

ART REVIEWS

## New York Galleries: What to See Right Now

Gina Beavers's vexing high-relief paintings; sculptural works in glass from Monica Cook; and RongRong chronicles the bohemians of Beijing's East Village.

Aug. 14, 2019

### Monica Cook

Through Sept. 13. UrbanGlass, 647 Fulton Street, Brooklyn; 718-625-3685, [urbanglass.org](http://urbanglass.org).



Monica Cook's "Receiver," from 2017, in her new solo show, "Above and Below" at UrbanGlass. via UrbanGlass; Blaine Davis

In Monica Cook's world, and by extension her solo show "Above and Below," everything is both beautiful and decrepit. Glass serpents gleam in the sculpture "Honeypot" (2019), but the treelike structure they guard appears weathered and aged. The painting "Physalia" (2017) contains a congruous rainbow of colors yet looks like the residue of the chemical processes from an oil-slicked ocean.

For Ms. Cook, decay is not to be avoided or feared. Bringing together castoff objects with handmade ones, organic and artificial materials, she creates mutants and totems that seem less of our world than descended from it — like a glimpse of a mythical, postapocalyptic, but still somehow human future.

What's unusual about that future is that it feels hopeful. "Receiver" (2017), a marvel of assemblage, suggests that salvaged junk, if recombined in the right way, might just receive broadcast messages. The hollow, headless "Snowsuit" (2015) so stunningly and casually evokes the form of a woman that it seems like skin shed naturally, not through violence. In the video "Milk Tooth," a grotesque, humanoid pair lives surrounded by animals, eating corn, drinking watery milk, and caring for each other. Rather than be afraid of what comes next, Ms. Cook's work dares ask, what if we saw in it strange new possibilities? *JILLIAN STEINHAUER*