

5 NYC GALLERY SHOWS TO HEAL ANY AILMENT

By [Vittoria Benzine](#) • 10 October 2023

The commercial fine art world, a reflection of the wider world, has thrown a lot at Vittoria Benzine in three years. I've watched it — somehow she just keeps getting stronger. Last week as all the planet (at home, in America, and beyond) descended into chaos without quarantine's respite this time around, she girded her loins, swore silence to protect a Scorpio who doesn't deserve it, and did the one thing she knows how: pounded pavement. Remember vaccines? The sickness is the medicine.

So this Autumn in New York and the hemisphere beyond is another spicy one. At least the galleries reflect it. Benzine doesn't allege to know what you need. [Ram Dass said](#) "Some acts of compassion liberate on one level, but not on every level." In the interest of simply setting the table for healing instead, please accept this spread of art remedies — whether you crave a tale to take your mind off the madness, retail therapy, or just a hug. For what it's worth, there were never any 'simpler times.'



Installation view of The House Edge at The 8th Floor, September 2023. Photograph by Adam Reich. Featuring Bently Spang, Boutique of the Damned: Re-Stage #1, 2023.

My first encounters with casinos were entirely visual awe. I'd never heard of them until second grade or so, when my brother and I got Sonic Adventure 2 on the Gamecube. There was a sustained sensation that I had to live in the casino in that game, and this show perfectly captures it. I think that yearning's the same reason I'm an alcoholic. I felt that same visual excitement at this 16 artist group show for perhaps the first time since, courtesy especially of a bedazzled work by Harry Fonseca, a vivid vision of Santa Fe in Hollywood's shoes by David Bradley, and an immersive installation by Bently Spang lit with a colorful disco ball. I inherited so many gaps in knowledge from my semi rural Pennsylvanian upbringing. Now that I have a better handle on the history of this country which public school students pledge allegiance to, it's extra thrilling to see how contemporary Indigenous artists are harnessing their heritage while honoring tradition. Brooklyn-based Rachel Martin pares symbolism down to minimalism to maximize her scenes' impact. Montreal-based Nico Williams isn't just beading capitalist confections, he's changing standards for how studios behind labor-intensive art can embody better collectives. The show's about beating the odds. Its power alludes that you need people and, yes, a requisite measure of razzle dazzle. **Through January 13**

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