

UPTOWN

'Art in Flux' exhibits works of homegrown Harlem artists in empty storefronts

Still one week to catch 'Street' at Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd. and 118th St.

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Art in Flux, a project created and run by arts event coordinator Leanne Stella, installs the work of local artists in vacant Harlem storefronts. This month's exhibit, titled "Street," is on display at 1961 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd. at 118th St.

A new type of art gallery has "popped up" in Harlem, showcasing community artists in vacant storefronts along Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd.

Art in Flux, founded by Leanne Stella, is a nomadic gallery that inhabits empty stores, engaging community members through exhibitions, workshops and open forums.

"Neighborhoods develop through artists and become desirable from the work they do, but Harlem does not really allow that," said Stella, 46, an arts and antiques events planner who lives in Harlem and says she has invested \$20,000 in the project.

To provide an artistic atmosphere with a local flavor, Stella negotiates with landlords to stage her exhibitions. Her theme this month is "Street," and she says the exhibit captures the vulnerability that men and women face even in their own neighborhood.

The exhibit is installed at 1961 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd., at 118th St.

Harlem artist Bayeté Ross Smith explores preconceived notions of violence by placing the image of one of his friends over a shooting-



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Ruben Natal-San Miguel depicts the colorful culture of Harlem with photos of women preparing for a night on the town with their boyfriends in photos including "Lady Money Sings the Blues."



target silhouette.

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Another work on display is "Visit to the Forbidden Planet," oil on canvas by Eileen Burgess

Smith said he sought to understand the emotion that a person feels when shooting the face of a human being who can be perceived as a threat.

Smith created the work several years back but it still seems to resonate in Harlem, where there's been widespread protest of the NYPD's stop-and-frisk interrogations and residents of W. 129th St. and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd. have seen their block locked down by police since a gang-related murder last month.

"Black males are targeted by the authorities, and they are killed for no good reason," says Smith.

Another Harlem-based artist, Ruben Natal-San Miguel, depicts the photos of women preparing for a night on the town with their boyfriends.

"There is something strange and unique about the people in Harlem," Miguel said.

The hidden beauty of "Street" is the second Art in Flux exhibition, and it's open to the public every day except Monday through June 28. The next exhibit, titled "Art Bites," will begin next month. For more information, call Art in Flux at (646) 340-3479.

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