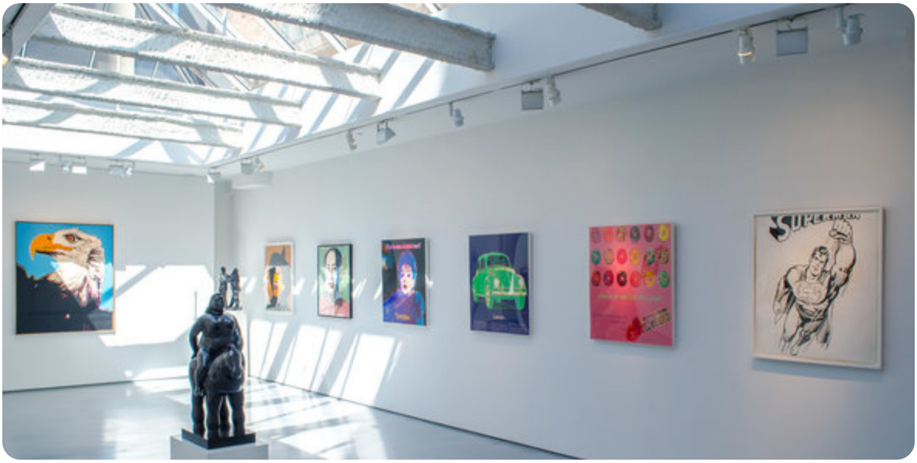
DESTINATIONS: NEW YORK CITY
FEATURES

Like a Local: The Best Art Galleries on the Upper East Side

TravelMag • December 7, 2016 • 6 min read



A skylit room in David Benrimon Gallery (Photo: David Benrimon Gallery)

This storied Manhattan neighborhood has been the backdrop for Woody Allen films and the place where the old money elite hang their hats, but it's also home to a wealth of art.

INSIDE HOWARD GREENBERG GALLERY (PHOTO: TOMGRILL360)

While most visit the famous institutions that make up Fifth Avenue's Museum Mile, world class galleries abound on the Upper East Side, hidden inside intricately preserved townhouses and skyscrapers alike. Here are ten of the best.

Howard Greenberg Gallery

Housed in an art deco tower on the southern edge of the neighborhood, Howard Greenberg

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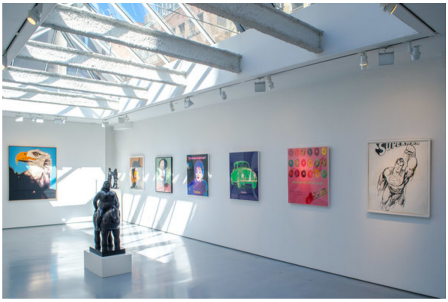
Gallery has played an instrumental role in the development of the modern photography market. Recent exhibits have included a retrospective of black and white portraits by the late Mary Ellen Mark, who shot her subjects with a vibrant candor; Frank Gohlke's shadowy, industrial landscapes of grain elevators that haunt with an eerie simplicity; and a pair of shows by Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky, whose shots look like trippy painted landscapes from a different dimension.

41 East 57th St

David Benrimon Fine Art



A SKYLIT ROOM IN DAVID BENRIMON FINE ART (PHOTO: DAVID BENRIMON GALLERY)

The veteran namesake owner of this gallery worked with legendary pop artists Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. The exhibition "Idolized" featured the iconic silkscreen portraits of Marilyn Monroe along less frequently exhibited pieces like "Moonwalk," one of Warhol's last unsigned pieces before his death in 1987. Recent exhibits beyond the pop art sphere have included a solo show of Columbian painter Fernando Botero and a series of Pablo Picasso's female portraits that put the artist's infamous womanizing in the context of his work.

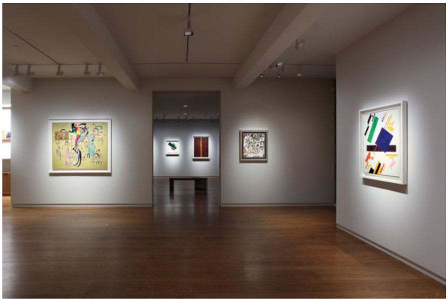
730 5th Ave, Seventh Floor

Anita Shapolsky Gallery

Specializing in the New York School of the particularly underappreciated Abstract Expressionists of the 1950s, this independent gallery makes it a point not to cater to the glitterati and ephemeral trends. A few years back, Ms. Shapolsky exhibited the stunning abstracts of Amaranth Ehrenhalt, which bring to mind what Jackson Pollock might have created if he had a sunnier disposition. A more recent exhibit "Abstract 50s Masters (Where Were the Mistresses)" is a comprehensive survey of the genre.

152 East 65th St

Di Donna Galleries

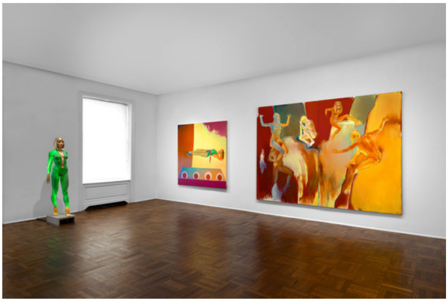


A PEEK INTO ONE OF DI DONNA'S LATEST EXHIBITIONS, "PATHS TO THE ABSOLUTE" (PHOTO: DI DONNA)

Housed opposite stores like Alexander McQueen and Givenchy, this gallery with a penchant for the surrealist artists is a regal wonder. A recent exhibition, “Paths to the Absolute,” traced European and American abstract painting through the work of artists like Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko. Rene Magritte and his challenging of an agreed upon reality by the status quo has been on display in previous exhibitions along with other surrealist masters like André Breton and Salvador Dalí.

744 Madison Avenue

Michael Werner Gallery



PEERING IN THE ALLEN JONES RETROSPECTIVE AT MICHAEL WERNER GALLERY (PHOTO: MICHAEL WERNER GALLERY)

Tucked inside a grand townhouse on a side street dotted with embassies, this gallery has been churning out thought-provoking exhibits for over a quarter century. They opened an exhibit of Belgian poet, filmmaker and artist Marcel Broodthaers ahead of a major retrospective at MoMA and have also exhibited a solo show of Hurvin Anderson’s brightly colored paintings, depicting the intersection of memory and history. These intricately abstract landscapes draw on the artist’s photographs and drawings to create images that are familiar yet mind-expanding.

4 East 77th St

Gerald Peters Gallery

THE VIEW INSIDE GERALD PETERS GALLERY (PHOTO: GERALD PETERS)

While the Upper East Side of Manhattan is a far cry from the low profile, idyllic adobe houses of Santa Fe where Peters opened his first gallery, its vibe still echoes throughout the two floors of this well-appointed townhouse. Exhibits are focused on major American movements of the 19th and 20th century, including the Hudson River School painters. Previous exhibits include “Masterworks of American Art,” which alternated between landscapes and formal portraits. A fireplace mantle and elegantly appointed seating area invite lingering, contemplation and a respite from the urban hustle.

24 East 78th St

Acquavella Galleries

18
ACQUAVELLA GALLERIES, INC.
Fausto Melotti

OUTSIDE ACQUAVELLA (PHOTO: ACQUAVELLA GALLERIES)

This third-generation family-owned business was founded in the 1920s. Its initial focus was the Italian Renaissance, which shifted to post-impressionism and cubism in the ‘60s and then to contemporary art in the ‘80s. Currently housed in a five-story neo-classical townhouse, Acquavella regularly exhibits some of the biggest names in modern and contemporary art along with more unfamiliar artists. A 2016 exhibit featured the stunning paintings of Spanish artist and ceramicist Miquel Barceló. His vividly colored abstract seascapes are always a highlight.

18 East 79th St

Gitterman Gallery

Peering into Gitterman Gallery (Photo: Gitterman Gallery)

PEERING INTO GITTERMAN GALLERY (PHOTO: GITTERMAN GALLERY)

Gitterman’s well-curated photographic exhibits capture realism as much as they obscure it. The thought-provoking show “Hommage à Christian Bouqueret” was a collection of the late historian, curator and collector’s vintage photographs. One particular highlight was an untitled gelatin silver print by Roger Parry that depicted, with vivid color, the dejected beauty of a young woman. Another by François Kollar superimposed images to show how two souls can occupy one body. This sense of warring duality permeated the entire exhibit.

41 East 57th St

Hirschl & Adler Galleries

A REGAL ROOM INSIDE HIRSCHL & ADLER GALLERIES (PHOTO: ERIC BAUMGARTNER)

Founded in 1952 and currently housed in The Crown Building, this gallery is the epitome of well-appointed, old school luxury. The gleaming rooms host about a dozen exhibits each year. Recent highlights include the paintings of Texas-born Everett Gee Jackson, who helped introduce Mexican Modernism into American Art. Another exhibit focused on American Abstract artists, like John Ferren, including his stunning "Grey Scale Composition," which featured dramatic geometric shapes that appear ready to pop out of the canvas.

730 Fifth Ave, 4th Floor

Robert Blumenthal Gallery

This 1,000-square-foot, white-walled gallery features a diverse array of contemporary art across mediums. A 2016 exhibit was a dual showcase for the works of Coby Kennedy and Victoria-Idongesit Udondian. The former uses video, painting and sculpture to examine subjective realities through the prism of the advertising and entertainment industries, while the latter draws on her previous career as a fashion designer to explore how clothing shapes identity. Another recent highlight was an exhibit of conceptual artist Bradley McCallum exploring stories of social injustice.

1045 Madison Ave, 3A

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