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What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now

Travis Diehl, Jan. 22, 2023

QUEENS

Tirzah

Through Feb. 27. SculptureCenter, 44-19 Purves Street, Queens; 718-361-1750, [sculpturecenter.org](https://www.sculpturecenter.org).

SculptureCenter



Tirzah's "Devotion," 2018, directed by Akinola Davies. Credit...via Tirzah and Akinola Davies; Photo by Charles Benton

When I first went downstairs at SculptureCenter, I thought I heard a party — complete with people saying “clink” as they clacked their plastic cups — but there was only an empty speakeasy, cross-lit aqua and crimson, and a couple of cryptic red posters of waves glommed on the wall with a sculptural amount of paste. A TV on the bar top loops 11 music videos for songs by Tirzah, the British lo-fi electronic singer-

songwriter, showcased in an environment designed by the artist Shahryar Nashat. In the sexy and invasive “Tectonic,” from 2021, the virtual camera interpenetrates 3-D scans of entwined bodies. In 2018’s “Devotion,” as a piano plinks over a slow-jam beat, the Steadicam edges through a hazy, half-speed house party.

Around the corner in a carpeted corridor, a monitor in an arched niche plays the same track. Tirzah’s sparse bedroom techno and underwater soul suffuses the whole of SculptureCenter’s idiosyncratic basement, its concrete nooks and cranny-lined hallways, while chalky light drifting from strips of LEDs shifts with the moods of the videos. The show is less about the videos themselves than a kind of party-as-practice, staged by Nashat with a restraint that chimes with Tirzah’s spare, sweet production. Nashat has stuffed, for example, several of the former electric substation’s old conduits with artificial ivy. You can watch the videos Tirzah and her friends made, or you can wander the reverberant corridors and feel like you’re in one. TRAVIS DIEHL