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10 Best "Fancy" Manhattan Shows in Brooklyn

by [Benjamin Sutton](#)



One day we won't have to trek to Chelsea, Midtown, the Upper or Lower East Side to see the biggest, glossiest gallery shows of the year. Judging by the number of glitzy, "Manhattan-style" exhibitions we visited without even leaving our borough this year, that day might come sooner than you think.

1. [Jim Herbert](#) at English Kills

The two-time Whitney Biennialist's sexy fall show was filled with giant canvases (mostly nine by ten feet) on which the Bushwick-based septuagenarian had applied thick layers of paint by hand. The colossal expressionistic scenes showed young couples, groups and solitary figures in the throes of various sexual adventures.

2. [Total Recall](#) at MetroTech

Admittedly, three of the five artists in the Public Art Fund's superb Downtown Brooklyn show are represented by Manhattan galleries, but Zipora Fried's impaled armchair, Matt Sheridan

Smith's shiny inflatables and Kevin Zucker's mashup sculpture all played on the site's overlapping office park–sterility and gritty nighttime desolation.

3. [Roa](#) at Factory Fresh

You probably saw the Belgian street art star's black-and-white animal murals around North Brooklyn, but in May he also filled this DIY Bushwick gallery with sensitively finished paintings on wood panels, many of which could be pulled back to reveal the skeletons beneath—just like a science museum!

4. [Unidentified Living Objects](#) at Parker's Box

This Grand Street gallery had impressive installations throughout its tenth season—Patrick Martinez's false ceiling in September was another highlight—but the robotic pieces by Pierre Ardouvin, Edith Dekyndt, Gereon Lepper back in March were exceptional, especially the latter's all-terrain robot arm.

5. [The Pseudonym Project](#) at The Invisible Dog

Ordinarily we dig visiting Invisible Dog specifically for its grittiness, but there was glitzy art world clout behind this October exhibition. Funny, since The Pseudonym Project's whole point was to divorce the work from its market currency. The amusingly aliased artists assembled by curator Gabriel Jones still rocked it.

6. [Aakash Nihalani](#) at Bose Pacia

We're long-time devotees of Nihalani's neon tape street pieces—they've brightened many a dreary Brooklyn brick wall—but his work evolved impressively for his solo debut at this Dumbo gallery. Brushed aluminum sculptures and allusions to art market heavyweights Koons and Murakami filled this slick show.

7. [William Lamson](#) at The Boiler

A couple weeks into this North Williamsburg exhibition, with its massive two-channel video projection centerpiece documenting Lamson's strange, solitary desert experiment, the gallery was forced to close, allegedly due to certificate of occupancy discrepancies. Still shuttered three months later, The Boiler remains Brooklyn's fanciest gritty gallery.

8. [John von Bergen and Michelle Weinstein](#) at Smack Mellon

Weinstein's ink metropolises subverted the favored Brooklyn illustration aesthetic, but this January double-bill's other half epitomized the type of elaborate sculptural installation

typically only seen in Chelsea. Von Bergen had one of the Dumbo space's distinctive metal pillars jutting from the imposing white wall, cantilevering spectacularly over visitors' heads.

9. Conrad Ventur at Momenta Art

The Greenpoint-based video and installation artist's opening at the Bedford Avenue non-profit felt like some New York art world time-warp, populated with alums of Andy Warhol's Factory scene. They came to see old friends (including Billy Name, Bibbe Hansen and Jonas Mekas) re-enacting their screen tests for Ventur's camera.

10. Pixelville at Dumbo Arts Center

As though encapsulating the increasingly bipolar Brooklyn gallery scene, this two-person show featured one new media artist (Shirley Shore) creating illusory pixelated dunescapes, and another (Nivi Alroy) assembling miniature cities from paper, paint, glue and found wooden furniture. Their collaboration produced wonderful digitally augmented urban miniatures.