

What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in March

SOHO

Renee Gladman

Through March 18. Artists Space, 11 Cortlandt Alley, Manhattan; 212-226-3970, artistspace.org.



Renee Gladman's "Untitled (moon math)," from 2022, in her New York solo debut. Credit... via Artists Space, New York; Photo by Filip Wolak.

Like the poet-painter Etel Adnan or the Canadian novelist-turned-artist Douglas Coupland, Renee Gladman enters the art world from a rarely used side door from the world of literature. Through poems, novels and essays, Gladman has established herself as one of the most original writers of her generation. Her series of philosophical speculative novels centering on an imaginary city named Ravicka catalyzed the founding of the taste-making indie publisher, Dorothy Project. Then Gladman wrote her way into drawing.

In "Narratives of Magnitude," Gladman's New York solo debut, you will find her distinctive cursive-like lines that resemble writing but remain illegible. In her early published drawings these lines clustered and stretched elegantly to suggest architectural forms. But the more recent (2019-22), two dozen or so, drawings at Artists Space seem less assured and more tentative as Gladman pushes her work closer to painting by both upping the scale and incorporating color. The large black sheet of "Untitled (moon math)" (2022) features a dense block of white writing at left interrupted by several drawn circles, and a chalky explosion at right that conjures both mathematical theorems and medieval marginal glosses. Throughout, the works recall the graphic compositions of the Russian artist El Lissitzky, who influenced the Bauhaus a century ago. In her writing, Gladman often dramatizes thinking by weaving doubt or awareness of the body into her sentences so as to push her prose into revelatory and unexpected places. In these drawings, we find her still searching on the cusp of her next revelation. JOHN VINCLER