

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

By **Travis Diehl**, **Seph Rodney** and **Jillian Steinhauer**

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Want to see new art in New York this weekend? Start on the Upper East Side with Tom Sachs's "Spaceships" at Acquavella. Then head to Chelsea for Jamea Richmond-Edwards's urgent narratives in her solo show at Kravets Wehby. And don't miss "Show Your Work," a group exhibition at 601Artspace on the Lower East Side.

CHELSEA

Jamea Richmond-Edwards

Through Nov. 12. Kravets Wehby, 521 West 21 Street, Manhattan; 212-352-2238, kravetswehbygallery.com.



Jamea Richmond-Edwards's "The Great Return" (2022), in which the artist presents two versions of herself, one that is obsidian and another that is brown. via Kravets Wehby Gallery

There is a glut of figurative drawing and painting that washed over the contemporary art scene in the past three to four years. It's now difficult to find artists that use the human figure to say something unique and unexpected. Then there is Jamea Richmond-Edwards at Kravets Wehby. I recently saw this Detroit-based artist's work in the exhibition "[Legacies of the Great Migration](#)," which originated at Mississippi Museum of Art, in Jackson, Miss., and is now at the Baltimore Museum of Art. When I first saw her work, I thought of mythmaking, how her depictions of familial characters, while flattened to almost the appearance of hieroglyphics (but with exuberant color schemes), become dynamic because they are infused with urgent narratives.

In [this show](#), "[Currency](#)," the same urgency is present as Richmond-Edwards places herself in the role of the hero, though one who's doubtful of her own provenance. In "Holy Wars" (2022) she rides a unicorn into battle alongside her tribe. Then in "The Great Return" (2022), she visually wrestles with the possibility (suggested via a DNA test) that her ancestors may have been Indigenous American and not entirely, as she had assumed, African. In this painting she presents two versions of herself, one that is obsidian and another that is brown. There is also a figure of a canine meant to represent Anubis, a god who ushers humans into the afterlife. Richmond-Edwards wrestles with all this inherited and hypothesized personal history and uses painting to meld them into a story of who she has come to be. *SEPH RODNEY*