

Thomas Erben Gallery

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Art in Review



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND THOMAS ERBEN GALLERY, NEW YORK

"Akhet," C-print from 2013 by Yamini Nayar in her second solo show, "An Axe for a Wing-bone," at Thomas Erben Gallery.

Yamini Nayar

'An Axe for a Wing-bone'

Thomas Erben Gallery
526 West 26th Street,
fourth floor
Through Dec. 21

Yamini Nayar's second solo at Thomas Erben builds on and complicates what she has done in the past. And whether she is fundamentally a photographer or a sculptor is still, in a sense, a tough call. Many of the photographs are of assemblages, often vaguely architectural in form, that she puts together in her studio from scrap materials, photographing the work in progress at various stages, and from different angles once it's done. Afterward, she more or less finesses the photographer-or-sculptor question herself: The models are discarded; the pictures remain.

As before, her pictures project us into disorienting interiors. What look like ceilings could be floors; floors could be walls. It's hard to get a footing and an illusion of damage, possibly in progress, is pervasive. In some of her recent vertically oriented photographs, we seem to peer down tight corridors into distant, blasted rooms. The interior in the photograph titled "Akhet" — the ancient Egyptian word for flood season — looks like a river is running through it, stripping off wallpaper as it goes and pooling up as

it surges toward an exit.

This picture has a sense of textural delicacy new to the work, which brings it very close to painting: It's filled with brushy strokes, suggesting yet another identity that this ambitious young artist is playing with, absorbing, making her own.

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