

# The New York Times

## What to See in New York Art Galleries This Week

By Roberta Smith, Will Heinrich, Martha Schwendener and Jillian Steinhauer

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At a time when stories of sexual misconduct continue to dominate the news, feminist utopias offer a refuge. For her solo show at [the Kitchen](#), “Her Garden, a Mirror,” the Brooklyn artist [Chitra Ganesh](#) finds inspiration in a remarkable utopia that’s over a century old.

Ms. Ganesh takes off from a 1905 novella, “Sultana’s Dream,” by the Bengali writer and activist Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain. First published in an Indian women’s magazine, the tale — an audio recording of which plays in the gallery near handouts that contain the text — is told by a narrator who’s transported to Ladyland, where India’s gender roles are reversed. Women lead the country and roam freely, while men remain at home. The women are so educated they’ve figured out how to use solar energy to defeat an invading army.

“Sultana’s Dream” informs the print series that is the backbone of the exhibition, which also includes videos and sculptures. The dynamic linocuts combine Ms. Ganesh’s talents in fine art and comics by riffing on the story without being slavish. The works abound with female characters and creatures, futuristic structures, and recurring, symbolic imagery like [hands](#).

Appearing elsewhere in the show, the hands seem significant. A large aluminum and silk sculpture of one occupies a corner of the gallery, with an animation playing across it. Hands are also a constant presence in “How We Do” (2018), two compilations of videos sourced from the news and social media and commissioned by Ms. Ganesh from her friends. The clips show women and queer and transgender people demonstrating different activities, from cooking and ukulele playing to truck driving, and much more. “How We Do” is mesmerizing in its capaciousness. It’s a cross between a survival kit and an instruction manual for a feminist world that may yet be within reach. JILLIAN STEINHAUER



Chitra Ganesh’s linocut print “Refugees and Queen” (2018). Durham Press

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