

ART REVIEWS

New York Galleries: What to See Right Now

American Folk Art Museum hosts outsider art; Heidi Jahnke's offbeat paintings; a group show on contemporary Muslim art; and Jessica Eaton's mesmerizing photographs.

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'Beyond Geographies'

Through Nov. 17. BRIC, 647 Fulton Street, Brooklyn; BRICartsmedia.org.



Laylah Amatullah Barrayn's "Cheikh Bamba's Tomb" (2014), Touba, Senegal. Laylah Amatullah Barrayn

The eight artists in "Beyond Geographies: Contemporary Art and Muslim Experience" at BRIC all live in New York, but their work often refers to histories and traditions forged elsewhere. Created in partnership with "Muslims in Brooklyn," an art and history project started in 2017 by the Brooklyn Historical

Society — which is also showing Kameelah Janan Rasheed's ambitious sound installation — "Beyond Geographies" aims to celebrate the large Muslim population in Brooklyn and also combat Islamophobia.

Laylah Amatullah Barrayn's beautiful, moody color photographs documents how Sufi Muslims in Senegal are often treated as "Others," and yet thousands of pilgrims flow through mosques and sites like one devoted to Cheikh Amadou Bamba, founder of the Mouride Sufi sect and the holy city of Touba. Asif Mian's sewn-together carpets illustrate the hybrid or "double consciousness" (as the exhibition brochure describes it) of young, urban or marginalized Muslims, while Umber Majeed uses morphing computer animations to examine Pakistan's patriarchal past.

One pitfall is a tendency by artists to lean heavily on earlier tactics and motifs, like Nsenga Knight's geometric painting that quotes Sol LeWitt's wall drawings or Mona Saeed Kamal's sculpture with 1,001 paper boats. (Installations with large accretions of objects have lost their awesome and sublime power, for this critic, because of the overuse and abuse of this format.) What's more effective is offering not just an alternative viewpoint, but a new structure — like Morehshin Allahyari's video and 3D-printed resin sculpture of a pre-Islamic Middle Eastern "Jinn" (female genie), a figure that is so unfamiliar in New York that Ms. Allahyari may well have invented it.

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