

# Why art galleries are popping up

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Eyewitness News

JAMAICA (WABC) -- They're stopping in their tracks and peering through store fronts all along Flatbush Avenue and in Jamaica Queens.

What's behind the phenomenon?

"We're really seeing more willingness on the part of property owners to consider different ideas and approaches to what's possible with their properties and artists are always excited to do anything," said Katie Dixon of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership.

It is a silver lining during these challenging economic times. What's referred to as "pop-up galleries" -- business owners taking vacant retail space and lending it to upcoming artists for little or no money. People like Renaldo Davidson. He has the rare opportunity to show more than 100 of his pieces in this spot in downtown Brooklyn.

"Even if I never sell a painting in here what's interesting, what you can't put a price tag on, is the response I got from people who normally wouldn't go in a gallery. They come in here. The feedback is priceless," he said.

The exhibits typically remain in one space for a few months. The artwork varies, from the whimsical to the way out.

"They always ask me the same question, is it real? Of course they are real," artist Lishan Chang said.

Real birds and squirrels, that is. Chang's medium of choice is roadkill.

He collects the animals, preserves them and then positions them in fetal positions in the arms of mannequins. He says it's a way to show the overlap between people and nature.

"I just want to make like they are asleep. That's why I use mannequins like holding a baby," he explained.

The Greater Jamaica Development Corporation owns these spaces and found the artists.

The exhibits do, no doubt, draw people in, satisfy one's curiosity and, hopefully in the end, help seal a deal.

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