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By Rachel Corbett

On View (<https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/on-view>)

See Jeff Koons's Hair-Raising Student Art From the 1970s

Plus, get a taste of John Currin's high school art.

Rachel Corbett (<https://news.artnet.com/about/rachel-corbett-668>), June 25, 2018



Jeff Koons. Photo by Adam Berry/Getty Images.

[Salvador Dalí](http://www.artnet.com/artists/salvador-dali/) (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/salvador-dali/>) was an early idol for [Jeff Koons](http://www.artnet.com/artists/jeff-koons/) (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/jeff-koons/>), who has said that the Surrealist painter was the subject of one of the only art books his parents had in the house. It wasn't until he left home to attend the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore in 1972 that he discovered other art-historical masters like Manet and Braque.

One can begin to see the convergence of these Surrealist and Cubist influences in Koons's 1974 painting of a girl, whose face is cut out of the frame, cradling a decapitated Picasso-esque head. The work, which Koons completed in the middle of his undergraduate studies in Baltimore, is now on view in a [group show](https://www.alminerech.com/exhibitions/4979-cliche) titled "Cliche" (<https://www.alminerech.com/exhibitions/4979-cliche>) at Almine Rech Gallery in New York, curated by art dealer and writer Bill Powers.



Jeff Koons, *Woman with Head* (1974). Photo by Matt Kroening.

“The piece resided at his mother’s house until she died last year,” Powers says of the work. “The violence and theatricality remind me of Samson and Delilah.”

The show, which is open through July 28, examines at some of the most persistent cliches in art making and curating today, including skulls, windows, dogs, rainbows, and student art. Another work included in the latter category is a painting by [John Currin](http://www.artnet.com/artists/john-currin/) (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/john-currin/>) that dates back to 1978, when the artist was just 16.



John Currin, *Untitled* (1978-79). Photo by Matt Kroening.

“John let watercolor slosh around on the paper first to create that marbling as a base then worked in details after it,” Powers tells artnet News. “We were initially thinking to exhibit an abstract painting from his Yale MFA days but this watercolor is a better companion for the Koons.”

Unfortunately for all you curio-minded collectors out there, neither work is for sale.

“Cliche” is on view at Almine Rech Gallery in New York, 39 East 78th Street, 2nd Floor, until July 28.