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

By Jillian Steinhauer, Will Heinrich, Travis Diehl, Roberta Smith, Max Lakin and Martha Schwendener

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Want to see new art in New York this weekend? Check out Bang Geul Han's "Land of Tenderness" at The 8th Floor; Michael E. Smith's sculptures at Andrew Kreps; and "Beautiful, Vivid, Self-Contained" at the Hill Art Foundation.

Newly Reviewed

FLATIRON

Bang Geul Han

Through June 24. The 8th Floor, 17 West 17th Street, Manhattan; 646-839-5908, the8thfloor.org.



Bang Geul Han's "Warp and Weft #02 — Reading" (2022) in her exhibition "Land of Tenderness." Credit...via Bang Geul Han and Accola Griefen Fine Art

The artist [Bang Geul Han](#), born in South Korea and based in the United States, is interested in technologies new and old. So the works in her exhibition "[Land of Tenderness](#)" fall into two categories: those focused on digital elements like video and virtual reality, and those centered on weaving. Together they offer a striking overview of her practice.

The show is titled after Han's "Terre de Tendre" (2023), a V.R. journey in which the viewer floats on a waterway through a mountainous landscape to the tune of a chiming lullaby. The hillsides are covered in video projections of hands doing maintenance and care work — tasks that migrants often do. At the same time, letters appear in the waters: the names of Supreme Court cases involving immigrants and matters of citizenship. The work has the viewer navigate the uncomfortable space between the supposed impartiality of the law and the messy realities of life. But its complexity dampens its emotional impact. (Notably, the piece is just Part 1 of a [continuing project](#).)

Han's "Warp and Weft" series (2021–ongoing) better drives home the point. For these, she weaves tapestries out of strips of printed U.S. government documents concerning subjects like abortion and drug enforcement. From afar they're pleasantly patterned; up close they become a dizzying jumble of text, with phrases ("termination of the pregnancy") popping out. In a series of evocative photographs, a naked Han wears the tapestries at home.

Like many of us, Han knows that official, austere words can and do have personal, intimate effects. Her work demonstrates how malleable and unstable language can be, without denying its all-too-real force. *JILLIAN STEINHAUER*