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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.

Open Source, 'Ronny Quevedo: Field of play'

Located in a renovated carriage house near the Prospect Expressway, Open Source is something of an outlier in a neighborhood without many art galleries. That hasn't stopped it from mounting ambitious exhibitions. Ronny Quevedo's current solo show continues his investigation of games and their relationship to the migration of people. On the floor, he's placed gold and silver tiles that turn the space into a kind of board. Some of them hold concrete sculptures of misshapen sports balls, while prints on the walls turn the shapes associated with various games into evocative abstractions. With the whole gallery as a "Field of play," as the exhibition is titled, it falls to the viewer to invent the rules for navigating it.

Through May 11 at 306 17th Street, Park Slope; open-source-gallery.org.



An installation view of Ronny Quevedo's "Field of play," which engages visitors in a sort of board game. Credit Stefan Hagen