Spring Gallery Guide: Brooklyn

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Like so much else in Brooklyn these days, the art scene there seems to be in flux. Galleries that were familiar presences have closed; others have changed names and moved to Manhattan. Neighborhoods that previously served as linchpins now have fewer dedicated art spaces; rents are high, and other parts of the city promise greater foot traffic.

Yet in a way, transition has always been central to a geographically scattered scene that’s uneven in its offerings and anchored by a handful of larger nonprofits alongside a rotating cast of small spaces run as labors of love. Even commercial operations seem to work differently here: Jenkins Johnson Gallery’s outpost aims to build a relationship with the surrounding community (and its coming show “Free to Be,” featuring Rico Gatson and Baseera Khan, should be worth a visit). Part of the thrill of seeing art in Brooklyn is that you don’t quite know what you’re going to get.

This list is just a sample of what Brooklyn has to offer. It will take you from Bushwick down to Park Slope and focuses on exhibitions that are, quite loosely, about identity. These artists are exploring how cultural, national, social and other factors shape us, even as they take very different approaches. It’s a fitting theme for a borough that, despite becoming a brand, is still a haven for those looking to make a creative life in New York City.
3. Recess, ‘Lex Brown: The Inside Room’ and ‘American Artist: blue are the feelings that live inside me’

The nonprofit Recess does something different than most other art spaces: It gives artists the gallery and roughly two months to realize their projects on-site. So the work happens before the public’s eyes, and it’s best to visit multiple times to follow the progress. Right now, Lex Brown is building a studio for the production of an experimental TV show that will disregard the typical conventions of the medium — scenes and story lines will be improvised, multiple people will play a single character — to focus on human interaction. Hanging in the front room are disquieting photographs by American Artist of books from the Blue Lives Matter movement — an extension of their recent, powerful show at Brooklyn gallery Koenig & Clinton. Through June 8 and May 11 at 46 Washington Avenue, Clinton Hill; 646-863-3765, recessart.org.