

## ART WORLD

David Ebony's Top 10 New York Gallery Shows for  
April

David Ebony, Friday, April 8, 2016



Installation view, Hew Locke, "The Wine Dark Sea."  
Photo Courtesy Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art.

**9. Hew Locke at Edward Tyler Nahem, through April 13.**

Hew Locke's 2014 exhibition in Prospect 3 in New Orleans, "The Nameless," made an indelible impression on me. The Scotland-born artist spent his formative years in Guyana, and has been showing internationally for some time. In New Orleans, he presented murals depicting fantastical creatures and characters based on Caribbean mythology, made of countless strands of glittering black Marti-Gras beads and black rope, like that used by Bayou fishermen. Incredibly, Locke has never had a one-person show in New York until now. This exhibition, "The Wine Dark Sea," titled after a line in Homer's *The Odyssey*, marks his solo debut here, and is appropriately momentous and revelatory.

The theme he chose for the show is nautical migration, alluding to the waves of refugees fleeing war-ravaged lands and obsessive regimes around the globe today. Suspended from the ceiling, and hanging several feet above the gallery floor, are dozens of elaborately outfitted toy boats, and intricately detailed model ships—some prefabricated and elaborately embellished by the artist, and others created from scratch. This crowded flotilla sails toward the gallery's windows, as if to proceed onto the city's streets. With vessels ranging from Chinese junks to luxury ocean liners, Locke suggests that the boats are all filled with people and goods; the refugees seek a better life in a more hospitable world, a place of redemption, renewal, and hope.