

ART & DESIGN | SPRING GALLERY GUIDE

10 Galleries to Visit Now in Chelsea

By JASON FARAGO APRIL 27, 2017

So here you are, in the thumping nucleus of the \$45 billion global art market, home to 250 or more galleries of contemporary art. But why does the floor feel so unsteady?

Rumblings of a market correction are everywhere in Chelsea lately, and the one-two punch of slowing sales and rising rents — note the garish condos rising above your head — has begun to knock out galleries large and small. Dealers have decamped downtown (Derek Eller, Alexander and Bonin) and uptown (Anton Kern). And there have been closings, too: Mike Weiss Gallery, Murray Guy and, most shockingly, the stalwart Andrea Rosen Gallery, which was an anchor of this neighborhood’s main drag of 24th Street.

But Chelsea’s still here, and still the best place in town to see lots of art in not a lot of time. This tour visits seven commercial galleries, as well as three of Chelsea’s nonprofit spaces, which can sometimes be overlooked. (Happily, the Dia Art Foundation is back; its 22nd Street home, currently hosting Hanne Darboven’s titanic installation “Kulturgeschichte,” is an essential stop.)

When you’re done, adjourn to the newly renovated Bottino, the Chelsea art world’s unofficial canteen on 10th Avenue. Buy a couple of dealers a drink; they might need it more than you.

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"Homage to Oba Ewaure II of Benin City, Nigeria," by Melvin Edwards, at Alexander Gray Associates.
Credit 2017 Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Vincent Tullo for The New York Times

ALEXANDER GRAY ASSOCIATES The poetic potential of scrap metal has long occupied another African-American artist: the veteran sculptor Melvin Edwards, who works in upstate New York but also keeps a studio in Dakar, Senegal. Chains, hooks, locks and horseshoes are welded into dense knotting of steel, which hang from the wall in this gallery like malevolent sconces; skeins of barbed wire stretch from one wall to the next, and are (a little melodramatically) suspended from the ceiling to form a large tent. Mr. Edwards's fiercely welded hunks and chains in this show, titled "In Oklahoma," certainly call forth the history of slavery and discrimination: Many are from a continuing series known as "Lynch Fragments." But they are also careful exercises in abstract form, in harmony with the metal sculptures of his contemporaries Mark di Suvero and John Chamberlain.