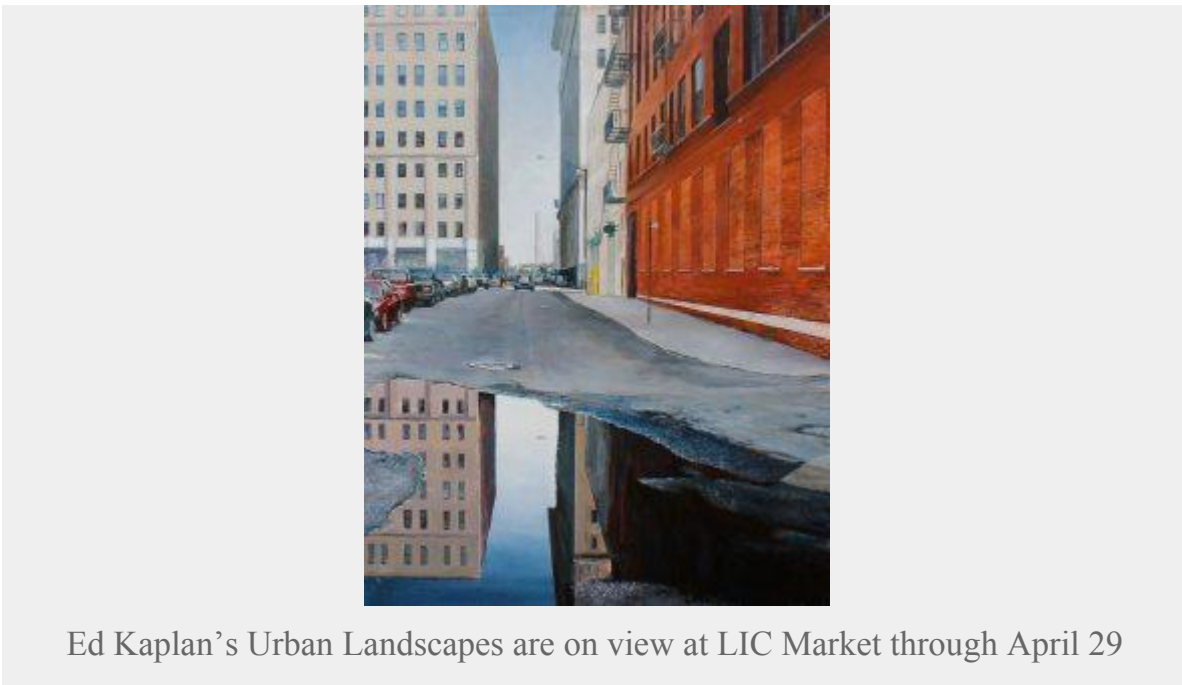


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The Art of Eating (and Drinking) in Long Island City

BY TASTORIAQUEENS APRIL 14, 2013 LONG ISLAND CITY QUEENS

Long Island City's reputation as an arts hub and an eating destination has been well earned. Developing slowly over a timeline punctuated with some serious spikes—like the MoMA's formal affiliation with PS1 in 2000 or M.Wells' mythical year in an old diner on 49th Avenue—before reaching a tipping point in Queens' and New York City's imagination. Compelled by this history, I set out this weekend to visit a few of the places that draw food and drinks and art closer together in Long Island City.



Ed Kaplan's Urban Landscapes are on view at LIC Market through April 29

Our first stop was **RESOBOX**, a Japanese Cultural Center, Art Gallery and Cafe tucked along 27th Street in the long, arching shadow of the Queensboro Plaza subway stop. Along with rotating art exhibits and a cafe, RESOBOX holds classes for adults, like Ink-Painting, Stick Fighting Techniques, and Japanese Classical Dance, and for kids, including Anime Character Drawing and Japanese Arts and Crafts. We were there for tea, however, specifically their excellent **Genmai Tea**, a Japanese tea that combines green tea and brown rice into an earthy, toasty blend. We Astorians know that there are few places in our neighborhood where we can get tasty, artfully prepared teas, and RESOBOX fills that void with quality teas like **Green**, **Hoji** and **Kombu**, a tea made with seaweed. They also have a modest selection of sandwiches, shakes, and smoothies to round out the menu. While there, we checked out the current art exhibit (there through May 2nd) featuring accomplished Astoria artist **Mieko Anekawa**. Her gorgeous, colorful paintings, that balance

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swirling dynamism with a self-assured peace, felt like a perfect fit for a space as flexible, thoughtful, and lovely as RESOBOX.

The next stop was a visit to an old friend at **MoMA PS1**. With many of their galleries currently under construction for new exhibits, we were there to see **James Turrell's *Meeting*** a work that was installed in the space in 1986, more than a decade before PS1's existing art space formally joined with MoMA. Once you view this quietly stunning work of art, hidden behind an inconspicuous schoolroom door, you will understand why it will likely never be installed anywhere else. I won't give too much away here for fear it will lessen the work's tremendous impact, but I will say that it is open after 3pm, on the third floor, weather permitting. While at MoMA PS1, don't miss the new incarnation of **M.Wells Dinette**. This is no Lady Lazarus, no attempt to recreate the past, but rather a brilliantly re-conceived cafeteria-style restaurant, complete with the variable menu format that used to keep me on the edge of my seat in grade school, hoping for the appearance of tater tots. Only now I am hoping for **Foie Gras Oatmeal**. The famously creative fare at M.Wells, and the always surprising contemporary art at MoMA PS1, create a clamorous, dissonant, visceral, gorgeous, challenging, and intelligent harmony.



Here's lookin' at you, kid. Beautiful Head on Prawns at LIC Market.

Our final stop was for dinner at **LIC Market**, a well-loved neighborhood restaurant that I had not yet visited. I had **heard via my good friends at We Heart Astoria**, that they were displaying the urban landscapes of artist **Ed Kaplan** through April 29th, and as a fan of Kaplan's work, I thought it would be nice to take in a meal while being surrounded by it. Once again, I gratefully

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encountered a harmonious balance between food and art. Kaplan's seemingly pedestrian scenes of empty city streets and long-standing restaurant facades in fact tell an epic story of fleeting, interstitial silences in urban spaces, of the integrity and persistence of the old amidst New York's ever-changing new, and of the possibilities of quiet, intimate moments in our city that never sleeps. LIC Market, too, surprises. Looking like a modest, tucked away, easily overlooked neighborhood spot, the food being served up inside is revelatory. Our favorite dish was the **Prawns with brown butter, braised lentils and chorizo**. Three stunning, beefy, head on prawns that had a touch of brine from their formidable shells, were arranged over a bed of perfectly cooked lentils, flecked with finely diced, smoky chorizo. Their **Market Burger**, with a slightly crisp caramelized onion bun (one of the best burger buns I have tried), aioli, and sharp white cheddar cheese takes a traditional burger recipe, and elevates it through sheer skill of execution, versus fancy ingredients, pomp or circumstance. The equally humble-looking truffled fried potatoes will haunt my dreams until I go back to devour more.



The straightforwardly delicious Market Burger at LIC Market.

These are just a few examples of the marriage of art and eating in Long Island City, which has deep roots in the neighborhood's past, and has engendered so many emerging, creative ventures. I feel lucky to have the opportunity to seek them out, and hope that you'll go exploring on your own and let me know what you see, feel and eat along the way.

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LIC Market happens to have one of my recent favorite beers, Sixpoint's 3 Beans –
CHEERS!