

HYPERALLERGIC

First Impressions From the 2024 Whitney Biennial

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The exhibition that often acts as a barometer of trends and ideas percolating in global art communities has both hits and misses.



Installation view of Sharon Hayes, *Ricerche: four* (2024) (photo Natalie Haddad/Hyperallergic)

For me, an immediate standout was Sharon Hayes's two-channel video *Ricerche: four* (2024). Even without watching the full 80 minutes, the documentary — the last in a series of works addressing gender and sexuality — should be illuminating for any audience members, whether queer or straight. The artist establishes an almost familial tone as her interview subjects sit in a group and converse (a configuration echoed by the mismatched chairs set up around the monitors), yet the subject matter is anything but casual. A diverse group of queer and genderqueer people offer intimate observations on their fears, frustrations, and the disparity between the ideals and realities of life as an LGBTQ+ person — the discrimination that comes from without *and* within. Hayes avoids didacticism by making a space for individual stories. The videos can be hard to hear in a busy gallery, so subtitles would be helpful, as the work is worth a watch.

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