

SEANKELLY

Heinrich, Will, Rodney, Seph, Schwender, Martha and Steinhaur, Jillian. "What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now," *The New York Times*, June 29, 2022.

The New York Times



Layo Bright's "Visions I" (2022), kiln-formed glass, in the group show "NXTHVN: Undercurrents" at Sean Kelly Gallery. via NXTHVN and Sean Kelly, New York

Want to see new art in New York this weekend? Start on the Lower East Side with Nicholas Galanin's arresting installations at Peter Blum and Ani Liu's take on parents' "invisible labor" at Cuchifritos Gallery. Then head to TriBeCa to see John Riepenhoff's "Skies" series at Broadway Gallery. And don't miss the group show at Sean Kelly, "NXTHVN: Undercurrents," at Hudson Yards.

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“Care, growth, abundance, rebirth, loss, dislocation, the forgotten” are what the sculptor Layo Bright says are the key concerns that undergird her work in the group show “Undercurrents.” These interests first strike me as particularly millennial, but then I look at “Double Standard” (2022), two coruscating, yet darkly foreboding rectangles of glass epoxied over nylon tote bags. Then listening to her discuss the 1983 forced deportation of Ghanaians from her native Nigeria I realize this is a profoundly purposeful reflection on the inequities of migration. All her work is also visually delectable, especially the “Visions” (2022) pieces, kiln-formed-glass visages combined with natural elements such as leaves to look like 21st-century building capitals. The curators, Marissa Del Toro and Jamillah Hinson, installed the work high on the walls so that it reads just this way.

“Undercurrents” is a show by graduates of the NXTHVN fellowship program, thus, as you might expect, it’s a smorgasbord — though laid out elegantly. There are some cartoonish, propulsive, almost surreal paintings by John Guzman that do surprising things to human faces. Alyssa Klauer’s paintings are all fey, ethereally glowing portraits with the repeated motif of one woman’s silhouette merging with another. There are *almost* gimmicky paintings by Patrick Quarm that owe something to Kehinde Wiley and employ vividly colored portraits of Black people pierced by strategically placed holes.

The entire exhibition feels like the assembled artists do consider loss, dislocation and the forgotten, and yet find their way to abundance. *SEPH RODNEY*