

10 Ambitious Gallery Shows to See in New York

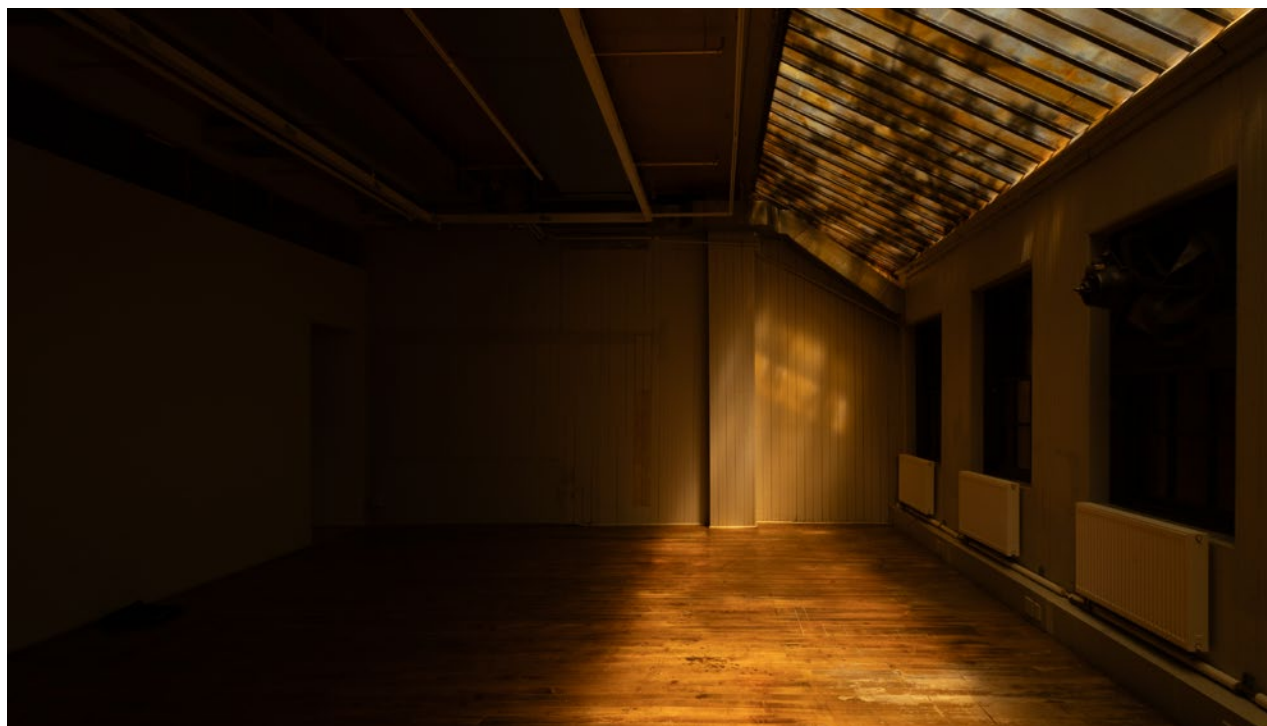
As the city embarks once again upon its springtime marathon of fairs and marquee auctions, galleries across Chelsea, Tribeca, the Lower East Side and the Upper East Side are mounting some of the best sculptural and installation-driven exhibitions New York has seen in years.

By Elisa Carollo

Stephen Lichty's "Ghost Stone"

Yve Yang

Through July 3, 2026



Installation view: Stephen Lichty's "Ghost Stone" at Yve Yang Gallery, through July 3, 2026. Courtesy the artist and Yve Yang

Another unmissable sculptural show is an exhibition at YveYANG, staged with the gallery's characteristic thoughtfulness and experimental curatorial approach. Here, Kansas City-born, San Francisco-based artist Stephen Lichty pursues a singular investigation into the sculptural medium that begins with the material intelligence of nature itself and the geological and human histories embedded within it. At the center is his ongoing research into quartz, a fascination that began more than a decade ago when he encountered an enigmatic boulder while briefly employed as a stonemason's assistant in the Bay Area. From the material itself, Lichty traces histories of extraction, labor and ecological domination whose effects remain visible today, particularly in the Sierra Nevada foothills, where hydraulic mining violently reshaped the landscape during the Gold Rush era, leaving behind scarred terrain and exposed geological formations that would otherwise have remained buried underground. In the gallery, Lichty stages an

OBSERVER

elegiac choreography of ecological disaster and human greed through a series of ghostly sculptural presences that carry histories of labor, ecology and exploitation within both their materiality and metaphorical function. Suspended at the entrance is a small hand-cast iron sculpture, produced through an obsessive process involving the collection and refinement of iron sand from San Francisco's Ocean Beach, connecting sculpture to craft, experimental archaeology and the elemental processes of the earth itself.