

HYPERALLERGIC

Your Concise New York Art Guide for July 2022

Your list of must-see, fun, insightful, and very New York art events this month, including Lee Lozano, Cindy Sherman, Tokuko Ushioda, Anas Albraeche, and more.

by [Billy Anania](#)
June 29, 2022

Ajay Kurian: Missing Home



Ajay Kurian, detail from “Hedgehog” (2022) (photo by Joerg Lohse, courtesy the artist and 47 Canal, New York)

When: through July 9

Where: 47 Canal (291 Grand Street, Second Floor, Lower East Side, Manhattan)

Last year, Ajay Kurian [told *BOMB* magazine](#) that he envisioned two future exhibitions in his mind that were “loosely about failed escape: one where we’re in the process of leaving the planet and mourning the loss of it. And the other where we’re somewhere else and mourning our circumstances there.” This latter idea, which addresses the neocolonial tendency of space exploration, forms the basis of his latest series. The mounted foam core sculptures of *Missing Home* are cerebral and celestial. From afar, they merge ancient Indian sculpture techniques with Rorschach test imagery; up close, they reveal microcosmic worlds that appear to float serenely in the gallery space.

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

June 22, 2022

Ajay Kurian

Through July 9. 47 Canal, 291 Grand Street, Manhattan; 646-415-7712, 47canal.us.

Ajay Kurian's "Tiresias" (2022) in his new show, "Missing Home." Ajay Kurian and 47 Canal, New York

An air of sacred stillness envelops Ajay Kurian's latest show. A whiff of danger, too. The only way to approach his new sculptures is to traverse the layer of pine needles strewn across the floor. They can be slippery, so anyone less than sure-footed will need to walk with care. Kurian, a Brooklyn-based artist, turned heads in the 2017 Whitney Biennial with Nike-sneaker-wearing, Muppet-like effigies that combined pop culture and provocation. (One wore a T-shirt with the words "All holes matter.") Somber in comparison, this show is titled "Missing Home." Road trip? Prolonged exile? Both, maybe.

A series of striking new sculptures resemble Rorschach ink blots whose organic shapes suggest moths and pelvic bones, heraldic lions and many-armed deities. Casting dramatic shadows under spotlights, the vertically symmetrical forms evoke humanity's ongoing attempts to depict a fearsome cosmic order, through icons past and present. But whose icons, from what century? One senses that the sculptures, at a loss for answers, mourn the ways that cultural memory can get jumbled and enshrined as part of diasporic experience.

An artwork in the back room looks more straightforward at first, innocuous even: a toy-model-scale house and palm tree set. But the bulky pedestal beneath hides ceramic heating elements that reach up to 1000 degrees Celsius when powered on. "Sculpture is hot please do not touch," reads a sign nearby. And with that caveat, shimmering-hot air rises around the figurines: an agonizing mirage for someone missing home. *DAWN CHAN*



ART

Ajay Kurian

June 2022

This Brooklyn-based artist is best known for his allegorical scenes of dystopian intrigue — amalgams of vape pens, Gummy Bears, and sneaker-wearing epoxy-foam figures — which put a postconsumer twist on the vanitas tradition. Recently, Kurian has shifted his focus from found-object hybrids to made-from-scratch abstractions. The works in his new show, “Missing Home,” have a direct appeal, playing on the human affinity for bilateral symmetry (the structure of vertebrates, insects, Rorschach tests), while exuding an ambient melancholy. The floor is blanketed with umber pine needles that crunch underfoot; on the surrounding walls colorful cutouts balance the organic and the ornamental. Inkblot-like daubs of pigment are built up with plaster and fibreglass until their scabby surfaces suggest pinned butterflies, iris blooms, pelvic bones, and brooches. The works’ titles — including “Tirtha,” Sanskrit for “crossing point” or “holy place,” and “Tiresias,” an oracle of Greek myth — hint at a millennia-spanning time line. Perhaps the allusion to homesickness in the exhibition’s name anticipates a future longing for a now familiar world faced with extinction

— *Johanna Fateman*