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# THE NEW YORKER

Fateman, Johanna. "Goings on about Town." *The New Yorker*, May 2023, [www.newyorker.com/goings-on-about-town/art/elisabeth-kley-2023](http://www.newyorker.com/goings-on-about-town/art/elisabeth-kley-2023).

## Goings on about Town

The palette of this New York artist's dramatic new exhibition is restricted to black-and-white, but the references range from the Wiener Werkstätte to the ancient world. (The show's title, "A Seat in the Boat of the Sun," alludes to the Egyptian god Ra.) Kley achieves the effect of a sunken sculpture garden by surrounding her earthenware pieces with a simple mural of a zigzagging incline and vertical stripes to conjure a staircase and a high wall. The ceramics themselves, placed on the floor and on pedestals, are multipart compositions, as if assembled from oversized, playfully ornate building blocks. "Idol," a symmetrical construction of arches, and "Chacmool with Ladders," which echoes a silhouette of a reclining Aztec figure, are both emblazoned with harmonious patchworks of geometric designs. Steady but imprecise lines—some drippy, others smudged—lend these and other hand-glazed forms an ink-stencilled, papier-mâché appearance. Also on view is a suite of drawings; some recall sketches for theatre sets, underscoring the casual, prop-like beauty of Kley's art.