

# The New York Times

## Upstairs and Behind Doors, Creative Passion Roberta Smith's Tour of the Sizzlers on the Upper East Side

By **ROBERTA SMITH** APRIL 3, 2014



**JUST PASSING THROUGH** Brenna Youngblood's "Democratic Forest" (2014), mixed media on canvas, at the Tilton Gallery.

THE Upper East Side gallery scene is one of the better-kept secrets in the New York art world, but this may be changing. Recently, the area has acquired some of the buzz that adheres to the Lower East Side, thanks to the volatile gods of New York real estate. With rents rising elsewhere, space along 57th Street and on or just off Madison Avenue, from the 60s to the low 80s, is newly attractive...

Unlike Chelsea's gallery scene, the one uptown is all but invisible from the street, housed mainly in office buildings and discreetly marked brownstones or townhouses. These provide the bonus of architectural diversity, which mirrors the area's artistic diversity. The exhibitions in this selective sampling range from historical material to emerging artists...

...**TILTON GALLERY** Its patch of trompe l'oeil-weave floor must be among the city's best parquets, but the [Tilton Gallery](#) has the added attraction of Brenna Youngblood's new paintings. They continue the American tragedy theme of the Arbus/Noland show, subtly balancing abstraction and reality. Their slightly careworn yet undeniable beauty, achieved with thin, somewhat dirty areas of paint or plaster, bits of collage, photographs and ghostly silhouettes, is rife with undercurrents of deprivation and social duress.