

# The New York Times

Art in Review

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## 'Emerge 6'

*Aljira, a Center for Contemporary  
Art*

*591 Broad Street, Newark  
Through Jan. 14*

Aljira, an alternative art space in downtown Newark, is a laboratory for artists still at an early stage in their careers, a place where they can ask questions, get advice and exhibit in an annual new-talent roundup. Lily Wei, an independent curator, is in charge of this year's show.

Paintings and drawings predominate. Most are well-schooled variations on currently popular styles; two pieces stand out. One is a big Twomblyesque abstraction by Tattfoo Tan, a young painter who runs a gallery on Staten Island; the other, a geometric abstraction by Don Christensen from panels of painted wood.

I liked Scherezade García's enigmatic film animation, and wouldn't mind seeing more of Sebastian Patané Masuelli's videos, if they are as bizarre as "Digital Path to Analog Love." I am also a fan of Brandon Ballengée, who has a piece in Aljira's window: a water-filled aquarium holding a photograph of a painting from Thomas Cole's "Course of Empire" series, along with some rubbish (a cinderblock, a Coke bottle) and a few live fish.

The Cole painting depicts an imaginary civilization at the height of its power; in the next picture, it meets its end. In Mr. Ballangée's piece, it has already done so, joining bits of subaqueous jetsam the artist has dredged from wetlands. But the fish are from the wetlands, too, evidence of life that will survive the course of many empires to come.

HOLLAND COTTER