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ART APPRECIATION: EXHIBIT KEEPS IT REAL ESTATE

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Building up: Cheryl Molnar's artwork documents the rapid-fire real estate development in Williamsburg and Greenpoint, offering commentary on the pros and cons of the changes.

A Sunset Park art exhibit will use the visual techniques and language of real estate to tackle the effects of rapid development on urban communities. The goal is to explore the ups and downs of development — without getting too preachy, said the show's curator.

"It's not really meant to take a very overt political tone," said Katherine Gressel, who will unveil the "Artistic Developments" exhibition at the New York Art Residency and Studios Foundation on March 11. "But I think most artists in their work are critical of the newest developments going on and the way they are marketed. Studio and living spaces for artists are becoming more and more unaffordable."

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Eight artists have contributed paintings, sketches, and other visual pieces that reflect the surge of real estate development that seems likely to put a tower the size of the Chrysler building in Downtown.

One contributing artist has documented the changes to her native Greenpoint over the last decade, taking photos of the shifting skyline to keep tabs on the transformation.

“Tearing down the old and making the new became a theme throughout everything that I do,” said Cheryl Molnar.

For the show, Molnar created a brochure that explains the changes, as well as a digital piece for that overlays Greenpoint’s current low-rise streetscape with the projected, far taller developments soon to take over.

While she laments the rising skyline blocking out sunlight and destroying the nabe’s low-rise charm, there are plus sides to the changes, says Molnar. Development often brings new places to hang out, including green space like Williamsburg’s East River State Park.

“I remember on North Seventh street there was a hole in the chain link fence you could crawl through and get out to the docks by the river,” she said. “That was nice, but having a formal park is nice too.”

Molnar says that her work traces the changes without making a value judgement.

“I’m just documenting what I see going on in front of me,” she said.

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