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ART & DESIGN | SPRING GALLERY GUIDE

10 Galleries to Visit Now on the Lower East Side

By **HOLLAND COTTER** APRIL 26, 2018

Galleries, small and midsize, are having a rough ride. Rents keep climbing. So do art-fair fees. And certain people who might help pay the gallery bills — collectors, big-museum curators — keep not showing up except at a handful of spaces with social cachet and publicity machines. Plus, a sizable portion of the art audience has taken to doing its looking online, raising the question: Why have physical galleries at all?

Because they're the only places where you truly see new work, experience it. Scale, texture, light, air, mood; all that changes when you're physically present, shifting positions, moving in close, backing away, hearing noise from the street. Most of the galleries on the Lower East Side are still storefront-size, scaled for shopping, and open on Sundays. They put you in intimate contact with objects, sensations and ideas so you can examine them, stay with them, make them your own.

LESLEY HELLER *through May 20; 54 Orchard Street, lesleyheller.com. Memory plays a big role in two fine, and very different, solo shows at [Heller](#). Much of Helen O'Leary's work materially recycles her own earlier paintings panels, which she cut into scraps and strips and pieces together — she calls it knitting — to form something new and often sculptural. It's the piecing-together that's painterly. Keisha Scarville's gorgeous photographs are about memory and patterning too, but here the memories are specific. In some of these pictures the artist wears clothes belonging to her late mother.*