

Rina BANERJEE

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5 Shows to See on New York's Lower East Side

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BY ALEX GREENBERGER

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Installation view of "Rina Banerjee: Black Noodles," 2023, at Perrotin New York. GUILLAUME ZICCARELLI

In the past few years, the Lower East Side, long the destination in New York for cutting-edge work by young artists, has begun to empty out as galleries join the exodus to Tribeca. Not all is lost, though—a rich scene continues to thrive, even as the gallery ecosystem in the Lower East Side is sparser than it once was.

Excepting Henry Street, which has suddenly become home to a scrappy grouping of galleries, the map is now quite spread out. This means two things. First, expect to walk relatively far distances between exhibitions—the norm in art world hotspots like London and Paris, but something New Yorkers who frequent Chelsea and Tribeca probably aren't used to. Second, you'll have to know where to look.

In an effort to point you in the right direction this Frieze week, here are five shows to see on the Lower East Side right now

[...]

Rina Banerjee at Perrotin



Rina Banerjee, *Contagious Migrations*, 1999–2023.
Photo: Photo Guillaume Zicarelli/Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin

Rina Banerjee's thrillingly offbeat exhibition is filled with maximalist sculptures, the biggest of which is *Black Noodles* (2023), which lends her Perrotin show its name. A large hanging structure with elements spilling onto the floor, it vaguely recalls a wrecked chandelier; its materials include a vintage milk glass, human hair, and an ostrich egg. It appears like a relic from a lost world, one entirely of Banerjee's making.

If the other works in this show stand as proof, that world is one where humanity has forged an entirely different relationship to everything else around it. Hybridity is the name of the game here. Her painting *I am not afraid of you said the Elephant to the Rodent* (2022) features two figures, one resembling a long-legged person with a mouse's face for a head, the other a crouching human with a long elephant's trunk à la the Hindu deity Ganesha. They're surrounded by oversize flowers and grass. Nature and animals, animals and humans, humans and gods press up against one another. Along the way, Banerjee, who was born in Kolkata, India, and is now based in New York, finds clever ways of blending cultures.

The dazzling *Contagious Migrations* (1999–2023) features as its background what appears to be a large plan for a city, with numbers and boxes denoting various structures. The plan isn't

particularly legible, however, and if it does map anything at all, it may be all the places Banerjee has been—the work includes Silly Putty, a toy now manufactured by the Western company Crayola, as well as turmeric and kumkum, substances that are pervasive in India. A similar work to this one figured in the Whitney Biennial more than 20 years ago, and amazingly, since then, Banerjee has had only a couple New York solo shows. This Perrotin show ought to bring her greater attention here—and hopefully lead to the mid-career survey she deserves.

Through June 10, at Perrotin, 130 Orchard Street

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