

COLLECTOR DAILY RATING



ON VIEW

[Yamini Nayar, Ouroboros](#)

May 2, 2024 - June 15, 2024

[Thomas Erben Gallery](#)

526 West 26th Street
New York, NY 10001

OTHER LINKS

[Yamini Nayar artist site](#)

Yamini Nayar, Ouroboros @Thomas Erben

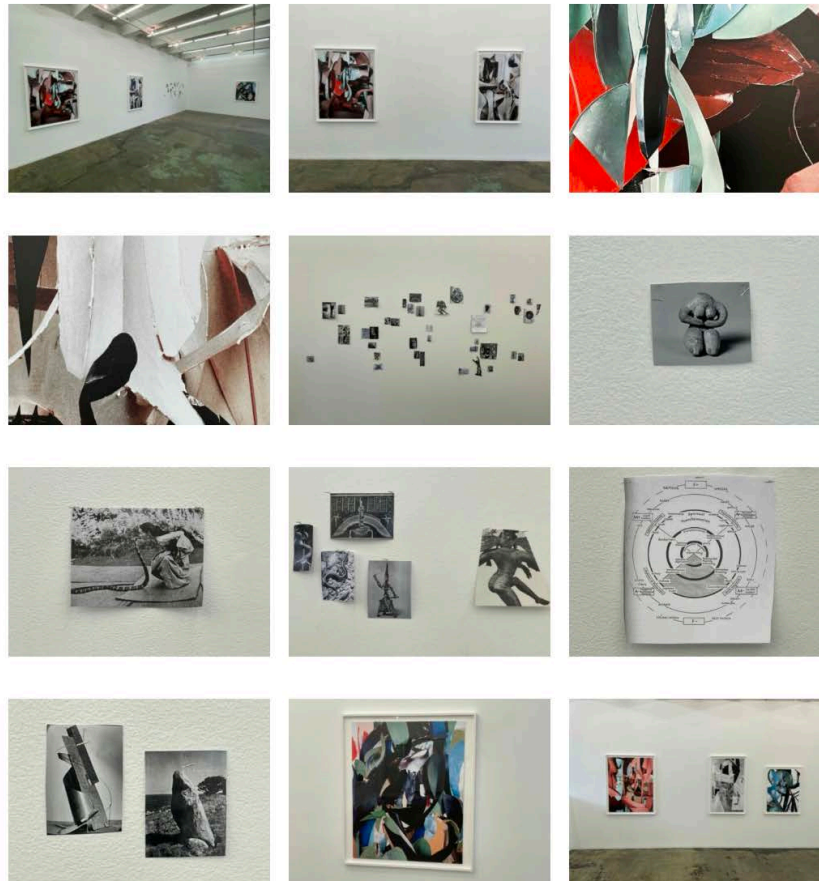
By Loring Knoblauch (<https://collectordaily.com/author/loring-knoblauch/>) / In [Galleries](https://collectordaily.com/category/galleries/) (<https://collectordaily.com/category/galleries/>) / May 30, 2024

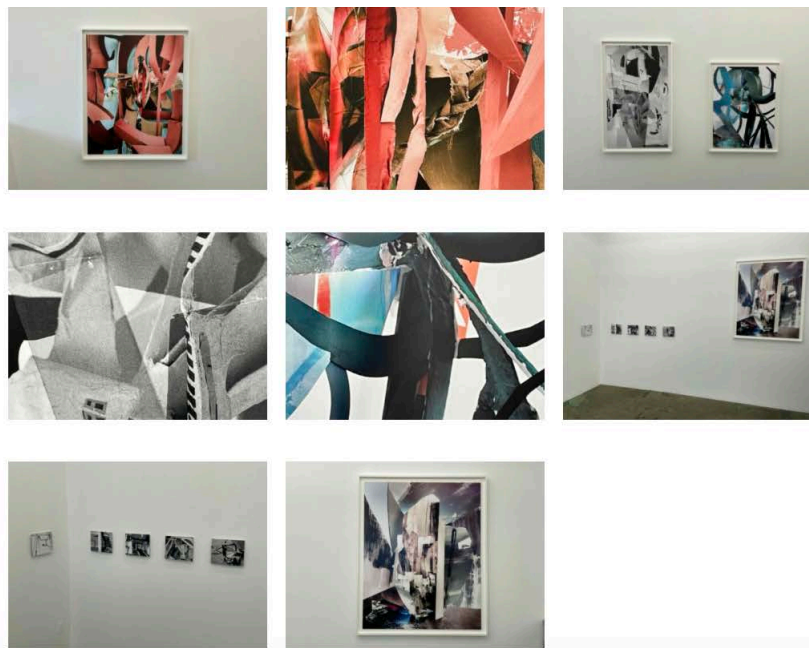
JTF (just the facts): A total of 8 photographic works, generally framed in white and unmatted, and hung against white walls in the main gallery space. (Installation and detail shots below.)

The following works are include in the show:

- 6 archival pigment prints, 2022, 2024, sized roughly 50×40, 50×30, 46×34, 40×30 inches, in editions of 5+2AP
- 1 installation of paper imagery
- 1 set of 5 archival inkjet prints, 2013, each sized roughly 8×10 inches, in an edition of 5 +2AP
- 1 archival inkjet print, 2013, sized 50×40 inches, in an edition of 5+2AP

A concurrent exhibition of the artist's work is also on view at Jhaveri Contemporary, in Mumbai ([here](https://jhavericontemporary.com/exhibitions/ouroboros) (<https://jhavericontemporary.com/exhibitions/ouroboros>)).





Comments/Context: I've always had an affinity for artists who approach their artistic problem solving in deeply analytical ways. For this kind of artist, there is inevitably a methodical off screen process that has been taking place over time, which ultimately manifests itself as visual artworks of one kind or another. Sometimes this meticulous thinking leads to exactly calculated and executed works, while in others it is eventually faced with the uncertainty of gesture, improvisation, or chance, which upends the prevailing logic and precision and introduces other less controllable essences and effects.

Yamini Nayar's recent show of new works includes a small wall installation of visual inspiration, which combined with her ongoing training as a Jungian psychoanalyst, is pretty solid evidence of a richly analytical artistic mind – when an artist is willing to overtly show his or her thinking, it's clear that they want that train of thought to be followed and understood, and to potentially inform our experience of the resulting works. At the center of this studio wall mood board lies an intricate circular schematic of the archetypes of motherhood, ranging from the virgin to the witch, with classic names like Kali, Demeter, Circe, Isis, and Hecate given placement around the positive/negative axes of the diagram. Nearby, Nayar has gathered images of female fertility symbols, ancient statuary, sculptural forms from around the world, flowers and seed pods, women enacting rituals with snakes, burial rites, multi-armed and octopus symbols, and various other formal echoes that resonate strongly when placed together. The images provide a context or backdrop to Nayar's efforts, these motifs presumably swimming around in her head as she stepped into the studio to construct her photographs.

For the better part of the past decade, Nayar has been building set ups intentionally made to be photographed, her works consistently settling into an aesthetic realm of shiftingly unstable abstraction. Working from a fixed camera point, she assembles her compositions using various combinations and aggregated layers of painted surfaces, plaster, paper, photographs, printed materials, and other less identifiable structural elements. As seen in gallery shows over the years (in 2020, reviewed [here \(https://collectordaily.com/yamini-nayar-three-spaces-for-time-thomas-erben/\)](https://collectordaily.com/yamini-nayar-three-spaces-for-time-thomas-erben/), and in 2013, reviewed [here \(https://collectordaily.com/yamini-nayar-an-axe-for-a-wing-bone-thomas-erben/\)](https://collectordaily.com/yamini-nayar-an-axe-for-a-wing-bone-thomas-erben/)), her work has continued to test the edges of recognizability, each image creating visual confusions and spatial illusions that pleasingly remain unresolved. Nayar's work pulls us into a vortex of conflicting shapes and architectural spaces, where the flattening eye of the camera folds everything together, leaving us without easy visual answers.

Given the set of inputs provided by Nayar's inspirational imagery, it's only natural that we might find ourselves seeing matching patterns in her photographs, whether they were intentional or not (which we can assume they generally were). To my eye, Nayar's new pictures feel more gestural and more painterly than her earlier works, especially when compared to the small gathering of earlier works (from 2013) which have been included in one corner of the gallery; those works feel meaningfully more structural and architectural, with bolder lines, edges, and spatial layers that dominate the compositions. A new work like "Only the Dance" feels altogether more lyrical and vegetal, seeming to echo the plant forms, spiraling sets of arms and legs, trailing snake-like movements, and the negative space of sculpture found in the reference images.

The salmon-colored “Full Circle” makes a related set of associations, its fleshy femininity built up from layers of curved shards. “Echo and Eros” has a leafier, more jungle like mood, the greens and blues pulling us inward a darker core, which resembles a kind of sculptural presence peeking out from the surroundings. Still other images revel in softer edges, where tears are rounded and feathery rather than sharp, and fragments of aggregated imagery stutter along like film strips.

Part of what I appreciate about Nayar’s photographs is that they really don’t look like anyone else’s, and when I engage with them, they haven’t been dumbed down to a sense of hackneyed obviousness. Their stubborn unresolved complexity is their source of joy, the process of wrestling with the visual challenges seemingly as important as the finished product. At this stage in her artistic career, Nayar has settled into a mature style that deserves to be better known and appreciated. Of course, her abstractions aren’t easy, but who wants a photograph that reveals all its secrets and mysteries at the first glance?

Collector’s POV: The newer prints in this show are priced between \$7500 and \$9000, based on size, in rising editions, with the earlier works at \$12000 and \$7000 (for the set of 5 prints). Nayar’s work has little secondary market history at this point, so gallery retail likely remains the best option for those collectors interested in following up.

Read more about: [Yamini Nayar](https://collectordaily.com/artists/yamini-nayar/), [Thomas Erben Gallery](https://collectordaily.com/galleries/thomas-erben-gallery/)

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