

THE NEW YORKER

Art

Xaviera Simmons

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“There are just so many different types of maps,” begins the giant, text-covered mural that anchors this fine exhibition by the thoughtful American postconceptualist. Simmons’s photographs, videos, and audio works create their own kind of geography, in which unidentified places seem haunted by bodies. In one video portrait, a serene shot of a swimmer at sea oscillates with grainy footage of go-go boys. Only one work, a sound piece, names specific locations; it’s seductive until it’s unsettling. A man mutters in French, Spanish, and Italian about his affection for black women (like the artist herself). As his voice flits across Africa, mentioning women from Egypt to Mozambique, he sounds less like a lover than a conqueror.

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