



ART

**Ajay Kurian**

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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*