ARTIST-RUN GALLERIES IN NEW YORK CITY 1952–1965

INVENTING DOWNTOWN

GREY ART GALLERY

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INTRODUCTION

Between the apex of Abstract Expressionism and the rise of Pop Art and Minimalism, the New York art scene was transformed by artist-run galleries. *Inventing Downtown* presents works from fourteen of these crucibles of experimentation, highlighting artists’ efforts to create new exhibition venues for innovative works of art—ranging from abstract and figurative painting, assemblage, sculpture, and works on paper to groundbreaking installations and performances.

*Inventing Downtown* proposes viewing these fourteen galleries via five thematic groupings. **Leaving Midtown** focuses on three Tenth Street galleries which adopted a cooperative business structure where expenses were shared among elected members: **Tanager Gallery, Hansa Gallery,** and **Brata Gallery.** **City as Muse** features four ventures that did not adopt the co-op model: **City Gallery, Reuben Gallery, Delancey Street Museum,** and **Judson Gallery.** They are best known for creating dynamic installations and pioneering performances. **Space and Time** investigates two significant artist-run projects, **112 Chambers Street** and **79 Park Place,** which occupied different conceptual terrains, embraced a wide range of media, and shared an interest in exploring temporality and geo-spatial dimensions. **Politics as Practice** includes four groups: **March Group, Judson Church’s Hall of Issues, The Center,** and **Spiral Group,** which examined the viability of politics as a subject for art and channeled a new sense of social urgency in addressing Cold War politics, the civil rights movement, and the legacy of World War II, among other concerns. Finally, **Defining Downtown** looks at the **Green Gallery,** which played a decisive role in bringing downtown uptown and fostering the rise of Pop and Minimalism. Its program, however, resulted in the narrowing of aesthetic possibilities and the marginalization of many artists.

Artist-run galleries shaped American art irreversibly. After 1965, New York’s uptown and downtown art scenes increasingly diverged, which led to the flowering of nonprofit downtown alternative spaces. Although more than half a century has passed since the era of *Inventing Downtown,* many of the issues mined in the exhibition still resonate in today’s art world—split as it is between the booming commercial market for contemporary art and ever more pluralistic models of artistic production, promotion, and display.
LEAVING MIDTOWN examines three pioneering cooperative galleries on or near East Tenth Street between Third and Fourth Avenues. Located in storefronts, these co-ops split expenses and administrative duties among elected members. Tanager Gallery, known for its strong curatorial program, presented both better-established and emerging artists. Some of Hansa Gallery’s artists tested new aesthetic paradigms—incorporating found objects into their artworks—while others continued to pursue figuration. Brata Gallery artists moved away from the emotive gestures of Abstract Expressionism toward hard-edge geometrical compositions.

TANNER GALLERY 51 East Fourth Street (May 1952–March 1953) 90 East Tenth Street (April 1953–June 1962)
Among the first of the many artist-run galleries, Tanager maintained a busy schedule of group and solo exhibitions, providing a model for later co-ops. Originally founded in a barber shop on East Fourth Street, the gallery moved in spring 1953 to a less expensive and larger—though still small—storefront at 90 East Tenth Street. Artist Angelo Ippolito, a co-founder, transformed both spaces into clean, white-walled galleries, designed the invitations, and oversaw installations with artist members who paid monthly dues of $10. The Tanager also received financial support from the father of member Sally Hazelet Drummond in exchange for artworks. This additional funding made it possible to hire a gallery assistant, a position notably held by the future art historian and critic Irving Sandler, who worked there for several years while a graduate student at Columbia University.

Tanager artists resisted what they viewed as critics’ outworn designation of downtown art as a unified “New York School.” In response, artist-curators organized shows that offered the nuanced mix of representational and abstract art that came to characterize the Tenth Street scene. One ambitious landmark exhibition of October 1961, The Private Myth, organized by Sidney Geist and Philip Pearlstein, examined the use of symbols in sculpture and assemblage by twenty-eight artists.

HANSA GALLERY 70 East Twelfth Street (November 1952–November 1954); 210 Central Park South (December 1954–June 1959)
Most of the twelve artists who founded Hansa Gallery studied with painter Hans Hofmann, in his schools in New York and Provincetown, Massachusetts; his first name is honored in the co-op’s name. Hansa artists included Jan Müller and Miles Forst, whose work and ideas were central to the gallery’s spirit. Members Jean Follett, Allan Kaprow, George Segal, and Richard Stankiewicz began incorporating found objects in their paintings, sculptures, and assemblages, and, in an attempt to address viewers more directly, created site-specific installations. Inspired by Post-Impressionist painter Pierre Bonnard, Wolf Kahn and Jane Wilson continued to paint figuratively, creating compelling portraits as well as scenes from their everyday lives.

Membership dues at Hansa’s initial address on East Twelfth Street were $21 a month, later reduced to $15. In 1954, the gallery moved uptown to 210 Central Park South and raised dues to $35 a month. The new location, near commercial galleries on Fifty-seventh Street and the Stable Gallery around the corner on Fifty-eighth Street, was a strategic move to attract collectors. In 1955 Richard Bellamy, who was close to Hansa members Barbara and Miles Forst, was hired as the gallery’s director; later he shared the position with Ivan Karp, then a writer for the Village Voice. The uptown Hansa ultimately operated less as a thriving business and more as a clubhouse where artists, critics, dealers, art historians, and patrons gathered, attracted by both the adventurous art and Bellamy and Karp’s convivial personalities.

BRATA GALLERY 89 East Tenth Street (October 1957–April 1962)
Co-founded by the brothers John and Nicholas Krushenick, the Brata took its name from the word “brother” in their father’s native Russian-Ukrainian dialect. Having worked at the Museum of Modern Art as a framer, Nicholas believed there was a need for this service downtown;
running a business there helped cover some of the gallery’s expenses. The Krushenick brothers invited Nicholas’s longtime friend, painter Al Held, to join. Other members included Ronald Bladen, Sal Romano, George Sugarman, and Ed Clark—who was one of the very few African American artists to join a Tenth Street co-op. The Brata also welcomed a number of Japanese artists, including husband and wife Robert Kobayashi and Nanae Momiyama. The notion that abstraction’s cross-cultural history could be reconciled differently, via a type of synthesis, drew the American and Japanese members together and pointed toward new ways of thinking about abstraction. Not every Brata artist pursued this formalist approach, but between 1957 and 1960, geometric works lent the gallery a remarkably coherent aesthetic. This tendency culminated in critical acclaim for Yayoi Kusama’s 1959 solo exhibition at Brata, which drew widespread admiration for her controlled use of paint, repetition of form, and monumental scale, jumpstarting her illustrious career.

CITY AS MUSE focuses on four galleries whose artists took urban life as their point of departure: City Gallery, Reuben Gallery, Delancey Street Museum, and Judson Gallery. All rejected the co-op model; their spaces were either donated or operated as gallery, studio, and living space. Each gallery presented groundbreaking shows, many of which consisted of installations (in today’s terms) or performances, then promoted as “Happenings.”

CITY GALLERY 735 Sixth Avenue (November 1958–May 1959)
In fall 1958, when Charles “Red” Grooms returned to New York from a summer in Provincetown, he moved into a loft at 735 Sixth Avenue, at the corner of Twenty-fourth Street. That same fall, Grooms and artist Jay Milder helped found the Tenth Street co-op Phoenix Gallery—but they soon felt stifled by its administrative demands and many meetings, which prompted them to open their own space, City Gallery, in the front of Grooms’s loft. Michaela “Micky” Weisselberg, (now Mica Nava) a young artist from London who was studying part-time at the Art Students League, soon joined the gallery and managed the space.

Grooms and Milder, along with artist Lester Johnson, were inspired by Manhattan city life. A decade older than his collaborators, Johnson insisted on the continuing validity of figuration; Grooms bridged the stylistic gap between Johnson’s sensual figures and the rough expressionism of younger representational painters such as Milder and Bob Thompson. Their desire to work with great speed, fewer restrictions, and more improvisation was aided by the group’s lack of bylaws, which constituted a marked departure from the formality of the Tenth Street galleries.

City Gallery’s ambitious Drawings exhibition featured more than forty-five artists, ranging from the celebrated Franz Kline and George Grosz to the emerging artists at the gallery’s heart. The show was conceived by Weisselberg, who—with help from Grooms and Milder—gathered nearly 100 drawings, which generated tremendous excitement and attention in the press. The gallery closed in May 1959 when Grooms left the city for the summer, and the building was torn down soon thereafter.

REUBEN GALLERY 61 Fourth Avenue (October 1959–June 1960)
44 East Third Street (November 1960–April 1961)
The Reuben Gallery was founded by Allan Kaprow and Anita Rubin in the summer of 1959, after the Hansa Gallery closed; its name came from the biblical spelling of Anita’s last name. Pushing the boundaries of painting and sculpture, the Reuben also introduced performance art as a serious form. Inspired by the simultaneity of a three-ring circus, Kaprow created his revolutionary 18 Happenings in 6 Parts for the gallery’s inaugural show, using translucent plastic sheeting to divide the space into three separate rooms; over the course of an hour, six actions unfolded in each room. This watershed performance, or “Happening,” set the bar for the gallery’s experimental approach.

Other artists given solo exhibitions at the Reuben include Robert Whitman, formerly with the Hansa, whose suspended sculpture and use of the floor produced a total environment. Lucas Samaras’s paintings and exquisite pastels drew critical acclaim. Also generating attention were Claes Oldenburg and Jim Dine, who both reprised themes they had first explored in their Judson Gallery shows, and Red Grooms, who exhibited paintings and drawings as well as mounting his performance The Magic Train Ride in January 1960. Renée Rubin and Martha Edelheit fabricated powerful assemblages that paralleled the
raw immediacy and combines of Robert Rauschenberg (whose work was included in a group show at the Reuben in 1959–60).

After the first season, Anita Rubin stepped down from the gallery’s daily management. Jim Dine then found a space on East Third Street that he, Kaprow, Oldenburg, and Whitman devoted to performance—presenting Oldenburg’s Ironworks/Photo Death, Dine’s Car Crash, Whitman’s The American Moon, and Kaprow’s A Spring Happening, among others. Whitman invited dancer Simone Forti to take part in his performances and also to produce her own. Her two powerful actions Rollers and See Sue pushed performance into new terrain. The Reuben Gallery served as a site for the redefinition of painting and sculpture—not as discrete disciplines defined by their materials, but rather in relation to environments.

DELANCEY STREET MUSEUM 148 Delancey Street
(October 1959–May 1960)

In 1959, Red Grooms moved from Chelsea to an abandoned boxing gym on the third floor of 148 Delancey Street, at the corner of Suffolk Street, on the Lower East Side. As he had done at City Gallery, Grooms conceived the space as both private studio and public gallery. He dubbed it the Delancey Street Museum and mounted on the door a life-size sculpture of Abraham Lincoln made of found wood. The gallery’s inaugural show in 1959 included work by Grooms’s frequent collaborators, painters Bob Thompson and Jay Milder, along with Milder’s wife, Sheila, as well as Lester Johnson and two artists Grooms had met in Provincetown, Emilio Cruz and Marcia Marcus.


While Milder, Thompson, Cruz, and Marcus remained committed to drawing and painting, and staged successful exhibitions at the Delancey Street Museum, Grooms used the space to develop performance pieces. Enacting the fascination with fire he had explored earlier that summer in Provincetown, Grooms developed The Burning Building, which featured six artist-actors, including Milder and Thompson. Dispensing with the notion of a script, Grooms asked his performers to call out words or short phrases to evoke a story of fire, love, and heroism. The Burning Building was performed over seven days in December 1959, sometimes twice a day. Painter Anne Tabachnick recalled that during these events Thompson, in white clown makeup for his role as the Doorman, stood in the street to hustle up an audience. Although admission was free, the “museum” wasn’t heated, and its chilly temperatures did not help attract visitors. During its brief existence, Delancey Street Museum held two more performances, both happenings produced by women artists—Marcia Marcus and Joan Herbst—in 1960.

JUDSON GALLERY 239 Thompson Street
(February 1959–January 1962)

Bud Scott—a community-minded minister at Judson Memorial Church, on the south side of Washington Square Park—reached out to artists in the Village in 1959. Among those who responded was Cooper Union student Marcus Ratliff, then living at Judson House on Thompson Street, who brought in his high school friend from Cincinnati, Jim Dine, a recent arrival in New York, and a new friend, Tom Wesselmann, another Cooper Union student from Ohio; in collaboration with Scott, they transformed the basement into an approximately 1,000-square-foot exhibition venue. There they mounted a series of shows, including Phyllis Yampolsky’s first solo show.

Impressed by a small exhibition of Claes Oldenburg’s drawings, Ratliff and Wesselmann offered him a solo exhibition. In January 1960, Judson’s most radical projects made their debut: Oldenburg’s The Street and Dine’s The House. Created in the gallery itself, both installations demolished the boundaries separating drawing, painting, sculpture, and theater. Before their installations were dismantled, Oldenburg and Dine organized Ray Gun Spex (February 29–March 2, 1960), in which Oldenburg performed Snapshots From the City inside The Street. The audience also moved about the church’s other spaces, viewing Dine’s The Smiling Workman, Projections by Al Hansen, Coca Cola Shirley Cannonball by Allan Kaprow, Edifices Cabarets Contributions by Dick Higgins, and Duet for a Small Smell by Robert Whitman.

Following this watershed series, Oldenburg arranged solo shows for two artists he had met at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago: printmaker Richard Tyler and painter-assemblage artist Dorothea Baer, both of whose work anticipates the counterculture’s bohemian sensibility and embrace of spiritual philosophies. Kaprow succeeded Oldenburg as the Judson’s curatorial adviser between 1960 and 1962—continuing the gallery’s commitment to presenting experimental works by young artists such as Gloria Graves, Martha Edelheit, Alison Knowles, and Dan Flavin.
SPACE AND TIME highlights how installation, performance, and related concepts were investigated differently by two separate groups: the musicians, composers, dancers, and artists involved with the boundary-expanding Chambers Street Loft Series organized by Yoko Ono and La Monte Young, and, two years later, group exhibitions of painting and sculpture at 79 Park Place. Artworks at 112 Chambers Street reflected the impact of poetry, dance, and especially music. Park Place artists viewed time and space through a space-age lens, focusing in particular on theories about the fourth dimension and pushing abstraction in radical new directions.

112 CHAMBERS STREET (December 1960–June 1961)
Yoko Ono leased a fourth-floor loft at 112 Chambers Street in December 1960, to be used as both studio and performance venue. There she established the Chambers Street Loft Series, inviting La Monte Young to co-curate. During the series, Ono installed her Instruction Paintings throughout the space—and asked visitors to participate by stepping on, adding color to, throwing food at, lighting on fire, or causing shadows to appear on them.

Among the many artists, poets, musicians, and dancers who presented projects at 112 Chambers Street were Simone Forti and Robert Morris. With her May 1961 Five Dance Constructions & Some Other Things, Forti helped redefine choreography, shifting dance toward corporeal challenges to be resolved differently by performers according to their physical abilities and the parameters of her rules. Like Ono’s Instruction Paintings, Forti’s rules lack the capacity to predict results.

Morris’s June 1961 Passageway, another breakthrough work, was composed of two arcing plywood walls that gradually narrowed, beginning at the door to the loft and extending approximately fifty feet back. A plywood ceiling followed the structure’s curve, effectively sealing the work off from its surroundings. Morris painted Passageway gray and added a soundtrack of a ticking metronome; electric bulbs provided just enough light to allow viewers to navigate the space. Possessing neither the functionality of architecture nor the autonomy of sculpture, Passageway is impossible to perceive all at once. Although short-lived, 112 Chambers Street was remarkable as both venue for and material of radical works of art—inciting a shift away from objects and toward Conceptual Art.

79 PARK PLACE (November 1963–March 1964)
In 1962, Dean Fleming rented the third floor of 79 Park Place, located in lower Manhattan near the former Washington Street vegetable market. He paid $35 per month for the approximately 2,500-square-foot space. Except for a diner on the ground floor, the five-story building would soon be occupied entirely by artists, including Fleming, his friend Leo Valledor, and his wife, Mary Leahy, along with the recently married artists Forrest Myers and Tamara Melcher. It also became a destination for the artists’ San Francisco Bay Area friends, especially Mark di Suvero, who moved to New York in 1957, as well as Anthony Magar from London, and the New Yorkers Robert Grosvenor and Edwin Ruda. In spring 1963, the artists fixed up the building’s fire-damaged top floor and converted it into a music studio and exhibition space to test ideas. Collectively disenchanted with the New York gallery system, they did not keep regular hours and planned to split equally any profits from sales.

Embracing an ethos of collaboration, they shared an interest in jazz (especially the work of Ornette Coleman), recent developments in science, mathematical theories, and the utopian ideas of modernist architect Buckminster Fuller. These conceptual affinities are conveyed in the imposing steel and wood sculptures of Di Suvero, Myers, and Magar, as well as the radiant geometric abstract compositions of Fleming, Valledor, Peter Forakis, Ruda, and Melcher. In 1964, 79 Park Place was slated for demolition—ultimately to make way for the World Trade Center. In 1967, photographer Danny Lyon, the artists’ friend, photographed the building before it was torn down. The group stayed together, and the following year they secured a space at 542 West Broadway (in the blocks later renamed LaGuardia Place), just north of what would soon become SoHo. The group’s strong resistance to the art market fostered a community that generated new ideas about public art and the genesis of what we now know as nonprofit alternative spaces.


Yoko Ono with Toshi Ichiyanagi (at the piano) and Toshiro Mayuzumi at her Chambers Street loft, 1961. Photograph: Minoru Nizuma. Collection of Yoko Ono, New York. Stretching horizontally across the background in this publicity photo for a concert at the Village Gate is one of Ono’s participatory Instruction Paintings.

Yoko Ono with Toshi Ichiyanagi (at the piano) and Toshiro Mayuzumi at her Chambers Street loft, 1961. Photograph: Minoru Nizuma. Collection of Yoko Ono, New York.
POLITICS AS PRACTICE explores the art and exhibition programs of four downtown organizations: March Group, Judson Church’s Hall of Issues, The Center, and Spiral Group. Coincident with the election of John F. Kennedy as president in 1960, these galleries explored the viability of politics as a subject matter for art and debated new strategies. In the wake of World War II and under the shadow of the Cold War, each fostered a sense of social urgency during the civil rights era and the nascent counterculture, articulating a new awareness of the artists’ responsibility to their communities.

MARCH GROUP 90 East Tenth Street (1960–62)
Until fall 1960, the March Gallery—located in a squat basement with exposed pipes, tin ceiling, and whitewashed brick walls—was a typical Tenth Street co-op of the late 1950s; its diverse members practiced a range of styles. This would change with the advent of Boris Lurie, one of the co-op’s founding members, who took charge of the gallery. Dismayed by the increasing careerism of the Tenth Street gallery scene, he wanted to do something different. Lurie had arrived in New York with his father in 1946, after surviving four years’ imprisonment in Nazi concentration camps. He found likeminded colleagues in Sam Goodman, who shared his disdain for the art world, and the poet Stanley Fisher.

During World War II, Fisher had served as a medic in the 1944 Normandy campaign, arriving soon after D-Day to treat the wounded. Under Lurie and Goodman’s tutelage, Fisher identified an artistic outlet where he could express the horrors of combat. The three Jewish artists invited others, such as French artist Jean-Jacques Lebel, to participate in group shows. Embracing unpopular and anti-aesthetic stances, and mining newspapers and magazines for their provocative imagery, they employed art as a tool for making polemical statements—rejecting American “supermarket culture,” and later characterizing their work as “anti-Pop.” In 1960–62 they produced three group exhibitions: the Vulgar Show, the Involvement Show, and the Doom Show. Each focused on issues pertaining to the Cold War, images from the Holocaust in the wake of the Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, the civil rights movement, and liberation struggles against colonial rule.

Boris Lurie’s Lumumba Is Dead (Adieu Amérique; formerly December) and a work by Sam Goodman in Vulgar Show, March Gallery, New York, November 1960. Photographer unknown. Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York

HALL OF ISSUES AT JUDSON MEMORIAL CHURCH
55 Washington Square South (December 1961–January 1963)
Artist Phyllis Yampolsky initiated the Hall of Issues at Judson Memorial Church in 1961. This open-call exhibition and public program series allowed all who were interested—even non-artists—to instigate discussions and participate in the project. The Hall of Issues presented topical statements and visual artworks from “anyone who has any statement to make about any social, political or esthetic concern.” Displays changed every Sunday and required a modest entry fee of twenty-five cents.

Lining the walls of Judson’s Long Hall, materials were informally taped or pinned to temporary Celotex insulation panels. Weekly dialogues were offered on Wednesday evenings, bringing together artists, community activists, and experts in a variety of fields. Though it was not conceived as an art exhibition, the initiative counted luminaries such as Claes Oldenburg, Dean Fleming, Yampolsky herself, and her husband, Peter Forakis, among its contributors. The Wednesday forums resembled the consciousness-raising sessions that grew out of the social activism associated with the New Left, with which Judson Church was aligned. Yampolsky banned the direct broadcast of any party platform, however, reflecting the Hall of Issues’s apolitical position. Such non-partisan polemics were attacked by the nihilist contributions of artists Sam Goodman, Stanley Fisher, and Jean-Jacques Lebel. In summer 1962, Yampolsky curated Best of the Hall of Issues, a selection of art, films, and music, as well as a repeat presentation of the well-received play Totentanz, by Peter Schumann and his Bread and Puppet Theater. A ritual dance of death and resurrection inspired by Hans Holbein’s etchings, the production featured black-draped figures moving to a steady percussive beat.

THE CENTER (1962–65)
In the Hall of Issues, Aldo Tambellini found an important precedent for his own community-based multimedia spaces and inclusive aesthetics. Born in Syracuse, New York, to Italian parents, Tambellini spent his formative years in Tuscany, Italy, and returned to Syracuse after World War II. Arriving in New York City in 1959, he settled on the Lower East Side. Working in his building’s backyard, using objects from the debris surrounding demolished buildings, Tambellini cast them into concave forms with Hydrocal plaster. While his molds were hardening, he added nails, shards, piping, and beer cans—resulting in sculptures that were part testament to the neighborhood, part fossilized relics.

Tambellini fenced in a recently cleared lot next to his backyard space, where he fashioned an outdoor sculpture park for his works. In 1962–63 he dubbed his efforts The Center, a new type of artist-run organization and non-commercial forum with a commitment to art’s relevance in the fight against racism and poverty in the Lower East Side. Tambellini’s wife Elsa was his administrative partner. Other participants included the artist Ben Morea and the black poets affiliated with Umbra, a literary collective and magazine. Wanting to engage non-art-world audiences, the Tambellinis partnered with St. Mark’s Church-in-the-Bowery, then under the leadership of former Look magazine editor Reverend J. C. Michael Allen, who helped garner further support from the social service agency Lower East Side Neighborhood Association (LENA). The Center’s first programs at St. Mark’s Church in June 1963 included a small exhibition of paintings and a two-week “LENA Festival” featuring outdoor jazz concerts, poetry readings, and film screenings.

SPRAL GROUP 147 Christopher Street (1963–65)
The Spiral Group comprised some fifteen African American artists who convened to discuss issues and shared concerns. Formed just prior to the August 1963 March on Washington For Jobs and Freedom—the largest protest against racial discrimination in the history of the United States—the group began meeting in Romare Bearden’s loft on Canal Street that summer. Members included Bearden’s cousin, Charles Alston, Hale Woodruff, Norman Lewis, Emma Amos, and others. Before the end of the year, they had secured a space on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village. Spiral represented the only effort by visual artists to self-consciously align with the civil rights movement before 1965.

Taking their name from the Archimedean spiral—a symbol that is imbued with the latent power of untapped energy and found in the art of many peoples—the group was caught up in debates over the modernist belief in the autonomy and universality of art, which discouraged the overt insertion of race into aesthetics. Before the Black Arts movement in 1965, artworks referencing race were likely to be condemned as sociological, not aesthetic. Spiral’s artists were passionate about confronting the tumultuous events of their time but struggled with the question of how to incorporate politics into modernism. Many feared the pitfalls of self-segregating in the art world if they too closely or narrowly identified themselves and their works—a debate that continues today. Such concerns contributed to the group’s slow, even fitful, working process; it took them two years to reach the consensus that made it possible to mount Spiral: Works in Black and White in 1965, their only exhibition.


**DEFINING DOWNTOWN** considers the five-year history of the Green Gallery. Directed by Richard Bellamy—who had previously worked at the Hansa Gallery—and secretly financed by collector Robert Scull, it does not fit the strict definition of an artist-run space. However, Green Gallery exhibitions promoted the kind of risk-taking art featured in the more adventurous noncommercial enterprises. Bellamy, a true downtown denizen, spotted and showed, early on, work that would become known as Pop and Minimalism and, with Scull’s backing, helped establish their marketability.

**GREEN GALLERY** 15 West Fifty-seventh Street  
(October 1960–June 1965)

After inaugurating the Green Gallery in October 1960 with an exhibition of Mark di Suvero's commanding, large-scale sculptures, Richard Bellamy fostered a spirit of collaboration among the downtown artists who showed there. Located in the heart of the commercial gallery district on Fifty-seventh Street, Green Gallery introduced midtown audiences to performance, environments, a new realist tendency, and sculptures that emphasized materiality, often to great critical acclaim. Bringing downtown uptown and embracing artistic pluralism, Bellamy was less concerned with defining art, and selling it, than his fellow gallerists.

During its first two years, the Green Gallery showcased abstraction’s reanimation by painters such as Tadaaki Kuwayama and Joan Jacobs. Also mounted in the gallery’s early years were solo shows by Pat Passlof and group exhibitions featuring figurative works by James Rosenquist, George Segal, Tom Wesselmann, and Claes Oldenburg—who together helped establish Pop Art as an unprecedented new trend, testifying to Bellamy’s attentiveness to the era’s most novel and momentous artistic developments. Oldenburg’s 1962 exhibition helped stabilize the gallery’s shaky finances, enabling seminal shows of works by Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, and Robert Morris between 1963 and 1965. Together these artists shepherded in Minimalism as a new art form, using the Green Gallery’s space to reconceive sculpture itself. At the same time, two shows of difficult-to-classify objects, boxes, and pastels by Lucas Samaras—including the 1964 reconstruction of his New Jersey bedroom in the gallery—counter views of the period as completely dominated by Pop and Minimalism, epitomizing the Green Gallery’s ethos of openness and its avoidance of stylistic orthodoxy. When Scull pulled out of the venture in spring 1964, the Green Gallery survived for one more season, but without financial backing, it closed in spring 1965. Ironically, while its program initially demonstrated great diversity, the commercial success of some of its artists ultimately ended up excluding and marginalizing many others.
AN INTERVIEW WITH MELISSA RACHLEFF, GUEST CURATOR

BY BRIAN BENTLEY AND ALISON MUELLER

Brian Bentley (BB): How did this project come about?

Melissa Rachleff (MR): In spring 2009, I taught a graduate class in NYU’s MA Program in Visual Arts Administration, titled “The Dematerialization of the Art Gallery,” which looked at how artists produced exhibitions that had no market value. The Museum of Modern Art had just posted an online exhibition about Richard Bellamy and the Hansa and Green galleries. I began to go through Bellamy’s voluminous papers and discovered that the 1950s and early ’60s were a far more vibrant era than I had realized. I had also learned about the Tenth Street galleries and recognized that they were just the tip of the iceberg. Anita Rubin, who had helped start the Reuben Gallery, graciously sketched it all out for me. Then Milly Glazer at the Pace Gallery contacted me about her exhibition and book on Happenings. That sparked a wonderful collaboration; Milly generously shared an amazing archive of photographs taken by Robert McElroy. She also put me in touch with Julie Martin who, with her husband, Billy Klüver, had recorded in the 1990s artist interviews looking back at this time. These absolutely changed the way I understood the era.

Alison Mueller (AM): Why focus on the period between 1952 and 1965?

MR: In 1952, both the Tanager and Hansa galleries opened. These were perhaps the most prestigious of all the artists’ co-ops. We end in 1965 because that’s when art culture in New York starts to split. By 1965, there is a bifurcation of attitudes between downtown and uptown. Also, that year coincides with the solidification of a new American art market, epitomized by Pop Art. If you showed some Pop artists, it became possible to survive as a business. In addition, to deal with a New York scene post-1965, you have to address the anti-war movement, the women’s movement, gay liberation, and the formation of nonprofits. That is another project with a very different set of concerns.

BB: Could you clarify what exactly the cooperative gallery model was?

MR: Co-op galleries were businesses where members split the expenses of the operation. They had bylaws and were incorporated. Every co-op member paid fees. Members also determined officers—who was president, who was treasurer, and so on—and worked on a volunteer basis to keep the gallery open; some galleries levied fees to pay for an assistant. The Hansa Gallery’s bylaws were well formulated; you can see a copy of them in the show. The co-op gallery’s drawback was that in deciding how to manage the space and determine the fee structure, the meetings could become quite contentious.

BB: Why was Tenth Street the epicenter?

MR: A lot of artists lived on East Tenth Street—from Fourth Avenue to First Avenue—including Willem de Kooning, Esteban Vicente, Milton Resnick, and Perle Fine. It was Fine who told the Tanager artists about the available retail space at 90 Tenth Street. Most of the buildings on Tenth Street between Fourth and Third Avenues were of the red Grooms’s Magic Train Ride, Reuben Gallery, New York, 1960.

AM: Why did artists begin to form their own galleries in the early 1950s? Why was New York City, and more specifically downtown, the epicenter for so much artistic experimentation, both in the art being made and in the model of selling that art?

MR: The Fifty-seventh Street galleries date back to before the First World War. New York had major museums showing modern art downtown: in 1929 MoMA opens, and then the Whitney Museum in 1931. Uptown, Solomon Guggenheim and Hilla Rebay are putting their collection of non-objective art on view. So New York becomes an epicenter for art. It’s hard to imagine now, but in the 1950s, downtown was really inexpensive. You could be an artist and not have to work full-time, and still have a place to live. Another significant factor was that Hans Hofmann had started his art school on West Eighth Street. The Club, a hangout for the Abstract Expressionists, also on Eighth Street, was a place where artists discussed ideas about what art could or should be. And at New York University, students like Alfred Leslie opened studio spaces in the University’s School of Education, where they taught art. A number of veterans also took advantage of the GI Bill to go back to school and get a place to live downtown.
three-story tenement type, with parlor floors designed as storefronts. During this postwar period, many of the businesses that had been there closed and rents were very cheap. The spaces were not unlike those of the Lower East Side galleries now, which occupy similar storefronts. They’re not that big, but they’re big enough for shows.

**BB:** Jean Follett’s work is featured in *Inventing Downtown*. Who are some of the other women artists you think warrant more attention or critical reevaluation?

**MR:** Jean Follett is very important; many artists cited her as an influence. I am not yet finished with my research on her—she is my next project. Lois Dodd just had a retrospective at the Portland Art Museum in Maine; a lovely painting by her from the late 1950s is in the show. Sally Hazelet Drummond is another woman artist I came to admire; she created exquisite abstract pointillist canvases. Jane Wilson’s work is absolutely moving; she had a facility for capturing light. Mary Frank’s powerful carved-wood sculptures mine the body so sensually; they are amazing. Mimi Gross’s work was another delight—her keen sense of color and love of New York City scenes captured my heart. Marcia Marcus’s self-portraits are ironic before irony was really in style. Phyllis Yampolsky, with her comic sensibility and graphic style, was way ahead of her time, as was Martha Edelheit, whose work probes the erotic. There are so many women artists we don’t even know! I’m hoping art history and museum studies students will start uncovering them!

**AM:** What effect did music, theater, and the performing arts exert on the visual artists of this period?

**MR:** Influences went both ways. The composer Steve Reich has noted that his audiences were largely comprised of visual artists. Allan Kaprow had studied at Hans Hofmann’s school, so he was steeped in compositional theory. In 1957 he wanted to do something with...
sound. Someone directed him to Cage’s class, where he quickly saw you could take Cage’s lessons and apply them to the visual arts. An interdisciplinary conversation was opening art up in New York.

Simone Forti, for example, trained as a visual artist and migrated into dance when she lived in the Bay Area, and then became a performer in Robert Whitman’s Happenings in addition to producing her own.

**AM:** The Green Gallery’s commercial status and uptown location make it unique in this exhibition. Can you speak to its importance and why it’s included?

**MR:** Strictly speaking, the Green Gallery shouldn’t be included because it’s not an artist-run space. Richard Bellamy isn’t an artist although he acted like one. He was hired by the Hansa Gallery in 1955, when they moved uptown. The members knew him from summers spent in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Bellamy shared the Hansa job with Ivan Karp, who eventually went to work with Leo Castelli.

Bellamy had followed what was happening at the Reuben Gallery. And he asked George Segal to join the Green stable. He also invited Claes Oldenburg to come uptown and, over the summer of 1962, Oldenburg made his signature soft sculptures in the gallery itself. Bellamy remained extremely open to artists such as Richard Smith, Tadaaki Kuwayama, Robert Morris, Dan Flavin, and Donald Judd (whom he knew as a critic, initially). At the end of the 1963–64 season, Scull pulled out. The gallery couldn’t sustain itself without a backer, and it closed at the end of the following season.

**BB:** Can you talk a little bit about the relationship between art and politics during this time?

**MR:** In 1965, the civil rights movement becomes increasingly active. The Spiral Group was a coalition of African American artists who met between the summer of 1963 and the fall of ’65. Romare Bearden was invited by A. Philip Randolph—who organized the 1963 March on Washington—to form a coalition in the spirit of that event. Bearden, his cousin Charles Alston, Hale Woodruff, who was teaching at NYU, Norman Lewis, Emma Amos, and others began to meet. This was the only self-conscious effort on the part of visual artists to side with the civil rights movement before 1965.

Many artists were acutely affected by World War II. Boris Lurie, in particular, had survived the Buchenwald concentration camp. He and his father, who also survived, settled in New York after the war. Lurie was appalled by the rhetoric in the newspapers about Russian-American relations and talk of nuclear annihilation. He was also horrified by capital punishment, especially the notion that gas chambers were still being used to euthanize human beings. Lurie embarked on a series of agitprop exhibitions that pierced through the rhetoric of American culture to reveal the ugly ideologies that were proliferating. When he takes over the cooperative March Gallery in January 1960, he starts producing amazing artwork along with his collaborators, including Sam Goodman, Stanley Fisher, and Jean-Jacques Lebel. At the March Gallery in 1960–62, Lurie, Goodman, and Fisher mount three provocative exhibitions: the Vulgar Show, the Involvement Show, and the Doom Show. These were truly unprecedented political statements.

Of course Phyllis Yampolsky’s free-spirited Hall of Issues, which opened at the Judson Memorial Church in December 1961, was another radical project. Yampolsky conceived the venue less as a gallery than as a forum to allow artists to air their political and nonpolitical views about issues that mattered to them.

Aldo Tambellini, who grew up in Tuscany, made a narrow escape in World War II; an allied plane dropped a bomb in his hometown, and he was nearly blown up. He came to the Lower East Side in the midst of
an enormous urban renewal project. New buildings—such as the white- and red-brick complexes that were publicly subsidized, and others that were speculative—were going up. And whole city blocks were coming down. All these kids playing in the rubble reminded him of the war, and that’s when he began thinking about creating outdoor art venues and how to engage the local residents. In 1962–63, he founded The Center, a public–art organization that initiated outdoor exhibitions and festivals as a means of engaging local residents with contemporary art.

BB: To conclude, could you summarize some of the most significant developments during this period as presented in the exhibition?

MR: In the 1950s and early ’60s, artists are reinventing both abstraction and figuration. At the same time, assemblage moves toward the environmental and performative, away from focusing on the object itself and toward incorporating the body and spatial dimensions. Artist-run galleries were crucial to both these developments. They provided places where artists could test out new ideas and strategies—even if their relative lack of sales left many artists in desperate financial circumstances. Life on the downtown scene, while chaotic and uncertain, was at least cheap.

And to some extent, artists’ involvement with galleries provided a first step, as it were, to getting commercial representation. Many would have preferred to show uptown. Indeed, artists weren’t so much rebelling against Fifty-seventh Street but rather using artist-run galleries as a way to get their works seen. The co-op model eventually evolved into more radical, short-lived experimental spaces. Despite being transitional, all these artist-run galleries made a real aesthetic impact. My hope is that Inventing Downtown demonstrates that these galleries did nothing less than redefine modern art. By focusing on these forerunners of alternative spaces, the show provides an opportunity to shed more light on artists, both established and those who deserve to be better known, who made this period in American art such a groundbreaking and exciting one.

Transcribed by Grey Art Gallery interns Hazal Kamisli, Charlotte Kohlberg, and Mary-Brett O’Bryan.

Melissa Rachleff is a clinical associate professor of art management in the Visual Arts Administration MA Program at New York University (Steinhardt). Brian Bentley is graduate curatorial assistant at the Grey Art Gallery and a PhD student in art history at NYU’s Institute of Fine Arts. Alison Mueller is a graduate intern at the Grey and a student in NYU’s MA Program in Museum Studies.
DIRECTOR’S LETTER

The staff of the Grey Art Gallery is extremely proud to organize and present *Inventing Downtown: Artist-Run Galleries in New York City, 1952–1965*. Curated by Melissa Rachleff and six years in the making, this landmark show reveals how artists conceived and created their own exhibition opportunities in mid-20th-century Manhattan. At first these cooperative ventures loosely resembled commercial art galleries—of which there were simply too few in New York during this era—but, over time, they evolved into experimental and innovative sites that encouraged and abetted inventive approaches to artmaking itself. Indeed, *Inventing Downtown* can be seen as a paradigmatic model for the type of shows university art museums should mount.

Not only do *Inventing Downtown* and the tome-sized publication that accompanies it further new scholarship of an extremely vital period of American art, this project brings to light many works—including those by women and artists of color—which have previously been overlooked.

University art galleries—and the Grey in particular—shouldn’t be regarded simply as teaching museums. They are so much more, and they are becoming, at this point in our cultural history, essential to ensuring visual literacy. As new NYU faculty member Amy Whitaker argues in her book *Art Thinking*, artists’ creativity, when showcased in exhibitions, can encourage all students—including those studying sciences, business, economics, healthcare, and so on—to think outside the box, push boundaries, and even provoke in order to mine new possibilities in their respective fields. Moreover, never before have we witnessed so many new developments in visual media. With the advent of the digital age, students are creating their own online publications, websites, videos, and photo albums, presented in an ever-expanding realm of social-media sites.

The Grey Art Gallery, NYU’s fine arts museum, serves as a museum-laboratory, incorporating experimentation as an essential element of our programming. Ann Philbin, my colleague at UCLA’s Hammer Museum, concurs, observing that, like the university itself, college galleries function as laboratories “for the research and discovery of the art and ideas that define and redefine our culture today.” But not everyone agrees. An article in the November 2016 issue of *The Atlantic* asks “Why Do Colleges Have So Much Art?” It recounts how many university art museums are expanding, echoing, as it were, the building boom we are also currently witnessing in our civic, state, and private art institutions. The Grey, I think, might figure among the very small minority of museums that is not looking to enlarge. We are, of course, situated in the very heart of one of the world’s major metropolises and cultural capitals. The magnificent holdings of the Grey’s sister museums are but a short walk or subway ride away. Indeed, we’re a very small fish in a very big pond! What we do emulate, however, are NYU’s global aspirations. An essential part of NYU’s mission is to prepare students for lives in a very diverse world, to see themselves as NYU’s global aspirations. An essential part of NYU’s mission is to

Fortunately, the Grey Art Gallery is ideally situated to make this happen! Our founder Abby Weed Grey, who amassed a stellar collection of Modern Asian and Middle Eastern Art, was a true global visionary who recognized the contributions of non-western contemporary artists long before the rest of world caught up to her. And while I don’t think the Grey needs larger temporary exhibition galleries, I do dream of another few thousand square feet that would allow students the opportunity to organize exhibitions from our permanent collections.

We also need better storage facilities along with a viewing room where we could welcome faculty from across the university to teach seminars based on works in the NYU Art Collection.

But I digress. *Inventing Downtown*, as Rachleff notes, functions as a prequel to the Grey’s epic *Downtown Show* of 2006, which examined the tumultuous downtown Manhattan art scene between 1974 and 1984. We are, as our exhibition track record readily attests, committed to revealing the history and diversity of New York’s cultural contributions along with promoting new ways to explore the interconnectivity of the arts. This past September, the Grey hosted *A Feast of Astonishments: Charlotte Moorman and the Avant-Garde, 1960s–1980s*, which revealed how a classically trained cellist evolved into a radical promoter and impresario of avant-garde practices in all media. And in April, we’ll present another show centered on a musician, Mark Mothersbaugh, lead singer of the post-punk band DEVO. Mark, it turns out, majored in the visual arts at Ohio’s Kent State University and has been making art while also writing songs and performing.

*Inventing Downtown* and the accompanying book present a new perspective—the first exhibition and publication to look at a remarkably fecund period of American art from the vantage point of artist-run spaces. We are immensely grateful to everyone—too numerous to name here, they are listed nearby—who contributed to this extremely ambitious enterprise. And, of course, our deepest gratitude goes to the artists themselves, for without them, there wouldn’t be a downtown scene to explore!

Lynn Gumpert, Director

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A truly monumental undertaking, Inventing Downtown could not have been realized without the assistance of many. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the following individuals and institutions (* indicates lenders to the exhibition):


L.G. - M.R.
Unless otherwise noted, programs are free of charge, no reservations, capacity limited. All programs are subject to change. Photo ID required for entrance to NYU buildings. Information: greoyartgallery.nyu.edu, greoyartgallery@nyu.edu, 212/998-6780.

Conversations @ Grey Art Gallery

**Wednesdays, January 11 and March 1, 6:30 pm**

With Melissa Rachleff, curator of the exhibition and clinical associate professor, MA Program in Visual Arts Administration (Steinhardt), NYU.

**Wednesday, March 8, 6:30 pm**

With Noel Anderson, clinical assistant professor of printmaking, Art & Art Professions (Steinhardt), NYU.

**Wednesday, March 22, 6:30 pm**

With Brian Bentley, graduate curatorial assistant, Grey Art Gallery, and PhD student, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU.

**Film Screenings: Aldo Tambellini**

**Tuesday, January 10 and Thursday, January 12**

**Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue**

Experimental short films, mostly from the 1960s, by Aldo Tambellini, artist in Inventing Downtown. **Tuesday, 7:30 pm** (highlights): Black Film Series Plus (includes opening of Black Gate Theatre, New York’s first “electromedia” space); Black Is (abstract images painted directly on clear film base); Black Trip 2 (American psyche seen through eye of a black man); Black Plus X (contemporary life in a black community); Blackout (crescendo of abstract images); Soundblack (reverses soundtrack and optical); Proliferation of the Sun (performance by Otto Fieni); Black Out (performance by Tambellini); **Thursday, 7:30 pm** (90 min.): Black Video 2 (study of light and real-time transmission); Black Spiral (a modified television sculpture); Black TV (contemporary violence on TV); and Inauguration, from the series A Day in the Life of Television—TV About TV. Co-organized by Anthology Film Archives and NYU’s Grey Art Gallery. Tickets and complete film listings: anthologyfilmarchives.org.

**Film Screenings: Inventing Downtown**

**Friday, January 13–Sunday, January 15**

**Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue**

Highlights of this four-part screening series include: Friday, 7:30 pm: Exhibition as Stage (100 min.): Meat Joy (Schneemann), What’s Happening (with Kaprow, LaMonte Young, Dick Higgins, et al.), and Doomsshow (Wiszniowski); Saturday, 5:00 pm: Lives of Artists 1 (90 min.): House of the White People (Kuchar on Segall) and Kusama’s Self-Obliteration (Talkud on Kusama); Saturday, 7:30 pm: Lives of Artists 2 (110 min.): Encyclopedia of the Blessed (Kuchar on Grooms) and Hats, Bottles and Bones (Edelheit on Diennes); Sunday, 7:30 pm: Artists Make Movies (105 min.): The Last Clean Shirt (Leslie) and The Medium Is the Medium (Kaprow, Paik, Tambellini, et al.). Co-organized by Anthology Film Archives and NYU’s Grey Art Gallery. Tickets and complete film listings: anthologyfilmarchives.org.

**Outliers, Mavericks and Risk-takers: The Emergence and Legacy of Downtown**

**Thursday, January 19, 6:00–8:00 pm**

The Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA), 421 Broome Street, Fourth Floor

Examining downtown’s further evolution—from the opening of commercial art galleries in Soflo in the late 1960s to the emergence of the Lower East Side as a new art hub—this panel will focus on the adventurous risk-takers who helped make downtown the epicenter of the New York art scene. Moderated by Grace Glueck, journalist, with speakers Betty Cuningham, Betty Cuningham Gallery; Eric Firestone, Eric Firestone Gallery; Michael Findlay, Acquavella Gallery; and Patricia Margarita Hernandez, Pi Gallery. Organized by the New York Foundation for the Arts, hosted by CIMA, and co-sponsored by the Sofo Arts Network and NYU’s Grey Art Gallery. Free of charge, reservations required: info@blt/c1500vqr.

**Film Screenings: John Cohen**

**Saturday, January 28–Sunday, January 29**

**Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue**

John Cohen, photographer in Inventing Downtown, will introduce his films:

**Saturday, 6:00 pm** (65 min.): Dylan (first film footage of young Bob Dylan in New York City); The High Lonesome Sound (music of rural poor in Kentucky); The End of an Old Song (ballad singers in North Carolina); **Saturday, 8:00 pm** (60 min.): Musical Holdouts (survey of American traditional music); Sarah and Maybelle (Carter family of country music); **Sunday, 3:30 pm** (95 min.): Mountain Music of Peru (centuries-old music of the Andes); Carnival in Q’eros (Andean Indians); **Sunday, 8:00 pm** (90 min.): Rescue Holcomb from Daisy Kentucky (banjo/guitar player and coal miner); and Visions of Mary Frank (portrait of artist in Inventing Downtown).

Co-organized by Anthology Film Archives and NYU’s Grey Art Gallery. Tickets and complete film listings: anthologyfilmarchives.org.

**Film Screening: Amos Vogel and Cinema 16**

**Wednesday, February 1, 6:30 pm**

Michelson Theater, Tisch School of the Arts, 721 Broadway, Room 648

Founded by Amos Vogel in 1947, the Cinema 16 film society attracted downtown artists to its landmark programs of documentary and avant-garde films—including the medley of shorts to be screened. Selected and introduced by Scott MacDonald, visiting professor of Art History, Hamilton College. Co-sponsored by NYU’s Department of Cinema Studies (TSOA) and Grey Art Gallery.

**Conversation: Ulrich Baer and Hasia R. Diner**

**Wednesday, February 8, 6:30 pm**

Center for the Humanities, 20 Cooper Square, Fifth Floor

Ulrich Baer, professor of German, Comparative Literature, and English, and vice provost for Faculty, Arts, Humanities & Diversity; and Hasia R. Diner, Paul S. and Sylvia Steinberg Professor of American Jewish History and Director, Goldstein-Goren Center for American Jewish History, both NYU, will discuss perspectives on the Holocaust in the postwar era. Co-sponsored by NYU’s Center for the Humanities and Grey Art Gallery.

**Downtown Forever: Artists and Conservators in Conversation**

**Thursday, February 9, 6:00–8:00 pm**

The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, 526 LaGuardia Place

Join artists and conservators in conversation about preserving their work and legacy. The discussion will consider works of art from the Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation collection as well as featured objects from the artists’ studios. Organized by the Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation and Voices in Contemporary Art (VoCA), and co-sponsored by NYU’s Grey Art Gallery. Tickets $15: www.rcgrossfoundation.org/events.

**Visions of Mary Frank**

**Friday, February 11, 6:30 pm**

**Silver Center, Room 300**

Joint efforts to celebrate the significant works of Mary Frank, one of the most important and pioneering printmakers of her time. Both Mary Frank’s work and her life are intertwined with the production and history of the renowned Leo Castelli Gallery. The evening will feature a talk by curator Sarah Parke about the Leo Castelli Gallery, followed by a conversation about the artist’s work and legacy, moderated by Sarah Parke and Adam D. Weinberg, director of the Whitney Museum of American Art. The evening will close with a screening of the film Visions of Mary Frank. Co-sponsored by NYU’s Center for the Humanities and Grey Art Gallery.
Reverberations: Historical and Art Historical Collisions
Wednesday, February 15, 7:00 pm
Einstein Auditorium, Barney Building, 34 Stuyvesant Street
(at 3rd Ave. and 9th St.)

Exploring pressing social issues around art in New York during the 1950s and '60s—a moment in American history that is both transitional and transformative—this roundtable discussion will examine the proliferation of art and other visual images relating to the Holocaust, the Cold War, civil rights, free speech, and access to, separation from, and collision of public and private space. Moderated by Norman Kleeblatt, Susan and Elihu Rose Chief Curator, The Jewish Museum, with speakers Steven Nelson, professor of Art History, University of California at Los Angeles; Lisa Saltzman, professor of History of Art, Bryn Mawr College; and Andrew Weiner, assistant professor of art theory and criticism in Art & Art Professions, NYU.

Co-sponsored by NYU’s Departments of Art & Art Professions (Steinhardt) and Hebrew & Judaic Studies; and Grey Art Gallery.

Conversation: John Cohen and Thomas Crow
Wednesday, February 22, 7:00 pm
Silver Center, Room 300 (enter at 32 Waverly Place)

John Cohen, photographer, musician, filmmaker, artist, and professor emeritus of visual arts, SUNY Purchase College; and Thomas Crow, Rosalie Solow Professor of Modern Art, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, and author of The Long March of Pop: Art, Music, and Design 1930–1995, will discuss Cohen’s role in the downtown art and music scene in the 1950s and early ‘60s.

Co-sponsored by NYU’s Departments of Art History and Photography & Imaging, Institute of Fine Arts, and Grey Art Gallery.

Exhibition, Environment, Performance
Tuesday, February 28, 6:30 pm
NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, 566 LaGuardia Place

This roundtable discussion will consider how artists in New York expanded both modes of artmaking and varieties of presentation in the alternative art spaces of the 1950s and ‘60s. Moderated by Bruce Altshuler, director of Museum Studies, NYU, with speakers Claire Bishop, professor of Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY; André Lepecki, associate professor of Performance Studies, NYU; Julie Martin, director, Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.); and artists Red Grooms, Claes Oldenburg, and Robert Whitman.

Co-sponsored by NYU’s MA Program in Museum Studies, Department of Performance Studies (TSAI), MA Program in Visual Arts Administration (Steinhardt), and Grey Art Gallery. Free of charge, tickets required: greyartgallery.nyu.edu/programs

Artist Collectives Today
Friday, March 3, 6:30–8:00 pm
Einstein Auditorium, Barney Building, 34 Stuyvesant Street
(between 3rd Ave. and 9th St.)

In this panel discussion, speakers will focus on how artist collectives today are advocating for artists’ rights, and how artists and galleries are working to prevent the displacement of longtime neighborhood residents, businesses, and organizations. Moderated by ACE members, with speakers to be announced.

Organized by Advocates for Cultural Engagement (ACE) and co-sponsored by NYU’s MA Program in Visual Arts Administration (Steinhardt) and Grey Art Gallery.

Conversation: Tenth Street Days
Monday, March 6, 7:00 pm
Einstein Auditorium, Barney Building, 34 Stuyvesant Street
(between 3rd Ave. and 9th St.)

Moderator Irving Sandler, art historian and critic, in conversation with artists Lois Dodd and Philip Pearlstein, will reflect on their early days at the Tanager Gallery.

Co-sponsored by the Department of Art & Art Professions (Steinhardt) and Grey Art Gallery.

Downtown on the Beach: Exploring 1950s–’60s Provincetown
Thursday, March 9, 6:00–8:00 pm
The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, 526 LaGuardia Place

In this panel discussion, artists will consider the vibrant Provincetown art scene in the 1950s and after, focusing in particular on the Sun Gallery and the HCE Gallery. Also included are a screening and discussion of Yvonne Andersen’s documentary film The Sun Gallery Provincetown 1955–59 (13:48 min.), and a viewing of newly discovered photographs by Marcia Marcus. Organized by The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation and co-sponsored by NYU’s Grey Art Gallery. Tickets $15: www.rcgrossfoundation.org/events. General information: info@rcgrossfoundation.org, 212/529-4906.

Walking Tour: Exploring East Tenth Street and Beyond
Saturday, March 25, 11:00 am
Meeting place will be sent to ticketholders

Grey Art Gallery staff member Lucy Oakley, head of education and programs, and Grey interns will lead a walking tour of East Tenth Street and environs, focusing in particular on the sites of artist-run galleries in Inventing Downtown and evoking the rich cultural landscape of avant-garde New York during the 1950s and early ‘60s.


Alt O’Hara: Coterie and Counter-Institution
Wednesday, March 29, 7:00 pm
Silver Center, Room 300 (enter at 32 Waverly Place)

Placing Frank O’Hara’s writing in relation to the development of alternative art galleries in the early 1960s, this lecture by Lytle Shaw, professor of English, NYU, will explore the ways that O’Hara’s cultivation of a coterie served an analogous function in terms of both the social world and literary history.

Co-sponsored by NYU’s Department of English and Grey Art Gallery.

ALSO ON VIEW

L. Parker Stephenson Photographs, 764 Madison Avenue
On view December 2, 2016–February 11, 2017
Information: lparkerstephenson.nyc, info@lparkerstephenson.nyc, 212/517-8700

Boris Lurie (1924–2008), Life After Death
Westwood Gallery, 262 Bowery
Curated by James Cavello in collaboration with the Boris Lurie Art Foundation
On view January 6–February 18, 2017
Reception: Thursday, January 12, 6:00–8:00 pm
Information: www.westwoodgallery.com, info@westwoodgallery.com, 212/925-5700

Building Identity: Chaim Gross and Artists’ Homes & Studios in New York City, 1953–’74
The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, 526 LaGuardia Place
On view January 19–October 22, 2017
Reception: Thursday, February 16, 5:30–7:30 pm
Information: www.rcgrossfoundation.org, info@rcgrossfoundation.org, 212/529-4906

Richard Tyler and the Uranian Press
Printed Matter, 231 11th Avenue
March 2017
Information: www.printedmatter.org

The Emily Harvey Gallery, 1983–2004
The Emily Harvey Foundation, 537 Broadway
Curated by Agustín Schang and Christian Xatrèc
On view: March 7–18, 2017
Reception: Tuesday, March 7, 6:00 pm
Information: http://www.emilyharveyfoundation.org
SUGGESTED READINGS


'A most companionable read, scholarly without ever being stuffy, *Inventing Downtown* is like one of the rare city gems that make NYC so magical… Featuring a pantheon of grand heroes and a firmament of brilliant stars whose names have largely been lost to time, Rachleff delivers all the politics, personalities, and passions of an art world in dramatic transition.”

—Carlo McCormick, senior editor, *Paper*, and culture critic

"Inventing Downtown is essential reading for anyone interested in the art world of New York.”

—Mary Anne Staniszewski, co-author of *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces, 1960 to 2010*

“Melissa Rachleff has insightfully documented a unique period in modern art… Fascinating and thought provoking.”

—John Strausbaugh, author of *The Village: 400 Years of Beats and Bohemians, Radicals and Rogues*

“This important book… is an outstanding account of artist-organized cooperative galleries and exhibition spaces.”

—Bruce Altshuler, author of *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that Made Art History, 1962–2002*

By Melissa Rachleff
Preface and introduction by Lynn Gumpert
Interviews by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin

296 pages. 225 color and black-and-white illustrations. 12 x 10 in.
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Special 20% discount at the Grey Art Gallery: $60