

CRISTIN TIERNEY

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## What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in March

By Holland Cotter  
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### Mary Lucier

Through March 2. Cristin Tierney Gallery, 219 Bowery, second floor, (212) 594-0550, [cristintierney.com](http://cristintierney.com).



Still from "Mary Lucier: Leaving Earth," 2024, a nine-channel video and sound installation. Mary Lucier, via Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York

The experimental video artist Mary Lucier turns the medium that she pioneered in the 1970s in a distinctly personal direction in a wonderful new installation called *Leaving Earth*. The piece begins with a screen scrolling short, ruminative phrases excerpted from a journal kept by Lucier's husband, the painter Robert Berling, recording his thoughts on his approaching death in 2015.

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These phrases also appear on several other screens affixed at different levels to upright poles in front of the gallery's west-facing windows. But here the words are interspersed with a succession of images, still and moving. Some are snapshot-like: faces of family and friends; the interior of the house in upstate New York that Lucier and her husband shared. Nature is ever-present in close-ups of breeze-touched field flowers and nesting birds. Mortality, repeatedly, intrudes: in a shot of ground zero on Sept. 11; in pitilessly sustained footage of a dying fawn breathing its last.

Lucier is silently present for all of this: Her face, passive, stares down from a high-up screen. And her husband is present too, seen swimming underwater in a clear stream. "Leaving Earth" is a deeply emotional piece, and a complicated one: a heartfelt lament, a stoic salute and a thing of great beauty.