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art fragments from the big apple

Specificity
Riva Gallery

That a group show as seemingly diverse as Odili Donald Odita's curatorial project has been titled "Specificity" may initially seem puzzling. Although the show posits focus and singularity of intent in an information- and stimuli-overloaded world as its underlying proposition, the work of these 14 artists could not, at first glance, appear more stylistically and conceptually wide-ranging. When examined further, however, the notion of individual engagement and absorption begins to crystallize. Small worlds are created within a larger universe, and these enfold the viewer in their particular imaginations. Rina Banerjee's sprawling sculptural installation of pink plant-like forms includes Christmas lights, plastic flowers, and crimson feathers, evoking an over-the-top version of paradise. Habib Kheradyar's minimal installation of red veils has an enigmatic air of tranquility, in which space and time are altered through three-dimensional manipulation. Reduction of form occurs two-dimensionally in the loosely painted geometric grids of Stanley Whitney. His paintings operate systematically but seem to simultaneously challenge that system by pushing the boundaries of its formal constraints. If only in reality different cultures and modes of expression could interact so effectively — it is perhaps in celebration of the ability of art to create a parallel and more perfect sphere of existence that Odita has chosen to present his specific, idealistic vision.

—Amanda Church