

The New York Times
New York Galleries: What to See
Right Now

By Roberta Smith



Installation view of “Uman: I Will Sit Here and Wait for You” at Fierman gallery. Uman and Fierman

Through Aug. 10. Fierman, 127 Henry Street, Manhattan; 917-593-4086, fierman.nyc.

The multimedia artist Uman made a splash on the New York scene when she had her first solo show at White Columns in September 2015, followed quickly — maybe a little too quickly — by a second show three months later at Louis B. James on the Lower East Side. Her third show, “I Will Sit Here and Wait for You,” at Fierman, overseen by David Fierman, a former partner at James, is smaller than its predecessors — four paintings and two sculptures. But it serves to keep in sight a truly gifted self-taught artist who was born in Somalia, raised in Kenya and came to the United States in 2004.

The most beautiful painting here is a six-foot square with dots of brilliant, encircled color on a camel-brown background. The loosely painted result is abstract but also has the thrilling vitality of gemstones in dust. Variations on the dots and circles are a recurring motif in Uman’s abstractions that — as in Yayoi Kusama’s — remain consistently engaging. A new direction is signaled in the tall, elegant figure, silouetted in black, in “Self-Portrait,” which is notable for its fluidity of gender and culture: male and female, shaman and fashion model. With luck, Uman’s work will return again soon, in force. ROBERTA SMITH