



THE NEW YORKER

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART

Edie Fake

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“12th House” is an apt title for this American artist’s current show at the Broadway gallery—in astrology, the twelfth house governs secret lives and unseen realms, and Fake’s new paintings recall the metaphysical maps and diagrams made by alchemists, spiritualists, and students of the occult. Like the modernist Agnes Pelton before him, Fake was inspired by the Mojave Desert landscape, which he evokes in compositions of hard-edged, Day-Glo squiggles, orbs, and pyramids, rendered on pristine, velvety black backgrounds. (Fake also painted a site-specific mural, which spans the rear wall of the gallery.) It’s not surprising to learn that the artist’s cryptic lexicon of forms addresses the climate catastrophe; themes of water scarcity, blazing heat, and natural disaster are discernible. With their graphic clarity, Fake’s blaring abstractions transmit a sense of foreboding, owing, perhaps, to the subtle recurring motif of the trefoil radiation symbol. Indeed, the paintings can be seen as complex warning signs—instructions sent by aliens, or even by earthlings from a parched future.

— Johanna Fateman