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

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LOWER EAST SIDE

Hiroka Yamashita

Through June 28. Kiang Malingue, 50 Eldridge Street. 917-722-8228, kiangmalingue.com.



Hiroka Yamashita, "Oni and Mother," 2025, oil on linen triptych. via Hiroka Yamashita and Kiang Malingue; Photo by Argenis Apolinario

Kiang Malingue, a Hong Kong hothouse for emerging artists, has just opened in Manhattan's Chinatown with an exhibition of 19 works by the Japanese painter Hiroka Yamashita, a wizard colorist based in Okayama and born in 1991. Her dark canvases and linens present spectral, shadowy scenes that draw on folklore and animistic beliefs, though they are arresting and psychologically potent even without any background knowledge.

A woman emerges from an undulating violet wave, amid craggy forms that could be mountains or distant nebulas, in "Unagi-hime Princess Eel" (2025), which recalls the environments of [Charles Burchfield](#) or [Bob Thompson](#) — the natural world as a majestic and mysterious realm. A ghostly stick figure floats above green-orange flames in "The Lunar New Year Bonfire" (2025), as four heads bow at the edge. (I think that's what it shows, at least. Forms can be tricky to identify in these playful pictures.)

With clear talent to burn, Yamashita can build elaborate images, though her best are more restrained, airy but never tranquil. "Salt Mounds" (2025) is an almost atmospheric blue-orange abstraction, thin oil paint conjuring an ink-wash pond or fog. You can make out the mounds, used for purification purposes in Shinto practice, and a snake gliding into view. *ANDREW RUSSETH*