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Brick Underground



With new art exhibits and installations, condo and rental buildings draw greater interest

By **Jennifer White Karp**
542.49K Unique Monthly Visitors



Artist Yuko Nishikawa's mix of bright colors are meant to signify the excitement that comes with moving into a home. *Matthew Williams*

Apartment hunters and art fans are crossing paths this spring, thanks to New York City real estate developers who are hosting exhibits and installing new commissions in condo and rental developments.

Hosting an exhibit or offering an immersive art experience is a softer sales strategy for real estate developers. It's intended to bring in a wider audience—not just New Yorkers looking for a new apartment, but people looking to see art in person—and generate buzz about a development project. Murals and other commissioned pieces are part of the same approach—they make a statement about the building to prospective buyers and renters as well as art fans, and add to the quality of life for residents.

An installation by Brooklyn-based contemporary artist **Yuko Nishikawa** appears to be a good fit for design and development firm **The Brooklyn Home Company**, which commissioned her work to display in one of its condos at new opened building at 137 Fourth Ave. in Park Slope.

“I love the fact that not only are buyers are looking at the home, but people who love art,” says Bill Caleo, co-founder and head of operations. Art has been central to the company’s ethos since its inception—the company made custom furniture for its early projects.



Yuko Nishikawa’s paper pulp mobiles move thanks to a breeze from an open window at 137 Fourth Avenue. Matthew Williams

Nishikawa’s installation, “Memory Functions,” which features room-filling mobiles made from paper pulp, was installed in a room with floor-to-ceiling windows with lots of natural light.

“I saw Yuko’s work and knew it would just shine in this space,” Caleo says. “Plus, it’s low impact—it just made some small holes in the ceiling that I can fill.”

The connection between art and condo sales

“It’s hard to measure relationship of the exhibit on sales, but I believe it does help sales,” says Lindsay Barton Barrett, a broker at [Douglas Elliman](#), who represents sales at 137 Fourth Ave. “It expands our universe and introduces the project to people who might not have seen it,” she says.

Hosting an exhibit is an event that creates energy and interest. “This is a little different than just displaying a piece of art,” she says.

Art elevates a residential space

Of course, incorporating art into a residential development is not a new concept—but one that is getting renewed attention—at least from some developers. CetraRuddy Architecture, for example, is reviving its practice of incorporating murals in building design.

“We have always incorporated art in our residential buildings, either through commissioning new pieces or by curating a collection,” says Nancy Ruddy, co-founding principal and executive director of interior design at [CetraRuddy Architecture](#). The firm commissioned a mural for the recently opened [Rose Hill](#) condo tower at 30 East 29th St., developed by the Rockefeller Group.

Art that is unique to a particular building “adds character and lends a personal quality to the residents’ experience of the space,” Ruddy says.

The mural took artist [Matthew Cole](#) several months to paint directly on the wall in the lobby. The piece is intended as a nod to the Jazz Age sensibility of the owner’s marquee property, the iconic Rockefeller Center, where murals are part of the interior design. Cole’s mural is a panorama that spans three centuries in the neighborhood, which was once known as Rose Hill. The piece brings a depiction of nature and the outdoors into the interior space.

It’s a showpiece and conversation starter, says Meg Brod, senior managing director at Rockefeller Group. “It has certainly helped us on tours with prospective buyers,” she adds.

A sold-out show for an immersive experience

Over the weekend, the landmarked 1908 Dime Savings Bank, part of [The Dime](#)—a 23-story terracotta and glass tower in South Williamsburg, hosted artist Jill Magid’s “Tender Presence,” a site-specific immersive installation with film and sound. The sold-out show “offers a communal site for reflection on the pandemic in New York City,” according to its organizers and the location is fitting—rental units at The Dime launched at the height of the pandemic in May 2020.

Here are some other examples of recently created artworks for new developments.

Over at **200 Amsterdam**, the tallest building on the Upper West Side, developers installed over a million dollars' worth of art in the amenity spaces and the model residences, which will be swapped out every year. The gallery and museum-quality pieces include works by Jeff Bark, Hans Beeck, Joan Miro, and Kaveri Raina.

At **44 Box St.**, a six-story condo building in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, local artist **Alex Russel** created a mural of custom wood panels that highlight local landmarks and amenities. It also serves as a map of the area.



*The developers of **Jolie** at 77 Greenwich St. commissioned two works of art for the lobby by **James Perkins** and **Petr Weigl**.*

Time Equities' Art in Buildings program, which launched in 2000, is a wide-ranging program that matches emerging and mid-career artists to non-traditional exhibition spaces, including residential buildings. The firm has two new installations at its buildings at 50 West St. and 80 Nassau St.

These installations are "typical of what we do as a means of bringing art and supporting artists within a renovation budget," says Tessa Ferreyros, director and curator of Art in Buildings. "I believe it is important to still buy from artists and support their practice. We look to find the best works that will look beautiful in a space and fit within any given renovation or remodel budget we are given," she says.

<https://www.brickunderground.com/buy/art-installations-exhibits-new-condo-development-rentals-nyc>