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

By Dawn Chan



Candice Lin's installation "Lithium Sex Demons in the Factory" (2023) at Canal Projects. Credit...via Candice Lin and François Ghebaly Gallery; Photo by Izzy Leung/Canal Projects

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Candice Lin

Through Dec. 16. Canal Projects, 351 Canal Street, Manhattan; 646-389-2153, canalprojects.org.

The title of Candice Lin's new show, "Lithium Sex Demons in the Factory," is the first hint that it relishes in impish chaos. A second clue comes in the form of sounds and smells: clacking and whirring, as well as the faint odor of mugwort, vinegar and essential oils. The source of all this is a rowdy, room-size installation that features giant ceramic urns, metal workstations, industrial tubing, herbal tinctures and candles.

Wall text leads us to imagine the space as a lithium battery factory that becomes the site of a demonic visitation. Near the center of the gallery, stairs lead to an elevated observation room, where visitors can try out the vantage point of a factory manager surveilling employees from above. Below it, a red-lit crawl space — surrounded by tapestries depicting demons that resemble the monsters of various East Asian myths — offers glimpses of a more mystical world to those deciding to crouch down and prowl around.

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Lin is among a generation of terrific artists training their sights on the ruinous effects of industrialization and global trade on local cultures. Her current project draws inspiration from anthropological case studies of Malaysian female factory workers who have reported spirit possessions while sometimes also falling ill to job-site toxins. But even rooted as it is in scholarly research, Lin's artwork is anything but rational. It is joyfully nonlinear and inexplicable, not to mention noisy and pungent, too. *DAWN CHAN*