

Feb. 24, 2022

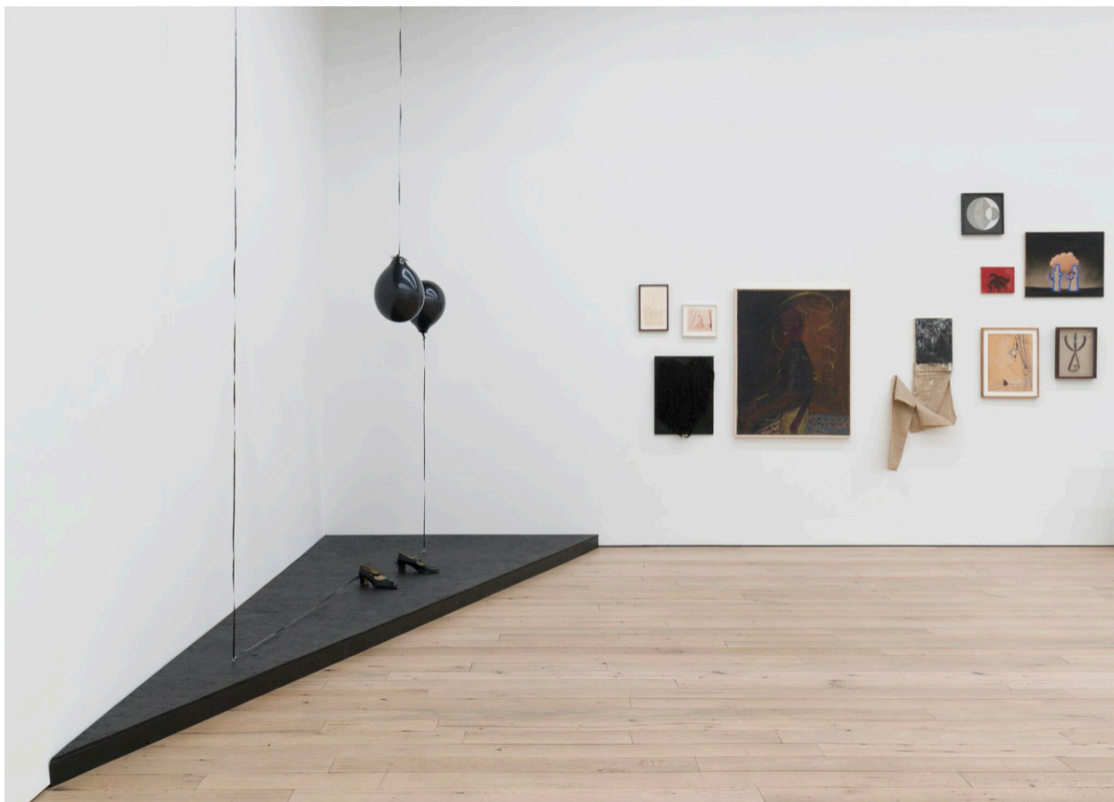
What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now

Want to see new art this weekend? Start in Chinatown with Rafael Sánchez and Kathleen White's found materials from the AIDS crisis to Sept. 11. Then head to Chelsea to check out the Kitchen's four-artist exhibition, which takes up its hallways, offices and exhibition spaces. And don't miss Stephanie Syjuco's haunting manipulations of archival photos.

CHINATOWN

'Rafael Sánchez, Kathleen White: Earth Work'

Through March 12. Martos Gallery, 41 Elizabeth Street, Manhattan. 212-560-0670; martosgallery.com.



From left, Rafael Sánchez's "Corner Piece" (2022), platform, balloons, shoes, ribbon, and hardware; and on the wall, works in various media (1985-2017) by Sánchez and Kathleen White. Photo by Charles Benton, Courtesy Rafael Sánchez, The Estate of Kathleen White, and Martos Gallery, New York

MARTOS GALLERY

Rafael Sánchez and Kathleen White were both formed by New York City's underground scene of the 1980s and '90s. Sánchez, Cuban-born, was doing cross-gendered performances work in downtown drag clubs; and White, born in Fall River, Mass., was part of the Lower East Side art world when they met in 2004. They then lived together until White's death from cancer in 2014.

Along with cultural turf, they shared lived histories: the AIDS crisis, urban gentrification, Sept. 11. As is evident in this moving, intricately textured two-person show, both drew on a personal experience of those years in their art. At one point Sánchez made assemblages from light bulbs in memory of friends who had died of AIDS. (A single photograph here seems to refer to that work.) White made sculptures from the wigs of deceased drag queens whose possessions had been thrown out into the street.

Despite the thrum of mortality, their art pulses with joy, in part through their witty use of found materials: dust, makeup, cinder block, telephone-book pages. The installation intermingles work in ways that suggests how they were different as artists (simplistically put: Sánchez looks more conceptually oriented, White more hands-on expressive.) But we also sense how they were alike. Two small paintings hung side by side — Sánchez's "Onement in a Field" (2002) and White's "Moon" (2005-2006) — could be depictions of the same evening sky vista seen by two people with a shared vision and distinctive temperaments, sitting side by side. *HOLLAND COTTER*