

NEW YORK TIMES

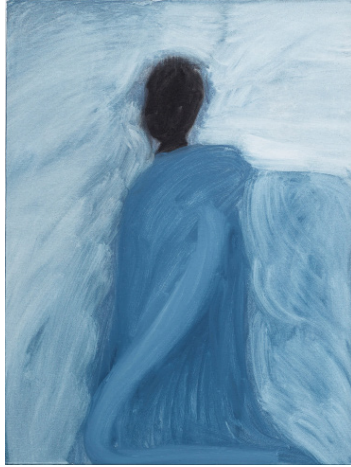
AUGUST 21, 2019

NEW YORK GALLERIES: WHAT TO SEE RIGHT NOW

by Will Heinrich



Henni Alftan's "Tiptoeing" (2019)



Ruth Ige's "Amongst the Winds and Waves," from 2019.

Ceramic sculptures; warped photographs; floral still lifes; treasures in a trash collection; and swoops of acrylic indigo.

Four separate painting shows currently fill as many consecutive rooms at Karma Gallery. What they have in common is a tight focus on the way we take in and construct images. The Glasgow-based Andrew Sim, in the first room, makes gentle pastels with titles like "A tree with twin trunks." But by including a yeti and a U.F.O. among these restful scenes, he reminds us that nature, too, is constructed by the imagination.

Henni Alftan, born in Helsinki and working in Paris, paints our *ideas* of how things look — colorful, sharp-edged, a little flat. (A fine pair of small paintings, both called "Tiptoeing," neatly argue that it's her stockings that shape a woman's ankles and not vice versa.) Matt Hilvers, the show's only American, looks at the strange way words can dance and combine when they're peeled away from the objects they refer to. In "Culture (Car) (Positioned)," curving bits of highway spell the word "Culture" against a bright, schematic landscape.

In the final room, Ruth Ige, who was born in Nigeria and lives in New Zealand, uses figuration like a weight to hold down great swoops of acrylic indigo, cerulean and gray. This figurative weight, though head-shaped and solid black, is the opposite of a silhouette. Its blackness isn't neutral or empty but full and mysterious, a place where gestures and moods concentrate into unknowable density.

Galleries



RUTH ICE AND KARMA GALLERY

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WILL HEINRICH

HENNI ALFTAN, MATT HILVERS, RUTH ICE, ANDREW SIM

Through Sept. 15. Karma Gallery, 188 East Second Street, Manhattan; 212-390-8290, karmakarma.org.

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