecola loves chewing Mary Jane candies and drinking milk from a Shirley Temple-emblazoned glass, white girls smiling from their containers, blonde hair in gentle disarray. At Sweetwater, that specific blue glass is half filled with Mary Janes that Dillon herself has chewed and spat out, displaying the disgust underneath the desire for a sweet life. "There can't be anyone," writes Morrison, "I am sure, who doesn't know what it feels like to be disliked."

