

Where Did All of the Art Spaces Go? Greenpoint Gallery Night Enters Its 15th Edition

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Alissa Guzman October 29, 2019

Now in its 15th edition, the Greenpoint Gallery Night (GGN) art crawl — originally conceived to spotlight the neighborhood's dedicated art spaces — now includes more and more local businesses that double as exhibition venues. This year, exploring GGN I discovered not only how the neighborhood has evolved but also how gallery spaces are surviving the rising costs of gentrification. Scott Chasse, now the sole organizer of the free biannual event and founder of Calico gallery space, told me that art-supporting businesses have always been a hallmark of the art scene in Greenpoint. He also confirmed, however, that there are fewer dedicated gallery spaces now than when GGN first began in 2013. Of the eight participating spaces in this year's event, three were art galleries. With the artwork curated mostly by participating businesses, the crawl felt more like a tour of the neighborhood's retail culture than a gallery night.



Of the dedicated gallery spaces, Auxiliary Project Space commanded the largest turnout, with the narrow gallery packed for the closing reception of Allison Gildersleeve's cheerful abstract collages and sculptural drawings. Over at Arete, a multimedia space designed to promote art, music, and performance, a series of video projects by dancer Janis Brenner and interdisciplinary artist Muyassar Kurdi drew in viewers looking for the immersive. A refreshing change of pace from the prevalence of 2-D artwork, each of the three videos screened seemed to explore different narratives around sound and movement, where the body featured as conductor or protagonist.

Inside the co-working space The Yard, artist Kirstin Lamb curates group exhibitions every three months in a collaboration that suits artists looking to sell and startups needing a creative office aesthetic. Adhering to The Yard's "no portraits" rule, Lamb's current exhibition titled "Indoor Voices" features six painters exploring the domestic. Dodging the thematic trend of retro furniture and home gardens were the almost monochromatic, intimate-sized paintings of Vena Gu. Gazing out soberly from curtained windows or doorways, her quietly provocative paintings offered a welcome escape from overly designed decor.

Inside the plant shop Soft Opening, owner Kristin McLaughlin hosts biweekly exhibitions, and for GGN it was all about greenery. The colorful and gestural works of Haley Cimillo were perfect for the space, resting comfortably between art and design, and thus palatable for almost any interior. As McLaughlin discussed, "Featuring a rotating roster of local artists and throwing weekly parties for them has been a great way to show people the shop who otherwise wouldn't have known about it. So it's a great networking tool and an all around positive experience for everyone involved."