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Glimpses of the Past and a High-Tech Future

A Critic's Gallery Crawl Through SoHo and TriBeCa

By Karen Rosenberg | April 3, 2014

APEXART

Across Canal Street, TriBeCa is now home to many start-up businesses, and the tech-heavy group show "Coding the Body," at this longstanding nonprofit space on Church Street, reflects the new demographic. Organized by the former M.I.T. Media Lab professor Leah Buechley, it explores "how code is being used to understand, control, decorate and replicate us."

Late adopters should prepare to do some reading, or to pepper the obliging gallery staff with questions. A pleasing abstract print by Ben Fry corresponds to letters of genetic code from Chromosome 21. Printed silk dresses by Cait and Casey Reas — designers who synthesize fashion and digital art into customized apparel — incorporate patterns generated by an algorithm, a process that unfolds on a nearby computer monitor. Meanwhile, an unsettling photograph taken in a Chinese robotics lab by the French photographer Yves Gellie shows a man with his robot doppelgänger. (Can you guess which is which?)