

The New York Times

Spring Gallery Guide: Upper East Side

By Jason Farago

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The cockamamie real estate market has turned the good old Upper East Side into the most stimulating gallery neighborhood in New York — and as downtown stultifies and Chelsea wilts in the shadow of Hudson Yards, the old blue-blood quarter has grown manifold. Up here the big-ticket dealers in grand townhouses exhibit alongside younger galleries in walk-ups and outposts of international dealers; the last few years have welcomed Nara Roesler and Mendes Wood of São Paulo, Almine Rech of Paris, Simon Lee of London and Kurimanzutto of Mexico City. That's not to mention the dealers in antiquities, Asian art and rare books.

On 57th Street you'll find things to see in the gallery-rich Fuller Building, along with stalwarts like Pace and Marian Goodman (where Tino Sehgal, the Greta Garbo of philosophical performance art, opens a new show on May 3). Start there and work your way up Madison Avenue, where the galleries (like Gagosian and Lévy Gorvy) cluster from the mid-60s to 79th Street. If you haven't had your fill yet, turn left and head for the Metropolitan Museum of Art; if you're worn out, rejuvenation awaits in the hotel bars.

1. Throckmorton Fine Art, 'Graciela Iturbide 1969-2019'

This uncommon gallery, founded in 1980, deals both in Buddhist and pre-Columbian antiquities and in contemporary photography from Latin America, all of it shown in an unpretentious space where classical music tinkles in the background. Up now is a show of Graciela Iturbide, one of Mexico's greatest photographers, whose black-and-white images of women, children and animals combine the slippery identifications of ethnography with the glamorous precision of the film still. (Her work is also on view at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, through May 12.) Ms. Iturbide shot these pictures everywhere from Madagascar to East Los Angeles, but the most compelling are her photographs from Juchitán, Oaxaca — above all "Our Lady of the Iguanas" (1979), in which a Zapotec woman stares confidently into the middle distance, her head crowned, Medusa-like, by a collection of reptiles. **Through May 18 at 145 East 57th Street, third floor; 212-223-1059, throckmorton-ny.com.**



An installation view of Moira Dryer's untitled works from the late 1980s at Van Doren Waxter. via Van Doren Waxter, New York; Charles Benton

2. Van Doren Waxter, 'Moira Dryer: Paintings & Works on Paper'

Here is a show of an abstract painter ahead of her time, and whose stylistic promiscuity belied a deep rigor. Moira Dryer, a Canadian artist who came to New York in the 1970s, made her most successful works by applying wavy stripes of black, teal, jonquil, and oxblood red to wood supports; the thin application of pigment, which in places spills top to bottom in trickles or floods, emphasizes the objecthood of the wooden paintings and the artist's careful balancing act between design and chance. This show also includes a few lovely gouaches, alive with the Mediterranean colors of Matisse, that testify to Dryer's artistic omnivorousness and ability to surprise. Her death in 1992, at 34, deprived art history of what was already a superb career, but her example saturates the studios of New York's contemporary painters. **Through May 24 at 23 East 73rd Street, second floor; 212-445-0444, vandorenwaxter.com.**



Four Artists to Watch Now

They are fearless, and their works are among the season's exciting shows. Drawing on memories and research, they propose new ways to live with our histories.

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Claude Tolmer's "Untitled (montage)," 1931.
Claude Tolmer and L. Parker Stephenson Photographs

3. L. Parker Stephenson Photographs, 'Claude Tolmer: Photographiques'

East Midtown and the Upper East Side bulge with photography galleries, and this one-room space at the top of a Madison Avenue walk-up is a hidden gem. Up now is a stellar show of vintage prints by the French modernist photographer Claude Tolmer (1911-1991), whose images of the 1930s include dense, high-contrast visions of airplane propellers and merry-go-rounds; spectral photograms of scissors and goblets; and still lifes montaged with squiggly hand-drawn additions that recall Cocteau. They are strikingly bold, yet many of them had commercial uses — Tolmer's father ran a leading firm for the packaging of luxury

goods, and his photographer son put these images to use on advertisements and boxes. It's worth remembering, as Instagram savagely injects the profit motive into all photographic communication, that an earlier avant-garde found its own methods to slide between artistic activity and commercial necessity. **Through May 11 at 764 Madison Avenue; 212-517-8700, lparkerstephenson.nyc.**



For his 1992 work "Paysage — 2CV," Pierre Buraglio took an entire door of a Citroën 2CV and filled its window with an abstract landscape. Pierre Buraglio and Ceysson & Bénétière

4. Ceysson & Bénétière, 'Pierre Buraglio: PB. 1978-2018'

This French gallery's outpost, now two years old, is presenting the first New York solo of Pierre Buraglio, a lone ranger of European painting and assemblage. His "Masquages Vides" of the late 1970s were cunning "paintings" that, in fact, collaged the color-streaked masking tape used to make earlier works into spare new compositions. (Their quixotic emptiness rhymed with the paintings of Supports/Surfaces, a high-concept approach to abstraction that's seen a revival in fortunes lately, though he never formally joined that movement.) Later he turned to found objects, such as fragments of window frames and even the whole door of a Citroën 2CV, whose window he infilled with an abstract landscape of blue and green. After decades of neglect in New York, postwar French painting is everywhere these days, and there's a good reason; long before we realized it, artists like Mr. Buraglio averred that there was no necessary boundary between painterly and conceptual sophistication. **Through April 27 at 956 Madison Avenue, second floor; 646-678-371, ceyssonbenetiere.com.**



Tauba Auerbach's first kinetic sculptures, including "7S, 7S, 7S, 7S; 7Z, 7Z, 7Z, 7Z, 2S, 2Z; 1S, 2Z," are now on view at the Artist's Institute. via Artist's Institute at Hunter College

5. The Artist's Institute, Tauba Auerbach

If you forced me to name the most dependably challenging exhibition maker in the neighborhood, I'd pick Jenny Jaskey — the director of this nonprofit gallery, associated with Hunter College, whose semester-long experiments push established artists outside their comfort zones. Currently Tauba Auerbach, better known for her abstract paintings, is trying out something new: her first kinetic sculpture, solar-powered, composed of twisted, tensile wires that pull away from a soap-slicked central tube and produce coruscating but evanescent diamonds. The sculpture has the childlike legibility of a game of cat's cradle, but two mildly nasty videos here, documenting surgery to the fascia that enclose human organs, inscribe the sculpture into a trickier domain of bodies and fluids. **Through June 1 at Hunter College, 132 East 65th Street; 646-512-9608, theartistsinstitute.org.**



A still from Eduardo Kac's single-channel video "Inner Telescope," 2017.
Eduardo Kac and Henrique Faria, New York

6. Henrique Faria, 'Eduardo Kac: Inner Telescope'

Another gallery with a strong Latin American focus, this dealership is presenting a show by the Chicago-based Brazilian artist Eduardo Kac that is, quite literally, out of this world. Mr. Kac (pronounced katz) teamed up with a French astronaut on the International Space Station, whom he instructed to cut a simple construction out of white paper: a capital M pierced by a cylinder. In a video here, plus preparatory drawings and research documents, you see the construction gently tumbling through zero gravity, and spinning to resemble the letters M-O-I ("me"): a spare but memorable evocation of the self lost in space. **Through May 11 at 35 East 67th Street, fourth floor; 212-517-4609, henriquefaria.com.**