



INVENTING DOWNTOWN

ARTIST-RUN
GALLERIES IN
NEW YORK CITY
1952-1965

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“Inventing Downtown greatly expands our knowledge of a largely forgotten aspect of postwar American art history: the crucial role played by artists in the display and circulation of their work. This important book, based on extensive scholarship and illustrated with rare documentary photographs, 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*

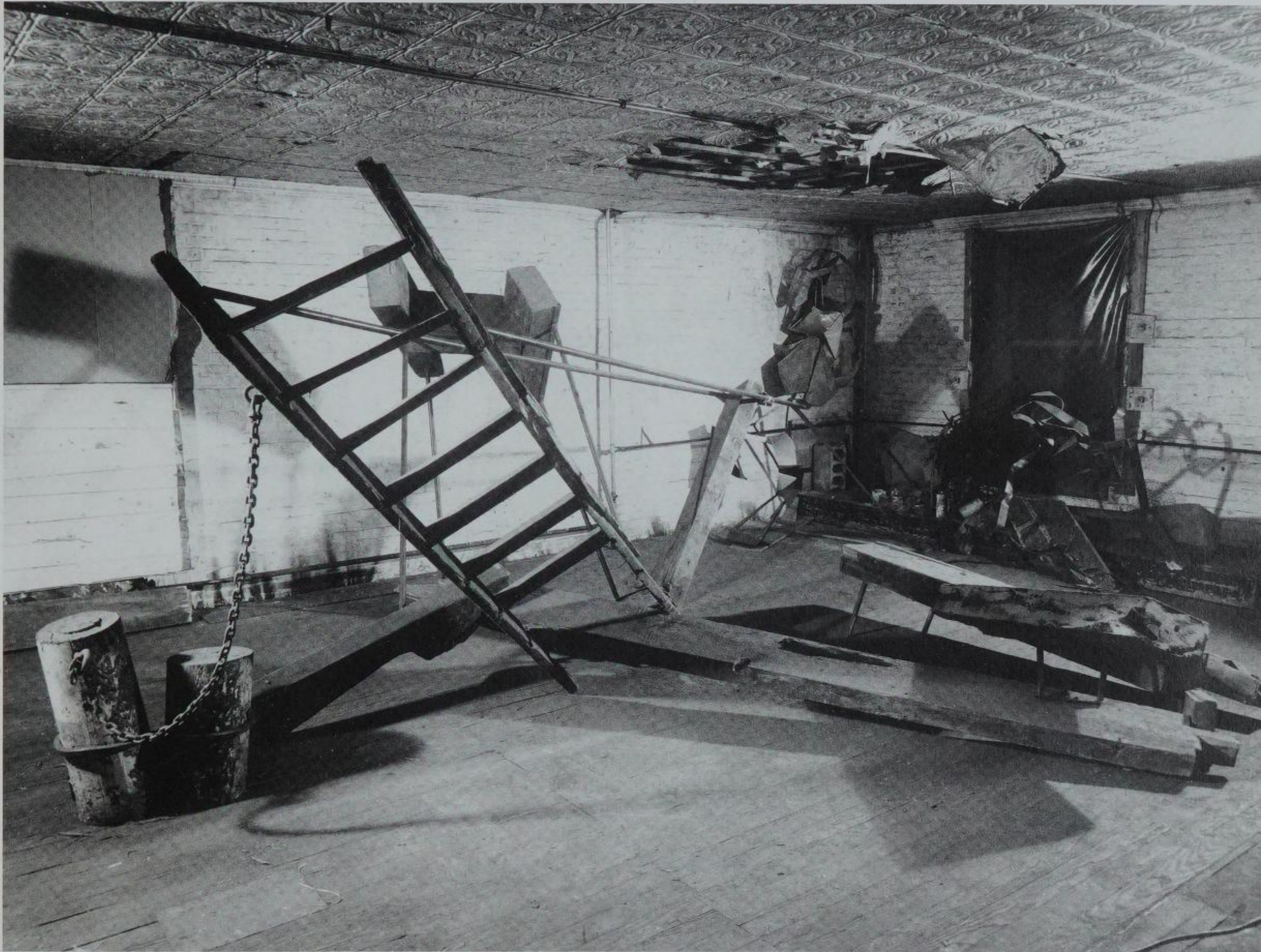
“Inventing Downtown is essential reading for anyone interested in the art world of New York. Melissa Rachleff vividly illuminates the period’s diverse communities and the energized mix of painting, sculpture, happenings, poetry, performance, music, and early Pop, Minimal, Conceptual, and activist experiments. One of the book’s many revelations is the prominent role played by artists who happen to be women and people of color in this important chapter of cultural history, which deserves to be better known.”

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

While the achievements of New York City’s most renowned postwar artists—Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Franz Kline—have been studied in depth, a large cadre of lesser-known but influential artists came of age between 1952 and 1965. Also understudied are the early, experimental works by more well-known figures such as Mark di Suvero, Jim Dine, Dan Flavin, and Claes Oldenburg. Focusing on innovative artist-run galleries, this book invites readers to reevaluate the period—uncovering its diversity, creativity, and nuances, and tracing the spaces’ influence during the decades that followed. *Inventing Downtown* charts the development of artist-run galleries in Lower Manhattan

(continued on back flap)





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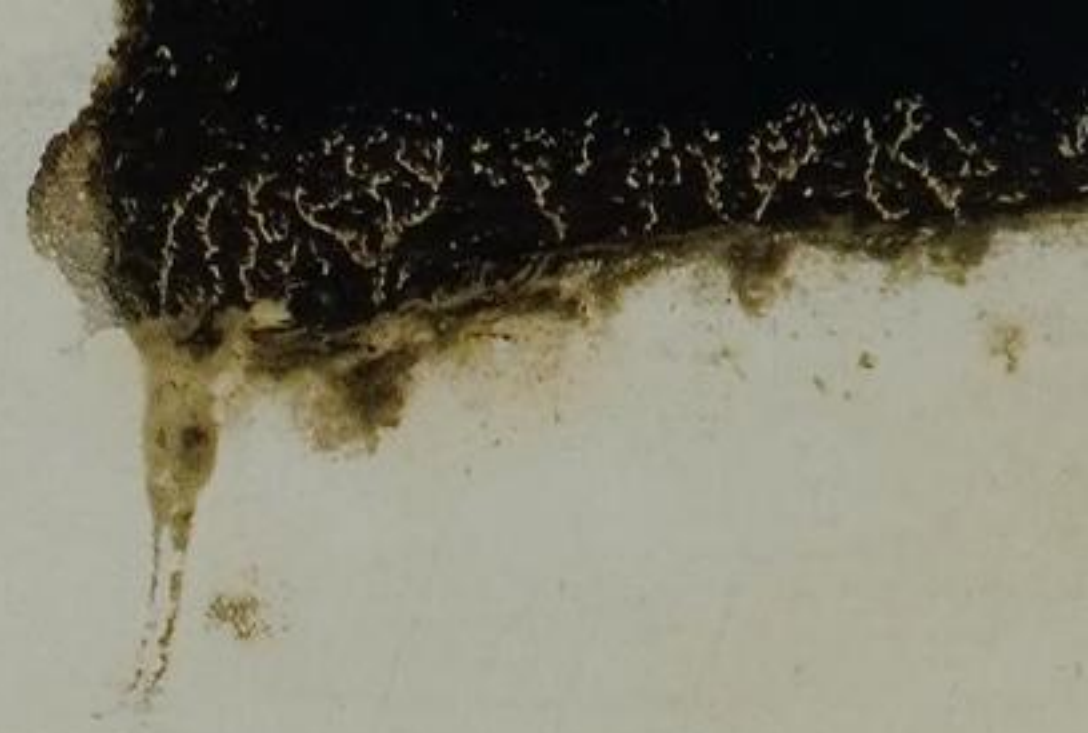


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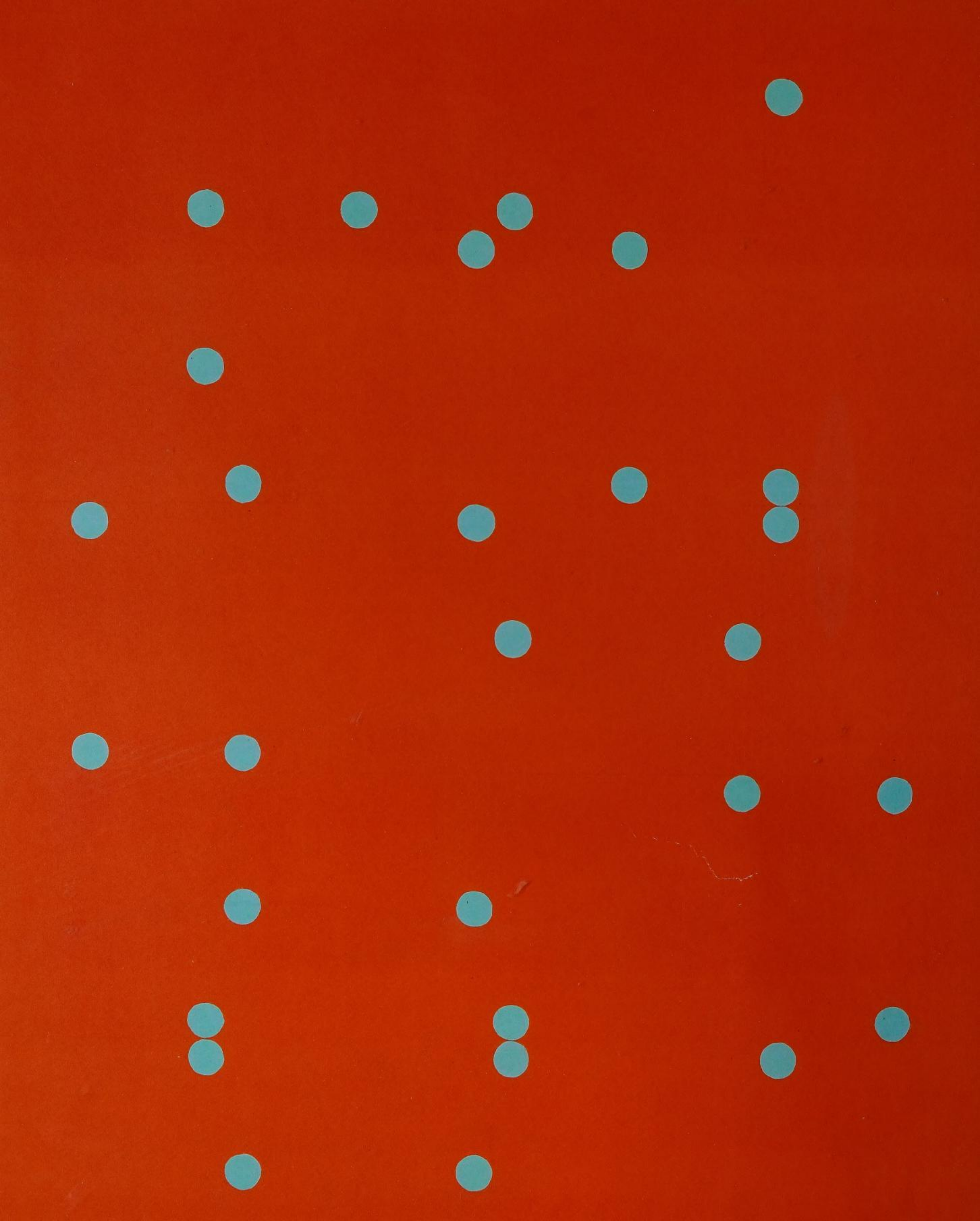


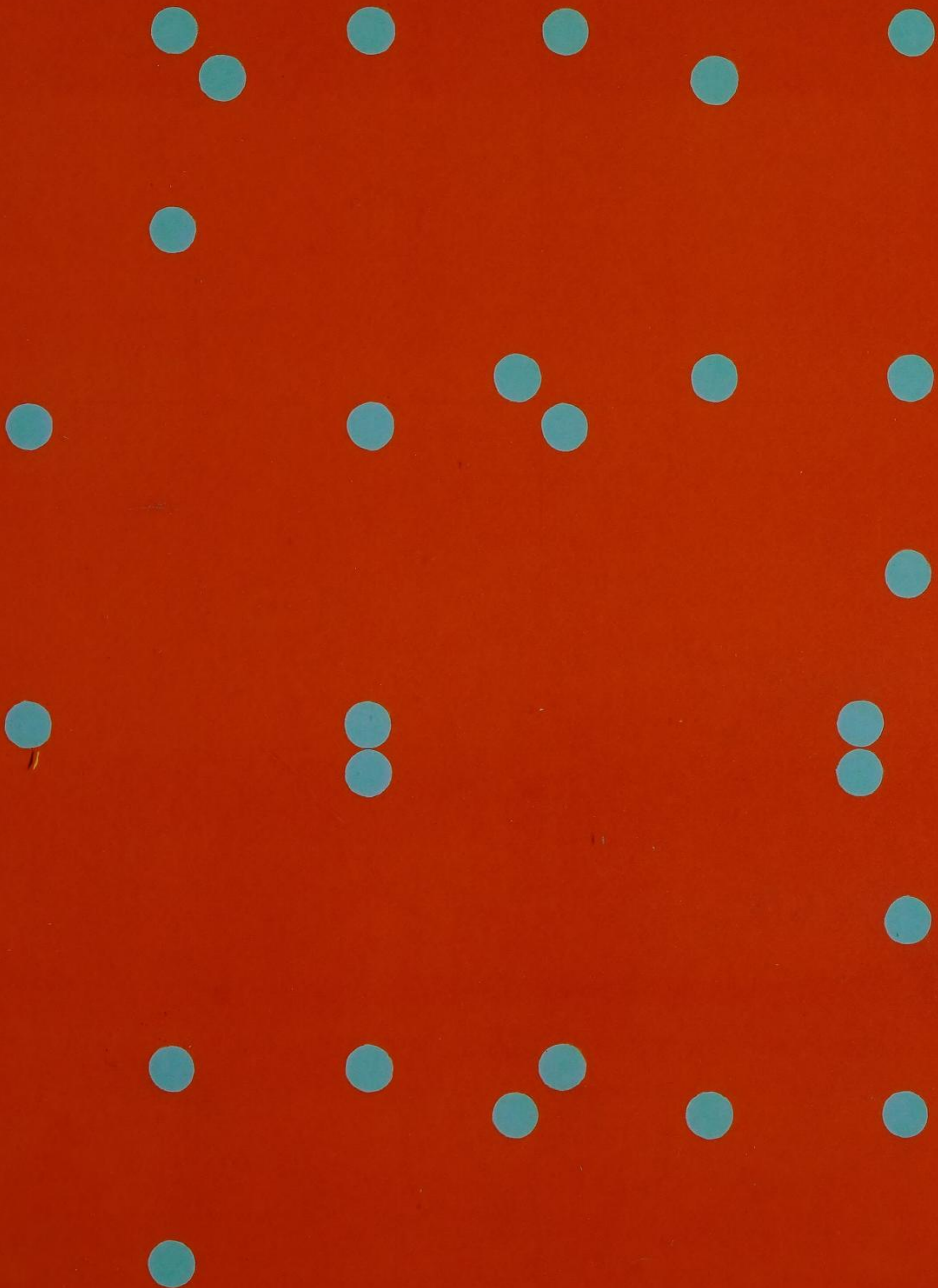
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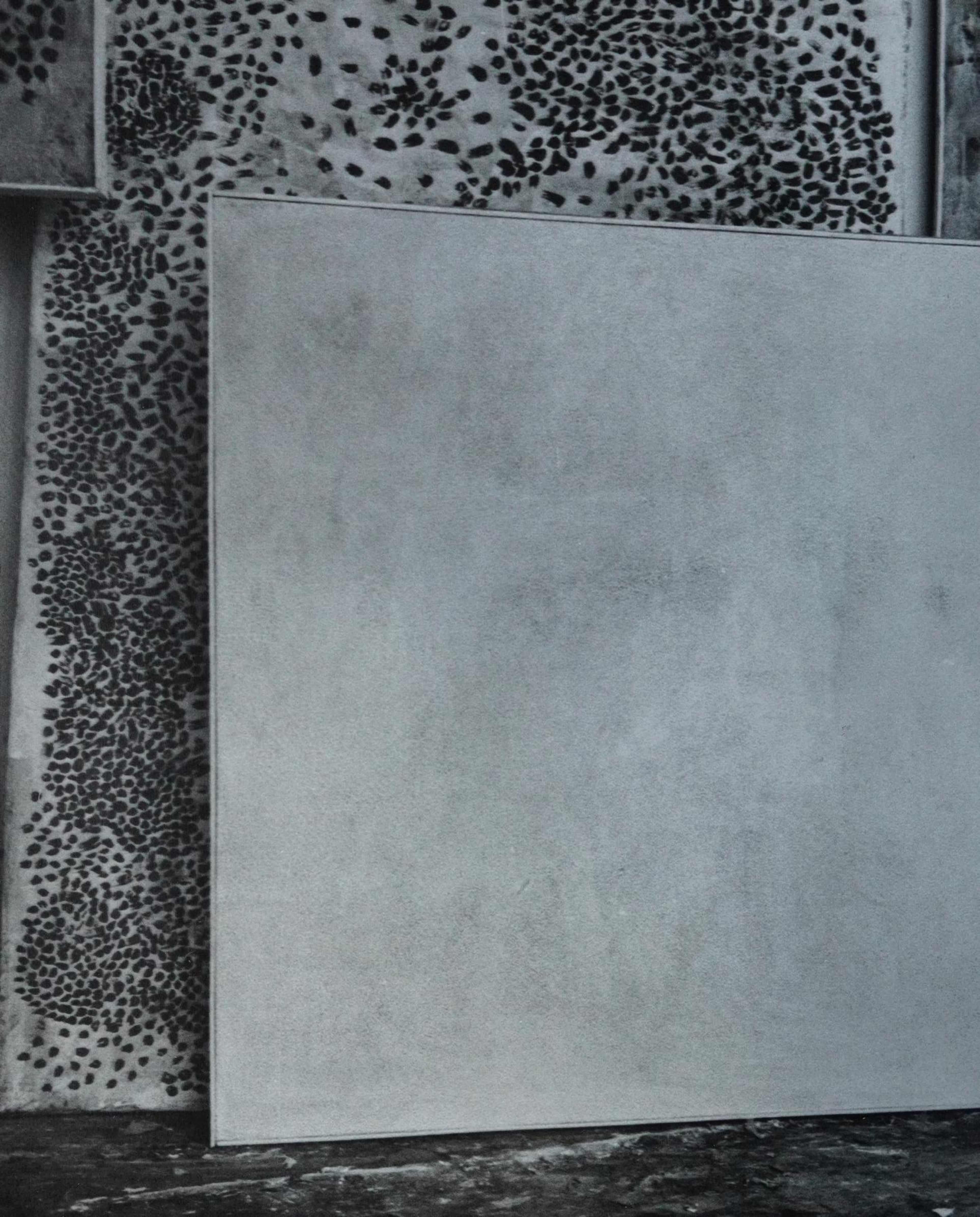
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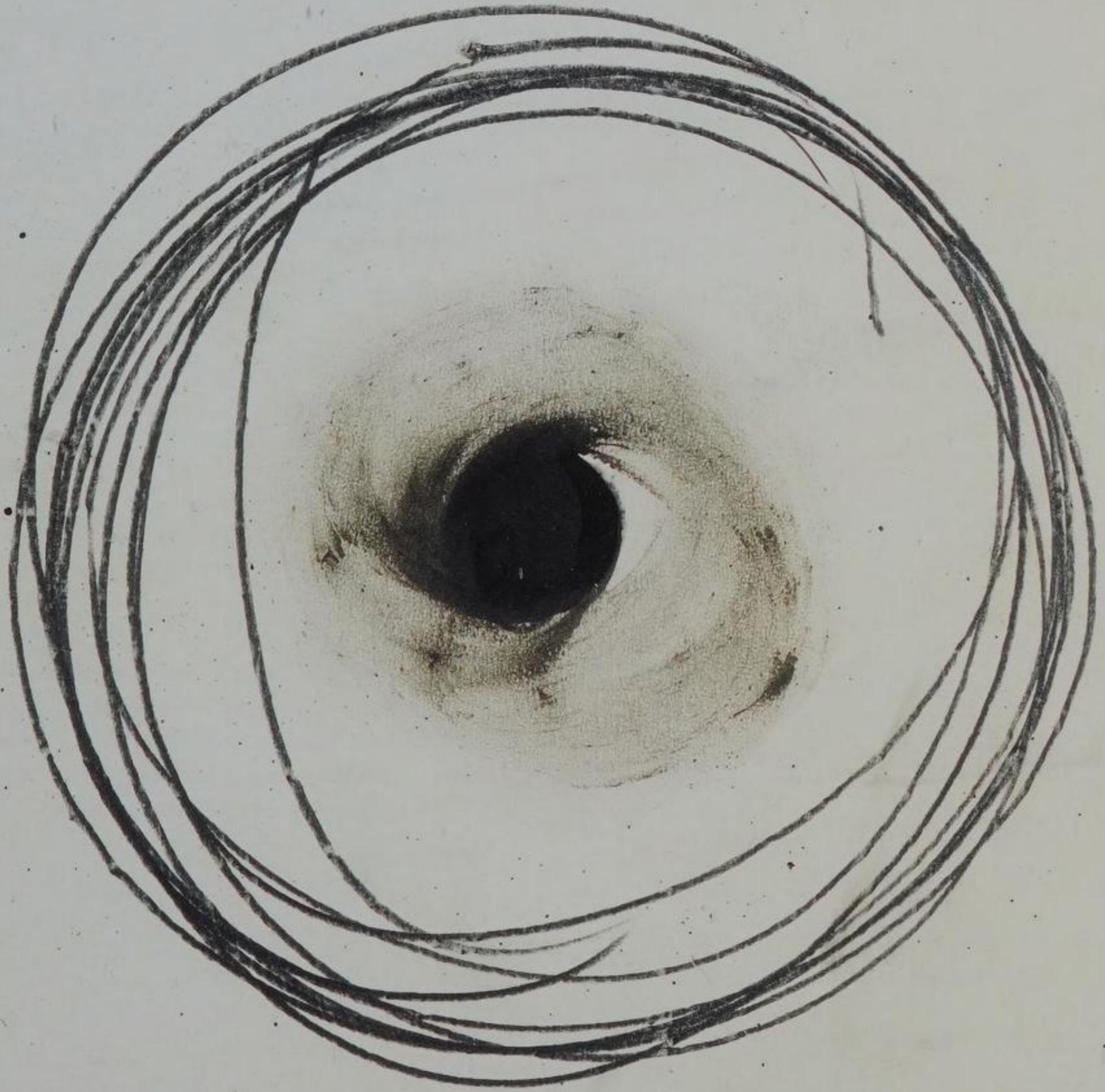
ARTIST-RUN
GALLERIES IN
NEW YORK CITY
1952-1965

Melissa Rachleff

Introduction by Lynn Gumpert

Interviews by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin

**we are
the primitives
of a new era**



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Photograph: Claes Oldenburg. Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York

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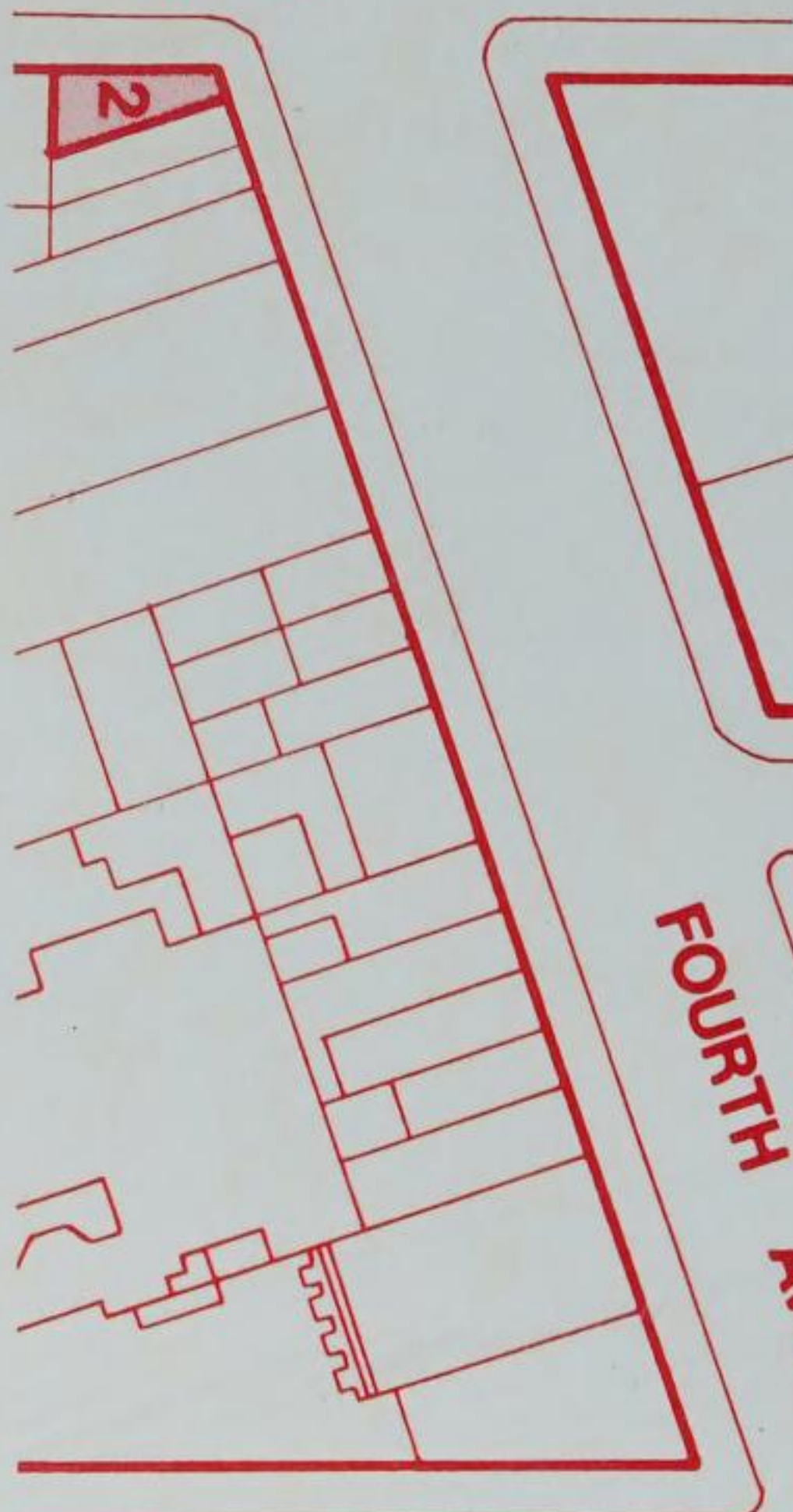
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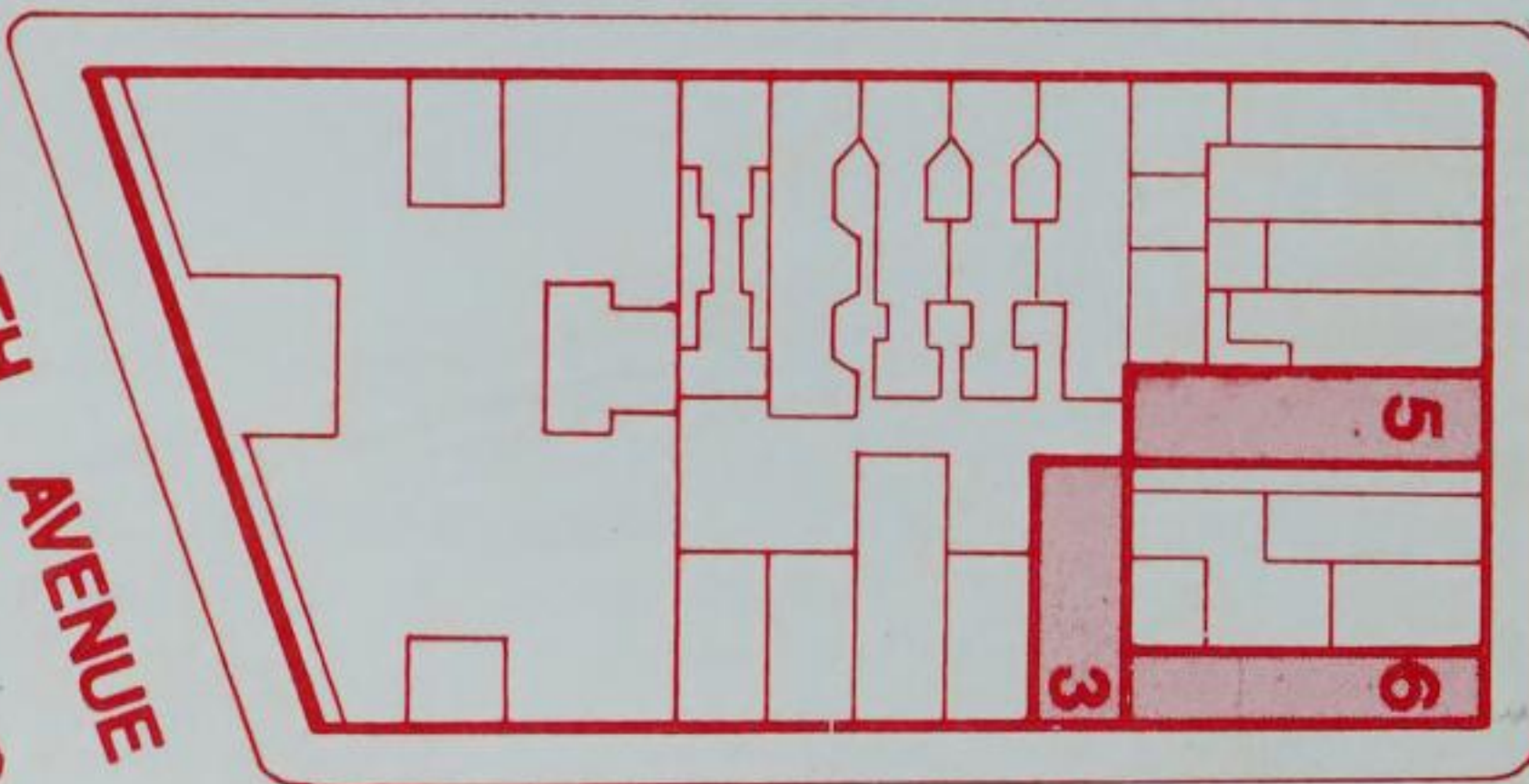


TENTH STREET 1952-1962

1	90 E 10th	TANAGER	1953 - 62
		(1952*)	
2	70 E 12th	HANSA	* 1952 - 54
		JAMES	* 1954 - 62
3	89 E 10th	BRATA	* 1957 - 60
		CAMINO	1960 - 63
4	92 E 10th	CAMINO	* 1957 - 60
5	56 3rd AVE	BRATA	1960 - mid 60's
6	95 E 10th	MARCH	* 1957 - 60
7	80 E 10th	AREA	* 1958 - 62
8	40 3rd AVE	PHOENIX	* 1958 - 62
9	73 4th AVE	THE CLUB	circa 1957 * founded

E 11th St

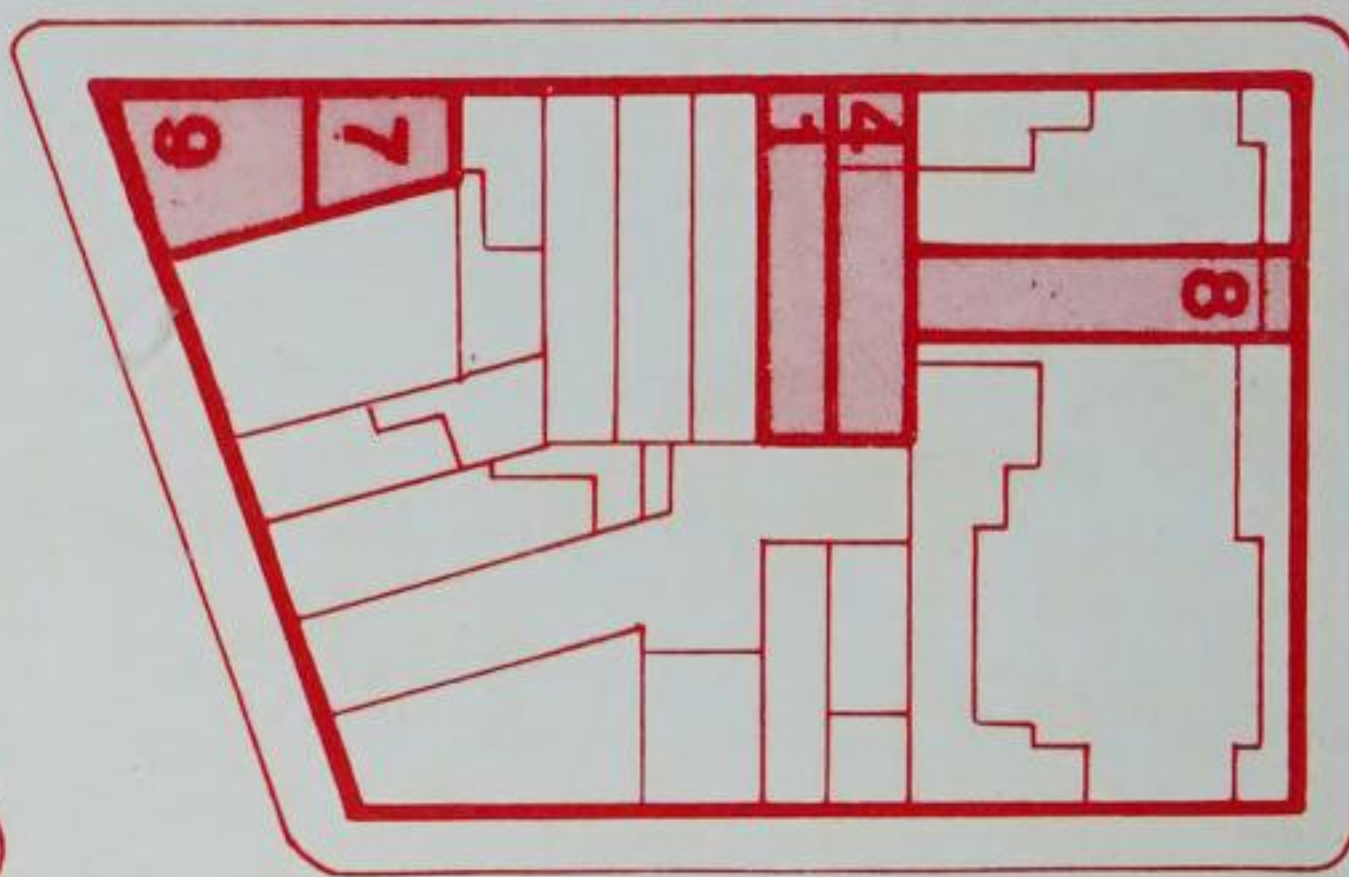
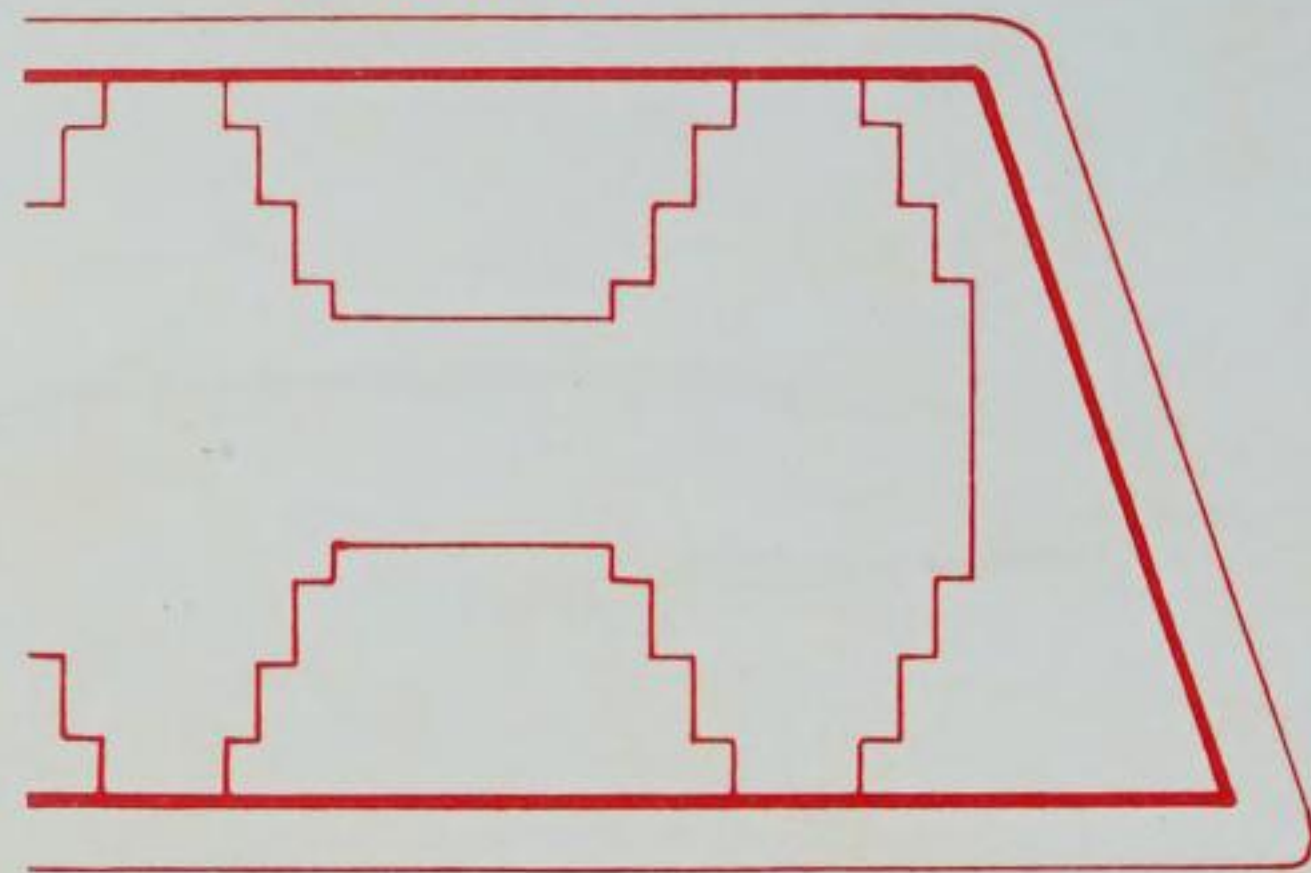
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THIRD AVENUE

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Foreword

In December 1976 an exhibition opened in Lower Manhattan at five artist-run galleries. Titled *Tenth Street Days: The Co-ops of the 50's*, the show surveyed eight galleries that had pioneered the notion of an artist-run space. The inside of the back cover of the catalogue featured a map indicating their locations, primarily along East Tenth Street between Third and Fourth Avenues. Painter Joellen Bard, who curated the show, noted that there had been approximately 250 “dues-paying members” of the cooperative galleries which, in turn, exhibited works by “more than 500 artists and possibly close to 1000.”¹

The neighborhood itself was unremarkable, comprised primarily of low, red-brick buildings. Critic Harold Rosenberg, writing in 1954, noted: “Apart from the two pawnshops facing each other on the Third Avenue western corners, everything on Tenth Street is one of a kind: a liquor store with a large ‘wino’ clientele; up a flight of iron steps, a foreign-language club restaurant; up another flight, a hotel-workers’ employment agency; in a basement, a poolroom. . . . Identical with rotting side streets in Chicago, Detroit, and Boston, Tenth Street is differentiated only by its encampment of artists.”² Those artists, indeed, were a force to be reckoned with, among them Willem de Kooning, Philip Guston, Milton Resnick, and Esteban Vicente. They attracted others: rents were cheap and the galleries provided an impetus to hang out, as it were, in these outer limits of Greenwich Village.

Reconstructing the lively history of these maverick galleries was already challenging in 1976. Some forty years later, this task has been truly monumental as guest curator Melissa Rachleff can well attest. Curious about the origin of alternative spaces, Melissa dove in, head first. Over the course of six years, *Inventing Downtown* grew into a labor of love. We thank Melissa for her resolute persistence and unwavering commitment; due to her unflagging

devotion, our understanding of this vital period is much enriched and expanded.

It could not have happened, however, without the kind cooperation of many other individuals and institutions. We are also very grateful to the over one hundred lenders for agreeing to part with precious works and, first and foremost, to the many artists who collaborated with Melissa to make the exhibition and book a reality. Absolutely essential, as well, are the generous funders who provided the financial means to realize this ambitious undertaking. We are therefore most appreciative to have received critical support from the Henry Luce Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; the S. & J. Lurje Memorial Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation; Ann Hatch; Art Dealers Association Foundation; and the Boris Lurie Foundation. We are also deeply indebted to the Terra Foundation for American Art, which has provided sage counsel along with substantial support for the tour. We thank our colleagues at the Kunstmuseum Luzern—Fanni Fetzler and Dominik Müller along with Corinne Erni—for hosting *Inventing Downtown* in Switzerland. A grant from Furthermore: a program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund helped to realize this volume. Finally, we acknowledge the Grey Art Gallery’s Director’s Circle, Inter/National Council, and Friends, along with the Abby Weed Grey Trust.

As New York University’s fine arts museum, the Grey Art Gallery is dedicated to promoting scholarship and visual literacy along with furthering knowledge of the extraordinary role the Downtown scene has played in the cultural life of this amazing metropolis. *Inventing Downtown* provides yet another fascinating and rich chapter.

NOTES

1. Joellen Bard, foreword to *Tenth Street Days: The Co-ops of the 50's* (New York: Education, Art and Service Inc., 1977), iii.
2. Harold Rosenberg, “Tenth Street: A Geography of Modern Art,” in *Discovering the Present: Three Decades in Art, Culture, and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 103–4.



Introduction

In 2006, New York University's Grey Art Gallery and Fales Library presented *The Downtown Show: The New York Art Scene, 1974–1984*, a landmark exhibition that surveyed the wild, raucous cultural activities occurring in Lower Manhattan during that remarkably lively decade. The exhibition grew out of years of discussion and debate: indeed, an advisory committee was formed in order to help tackle the daunting challenge of mounting a show that was, by its very nature, anti-institutional. The time span the exhibition addressed was very specific: 1974 marked the enactment of the Loft Law, which enabled artists to live and work in former industrial spaces of SoHo; 1984 is when the East Village scene, which witnessed the transformation of narrow, storefront spaces into compact for-profit galleries, was flourishing. The commercialization of the moment was captured, in part, by Keith Haring when he opened his eponymous Pop Shop that year.

As Marvin Taylor, director of Fales Library and Special Collections, who also edited the accompanying *Downtown Book*, notes: "Downtown is synonymous with experimentation."¹ The term Downtown, Taylor goes on to explain, had not only become a geographical description but signified a shared attitude. Artists in the 1970s, working in the then cheap, open loft spaces previously devoted to light industry, had nothing to lose. The market for contemporary art was, by today's standards, minuscule and there were far many more artists than the commercial galleries could accommodate. Opportunities to show in museums were even fewer. As a result, many artists decided to organize their own exhibitions. In the early 1970s, a number of what would come to be called "alternative spaces" opened. Among them were The Kitchen (1971), P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (1971), A.I.R. Gallery (1972), Artists

Space (1972), Creative Time (1974), and Just Above Midtown (1974), to name but a few.² By 1978, many of the founders of these renegade organizations had banded together to form the National Association of Artists Organizations, which held its first conference in Santa Monica that year.³

I had started working at one of them, the New Museum, in February 1980, three years after Marcia Tucker had left the Whitney Museum of American Art determined to mold an institution that would be more receptive and flexible to the often wild and unpractical ideas of living artists. The idea that artists could take matters into their own hands and establish exhibition possibilities, I soon learned, wasn't a new one. The next year, the New Museum mounted *Alternatives in Retrospect: An Historical Overview, 1969–1975*, an exhibition that was guest-curated by Jacki Apple and surveyed seven key spaces located in Lower Manhattan. These venues showed "works [that] were process oriented and situationally specific, involving a relationship between materials, concepts, actions, and locations," notes Apple. She continues: "They were sometimes spontaneous, improvisational, open-ended, and often collaborative."⁴

But even these radical spaces, which truly exemplified a Downtown ethos of experimentation, have their historical precedents. It is these precedents—galleries organized and operated by artists—that provide the focus and *raison d'être* for this volume. It, and the exhibition it accompanies, *Inventing Downtown: Artist-Run Galleries in New York City, 1952–1965*, explores how artists, eager as always to show their work, banded together to make that happen.

It is very appropriate and fitting that this momentous exhibition originates at the Grey Art Gallery, which, like New York University itself, is located in one of Downtown's epicenters, Greenwich Village. In fact, a number of the galleries explored in this book were on East Tenth Street, just a few blocks north and east of the Grey Art Gallery. Nor is the history of artists living and working downtown new to the Grey, which itself was founded only

in 1975 as NYU's museum. Similarly, works by Downtown artists constitute one of the strengths of the NYU Art Collection, which was begun in 1958. The prominent rise of American art in the 1940s, more specifically Abstract Expressionism, is well known and documented. Key hangouts at the time included the Waldorf Cafeteria at Sixth Avenue and West Eighth Street, the Club, on East Eighth Street, and, of course, the Cedar Tavern on University Place.

A number of other exhibitions during the Grey's forty years have also focused on Downtown art. Among them is a survey of 19th-century artist Samuel F. B. Morse, whose studio was located in the original 1836 University Building, which was later demolished, rebuilt, and is now known as the Silver Center. Others, in addition to *The Downtown Show* discussed earlier, include *Precious: An American Cottage Industry of the Eighties*, which focused on work from the booming East Village scene, in 1985; *Rudy Burckhardt and Friends: New York Artists of the 1950s and '60s* in 2000; *Downtown Pix: Mining the Fales Archives, 1961–1991* in 2010; *Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life* in 2011; and *Beat Memories: The Photographs of Allen Ginsberg* in 2013.

Key among these exhibitions is *New York Cool: Painting and Sculpture from the NYU Art Collection* in 2008. It comprised, as the title denotes, a selection of Downtown works from the Grey Art Gallery's permanent collection. Guest-curated by NYU professor Pepe Karmel, the show took its name from Irving Sandler's 1965 article "The New Cool-Art."⁵ One of the goals of the show and the accompanying book was "to trace how New York School art evolved from the 'hot,' gestural style of the early 1950s to the 'cool,' hard-edged style of the early '60s." But the story that Karmel eloquently reveals and that the works convincingly convey isn't that simple or straightforward. Figuration was still being produced and, indeed, experienced a breakthrough. Abstraction continued to be practiced in a painterly, expressionistic manner while more geometric-inspired works also surfaced. There was, Karmel posits concisely and directly, "an incredible variety of art being made during those years."⁶

Inventing Downtown reveals, much more fully than selections from the NYU Art Collection ever could, the extent of that variety. It also uncovers a more diverse history and reveals how artists themselves, by creating their own exhibition spaces, took on, to a certain extent, a form of critical discourse and, in so doing, could act themselves as cultural arbiters. They refused to be ignored and, by mounting their own work for public viewing, eventually effected a major shift of the art market away from midtown and the Upper East Side, to downtown. Gallerists Paula Cooper and Ivan Karp were the first to establish spaces in SoHo in 1968, but that is another story . . .

Inventing Downtown, meticulously researched and to a large extent fashioned from interviews with artists by guest curator

Melissa Rachleff, sheds new light on another remarkably vital time in American art, specifically from 1952 to 1965. In the first chapter, "Leaving Midtown," Rachleff examines how a number of artists formed what would become influential cooperative galleries, in which members divvied up both the costs and the practical aspects of running the spaces. Most of the artists showing at the Tanager, Hansa, and Brata galleries would have, given the choice, been thrilled to show at a commercial gallery and, when the opportunity arose, did so. As "City as Muse," the second chapter, reveals, artists participating in shows at the City Gallery, Reuben Gallery, Delancey Street Museum, and Judson Gallery rejected the cooperative model and created more ad hoc spaces that could function partly as exhibition venues and partly as expanded studios. It was in these spaces that the genre of performance art took off as a viable domain for painters and sculptors. Figurative painting was pushed to an extreme, and sculpture expanded beyond the third dimension into the fourth.

These highly experimental spaces engendered new forms and ideas. In "Space and Time," the third chapter, Rachleff details how artists showing in the Chambers Street Loft Series and at 79 Park Place incorporated temporality and music into their work. She reveals how jazz and its emphasis on improvisation—a topic that is now receiving more attention—influenced the visual arts. "Politics as Practice," the fourth chapter, examines how other artists at the time fostered a new paradigm where political and social issues the artwork addressed came to the fore. These pioneering, prescient artists participated in the March Gallery, the Hall of Issues at the Judson Memorial Church, The Center, and the Spiral Group.

Both the exhibition and this volume conclude with a case study of the Green Gallery. The mercurial Richard Bellamy, who had started his career at the Hansa Gallery, had the financial backing of businessman and taxi mogul Robert Scull. The Green Gallery was not an artist-run gallery nor was it located downtown. It was, however, Rachleff argues, absolutely essential to bringing a distinctly Downtown aesthetic uptown. By working with Downtown artists in his uptown space, Bellamy championed work that was truly cutting edge and, as it turns out, was not commercially successful, not a great model for sustaining a supposed for-profit enterprise.

In a way, *Inventing Downtown* recounts a history that comes full circle. Artists who, in the early 1950s, couldn't break into the art market, invent a new gallery model, that of the co-op. Soon after, other artists, rejecting the market altogether, experiment with new art forms in unexpected and blatantly noncommercial venues. Others investigate how art and political activism can inform each other, creating models for subsequent groups such as Artists and Writers Protest the War in Vietnam in 1965, the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition in 1968, and the Art Workers Coalition in 1969.

Eventually, the energy and vitality of these experimental activities engender even newer media and art forms that, in turn, whet art market appetites. Artists, as always, are ahead of the game, even though some of them reject it as it embraces them.

Alternative spaces, those entities inspired and informed by artists' co-op galleries from the 1950s, remain a vital component of the art world. Some of those that originated in the 1970s have evolved into more professional, incorporated institutions; many others have disappeared. What is incontestable is that these early artist-run galleries and organizations have not only had an enormous impact on the vitality of 20th-century American art but also continue to influence art made today.

NOTES

1. Marvin Taylor, "Playing the Field: The Downtown Scene and Cultural Production, An Introduction," *The Downtown Book: The New York Art Scene, 1974-1984* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 17.
2. See Julie Ault, "A Chronology of Selected Alternative Structures, Spaces, Artists' Groups, and Organizations in New York City, 1965-85," in *Alternative New York, 1965-1985*, ed. Julie Ault (Minneapolis and New York: University of Minnesota Press and the Drawing Center, 2002), 28-41.
3. Lane Relyea, "Alternative Space Movement 2.0," *Art Journal* 74, No. 3 (2015), 5-7.
4. Jacki Apple, "Introduction," in *Alternatives in Retrospect: An Historical Overview, 1969-1975* (New York: New Museum, 1981), 5.
5. Irving Sandler, "The New Cool-Art," *Art in America* 53, no. 1 (February 1965), 96.
6. Pepe Karmel, "An In-Between Era," in *New York Cool: Painting and Sculpture from the NYU Art Collection* (New York: Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 2008), 21-25.



Preface

As odd as it may seem now, in the midst of a booming art market, American contemporary art attracted little public interest and was generally ignored by New York's museums during the 1950s. Commercial galleries were few and far between—most simply couldn't survive if they featured contemporary works. Those that did were located uptown, many on Fifty-seventh Street. Artists—who lived and worked in downtown Manhattan—desperately wanted to show their work. Their overarching goal was visibility, and they pursued this with great seriousness and creativity. Taking matters into their own hands, they established their own “galleries,” spaces where they could exhibit and perhaps even sell a work. Thus, artist-run galleries were born. Most were conveniently located downtown, near the artists' studios, where rents were cheap and it was easy to run over and take turns sitting at the front desk.

Inventing Downtown explores the institutional and exhibition histories of fourteen New York-based artist-run galleries of this mid-century era in five chapters. First is “Leaving Midtown,” which examines the cooperative Tanager, Hansa, and Brata galleries, where expenses were shared among elected members and new aesthetic paradigms were tested. The curatorially adventurous Tanager (1952–62) expanded the definition of the “New York School” beyond gestural abstraction, causing its artist-curators to come into conflict with leading art critics. The ambitious artists behind the Hansa (1952–59) extended the aesthetic theories of Hans Hofmann, and found support among adventurous art critics. And the multicultural artists at the Brata (1957–62) reoriented gestural abstraction toward geometric composition.

The second chapter, “City as Muse,” along with the two following chapters, presents “galleries” that were formed in

Detail, Allan Kaprow's *Apple Shrine Environment*,
Judson Gallery, New York, 1960 (fig. 126)



Fig. 1. Fay Lansner with her paintings,
Hansa Gallery, New York, 1958
Photograph: Kermit Lansner. Estate of Fay Lansner

reaction against the co-op model. The use of quotation marks is deliberate, for the ten short-lived exhibition spaces that structure the discussion diverge from the traditional idea of the art gallery. “City as Muse” examines the relationship among three loosely affiliated artist groups and how the artists involved put an end to the era's core debate, figuration versus abstraction, by inventing new, hybrid art forms, including performance. The City Gallery (1958–59), Reuben Gallery (1959–61), Judson Gallery (1959–61), and Delancey Street Museum (1959–60) were best known for path-breaking projects, including Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* at the Reuben; Robert Whitman's *The American Moon* at the



Fig. 2. Perle Fine, *Heroic Awakening*, 1957
 Oil and collage on canvas, 44 × 60 in. (111.8 × 152.4 cm)
 Grey Art Gallery, New York University Art Collection. Gift of Irving Sandler, 1981.18

second Reuben Gallery; Jim Dine and Claes Oldenburg's watershed *The House* and *The Street* at the Judson; and Red Grooms's *The Burning Building* at the Delancey Street Museum, each of which functioned as an installation (in today's terms) as well as a stage for physical actions. These gallery groups disdained what Museum of Modern Art curator Peter Selz called "new humanism" and considered a visual equivalent to existentialism.¹ Dealers Martha Jackson and Sidney Janis rejected the connection with existentialism even more acutely—in projects they termed New Forms and New Realisms, respectively, which exhibited the "cooler" emotional temperature of what later came to be called Pop Art.

Chapter three, "Space and Time," looks at two divergent approaches, at Yoko Ono's 112 Chambers Street Loft (1960–61) and

in the Park Place group (1962–64). At 112 Chambers Street, Yoko Ono and La Monte Young featured a series of composers, dancers, and artists, who, like them, conceived of space and time as empirical. It was there that Robert Morris created the experiential sculpture *Passageway* (1961) and Simone Forti devised *Five Dance Constructions and Some Other Things* (1961), a series of rules-based physical actions. The Park Place collective of artists, most of whom lived at 79 Park Place, in Lower Manhattan, were influenced by new scientific discoveries emanating from space exploration. The prevalence of geometric shapes in their work reflects their readings on the fourth dimension, and their use of vivid contrasts and unpredictable patterns carried through the logic of the forms they made.

The fourth chapter, "Politics as Practice," investigates a theme coincident with the election of John F. Kennedy as president,



Fig. 3. Alex Katz, *Ada Ada*, 1959

Oil on canvas, 49 × 50 in. (124.5 × 127 cm)

Grey Art Gallery, New York University Art Collection. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Golden, 1963.13



in November 1960. Four groups explored the viability of politics as a subject matter for art and represented new strategies that, if analyzed at all, were most often dismissed by formalist critics and reported as human-interest stories. The NO!art group (1960–61), initially formed as the March Group, on East Tenth Street, organized three projects that confronted the perils of Cold War policies in an agitprop style. Artist Phyllis Yampolsky initiated the Hall of Issues at the Judson Memorial Church (1961–63), a broadly conceived open-call art exhibition and public-program series in which anyone, even non-artists, could instigate a discussion. Aldo Tambellini, a sculptor, founded The Center (1963–65), a public-art organization that initiated outdoor exhibitions and festivals on the Lower East Side as a means of engaging local residents with contemporary art. Finally, the Spiral Group (1963–65), a collective of African American artists, began meeting as part of the 1963 March on Washington, producing a single exhibition, in 1965. These groups' focus on political subject matter and the artist's responsibility to community proved prescient, as these would become two prevailing themes in the art of the later 1960s and throughout the 1970s.

Chapter five, "Defining Downtown," is a case study of Richard Bellamy's patron-supported Green Gallery, on Fifty-seventh Street (1960–65). The Green Gallery brought Downtown art uptown, and featured what critics began to describe as Pop Art and Minimal Art. "Defining Downtown" argues that the outsized influence of collectors and the mass media sensationalized these art trends for their own benefit.

FORMALISM AS A CRITICAL FRAMEWORK

The "break years," to use a term coined by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin (more on this below), are challenging to study; the 1950s are either seen through the prism of Abstract Expressionism or overshadowed by the emergence of Larry Rivers, Robert Rauschenberg, and Jasper Johns. But the diversity of the period is, in fact, less diametrically classifiable. In the history of art, Happenings, figurative painting, assemblage, early Pop Art, and Minimalism are often treated as separate tendencies when, in fact, as the study of artist-run organizations shows, a plethora of strategies coexisted and drew from one another. Only one book on



Fig. 5. Boris Lurie with unidentified woman at opening of *Involvement Show*, March Gallery, New York, April 1961

Photograph: Kenneth van Sickle. Courtesy the photographer

the subject of artist-run galleries of the 1950s and early 1960s has been published, Joellen Bard's *Tenth Street Days: The Co-ops of the 50's*, which appeared in 1977.² Long out of print, it is a compendium of short essays about eight artist-run galleries, among them the Tanager, Hansa, and Brata galleries. The term "coop" (or "co-op") derives from the word "cooperative" and refers to a financial structure in which elected members share operational costs. Bard's book includes black-and-white reproductions of artworks by members of each gallery, comprising both abstract and figurative painting and, to a lesser extent, sculpture. It is nearly impossible to identify a "co-op aesthetic" beyond gestural and "painterly" qualities. Among those who have emphasized Willem de Kooning's influence on co-op artists is art historian Irving Sandler, whose memoir *A Sweeper-Up After Artists* includes passages about working at the Tanager Gallery.³ Sandler's approach blends empirical research with reminiscences grounded in the copious notes he has taken throughout his sixty-plus-year career and, like *Tenth Street Days*, his book offers a foundation, or a place to begin. But until *Inventing Downtown*, in-depth, primary source-based analysis on this subject did not exist.

A comprehensive narrative assessment of New York's art scene during the 1950s may be found in Jed Perl's *New Art City: Manhattan at Mid-Century* (2005), in which he analyzes the abstraction-figuration debate that swirled around de Kooning in the wake of his *Woman* series of the early 1950s. Perl takes issue with the notion, embraced by many art historians, that

Fig. 4. Bob Thompson adjusting lights at Delancey Street Museum, New York, 1959
Photograph: © John Cohen. Courtesy L. Parker Stephenson Photographs, NYC

de Kooning exerted a dominating influence on New York artists, presenting Hans Hofmann as having an even greater one. “Both as a painter and as a teacher,” Perl explains, “(Hofmann) was determined to move beyond rigid choices about abstraction versus representation or painterly expressionism versus hard-edged geometry,” thereby enabling a variety of strategies to flourish during the mid-twentieth century.⁴ Like *Inventing Downtown*, Perl draws on contemporary publications; artists’ writings, anecdotes, and interviews; and archival and secondary sources to produce a loosely chronological, narrative sociocultural history.

The abstraction-figuration debates of the 1950s lie at the heart of curators Judith E. Stein and Paul Schimmel’s 1988 exhibition catalogue *The Figurative Fifties: New York Figurative Expressionism*, in particular Stein’s essay “Figuring Out the Fifties: Aspects of Figuration in New York, 1950–1964.”⁵ Stein describes the dominant critical reception of figurative painting as regressive, judged against the “teleological promise that American expressionism was the culminating phase of artistic progress.”⁶ This position was carved out in great part by Clement Greenberg, whose influence on art criticism was outsized. His many polemical essays, based in his interpretation of Kant’s notions about judgment, argue in favor of an advanced art in which subject matter is limited to materials historically associated with a discipline (e.g., painting or sculpture). Greenberg’s ideas were thoroughly debated then and continue to spur heated discussion, although even dissenting art historians tend to follow his unofficial canon.⁷ Less authority is commonly accorded to Greenberg’s fellow critics, notably Dore Ashton, Thomas B. Hess, Harold Rosenberg, Meyer Schapiro, Leo Steinberg, and Gene R. Swenson; poet-critics John Ashbery, Frank O’Hara, and James Schuyler; and artist-critics Elaine de Kooning, Donald Judd, Fairfield Porter, Sidney Tillim, and Parker Tyler, whose tastes in forms of visual expression were both more wide-ranging and less restrictive. Stein posits aesthetic formalism’s central concern with the artwork’s autonomy and compositional elements as central to understanding the parameters of art in the 1950s. Within such a framework, figuration is not a form of populism but rather a new humanism, a provocation in opposition to abstraction’s elegance.

Formalism—which insists upon the object’s autonomy and emphasizes its composition, color, and technique—was not refined by Greenberg alone. Indeed, the art reviews of the period are essential to recuperating the history of artist-run gallery exhibitions. In *Inventing Downtown*, the ways in which other critics conceptualized new art and defined its aesthetic significance are discussed in the section for each gallery. *Art News* and *Arts* most consistently reviewed exhibitions taking place downtown. Parker Tyler, with his expansive, dialogic tone, was especially adept at describing what we now call “installation,” evoking with acuity the physical experiences shaped by the visual situation. In the late

1950s and 1960s, Tyler’s territory was unofficially taken over by *Arts* critics Donald Judd and Sidney Tillim, and at *Art News* Jill Johnston, whose formalist writings spun the details of a work of art into broader questions about form, discipline, and strategy.⁸ Their analyses laid the groundwork for subsequent debates about the limits of art and the unraveling of discipline specificity. Judd, writing trenchantly about sculpture and new forms of assemblage, had an affinity for color-field painters—especially Newman and Reinhardt—and was as polemical as Greenberg about the strategies he deemed exhausted, in particular gestural abstraction. Tillim, a modernist, was cautious about Pop; its roots in a quasi-Dada nihilism made him question its seriousness, its ability to outlast the present. Indeed, Dada and Surrealism were ill-regarded by most American critics—Parker Tyler being an exception—an attitude nearly opposite to that of our present time. Critic Gene Swenson of *Art News* wrote the first sympathetic analysis of Pop, pinpointing Dine, Indiana, Lichtenstein, Rosenquist, Warhol, and Wesselmann as “New American Sign Painters.”

The Richard Bellamy Papers, housed in the Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York, provided another important source for research, especially the ephemera dating from his years (1955–59) working at the Hansa Gallery.⁹ Even more extensive are the files from his second venture, the Green Gallery, an examination of which forms the core of “Defining Downtown,” the final chapter of this book.¹⁰ Bellamy felt a strong disdain for the business of art even as he was generating it, and for a time he represented the epitome of the new contemporary-art dealer, in the same league as Leo Castelli. Unlike Castelli, however, Bellamy had no strategy for selling art; it was the collectors who found him. His subsequent correspondence is wry, charming, and incisive about both the collector’s taste and the artist he was advocating. But unlike most dealers, who balance charm with expertise, Bellamy was ambivalent about any authority he might have possessed. Most endearing about Bellamy’s attempts to sell art was his welcoming of the client into his deliberative process, including his struggles to fully comprehend what he was offering.¹¹

Bellamy’s memos to Marie Dickson, the Green Gallery bookkeeper, are quite revealing. There was little earned revenue at the Green, and Bellamy had continually to beg the gallery’s financial backer, the collector Robert Scull, for help in paying the bills submitted by now-famous artists: Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, James Rosenquist, Lucas Samaras, and George Segal, among others. The tone of Bellamy’s notes and his various attempts at accounting for expenditures marry the quotidian with the quixotic. He lays bare the subservience to wealth at the heart of most art enterprises, even if his ability to sustain autonomy from Scull’s overt personal interest was unprecedented. It is, however, important to note that the financial

stakes for contemporary art—an infrequently used term at the time—were not comparable to those for modern and American abstract art, which were then in the process of being codified. Contemporary art was then characterized by informal artist-dealer-curator-patron relationships, even on Fifty-seventh Street. The Richard Bellamy Papers hint at the challenges inherent in trying to determine a strictly art-historical framework for the late 1950s and early 1960s, and for artist-run galleries in particular (I include Bellamy's Green Gallery in this category owing to his artistic nature).

Another research stream proved even more illuminating in terms of contemporary opinions about formalism and the tensions therein. Mildred L. Glimcher, of the Pace Gallery, shared with me her considerable research on artist Happenings, undertaken in preparation for her landmark exhibition on the subject in 2012.¹² Unfettered access to the documentary photographs taken by Robert McElroy (now held by the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles), which she spent five years studying, offered a far richer picture of the Downtown scene of the late 1950s and early 1960s than I had previously encountered. During this period, artist performances took place mainly at three spaces: the Judson Gallery, the Reuben Gallery, and the Delancey Street Museum. Challenging the commonly held notion of a gallery as a commercial enterprise, these performances ruptured the stranglehold of Abstract Expressionism and, by extension, modernism. Concurrent exhibition projects at the Judson and Reuben Galleries in the winter of 1960 took the gallery itself as their subject—as a condition of the artwork made. Critics took a while to catch up, and when they did, starting in 1963, they reconstituted installation-based assemblage into what they called Pop Art.¹³ Glimcher's careful reconstruction of the McElroy archive not only provides an in-depth documentary record, it also visually resurrects the immediacy of the exhibitions and the process of artist performances. Her research demonstrates how space was transformed into a sculpture-stage. As abstraction's all-over aesthetic became extended into environmental, spatial realms, the gallery itself disappeared.

Glimcher's generosity extended well beyond sharing her archive. Significantly, she put me in touch with artists she knew, all of whom helped shape my understanding of the period. She also urged me to reach out to Julie Martin—whose work as a producer, administrator, and collector of artist ephemera has indelibly informed *Inventing Downtown*. In the 1970s Martin married Billy Klüver, a former engineer for Bell Labs, who in 1967 had co-founded Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) with Robert Rauschenberg and Robert Whitman. From 1990 through 1994, husband and wife collaborated on a book project with the working title *The Break Years, Art and Artists 1945–1965*, for which they traveled across the United States, Europe, and Japan, recording

interviews with roughly 300 artists, critics, curators, dealers, and collectors who, by that time, were in their late fifties and sixties. But when Klüver became ill, Martin shelved the project, storing in her garage the 580 cassettes they had taped. During the summer of 2011, I took up residence at Martin's audio archive, where I listened to between six and eight conversations each week.

Many cultural histories begin with an overarching thesis, a perspective that contains the subject, but such is not the case in the candid, conversational, and expansive interviews I listened to, all premised on the question: When did you begin to make art? The stories contained within reflect a history of art that is evocative, meandering, and filled with details and ideas not yet fully resolved. Making art is a vital process, not something bracketed by a constructed past, and this fluidity is, I hope, conveyed throughout *Inventing Downtown*. Taking artist commentary as its focal point, *Inventing Downtown* does not offer an art history but, rather, an art chronicle, one that presents art as being viewpoint-based—or rather, a narrative out of alignment with histories built primarily on critics' assessments. It also privileges the site, the artist-run gallery, as a crucial facet of artist production.

All institutions (including artist-run galleries) operate according to a particular set of values.¹⁴ The values reflect different “status functions,” or roles, for each actor in the enterprise. Apart from visibility as a core motivation, what inspired the artist-run enterprises in this study? Unlike commercial galleries, status functions in artist-run galleries of the 1950s and early 1960s were generally diffuse; authority was spread out among the artists. Collectively, and in concert with other artists and critics, they engaged in a conversation about art's relevance, and, as I will argue throughout this book, these dialogues gave birth to new aesthetic strategies. Artist-run galleries were influential because the discourses they spawned challenged the prevailing definitions of modernism within a local (New York) network, and these discourses had a direct influence on what artists chose to make.

Judging from artist interviews, much of the art shown in co-op galleries of the 1950s was created in response to late 19th- and early 20th-century European modern art. For artists working in figurative modes, the Post-Impressionist painter Pierre Bonnard was broadly referenced, as was Henri Matisse, but artists were determined to transmute those influences into a definable American style. A discernible shift away from this goal occurred around 1958. Artists involved with “spaces” defined modernism apart from its early 20th-century precedents, and rejected European art as a basis for their work. That modernism could *originate* as American—and not just be transformed into something American—was central to early 1960s discourse. As we will see throughout this study, definitions of modernism shift throughout the text, depending on the network under discussion.



Fig. 6. Tom Wesselmann in his studio, New York, c. 1960
 Photograph: Jerry Goodman. Estate of Tom Wesselmann, New York

Other predominant discourses around commercial galleries appear in the anecdotal stories told by the artists involved in co-ops and spaces. The vast majority saw Downtown galleries as transitional. Nearly all the artists strove for commercial representation uptown. Around 1960, when a plethora of new dealers began opening galleries on Fifty-seventh Street and further uptown, causing a “boom” in contemporary art spaces, numerous male Downtown artists in this study entered a new phase in their careers. Most women artists, on the other hand, remained Downtown. Such gender bias remained unchallenged during this era and, as we will see, female artists customarily rationalized their exclusion from uptown commercial representation.

“Institutional facts only exist from the point of view of the participants and for that reason no external functionalist or behaviorist analysis will be adequate to account for them,” philosopher John Searle cautions. “You have to be able to think yourself into the institution to understand it.”¹⁵ For this reason my study privileges subjectivities and asks readers to “think

themselves into” each gallery in order to recover this notion of “inventing”—that is, to keep in mind that each exhibition space under discussion here was in the control of artists. But while the artists’ concepts are my central focus, it is important to note that aesthetic ideas were not, for the most part, conceived in opposition to New York’s fledgling art market; rather, art of this era participated, often quite enthusiastically, in commodity culture.

I propose that we might hold this now-unfashionable approach responsible for the lacuna in scholarship about artist-run spaces of the 1950s and early 1960s. *Inventing Downtown* invites the reader to view artworks and other projects by a diverse group of artists who, during this period, rejected Greenberg’s strict discipline-specific framework along with prevailing notions of taste, materials, and subject matter—and to reexamine the works through critical lenses the artists themselves established.

By focusing on fourteen catalytic artist-run galleries and the innovative projects they presented, *Inventing Downtown* restores the period’s diversity and vitality and reconsiders the time when

stylistic labels had not yet been codified. Although standard art-historical narrative can be a useful tool, it can also distort the facts. Claire Wesselmann recalled the challenge of such labeling: "It was [curator-critic Lawrence] Alloway who came up with the term 'Pop Art.' People began to see things and identify this work as a movement. Later, Tom [Wesselmann, her husband] spent a good portion of his career trying to get rid of that title, only because it has been seen in terms of being a movement, and it was not a movement."¹⁶ Mimi Gross, an artist best known for collaborations with her former husband, Red Grooms, recalled that the Pop label oversimplified contemporary viewers' experience of the art. Citing James Rosenquist's February 1962 show at the Green Gallery as an example, she observed, "It was a transition between very broad, very fast-gestured, abstract paintings and a need to do something figurative that wasn't defined as Pop Art yet. . . . There is a difference [between] real time versus historical time. Real time has nuances you may not notice but they're in front of your nose."¹⁷

Inventing Downtown brings "real time" and the sensibility of experimentation to the foreground. Claes Oldenburg epitomized

this ethos in recalling, "I don't think I took the word *sculpture* very seriously, because I don't think the issue was whether or not it was sculpture or painting. It was just a construction of some kind, and I think that's the important thing because it gave you a sense of freedom."¹⁸ In each chapter of the present book, discussion shifts from a progression of styles promoted by commercial galleries and museums—Abstract Expressionism, figuration, assemblage, Pop, and Minimalism—to an exploration of how and why artists rejected abstraction's cultural primacy and questioned modernist values. *Inventing Downtown* invites readers to reevaluate the period between 1952 and 1965, recuperating its full flowering not only by including women and artists of color—so often omitted from previous art-historical examinations—but also by reconstructing visual artists' fertile collaborations. Reconstituting the core concerns of artist-run galleries re-situates a familiar history within a much more fluid and nuanced context, and suggests new ways to expand our ideas about American art after the triumph of abstraction.



1. Leaving Midtown

Frustrated by the lack of venues where they could exhibit their work, some artists in the late 1940s and early 1950s convinced Greenwich Village café owners to let them hang paintings on their walls. Allan Kaprow (1927–2006) cited the importance of these initial public forays, where artwork could be displayed “without much fanfare” and an artist could “see one’s own work at a distance and in an ambience that was different from a studio and a gallery.”¹ But while the cafés constituted a significant early step, they were not catalytic.

Artist-run galleries descend directly from The Club, an organization founded by New York School artists in 1948 that lasted until 1962. Its Friday evening lectures and panel discussions fostered a sense of community among artists, scholars, and critics, though disagreements concerning modes of abstraction and figuration remained unresolved. One rule was undisputed: The Club was not a gallery—no art was ever installed in its rented space on East Eighth Street.² In 1951, Club members Conrad Marca-Relli (1913–2000), Franz Kline (1910–1962), and John Ferren (1905–1970) broke ranks from that rule to organize an exhibition that combined “first generation” abstract artists active before World War II with the younger “second generation” who came to maturity after the war. More than sixty abstract painters and sculptors were ultimately featured in what they titled the *Ninth Street Show*, mounted in a former retail space at 60 East Ninth Street.³ The *Ninth Street Show* was, in the words of Bruce Altshuler, “remarkably coherent,” and among artists, art historians, dealers, and critics, “there was a sudden awareness

that artistic activity had achieved a critical mass.”⁴ The exhibition also demonstrated that artists had the capacity to act as cultural arbiters. Uptown galleries would always be preferred by artists emerging during the 1950s and early 1960s, but why wait for a dealer’s recognition? For painter Charles Cajori, who was not included in the *Ninth Street Show* but was struck by its presentation of both established and unknown artists, such deductions led to the rethinking of conventional roles. The show “made it possible to exhibit without all the accouterments and apparatus of a gallery,” he reflected. “That, coupled with a need on the part of all these people to show, caused the whole cooperative thing to happen.”⁵

More than a dozen artist cooperative, or co-op, galleries opened on or near Tenth Street between 1952 and 1960, among them the Tanager Gallery, the Hansa Gallery (both founded in 1952), and the Brata Gallery (founded in 1957).⁶ As co-ops, their members shared operating expenses and, in the case of Tanager and Hansa, obeyed formal bylaws that governed their exhibition programs. Each gallery had a distinct cultural vision: the Tanager developed a curatorial program much like a museum, while the Hansa and Brata hewed closely to a commercial paradigm, with one-man shows (as solo exhibitions were then called) and group shows of member artists as the core. All three galleries helped redefine the parameters of artmaking and challenged the definition of art by critics and museum curators.

TANAGER GALLERY (1952–62), 51 East Fourth Street (May 1952–March 1953); 90 East Tenth Street (April 1953–June 1962) The Tanager Gallery was the most influential of all the co-op galleries. It sustained an astute exhibition program—both group and carefully timed solo shows—that generated debate about the direction of contemporary art and shifted the discourse away from abstraction’s dominance into more flexible territory. Founded in

Fig. 7. Cover of *Painting and Sculpture* exhibition catalogue,

Tanager Gallery, New York, October 16–November 5, 1959

Offset print, 12 × 8⁷/₈ in. (30.5 × 22.5 cm)

Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Collection of Lois Dodd, New York



Fig. 8. Angelo Ippolito and Lois Dodd
installing works at Tanager Gallery, New York, c. 1960
Photograph: © John Cohen. Courtesy L. Parker Stephenson Photographs, NYC



Fig. 9. Charles Cajori, *Untitled*, 1958
Collage and charcoal on paper, 39¹/₄ × 35¹/₄ in. (99.7 × 89.5 cm)
Estate of Charles Cajori

1952 by five Americans—sculptor William “Bill” King (1925–2015) and painters Lois Dodd (b. 1927), Angelo Ippolito (1922–2001), Charles Cajori (1921–2013), and Fred Mitchell (1923–2013)—the Tanager began in a former barber shop on East Fourth Street. It moved to a larger—though still small at about 14 × 25 feet—cheaper space at 90 East Tenth Street in the spring of 1953, remaining there until it closed in 1962.⁷ Ippolito transformed both Tanager spaces into white-walled galleries, oversaw most of the installations, and designed the invitations. Not long after the founding, other artists began to join: first George Ortman (1926–2015), then Ben Isquith (c. 1930–1965) followed by Joseph W. Groell (b. 1928). In 1954 the Tanager expanded membership considerably when Sally Hazelet

Drummond (b. 1924), Sidney Geist (1914–2005), Philip Pearlstein (b. 1924), Alex Katz (b. 1927), Raymond Rocklin (1922–2014), and Perle Fine (1905–1988) all joined, each paying \$10 per month.⁸ Other members included Nicholas Marsicano (1908–1991) and Salvatore “Sal” Sirugo (b. 1920). The Tanager also received outside financial support from Drummond’s father in exchange for artwork, which enabled the members to hire a gallery assistant, most notably the future art historian Irving Sandler (b. 1925), who worked there for several years while he was a graduate student at Columbia University.⁹

The Tanager’s exhibitions frequently mixed works by mature and lesser-known artists, with works by non-member artists



Fig. 10. Lois Dodd, *Cows—Red and Orange on Pink Ground*, 1958

Oil on linen, 27⁷/₈ × 38 in. (70.8 × 96.5 cm)

Courtesy the artist and Alexandre Gallery, New York

often predominating. For the most part, the shows were not titled, aside from artists' names. The Tanager's juxtaposition of disparate styles often defied logic, as, for example, in the curated Christmas shows, which featured on average fifty artists and soon became a highly anticipated ritual in December (fig. 14). Artist members modeled the Tanager on the *Ninth Street Show* but displayed representational art alongside abstraction. A few artists influenced by Willem de Kooning (1904–1997) developed an approach that straddled the two, and Sandler recalled that this style was characterized colloquially (if not dismissively) as the “Tenth Street touch.” Tanager exhibitions emphasized tactile, “painterly” qualities in both abstract and figurative work. For the most part, the Tanager's more than one hundred exhibitions affirmed formalist principles.

Tanager members were unique in their commitment to conducting regular studio visits with Downtown artists, not only to generate ideas for exhibitions but also to help artists connect with other galleries.¹⁰ “We did this constantly,” recalled Cajori in 1977, for whom the process was “a terrible chore as well as embarrassing because you were in a judging position.”¹¹ The Tanager's aspirations went well beyond New York. Their bylaws expressed their desire for exhibitions to travel, and members asked artists to price their work affordably to foster “beneficial relationships” among artists, galleries, and the public, all in an effort to make modern art (as contemporary art was then called) more widely known. To be a member of the Tanager Gallery meant being asked to think beyond one's own artwork and to consider it in relation to that of other artists.¹²



Fig. 11. Fred Mitchell, *Torso*, 1955
Oil on canvas, 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (92.7 × 62.2 cm)
Collection of Darlene and Tom Furst, Rockford, Illinois



Fig. 12. Angelo Ippolito, *Storm*, 1956

Oil on canvas, 42⁵/₈ × 50¹/₈ in. (108.3 × 127.3 cm)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Purchase, with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art, 57.11

It is impossible to overstate Tanager's positive critical reception and the integrity of its programming. On its fourth-year anniversary, Dore Ashton wrote in the *New York Times* that the gallery "had done a pioneering job in integrating artists with other artists and with the public." She asserted the authenticity of its location, noting that east of Greenwich Village was "a colorful neighborhood where a heterogeneous foreign population mixes with some of New York's major painters, among them de Kooning and (Esteban) Vicente (1903-2001), who have their studios there."¹³ During its decade-long history, the Tanager organized on average ten exhibitions a year, bolstering its status as a "hot gallery." Alex Katz recalled, "if you had a show there, everybody in the art world saw it."¹⁴ For all these reasons, histories of the Tanager Gallery rightly stress its positive impact and its central role in supporting the burgeoning artist community.

That narrative, however, inadvertently flattens some of the more acute ideas germinating among Tanager's members, including plans for a book and series of five shows aiming to define the New York School as multifarious. As a term, "New York School" suggested an embrace of all artists working in New York City, but in practice it was used primarily to refer to abstract artists of the older generation, such as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and de Kooning. Younger artists were generally classified as followers of a "school," and those who worked abstractly were also labeled "second generation," which later led some to stamp their art as derivative. The account of the Tanager that follows investigates this one incident: the gallery's development of a New York School project. In telescoping the history of the Tanager Gallery by exploring this five-year gestation of a project conceived to redefine the "New York School" (a project, it must be added, that most members did not deem especially relevant), we are able to appreciate both the gallery's critical ingenuity and its curatorial process in microcosm.

EXHIBIT
 OPENING FRIDAY DECEMBER 21, 1956 8-11 P. M. CONTINUING THROUGH JANUARY 18
Tanager GALLERY
 DAILY: 1-6 P. M.
 90 E 10TH ST
PAINTERS
SCULPTORS
 ON 10TH STREET
 NYC

Through the courtesy of the following Galleries:

JANIS CAMINO STABLE	ALAN ROSE ROKO	BERTHA SCHAEFER POINDEXTER
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**ABRAMS
 BEK-GRAN
 CAJORI
 CRAIG
 CAVALLON
 GOLDBERG
 GUSTON
 IPPOLITO
 JENSEN
 KING
 DeKOOING
 KOTIN
 LEITER
 LINDBERG
 PASSLOFF
 PAVIA
 PEDERSEN
 PETERSEN
 SANDER
 SWINDEN
 SPAVENTA
 ROSATI
 RESNICK
 VICENTE
 KOHN
 WHEELER**

Fig. 13. Poster for *Painters Sculptors on 10th Street*, Tanager Gallery, New York, December 1956-January 1957
 Offset print, 27 1/2 x 15 1/2 in. (69.9 x 39.4 cm)
 Design: Angelo Ippolito. Collection of Lois Dodd, New York



Fig. 14. *Christmas Show*, Tanager Gallery, New York, December 20, 1954–January 20, 1955. Photograph: Dorothy Zeidman. Courtesy the photographer

DECONSTRUCTING THE NEW YORK SCHOOL

In his memoir, Irving Sandler reflects that by 1957 New York artists had stopped making aesthetic advances. Their work appeared largely imitative of de Kooning, which led to a “certain dullness in New York art”—abstraction had become technical and academic.¹⁵ In March 1957, the Jewish Museum opened the exhibition *Artists of the New York School: Second Generation*, organized by Meyer Schapiro with the assistance of collector Horace Richter and artist Allan Kaprow. In the show’s pamphlet, a short essay by art historian Leo Steinberg defined the generation following the Abstract Expressionists as furthering the style but without any “revolt,” because there was “at the moment nothing in view to be overthrown.” Instead, viewers had to puzzle out relatable content, whether representational or not, with a decided quality of deliberate “shabbiness.”¹⁶ The exhibition included twenty-three artists, many of whom were engaged in extending the tenets of Abstract Expressionism, particularly Elaine de Kooning (1918–

1989), Helen Frankenthaler (1928–2011), Grace Hartigan (1922–2008), Alfred Leslie (b. 1927), Joan Mitchell (1925–1992), and Milton Resnick (1917–2004). Also included were seven artists affiliated with the co-op Hansa Gallery (to be discussed in the next section), as well as Jasper Johns (b. 1930) and Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008), the latter more adeptly aligned with Steinberg’s conception of “shabby” through his nascent articulation of an entirely new art form. Not a single artist affiliated with the Tanager Gallery was invited to participate in this early effort to define the younger artists of the so-called New York School.

Perhaps in reaction to this exclusion from the Jewish Museum exhibition, or to Sandler’s suggestion of a lack of energy, or to artists’ general frustration with critical labels, the Tanager group began discussions in the fall of 1957 that would ultimately reject designations such as Abstract Expressionism, Action Painting, second generation, and, especially, New York School, as “the outworn inventions of critics.” They challenged themselves to



Fig. 15. Opening at Tanager Gallery, New York, c. 1960
 Photograph: © John Cohen. Courtesy L. Parker Stephenson Photographs, NYC

define what art was most vital and how it might be categorized.¹⁷ Artists pondered that question into the winter, then laid plans for a series of five two-week exhibitions, each based upon an aesthetic tendency they had identified. The exhibitions would coincide with the publication of a book titled *The New York School: Painting and Sculpture*, which was intended “to present, in one volume, the New York artists and the New York critics” and to reveal the New York School’s great diversity.¹⁸

Although Sandler credits Tanager members equally in the planning, Dodd, Pearlstein, and Cajori identify Sidney Geist, a sculptor and art critic, as the catalyst.¹⁹ Geist, while little-known today, was highly influential at the time, perhaps more so as a critic than an artist. His article on Richard Stankiewicz, “Miracle in a Scrap Heap,” for *Art Digest* (the forerunner of *Arts*) in 1953, and his 1960 article on Mark di Suvero, “A New Sculptor,” for *Arts* (discussed later in this volume) launched those artists’ careers. He also co-founded the periodical *Scrap*, a witty roundup

of debates and reviews—a blog avant la lettre.²⁰ “Sidney Geist was voted in as a member,” Pearlstein remembered, “because he was smart.”²¹

Pearlstein vividly recalled the process. He remembered how Geist sparked discussions about the New York School, how its aesthetic goals might be defined, and which artists might be included in that definition. Geist asked Tanager members to submit the names of artists they judged significant, and he compiled the names into a long list. This list, it should be noted, included nearly all the Tanager members. Sandler, who took notes during meetings, reflects that in 1957, there were approximately two hundred serious artists living in New York. All were considered based on members’ recollections of original artworks, not reproductions. Tanager members then eliminated artists they deemed less interesting, and codified the remaining eighty-eight into various segments of the New York School. Pearlstein described the categorization process:



Fig. 16. Sidney Geist's *One Man Show*, Tanager Gallery, New York, 1957, installation view. Left to right: *Standing Woman*, 1948–57; *Standard #2*, 1951; and *Woman*, 1957 Estate of Sidney Geist. Courtesy Eric Firestone Gallery, New York

The meetings centered on naming the categories of these different groups of artists we came up with, and it was ten or twelve. We couldn't have ten or twelve shows, we had to get it down to five. Meantime Sidney was going ahead as if it was an established fact that we were going to do a book, and he lined up—what was it, Grove Press? (It was actually Praeger.) Sidney said we have to have good writers, we have to have the most prominent writers on the scene.²²

The Tanager members settled on five thematic tendencies: Old Masters, Nature Departed, Nature Observed, Paint, and Personal Mythology (fig. 17). The first category, Old Masters, sets the standard for the stylistic range within the categories. The “Old Masters” were

the first generation painters, a number of whom lived on or near Tenth Street, and who came to prominence in the 1940s. But not all the artists selected for this category worked in an “expressionist” style. Twenty-two artists were chosen to represent the celebrated older generation, among them de Kooning, Kline, Rothko, David Smith, and the lone female, Louise Bourgeois. Left off the Tanager artists' list were Adolph Gottlieb, Aristodimos Kaldis, Richard Pousette-Dart, Jackson Pollock, and Clyfford Still. The New York School project's four other themes divided modes of abstraction and representation into two categories each. Some abstraction was placed in Nature Departed, which incorporated artists whose abstract canvases had a basis in the natural world, while Paint comprised experiments with color and the handling of paint. Representational art fell into Nature Observed and Personal Mythology. Nature Observed brought together artists who were mining Post-Impressionism—notably Fairfield Porter, Larry Rivers, and Jane Freilicher—and achieved singular results. This category in particular omitted a number of well-regarded figurative artists, notably Elaine de Kooning, Robert de Niro Sr., Gandy Brodie, Felix Pasilis, and Wolf Kahn. Personal Mythology was the place for assemblage (another form of realism) and artists who deployed geometry

as a form of symbolism. Here the Tanager artists omitted Johns, Rauschenberg, and Jean Follett (1917–1991), one of the innovators of assemblage, whose work was difficult to classify as either painting or sculpture. But they did include her studio mate, sculptor Richard Stankiewicz. Perhaps the pressure to mount only five shows compressed the categories too much. Given this state of affairs, the project's overall diversity was notable.

Possibly with the help of artist Ludwig Sander, Geist secured an agreement with the publisher Frederick A. Praeger, to which he submitted an outline of the project in January 1958. The plan stipulates that Geist would edit the volume, including soliciting the critical essays, artist statements, and photographs of artwork. Clement Greenberg agreed to write an introduction to the book (and requested \$150). Three other critics confirmed that January were Thomas Hess, Hilton Kramer, and Harold Rosenberg; unconfirmed were Meyer Schapiro and Robert Goldwater—an impressive list reflecting the Tanager Gallery's importance in the New York

cultural scene. Pearlstein, who earned a living in graphic design, was tapped for the book's layout, and he recalls asking photographer Rudy Burckhardt (1914–1999) to provide the cover art. One option considered was a street-view shot of the gallery (see fig. 7); the other was a photograph of the Flatiron Building at Twenty-third Street and Fifth Avenue, a touchstone of American modernism.²³ Praeger agreed to print, market, and distribute the volume.

A letter of invitation dated Saturday, February 15, 1958, was mailed to the eighty-eight artists selected. This document did not specify that the project's purpose was to re-think the New York School, nor did it mention the themes and critics involved; rather, it framed the project as a single totality:

The members of the Tanager Gallery invite you to participate in a series of five exhibitions at the Tanager Gallery next fall (1958) that will comprise a survey of the work of New York artists. Coincident to the exhibition will be the publication of a book edited by the gallery, which will contain reproductions of all the artists included in the exhibition; and articles written by five critics, close to the New York scene. The book will be published by Frederick Praeger & Co. and will have international distribution.²⁴

These lacunae might be chalked up to the project's more immediate goal: obtaining photographs of artworks submitted by the invited artists as a "good example of (his or her work of) the past five years."²⁵ The same letter assumes a coequal status between critics and artists, noting, "the purpose of this volume is to survey the achievement and meaning of current painting and sculpture on the New York scene. All of the contributors—artists and critics—are active participants in current art affairs in New York."

Pearlstein recalled that all the letters were mailed on the same day, likely on or around February 15, but what happened next was, by his own admission, "horrific," and not only resulted in the termination of the exhibition series but also caused a rift among Tanager members and three bastions of the New York art community. The omission of prominent artists, most especially Elaine de Kooning, cast the project in a different light. Wife of the luminary Willem de Kooning, Elaine was a painter in her own right who worked both abstractly and figuratively, and she also wrote for *Art News*. After months of meetings and formalist-evaluative analysis, the Tanager members found themselves unable to agree on the import of her artwork. But the integrity of their process was not a defensible rationale for omitting the wife of one of the most admired painters in America, whose rumored associations with *Art News* editor Thomas Hess and critic Harold

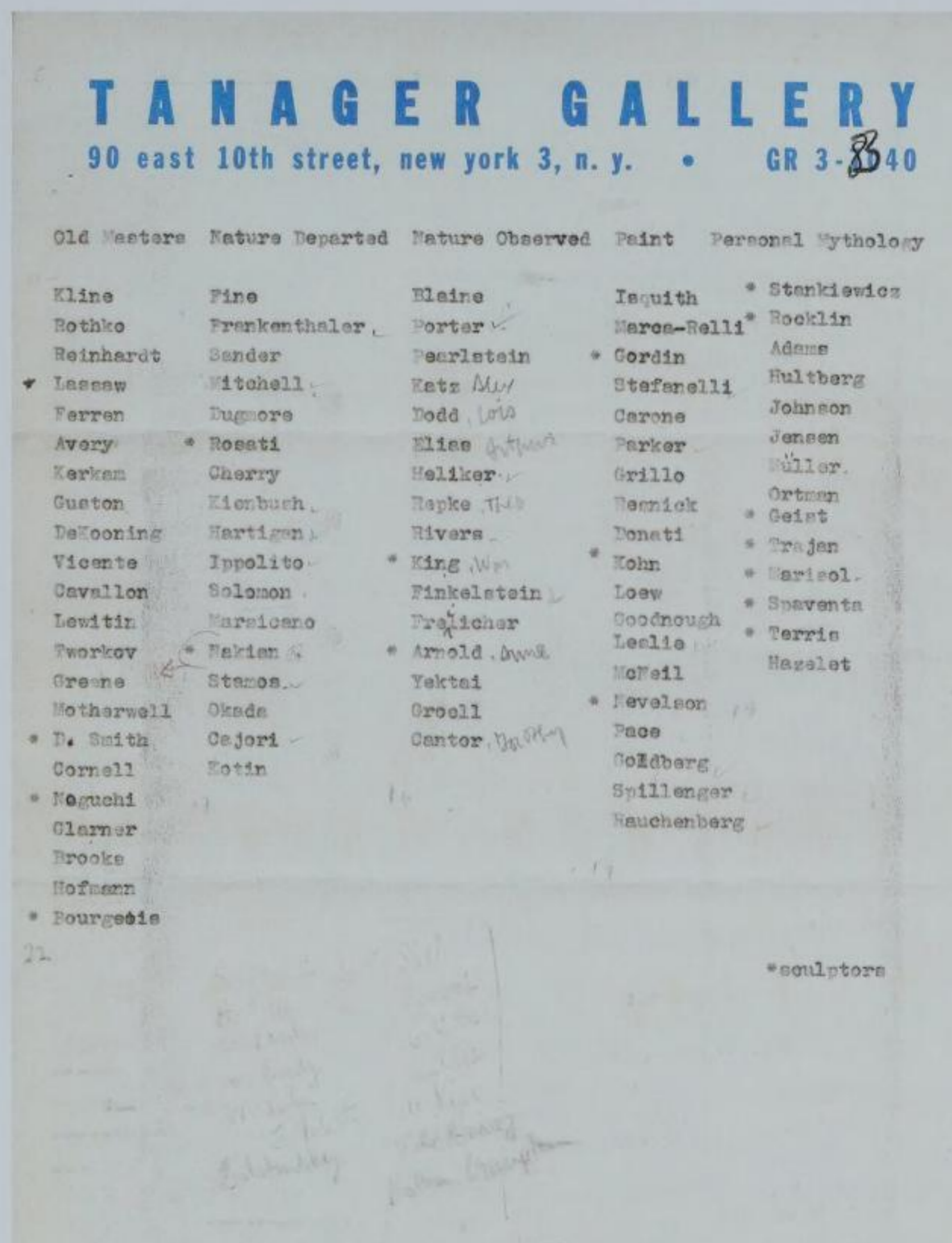


Fig. 17. Sidney Geist's list of artists for *The New York School: Painting and Sculpture*, Tanager Gallery, New York, 1958
Estate of Sidney Geist. Courtesy Eric Firestone Gallery, New York

Rosenberg made her a formidable figure downtown. Once Elaine learned of her rejection, her husband "refused to participate. Given his prestige, that was enough to bury the project."²⁶ Indeed, when Geist learned of de Kooning's change of heart, he was crestfallen. "You must know that we have the greatest respect for you and had counted on your being part of this book and exhibition. In fact we didn't send letters to the other artists or commission articles till we learned that you agreed to be in the book," Geist wrote in a draft letter. But Geist's bruised feelings can be discerned amid his diplomatic efforts: "Lois (Dodd) told me you said something about preferring to be seen by your betters, or something like that. . . . Alfred Barr or Rudi Blesh or Selden Rodman. We're certainly not as influential as they are, but I think our intentions are at least as serious."²⁷

With the collapse of this project, Tanager's authority as a cultural arbiter was severely challenged. Secure in their stature, Hess and Rosenberg took a different tack in backing out. "Dear Sidney," Rosenberg began in a short but cordial note dated

February 20, 1958, "I have thought about your proposal a good deal since our talk last night. I am sorry to say that the only conclusion I can reach is to decline." Rosenberg cautioned that "writing a piece for this book would constitute a backing for its contents and the procedures by which those contents were arrived at. In addition to the uneven level of the artists there is the fact that the writers who are now involved are equally out of joint with one another," perhaps a reference to his differences with Greenberg.²⁸ Hess's letter similarly cited the bothersome method, "the categories and inclusions and omissions," and recommended other writers to replace him. The loss of de Kooning, Rosenberg, and Hess's participation was a serious blow to the otherwise esteemed Tanager Gallery. Geist had unwittingly led members into confrontation, not collaboration, with two of the art community's powerful critics and de Kooning the luminary. Pearlstein's expression of horror was visceral—could he or any artist afford to alienate such an illustrious group? In selecting artists and attempting to rethink existing critical designations, Tanager members overstepped their remit. Within Rosenberg's carefully worded letter, and de Kooning's dismissive retort, were assertions of their own power. Geist failed, in Rosenberg's estimation, because of his inherently faulty critical abilities. Critics made aesthetic judgments, not artists—not even artists who made their living as critics. Critics held the authority to analyze artworks; artists made art. "If we give the attributes of a medium to the artist," Marcel Duchamp observed in 1957, "we must then deny him the state of consciousness on the esthetic plane about what he is doing or why he is doing it." Duchamp went even further to place the power of aesthetic determination solely with the viewer, which of course includes the critic: "The spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act."²⁹ The art system of the late 1950s maintained these demarcated roles, and the Tanager Gallery had violated its conventions.

Despite this considerable setback, Geist obtained essays from other critics, including Parker Tyler and Robert Goldwater, and submitted the manuscript to Praeger at the end of April 1958.³⁰ But Praeger declined to publish the book, most likely due to the expense, a concern voiced by the publisher in correspondence with Geist earlier that year. Yet not all Tanager members were ready to give up. Both Dodd and Geist sent letters to the publishers Doubleday, George Braziller, and Grove Press in an attempt to secure another agreement, but while all expressed enthusiasm for the project in principle, they found the cost of publishing such an amply illustrated volume prohibitive.

At the same time, Tanager artists were reconsidering their exhibition plans for the 1958–59 season. After opening with a member show in fall 1958, they mounted a group show the

following February comprised of artists working in the Nature Departed theme—demonstrating confidence in their curatorial ideas. The following season, they published a pamphlet for the opening exhibition, in October 1959, reproducing artworks by the nine participants, all members: Dodd, Drummond, Fine, Geist, Ippolito, Katz, Marsicano, Pearlstein, and Rocklin, all of whom had initially submitted images for the New York School book. For the pamphlet, Sandler wrote a short statement characterizing the gallery as "a public extension of the artist's studio," and dared to claim an interpretive role for artists. After conceding that the Tanager exhibitions "reflected the intimate artistic problems that painters and sculptors face," Sandler declared that, in producing exhibitions, the artists—"simultaneously participants and spectators"—had "proved a means of defining, clarifying and evaluating" art. The Tanager, he insisted, "intends to continue as a barometer of the New York art scene."³¹ A shorter statement credited to the Tanager artists is more equivocal:

The 1959–60 season for the Tanager Gallery will be one of exclusive choice. The importance of unofficial artist selection will be given its respectful consideration in order to establish his assertion, participation, and personal inspiration. In this we invite whatever urgency seems necessary to his needs, and we are prepared to create a need if necessary. We look forward to a program of recognized and unrecognized qualities in art.³²

The statement is both apologetic and forceful, backing away from curatorial authority ("unofficial artist selection") yet reaffirming the Tanager's curatorial role ("establish [a context for artist] assertion, participation, and personal inspiration").

While on a Fulbright fellowship in Rome in the fall of 1958, Pearlstein ruminated over one theme, Personal Mythology, although he had been classified as a Nature Observed artist. Upon his return to New York in August 1959, Pearlstein initiated discussions with Geist—who had himself recently come back to New York after a visiting professorship at the University of California, Berkeley—on mounting an exhibition devoted to the artist as mythmaker. With a modified title, *The Private Myth* was slated as the gallery's fall season opening show in October 1961.

The Private Myth made its debut as an article, authored by Pearlstein, in none other than Hess's September 1961 *Art News*.³³ Its appearance paid testament to Hess's lack of rancor, and also marked a moment far different from that of 1958, which had been the apex of abstraction's dominance. Aside from the Tanager's Christmas shows and its 1957 watershed *Painters Sculptors on 10th Street*, *The Private Myth* was the largest curated show in

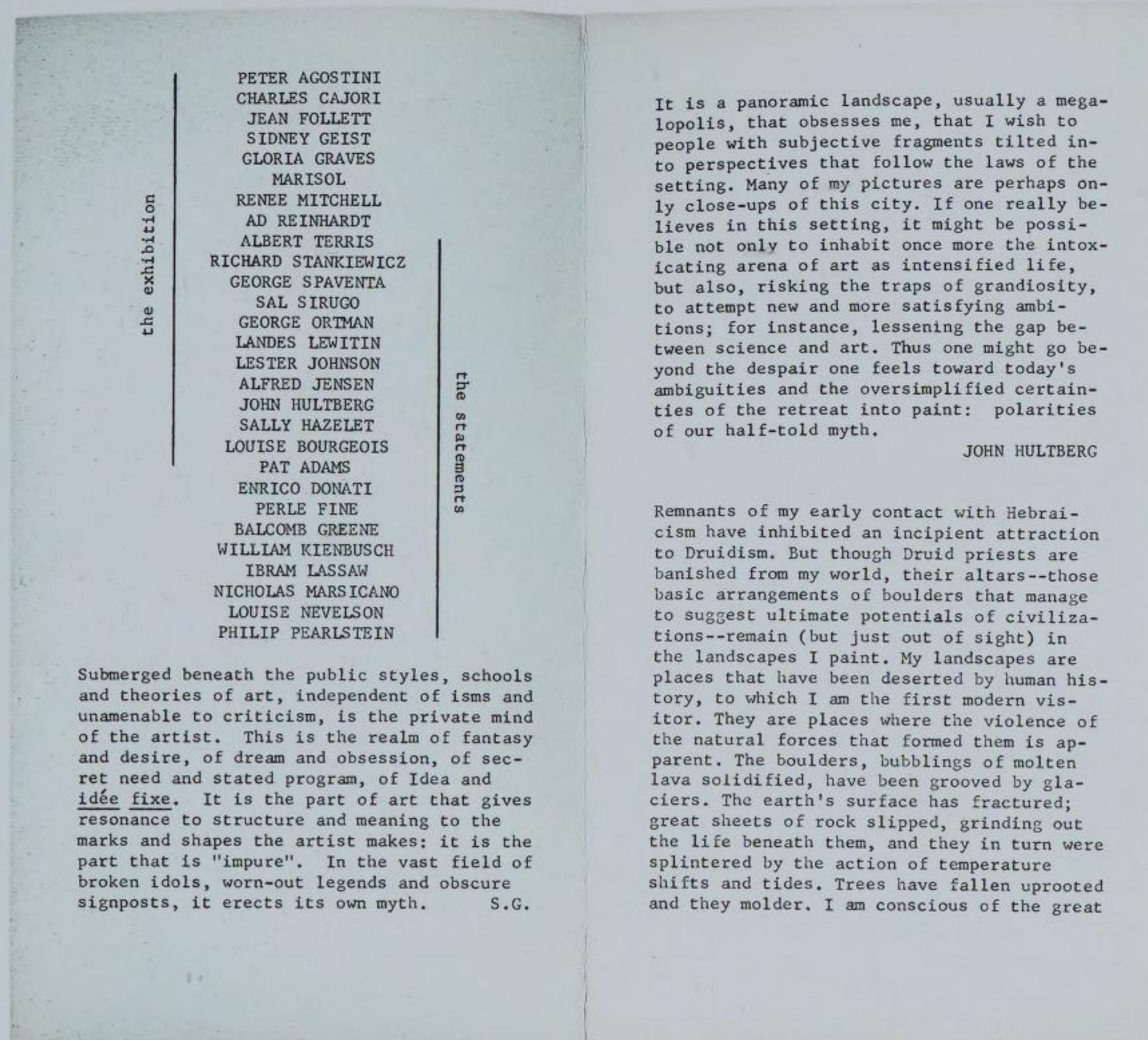
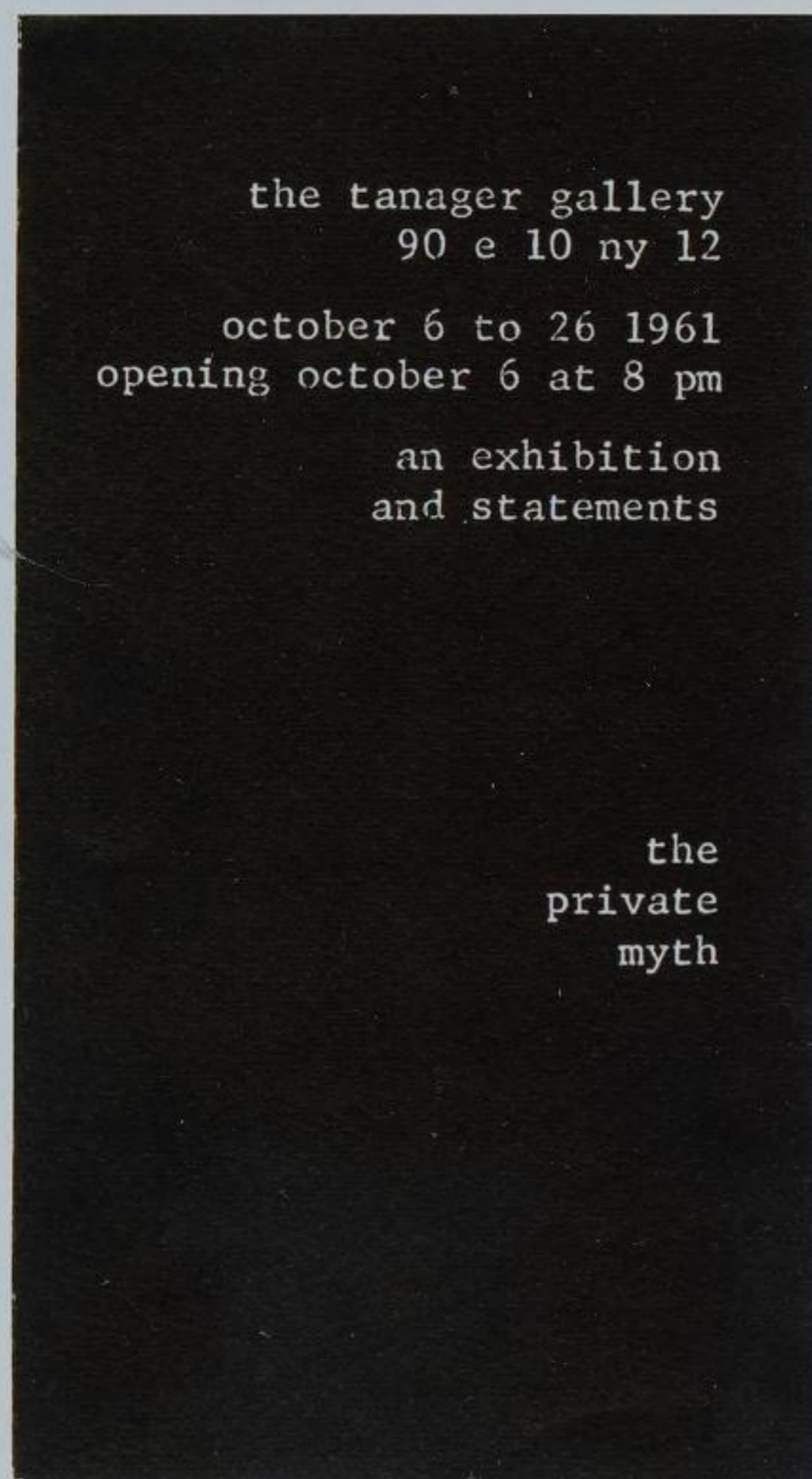


Fig. 18. Pamphlet for *The Private Myth*, Tanager Gallery, New York, October 6–26, 1961
 Offset print, 6³/₄ × 3³/₄ in. (17.1 × 9.5 cm)
 Design: Philip Pearlstein. Collection of Lois Dodd, New York

the gallery's history, featuring works by twenty-eight artists in the modest space.³⁴ It ran from October 6 through October 26; regrettably, details about its installation have not been preserved. Nonetheless, three related aesthetic approaches can be discerned: literal, totemic figuration in sculpture; paintings that explored the tension between figuration and abstraction (or, Nature Observed); and painting that was abstract but not expressionistic (or, Nature Departed and Paint).

THE PRIVATE MYTH

What is a private myth, and what did it have to do with artmaking in the late 1950s and the first years of the 1960s? Reviewing the list of artists in the exhibition brochure, considerably expanded from 1957 (figs. 17, 18), Sandler identifies "an attempt to rethink Surrealism," which critics at the time considered aesthetically *retardataire*.³⁵ Of the twenty-eight artists listed in the brochure, only four—Agostini, Follett, Graves, and Mitchell—were never part of the Tanager's New York School project. Yet the lineage of "private myth" as a concept is also found in contemporary existentialism,

- the exhibition
- PETER AGOSTINI
 - CHARLES CAJORI
 - JEAN FOLLETT
 - SIDNEY GEIST
 - GLORIA GRAVES
 - MARISOL
 - RENEE MITCHELL
 - AD REINHARDT
 - ALBERT TERRIS
 - RICHARD STANKIEWICZ
 - GEORGE SPAVENTA
 - SAL SIRUGO
 - GEORGE ORTMAN
 - LANDES LEWITIN
 - LESTER JOHNSON
 - ALFRED JENSEN
 - JOHN HULTBERG
 - SALLY HAZELET
 - LOUISE BOURGEOIS
 - PAT ADAMS
 - ENRICO DONATI
 - PERLE FINE
 - BALCOMB GREENE
 - WILLIAM KIENBUSCH
 - IBRAM LASSAW
 - NICHOLAS MARSICANO
 - LOUISE NEVELSON
 - PHILIP PEARLSTEIN

Submerged beneath the public styles, schools and theories of art, independent of isms and unamenable to criticism, is the private mind of the artist. This is the realm of fantasy and desire, of dream and obsession, of secret need and stated program, of Idea and *idée fixe*. It is the part of art that gives resonance to structure and meaning to the marks and shapes the artist makes: it is the part that is "impure". In the vast field of broken idols, worn-out legends and obscure signposts, it erects its own myth. S.G.

the statements

It is a panoramic landscape, usually a megapolis, that obsesses me, that I wish to people with subjective fragments tilted into perspectives that follow the laws of the setting. Many of my pictures are perhaps only close-ups of this city. If one really believes in this setting, it might be possible not only to inhabit once more the intoxicating arena of art as intensified life, but also, risking the traps of grandiosity, to attempt new and more satisfying ambitions; for instance, lessening the gap between science and art. Thus one might go beyond the despair one feels toward today's ambiguities and the oversimplified certainties of the retreat into paint: polarities of our half-told myth.

JOHN HULTBERG

Remnants of my early contact with Hebraicism have inhibited an incipient attraction to Druidism. But though Druid priests are banished from my world, their altars--those basic arrangements of boulders that manage to suggest ultimate potentials of civilizations--remain (but just out of sight) in the landscapes I paint. My landscapes are places that have been deserted by human history, to which I am the first modern visitor. They are places where the violence of the natural forces that formed them is apparent. The boulders, bubblings of molten lava solidified, have been grooved by glaciers. The earth's surface has fractured; great sheets of rock slipped, grinding out the life beneath them, and they in turn were splintered by the action of temperature shifts and tides. Trees have fallen uprooted and they molder. I am conscious of the great

specifically in Harold Rosenberg's 1952 essay "The American Action Painters." Rosenberg coined the term "private myth" to describe a shift in consciousness among American abstract painters. Advanced painting, he argued, had become a total art—total expression—and unconsciously encompassed the entire history of art, a process akin to a religious conversion but secularized as "the creation of private myths":

The tension of the private myth is the content of every painting of this vanguard. The act on the canvas springs from an attempt to resurrect the saving moment in his "story" when the painter first felt himself released from Value—myth of past self-recognition. Or it attempts to initiate a new moment in which the painter will realize his total personality—myth of future self-recognition.³⁶

The "private myth" appears to illustrate Rosenberg's view: the Tanager artists' application of his term extended, but did not refute,



Fig. 19. Marisol Escobar, *Printer's Box*, 1956
 Painted wood, plaster, and glass, 16½ × 21¾ × 2 in. (41.9 × 55.2 × 5.1 cm)
 Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of Joseph and Jory Shapiro, 1992.56

the conceptualization of inner vision as self-making. However, Geist, perhaps injured by his encounter with Rosenberg, reinscribed the “private myth” with artists’ resistance to criticism. He wrote in the exhibition’s accompanying pamphlet that artists’ ideas lie not in their visual expression but in something deeper and less tangible, imbued with greater authority than the eye could perceive:

Submerged beneath the public styles, schools and theories of art, independent of *isms* and unnamable to criticism, is the private mind of the artist. This is the realm of fantasy and desire, of dream and obsession, of secret need and stated program, of *Idea* and *idée fixe*. It is the part of art that gives resonance to structure and meaning to the marks and shapes the artist makes: it is the part that is “impure.” In the vast field of broken idols, worn-out legends and obscure signposts, it erects its own myth.³⁷

By positioning the artist as the ultimate interpretive authority, Geist asserts that an artwork’s meaning does not rely on formal qualities alone, yet the outside observer is denied access to the deeper impulse behind it. He suggests that understanding composition—shape, color, form—can only ever provide a partial

understanding of art. Following this logic, and undoing Duchamp’s evocation of the art system, artists do not need critics, but critics need artists in order to fully understand their artwork.

In a more modulated tone, but one that also questions whether critically designated movements are tenable, Pearlstein’s *Art News* article identified the “gap between what an artist says he is doing and what the spectator actually sees” as an “unnerving” experience. He wrote, “This survey is not an attempt to define a trend; it represents only the collective opinion of certain artists that some contemporary work seems to radiate an urgent message. . . . (Artists contributed) an oblique definition of a motivating idea—an idea not rooted in the mechanics of creating paintings or sculpture.”³⁸

Comparing the extant checklist, the exhibition brochure, and the artworks used to illustrate Pearlstein’s article—all of which differ somewhat—it is possible to reconstruct a range of artworks in the show that share the existential qualities implied in Rosenberg’s theory (figs. 19–21). Totemic figures are especially prevalent in the work of Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010), Marisol Escobar (1930–2016), Jean Follett (1917–1991), Mary Frank (b. 1933), Sidney Geist, Raymond Rocklin, George Spaventa (1918–1978), and Richard Stankiewicz (1922–1983). Marisol (she would later drop her last name) constructed a “stage” from a wooden box used to store metal letters for typesetting. Within this tableau, tiny terracotta figures danced, peeked out, or functioned as miniature statues. Both Geist and Frank carved directly into wood, to different effect. In their geometric, upward-moving forms, Geist’s sculptures recall those of early modernist sculptor Constantin Brancusi (about whom he wrote a monograph, published in 1967), while their painted surfaces reference abstraction’s pure use of color. Frank’s work is less planar, more languorous. Her use of wood is supple, tethered to the material’s solid properties and her pursuit of corporeal form.

Jean Follett contributed a collage, *The Spirit Emerges from 'Neath the Gravestones* (fig. 22), which she had previously shown at the Hansa Gallery, in 1956. On top of a painted black background, she affixed a light band of burlap across the work’s bottom third. Sewing needles are stuck into the burlap and, in a gesture recalling children’s drawings, a circle of mesh in the upper right corner represents the sun. On top of this “landscape,” Follett laid



Fig. 20. Richard Stankiewicz, *A Double Booger for a Little John*, 1961
Steel, 28 × 20 × 12 in. (71.1 × 50.8 × 30.5 cm)
Photograph: Collection of Lois Dodd, New York

a stick figure made of string, wood shavings, and other found objects, a feature that is disturbing in both its naïveté and its sophisticated division of the picture plane. Steinberg noted that this work, “even after prolonged looking, maintains a state of conjugated incongruities,” and devoted nearly a full page to deciphering it, ultimately recognizing that, though the process of collage is aligned with modernism, the meaning is outside the critic’s capacity to understand. “There is the further problem of real sadness achieved with a display of jokes,” he said. “There is a polar contrast of the very dark and the light,” he continued, recognizing that the artwork’s expressiveness and the viewer’s ability to feel unresolved about the piece are, in an inchoate sense, significant.³⁹

Louise Bourgeois presented a sculpture, *Entrat*. In her statement in the *Private Myth* pamphlet, she also draws a line between the issues with which an artist grapples and the form an object takes—



Fig. 21. Mary Frank, *Reclining Figure*, c. 1960
Wood, 24 × 19 × 34 in. (61 × 48.3 × 86.4 cm)
The McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas. Museum purchase with the Helen and Everett H. Jones Purchase Fund

that is, what the public will see. She clearly states that an inner issue is the most important aspect of the artmaking process:

The relation of one person to his surroundings is a continuing preoccupation, it can be casual or close; simple or involved; subtle or blunt. It can be painful or pleasant. Most of all it can be real or imaginary. This is the soil from which all my work grows. The problems of realization—technical, and even formal and esthetic—are secondary; they come afterwards and can be solved.⁴⁰

Bourgeois was prescient about the diminishing importance of an artist’s fabricating his or her own work, a concept extravagantly realized in Andy Warhol’s first solo exhibition of his Campbell’s Soup silkscreens at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles just one year later (1962), as well as in the work of the artists grouped as “Minimalists.”⁴¹



Fig. 22. Jean Follett, *The Spirit Emerges from 'Neath the Gravestones*, 1956
Mixed media, location and dimensions unknown
Photograph: Collection of Charles Gallup, St. Paul, Minnesota

From today's point of view, painters in *The Private Myth* can be classified into two modes. The first was the merging of figuration with abstraction, as Willem de Kooning had done in his *Woman* paintings of 1949–54. Carter Ratcliff notes this tendency in works by Elaine de Kooning and Robert Goodnough (1917–2010): “disinclined to treat the figure as an impediment on its way to obsolescence, they turned painting into a three-way struggle between the painter, painting as painterly gesture, and painting as a picture of identifiable things.”⁴² Judith E. Stein observes that the incorporation of realism was anathema for critics like Greenberg and Rosenberg, because it meant an excavation of Post-Impressionism—Bonnard, Vuillard, and Cézanne—at precisely the point at which American abstract art had achieved international renown for succeeding European modernism. Stein argues that figuration was more than simply an appeasement of the conservative forces in American society that had always favored representational art and rejected “abstraction's moral superiority.”⁴³

Pearlstein's contribution was premised on a close observation of nature, people, and places, notably the coastline of Maine and

the cliffs and ruins surrounding Rome and in southern Italy. His early work reveals a tension between representation and the use of paint as gesture. This transitional phase suggests a search for personal expression using objective subjects. *Roman Ruin* (1961), his fragmentary examination of the ancient structures built into the cliffs of Amalfi, is emblematic (fig. 23). The flat, detailed rendering shows classical architecture emerging from jagged, shadowy ruins. This work's composition abstracts reality through a “close, static viewpoint,” as Pearlstein's biographer, Russell Bowman, observes.⁴⁴

While some of the painters in the exhibition focused on realism derived from nature, others incorporated symbols in their work. Although not included in the show, Al Jensen's (1903–1981) *Heaven and Earth* from 1960 (fig. 24) was reproduced in Pearlstein's *Art News* article. Of all the painters under discussion here, Jensen goes furthest in establishing a personal iconography. Thickly painted in the bright hues that would provide Pop Art's palette, but with none of Pop's irony or commodity-culture associations, Jensen's work is a highly personal form of calligraphy, a coded system of the artist's own devising. In *Heaven and Earth* the focal point is a radial graph. Using an alphabet of symbols—some Christian in derivation, some suggesting infinity, and others likely taken from Egyptian hieroglyphics and perhaps the Mayan ruins of Guatemala, where he was born—Jensen suggests a space outside material concerns. Also recalling tantric drawings, the composition resists quick scrutiny. For his statement for the pamphlet, the artist offered a metaphorical story:

Long ago my uncle and I went for an afternoon's walk. As we came out of a wood into a clearing we saw a rainbow. My uncle said, “Mark it in your memory: where the pure color hues touch the earth, there the fairy folk have buried their treasure.” Excited by nature's brilliant display, I ran toward the colors hoping to grasp at the elusive mirage.⁴⁵

The source—mystical, unexplained, “elusive”—is color. Also working with vivid color, but within a more literal framework, was George Ortman. He was impressed by the theater of Samuel Beckett, whose use of repetition and ability to “capture a sense of place and situation by a single symbol” proposed a radical new approach.⁴⁶ Ortman's paintings morphed into reliefs composed of regular geometric shapes in wood and plaster, often monochrome, mounted on canvas (fig. 25). Color was also central to the work of Sally Hazelet Drummond, an artist who in January 1954 exhibited with Jensen in a small group show at the Tanager. Hazelet Drummond's work displays a Pointillist technique in which many dots of color appear to vibrate and, from a distance, look monochromatic (see fig. 190).



Fig. 23. Philip Pearlstein, *Roman Ruin*, 1961
Oil on canvas, 44 × 36 in. (111.8 × 91.4 cm)
Grey Art Gallery, New York University Art Collection. Gift of Benjamin Weiss, 1963.16



Fig. 24. Al Jensen, *Heaven and Earth*, 1960
 Oil on linen, 42 × 50 in. (106.7 × 127 cm)
 Courtesy Pace Gallery, New York

“My vision of an art that declares . . . sensed reality in the purest and simplest terms,” the artist wrote of her approach, and about its effect, “the total painting as the image—silent, emphatic and radiant.”⁴⁷

Although *The Private Myth* provides a truncated reflection of the Tanager Gallery’s original ambition, it effectively asserted the artist’s right to interpretive authority, which had been the premise of Geist’s initial challenge to the concept of the New York School. By questioning the critic’s sole authority to define terms and meaning, but without refuting formalist logic, the show exemplified the deepening understanding in modernist discourse

that there were private motivations behind the act of making art, thereby substantiating Pearlstein’s assertion that “it does matter what the artist thinks.”⁴⁸ It also represented the culmination of the Tanager group’s curatorial coming-of-age. One year later, in 1962, they closed the gallery, an endpoint for the application of formalist criteria to combat the contemporary canon. *The Private Myth* demonstrated the power of the co-op gallery to arbitrate aesthetics, a stance also taken by the Hansa Gallery artists, whose work, however, relied less on inscrutable inner motivations than on the literal use of materials.

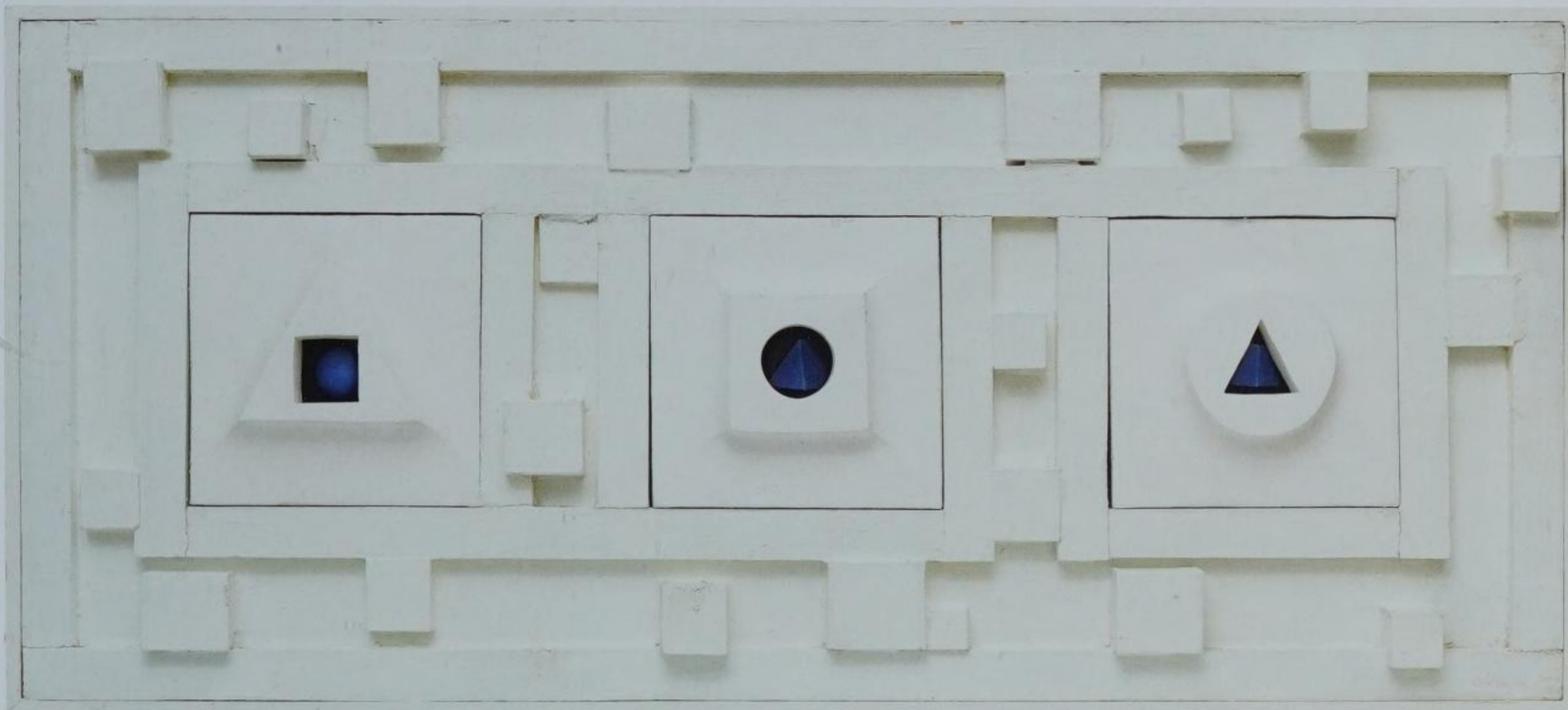


Fig. 25. George Ortman, *Stages of Life*, 1957
Oil, plaster, and wood on canvas, 25 × 56 in. (63.5 × 142.2 cm)
Estate of George Ortman. Courtesy Mitchell Aligus Gallery, New York

HANSA GALLERY (1952–59), 70 East Twelfth Street (November 1952–November 1954); 210 Central Park South (December 1954–June 1959)

The origins of the artistic program of the Hansa Gallery (1952–59) may be found in Hans Hofmann’s School of Fine Arts. Unlike the Tanager Gallery, where no singular aesthetic ideology held sway, at Hansa the founding artists shared a grounding in modernist compositional theory, which they learned under Hofmann’s tutelage in the late 1940s. They were trained to think of artmaking dialectically, and for several key artist-members, this meant merging an aesthetic of non-art (the incorporation of existing materials, especially *objets trouvés* or junk; or the use of pure form and shape) with a highly evolved compositional strategy that rejected classical one-point perspective. The name Hansa is in part a tribute to Hofmann (“Hans”) and to the German Hanseatic League, because two of the founders, painters Wolf Kahn (b. 1927) and Jan Müller (1922–1958), were from Germany and liked the suggestion of an alliance.⁴⁹ The gallery served as a laboratory for the generation of artists who succeeded the New York School painters and were interested in expanding beyond abstraction to explore the material conditions of everyday life. Unlike the curatorial Tanager group, Hansa artists

were considered second-generation artists; most were included in the 1957 Jewish Museum exhibition. The reception of their artwork helped expand the canon of the New York School, and both critics and the art community came to view them as part of a vanguard.

HANS HOFMANN SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

Hans Hofmann (1880–1966) was a pivotal figure in establishing modernist pedagogy in America, and many of his ideas remain essential to art training even today.⁵⁰ At the heart of his teaching lay a paradox: how to translate three dimensions into two, thereby



Fig. 26. Miles Forst with Hans Hofmann at the opening of Forst’s exhibition, Hansa Gallery, New York, 1954
Collection of Sophie Forst, New York

abandoning a vanishing-point perspective and ridding painting of a singular, directional gaze. Hofmann taught that the goal in modern painting was not mimesis but movement: specifically, the dynamism that recognizes a painting's two-dimensionality even as three-dimensionality is implied through color and form. Writing in the summer of 1931, after leaving the school he founded in Munich for Berkeley, California, Hofmann asserted, "It is possible, through the development of space and light unity, to create three-dimensionality on this place [canvas] without destroying its essential two-dimensionality."⁵¹

Hofmann opened his first New York art school in 1933. He moved the school several times until 1938, when he landed at 52 West Eighth Street, where he taught continuously for two decades (except during summers, when he taught in Provincetown, Massachusetts), until 1958.⁵² His method, based partly on his experiences studying in Paris, involved visual discernment, the careful study of objects and the space between objects, and verbal critique. Students made charcoal drawings based on still lifes or from live models posed with attention to 360-degree angles so that every student based his or her drawing on a dynamic form. In insisting on working from life, Hofmann furthered his dialectical approach—students sought not mimetic representation but rather shapes, planes, and forms as they appeared in reality. They were given one week to complete each drawing, and Fridays were reserved for critiques. These Friday sessions became famous among artists and critics, who were allowed to attend as observers.

Dore Ashton distilled Hofmann's teaching as a merging of his three greatest influences, which he experienced firsthand in Paris and Munich between 1898 and 1930: Cubism (flatness), Fauvism (pure color, with no tonal gradation), and German/Russian Expressionism, especially that of Wassily Kandinsky (color as intervals, which in turn create harmonies). In addition, Hofmann's concept of "empathy" as a necessary component of modern art derived from a German art historian, his contemporary Wilhelm Worringer, who posited: "The physical eye sees only the shell and the semblance; the inner eye, however, sees to the core and grasps the opposing forces and the coherence of things."⁵³ The incorporation of one's emotional reaction to objects made artmaking a dynamic, versus clinical, exercise.

More recently, Jennifer Sachs Samet has investigated Hofmann's published and unpublished writings to illuminate his best-known theory: push-pull. Premised on gesture (the use of paint, or lines when drawing), push-pull tension is created when the medium, paint or line, acts as a stimulus to the support, canvas or paper. The artist must learn to control the stimulus. Any applied paint or marks automatically become forms. These forms establish the picture plane, which "by nature . . . automatically



Fig. 27. Jan Müller, Announcement for *Paintings*, Hansa Gallery, New York, March 1953

Hand-colored offset print, 14 × 8½ in. (35.6 × 21.6 cm)

Collection of Sophie Forst, New York

reacts in the opposite direction to the stimulus received," a tension Hofmann analogized to squeezing a balloon. An area of flatness—equivalent to deflation—must expand in diameter. "Form can be developed in proportion to the stimulus received," and this relational action creates three-dimensionality without destroying the two-dimensionality of the picture plane.⁵⁴ Crucial to push-pull dynamism was the suspension, but not the resolution, of tension.

In the 1940s Greenberg extolled Hofmann's understanding of modernism's tenets: "He has, at least in my opinion, grasped the issues at stake better than did Roger Fry and better than (Piet) Mondrian, (Wassily) Kandinsky, (André) Lhote, (Amédée) Ozenfant, and all the others who have tried to 'explicate' the recent revolution

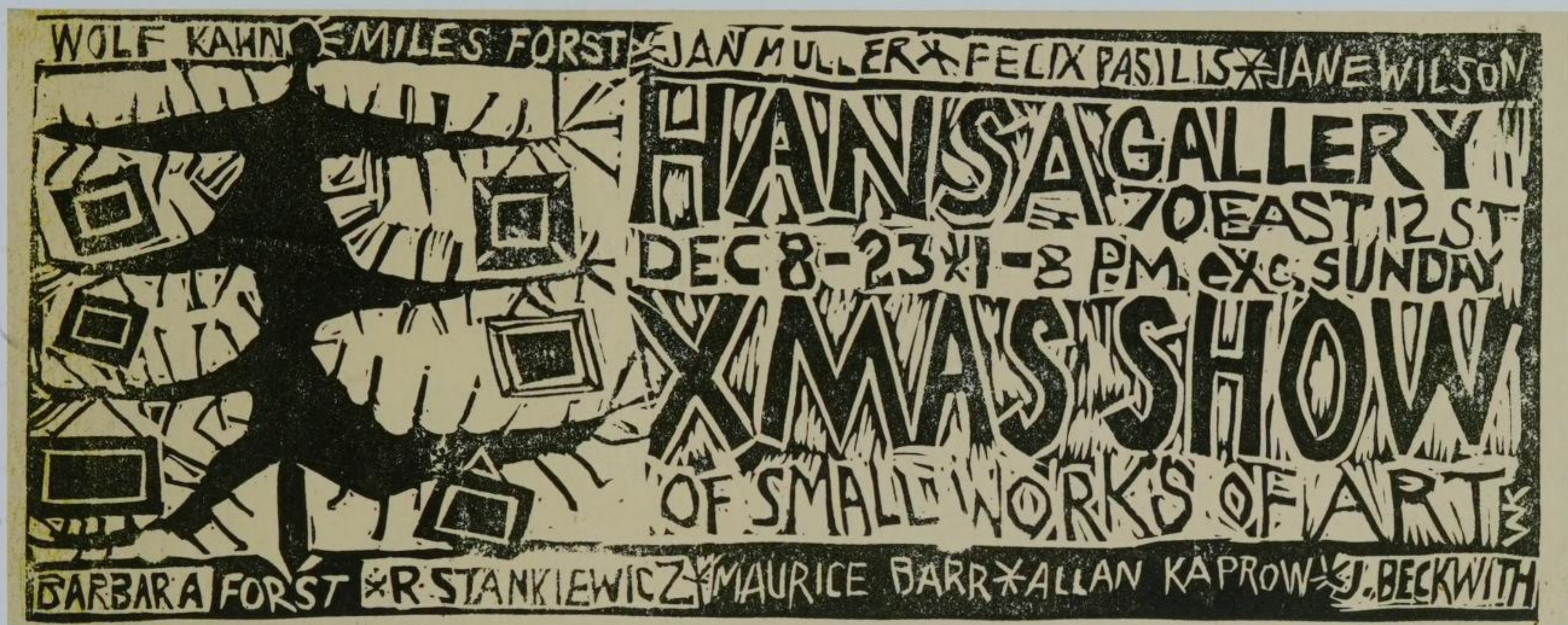


Fig. 28. Wolf Kahn, Announcement for *Xmas Show*,
Hansa Gallery, New York, December 1955
Woodblock print, 3³/₄ × 9¹/₂ in. (9.5 × 24.1 cm)
Collection of Sophie Forst, New York

in painting.”⁵⁵ Ashton went further, crediting Hofmann’s belief in the centrality of Cubism as “the first authoritative discussions of the strictly interior problems of painting.”⁵⁶

Hansa member and Hofmann student Allan Kaprow viewed Hofmann’s thinking as Hegelian in its search for dynamism rendered in two dimensions—or, the thesis-antithesis of push-pull, resulting in the synthesis, which is the subsequent artwork. He was also attuned to Hofmann’s teaching method. Not infrequently, Hofmann would rip a student’s drawing in order to rid the composition of its awkward aspects, or request that a student surrender his or her charcoal, whereupon he completed the drawing himself. In such instances, Hofmann’s broader lesson was of destroying art to create something more alive.

“PUSH-PULL” ADMINISTRATION

Although no collective human enterprise is free from internal strife, the Hansa Gallery was especially given to a full airing of creative differences, a veritable “push-pull” style of management. Miles Forst (1923–2006) noted the “rancor” with which the members “found things to deride in one another’s work,” incorporating Hofmann’s critique sessions into their relationships with one another.⁵⁷ At the center of these debates was the painter Jan Müller, who had arrived in New York as a war refugee in 1941 and studied with Hofmann between 1945 and 1950. Müller “could put [group arguments] into sensible diction, he could articulate whatever it was, it seemed, we were fumbling for.”⁵⁸ The arguments resulted in more ambitious works and openness to experimentation

in exhibition design, going so far as to propose the exhibition as a stage.

Opening in November 1952, about four months after the Tanager, the Hansa held its first two seasons on the second floor of 70 East Twelfth Street, between Broadway and Fourth Avenue, within walking distance of the Tanager. Wolf Kahn, who secured the location, co-founded the gallery with Felix Pasilis (b. 1922), together with a number of artists they met through an exhibition held in December 1951 at the loft-studio the two shared at 813 Broadway: Miles and Barbara Forst (c. 1923–1998); Richard Stankiewicz and Jean Follett, who shared a studio; Jan Müller; and Allan Kaprow.⁵⁹ Their discussions about opening a cooperative gallery continued throughout 1952, during which time the founding group grew to include the painter Jane Wilson (1924–2015), a friend of Wolf Kahn’s, and her husband, writer-composer John Gruen (b. 1926), who organized public programs modeled on *The Club*; and the painter Jacques Beckwith (1920–2000), who lived in the same Bond Street building as Müller.⁶⁰ The Hansa’s membership changed as artists found commercial dealers, were asked to leave, or quit. Fay Lansner (1921–2010) joined in 1954, and the following year painter Myron Stout (1908–1987), a student of Hofmann’s in Provincetown who was friendly with Müller and the Forsts, also became a member. Through Kaprow, George Segal (1924–2000) and Robert Whitman (b. 1935) became members, in 1956 and 1958, respectively. Kaprow also facilitated the inclusion of Lucas Samaras (b. 1936) in group exhibitions during the final season.⁶¹



Fig. 29. Jan Müller, standing in front of *Walpurgisnacht-Faust II* (1956), with Angelo Ippolito at far left, at the opening of Müller's solo exhibition, Hansa Gallery, New York, January 1957
 Photograph: Robert Frank, Richard Bellamy Papers. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

The Hansa's bylaws differed from the Tanager's in their provisions regarding one-man shows, which, in the parlance of the 1950s, applied to solo exhibitions by women artists, too. The bylaws required members to produce artwork worthy of exhibition, "to guarantee that the group membership shall be of active and productive artists and not of 'riders,' whose principal motive for joining the group might be social."⁶² While the group would include non-members from time to time, particularly Alfred Leslie, whom they hoped would join but never did, the Hansa's main purpose was to serve as a showcase for members.⁶³ Invitations listing the gallery's East Twelfth Street address indicate that exhibitions lasted approximately two weeks, not the four weeks typical of most galleries. This briefer time span was likely the only way to ensure that all members enjoyed a solo exhibition, and that they received opportunities to be in the several group exhibitions featuring works by both members and non-members.

Exhibitions were "conceived as to present an effective strategy in the timing of different shows in different times of the season, and the combination of works which might be shown simultaneously to the best advantage."⁶⁴ This approach concentrated aesthetic discussions on specific pictorial issues, particularly subject matter. And unlike the Tanager's members, Hansa artists were not interested in situating their work in relation to that of older, established artists. The Hansa was a place for viewing works by young artists and for formulating critical arguments about its importance for their generation. Thus, group shows were designed to serve not a broader art community but the interests of the artists' own aesthetic development.⁶⁵

The Hansa was considerably more expensive to operate than the Tanager. As revealed in a letter from Jean Follett to her family, the East Twelfth Street loft cost each member \$21 a month, later reduced to \$15 with the addition of new members.

The bylaws specified three officer roles—chairman, secretary, and treasurer. As if anticipating divergent motivations among members, the bylaws required cumbersome twice-yearly elections. Each monthly meeting was to be presided over by officers and to follow “the rules of parliamentary procedure, but using the voting majorities”; accordingly, if two-thirds of the artists agreed, officers could be removed from their posts and members expelled for lack of aesthetic confidence.⁶⁶ Stankiewicz, a sculptor, credited for his “probity and calmness,” served as an officer for most of the Hansa’s lifespan. He was most often elected chairman, and he viewed his leadership as emanating from a “passion for parliamentary order” and an irritation with “irrelevant group conversations.”⁶⁷ He was also an adept handyman; at both the Twelfth Street space and 210 Central Park South, where the gallery moved in December of 1954, he installed lighting and finished walls and floors.

Twice a month, each member was required to work in the gallery during business hours, until Gruen secured the volunteer services of Anita Coleman, a recent graduate of Sarah Lawrence College whom he met through the dealer John Myers soon after the latter opened Tibor de Nagy Gallery in 1950. From that point forward, the Hansa always had a business director, whose chief task was to promote exhibitions to the art press, curators, and art historians. Barbara Bluestein, a friend of Müller’s, succeeded Coleman, and Anneta Duveen, a sculptor acquaintance of Wolf Kahn’s, worked with the gallery when it transitioned to Central Park South.⁶⁸

Stankiewicz was consulted on the design of the exhibitions, a process during which tensions often ran high. A characteristic tempest occurred in the early 1950s when Kaprow objected to Stankiewicz’s installation of a sculpture, then came to regret it. In an apology note to Stankiewicz, Kaprow observed:

I feel sorry that my spontaneous remark about what I felt to be an unfair display of your sculpture caused you to mistake it for an aspersion. I hope reflection has revealed to you that I meant no more than a suggestion for something better for our work, my admiration for it I thought known by you and everyone. . . . If my words went amiss, I allow myself to consider it explained in light of the increased tension we have all been experiencing as the gallery progressed.⁶⁹

Not all Hansa members were so reflective. Gruen characterized their interpersonal dynamics as “chaotic” and the member meetings as “unnerving,” with “any number of violent personal clashes.”⁷⁰ One imbroglio involved Pasilis and Stankiewicz. Although Stankiewicz was a pioneer in adventurous installation

design, some Hansa members disagreed with his concepts. One incident that was sparked by his installation for a group exhibition epitomizes the gallery’s reputation for fiery relationships:

We had a group show and in a case like that we sometimes appointed someone to do the hanging and in this instance it was my job, and it was a firm principle that the person who was responsible for the hanging was not to be interfered with. Yes, we were having guests in this show, people who were not Gallery members, and so I spent the whole night hanging the show and I think I was impartial placing things where they had the best effect in the total room, and the next day when we all came for the opening, I found that the show had been rearranged, and so I put everything back the way I thought it should be. At the next meeting the subject was brought up and the question raised, who rearranged the show, and nobody wanted to admit it, and finally, it turns out that Felix (Pasilis) and his friend had rearranged it to put his friend’s picture on the most prominent wall. . . . So eventually (Pasilis) said, “Yes, I rearranged the show. Do you want to make something of it?” And I was sitting behind the desk . . . I really didn’t want to catch onto the fact that he was being threatening and I said, “Of course I want to make something of it. That’s what we’re talking about.” So he jumped up and popped me in the nose while I still had my feet tangled in the drawers of the desk, and so he was pulled off immediately by everybody and I never got a chance to return the compliment.⁷¹

Though his passions ran high, Stankiewicz was not autocratic, and his fondness for member Jan Müller’s anarchistic tendencies reflects the complex dynamics of his style of leadership:

Sometimes (Müller) would want to change whatever procedure was under way just because things were getting too orderly and set. I supposed he wanted to keep it interesting and so he was apt to come up with new ideas at the wrong time, it seemed to me, but it was alright. . . . It wasn’t that his contributions were irrelevant or not very good—quite often they were—but he would always throw them in at the wrong time. Perhaps we might make decision A and be halfway in the execution of decision A and he would suggest B and say, why don’t we do this instead? And then he had a couple of followers, you see, who would support him, and then the struggle would be against the disorganization.⁷²



Fig. 30. Jane Wilson, *Portrait of Jane Freilicher*, 1957
Oil on canvas, 36 × 24 in. (91.4 × 61 cm)
Collection of John Gruen and Julia Gruen, New York

These visceral reactions bear the mark of the vital irresolution that is also embedded in Hofmann's compositional theory. And the push-pull dialectic of those reactions to one another's ideas within the framework of strict parliamentary rules ultimately shaped programming decisions. The conflicts apparently paid off. By 1955 Stankiewicz and Müller were critically acclaimed artists, while Follett and Miles Forst were included in James Johnson Sweeney's important 1954 exhibition *Younger American Painters* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.⁷³

With critical attention secured, the next step was building a patron base. This desire informed the resolution at the end of November 1954, the Hansa's two-year anniversary on Twelfth Street, to move the gallery uptown. Securing the second floor of a brownstone at 210 Central Park South, near Columbus Circle, the members opened the new space quickly, with an inaugural group

show in December.⁷⁴ From a collector's perspective, this address had decided advantages. It was closer to Fifty-seventh Street, though still a three-block walk crosstown from the important gallery cluster near Madison Avenue. And it was close to Eleanor Ward's Stable Gallery, which was around the corner at Seventh Avenue and West Fifty-eighth Street. The Hansa's new space boasted hardwood floors, decorative wall molding, and a separate office space. It had the look of an apartment (which it had been) rather than an industrial loft, still an unfamiliar setting for art collectors in 1954.⁷⁵ Despite its distinctive features, the space required certain renovations to make it suitable for use as a gallery. The renovation expenses, coupled with increased total monthly rent (from \$70 on East Twelfth Street to \$150 on Central Park South), caused member fees to rise to \$35 per month, intensifying the artists' drive for financial success.⁷⁶

When Anneta Duveen resigned, Miles Forst persuaded the members to hire his close friend Richard Hu Bellamy (1927–1998) as director, starting in September 1955. Unlike his predecessors, Bellamy received a salary—he recalled \$40 a month plus commissions on sales—and the artists made their sales expectations clear. They also granted Bellamy voting rights in gallery decisions, demonstrating their trust and their aspirations.⁷⁷ Although his relative longevity as director—he remained in place until the gallery closed in spring 1959—brought administrative stability, his tenure was bumpy, a reflection of uneven sales and his ambivalence about selling.⁷⁸ In October 1955 Stankiewicz noted the Hansa's ongoing financial challenges: “We have yet to know how efficient (Bellamy) is as a promoter. Our first exhibition this season is a group show and interest has been quite light. He may have more to work on with the show of Jane Wilson's which is coming up and which gets quite a lot of attendance.”⁷⁹ Indeed, the review of Wilson's January 1957 Hansa show in *Arts* magazine demonstrates one critic's enthusiasm for her work. “It is startling to find a young American painter who, surrounded by all those tempting short cuts to contemporaneity, either slick or rugged, has instead retained and developed an innate refinement, best described as Parisian,” the reviewer glowed. “Miss Wilson's reward, and ours, is a rediscovery of the intimist scene on native grounds—a garden, a room with a view, a chaise longue, and end table, a landscape sufficient to its less grandiose aspects.”⁸⁰ Wilson's art was an exception (fig. 30); generally, Hansa artists did not create such sumptuous work. She grew apart from co-op members and ultimately left the gallery at the end of the 1956–57 season.⁸¹

Bellamy poured tremendous energy into his correspondence, which charmed and delighted recipients and led to a “constant stream of visitors,” including their upstairs neighbors, the art historian and critic Barbara Rose and the poet Terry Brook, who later married the filmmaker Emile de Antonio.⁸²



Fig. 31. Wolf Kahn, *Frank O'Hara*, 1953–54
Oil on canvas, 43 × 41 in. (109.2 × 104.1 cm)
Courtesy the artist

Bellamy was, in the words of his close colleague Ivan Karp (1926–2012), “a very poetic man” and, in his estimation, “one of the remarkable, eccentric personalities of the city.”⁸³ Bellamy’s manner significantly contributed to making the uptown Hansa a “clubhouse” where artists, critics, dealers, art historians, and a few patrons gathered.⁸⁴ The pressure to sell convinced Bellamy he needed help, and in 1956 the members agreed to allow him to split his job with Karp, then a part-time art writer and book reviewer for the newly founded *Village Voice*. Bellamy and Karp alternated, each working three days at a time.⁸⁵

Uneven record keeping renders it impossible to know whether sales during the 1956–57 season increased in response to Bellamy and Karp’s efforts.⁸⁶ Perhaps to determine commissions, Karp and Bellamy put together a list of sales in roughly chronological order; Bellamy added to the list in 1959, a year after Karp left,

at the end of the 1957–58 season. The Hansa’s most frequent sales were for Müller, Stankiewicz, and Wilson, and their major patron was Horace Richter, scion of a North Carolina clothing-manufacturing family, who amassed a considerable collection of Müller paintings, as well as five assemblages and, perhaps, three drawings by Follett.⁸⁷ Other notable collectors included Philip Johnson, Monroe Wheeler, and Alfred H. Barr of the Museum of Modern Art; George J. Lee, a curator at the Brooklyn Museum; the dealer Martha Jackson; art historian Meyer Schapiro; artists Elaine de Kooning, Dan Flavin, and Yvonne Thomas; poet Barbara Guest; and collectors Richard Brown Baker and Herbert Vogel.⁸⁸ Importantly, the Museum of Modern Art paid \$1,500 for one of Müller’s large-scale paintings, *Faust I* (1956), from his eponymous series; and the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art purchased Stankiewicz’s *Kabuki Dancer*, made in the spring of 1956, for \$900.⁸⁹

MIXING MEDIA: OBJECTS, FORM, AND THE GALLERY AS A STAGE

Irving Sandler pinpointed two general tendencies in the artwork shown at the Hansa, “painterly realism with an expressionist cast” and the use of found materials, while Richard Bellamy eschewed any classifications at all, noting “no point of view” other than a shared “independence and a certain competence.”⁹⁰ Yet the search for affinity with the physical object belied a deeper significance. Subject matter was an open field in the 1950s, even at the apex of American abstraction’s success. For Hansa Gallery artists, who were expanding into areas that pushed back against prevailing taste and criticism, the incorporation of actual space, classical themes, and ordinary objects represented a shift away from pictorial abstraction—and this was at the root of the Hansa sensibility.

Hansa artists’ transition from abstraction to representations of the everyday occurred during the gallery’s 1953–54 season. As a 1953 review of the fall group show noted, “the general style here is more expressionist than at the Tanager. Allen (*sic*) Kaprow’s style is fauvist; Wolf Kahn derives directly from Soutine (fig. 31),



Fig. 32. Jacques Beckwith, *Untitled*, c. 1959
Oil on composition board, 9½ × 14 in. (24.1 × 35.6 cm)
Collection of Lois Beckwith, Connecticut, and Sebastian Beckwith, New York

and Jacques Beckwith (fig. 32), the most credible painter here, is a pointillist after his own fashion.”⁹¹ Indeed, Kahn felt that the Hansa group mined the French Impressionists, but he also saw Hansa’s interest as connected to Hofmann’s training and embrace of classical art: “Hofmann was a traditionalist. He had the same place in American art that you might say Cézanne had in France, in revivifying the tradition. Cézanne said he wanted to paint art of the museums from nature. And Hofmann wanted to paint traditional paintings in modern terms.”⁹²

What caused the break with pure abstraction? The Hansa’s first season, 1952–53, coincided with Willem de Kooning’s unveiling of his *Woman* series at a March 1953 exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery, heralding a return to the figure and, accordingly, generating tremendous critical controversy. These paintings offered a paradox in which modernism’s core concepts coexisted with classical subject matter. De Kooning’s independence from critical rhetoric gave artists permission to follow their own concerns, without regard to critically designated “movements.” His sense of conviction represented a breakthrough for the New York artist community.

Fig. 33. Felix Pasilis, *Untitled* (Portrait of the artist’s wife, Pauline), 1951
Oil on canvas, 24 × 18 in. (61 × 45.7 cm)
Estate of Horace Richter. Courtesy Martha Henry Fine Art, New York

In fact, Hansa artists had always been skeptical of reductive formalist arguments, including Clement Greenberg’s, even after the latter had become orthodoxy. Greenberg knew several Hansa artists personally, including Jean Follett and Miles Forst. “Clem had sort of adopted us, in a way,” Forst recalled, though he didn’t remember Greenberg’s criticism of his work quite so fondly, laughing off his suggestion that the artist simply needed to “straighten these edges” to improve his work.⁹³ All the Hansa artists had the opportunity to engage directly with Greenberg on January 15, 1953, when he inaugurated a series of cultural discussions organized by John Gruen at the 70 East Twelfth Street space.⁹⁴

In contrast with today’s approach, for most of the 1950s polemics around painting favored figuration, no doubt influenced by the





Fig. 34. Jan Müller, *Of This Time Of That Place*, 1956
 Oil on canvas, 49½ × 93¾ in. (125.7 × 238.1 cm)
 Courtesy Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York

close relationship between Willem de Kooning, Thomas Hess, Harold Rosenberg, and Meyer Schapiro. Moreover, Hess hired artist-reviewers who did not subscribe to abstraction's dominance—Lawrence Campbell, Elaine de Kooning, Fairfield Porter, and Parker Tyler. During the early 1950s Hansa artists absorbed de Kooning's *Woman* series as a signal event, and all left unresolved the “room between the action in Action Painting and the image.”⁹⁵ This “image” pointed beyond gesture, toward more literal qualities. For some Hansa artists, the literal meant the direct use of non-art objects.

This concern with maintaining visual tension while investigating the actual eventually came to dominate Hansa exhibitions. Kahn, Pasilis, Wilson, and Lansner based their paintings on personal spaces, such as the home or studio; portraits of friends; and landscapes that resonated as American. Müller, an artist who is difficult to classify, transitioned from mosaic-style abstract renderings that appeared influenced by Lower East Side tenement bricks to, in 1953, classical literary subjects, notably episodes of temptation derived from Goethe's *Faust*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, and the Bible. Müller's recuperation of painting's historic traditions—what poet-critic John Ashbery identified as his “medieval sensibility”—was unprecedented.⁹⁶

He created large-scale narrative allegories, shifting foreground and background with loosely rendered figures (fig. 34). His use of color appeared uncalculated due to its loose application, but his conception of the series was highly resolved.⁹⁷

Could such a departure from contemporary concerns be taken seriously? Ashbery pondered the validity of Müller's style: “One is continually wondering what led him to choose this odd form of expression, and his masked figures offer no clue to what secret, if any, they have been entrusted with.”⁹⁸ But in the wake of de Kooning's *Women*, religion and ritual, concepts that would appear outmoded, if not outrageous, to modern art's secular basis, were taken seriously.⁹⁹ For Müller, history was “an asset rather than a mere return to a discarded ideal,” and like formalist theory, modernism was not a break from but rather the basis for a new aesthetic dialogue with the past. He had little patience for fussy compositional rules, believing that humanism was at the root of art, that the artist “must deal with matter complex. If not coming to the conclusion he must hint and try to portray and achieve the most of his inherent capacity instead of taking refuge into the laws pre-established for him . . . (for) art is first and foremost content.”¹⁰⁰



Fig. 35. Myron Stout, *Untitled No. 2*, 1956
Oil on canvas, 20 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 14 in. (51.1 × 35.6 cm)
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Gift of Charles H. Carpenter, Jr. 2007.1

Artist Myron Stout, a close friend of Müller's, also defied identifiable trends. He joined the Hansa after a solo show at the Stable Gallery in April 1954, a seemingly contrary move from commercial to co-op gallery that made sense for an artist who worked slowly, sometimes for decades, on a single piece. Stout's work incorporated color, but his one-man show at Hansa in 1957 featured work only in black, white, and gray, with pure shapes—ovals, rectangles, simple curves—in charcoal sketches and on canvas. Stout's works resonate "wholeness"; they are flat yet at the same time imply space, a balance achieved through the deliberate use of black and white, shape and proportion—a process of realization based on the empirical, avoiding illusionism (fig. 35).¹⁰¹ Stout's work, like Müller's, recuperated the classical—in this instance, ancient Greece. In an interview in 1977, he recited a well-known passage about creation from Aristophanes' play

The Birds (414 BCE), which Stout felt described his process: "Black winged night / Into the bosom of Erebus dark and deep / Laid a wind-born egg, and as the seasons rolled / Forth sprang Love, the longed-for, shining, with wings of gold." The "wind-born egg" comes from nature, from the night, from blackness. "Painting is an analog of reality, not just physical and not just representation," Stout suggested, demonstrating his affinity for art as an experience that takes place over time.¹⁰²

Other Hansa artists took different approaches. Junk or found objects (*objets trouvés*)—are not commonly found in American modern art in the early 1950s, yet they became a significant element in the work of Jean Follett and Richard Stankiewicz, who are sometimes linked to Robert Rauschenberg, particularly after the latter included found-object sculptures in his 1953 Stable Gallery show and the Combine series in 1954. More significant in the early 1950s was Follett and Stankiewicz's admiration for the French artist Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985). In 1951–52 Dubuffet lived in New York, on the same Bond Street block where Follett and Stankiewicz shared a studio.¹⁰³ His paintings and drawings of this period combine detritus from the street with sophisticated compositional constructions in a naïve-style rendering of everyday scenes. Follett's letters home note their budding friendship: "Dubuffet said we will become good friends, he is sure. . . . He is a great person, a distinguished and celebrity artist, beyond [Clement] Greenberg, who by the way, looks up to him as a God almost."¹⁰⁴

Although she always considered herself a painter, Follett made artwork that resides between painting and sculpture. She incorporated wood, dirt, window screens, mechanical objects, tools, and metal casters into hanging reliefs with deep, dark areas of black. For example, in *Many-Headed Creature*, from 1958, Follett created a textured and layered background from black-painted elements such as wood and found metal parts; to the surface she attached twine, rusted metal, sockets, and cooling coils in their natural state (fig. 36). *Many-Headed Creature* references the body, in a fragmented state. Her impulse balanced the compositional theory she learned from Hofmann with an abiding interest in Dada and Surrealism, both of which she acknowledged as having an enormous influence on her practice:

I should like to make my contribution that of not only a revival of Dada, but a new and better kind of Dada, for I do not believe in negating art, as Dada is. In my kind of Dada I should like to make it positive art, though Surreal in expression and Dada both in technique and expression, but always keeping the principles of balance and the laws which I believe basic and intrinsic and constant throughout all the ages in a true work of art.¹⁰⁵



Fig. 36. Jean Follett, *Many-Headed Creature*, 1958
Light switch, socket cooling coils, window screen, nails, faucet knob, mirror, twine,
cinders, caster, springs, and rope on wood panel, 24 × 24 × 4³/₄ in. (61 × 61 × 12.1 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund, 296.1961



Fig. 37. Richard Stankiewicz's *Fantastic Creatures and Satiric Poses* exhibition, Hansa Gallery, New York, January 1953
Estate of Richard Stankiewicz. Courtesy Virginia Zabriskie, New York

Like Follett, Stankiewicz used found materials anthropomorphically. He viewed his use of existing materials as part of a “transfiguration” in which the artist gives life to otherwise quotidian objects. “The extraordinary object, the one with presence, is one which is subjectively and tyrannically there,” he said of his sculptures. At the core of his work is composition, a quality recognized by artist-writer Sidney Geist in 1954, when Stankiewicz began combining “all manner of rusted pipes, hinges, rods, and bits of old machinery. These he has cut and welded together and transformed by the addition of forms created by himself in metal.” The effect was “a clutter organized to the *n*th degree, precise in its distances and thickness and turnings, in looseness or coagulation of its forms.”¹⁰⁶

Stankiewicz was especially adept at theatrical installations. *Fantastic Creatures and Satiric Poses* (1953), his second one-man show at the Hansa, featured architectonic, insect-like sculptures and mobiles rendered in delicate plaster-covered wire and

suspended throughout the gallery by threads hanging from the ceiling (fig. 37). Stankiewicz treated the space as an encounter between object and viewer, and his use of high-key lighting created a total experience that went beyond the integrity of each artwork. Follett described Stankiewicz’s use of space as “unheard of or seen before,” but during his 1950–51 year of study in Paris, Stankiewicz had no doubt become familiar with Dada and the Dutch De Stijl movement, both of which offered experiential encounters with art. Perhaps—though it is not recorded in his papers—Stankiewicz was also familiar with the immersive installation design approach pioneered by Frederick Kiesler, who had lived in New York since the 1920s. Kiesler designed Peggy Guggenheim’s space *Art of This Century* (1942–47), Herbert Mayer’s *World House Galleries* (1953–68), and in 1951 transformed a retail store into an exhibition space for the *Ninth Street Show*.¹⁰⁷

Follett and Stankiewicz collaborated on an installation of her drawings and his sculptures in a group show at the Hansa’s Twelfth

Street space in 1953 or 1954. A photograph taken by Stankiewicz shows Follett's drawings installed between the wall and the floor (fig. 38), calling attention to this marginal space and suggesting an aborted action of some kind—the drawings are either falling or climbing. Viewers were forced to squat in order to look closely at Follett's work, which required physical action in viewing.

Allan Kaprow, ten years younger than Follett and five younger than Stankiewicz, was drawn to their use of the space and incorporation of found materials, though less interested in their Surrealist tendencies. To Kaprow, found objects held a vitality of their own, cycling from creation to decay and back into creation.¹⁰⁸ In 1965 he reflected on the growing importance of found materials in his artwork, especially evident in his February 1957 solo exhibition at the Hansa, where he also included paintings demonstrating his different interests, in a variety of styles: "I now realize that I was not just casting around for a way to paint, but was casting around for a way to include all the levels of meaning that I was intending. For, in addition to paintings, there were also constructions, or what we would call today 'assemblages.'"¹⁰⁹ In fact, Kaprow became convinced that painting was exhausted; it was time for a radical break. He began making collages that employed physical rules, an approach distinct from painting and drawing:

I developed a kind of action-collage technique following my interest in Pollock. These action-collages, unlike my constructions, were done as rapidly as possible by grasping great hunks of varied matter: tinfoil, straw, canvas, photos, newspaper, etc. I also cut up pictures [drawings] which I had made previously, and these counted as autobiographical fragments, as much as they were an intended formal arrangement. The straw, the tinfoil, occasional food, whatever it was, each of these had, increasingly, a meaning that was better embodied in the various nonpainterly materials than in paint. Their placement in the ritual of my own rapid action was an acting out of the dramas of tin soldiers, stories, and musical structures, that I once had tried to embody in paint alone.¹¹⁰

Kaprow further enriched his process through studies in music composition with John Cage (1912–1992) at the New School, which he began in 1957.¹¹¹ Unlike the Tanager artists, who sought to challenge the critics on their own terms, Kaprow, via Cage's influence and with echoes of Duchamp, asserted a new aesthetic paradigm and chose to foreground the spectator as an essential component of art. Indeed, Cage's class—well documented by both Kaprow and succeeding art historians—helped spark the artist's reconceptualization of the exhibition experience itself.



Fig. 38. Jean Follett's drawings and Richard Stankiewicz's wire sculpture, Hansa Gallery, New York, February 1953
Collection of Charles Gallup, St. Paul, Minnesota

In March 1958, during the Hansa's penultimate season, Kaprow took assemblage into the gallery's physical space with a project he called *Untitled Environment*, which occupied the entire gallery. Even more radical than the installation alone, Kaprow held performances each day at 3:00 p.m. We can catch a partial glimpse of *Untitled Environment* in photographs of the show by artist Jon Henry (1916–1990) (fig. 40). Hanging sheets of translucent plastic and rayon from the ceiling, Kaprow painted them with broad, even strokes of primary colors; in contrast, he painted rayon and paper strips with more gestural strokes, leaving drips and stains across the surfaces in a manner recalling the execution of his collages (fig. 39). Writing in *Art News*, Parker Tyler noted the spectator's role: "One had phantasmal glimpses of other visitors . . . absorbing, courteously with every available nerve, the sensation of being abstracted from the ordinary world to one where *musique* is as *concret* as abstract art."¹¹² Similarly enthusiastic was the reviewer for *Arts* magazine, who described the environment as lighthearted: "Here and there,



one's excursion was rewarded by a diaphanous little inner sanctum blocked off by scrim or strung with Christmas lights."¹¹³

Kaprow's second project at the Hansa, titled *An Exhibition* on his announcement, but also referred to as the second *Untitled Environment* in writings of the time, was held from November 25 to December 13, 1958 (fig. 41).¹¹⁴ Offering a more ambitious (and humorous) rationale, Kaprow described himself as "working on environments with the idea that all the sensory elements were operable." He went on:

I had gone, for example, to chemical companies to find essential odors that I thought in the Hofmannesque style that I could pit one against the other, as if it would be a low sound and a high sound, or antiphony—a sound over here, a sound over there, so I put these chemical smells on one end of the constructions that I was making at that time, which filled the space. You know, like lots of straw, like going through the bushes, or pushing plastic film aside, or pushing lights blinking aside. But you would smell something sweet on one end of the gallery. . . . Well that is of course nonsense. Air moves around, it doesn't stay. So they began to blend in a horrible stink, and worse than that, I discovered that people's olfactory nerves are not as renewable in the stimuli response relation as eyes or ears, where if you just turn away, you can look back and see something freshly. You can't do that with your nose.¹¹⁵

Visitors to *An Exhibition* received a pamphlet with Kaprow's short essay "Notes on the Total Creation of Total Art," in which he defined the project as a break with modernism: "By bypassing 'art' and beginning with the totality of nature itself as a model or point of departure, it may be possible to devise a different kind of art by putting together first a molecule out of the sensory stuff of ordinary life." Kaprow invited visitors to see themselves as part of a collage, to "join a literal space with a painted space," to not look at the environment but to enter and become part of it. His dialectic pivoted on the modernism of Hofmann and the open-ended method of Cage: "We *ourselves* are shapes . . . and will constantly change the 'meaning' of the work . . . a never-ending play of changing conditions between the relatively fixed or 'scored' parts of my work and the 'unexpected' or undetermined parts."¹¹⁶

Reactions by artists and other regular visitors to the Hansa were mixed. Calling Kaprow's essay yet another "shopworn" treatise on

Fig. 39. Allan Kaprow, *Blue Blue Blue*, 1956
Collage and oil on canvas, 60 × 47½ in. (152.4 × 120.7 cm)
Estate of Allan Kaprow, San Diego. Courtesy Hauser and Wirth, New York



Fig. 40. Allan Kaprow's *Untitled Environment*, Hansa Gallery, New York, 1958, installation view

Photograph: Jon Henry. Estate of Allan Kaprow, San Diego. Courtesy Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

the "synthesis of the arts," Hilton Kramer disdained what he saw as a rehash of Dada, describing the installation as follows:

[The ceiling was] a continuous string net from which long stalks of dry straw hung to the floor. Included in this network of straw were thin electric cords bearing tiny lights which blinked at leisurely intervals. Occasionally one found nasty bits of old paint rag tied to the straw. . . . The lighting in this main section was gray to dim in stark contrast to the narrow corridor by the windows which boasted such a glare of high powered spotlights that I found it difficult to take in the details. . . . There was, of course, sound. (How can you have a synthesis-of-the-arts without sound?) I identified it mostly as sirens and doorbells, but there were no doubt other elements more readily grasped by ears better educated than my own.¹¹⁷

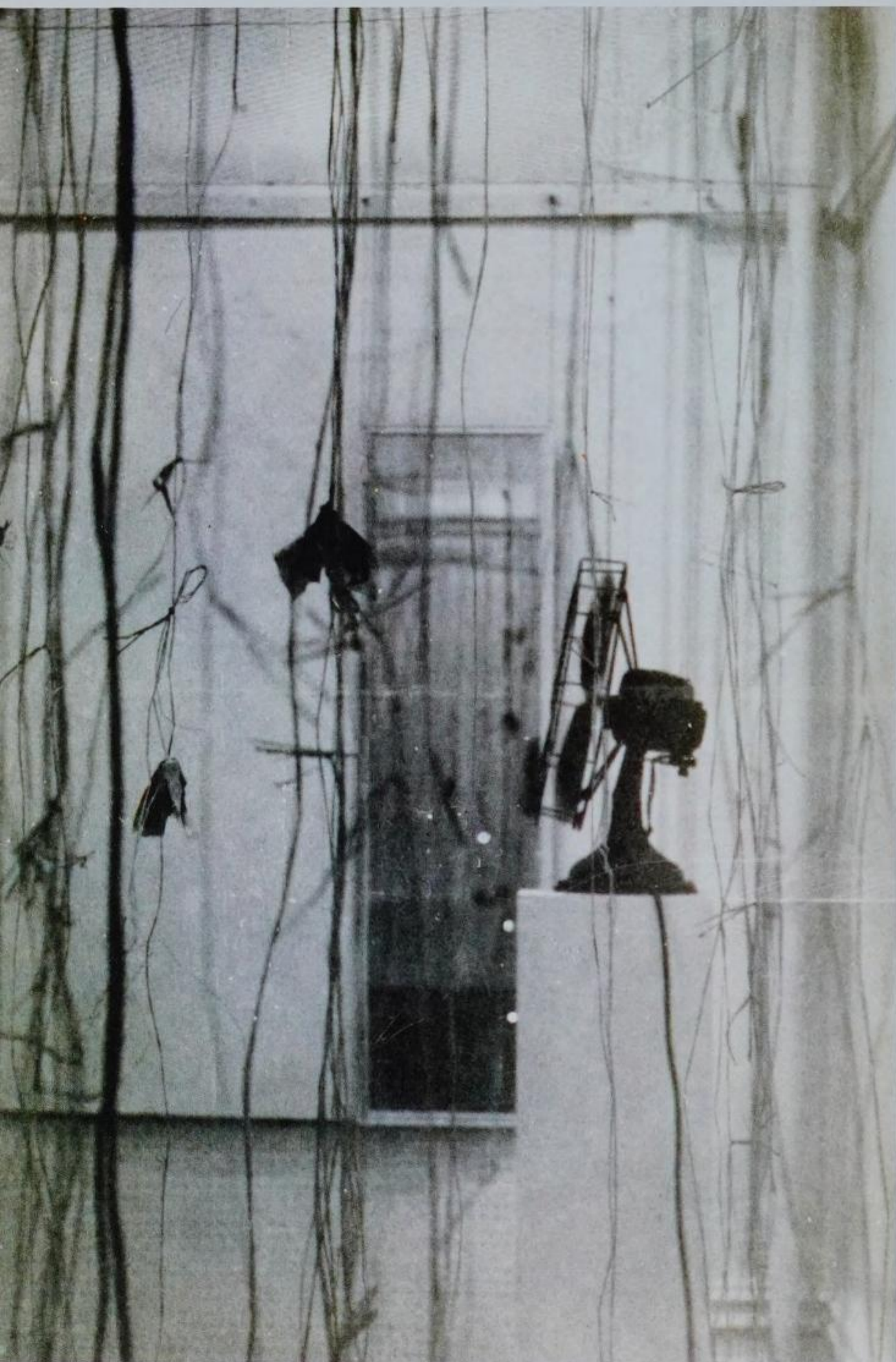


Fig. 41. Allan Kaprow's *An Exhibition*, Hansa Gallery, New York, November 1958, installation view

Photograph: Vaughan Rachel. Courtesy the photographer

Unlike the first *Untitled Environment*, *An Exhibition* was not deemed particularly playful. "There is very little gaiety in these dry bones," Kramer concluded.¹¹⁸ And Richard Bellamy acknowledged that while Hansa artists were divided on, even hostile to, the direction Kaprow was taking, Bellamy himself was decisive on the art-historical importance of the project: "I do consider that it is important that Allan Kaprow did make this exhibition at the Hansa Gallery at that time. It has, as you say, art historical importance. . . . The important thing to note is that it did happen at the Hansa Gallery and it is the only place

(where) it could have happened."¹¹⁹ By granting Kaprow the liberty to use his exhibition slot to experiment, the Hansa artists established a new gallery standard that would soon be taken up by younger artists.

Kaprow's transition was witnessed by his close friend George Segal, who met Kaprow in 1953 when they were living on neighboring chicken farms near New Brunswick, New Jersey (Kaprow did not actually raise chickens, but Segal did).¹²⁰ When Segal joined the Hansa on Kaprow's nomination in 1956, his vivid pastels of domestic interiors and expressionistic paintings of chickens (fig. 42) were immediately commended in the art press.¹²¹ Segal was deemed a primarily figurative artist but rejected such a monolithic definition, asserting, "I was in no way going to give up abstract structure, but also in no way was I going to give up the real world."¹²² Segal sharpened his ideas through his friendship with Kaprow, who in turn enriched his own practice with Segal's help. For instance, in 1955 or 1956, Segal helped Kaprow to secure an experienced welder, a person with farm experience, not an artist. In concert with the welder, Kaprow made armatures for sculptural figures, which he then covered in plaster and roofing tar (fig. 43). These works, together with the artist picnics that Segal hosted at his farm beginning in 1956, may have influenced Segal's own shift into sculpture.¹²³ In 1958, he exhibited his first three-dimensional artwork, the bas-relief *Reclining Woman* (fig. 44), made from wire mesh and covered in burlap affixed with plaster. This figure, positioned atop what might be a section of a barn, protrudes into space, away from the paneled surface onto which she is mounted. In sharp contrast with Kaprow, Segal's artwork remained firmly object-based, because he "couldn't accept the idea of disposable ephemeral art."¹²⁴

One of the Hansa's last solo exhibitions (January 12–31, 1959) was devoted to the assemblages and drawings of Robert Whitman (b. 1935), who had taken courses with Kaprow at Rutgers University and was part of Segal's small sketch club there. While Whitman's work displays a completely different orientation from Kaprow's, he appreciated the latter's move away from traditional notions of permanence. "(Kaprow) recognized that you didn't have to be concerned about these things lasting forever," he reflected. "You could be sloppy, and you could make work that decayed and fell apart."¹²⁵ Whitman used modest materials—cheesecloth, tinfoil, and adhesive tape—to create literal but not-quite-perfect checkerboard patterns, rendered by hand and therefore marked by imperfection (fig. 45). In addition, Whitman was interested in making art that takes place in real time, a concern he would pursue especially in his performances during the early 1960s. But in 1959 Whitman's work still manifested itself in material terms: the centerpiece of his exhibition was a six-by-six-foot cube composed of wood slats,

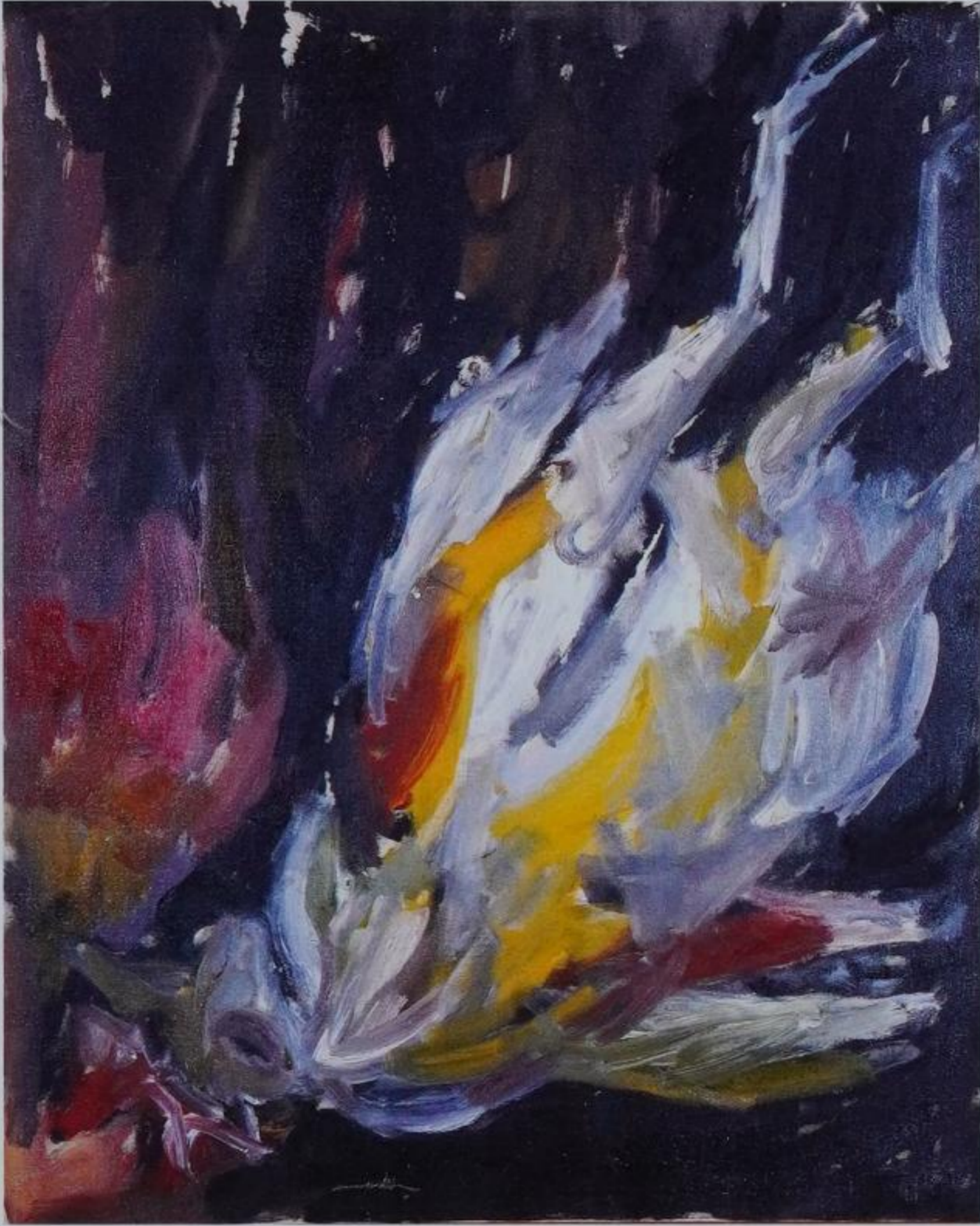


Fig. 42. George Segal, *Dead Chicken*, 1957
 Oil on canvas, 36 × 32½ in. (91.4 × 82.6 cm)
 Grey Art Gallery, New York University Art Collection.
 Gift of The George & Helen Segal Foundation Inc., 2014.2.4



Fig. 43. Allan Kaprow, *Woman out of Fire*, 1955-56
 Metal, paper, and plaster covered with roofing cement, and wood
 68 × 24¾ × 24½ in. (172.7 × 62.9 × 62.2 cm)
 Estate of Allan Kaprow, San Diego. Courtesy Hauser and Wirth, New York



Fig. 44. George Segal, *Reclining Woman Bas Relief: Nude*, 1958
 Plaster, wood, and paint, 36 × 66 × 3 in.
 (91.4 × 167.6 × 7.6 cm)
 Grey Art Gallery, New York University Art Collection. Gift of The George & Helen Segal Foundation Inc., 2014.2.1

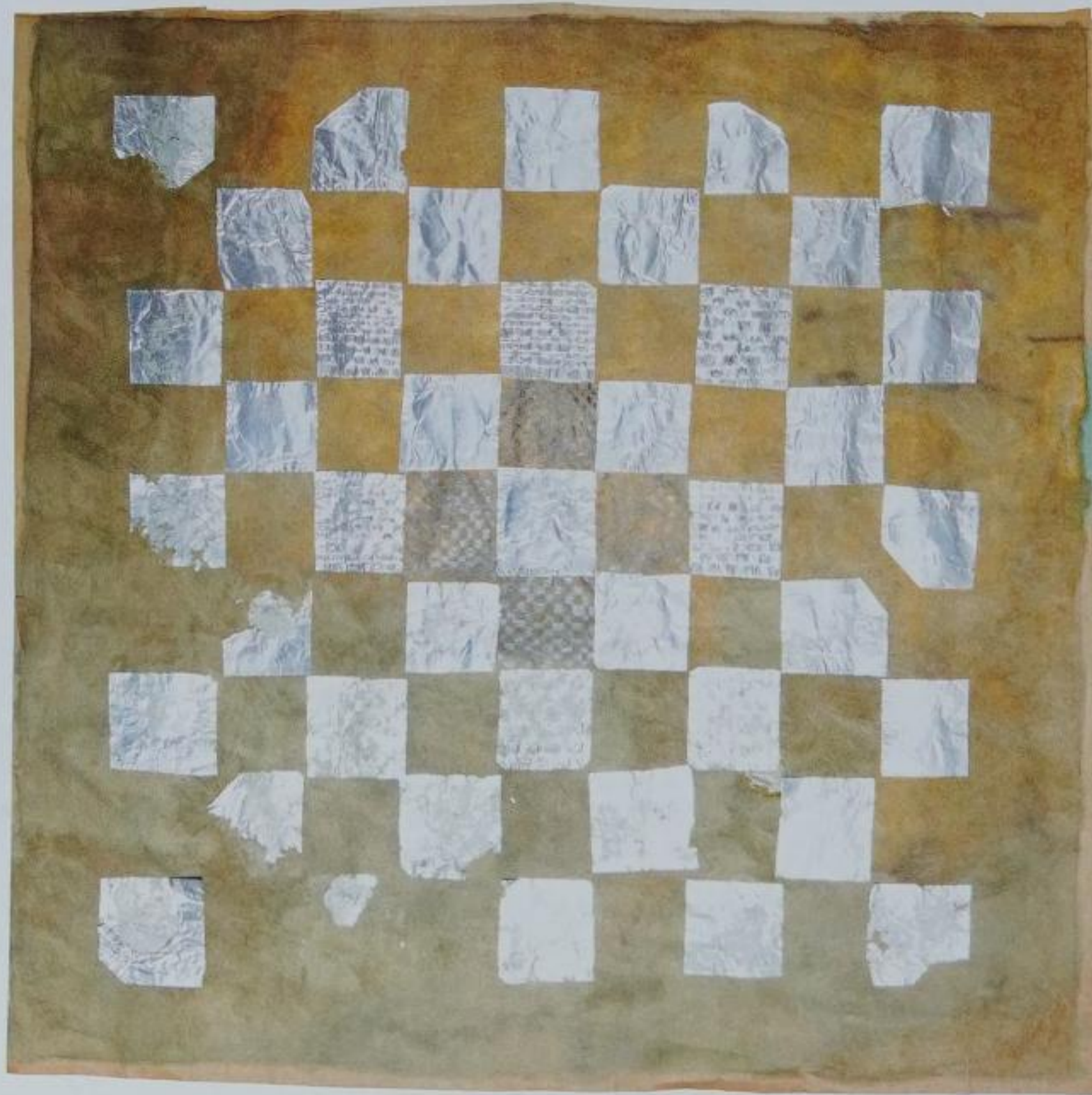


Fig. 45. Robert Whitman, *Untitled (Checkerboard)*, 1957
 Scotch tape, aluminum foil, and graphite on paper, 15¹/₄ × 15¹/₄ in. (38.7 × 38.7 cm)
 Courtesy the artist and Pace Gallery, New York

sheer plastic, adhesive tape, aluminum foil, and paper, suspended from the ceiling. On the outer and inner surfaces, he installed “different checkerboards in three-dimensions” and a “completely random” selection of geometric parts.¹²⁶ Foil laid on the ground beneath the cube was perhaps a reference to Whitman’s interest in using the floor actively. The show also included aluminum-covered canvases, drawings, collages, and another assemblage made from painted cheesecloth, old canvas, and wood sticks.

Fairfield Porter’s review of Whitman’s January 1959 debut homed in on the works’ fragility: “The rickety constructions are square or cubical with checkerboard patterns cut out of more or less limply hanging sheets of transparent plastic, on which is pasted scotch tape that pulls the plastic into ‘interesting’ wrinkles.” Situating Whitman’s work within formalist terms proved impossible. Describing a construction that incorporated red and blue lights, Porter suggested its affinity to the Bauhaus, and then immediately refuted that comparison owing to its poor construction. He held Whitman’s core interest—his “concern with time”—up for ridicule, asserting that the artwork arrived “already dated.” Within the modernist values of 1959, time was an element for which there was not yet a critical language in the visual arts.¹²⁷

Sales at the Hansa were ultimately not lucrative enough to meet operating expenses, and the gallery closed in June 1959. Equally instrumental in the closure, however, was a general sense that

the co-op era was coming to an end. The Hansa experienced two critical losses in 1958. The first occurred on January 29, when Jan Müller succumbed to heart disease, depriving the gallery of its central spirit and member artists of their beloved friend.¹²⁸ “I have just come from (Grace) church where Richard (Stankiewicz) was pall-bearer,” Follett wrote her mother on February 1. “It was ghastly. Everyone in the gallery was horrified. The church was filled—Hans Hofmann and Mrs. Hofmann and all the New York art world were there.”¹²⁹ Meyer Schapiro gave the eulogy. A year later, painter Bob Thompson, who had never met Müller, immortalized the event in his painting *The Funeral of Jan Müller* (fig. 46), based entirely on the remembrances of artists in both New York and Provincetown—an indication of the impact Müller had had on the New York art community. The second blow occurred in the summer of that year, when Stankiewicz resigned from the Hansa to be represented by Eleanor Ward at the Stable Gallery.¹³⁰ With two of its leading lights gone, the gallery’s dynamic changed. Before the start of the fall season, Ivan Karp also left, leaving the administrative tasks to Bellamy alone.

The Hansa artists’ belief in the gallery as a laboratory for experimentation and independence from critical assessment provided an important model for successive artist ventures. Hofmann’s foundation in critique lent the Hansa group both a modernist premise and a critical language for evaluating the artwork on display. Debates among members furthered their thinking about subject matter and allowed them to pursue seemingly retrograde strategies on their own terms. In fact, the pursuit of the ordinary, whether rendered realistically or appropriated from other sources, formed a bridge to the next generation of artists, associated with Pop Art. Moreover, evaluations of an artwork’s validity were not left to the critics. Rather, the art’s significance was determined among artists themselves—and the Hansa’s members could be unsparing, to say the least, in their critical assessment.

In providing opportunities for artists to have solo exhibitions as well as participate in group shows, the Hansa created a necessary forum for moving beyond the tenets of abstraction to address the actual. This independence proved foundational for Brata Gallery members, who pushed abstraction away from volume toward shape and form.

BRATA GALLERY, 89 East Tenth Street (October 1957–April 1962)

The rapid success of the Tanager and Hansa galleries galvanized other artists to form their own co-ops. In what social scientists term geographic clustering, more than a dozen galleries opened on and around East Tenth Street, all within a span of four years. The James Gallery opened in the Hansa’s former Twelfth Street loft in December 1954, followed by the Camino Gallery, which opened next door to the Tanager, at 92 East Tenth Street, in 1956. Across



Fig. 46. Bob Thompson, *The Funeral of Jan Müller*, 1958
 Oil on Masonite, 36 × 42 in. (91.4 × 106.7 cm)
 Myron Kunin Collection of American Art, Minneapolis, Minnesota

the street, two galleries opened in 1957: the March Gallery (named for the month it launched) and the Brata Gallery, which kicked off that fall at 89 East Tenth Street. That same year *New York Times* art critic Dore Ashton added downtown galleries to her review schedule, and *New Yorker* critic Robert M. Coates identified the area as a new nexus for contemporary art, noting, “it’s odd that so many galleries should have opened so close to each other, in both time and space.”¹³¹ Puzzlement aside, Ashton’s monthly column and Coates’s article defined Tenth Street as both an art district and an aesthetic, the latter bearing the marks of gestural abstraction, Hans Hofmann, and, for many Tenth Street galleries, Willem de Kooning.

Of all the co-op galleries that opened in the wake of the Tanager and Hansa, the Brata takes pride of place, owing

primarily to the way in which a core group of its artists distanced their work from Abstract Expressionism’s emotive gestures and reoriented painting and sculpture toward an analytical approach to shape and form. Brata was also one of very few galleries to include artists of color as members, in particular Japanese artists. The notion that abstraction’s cross-cultural history could be reconciled differently, via a type of synthesis, drew the American and Japanese Brata members together in realizing a new form of abstraction.¹³² Not every Brata member pursued shape as subject matter, but between 1957 and 1960, the work of those who did lent the gallery a remarkably coherent aesthetic. In rejecting subjective expression in favor of geometric forms, a core group of Brata artists pushed abstraction into new terrain. By the mid-1960s this preference for clearly discernible shapes, often

industrially fabricated, was labeled Minimalism. In other words, the Brata group was among the first to radically reimagine shape as a viable subject matter.

Unlike the Tanager and Hansa galleries, the Brata's business records have not been located, so it is not possible to reconstruct its complete exhibition history, its bylaws, or the dynamic among members. Exhibition reviews, oral histories, and artist ephemera indicate, however, that the program was composed mainly of two-man and group exhibitions; there were relatively few solo shows. The brothers John (1927–1998) and Nicholas Krushenick (1929–1999) co-founded the gallery, which coalesced with the involvement of their longtime friend Al Held (1928–2005). The Krushenicks met Held in the late 1940s, when he and Nicholas were involved with anti-Cold War and civil rights efforts among folk musicians and activists in Greenwich Village. Their shared left-wing values and activism no doubt encouraged them to engage with artists from different cultural backgrounds and traditions.

In 1949 Held had taken advantage of the GI Bill to study art in Paris, where he became involved in the artist-run Galerie Huit and developed a broad network of artist friends, many of them American. After returning to the U.S. in 1953, he settled back in New York permanently in 1956, where he reconnected with the Krushenicks.

A NEW ATTITUDE

The Krushenick brothers undoubtedly occupied the heart of the Brata enterprise. Of the two, Nicholas is deservedly better known. His mature art is often described as a merging of Minimalism and Pop; the work he exhibited at the Brata was prescient in its anticipation of both. Before the Brata, Nicholas was a member of the Camino Gallery, which he described as a community of well-intentioned “creeping turkeys,” reluctant to make decisions and stuck in their ways like “old ladies and fuddy-duddies.”¹³³ After a year there, he took matters into his own hands, quitting his job in the carpentry shop at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and enlisting his brother's help in opening a framing shop with space for a gallery in front. The below-grade space at 89 East Tenth Street was essentially a basement with areas of exposed brick walls. The Krushenicks painted it white, erected temporary walls for their shop, and affixed gallery lighting throughout. Proceeds from the Krushenicks' framing business enabled them to keep the gallery staffed, and the nominal co-op fees they charged member artists helped support overhead.¹³⁴ The name Brata, credited to John, is a play on *brati*, which means “brothers” in Russian.¹³⁵

Held encouraged the Krushenicks to enlist members from among the artists he had met during his travels.¹³⁶ The Parisian-trained group he brought to the Brata was especially sympathetic to the work of Earl Kerkam (1891–1965), whose paintings blended



Fig. 47. Nanae Momiyama with John and Nicholas Krushenick at the Brata Gallery, New York, 1958

Nanae Momiyama papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

Cubist-inflected forms, sophisticated deployment of color, and representational subjects. Although little-known today,¹³⁷ Kerkam was once widely commended for merging lessons from the School of Paris with American abstraction. Living between New York and Paris (Kerkam “borrowed” friends' studios while in the U.S., including Franz Kline's) increased his influence, and lent the group an abiding skepticism toward de Kooning in particular and expressive figuration in general; indeed, Brata artists reached farther back in history, to the compositional geometries of the European modernists. Nicholas Krushenick did not study in Paris but nonetheless cited the impact of seeing Henri Matisse's late work at the MoMA in 1951, particularly his use of pure color and flat, cut-out shapes: “I had a great feeling for the work, but I wanted to do it as an American.”¹³⁸ Held, however, exemplified the Brata sensibility in positing, “if Pollock was the epitome of the subjective, and Mondrian was the epitome of the objective, if you took the two and put them together you'd have the universal.”¹³⁹ Although Held ultimately abandoned this idea, his sense that composition should be conceptualized factually, empirically, and not emotively, intuitively, is significant. Making form itself the subject of art was a strategy embraced by Held and other Brata artists.

Assembling the nascent gallery's membership roster, Nicholas invited a MoMA co-worker to join, the painter Robert “Boy” Kobayashi (1925–2015), who had studied at the Honolulu School of Art in his native Hawaii, and then moved to New York,

where he took art classes at the Brooklyn Museum. At the time Nicholas Krushenick approached him, Kobayashi had just begun exhibiting his paintings, and had shown in a Camino Gallery group invitational in the summer of 1956, alongside the Krushenicks. Kobayashi's wife, the painter Nanae Momiyama (1924–2002), also joined the Brata. Born in Japan, she had graduated from Bunka Gakuen University in Tokyo, and in 1954 received a fellowship from the Japanese government to continue her studies with Morris Kantor at the Art Students League. She met and married Kobayashi not long after her arrival in New York.

In Japan, fine-art students were exposed to modernist methodologies during the prolonged American Occupation following World War II. Extending through 1952, the Occupation exerted influence on Japanese schools, where Western sociocultural values came to dominate, in tension with Japanese aesthetic tradition.¹⁴⁰ It is difficult to fully contextualize the impact of American abstract art on postwar Japanese society, but recent scholarship has shown that the American presence in Japan sparked new aesthetic strategies that confronted Japanese tradition while reinforcing skepticism toward the West, particularly in regard to American encroachment into Asian nations during the Korean War and to America's Cold War policies in general. During the late 1940s and 1950s, the pedagogical purpose of fine-art training in Japan was to “liberate tradition from rigid orthodoxies, and to universalize modern art—which was mired in staid Eurocentrism—with an infusion from the East.” Japanese art students were further encouraged to “integrate Western notions of Modernism with Japanese forms of culture in order to achieve an international art of ‘world relevance.’”¹⁴¹

Held also extended invitations to Ronald Bladen (1918–1988), a painter (better known today for his sculpture) whom he had met during a brief stint in San Francisco, and to George Sugarman (1912–1999), a sculptor friend from Paris.¹⁴² Sugarman agreed to take part and asked Ed Clark (b. 1926) and Sal Romano (1926–2015) to join, each having recently returned to the States from Paris when their GI Bill benefits ended.¹⁴³ They were friendly with another American studying in France, Kenneth Van Sickle (b. 1932), several of whose photographs of Brata artists are included in these pages (figs. 5, 48, 56, 57).

In the end, seventeen artists joined the Brata Gallery.¹⁴⁴ Their first exhibition was a members' group show that opened on October 25, 1957 (fig. 49), followed by a drawing exhibition of gallery artists that opened on November 15. Ashton wrote enthusiastically of the Brata and deemed it “a welcome addition, since in its opening group show the gallery offers work by seventeen artists, few of them well known, but all of whom present personality. That is, each painting and sculpture is marked with the artist's seriousness and respect for his materials, showing that the ranks



Fig. 48. Ed Clark and Sal Romano, c. 1959
Photograph: Kenneth van Sickle. Courtesy the photographer

BRATA GALLERY
89 EAST 10th STREET NEW YORK, N.Y.
GRAMERCY 5-9240

Opening

GROUP SHOW

Paintings—Sculpture
October 25th—Thru November 14th

TAKESHI ASADA	JOHN KRUSHENICK
RONALD BLADEN	NICHOLAS KRUSHENICK
EDWARD CLARK	NANAE MOMIYAMA
WILLIAM CRESTON	JACOB ARNOLD RABINOWITZ
BERENICE D'VORZON	SALVATORE M. ROMANO
JOSEPH FELDMAN	KNUTE STILES
AL HELD	GEORGE SUGARMAN
BOY KOBAYASHI	JULIUS TOBIAS
JOSEPH KONZAL	

PREVIEW OCTOBER 25th
FRIDAY EVENING 8 to 10 P.M.

Open Daily—12-6 P.M.

Fig. 49. Announcement for *Group Show*,
Brata Gallery, New York, October 25–November 14, 1957
Offset print, 11 × 8½ in. (27.9 × 21.6 cm)
Nanae Momiyama papers, Archives of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC



of the younger avant-garde can still provide us with paintings of professional quality."¹⁴⁵

Member artists' propensity for dialogue and exchange is nicely illustrated in an anecdote from Clark, a rare African American member of a Tenth Street co-op.¹⁴⁶ One of Clark's most vivid recollections of his initial years in New York is a visit to Al Held's studio, where he saw and admired Held's paintings on paper. Struck by the work's economy of means, Clark, too, began to work with paper—but he kept the materials distinct, employing paper as a collage element affixed to the canvas. Working with paper led him to expand past the rectangular limit of the canvas (fig. 50). As Clark explained, he "tried to put some torn paper over the canvas, but nothing worked until it went outside the edges, so I built up behind the limp paper with wood."¹⁴⁷ By extending the edges of the picture plane outside the rectangular frame, Clark made, in 1957, the first shaped paintings of the postwar period in New York, completing two. He included one in the final Brata group show of 1957 and was surprised when the Krushenicks installed his painting on the back wall, in the center, making it the first artwork visible upon entering the gallery. That particular group show opened on December 11, when, for the first time on Tenth Street, all the co-op galleries coordinated their openings on the same evening. "No one had ever done that before," Clark recalled. "You couldn't get down the street, it was so crowded: rich people, poor people, everything."¹⁴⁸ An estimated two thousand people toured the galleries and saw Clark's painting. In her review of the event, Ashton again praised the Brata, citing it as "distinguished in installation and decent in selection."¹⁴⁹

Clark was the first Brata member to receive a one-man show. His March 1958 debut was reviewed by Ashton, as well as by *Art News* and *Arts*. All remarked on his accomplished color sense, which established spatiality through gestural sweeps that foregrounded the texture of the brush.¹⁵⁰ But optical experience was paramount. The eye traveled "up and down, over and across, forward and backward—one is always aware of the canvas edge as a positive element," James Schuyler opined in *Art News*.¹⁵¹ Ashton identified Clark as one of the more adventurous painters on Tenth Street, impressed by "the effect of massive color areas juxtaposed. His paintings are plotted with wedges of dark blue and black set in contrast to scarlet and other high-key colors."¹⁵²

Another artist to receive attention from the art press was Nanae Momiyama, whose solo show at the Brata followed Clark's, and was on view from April 18 to May 8, 1958. Trained in the traditional

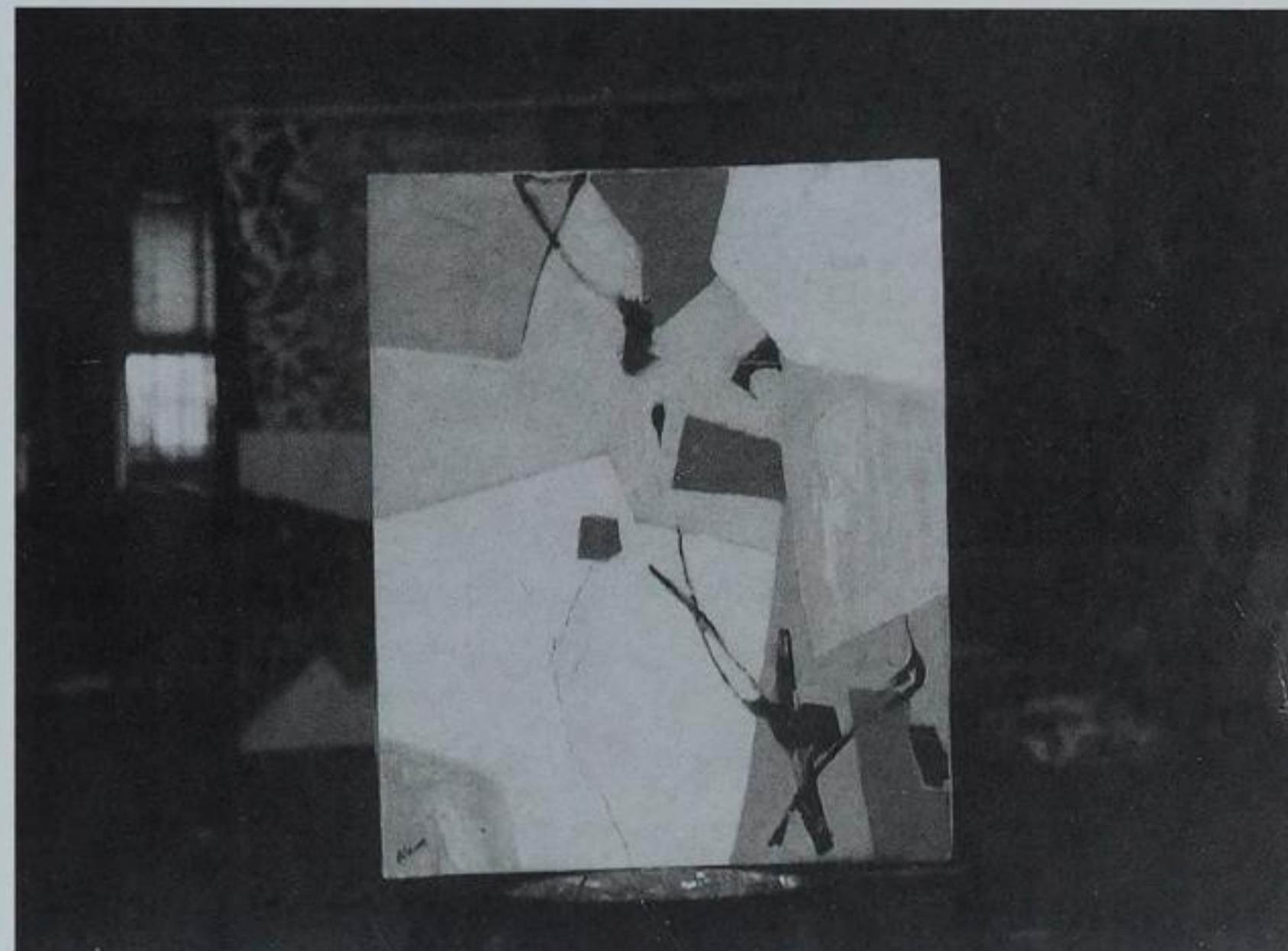


Fig. 51. Painting by Nanae Momiyama, title unknown, location and dimensions unknown, 1959
Nanae Momiyama papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

Japanese *sumi-e* ink painting technique, Momiyama exhibited in several Tokyo-based annuals beginning in 1944, including a prestigious show focusing on abstraction at the National Museum of Modern Art (1952), and she enjoyed solo shows of her work at Tokyo's Takemiya and Form galleries just prior to leaving for her fellowship in New York.¹⁵³ In the U.S., Momiyama's work initially combined strong line with organic shapes, in colors ranging from bright to muted. These shapes echo aspects of the natural world, and in some areas they appear slightly anthropomorphic. This series constitutes Momiyama's response to "vital forms," the curving, futuristic shapes prevalent in contemporary American design that were linked to the atomic age. It may represent her attempt to work through the repercussions of such an association.

For her 1958 Brata exhibition, however, Momiyama broke with this approach. Instead, she showed a series based entirely on painterly textures and simplified forms. Fields of brown predominate, and areas of white, black, and primary colors intersect, sometimes in irregular shapes and other times in the form of jagged brushstrokes (fig. 51). "Twenty-five interesting statements composed of large, variously sided geometrical areas complete the debut of an emotional Tokyo painter," wrote *Arts* reviewer R. Warren Dash. While Dash's characterization of Momiyama as "emotional" casts doubt on his reliability as a critic, he ultimately praised her willingness to embrace ugliness, mentioning how "in soaked areas of great, tumultuous splatterings, (she) sagely permits gravity to substitute for the painterly gesture."¹⁵⁴

Critic James Schuyler also questioned Momiyama's skill, devising a neologism to pinpoint the issue: "(She) has fine color

Fig. 50. Ed Clark, *Untitled*, 1957

Oil on canvas and paper, on wood, 55 × 46 in. (139.7 × 116.8 cm)

The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago. Restricted gift of an anonymous donor; Samuel A. Marx Endowment, 1999.243



Fig. 52. Robert Kobayashi and Nanae Momiyama at Brata Gallery, New York, February 1959
 Courtesy Kate Keller Kobayashi, New York and Honolulu, and Moe's Meat Market, a gallery, New York

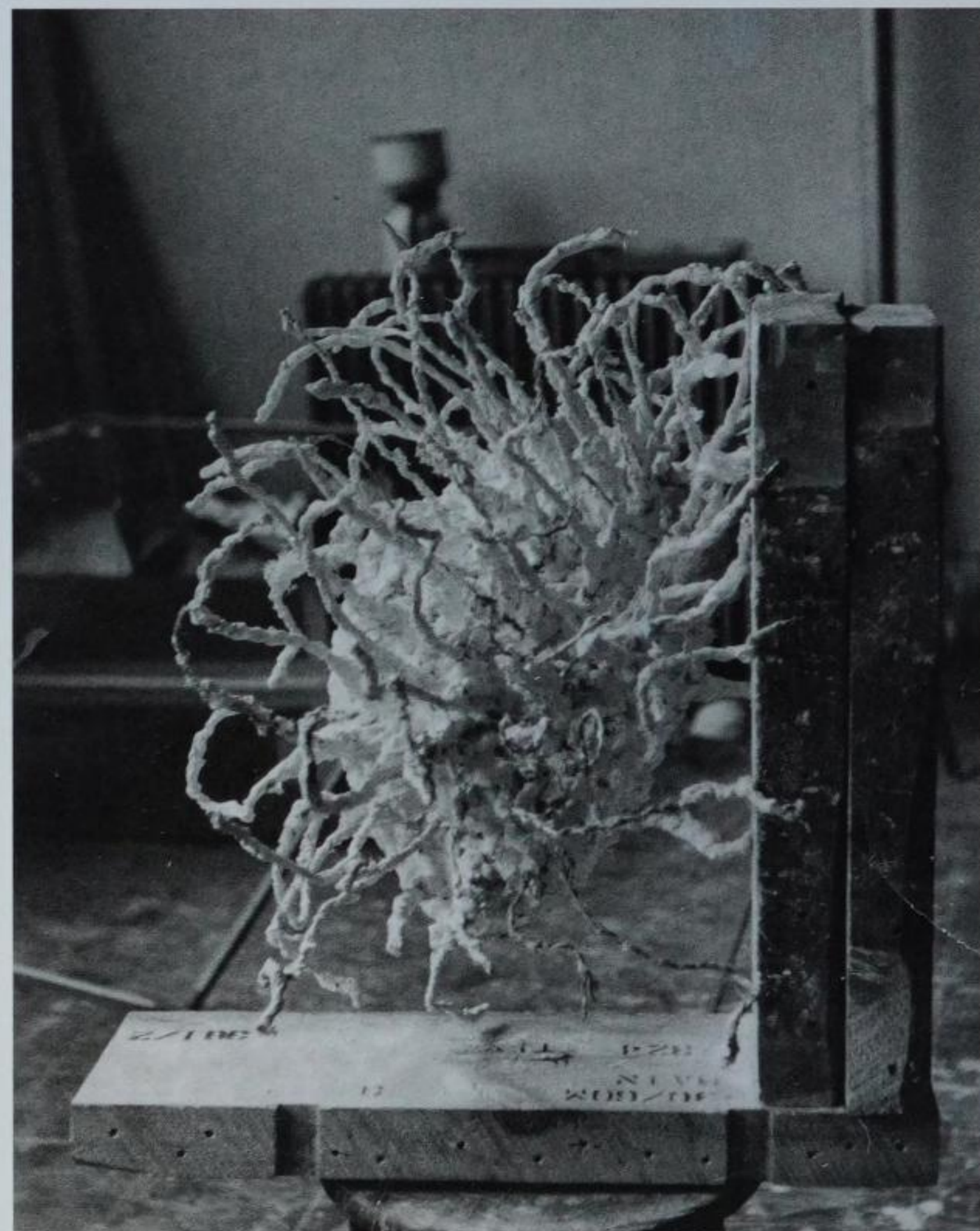
and a pleasant infacility." More forgivingly he noted, "A lot of white is used, and if sometimes it exceeds its purpose, varied brushing gives it breath. Her small pictures, that give to grey a special savor, seem best realized."¹⁵⁵ Of these more delicate aspects of her work, Kobayashi said, "her paintings are Oriental," situating them apart from gesture-focused American abstraction.¹⁵⁶ He and his wife had received media attention for several years, owing mainly to Momiyama's participation in activities sponsored by the Japanese embassy or the Japan Society and her frequent donning of traditional Japanese dress at public events, which garnered curiosity. Such (generally positive) public attention and success early in her career, and as an abstract painter, was atypical for most artist couples, as the male artist was the one most often accorded critical attention. Perhaps as a way to distinguish himself from his photogenic and energetic wife, or perhaps because he simply saw her in those terms, Kobayashi foregrounded Momiyama as Japanese, not American, and the press often followed suit.

That said, Kobayashi's work of the period—what little of it survives—might also be aptly described as delicate. Indeed, his attraction to nature and beauty appears far more insistent than Momiyama's. One marvelous example is the plaster-covered metal sculpture *Suva*, from 1957 (fig. 53). Part bird, part bug, *Suva* is caught, as if mid-crawl, on planks of wood, which serve as a base. The creature's body is in full bloom, with wiry elements energetically jutting out. In two canvases from 1960, Kobayashi captured the same circular vigor in paint. One work portrays an exploding chrysanthemum in a vase, while another contains short white, red, and black swipes within a broader swirl of black and green (fig. 54).

Fig. 53. Robert Kobayashi, *Suva*, 1957
 Courtesy Kate Keller Kobayashi, New York and Honolulu, and Moe's Meat Market, a gallery, New York



No records have been found to indicate that Kobayashi had a solo show at the Brata.¹⁵⁷ He is known to have participated in a three-man exhibition in February 1958, but James Schuyler, in his review of the exhibition, failed to discuss Kobayashi's contribution.¹⁵⁸ In *Arts*, R. Warren Dash mentioned that Kobayashi's work was not available, which may indicate that the artist had not yet completed it.¹⁵⁹ Kobayashi did, however, receive critical interest due to his MoMA affiliation, and in that same year he was awarded \$2,500 in a competition sponsored by the John Hay Whitney Foundation.¹⁶⁰



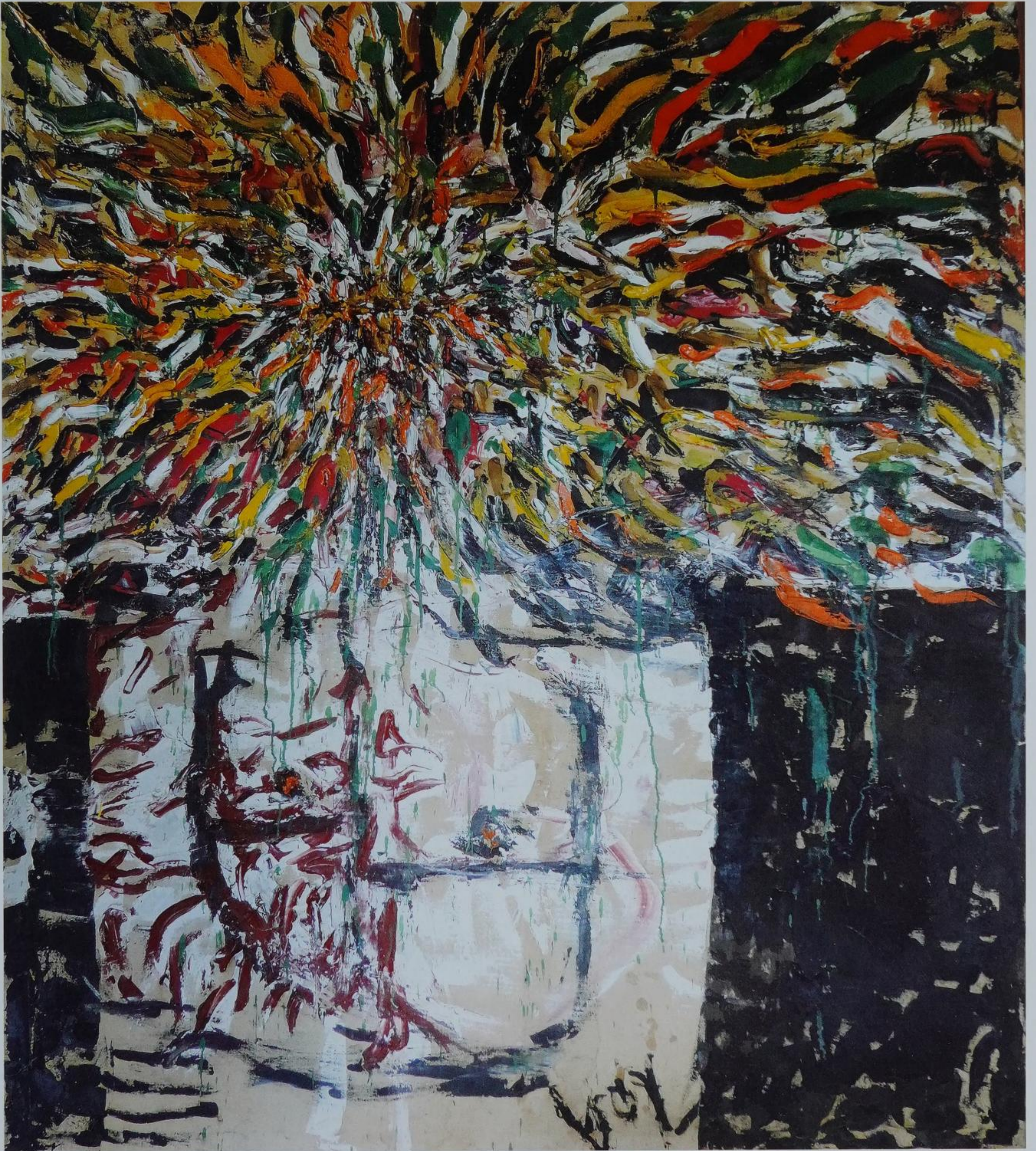


Fig. 54. Robert Kobayashi, *Untitled*, c. 1960
Oil on canvas, 72 × 63 in. (182.9 × 160 cm)
Private collection

Momiyama and Kobayashi were not the only Japanese artists associated with the Brata. In 1959 Ed Clark met Yayoi Kusama (b. 1929), a sociable artist newly arrived from Japan. Her studio was filled with large-scale paintings devoted to a weblike pattern built up from small, hand-painted arcs (what the artist calls “dots”) that formed both texture and pattern. The “guys” at the Brata, as Clark referred to them—and more than any other co-op, the Brata was chiefly male—were not particularly interested. But Clark was so insistent that Kusama’s artwork was unlike anything he had ever seen that they gave her the October 9–29, 1959, slot for a solo exhibition.¹⁶¹ The five fourteen-foot-long paintings she installed

at the gallery, now known as the Infinity Net series, took up the entire space and created an environment that could be sensed but not discerned. When he photographed her making the paintings in the late ’50s, Kenneth Van Sickle recalled, Kusama claimed that the Pacific Ocean had informed this series (figs. 55, 56).¹⁶² She later credited the dot patterns to inner visions, however: “My desire was to predict and measure the infinity of the unbounded universe, from my own position in it, with dots—an accumulation of particles forming the negative spaces in the net.”¹⁶³

The exhibition’s impact was seismic; no other artist had achieved an installation that evoked multi-dimensionality while maintaining the essentially two-dimensional nature of the canvas. The installation itself was essential to understanding the artworks; reviews had to be written *in* the gallery, based on the critics’ direct experience of the finished work, not on the work as it had appeared in the studio. The exhibition’s visual impact sparked sustained, serious commentary from the art press; three such critical reactions are worth a closer look. The work’s resistance to formal analysis proved troubling to Dore Ashton:

Her paintings are puzzling in their big, obsessional repetitions. They are huge, white canvases, lightly scored with gray dots and partly washed over again with white film. The results are infinitely extending compositions utterly dependent on the viewer’s patient scrutiny of the subtle transitions in tone. Her exhibition is without question a striking *tour de force*, but disturbing nonetheless in its tightly held austerity.¹⁶⁴

In *Art News*, Donald Judd never used the word “obsessive” when describing the effect. Combining formal scrutiny with deductive assertion in discussing the series’ relevance within the trajectory of contemporary art, Judd deemed Kusama “advanced in concept.” He saw her repetitions as a demonstration of the “great assurance and strength which even a small area conveys,” and he pinpointed the fragility within the grand scale, comparing the paintings and their pattern to lace—closely approximating Kusama’s ultimate “net” designation. Kusama’s was a series “both complex and simple” that suggested universality, akin to Held’s abovementioned modernist formula marrying Pollock and Mondrian, but even closer to the unified vision of an international language of modern art.¹⁶⁵

Sidney Tillim’s review for *Arts*, nearly an entire column in length, left no doubt as to Kusama’s importance, calling her “one of the most promising new talents to appear on the New York scene



Fig. 55. Yayoi Kusama in her studio, New York, c. 1959
Photograph: Kenneth van Sickle. Courtesy the photographer

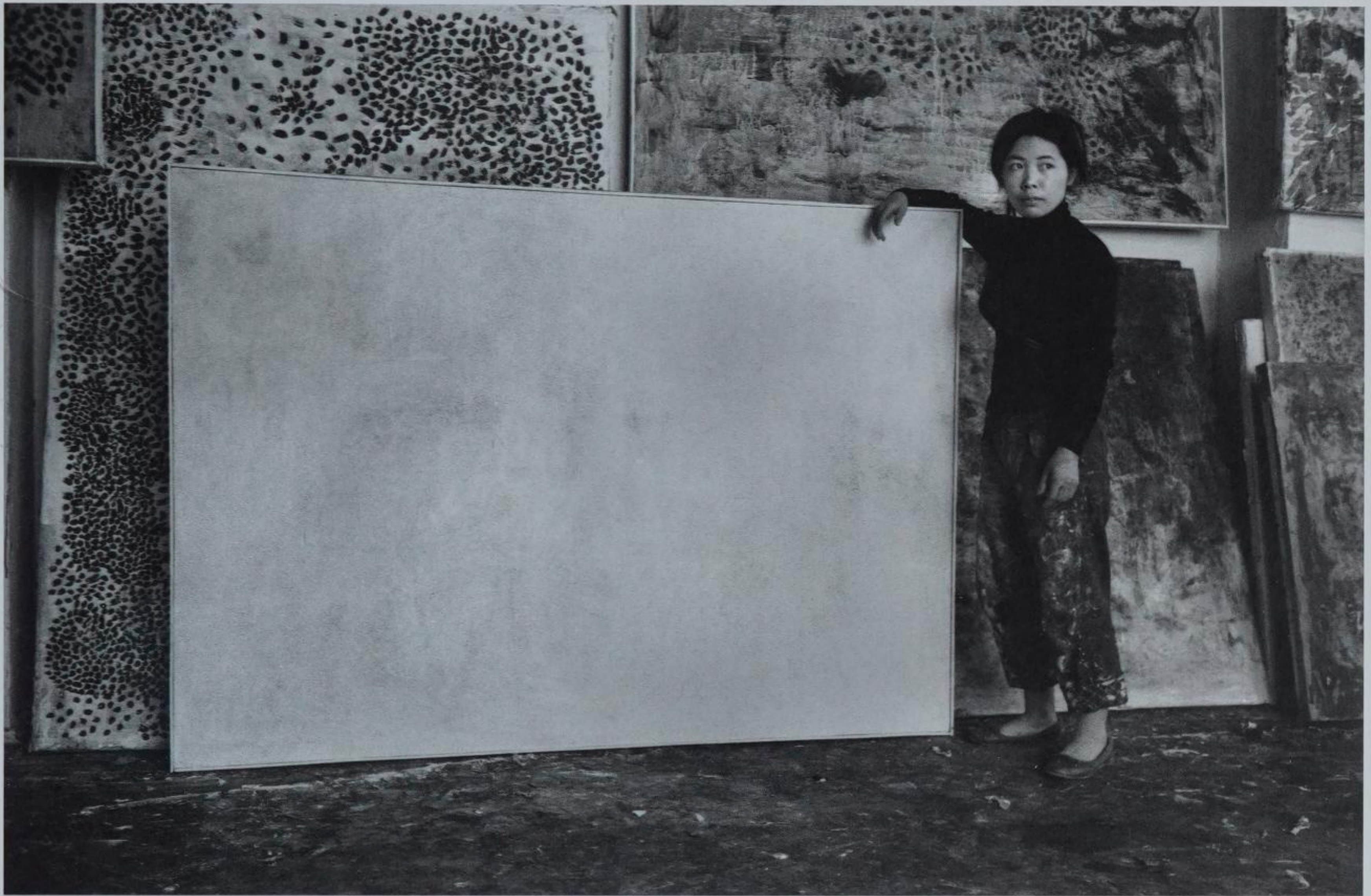


Fig. 56. Yayoi Kusama with painting from her Infinity Net series, c. 1959
 Photograph: Kenneth van Sickle. Courtesy the photographer

in years.”¹⁶⁶ In their controlled use of paint, repetition of form, and massive scale, Kusama’s paintings, he suggested, broke with previous understandings of the genre of painting itself. “This stunning and quietly overwhelming exhibition is likely to prove and remain the sensation of a season,” he proclaimed, defining a moment and setting stakes quite distinct from the usual painterly analysis found in critical reviews. Drawing comparisons with Pollock, he described the paintings as “vast meshes of white which form a net over a darker ground . . . a singular plane of continuity” that, he warned, in an example of proto-Minimalist criticism, ran the risk of overexposure to “the hazards of determinism and monotony.” Nevertheless, by situating the series as the culmination of a ten-year trajectory, Tillim predicted that Kusama had the patience and flexibility to transcend the limitations he mapped. He remained unable to locate Kusama’s style in her person, instead ascribing to the work an emotive detachment that stemmed directly from his generalized notion of an “Asian sensibility.”

Kusama’s breakthrough was unprecedented; no other Brata artist would achieve the same critical renown during their time at the gallery. Each Brata artist absorbed lessons from Kusama’s approach, however, and each sought new strategies according to their own concerns.

SHAPES AND FORMS

Salvatore “Sal” Romano shared a studio with Ed Clark; while Clark’s work was imbued with movement, Romano’s was still. The brick tenement buildings on the Lower East Side, where he lived, inspired his series of paintings incorporating rectangular forms built up in related hues. In fact, *The Wall* (1958), in shades of red, orange, and yellow, directly references Lower East Side buildings (fig. 57). Combining acrylic and plaster, he imbued the work with texture and depth; indeed, his “fluent abstraction, rendered in related tones of blue, gray and occasional greens,” captured Ashton’s attention.¹⁶⁷ Eventually, however, his paintings moved away from stolid forms toward a more gestural approach, often using white



Fig. 57. Sal Romano, *The Wall*, 1958
Acrylic and plaster on canvas, 64 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 64 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (163.8 × 163.8 cm)
Estate of Sal Romano, New York



Fig. 58. Sal Romano, *Monk*, 1959–60
 Acrylic and plaster on canvas, 25 × 30³/₄ in. (63.5 × 78.1 cm)
 Estate of Sal Romano, New York

paint. One transitional work, *Monk* (1959–60), echoes *The Wall*'s rectangularity but in five vertical swipes of gray and black that move steadily across a central axis. Other parts of the painting incorporate vibrant red and purple, and still others overlay warmer tones in a wash of black and gray (fig. 58). Wiping away color—as initially seen in Kusama's work—characterizes a “white” series by Romano. In *Painting No. IV*, from 1960, for example, the artist employs acrylic and plaster to suggest life under a field of white that, like plaster, appears to cover and hide the darkness beneath. Reviewers of Romano's one-man show in the spring of 1960 pointed to this use of white. “Romano trowels on the color,” wrote Helen DeMott for *Arts*, “then uses broad, spadelike strokes which sweep the

canvas with white . . . that envelop and hold the blues, yellows and alizarin.”¹⁶⁸ Irving Sandler, writing for *Art News*, was also struck by the way white came to dominate and to eliminate gesture, calling it “simultaneously aggressive and recessive.”¹⁶⁹

Fellow member Ronald Bladen is better known today as a sculptor, owing to his breakout installation at the Jewish Museum's legendary *Primary Structures* exhibition of 1966, but he spent much of the 1950s making large-scale abstract paintings with greatly built-up surfaces (fig. 59). He received a solo exhibition of paintings at the Brata in May 1958. While some of the exhibited paintings, among them *Road* (c. 1956–59), feature high-key colors and swirling forms, others, such as the contemporaneous *Untitled*



Fig. 59. Ronald Bladen, *Space Landscape*, c. 1957–59
 Oil on Masonite, 19½ × 14 in. (49.5 × 35.6 cm)
 High Museum of Art, Atlanta. Gift of the Alex Katz Foundation, 2013.381

No. 9 (White Painting), are seemingly monochrome, bisected by a few areas of contrasting color. Homing in on the paintings inspired by landscape, Ashton described the effect as “heavily weighted with paint and composed around meandering lines.” She likened the paintings to a “matrix such as a country road twists through a landscape.”¹⁷⁰ But Schuyler was less convinced by the paintings in Bladen’s second solo show at the Brata, in March 1960. “They are Tenth Street maps of no place,” he wrote, likening the style to derivative Expressionism, “here is the mail box, this way leads to the store.” Quips aside, Schuyler also acknowledged

Bladen’s mastery as an artist, particularly in his handling of “pure and mixed color, of flatness and relief, and most importantly, the individuality of each picture (a cindery texture for spring yellows, greens, fresh earths), suggesting an original temperament and an emerging style.”¹⁷¹

While shape would come to occupy Bladen’s concerns in 1960, Al Held, Nicholas Krushenick, and George Sugarman had already reached that point. Sugarman described his initial explorations of form as a student of Ossip Zadkine’s in Paris, where he realized that his ideas were leading him toward tableaux that diverged from modernist rules of composition:

I didn’t let [Zadkine] look at my work, because I realized by that time [the early 1950s] I had an idea of space. . . . I was doing crazy things and he didn’t have an idea of what it was about. I was already trying to get away, without the slightest idea—I didn’t use the word “the object,” then, I was very innocent. But I would take clay and use two or three sculpture tables, and pat it and make a field, and put things in it. I had no idea what I was doing, but it was getting away from the object, right. And [Zadkine] had no idea of what it was.¹⁷²

At the Brata, Sugarman abandoned his tabletop process but not his goal of abandoning the object. To make a sculpture less object-like, he explored notions of seriality and horizontality, handling each as a structural precept. He eschewed Cubism, avoiding relational compositional strategy in favor of maintaining clarity among the individual parts.¹⁷³ Emerging from this investigation, begun in 1958, were works constructed with pieces of wood he carved and joined together; a few from the late 1950s were placed directly on the floor. “I developed the idea of multiple forms in one sculpture,” the artist recalled, “and [of] going to the floor, getting what is known as ‘off the pedestal.’”¹⁷⁴ In *Four Forms in Walnut* (1959), four discretely carved pieces of walnut wood are unified into a connected sequence (fig. 60). Judd’s famous observation about witnessing “specific objects” as “one thing after the other” describes the logic of this sculptural aggregate of parts, each remaining distinct and legible

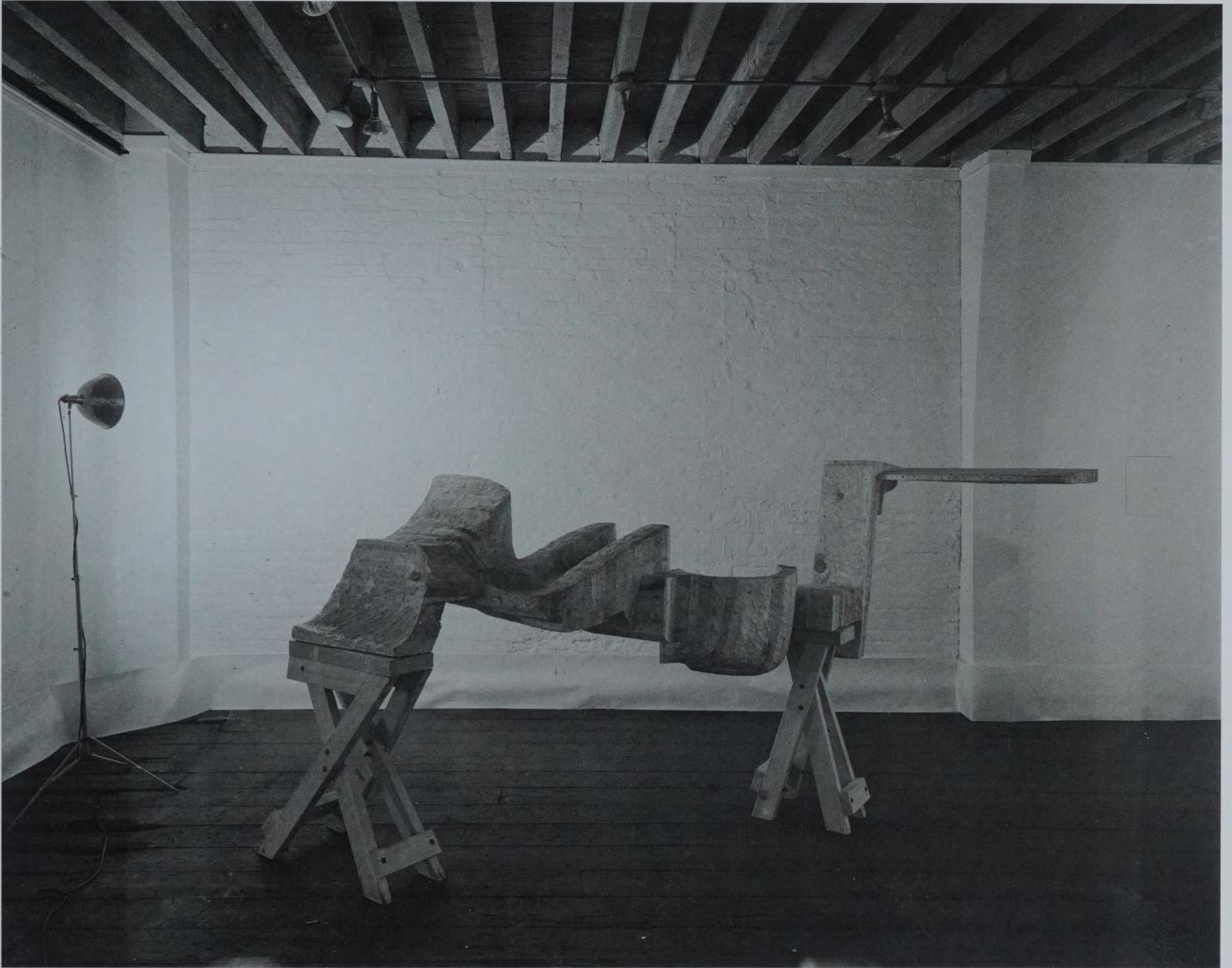


Fig. 60. George Sugarman's *Four Forms in Walnut*, 1959
 Rudy Burckhardt papers, Archives of American Art
 Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

as a singular shape.¹⁷⁵ Sugarman's work was included in group shows at the Brata, and of his first appearance, in March 1958, Schuyler wrote approvingly of his sculptures' "humor and formal attractiveness."¹⁷⁶ Dash also cited Sugarman's sculpture, calling out the "eroded shapes fitted with mechanical precision."¹⁷⁷

In his paintings, Al Held pursued shape and form to achieve a similar degree of clarity (fig. 61). He was an active member of the Brata only during the gallery's first season, which coincided with his incorporation of black-outlined geometric shapes into his canvases. In 1957–58 no critical language existed to describe his approach; Ashton used the term "cold" to emphasize an emotionally bereft quality.¹⁷⁸ But to accuse Held of "coldness" was overly harsh

and ultimately inaccurate. As Held reflected, in 1975, on the limitations of formalist language in the late 1950s:

There was a kind of general agreement about what art was. . . . Everybody somehow used the same words and those words seemed to be acceptable to very different . . . kinds of abstraction, not necessarily abstraction, but art. And even when I started doing those big black geometric paintings I knew they were different but my rhetoric was still the same rhetoric as the rhetoric of the 1950s. The paintings kept moving but the rhetoric was actually two or three years behind.¹⁷⁹



Fig. 61. Al Held, *Untitled*, 1960

Acrylic and ink on tracing paper mounted on hardboard, 18¹/₈ × 24 in. (46 × 61 cm)
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven. Richard Brown Baker, B.A. 1935, Collection

Held went on to explain the difference between saying and expressing—the former a concrete, communicative process; the latter, an emotional one—or, setting emotive painterly gesture in relation to the objective. Each quality is left distinct, and ultimately unresolved. Held credited this dialectic to John Cage.¹⁸⁰ Painting thickly with a palette knife, not a brush, Held “structured” the painting into forms. In his own words:

Usually they were circles and triangles but . . . they weren’t obvious, they were very broken up. . . . It wasn’t simply a series of marks on a canvas but that they would congeal into images and the images were always abstract, never figurative or literal. Then the geometry started to emerge. Then very, very slowly what happened was that these groupings began to take on geometric [shapes].¹⁸¹

Held’s pursuit of geometric forms caught the attention of commercial dealers. Not long after seeing his paintings at the Brata in the fall of 1957, Elinor Poindexter invited Held to join her gallery roster at a monthly stipend, and he left the co-op after one season. He was not, however, the only Brata artist interested in bringing geometry forward. Nicholas Krushenick

also experimented with shape, but departing from the emergence of form from a color field, he embarked on “a central image idea.” Krushenick’s first solo show at the Brata, in October 1960, included both paintings and collages. In these spare creations, he situated simplified, easily recognizable forms in direct correlation to a rectangular paper support; the shape of the paper, in other words, was not incidental but integral to the composition. Taking his cue from Matisse, he said, “I started to cut paper and put it up against clean fields of color. And I kind of liked the beautiful shock value it had.”¹⁸²

His collages were well reviewed by the critics—especially the triptychs, in which the central shape extended past the frame’s edge and into the flanking panels (fig. 62). Like Sugarman, Krushenick emphasized a horizontal

reading, but he avoided associations with landscape through the hard geometry of his work. Ashton likened the series to filmstrips, seriality with slight variations between images.¹⁸³ In another break with the Tenth Street style, Krushenick, like Romano, gave up oil paint for acrylic Liquitex, which became commercially available in 1956. Unlike oil, acrylic paint does not seep into the surface; it stays flat, which is especially visible when working with paper. Krushenick also exploited the translucent effects of acrylic, but he would later reject such “painterly” techniques in favor of pure, unadulterated color. As if anticipating this shift, critic Vivien Raynor wrote, “Krushenick has a marvelously unfogged eye and a sense of form.”¹⁸⁴ His clarity of form attracted increasing interest, and in 1962 he left the Brata for the uptown Graham Gallery.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Notably, the Brata Gallery also served as a venue for touring shows, like a museum. This practice merits further exploration. In the winter of 1958, possibly at the urging of Ronald Bladen or Al Held, the Brata collaborated with Ethel Gechtoff’s San Francisco-based East and West Gallery on an exhibition of Bay Area artists that was panned by the critics.¹⁸⁵ Later that year, in November 1958, the Brata mounted an exhibition of Japanese abstract art alongside works by member artists. Organized by Momiyama in collaboration with the Japan Society and the Japanese government, the show was reviewed in the *New York Times*, *Arts*, and *Art News*.¹⁸⁶ Brata artists also participated in touring shows; through Ed Clark, the



Fig. 62. Nicholas Krushenick, *Untitled*, 1959
 Acrylic on paper collage, 40 × 90 in. (101.6 × 228.6 cm)
 Estate of Nicholas Krushenick. Courtesy Garth Greenan Gallery, New York

exhibition *Groupe Brata* opened at Galerie R. Creuze in Paris in January 1959, and in 1962 Momiyama arranged for a tour of works from the Brata Gallery to museums in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka.¹⁸⁷

In the late 1950s, the Brata was not the only New York gallery to enter into dialogue with Japanese modern art. Concurrent with the November 1958 Japanese art show at the Brata, the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York held an exhibition of works by the Osaka-based Gutai artists, the critical reception of whose art was flagrantly dismissive. The Gutai group was known for its provocative, boundary-pushing actions that overturned the notion of a painting as a self-consciously composed artwork, instead transforming it into an arena for performance. Writing in *Art News*, Thomas Hess roundly rejected the group's radical social and political goals. He saw the works' absent personality as something that might appeal "to many interior decorators who seek exactly this sort of chintz."¹⁸⁸ These parallel artmaking strategies were of course not exclusive to Japan—Allan Kaprow's Hansa environments are a case in point (discussed above)—but the critical discourse surrounding these two showings accentuated the fissures that would soon undo modernism's stranglehold on the New York art scene.

By 1960, Ed Clark, Yayoi Kusama, George Sugarman, and Nicholas Krushenick had left the Brata, and the gallery thereafter lost its luster. John Krushenick moved to a less expensive space on Third

Avenue, maintaining both the gallery and the framing business until 1965. The Brata Gallery's first phase coincided with the pinnacle of Abstract Expressionism, and its artists countered its dominance. "If those young artists hadn't asserted themselves (by forming galleries)," Nicholas Krushenick noted, "the very tight clique of abstract expressionists who had the whole thing wrapped up for themselves would have still been in control for a lot more years."¹⁸⁹

Brata artists' sparer, more direct use of color and shape later become "tendencies" employed by artists showing in the uptown galleries that defined Pop and Minimal art. But without the Brata's exhibitions, especially Yayoi Kusama's October 1959 show, such tendencies would have been much more difficult to detect and, most likely, less influential. Nicholas Krushenick summed up the endeavor's focal point, visibility: "Part of the idea of being a painter in New York—you put your paintings up and your fellow artists look at them and they're the first to judge you. And then if they really get excited they start talking about you, and to this day I think this is what really makes an artist. Not how good a dealer you have."¹⁹⁰ The gallery is a space for conversation between artists, and at the Brata, the members invited artists to consider the sequential use of shape as a subject. This approach canted toward the conceptual, and between 1957 and 1960, the Brata Gallery postulated a new direction for art that defied formal aesthetics and, as discussed in the following chapter, required a new critical language to discuss.



MAN IN STREET

2. City as Muse

In discussions of co-op galleries, a new, dismissive tone emerged in the late 1950s, with the harshest criticisms coming initially from artists. “I think in 1959 [Tenth Street] hit its height,” Nicholas Krushenick recalled. “It sort of hit its zenith and in 1960 I left Brata because I felt that Tenth Street had had it.”¹ In 1959, with the *New York Times*’s hiring of John Canaday as its chief art critic, Downtown artists confronted an especially vitriolic writer. “Street of Strugglers,” he deemed Tenth Street in 1961, and his funereal “Goodbye Forever” of 1963 single-handedly proclaimed the end of Tenth Street.² In contrast with critics writing for small-circulation art magazines, Canaday was an especially formidable opponent, due to the *Times*’s huge circulation. His attitude immediately put artists on the defensive.

The waning of the co-op gallery coincided with an explosion of artist-initiated temporary exhibition spaces, a phenomenon that began in 1958 and continued through the 1960s. Ten such spaces—a mere sampling rather than a comprehensive survey of this trend—are explored in this and the following two chapters. Each of these spaces was loosely conceived as part studio, part gallery, part laboratory. Financing was informal; either the space was donated, or payment was arranged if necessary. There were no bylaws, and exhibition projects were mounted first as exchanges among artists within self-defined networks, and later for audiences of Downtown art, mainly other artists, critics, some dealers, and a few adventurous collectors.

Yet for all their informality, each space discussed here represented identifiable concerns about the function of public

exhibition space. Within these spaces, to a far greater extent than in the co-ops, artists challenged gallery conventions without necessarily rejecting the gallery’s underlying premise: exposure to a larger audience and the potential for commerce. These spaces embraced a common stance, or mission, in today’s parlance, and sought to reconcile quotidian experiences with art. From the roots of these artist-initiated, nonprofit spaces grew today’s alternative art spaces, which continue the legacy of offering diverse points of view. For example, one early group rejected compositional “artistry”; another bridged art with social justice. These spaces and their cutting-edge artists brought down the curtain on the fraught abstraction-figuration debates of the 1950s, recasting them as doctrinaire or irrelevant. Their leaders sought the literal, not the allegorical.

It is tempting to view these spaces as correctives to two major exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art: *New Images of Man*, organized by Peter Selz in 1959, and *The Art of Assemblage*, organized by William C. Seitz in 1961. In the former, new figurative and abstract paintings by twenty-three artists including Jean Dubuffet, Eduardo Paolozzi (1924–2005), and Willem de Kooning probed the “human situation.” In the accompanying catalogue the existentialist philosopher Paul Tillich defined this tendency as a reassertion of the “human predicament” in which life is threatened by either a mergence with commodity production or submergence by totalitarian states.³ Art was left diluted, the better to convey the “wounds of existence,” a concept that Francis Bacon, whose work was included in the show, described as the “interlocking of image and paint, so that the image is in the paint and vice versa.” Bacon’s approach provides a corrective to Greenberg’s disinterest in existentialism, his insistence that flatness and paint are the primary subjects of advanced art.⁴

Fig. 63. Lester Johnson, *Man in Street*, 1957
Woodcut on paper, 11 × 9¾ in. (27.9 × 24.8 cm)

Estate of Lester Johnson. Courtesy Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, New York

Two years later, Seitz's *The Art of Assemblage* abandoned existentialism for a materialist view. As defined by Seitz, assemblage is not subjective, it is a rejection of Abstract Expressionism—now seen as a “slick international idiom”—in favor of incorporating popular culture as an advanced subject for both painting and sculpture.⁵ The Hansa Gallery's influence in this regard was instrumental. In fact, Hansa members Jean Follett and Richard Stankiewicz, as well as non-member John Chamberlain (1927–2011), who was included in the Hansa's final show, were part of Seitz's exhibition. Seitz accorded great importance to the historic use of non-art materials, and as Allan Kaprow had argued in 1958, he claimed that the use of junk liberated artists from the confines of formal aesthetics. Citing Lawrence Alloway, an early champion of mass culture in art, Seitz framed assemblage as an urban art form, asserting that “the City—New York above all others—has become a symbol of modern existence.”⁶

The Art of Assemblage also differed from Selz's show in scope. With 250 artworks by 130 artists, the exhibition took full advantage of MoMA's collection. It began with Cubist collages by Picasso, Braque, and Gris; continued into Dada with readymades by Duchamp and collages by Schwitters; and proceeded to the use of collage by celebrated American abstract painters. The exhibition concluded with recent works by Americans, which, in addition to Chamberlain, Follett, and Stankiewicz included Edward Kienholz (1927–1994), Louise Nevelson (1899–1988), and Robert Rauschenberg, as well as the French Nouveau Réalistes Jean Tinguely (1925–1991) and Daniel Spoerri (b. 1930). Seitz succeeded in demonstrating how recent art was part of a modernist continuum, and he rehabilitated Dada and Surrealism as enduringly relevant, serious art forms, not novelties.⁷

Both exhibitions reveal the available frameworks for defining recent art production in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Each exhibition asked: Was art a reflection of a crisis in the human spirit during the Cold War era? Or, was it nihilistic, using the detritus from everyday life to better eviscerate its privileged status? The ten spaces examined in the following chapters challenge both MoMA curators' discussions and move art discourse even farther away from then-common conceptions of form, composition, and discipline.

New York City's rawness and allure as a subject for artists was perhaps best captured by Jim Dine (b. 1935) in his statement, “[Claes] Oldenburg and I... were particularly in love with the Lower East Side and the dirt, not absurdly so, (but) in the sense that we really felt a great romance with the way soot lay on the snow.”⁸ The Lower East Side was indeed dirty, due in part to the large-scale urban revitalization projects of the late 1950s, which cleared tenement housing for blocks-long stretches, especially in the area

bounded by First Avenue and Avenue A, and First and Sixth Streets. Cooper Union was completing a new building project on Astor Place, while New York University and private developers were clearing old housing stock in Greenwich Village from Washington Square South to Houston Street. Between demolition and new construction, piles of old, dusty bricks, exposed plumbing, and other smashed bits of tenement buildings could be found in the mountains of rubble, which resembled ruins.⁹

Three artists play central roles in the story of New York City as muse: Charles “Red” Grooms (b. 1937), Claes Oldenburg (b. 1929), and Allan Kaprow. Each fostered adventurous artist projects in gallery spaces they initiated, even as they advanced their own ideas. All three shared an abiding interest in the city, especially its dystopian aspects. The spaces they guided leaped ambitiously beyond discipline-specific boundaries of painting and sculpture to become stages for art performance.

CITY GALLERY, 735 Sixth Avenue (November 1958–May 1959)

When Red Grooms moved to New York City in 1957, he stayed with the married couple Yvonne Andersen (b. 1932) and Dominic “Val” Falcone (1928–2009). Grooms had met them in Provincetown, Massachusetts, where they ran the Sun Gallery in the summertime. Andersen and Falcone also lived in this storefront space, and the fluidity of movement between their home and gallery had a profound impact on Grooms, who received a solo exhibition there in August 1958. When the couple elected to stay in Provincetown after the birth of their first child later that fall, Grooms returned to New York alone and found a loft on the third floor of an old building at 735 Sixth Avenue, at the corner of Twenty-fourth Street.¹⁰

Also that fall, Grooms had helped co-found the Tenth Street co-op Phoenix Gallery, but he and another founder, Jay Milder (b. 1934), became disillusioned with administrative processes and meetings, which they viewed as stifling spontaneity, and they resented the group's rejection of Claes Oldenburg's membership petition.¹¹ In a letter to Andersen in October 1958, Grooms wrote, “we have decided to run our own gallery. We went over to Lester (Johnson)'s tonight and talked it over. Decided to use my place. . . . Lester suggested ‘City Gallery’ as a name and that's what it will be.”¹² This name underscored the fact that Johnson, Grooms, and Milder were all focusing on life in New York as a core subject. In November they invited another young artist to join, Michaela “Micky” Weisselberg (b. 1939), a Londoner studying part time at the Art Students League whom they had met the previous summer in Provincetown.¹³

City Gallery artists were influenced by Jan Müller's sensual, figurative approach and also looked to dystopian urban figures by Lester Johnson (1919–2010) (fig. 63). In their work, these two



Fig. 64. Red Grooms, *Untitled (Street scene with monster)*, c. 1958
 Ink on paper, 13½ × 18¼ in. (34.3 × 46.4 cm)
 Courtesy the artist

artists confirmed figuration as valid, and Grooms and Milder, in particular, threw themselves into guiding representational painting into rougher territory. The City Gallery was the first artist space to operate without bylaws, instead deploying a looser, more informally collaborative method of programming. This relatively unrestricted, intuitive approach is clearly evident in the large-scale group show *Drawings* of 1958–59. The gallery also presented solo exhibitions, including Johnson's first-ever retrospective. Throughout the 1950s, Johnson, who was nearly twenty years older than the directors, had exhibited widely in co-op and commercial galleries. Nevertheless, they found his brooding figures, dark tones, and loose brushwork fresh and exciting.

About his third-floor space, Grooms wrote, "It will be a rough gallery, a found room."¹⁴ His sketched rendering of the layout noted its fourteen-foot width as well as the building's awkward two-foot incline along Twenty-fourth Street, which resulted from the wooden structure's uneven settlement into the Manhattan schist and rendered it trapezoidal (fig. 66). Grooms drew partitions to create the private space that doubled as a studio for Johnson's fledgling art school, as well as the latter's plans to cover the windows with curtains and white paint.¹⁵

The City Gallery opened with an evening poetry reading on Sunday, November 23, 1958, with more than 150 people in attendance. Interestingly, the gallery's founders did not design



Fig. 65. Jay Milder, *Pot of Flowers*, 1959
Oil on canvas, 20 × 20 in. (50.8 × 50.8 cm)
Renee and Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

the invitation; this was done by Mimi Gross (b. 1940), a friend they had met in Provincetown whom Grooms would later marry. Gross's rough-hewn, woodcut print depicted a poet and musicians, aptly conveying the gallery's sensibility (fig. 67). On Friday that same week, November 28, the gallery's exhibition program was inaugurated with *Five Painters*, featuring works by Grooms, Milder, and Weisselberg along with painters Peter Passuntino (b. 1936) and Joshua Epstein (fig. 68).¹⁶

In the view of Grooms, Milder, and Weisselberg, the loft's windows were in dialogue with the street, facing as they did onto both Twenty-fourth Street and Sixth Avenue. "Micky came over and painted CITY GALLERY EXHIBITION FRIDAY in both windows and made a terrific figure drawing for a small corner window," Grooms wrote, and she sewed curtains from burlap sacks.¹⁷ The installation's final addition was a mural-size drawing: "Jay and I made a wild double painting last night while a girl was posing, on about a 15 foot piece of paper," Grooms wrote. "Today I put it around the windows looking out on the street."¹⁸

Not long after the inaugural show opened, Meyer Levin, a syndicated cultural reporter, received an announcement for the exhibition from a City Gallery artist he ran into at the Whitney Museum annual, also taking place that December. "The paper was smudged, the writing scribbled, and the print was blurred," Levin wrote of the deliberately sloppy invitation in his subsequent review of the show, "(and) there was a picture of a lot of strange little men in a row."¹⁹ He also noted the gallery's location in Chelsea as wholly unprecedented—a clear break from Tenth Street. "Looking upward, I spotted some huge white sheets of paper in the third floor window of an old wooden building," he wrote. "The paper had a few black unreadable scrawls on it, but in the adjoining window was written in white paint 'City Gallery.'" Once upstairs, Levin encountered Grooms working on a painting, and together they toured the show. "The whole exhibit had more gusto than most of the young artists have today," Levin concluded.

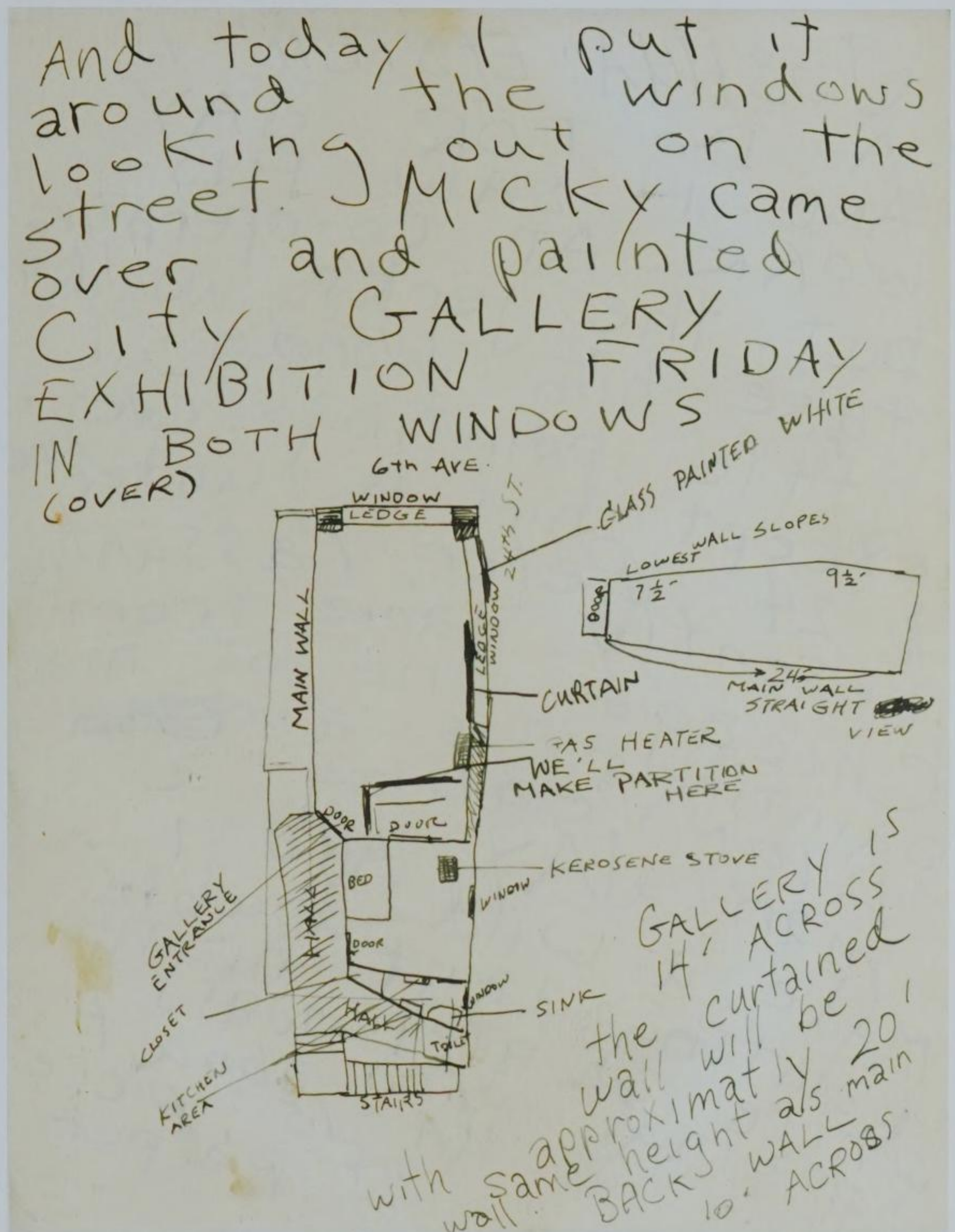


Fig. 66. Red Grooms's letter to Yvonne Andersen and Val Falcone depicting floor plan of City Gallery, New York, c. 1958
Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in. (27.9 × 21.6 cm)
Collection of Yvonne Andersen, Lexington, Massachusetts

Naturally, most writing on the City Gallery names Grooms as its chief protagonist.²⁰ But Grooms was a consummate collaborator, and he shared administrative duties with Weisselberg, whose contributions were equally pivotal. Her responsibilities increased when Milder and Grooms left New York on various trips. The large group show *Drawings*, for example, was produced largely through her efforts. Providing an important example of female participation in the gallery scene,



Fig. 67. Mimi Gross, Announcement for poetry reading at City Gallery, New York, November 1958
Woodblock print, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$ in. (22.2 × 27.3 cm)
Courtesy the artist

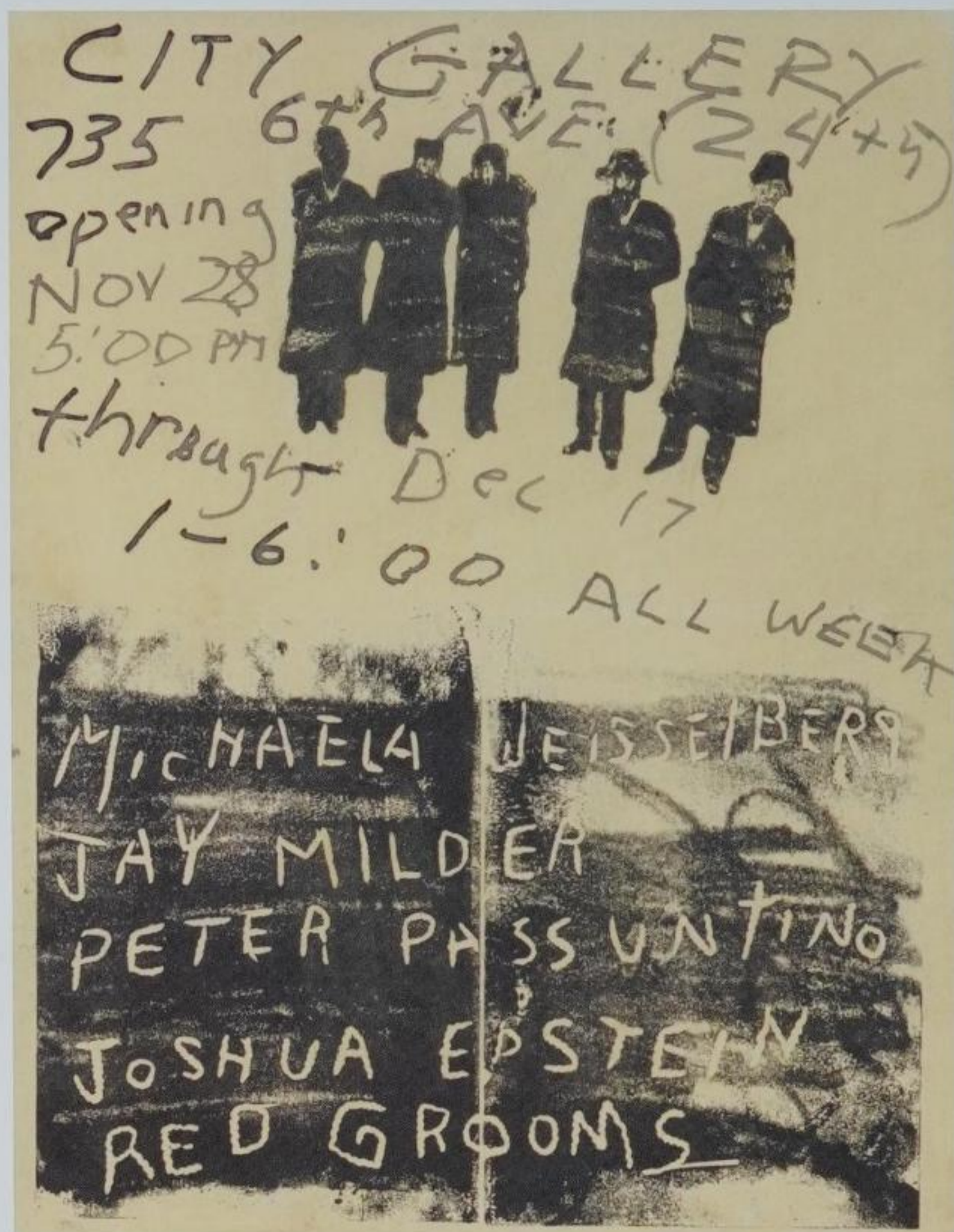


Fig. 68. Red Grooms, Announcement for *Five Painters*, City Gallery, New York, November 28–December 17, 1958
Linocut on paper, 14 × 11 in. (35.6 × 27.9 cm)
Collection of Yvonne Andersen, Lexington, Massachusetts

Weisselberg's deep involvement in its operations broadens our view of City Gallery.

DRAWINGS

"I am now with a gallery," Weisselberg proudly wrote home to her mother in London. Mindful of her cultivated family's wide network of contacts across Europe, including artist relatives in the Netherlands, Weisselberg cautioned, "the gallery is not sophisticated." Initially, she acted as "secretary and publicity agent for the management"—the job title she settled on with Milder and Grooms—"but on a small scale, and merely because I am a little more efficient than Red and Jay, whose gallery it is."²¹

Weisselberg's efforts did not remain "small scale." After the initial group exhibition closed in mid-December, Grooms left New York to visit his family in Tennessee, and Weisselberg took up temporary residence in the loft, where she began work on what she predicted would be "one of the very best drawing shows in NYC for years."²² She devised the group's curatorial strategy, amassing recent drawings by as many artists whose work they respected as possible—and her approach was dogged. Setting the gears in motion before his departure, Grooms had written to Andersen and Falcone, inviting them to submit drawings to what he was certain would be "a really magic show."²³

Weisselberg deployed her contacts downtown, urging the artist couples Robert Beauchamp (1923–1995) and Jackie Ferrara (b. 1929), Wolf Kahn and Emily Mason (b. 1932), and her friends Alfred Leslie, Dody James Müller, and Arthur Tieger to participate. From the Art Students League, she assembled a wish list of illustrious artists including George Grosz (who had been her teacher) and Philip Guston, and she also invited Milton Resnick to participate.²⁴ In her diary, she noted that she had even asked Pablo Picasso to contribute a work, but there is no record that he ever responded.²⁵ Another well-known artist did take part, however, through the intercession of Milder and Grooms: "Jay and I went down to Fourteenth Street and had coffee with Franz Kline in his studio," Grooms recounted. "We carried back a drawing of his to City Gallery for the group show. No receipts."²⁶ Jay Milder, for his part, wrote to Mimi Gross, who was studying at Bard College, asking for both a drawing from her and a sculpture from her father, Chaim Gross.²⁷ He also obtained a drawing from Claes Oldenburg, whom he had unsuccessfully recommended to the Phoenix Gallery. Weisselberg produced the final no-frills, declarative invitation, a typed offset print, likely designed by Yvonne Andersen. An earlier announcement, designed by Andersen in collaboration with Grooms, was printed in a run of only fifty, which evidently precipitated the need for a second version.²⁸ Ultimately, forty-five artists lent work.



Fig. 69. Bob Thompson, *Red*, 1959

Pastel on paper, $13\frac{7}{8} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$ in. (35.2 × 27.3 cm)

Collection of Rita Fredericks Salzman. Courtesy Martha Henry Fine Art, New York



Fig. 70. Robert Beauchamp, *Untitled*, c. 1960
Ink, charcoal, and graphite on paper, 25³/₄ × 26¹/₄ in. (65.4 × 66.7 cm)
Collection of Nadine Beauchamp, New York



Fig. 71. Michaela Weisselberg (now Mica Nava), *Portrait of Joan Herbst*, 1959
Charcoal on paper, 25 × 19 in. (63.5 × 48.3 cm)
Courtesy the artist

Milder remembers *Drawings* as hung salon style, with perhaps as many as one hundred works affixed to the wall with pins.²⁹ Weisselberg thought the number of works might have been fewer, especially because the better-known artists included would have lent only one drawing.³⁰ While unfortunately it is impossible to reconstruct the exhibition—no checklist survives—we do know that many of the works evoked immediacy. In terms of subject matter, everyday incidents were especially prevalent, along with portraiture. Joan Herbst (b. 1941), also a student at Bard, was frequently depicted, having modeled for Weisselberg (fig. 71), Gross, and Grooms. In turn, Herbst drew Grooms as well as herself. The portraits reflect the intimacy among them, as well as their propensity for testing representational styles.

Grooms's drawings from this period were extremely influential. Their naïve, deliberately quick style was shot through with humor. While his portraits of friends astutely captured their essence, particularly those of a sultry Weisselberg (fig. 72) and of painter Bob Thompson at work and rest (fig. 73), his vision



Fig. 72. Red Grooms, *Portrait of Michaela Weisselberg*, 1959
Ink on paper, 8½ × 11 in. (21.6 × 27.9 cm)
Collection of Joan Herbst Shapiro, New York

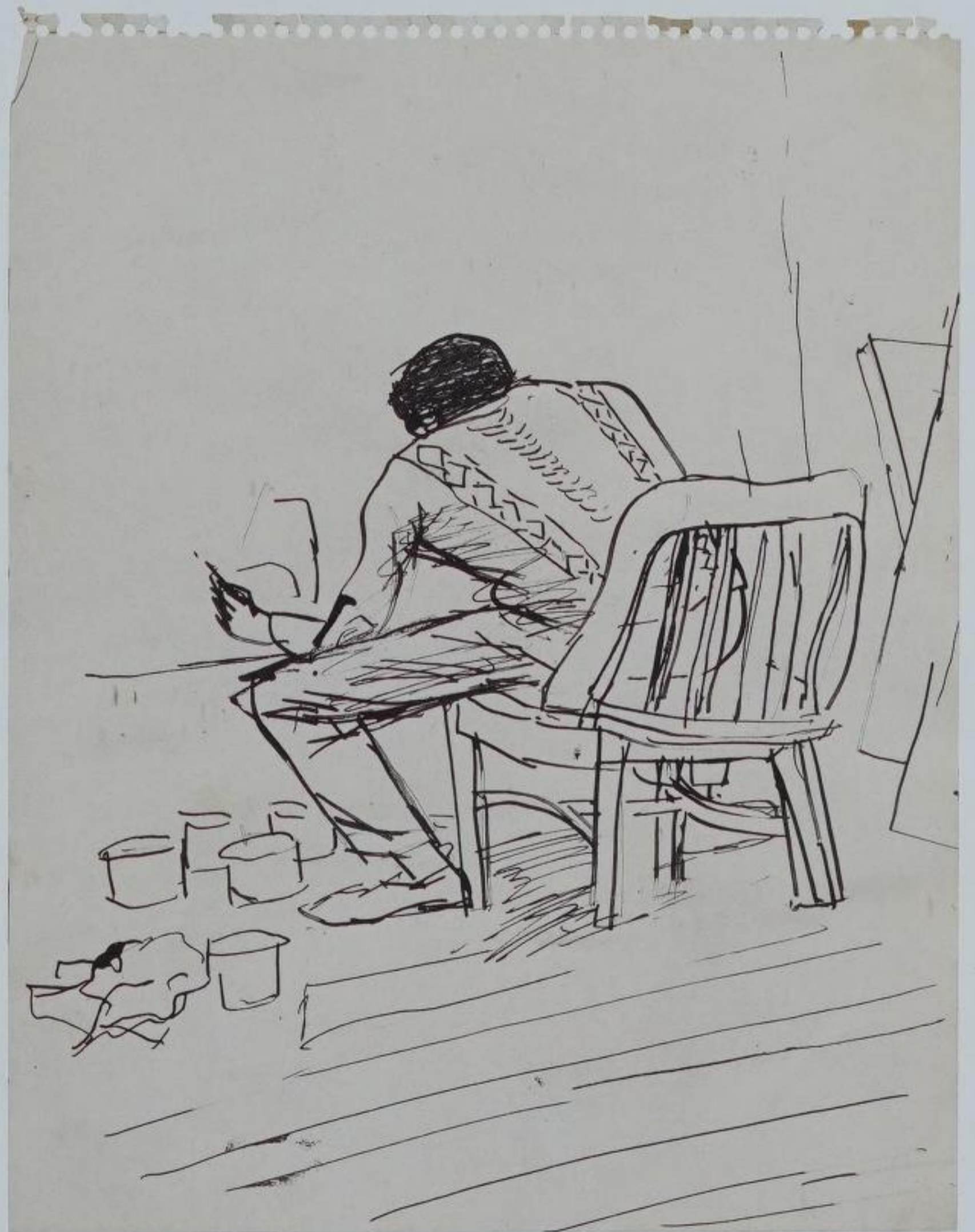


Fig. 73. Red Grooms, *Untitled (Bob Thompson in his studio)*, 1958–59
Ink on paper, 14 × 10¾ in. (35.6 × 27.3 cm)
Courtesy the artist

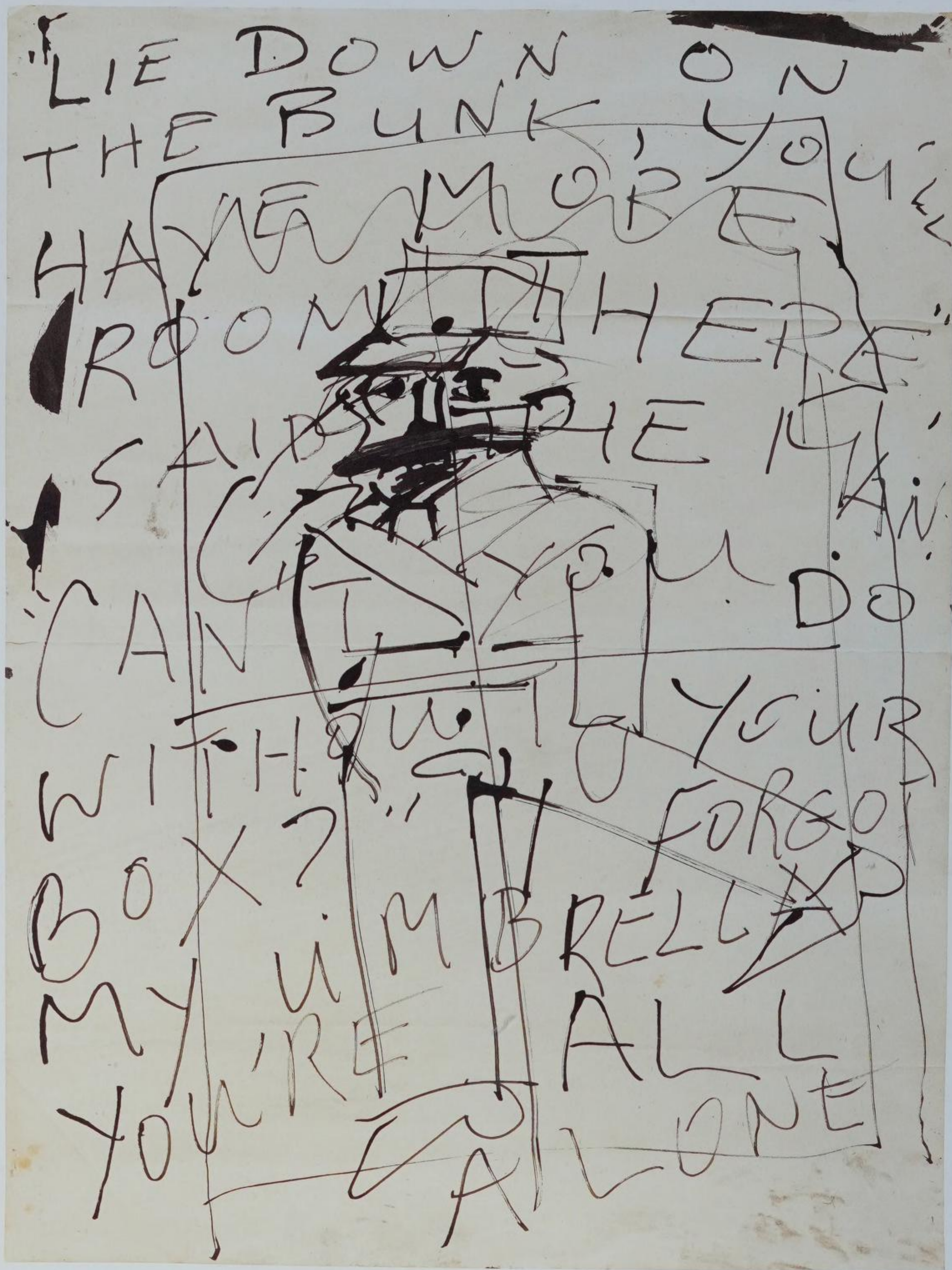


Fig. 74. Red Grooms, Untitled (Lie down on the bunk...), 1958

Ink on paper, 24 × 18 in. (61 × 45.7 cm)

Courtesy the artist



Fig. 75. Jay Milder, *Untitled*, c. 1958–59
Ink on paper, 18 × 22 in. (45.7 × 55.9 cm)
Collection of Mica Nava, London

truly skyrocketed in his urban scenes, real and imagined. Grooms incorporated absurd poetics, fragments of ideas as if overheard on the street. “Lie down on the bunk, you’ll have more room there,” Grooms wrote over a drawing of a policeman, “Can’t you do without your box? I forgot my umbrella, you’re all alone” (fig. 74). The raw vigor in Grooms’s drawings was delectable, signaling a new direction that hovered between art brut and illustration.

Influenced by Johnson at the time, Milder produced a series of still lifes (fig. 75), mostly of flowers and animals, with what Leo Steinberg described in a different context as a “mortification of skill.”³¹ Peter Passuntino’s meditations on the brutality of urban life gave rise to a series in which several men and a dog engage in a drunken brawl (fig. 76). He explored this theme in several versions, loosely in ink and more analytically in pastel



Fig. 76. Peter Passuntino, *Men Fighting*, c. 1963
Ink on paper, 14½ × 18 in. (28.6 × 45.7 cm)
Courtesy the artist



Fig. 77. Michaela Weisselberg (now Mica Nava), *Interior of City Gallery*, 1959
Pencil on paper, 11 × 14 in. (27.9 × 35.6 cm)
Courtesy the artist



Fig. 78. Emily Mason, *Untitled (Venice)*, 1958
Oil and pastel on paper, 19¹/₄ × 26¹/₄ in. (48.9 × 66.7 cm)
Courtesy the artist

and graphite. In contrast with the efforts of Grooms, Milder, and Passuntino, Weisselberg's hewed more closely to her training at the Art Students League, favoring formal composition and one-point perspective. Her depictions of the City Gallery itself convey her great familiarity with the space. In one drawing a window displays the gallery's name in reverse script. A plant is perched on a window seat. On her desk Weisselberg portrays a book by Sigmund Freud, likely her reading material during the quiet hours without visitors (fig. 77).

In terms of color, two artists stood out. Emily Mason, recently returned from a two-year Fulbright fellowship in Italy, exhibited a series of vivid abstract drawings in ink, pastel, and graphite. Two drawings from 1958, *Untitled (Spoleto)* and *Untitled (Venice)*, leap

out at the viewer with high-key contrasts of yellow, red, and brown (fig. 78). Mimi Gross, like Mason, was familiar with both European and American modern art through her parents.³² Working from life, she negotiated especially effectively between figuration and naïveté. Her subject matter stayed close to home, however: the play of a color spectrum among pedestrians moving along downtown avenues and intimate portraits of friends (fig. 79). Mason and Gross's approach provided a colorful counterpart to the darker palettes of Milder, Grooms, and Passuntino.

Following the success of *Drawings*, the City Gallery organized six more exhibitions before its closure, including one featuring works by Grooms and Milder, whose two-man show in February 1959, titled *The Black City The Red People*, drew on their combined



Fig. 79. Mimi Gross, *Street Scene*, 1958
 Oil stick on paper, 11 × 13⁷/₈ in. (27.9 × 35.2 cm)
 Courtesy the artist

fascination with urban scenes. During his visit to that show, Walter Chrysler, a scion of the automobile manufacturing family, spent \$900 in acquiring their paintings and drawings. The remaining months of 1959, from the end of February through mid-May, were devoted to four solo shows: Max Spoorri (b. 1935) (a painter who had shown at the Sun Gallery in Provincetown), Johnson, Passuntino, and Weisselberg.³³ During Johnson's March 1959 show Grooms, Weisselberg, Milder, and a new friend, Jim Dine, among others, painted a mural in the building's hallway, one of artists' few opportunities in New York at that time to collaborate on a large scale.

WOMEN'S WORK

One of the striking facts to emerge from Weisselberg's correspondence with her mother is how readily she assumed responsibility for the day-to-day management of the City Gallery and how strenuously she characterized this transformation in personal, not gendered, terms. Not yet twenty years old, she came to see herself as a more capable administrator than her older partners:

I am now a director and . . . actually I did practically ALL the organising of this show, partly because I knew all the people personally and also because in a way, sometimes, I am efficient. It took up VERY much time and energy, but I enjoyed it. And the show is excellent, many people have said so . . . We have even begun to sell things. The gallery always takes a third.³⁴

But her administrative efforts were overshadowing her time in the studio. "I haven't been doing too much painting in the last two weeks, so that makes me feel bad, and also guilty if I do anything else 'when I could be painting,'" she confessed. "And right now I am sitting in the gallery, which is always an immense drag. This is because the girl who we 'employed' (i.e. she lived here rent free and sat here when the gallery was open) suddenly left one day." As Weisselberg spent more time at the gallery, her identity became more enmeshed with it. "My painting and the gallery make me aware that America is really where I should stay, being a great part of me and I a small part of it." Weisselberg felt that

possibilities for women in the United States were expanding, in contrast with England. She also recognized, however, that it was “far too easy to be talented and miss the point (of one’s talent) altogether. Especially that seems to be the trouble with women painters,” demonstrating the ease with which she internalized the bias that segregated women artists from male ones during this period.

The City Gallery’s programming consistently re-situated figuration as indelibly linked to youthful abandon, not Impressionism, and confidently asserted a non-conformist urban lifestyle as subject matter. As such, within six months of opening, it had garnered the respect of artists, writers, and collectors. But by April 1959 the founders’ attention began to dissipate. “I was *desperate* and close to giving up my [solo] show,” Weisselberg wrote to her mother when she learned that Milder and Grooms planned to leave New York later that spring to travel across the States. Her letters home expressed the tension of having the gallery at her disposal but without support from her closest colleagues. With the gallery’s daily demands left to her to manage, she struggled to find time to paint. “I didn’t know what to do and was very upset about it all. I don’t want to leave but I want to arrive,” she wrote, realizing that her newfound attention was double-edged: her exhibition would be closely scrutinized. When Weisselberg finally opened her solo show, Suzanne Kiplinger of the *Village Voice* found it somewhat unconvincing. The critic questioned Weisselberg’s command of the drawing medium, identifying “a certain brusque quality and bulk to the drawings which look like a sculptor’s sketches. Judging by the size of the work and the amount of paint involved, she has the stamina for sculpture, and that is not an unimportant consideration for a woman.”³⁵ These assumptions and this overtly gendered analysis, by a female critic no less, spotlights the limited arena for women artists during this time. With such gender-specific conceptions about their talent, women encountered great difficulty in trying to build viable art careers. But Weisselberg was not in New York when Kiplinger’s review appeared. Not long after her opening, she headed to England for the summer and then gradually moved away from painting, like many women artists of the era.³⁶

With 735 Sixth Avenue slated for demolition, the City Gallery closed on May 13, 1959. Grooms went on the road with Milder and Bob Thompson, with the intention of spending the summer in Mexico. They made it as far as Milder’s hometown of Omaha, Nebraska; after a couple of weeks the three split up, and Grooms and Thompson ended up in Provincetown for the rest of the summer.

The City Gallery pushed figuration into raw and energetic forms of representation that sprang directly from the Downtown experience. “We were reacting to Tenth Street in ’58 and ’59,”

Grooms recalled. “Tenth Street was (established) sort of like SoHo (was), and it was getting all the lively attention of everyone downtown. We were just kids in our early twenties . . . (and) had a flair for attracting people to our openings.”³⁷ But the flair was about much more than mere personality. The City Gallery fostered impertinence toward the aesthetic debates of the 1950s. Its artists’ desire to work with great speed and improvisation constituted a marked departure from Tenth Street’s formality. This approach would soon be taken up by the similarly upstart Reuben and Judson galleries, “before the critical formulation of Pop Art imposed sharper boundaries.”³⁸

REUBEN GALLERY (1959–61) 61 Fourth Avenue (October 1959–June 1960); 44 East Third Street (November 1960–April 1961) The abstraction-figuration debates so all-engrossing at Tenth Street co-ops were supplanted between 1959 and 1961 by the “anti-ceremonious, anti-formal, untidy, highly physical (but not highly permanent)” exhibitions taking place at the Reuben Gallery.³⁹ With this description, Lawrence Alloway credited the Reuben with forging an important aesthetic shift, and in January 1965, four years after the gallery’s closure, he organized a tribute at the Guggenheim Museum that defined the Reuben’s unique sensibility as “Pop.”⁴⁰ Works shown at the Reuben were unprecedented in their shift away from traditional artistic categories, made by artists who were hell-bent on exploring space, performance,⁴¹ and process to the hilt, situating the gallery not only at the forefront of Pop but, it may be argued, at the vanguard of postmodernism.

Iconic projects such as Allan Kaprow’s *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* and Claes Oldenburg’s *The Street*, as well as the performances *Car Crash*, by Jim Dine, *The American Moon*, by Robert Whitman, and *See Saw*, by Simone Forti (b. 1935), were all designed specifically to take place within the framework of the Reuben’s architectural space. Beginning in 1960, these artists took part in the boundary-expanding “new media” exhibitions being produced uptown.⁴² Redefining painting, sculpture, and assemblage not as discrete disciplines defined by their respective mediums but rather according to their application within a specific space represented a significant shift away from modernist values and definitions. Whitman explained one such trajectory, from painting to performance: “You’ve got your painting on the flat wall, you have sculpture coming out of the room, you have sculpture that moves, why stop there? Why not have abstract theater, or theater without words, or a theater of images?”⁴³ Now, use of the word “figure” no longer referred to “figuration”—which had previously been, as we have seen, a focus of heated critical polemics—but rather a completely new tendency to use easily recognized images, first advanced at the City Gallery and now reaching full maturation at the Reuben.



Fig. 80. Red Grooms's *Magic Train Ride*, Reuben Gallery, New York, 1960
 Photograph: © John Cohen. Courtesy L. Parker Stephenson Photographs, NYC

At the center of this new aesthetic enterprise was Allan Kaprow. When the Hansa Gallery folded in spring 1959, Kaprow found himself stymied at a pivotal moment in his transition away from object making. He actively sought collaborators in a new gallery, “a place where something happens.”⁴⁴ He mined three of his personal networks. The first comprised artists based in New Jersey: George Brecht (1926–2008), George Segal, Lucas Samaras, and Robert Whitman; another was located downtown: Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg, and Red Grooms.⁴⁵ Less discussed but equally important were the two women artists with whom Kaprow was long affiliated: his studio colleague, Renée Rubin Miller (b. 1929), and Miller’s close friend at the time, Martha Edelheit (b. 1932).⁴⁶ Equally crucial was Miller’s younger sister, Anita Rubin (b. 1935), who was not an artist but whose influence on the Downtown art community would prove catalytic.⁴⁷ Learning of Kaprow’s ambitious plans to move off the canvas and into real space (famously outlined in his *Art News* essay published in 1958 as “The Legacy of Jackson Pollock”⁴⁸) and his need for a venue, Anita

Rubin secured a lease for the second-floor rear loft space at 61 Fourth Avenue in the spring of 1959, using the biblical spelling of her surname, Reuben, as the gallery name.⁴⁹ Although the gallery was technically a co-op, Anita also underwrote the rent during the first season.⁵⁰ She volunteered full time in the gallery and actively promoted its program through press releases and advertisements.

During its first season, which ran from October 1959 through mid-June 1960, the gallery presented ten solo exhibitions, two group exhibitions, and three performance series, an impressive level of activity. When the season ended, Anita Rubin terminated her managerial role. At a different location, a storefront at 44 East Third Street, however, a core group of male artists—Dine, Kaprow, Oldenburg, and Whitman—elected to collaborate for one more season, and to focus solely on performance.⁵¹ Its brief lifespan distinguished the Reuben from the co-op model’s more sustainable longevity. Whitman recalled, “The idea was that too many things get dragged on past their vitality.”⁵²

RETHINKING PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

Kaprow's influence on the Reuben Gallery's direction was well reflected in its inaugural show, *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, which took place over six nights in October 1959. Unprecedented in form—not quite environment, but also not quite theater—the piece was inspired by the simultaneity of a three-ring circus.⁵³ A sequence of six events took place at the same time in three separate chambers, for a total of eighteen actions. The audience experienced six actions over the course of an hour, and it was not possible to see the entire piece at any one time. They did, however, move twice between rooms, at intervals determined by random seating assignments made upon their arrival.⁵⁴ On the verso of Kaprow's poster for the event, he printed a factual statement: "One room has red and white lights in rows along the top. . . . The third has a blue globe hanging in the center."⁵⁵

18 Happenings in 6 Parts was performed by three artists, Kaprow, Whitman, and Samaras, whose activities included speaking, moving, playing a game, and sounding a musical instrument; and three dancers, Rosalyn Montague, Shirley Prendergast, and Janet Weinberger, whose tasks included bouncing a ball, winding up a toy, and squeezing oranges—everyday activities that were abstracted into the piece's design.⁵⁶ Interwoven into the actions were tape-recorded sounds, projected slides, and a phonographic recording, each activated or deactivated during one of the six time periods governing the Happening overall. "The movement would go in between each of the rooms and people were asked, according to cards that they were given, to move at certain times from one room to another," Kaprow explained. "So everything was being shifted in some seemingly formal way, but actually a disjunctive fashion," without a discernible beginning or end.⁵⁷

Two painters also had a role in the piece, a dual one that alternated each of the six times it was performed.⁵⁸ Two artists appeared toward the end of the fifth Happening, stationed on either side of a canvas located between the first and second rooms: one painted lines, the other circles. This episode epitomized Kaprow's claim that gesture—the physical action of painting—is a quality in



Fig. 81. Bob Thompson and Jay Milder painting wall for Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, Reuben Gallery, New York, October 1959
Photograph: Fred W. McDarrah/Getty Images

and of itself; that artists "must be acrobats, constantly shuttling between an identification with the hands and body that flung the paint. . . . The artist, the spectator, and the outer world are much too interchangeably involved here."⁵⁹ Whitman seconded this notion of interchangeability, remembering how the performed, painted gestures would "bleed through and intermix," thereby negating singular authorship.⁶⁰

18 Happenings was the Reuben's most expensive project mounted, costing an estimated \$2,000 to produce—an enormous sum in 1959.⁶¹ Kaprow assumed most of the expenditures, and he struggled to gain monetary support, particularly from Rutgers University, where he taught. Mason Gross, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, ultimately agreed to set up a fund.⁶² Starting in the summer of 1959, Kaprow and Anita Rubin actively solicited financing, funneling new contributions into the Rutgers fund. Writing to potential supporters, they defined their dual role,



Fig. 82. Allan Kaprow, Announcement for *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*,
 Reuben Gallery, New York, October 1959
 Offset print, 16 × 17 in. (40.6 × 43.2 cm)
 Estate of Allan Kaprow, San Diego. Courtesy Hauser and Wirth, New York



Fig. 83. *Concert in Room 1, Set 4* from Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, Reuben Gallery, New York, October 1959
 Photograph: Vaughan Rachel. Courtesy the photographer and Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles



Fig. 84. Documentation of *Sandwich Man* in Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, Reuben Gallery, New York, October 1959
 Photograph: Scott Hyde. Estate of Allan Kaprow, San Diego. Courtesy Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

not only as patrons but also as collaborators integral to the project. Heightening the sense of urgency (while at the same time underscoring Rubin's generosity in renting the space for several months prior to the opening), their letter noted the flurry of activity taking place in the otherwise shuttered gallery and asserted, "money is needed. Yours. May we have your contribution now, early, when it will do the most good?"⁶³

The collector Horace Richter, for whom Kaprow served as an art adviser, underwrote a second solicitation campaign that September. In a two-page letter penned on his personal stationery, Richter noted that, with *18 Happenings*, Kaprow was not producing anything collectible—that is, saleable art—and thus required financing beyond what could be charged for admission. The funding push ultimately reached the *New Yorker*, in the form of an unsigned article distilling the efforts of the solicitation campaign into a single assertion: "Although sustained to date by current contributions, the event will suffer a large deficit unless it is promptly and generously supported by—you."⁶⁴ The patrons were, as expected, artists, art historians, critics, and dealers, a demographic that also represented the audience, several of whom, including Robert Motherwell, Helen and George Segal, and Martha and Hank Edelmet, contributed beyond the suggested ticket price of \$1.50.⁶⁵ Despite these efforts, surviving

evidence suggests that Kaprow and Rubin probably did not recoup their expenditures.

Reactions were mixed. Writing for the *Nation*, Fairfield Porter, an otherwise generous critic, objected strenuously to Kaprow's theoretical conceit: "The action is monolithic, the materials of the setting flimsy, and the voices have an unrelieved seriousness."⁶⁶ For Porter, the work ultimately lacked expression; it never transcended its materials, a necessary quality in assemblage, which is, in part, how the critic situated the performance: "He uses art, and he makes clichés. . . . The 'Eighteen Happenings' devalue all art by a meaningless and deliberate surgery. And the final totality is without character, it never takes off from the sidewalk," he wrote in reference to the street.⁶⁷

Even Kaprow's fellow Reuben artists were troubled by the work's stiff rigor. Lucas Samaras, reflecting on both his participation in *18 Happenings* and Kaprow's performance work overall, observed:

Allan was like the guy who went shopping to cook something, and then he'd bring the stuff, and he wouldn't cook it. The stuff would be raw somehow. . . . The other guys (Dine, Grooms, Oldenburg, Whitman) would come up with the stuff and cook it; with Allan

loudspeaker sound set	Events + Cast		
	Room 3	Room 2	Room 1
tape 1	slides	movement Shirley Janet Roz	words + movement Bob Lucas
nothing 2	slides + speech Allan	nothing	speech Lucas
tape (record) 3	slides words Roz	blocks on table record Lucas Bob	ball bouncing movement Janet Shirley
Tape 4	matches spray gun (Bob) stuff raises blind Bob - canis toy	Toy	concert Allan Shirley Janet Lucas
Tape (record) 5	slides words Roz Allan Lucas	movement Bob 2 PAINTERS	squeezing orange figure + record Janet Shirley
nothing 6	movement 1 slide Bob (who goes here) Lucas	words scrolls Bob Lucas Janet Roz	nothing

Fig. 85. Allan Kaprow's score for *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, 1959
Ink and graphite on paper, 11 × 8½ in. (27.9 × 21.6 cm)
Estate of Allan Kaprow, San Diego. Courtesy Getty Research Institute,
Los Angeles

it was never cooked. It was intriguing, but also at the same time, his stuff was full of crude elements, it was extremely arch. It was a strange combination of archness and found stuff. It wasn't affected, but it was arch.⁶⁸

Another much-studied Reuben Gallery project is Claes Oldenburg's installation *The Street* (May 6–19, 1960), a companion to his environmental installation of the same name presented five months earlier at the Judson Gallery.⁶⁹ Like Kaprow, Oldenburg utilized the walls, ceiling, and floor, but Oldenburg's method was looser, closer to montage, and the paper and burlap objects hovered between painting and sculpture (fig. 87). *The Street* reflected his appreciation for the everyday theater of the Lower East Side's human and built environment, mediated—or, to use Samaras's terminology, "cooked"—through a deliberately rough, seemingly



Fig. 86 Claes Oldenburg, Announcement for *The Street*, Reuben Gallery,
New York, May 6–19, 1960
Offset lithograph, 12⁷/₈ × 8¹⁵/₁₆ in. (32.7 × 22.7 cm)
Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York

unfinished, non-art aesthetic. Oldenburg set his "characters" (to extend the theater metaphor) in diametric comparison, "men and women and heroes and bums and children and drunks and cripples and streetchicks," he listed, "and bright light, and darkness, fires and collisions and . . . guns and newspapers." The scale ranged from "heroic to very, very small," or from approximately one to fifteen feet tall.⁷⁰ While some of the figures, especially the "streetchicks," are clearly legible, with thin black legs anchored by platform shoes, other elements are more oblique. Some incorporate drawings and words that hint at their meaning, while others avoid literal mimesis. The work's limited tonal range and use of black paint on cardboard echoed the dirt-strewn neighborhood, especially as seen in black-and-white photographs. *The Street* was thus as much an evocation of a dense, urban milieu as an installation, and conveyed specific urban types in its individual elements.⁷¹



Fig. 89. Martha Edelheit with Al Hansen sculpture, c. 1959
 Photograph: Al Hansen, collection of Martha Nilsson Edelheit, Stockholm

studio as social constructs, out of step with current culture.⁷² Participating artists in *Below Zero* reflected this sensibility, and today might be segregated into distinct movements: neo-Dada, Fluxus, assemblage, and Pop. But in 1959, such categories did not exist, nor were there clearly defined distinctions. *Below Zero* included the core Reuben artists—George Brecht, Jim Dine, Martha Edelheit, Red Grooms, Allan Kaprow, Renée Rubin Miller, Claes Oldenburg, and Robert Whitman; Kaprow's former Hansa colleagues Jean Follett and Richard Stankiewicz, as well as George Segal, were also included, along with artists on Kaprow's periphery, like Yvonne Andersen. Kaprow was deeply attracted to works by the participants who had collaborated with John Cage: Al Hansen (1927–1995), Ray Johnson (1927–1995), and Robert Rauschenberg. Kaprow also invited the choreographer James Waring (1922–1975)

Fig. 90. Red Grooms, Announcement for Happenings (*Fireman's Dream* by Red Grooms, *The Big Laugh* by Allan Kaprow, and *Small Cannon* by Robert Whitman), Reuben Gallery, New York, January 8–11, 1960
 Offset print, 15 1/4 × 12 in. (38.7 × 30.3 cm)
 Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York

to contribute a piece.⁷³ Lawrence Alloway summed up the show's sensibility in stating, "The city and its inhabitants was not only the *subject* of much of this art, it was also, literally, the *substance*, providing the texture and bulk of the material itself."⁷⁴

Below Zero was followed by a festival of Happenings featuring Kaprow, Grooms, and Whitman (fig. 90).⁷⁵ The series linked visual art and theater in a distinct branch of performance, separate from experimental theater.⁷⁶ While the Happenings have recently received an overdue, thorough reappraisal, the predominant activity at the Reuben Gallery's first season, one-person shows, has been less well studied. George Brecht pushed assemblage into a sparer, less emotive state with an exhibition of his precise, anti-Expressionist constructions of children's toys and found objects (October 16–November 5, 1959). Lucas Samaras's series of pastels and oil paintings, shown November 6–26, harked back to figuration's roots in Post-Impressionism, garnering both critical praise and the consternation of his peers.⁷⁷ Samaras's geometry was strong and sensual, unlike that of the Brata artists discussed earlier. In one untitled painting in this show (fig. 92), a series of thickly painted, grayish-brown rectangles gradually diminish

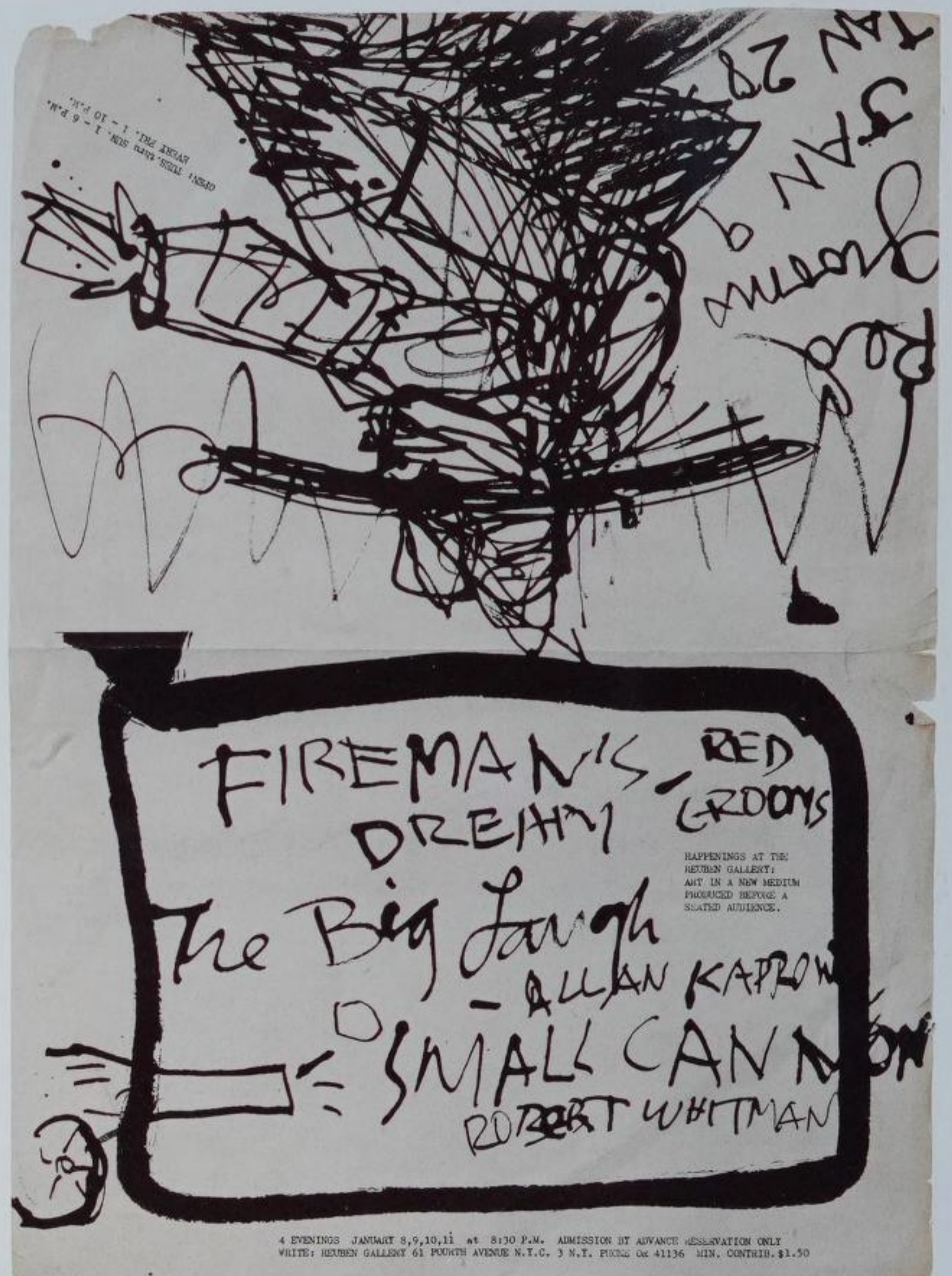




Fig. 91. Robert Rauschenberg, *Untitled* (formerly titled *Collage with Horse*), 1957
 Oil and collage (plain and printed papers, wood, and fabric) on canvas,
 30³/₄ × 36³/₄ in. (78.1 × 93.3 cm)
 Grey Art Gallery, New York University Art Collection. Gift of Philip Johnson, 1961.34



Fig. 92. Lucas Samaras, *Untitled*, 1958–59
Oil on canvas, 24¹/₄ × 14¹/₄ in. (61.6 × 36.2 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Pace Gallery, New York

in size until the system's logic reaches its center, unfolding in a tactile, fleshy, thin red line. This painting's corporeal aspect removes it from the realm of analysis. In any case, contemporary critics looked past this artwork and toward Samaras's representational and collage investigations.

Robert Whitman's installation-based *Constructions, Drawings, Pastels, Paintings, Floor and Hanging Pieces* (November 27–December 16) comprised "automobile wreckage, chicken wire, twine, steel wool and dirty rags; he covers vast canvases with a collage of shredded tissue, polyethylene and foil, and smears the whole with paint," a perplexing tableau that challenged taste and deepened

the artist's engagement with the effects of space and time on materials.⁷⁸ "I used to leave drawing and things on the floor to be walked on and changed by what happened around them," Whitman recalled, a process that would serve as a starting point for concept-based art later in the 1960s.⁷⁹

Red Grooms's energetic drawings, sculptures, and paintings, shown at the Reuben in January 1960, were met with derision by *Art News*. Labeling Grooms unimaginative, the magazine's critic dismissed his works as deliberately naïve, broadly accessible, and, in short, as an affront.⁸⁰ Artists reacted differently. "I really liked the subject matter a lot," Oldenburg recalled, "and I really liked his materials, which were found materials on the street."⁸¹ Jim Dine took an equally adventurous approach to materials for his solo exhibition in April 1960. He made a new, colorful series of works including collages, wall reliefs, and drawings, all united by areas of vibrant red offset by deep, rich blacks. On April 1, the evening of his opening, Dine himself appeared in a red suit, his face colored red, with painted-on black eyebrows and moustache (fig. 94). "I wanted to be part of the work," he reflected, or to merge objects with the self. "I am the art, and I am also the man who makes the art, and I look at the art."⁸²

In 1960 three women mounted important one-person exhibitions at the Reuben Gallery.⁸³ Close colleagues Renée Rubin Miller and Martha Edelheit both embarked on series of painting-collages in which shape was a core concern. Each artist also experimented with the strength and malleability of canvas-covered aluminum. Miller, whose solo show ran from April 15 to May 5, 1960 (fig. 95), had been trained in both fine art and illustration, which lent her work a strong graphic sensibility that anticipated Pop. In one small relief, *Coney Island Pinball* (1958), paint cans and wood scraps telegraph Brooklyn's arcade culture and urban grit (fig. 96).

Edelheit's "extension paintings," as she called them, similarly broke away from the rectangle, incorporating newspapers, license plates, and other found objects (fig. 97). These works range in form from uneven quadrilaterals to scroll-like, horizontal vistas, but all compel a mode of "reading" from left to right. Her use of paint was thick and "juicy," in the words of *Arts* reviewer Sidney Tillim, with her application of color influenced by American abstraction.⁸⁴ Edelheit conceived of her work contiguously, an influence she credits to Kaprow, Pollock, Rauschenberg, and Johns:

Fig. 93. Robert Whitman, *Untitled*, 1959
Wooden door, metal, rubber tubing, and plastic, 75³/₄ × 60¹/₂ × 24 in.
(192.4 × 153.7 × 61 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Pace Gallery, New York





Fig. 94. Jim Dine at his solo show, Reuben Gallery, New York, April 1960
 Photograph: Robert McElroy. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2014.m.7

I wanted to cover a wall, like Pollock did, but without depending on a rectangular canvas. I started drawing a line across the wall, starting on a standard canvas, but continued the line gesture with strips of sheet metal covered with canvas and supported by thin strips of wood. I used brillo (*sic*) and wire, clutch plates and spools, sand. . . . To me the world was art . . . a moral, ethical and intellectual system, of total and passionate importance. And it was full of rules, dos and don'ts, boundaries. I wanted to break these rules.⁸⁵

While Edelheit and Miller engaged in formal experimentation, Rosalyn Drexler (b. 1926) worked more intuitively. She came to the Reuben through Ivan Karp, and Anita Rubin agreed to give her the February 19–March 10, 1960, slot for a one-woman show.⁸⁶ Drexler's training was non-traditional, especially challenging in an era when there was not yet a defined mixed media or "inter-media" category for visual art; these would not be invented until the late





Fig. 96. Renée Rubin Miller (now Renée E. Rubin), *Coney Island Pinball*, 1958
Aluminum and oil on canvas and wood, 36 × 27 in. (91.4 × 68.6 cm)
Courtesy the artist



Fig. 97. Martha Edelheit, *Frabjous Day*, 1959
Oil, wood, sheet metal, canvas, and paper, 58½ × 51½ in. (148.6 × 130.8 cm)
Courtesy the artist

1960s. She was also known as a playwright, a novelist, and (briefly) a wrestler. Her keen, performative physicality captivated George Segal, who used Drexler as a model, and Robert Whitman, who included her in his production *E.G.*⁸⁷

Drexler's first series comprised realistic tableaux of found objects, plaster, and melted lead. "I did a plaster bride, a sort of coffin thing with a white shrouded figure in it, and wood, and poured lead," she explained. "At that time, I didn't know it was dangerous." Her exhibition, including much of the small-to-mid-size, eighty-sculpture series, was enthusiastically received (fig. 98). A crucified Christ was sold to the Bessie Chapel in Lower Manhattan, while Ernestine Lassaw and Franz Kline each obtained

Fig. 95. Renée Rubin Miller at her solo show, Reuben Gallery, New York, 1960
Photograph: Max Baker. Collection of Renée E. Rubin, New York

a sculpture by exchange. Drexler recalled the letter she received from David Smith: "Look, I don't know you, you are a very talented sculptor, but something's funny, I don't understand it. All these talented women, they stop. I don't know why, they stop. So please don't stop."⁸⁸ Then, as now, many women stopped making art because there was little or no economic infrastructure to support their careers. "There were always a lot of women in my generation who painted; most of them ended up working other jobs. Because they couldn't make a living at it," Edelheit reflected.⁸⁹ Yet despite this lack of support, Drexler, Edelheit, and Miller did not stop—which underscores the vital role artist-run galleries played for postwar female artists. With few exceptions, however, women never reaped the critical accolades and monetary rewards accorded their male colleagues, "and I don't think it had anything to do with the quality of the work," Edelheit punctuated.



Fig. 98. Opening of *Rosalyn Drexler Sculpture* show, Reuben Gallery, New York, February 10–March 10, 1960

Courtesy Rosalyn Drexler and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York

VISUAL ART INTO PERFORMANCE: THE REUBEN GALLERY'S SECOND SEASON

When Anita Rubin pulled out of the enterprise at the close of the 1959–60 season, the male artists involved in performance—Dine, Kaprow, Oldenburg, and Whitman—initiated the Reuben Gallery's second season, at 44 East Third Street, a twenty-by-forty-foot storefront, secured by Dine, where each artist produced a solo project.

In the fall of 1960, while Dine and Oldenburg were both working mainly at the Judson Gallery, they also developed significant performances at the Reuben. Dine inaugurated the program on November 1 with *Car Crash*, derived from several unfortunate car accidents he had endured. Materially, *Car Crash* utilized the remnants of the flooring business that had previously occupied the storefront, in particular felt, linoleum, and cork. This was one of the rare pieces in which Dine gave roles to other performers, in this case Oldenburg's wife Patty (née Muschinski; now Mucha, b. 1935), Marcus Ratliff (b. 1935), and Judy Tersch (b. 1939) (fig. 99).

Oldenburg devised a complex performance that contained echoes of Kaprow's simultaneity, but without the didactic elements. A collaboration with fourteen actors, *Circus: Ironworks/ Fotodeath* ran from February 21 to 26, 1961.⁹⁰ Oldenburg removed much of the detritus that had been left in the storefront and installed a cloth backdrop painted in vivid primary colors.

Fig. 99. Marcus Ratliff in Jim Dine's *Car Crash*, Reuben Gallery, New York, 1960
Photograph: John G. Ross, collection of Marcus Ratliff

On one side of the space, he placed a photographic panorama of Manhattan's waterfront. The performance was structured as a series of vignettes performed simultaneously but within three distinct sets. "My theatre is a painter's theatre for the reason that the values involved are those you would expect of a painter or sculptor," Oldenburg told the writer Richard Kostelanetz. "There is a lot of ripping and tearing and squeezing and crushing and also, falling 'bodies' which exhibit a sculptor's attraction for the effect of gravity. It is also a way to make objects of the players."⁹¹ The actions performed made concrete reference to themes of death, control, patriotism, and consumerism while nodding to antiquated notions of masculinity and femininity, as was especially evident in the costumes. These included quasi-19th-century frocks with pastoral umbrellas for several women, and a photographer wearing a stovepipe hat.

From March 22 through March 27, 1961, Allan Kaprow turned the Reuben Gallery into *A Spring Happening*, in which spectators crowded into a tunnel with tiny slits for windows through which they could glimpse only a partial view of the action outside





Fig. 100. Jim Dine, *Study for The Car Crash: Man in Woman's Costume and Woman in Man's Costume*, 1960

Ballpoint pen, ink, chalk, watercolor, colored pencil, pencil, and cut and pasted paper on paper, 16³/₄ × 21³/₄ in. (42.5 × 55.2 cm)

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist, 122.1965

the tunnel. They could, however, hear electronic sounds, which grew steadily more assaultive. At the end a lawn mower was activated and pushed through the space onto the street, ending the Happening.⁹²

The only artist to produce two solo projects during the Reuben's second season was Robert Whitman, whose works were arguably the most sensual and mesmerizing. *The American Moon* was performed ten times between November 29 and December 4, 1960; *Mouth* followed in 1961, running from April 18 to 23.⁹³ In both works dense layers of fabrics, foil, plastics, and found textures transformed the Reuben's space into a rich and colorful collage. *The American Moon* took three weeks to construct. Its performers

included Whitman, Samaras, and Simone Forti, their movements activating the entire space, including the ceiling. Spectators were situated in six tunnel-like bays facing a central space, which seated eight to ten visitors each—"separate little communities having their own experience," recalled the artist.⁹⁴ *The American Moon* ended when the tarp covering each viewing bay was rolled back to reveal Samaras suspended on a swing above the spectators' heads.

The American Moon developed from Whitman's work in sculpture and collage. "I didn't have a script," he remembered, "but I had a selection of images and I sort of intuitively figured out how they would go together."⁹⁵ He added further dimension



Fig. 101. Robert Whitman, *Untitled*, 1960
 Watercolor on paper, 8³/₈ × 11 in. (21.3 × 27.9 cm)
 Courtesy the artist

to the work by using time as a structuring device: “I thought of time as a material that these works were made out of, as a sculptor might make something out of a rock. I thought of time as real and substantial.”⁹⁶ Viewers’ multi-sensory experience was further heightened by a film he had made especially for the work, of figures doing things in nature. From the depths of the tunnels, six copies of the film were simultaneously projected onto screens covering the front, followed by other events in the space. Such layering in time and space lent Whitman’s performance extraordinary power as an environment, or a world unto itself.

In addition to solo shows, the Reuben group collaborated on a series of “varieties” in mid-December 1960. That series is especially significant for the inclusion of Simone Forti, then Simone Morris,

who performed with Whitman in *The American Moon* and was the only female artist invited to produce her own work. Forti had studied dance with Anna Halprin (b. 1920) in San Francisco before moving to New York, and her methodology drew from an analysis of movement and bodily interaction.

Forti developed two works based in play. *See Saw* was a twenty-minute piece performed by Robert Morris (b. 1931) and Yvonne Rainer (b. 1934) on a homemade seesaw (fig. 102). Gender is made a subject of the work through costuming. Both figures wear bathing-suit bottoms that emphasize their lower bodies. Their physical actions propose a symbiotic relationship in which the male appears to have emotional control. The work’s structure unfolded as follows: After a period in which Morris and Rainer balanced on



Fig. 102. Yvonne Rainer and Robert Morris performing Simone Forti's *See Saw* in *Happenings*, Reuben Gallery, New York, December 16–18, 1960
Photograph: Robert McElroy. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2014.m.7

the beam, Rainer then began to move, “throwing herself around and shrieking as she rode the seesaw up and down.” During this interval, Morris read from a copy of *Art News* in a “monotonous, self-contained voice.”⁹⁷ Forti also devised and performed with Patty Mucha in *Rollers*, in which both women sat in wooden crates to which swivel wheels and a rope were affixed (fig. 103). Members of the audience were invited to hurl them around the space, while Forti and Mucha made loud, sustained sounds. The effect was physical and terrifying for both the spectators crammed into the small space, who could be struck, and the performers, who could crash and tumble out of the box.⁹⁸

Fig. 103. Simone Forti and Patty Mucha performing in Forti's *Rollers* in *Happenings*, Reuben Gallery, New York, December 16–18, 1960
Photograph: Robert McElroy. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2014.m.7

Expanding art into physical actions, Reuben Gallery artists infused it with raw immediacy, a quality also found in their paintings and sculptures. On the stage that was their gallery space, artmaking impulses took primacy. These artists worked conceptually—well before this term was coined—in their approach to space, their notion of time as synchronic, and (often) the use of their bodies as a starting point. The “internal processes, excretions, absorptions, subjective sensations, were all very important,” Kaprow reflected in 1991, neatly bracketing his thoughts from 1965, which predicted that the “romance of the atelier, like that of the gallery and museum, will probably disappear in time. But meanwhile, the rest of the world has become endlessly available.”⁹⁹

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

Red Grooms spent August and September of 1959 working in the cramped basement space of Provincetown's Sun Gallery. Before returning to New York he performed *Walking Man*, a non-narrative Happening involving fire, performances by distinctive urban characters (Yvonne Andersen as a blind woman; Bill Barrell (b. 1932) as a high-society type in a top hat and black overcoat), and sound, with Grooms shouting “pop code words” from backstage.¹⁰⁰ *Walking Man* signaled Grooms's concern with three-dimensional, visual experiences—a merging of sculpture with performance—which distinguished him from his closest collaborators.

Back in New York in October, he found an abandoned boxing gym on the third floor of 148 Delancey Street, at the corner of Suffolk Street. As he had done a year earlier at the City Gallery, Grooms conceived the space as both private studio and public





Fig. 104. Red Grooms, *Untitled (Let's sell some of this stuff)*, c. 1960
 Ink on paper, 8 × 10 in. (20.3 × 25.4 cm)
 Courtesy the artist

gallery; he dubbed it the Delancey Street Museum and mounted a life-size junk sculpture of Abraham Lincoln on the door.¹⁰¹ The inaugural exhibition took place on October 23, 1959, and included Grooms's frequent collaborators Jay Milder and Bob Thompson, along with Milder's wife, Sheila; Lester Johnson; and two artists he had befriended in Provincetown, Emilio Cruz (1938–2004) and Marcia Marcus (b. 1928), whose husband, Terry Barrell (Bill Barrell's brother), appeared in other performances by Grooms. A hand-printed poster made and designed by Thompson depicts each artist in silhouette, the men in Thompson's signature porkpie hat, the women in fancy tea hats (fig. 105).

Grooms's then girlfriend, the poet Sylvia Small, noted his ability to make the loft feel homey, and she wrote of the space, "our house is lovely. Red just made shelves. Two kinds. One set of bookshelves. And one for plants." Nearby were Bob Thompson's loft on Clinton Street and Jay Milder's large warehouse space on Monroe Street.¹⁰² Their move farther south and east reflected the rising rents around Tenth Street. At the same time, the artists found such industrial spaces conducive to their aesthetic ideas. "I paint many paintings now in a surreal environment of a studio with light bleeding in a volcanic rush every morning over my bed and me," Thompson wrote of his Clinton Street studio. "It's white as white can be and

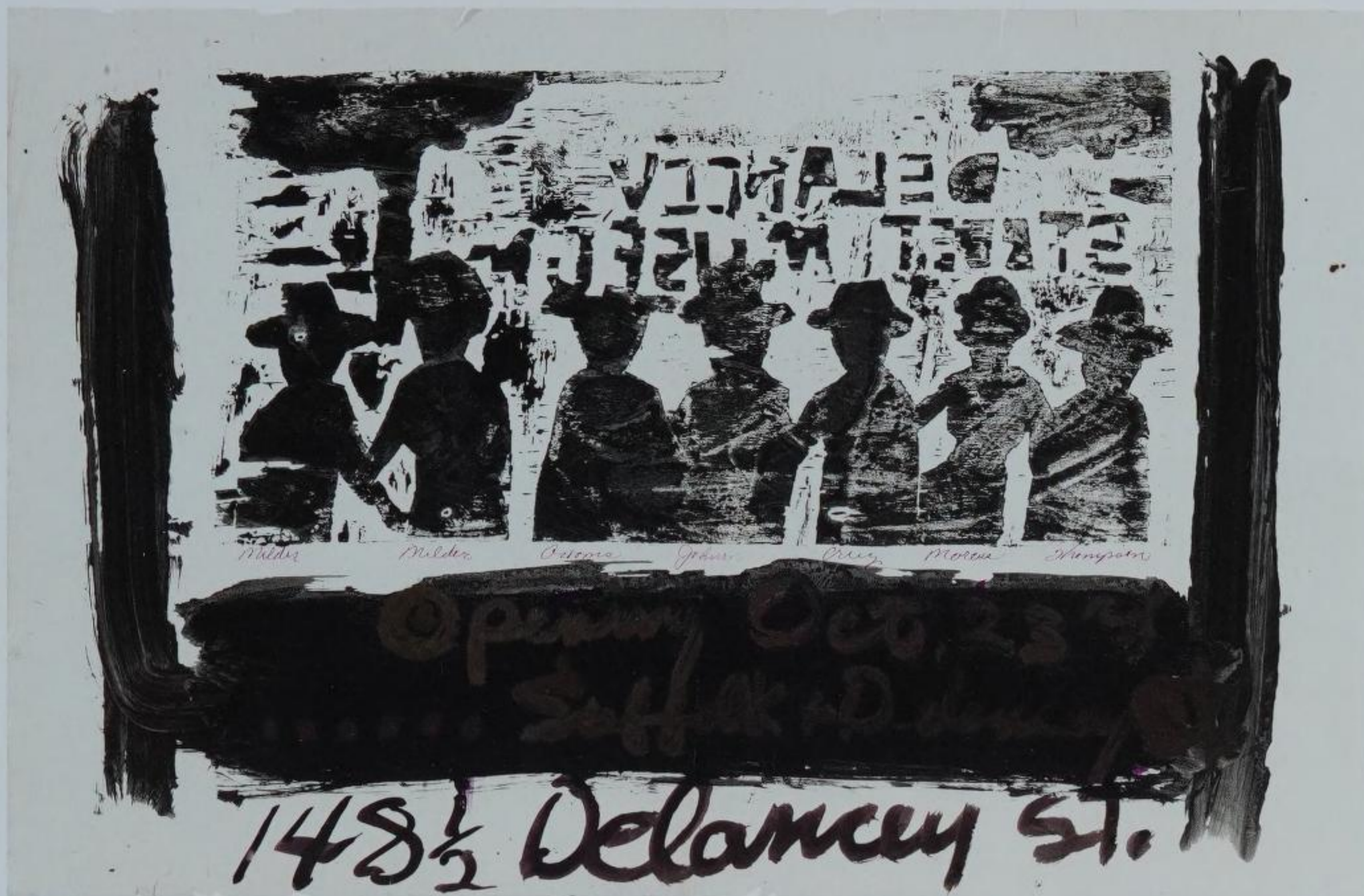


Fig. 105. Bob Thompson, Announcement for opening at Delancey Street Museum, New York, 1959
 Ink on paper, 22 × 34 in. (55.9 × 86.4 cm)
 Estate of Bob Thompson

light as though from heaven and large enough to think big.”¹⁰³ The work he made there had quite an impact: “[Thompson] expresses hallucinating visions impressed on his mind like fingerprints on a police card,” wrote Lawrence Campbell in *Art News*.¹⁰⁴

THE PROGRAM

Small outlined Grooms’s exhibition plans to Andersen and Falcone in an undated letter:

Jay [Milder] has a one-man show at the Museum [January 18–February 1, 1960]. Lester [Johnson] will have a drawing show, Bob [Thompson] a one-man [February 12–March 13, 1960]. Marcia [Marcus] a ballet [January 1960], Joan Herbst a puppet show and Red and I a two-man show. Our show will be intimately in his studio. You first walk into an empty gallery and see white walls and one or two sculptures, then into his studio where will be my poems and his things.¹⁰⁵

Grooms followed up in his own correspondence with Andersen and Falcone: “We had a real strong show,” he wrote after the opening in January, likely concurrent with his solo show at the Reuben Gallery. He went on to describe his work in the space:

Sunrise looked [delicious] on the white wall. I wrote *She had long legs* on the wall in big red and black letters. I mounted the colored poems on wood and wrote out *swelling she* on big piece of brown paper. You saw the double painting just as you walk in. I made a wooden man on the door. We had a big opening.¹⁰⁶

The immediacy of Grooms’s account echoes the rapidity with which he worked between 1958 and 1960, both in his own gallery projects and in his collaborations with other galleries. In December 1959 Grooms performed *The Burning Building* (discussed below) and in January 1960 he performed and produced *The Magic Train Ride* (see fig. 80) at the Reuben Gallery. That month he also received a solo exhibition at the Reuben, and in February Grooms participated in a group show at the Judson Gallery. His boundless energy seemed to benefit his circle: both Milder’s and Thompson’s shows were reviewed enthusiastically in the press, and by May 1960 each began showing in commercial galleries, starting with a joint exhibition at the Zabriskie Gallery, on Madison Avenue.¹⁰⁷

According to Milder, he and Thompson were “appendages” to Grooms’s Delancey Street Museum concept, and the pair performed in Grooms’s Happenings, as they had in Allan Kaprow’s watershed *18 Happenings* in 1959. But neither artist thought in spatial-

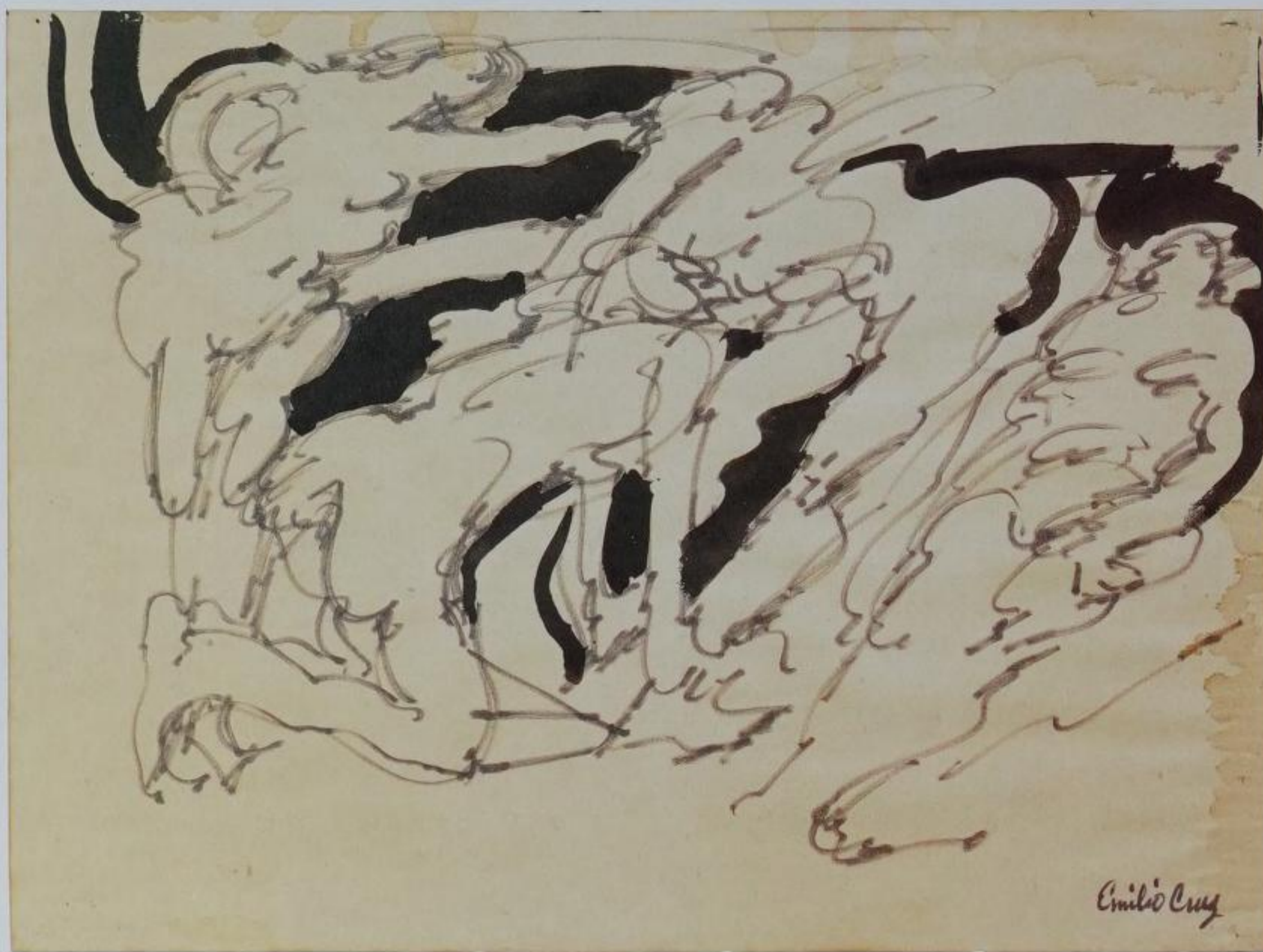


Fig. 106. Emilio Cruz, *Dancers*, c. 1960
Ink on paper, 18 × 20 in. (45.7 × 50.8 cm)
Collection of June Ekman, New York

sculptural terms. “That wasn’t our nature,” Milder asserted, “we just went on and had painting shows [at the Delancey Street Museum] and just kept painting.”¹⁰⁸ Their friend Emilio Cruz was similarly focused on painting, arguing that the late 1950s were about mining the return of the figure, per Pollock and de Kooning, despite figuration’s association with the so-called Tenth Street touch (fig. 106). While acknowledging the pressure of figuration’s “clumsy weight,” Cruz sought to stay within the bounds of painting

and sculpture but to move beyond Pollock and de Kooning, each of whom “sat like a giant sphinx on our road whose riddle had to be solved.”¹⁰⁹

Cruz’s art concentrated on representations of the female body, and he made numerous drawings and paintings of his girlfriend, the dancer June Ekman (b. 1932), in an attempt to both fix and suggest movement. Whereas Cruz struggled with what to do with the picture-plane after Pollock and de Kooning, Bob Thompson went in a different direction. Artist theater, it turned out, was influential, as evidenced by the artist’s use of stairs as a structuring device, as though setting a stage or creating a clearing in the natural environment; and by the theatricality of such paintings as *The Funeral of Jan Müller* (1958), in which silhouetted figures move

in a procession down a center aisle (see fig. 46). Indeed, he told the critic Jeanne Siegel in 1965 that painting “should be like the theatre, a presentation of something, some activity,” demonstrating an awareness that painting had an audience, an aspect integral to performance.¹¹⁰

In April 1960 Grooms invited Marcia Marcus to exhibit a new series of self-portraits that similarly acknowledged an awareness of the viewer (fig. 108). These ten paintings depict Marcus through feminine tropes, from Medusa to high-society women to vamps, and the show was favorably reviewed. “The artist does not use self-portraiture to reveal introspective insight or to probe inner truth,” wrote *Arts* reviewer Helen DeMott, pinpointing Marcus’s deliberate objectifying tendency.¹¹¹ Dealers were mystified by her deadpan approach, however, and apart from her subsequent inclusion in the Whitney Museum’s *Young American Artists* exhibition in 1960, the same year as her show at the Delancey Street Museum, she was unable to capitalize on the professional momentum.¹¹² Had it occurred in the late 1970s, her conceptual approach to portraiture would have been considered a breakthrough, for example as a precedent for the constructed “selves” of Cindy Sherman’s early photograph series. In 1960, however, commercial dealers were unable to grasp her point.



Fig. 107. Bob Thompson, Announcement for *Bob Thompson: Paintings and Sculpture*, Delancey Street Museum, New York, February 12–March 13, 1960
Offset print, 9 × 11³/₈ in. (23 × 29 cm)
Bob Thompson papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

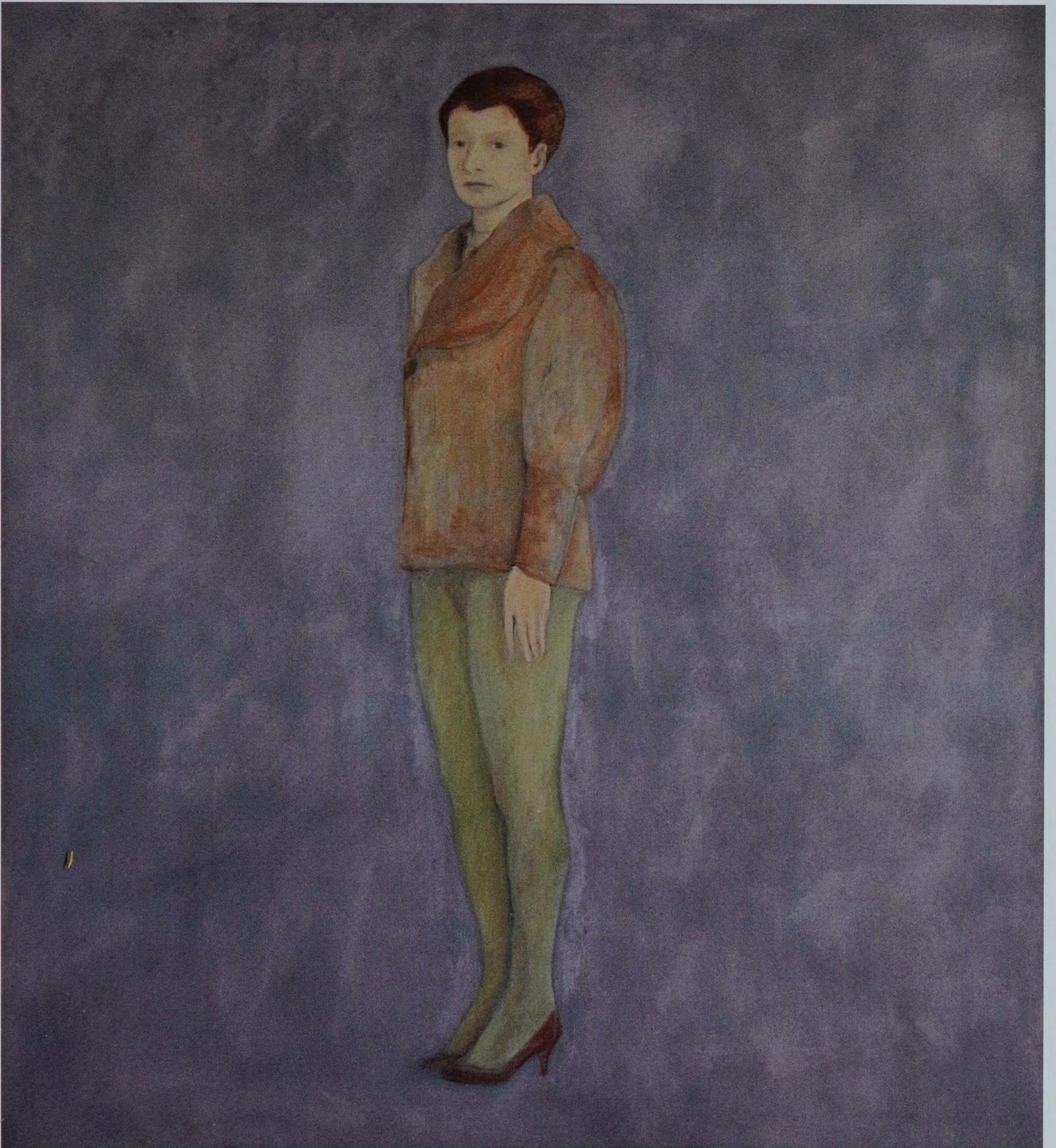


Fig. 108. Marcia Marcus, *Self-Portrait in Fur Jacket*, 1959

Oil on canvas, 60 × 54 in. (152.4 × 137.2 cm)

Collection of Kate Prendergast, New York



Fig. 109. Red Grooms's *Burning Building*, Delancey Street Museum, New York, 1959
 Photograph: © John Cohen. Courtesy L. Parker Stephenson Photographs, NYC

PERFORMANCE

In interviews, Grooms remembers the Delancey Street Museum as a laboratory for developing his performances. Indeed, performance-based art was part of the new, multimedia sensibility, an approach Grooms embraced.¹¹³ And the former boxing gym on Delancey Street decidedly influenced the performances he devised. In addition to leftover lockers, pew benches, and yellow-tinged posters, the third-floor space also contained metal card tables on which a system of rubber bands and pushpins had been used to hide cards.¹¹⁴ Grooms appropriated these elements in his set design for *The Burning Building*, where he expanded on his fascination with fire as a dramatic concept and also extended collage into three dimensions (fig. 109). He even repurposed the old boxing posters on the walls as paper for his announcement (fig. 110). *The Burning Building* lacked a linear narrative, “except for a couple of sheets listing single words or short phrases shouted out by the Firemen (Bill Barrell, Milder) or Patsy Man (Grooms), The Girl in a White Box (Herbst) hummed

and made vocal sounds of her own choosing as she turned round and round. The Soundman (Sylvia Small) read a simple speech that I wrote to accompany the Patsy Man as he searched the Firemen’s den for his love interest.”¹¹⁵ Grooms left other aspects to chance. *The Burning Building* was performed over seven days, from December 4 to 11, 1959, sometimes twice a day.¹¹⁶ The painter Anne Tabachnick (1927–1995) remembered that Thompson, in white clown makeup, playing the Doorman, was asked “to stand in the street and hustle up an audience. This was no easy task. Admission was free, but it was very cold in the museum.”¹¹⁷ Grooms recalled spending no more than \$15 on the total production: “Costumes were cardboard and rough canvas, underneath the actors wore their own clothes and street shoes. . . . The Downtown art scene attended. Audience numbers varied from one (Jim Dine) Wednesday night to about 30 Saturday night.”¹¹⁸

Delancey Street saw two more performances, each of them a rare, woman-produced Happening. In January 1960 Marcia Marcus.

who felt a strong affinity with dance, performed in her “ballet” titled *A Garden* along with Thompson, on drums, and Grooms, as a dancer.¹¹⁹ Marcus remembered asking Grooms over drinks at the Greenwich Village hangout the Cedar Tavern if she could perform at the museum: “I don’t think he even wanted me to do it. It was just a thought, and someone said yes, so I said, okay, why not?” She sought out Thompson for his knowledge of music and Grooms because he “was one of the weirder dancers.”¹²⁰ Cut-and-painted boxing posters became flowers for the titular garden, and a gauze curtain in front of the “stage” area rendered Marcus and Grooms a soft-focus blur.¹²¹ Far from stage front, Marcus read aloud from a text. Her highly developed sense of irony precluded a “deep, dark production” that delved into her inner self. She preferred instead to assign roles, then allow things simply to happen—“otherwise known as a Happening.”

Joan Herbst’s puppet play *The Red King and the Witch* was among the Delancey Street Museum’s last activities, performed May 6–9, 1960 (fig. 111). “It was a story about the inevitability of death, which really fascinated my 19-year old self,” Herbst recalled.¹²² Its fairy-tale structure and playful elements would prove influential on Grooms and another helper on the production, Mimi Gross; the two artists would subsequently collaborate on films that mined fables as source material.

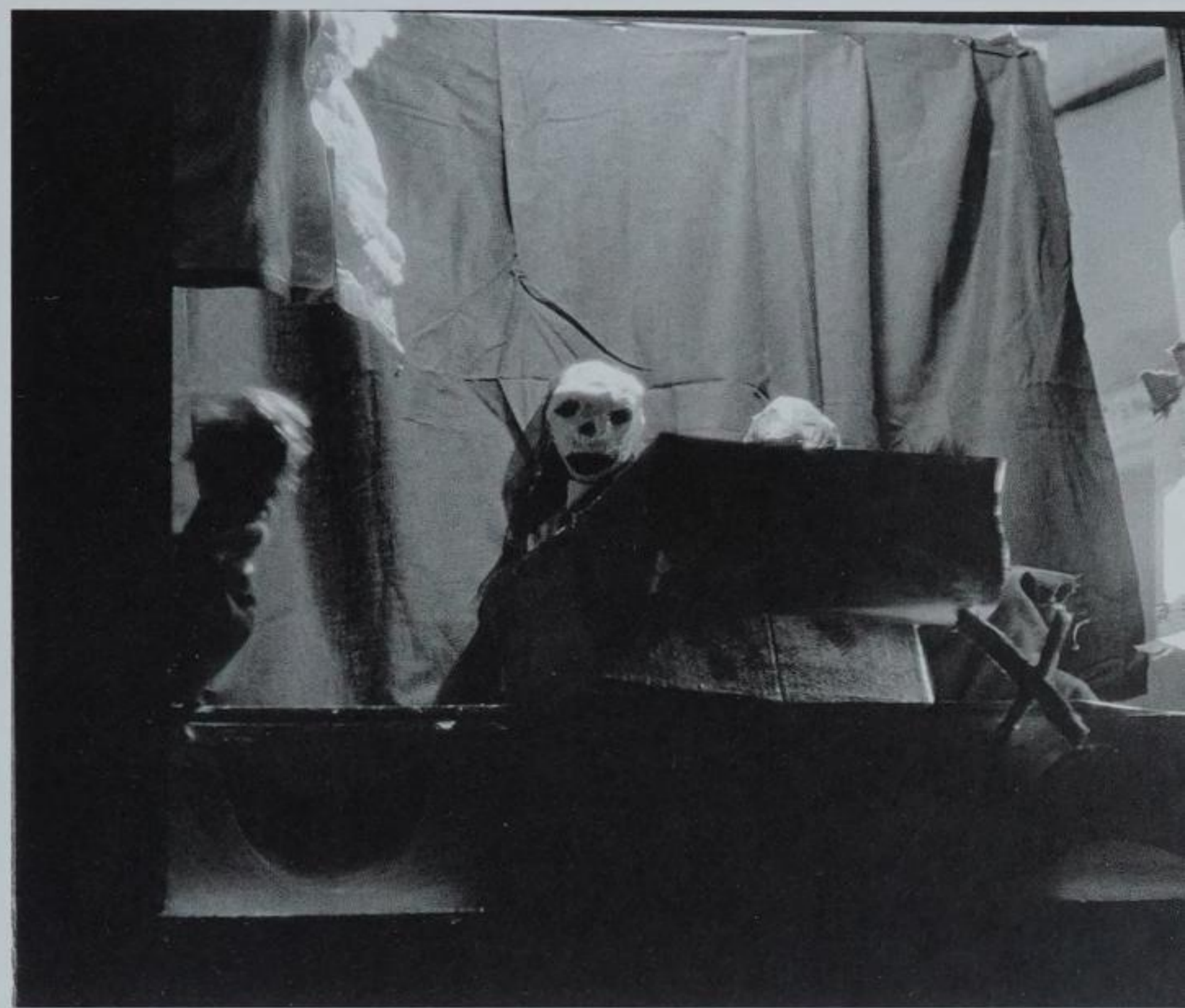


Fig. 111. Joan Herbst’s puppet play *The Red King and the Witch*, Delancey Street Museum, May 6–9, 1960

Photograph: Charles Rotmil. Courtesy the photographer

The Delancey Street Museum had an even looser administrative structure than the City Gallery. This state of affairs allowed Grooms to push through his agenda of showing artists he believed deserved solo exhibitions. That Grooms opted to use the Delancey space primarily to develop his performance work is significant. The museum nurtured the precise shift that occurred in 1959 and 1960, when artist theater became an established genre. As the 1960s progressed, an aesthetic division emerged between artists like Grooms, who continued to explore the theatrical middle ground between painting and sculpture, and those like Milder, who maintained a commitment to their specific disciplines and were thereby overshadowed by the performance and environmental work that was quickly emerging as the vanguard. Grooms, however, elected not to remain at the forefront of the movement. In the spring of 1960, feeling pressured by the demands of his nonstop, two-year production schedule, he left New York and dissolve the loft-museum, storing his art collection in Thompson’s Clinton Street studio and embarking for Europe.¹²³ The Judson Gallery was left to carry the charge.

Fig. 110. Red Grooms, Announcement for *The Burning Building*, a play by Red Grooms, Delancey Street Museum, New York, December 4–11, 1960
Woodcut print on salvaged poster board and paper, 9 × 12 in. (22.9 × 30.5 cm)
Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York

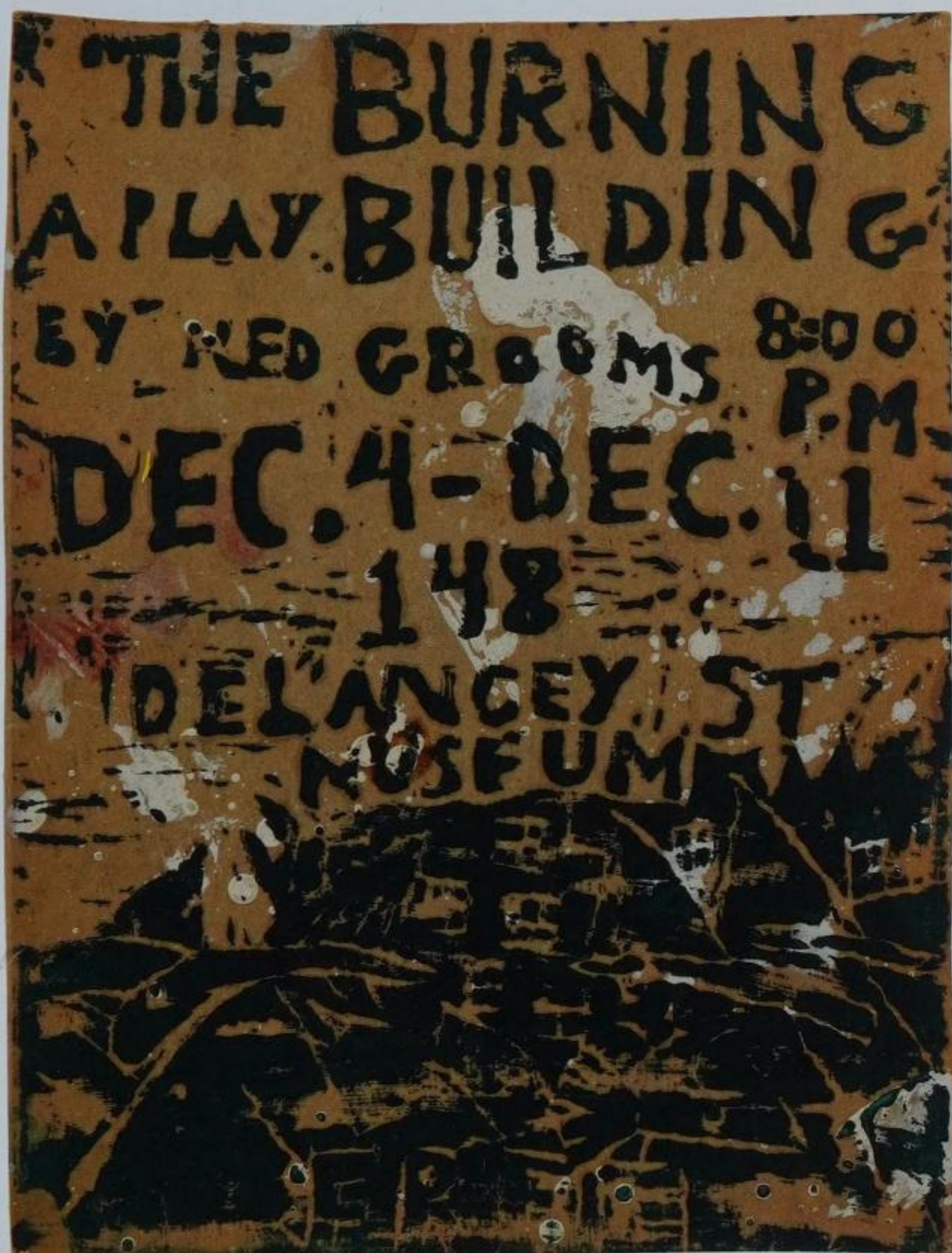




Fig. 112. Joan Herbst, *Nightmare*, c. 1965
Ink and gouache on paper, 22¹/₄ × 29³/₄ in. (56.5 × 75.6 cm)
Courtesy the artist

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

“I observe with delight the strangeness of common things,” Claes Oldenburg noted in his journal not long after he moved to New York City in 1956.¹²⁴ Four years later, he mounted *The Street* as part of his Ray Gun series, a breakthrough exhibition and performance project at the Judson Gallery. And unlike performances held at the Reuben and Delancey, *The Street* was equal parts painting, sculpture, environment, and theater. Perhaps more than any other artist, Oldenburg synthesized into his own visual language the radical new tendencies emerging at these new artist-run spaces: a raw response to the urban environment, the abandonment of discipline specificity, and the use of the gallery as a stage. Moreover, no other

artist so systematically investigated New York City as a subject or so completely embraced Allan Kaprow’s assertion that art must incorporate “the space and objects of our everyday life, either our bodies, clothes, rooms, or, if need be, the vastness of Forty-second Street.”¹²⁵

The cityscape, its inhabitants, and their happenstance interactions also drove Associate Minister Bernard “Bud” Scott’s theology at the progressive Judson Memorial Church, on Washington Square South. His and Oldenburg’s shared perception converged in 1959–60 at the Judson Gallery, an approximately 1,000-square-foot room in the basement of Judson House, an interracial student dormitory at 239 Thompson Street, around the corner from the church.¹²⁶ The church believed in art’s capacity to spur Protestant



Fig. 113. Claes Oldenburg, Thompson Street entrance to *Ray Gun Show* (a.k.a. *The Street*), Judson Gallery, Judson Memorial Church, New York, January 30–March 16, 1960
Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York



Fig. 114. Phyllis Yampolsky standing between Peter and Gia Forakis at Yampolsky's solo show, Judson Gallery, Judson Memorial Church, New York, March 1962
Judson Memorial Church Archive, Fales Library, New York University

theological relevance and hoped to reverse the faith's centuries-long suspicion of the arts: "The artist may begin to use the church in a new light . . . (and) the Church at large may begin to understand the place contemporary art ought to have in its liturgical life."¹²⁷ Its approach stood in contrast to the postwar rise of Protestant evangelism epitomized by the televangelist Billy Graham. Rather than assume as he did that "the Bible has all the answers to social problems," ministers affiliated with the Judson instead tried "to understand cities."¹²⁸ Under their visionary leader, the Reverend Howard Moody (1921–2012), Judson clergy worked with members of the local community as partners, not authorities. And they granted artists unprecedented freedom, thereby forging an ideal alliance in their campaign to refute conformity and consumerism, values deeply embedded in American society. "Behind their drive," *New York Times* columnist Meyer Berger observed, "is the belief that the Church must go beyond theological utterance to face a neighborhood's human problems."¹²⁹

Three artists originally from Cincinnati started the Judson Gallery in early 1959. Marcus Ratliff (b. 1935), a resident of Judson House who was completing studies at nearby Cooper Union, was the first to join Bud Scott in exploring the feasibility of using the basement as a studio and exhibition venue. He invited his classmate Tom Wesselmann (1931–2004) and his high school

friend Jim Dine, who had recently arrived in New York, to show their artwork in the newly repurposed basement gallery. Opening on February 13, the exhibition was devoted to their drawings, paintings, and, in the case of Wesselmann, collages. Their second project, also a group show, opened on March 14, and included artists whom Dine had befriended: Red Grooms, Jay Milder, and John Cohen (b. 1932).¹³⁰ Phyllis Yampolsky (b. 1932), who at the invitation of Bud Scott had a "one-man" show at the Judson in late October 1959, was also part of the initial group (fig. 114). Her involvement with the church, however, would prove most pivotal in another project, the Hall of Issues, discussed later in this volume.

Ratliff and Wesselmann first encountered Oldenburg's art in March 1959 at a small show held at Cooper Union's art library. Ratliff remembered the work as striking, comprising small-scale drawings of a woman (fig. 115). "They were just black and white, and wonderful, quick drawings. And they were just so juicy and delicious," he recalled. Wesselmann was similarly impressed.¹³¹ The works derived from a series Oldenburg had made of his wife-to-be, Patty, an artist herself who also worked as an artist's model. He reflected, "All those drawings of (Patty) that were done in 1959, is really the time that the drawing began to work, to operate, become more than illustration. They became formal, finally, and it took years to get it to that point."¹³²

Together Ratliff and Wesselmann arranged for Oldenburg to show at the Judson in May 1959, an exhibition notable for the artist's shift away from figurative paintings and drawings to constructions made from found objects.¹³³ Importantly, thereafter Oldenburg took a role in administering the gallery. In a letter to Scott in August 1959, he wrote of steering the second season toward activities less definable as exhibitions. Oldenburg recognized that Moody and Scott's goals for the gallery were social, and this correlated with his own thinking about art. The artist began to conceptualize his plans for the Judson in a manner distinct from the Reuben:

The Reuben (or any other commercial gallery) has its function, which is to make money, establish reputations for this purpose, etc. This is not the aim of the Judson. Other aims of cultural significance are more important. The Reuben is the place for one-man shows. The Judson is the place for experiments, especially with a view toward affecting culture, more as a museum might. They are not incompatible. X could belong to one and be active in the other.¹³⁴

By allowing himself such radical juxtapositions and not limiting himself to one gallery model, Oldenburg synthesized the era's binaries into a new approach for exhibition, in which



Fig. 115. Claes Oldenburg, *Pat Sewing*, 1959
Crayon on paper, 11 × 13⁷/₈ in. (27.9 × 35.2 cm)
Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York

the architectural space would form the context for the artwork produced. Such ideas intoxicated Dine. “Claes shared his vast collection of urban aspirations,” Dine wrote in 2012, “and I, who had come from southern Ohio, took my Ph.D. in the art world with C.O. as my adviser.”¹³⁵

From the initial Ratliff-Wesselmann phase (1959), through the Oldenburg phase (1959–1960), and concluding with Allan Kaprow as curator (1960–62), the Judson exhibition program further advanced assemblage while also giving primacy to drawing. Oldenburg and Dine were the largest and most influential proponents of experimenting with disciplines, as exemplified in their projects *The Street* and *The House*, as well as in the several performances held in the gallery during Oldenburg’s tenure at the helm. Indeed, as early as November 2, 1959, at the conclusion of *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* at the Reuben Gallery, Kaprow met with the Judson Church’s cultural committee to discuss mounting a series of large-scale environments and Happenings that would require the use of the sanctuary and the gymnasium as well. Kaprow

explained that his goal was to create an “intensified interior” where people would “Go IN instead of LOOK AT.”¹³⁶ His proposal was perfectly aligned with Bud Scott’s belief that art could “rekindle our awareness of our existence and all that runs through it and surrounds it.”¹³⁷

FROM EXHIBITION TO INSTALLATION

In taking over programming for the Judson, Oldenburg arranged for a joint show with Jim Dine in November 1959 that featured new “figurative” work inspired by the streets, Brutalism, and children’s drawings (figs. 116, 117). They organized a corresponding panel discussion, “The Human Image in Art,” on December 2, 1959, which in addition to Dine and Oldenburg included Lester Johnson and Allan Kaprow. Forty people attended, and the conversation coalesced around three issues: “the conflict—or lack of conflict—between humanism and abstraction; the danger of avant-garde conventionalism; and the question of why painters paint and for whom.”¹³⁸ Oldenburg and Kaprow, not surprisingly, broke with



Fig. 116. Jim Dine, *Small Head*, 1959
Oil on canvas, 14 × 10 in. (35.6 × 25.4 cm)
Courtesy the artist

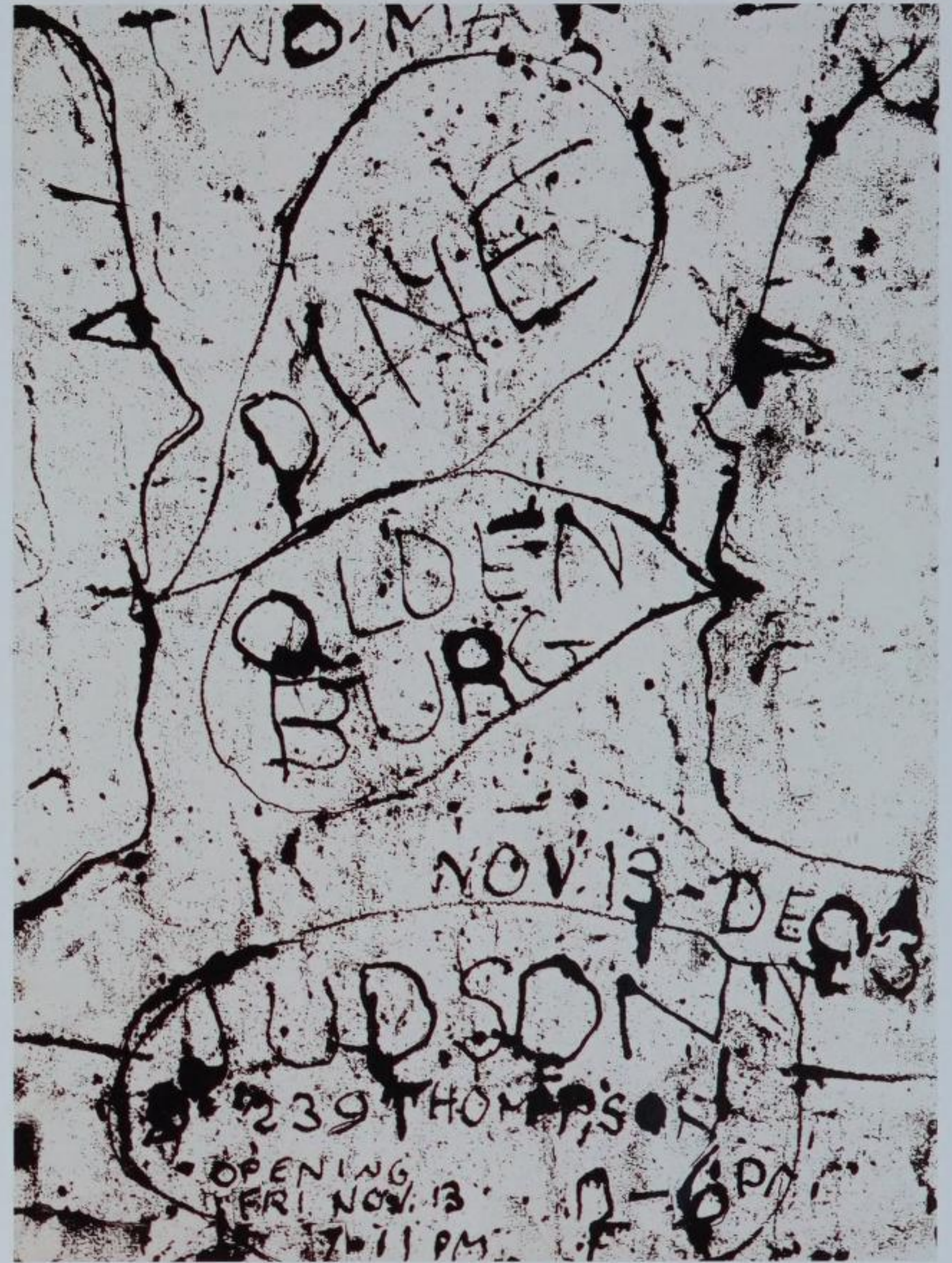


Fig. 117. Claes Oldenburg, Announcement for exhibition of works by Jim Dine and Claes Oldenburg, Judson Gallery, Judson Memorial Church, New York, 1959
Offset print, 11 × 8½ in. (27.9 × 21.6 cm)
Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York

painting. Kaprow stressed that the environment as a method would supplant traditional disciplines, embracing humanism through its involvement of the spectator. But Oldenburg spoke about how best to relate figurative imagery to the viewer. Reacting to the *New Images of Man* exhibition at MoMA, which he found overwrought and outmoded, Oldenburg stressed the importance of using the right tools to reach as many people as possible, and he reiterated a belief in the particularly profound symbolism in human imagery.¹³⁹ He rejected the existential new humanism for its failure to appeal to people on a mass scale, and in a way that would render painting a necessity to them, prompting a question from Marcus Ratliff about the function of art if such populism was to be realized.¹⁴⁰

The answer to Ratliff's question came in January 1960, when Oldenburg and Dine collaborated on *Ray Gun*, comprising "American popular art, street art and other informal sources," over more than two months, from January 4 through March 16. Citing

the science-fiction fantasy weapon as a symbol of Oldenburg's new paradigm, *Ray Gun* merged the studio process, site specificity, and performance within the exhibition format.¹⁴¹ Its ten-week duration was also unprecedented. The press release indicated, "The gallery is open at the usual hours during construction in order to encourage participation and development of the *Ray Gun* idea."¹⁴² An advertisement designed by Oldenburg (though his first name was misspelled by the typesetter) was also distinctive, with a brushed-ink rendering of a gun (fig. 118). The ad promised "Two Huge Living Constructions" that would "Annihilate-Illuminate" aesthetic conventions.

Ray Gun was initially scheduled with Dine's project happening separately from Oldenburg's, but as they worked, the artists decided to produce their projects at one and the same time. Dine described their collaboration up to the opening, on January 30, 1960:



Fig. 118. Claes Oldenburg, Advertisement for *Ray Gun Show* in *Village Voice*, January 27, 1960
 Newsprint, 3 1/8 x 4 1/8 in. (8 x 10.5 cm)
 Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York, and Judson Memorial Church Archive, Fales Library, New York University

[I] was coming down at night [from the Upper East Side], and he [Oldenburg] was meeting me, and we buy a little beer, and get a little high, then we go out on the street and we pick up all this stuff. We go back in, and we talk and we build. . . . That was the process.¹⁴³

The Street was the first thing a visitor encountered upon entering. Described as both a three-dimensional mural and a painting in the shape of a city street, the installation merged the "chaos and uncertainty of life . . . into the space of art."¹⁴⁴ Whereas Kaprow's environments engaged abstraction, *The Street* and *The House* reconceived figuration apart from Post-Impressionism and embraced a literal use of materials. *The Street* was constructed of cardboard, paper, newspaper, and found wood, and most of its forms were heavily outlined in black paint: "trash covered the floor from corner to corner, strips of newspaper hung from the light fixture, and the walls were covered with a brown and sooty-looking cardboard relief" (figs. 119, 120).¹⁴⁵ Certain elements and figures were distinguishable—a subway turnstile; a man at a shoeshine booth and another with a gun—and objects, especially the ray gun and automobiles, became motifs used throughout the space.

Figs. 119, 120. Claes Oldenburg, *Ray Gun Show* (a.k.a. *The Street*), Judson Gallery, Judson Memorial Church, New York, January 30–March 16, 1960
 Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York



The House was confined to a discrete corner, further distinguished aesthetically from *The Street* by its use of vivid pink and green and the bedsprings hanging from the ceiling. It, too, was built from found objects, including stretched canvas backdrops and props from the church's theater, children's paintings, and a broken umbrella and other detritus (fig. 121). All were overpainted with phrases both nonsensical and comprehensible—"Yes eggs," "Go to Work," "Goo," and "Why Can't We Be Friends?"—casting a sinister tone on the seemingly innocuous conversation of daily life.¹⁴⁶

During the run of the exhibition, on February 29 and March 1 and 2, Oldenburg and Dine organized a performance series under the title "Ray Gun Spex," which took place throughout the church.¹⁴⁷ The series was unprecedented. In addition to performances by Oldenburg and Dine, it included pieces by Al Hansen, Robert Whitman, Allan Kaprow, and Dick Higgins (1938–1998). "Ray Gun Spex" is best known for *Snapshots from the City*, which Oldenburg and Patty Mucha performed within the space of *The Street*. The two artists were costumed and painted, the former wrapped in cotton bandages and the latter in a rat-like mask with braids. Spectators entered a darkened Judson Gallery, where they could hear but not see human movement. They



Fig. 122. Patty Mucha and Claes Oldenburg performing in Oldenburg's *Snapshots from the City* in *The Street*, Judson Gallery, Judson Memorial Church, New York, January 30–March 16, 1960

Photograph: Martha Holmes. Courtesy The LIFE Collection, Getty Images

gathered in an adjacent room and remained in place until Lucas Samaras switched the lights on and off thirty-two times. Viewers had to crowd around the doorway to see Oldenburg and Mucha frozen mid-movement, but only when the light came on, like a flash photograph (fig. 122). Oldenburg explained, "I was obsessed at the time with something that lay between action and stillness; freezing the motion as a painterly and theatrical idea. Originally, I had wanted to bring things from a very still state to a very slow state to a very fast state; but I settled for the snapshot device, which made the effect of the thing really painterly."¹⁴⁸ But the work was also an intuitive rendering of the intimidating aspects of urban living. The darkness, dirt, vaguely animalistic costumes, and bandages were unnerving, approximating nighttime and the decrepitude one experienced on New York's decaying Lower East Side.

Fig. 121. Jim Dine in *The House* at Judson Gallery, Judson Memorial Church, New York, 1960

Photograph: Martha Holmes. Courtesy The LIFE Collection, Getty Images

The second widely discussed performance was Jim Dine's short, intense *Smiling Workman*, held in the church's Long Room, a space used for theater productions. Dine appeared painted and dressed entirely in red—a persona he would reintroduce in April at his Reuben Gallery opening. Onto a canvas he painted the phrase "I love what I'm doing" in orange and blue. "When I got to 'what I'm doing,'" Dine recalled, "it was going very fast, and I picked up one of the jars and drank the paint (actually tomato juice) and then I poured the other two jars of paint over my head, quickly, and dove, physically, through the canvas."¹⁴⁹ The only other performance to resonate on a perceptual level was Robert Whitman's *Duet for a Small Smell*, a short piece that combined a noxious sulfurous odor with Mucha stabbing a dummy. The pieces by Hansen, Kaprow, and Higgins were far more esoteric and less menacing in tone and intensity.¹⁵⁰

"Ray Gun Spex" generated tremendous enthusiasm, including an article in the mass-market weekly *Time* magazine with a photograph by Martha Holmes of Oldenburg in his bandaged dystopian guise. It was the first time that the younger Downtown New York artists achieved public attention reaching far beyond the local art press. Though the article was mocking in tone and identified the work as belonging to a novel artistic genre emanating from Beat culture (which it did not),¹⁵¹ the publicity brought Oldenburg and Dine invitations to show at uptown galleries, beginning later that May with Martha Jackson's sprawling *New Forms–New Media in Painting and Sculpture*, for which Oldenburg designed the invitation (fig. 123).

New Forms–New Media was the first project to examine the broad use of found objects in recent art, anticipating William Seitz's *Art of Assemblage*. Not only was the exhibition a showcase for numerous young artists working downtown—in addition to Dine and Oldenburg, fellow Reuben Gallery artists Brecht, Grooms, Kaprow, and Rubin Miller took part—it was a media sensation, even prompting a television documentary produced by CBS. In the accompanying exhibition pamphlet, both Kaprow and Lawrence Alloway contributed short essays, "Some Observations on Contemporary Art" and "Junk Culture as Tradition," respectively. While Alloway, like Seitz, situated artists like Oldenburg and Dine in extension to the legacy of Dada, Kaprow positioned the art as an entirely new episode, disconnected from Europe. Among the qualities Kaprow identified was an identical attitude transposed across drawn, sculptural, and painted forms, weakening discipline specificity; "rawness" replaced craft and beauty, and there was a prevailing notion that the object could continue or be added to. The latter was, in a sense, a synchronic explanation, rendering the object a segment wrested from "the whole world of experience."¹⁵²

This new, "contemporary" art, absent of clear categories and familiar names, proved problematic for the uninitiated, especially the critics. Their use of terms like neo-Dada was, for Kaprow, more

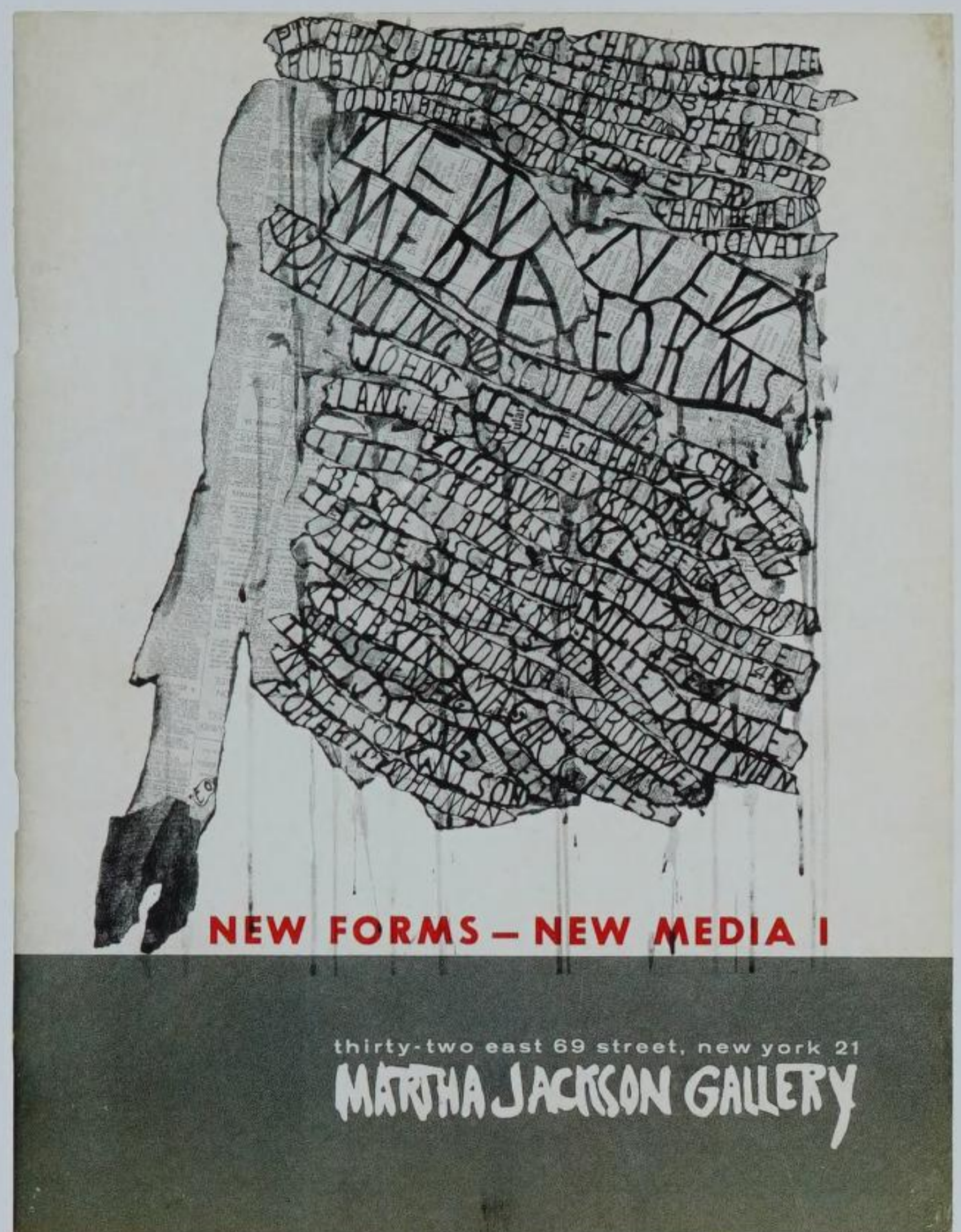


Fig. 123. Claes Oldenburg, Brochure for *New Forms–New Media I* exhibition, Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, 1960
Offset print, 11 × 8½ in. (27.9 × 21.6 cm)
Collection of Renée E. Rubin, New York

revealing of "the helplessness and anarchy of understanding in the minds of these judges" than on the nature of the art being shown.¹⁵³ And while Kaprow's conceptualization of new art left room for situating his own projects, in *The Street and Snapshots from the City*, Oldenburg most effectively smashed the boundaries between drawing, painting, sculpture, environment, and theater. No other artist, not even Kaprow, went as far in advancing an entirely new art form without abandoning the object altogether. An astute observer of the scene, Oldenburg created a new, environmental paradigm that he would pursue over the succeeding two years.

Before Oldenburg turned to performances at the Reuben Gallery and the inauguration of his own studio-space, *The Store*, he arranged solo shows for two artists he had known since his years at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago: the printmaker Richard O. Tyler (1926–1983) and the painter-assemblage artist Dorothea Baer (1926–2012), Tyler's wife. Both anticipated the counterculture's bohemian sensibility and spiritual ethos.¹⁵⁴ Tyler's show in March



Fig. 124. Richard Tyler, *The Planets* print portfolio title page, 1958
Offset print, 12³/₄ × 9 in. (32.4 × 22.9 cm)
Courtesy Uranian Phalanstery, New York



included constructions and small sculptures drawn from his mystical adventures, “daringly dipped & fearsomely filched from the Deep Unconscious, & patinæd (sic) by the Personal with rich ritual ‘irrelevancies’ religiously rendered & rightly represented” (fig. 124).¹⁵⁵ His assemblages occasioned a flattering profile in the *Village Voice*, which also delved into Tyler’s Uranium Press, a basement workshop on East Fourth Street where he published pamphlets and broadsides, including stories written by neighborhood children. Likewise, Baer’s use of metaphor in both language (titles) and the objects selected in her exhibition the following month was affirmed by Helen DeMott in *Arts* as “witty and urbane” (fig. 125).¹⁵⁶

Before the close of the Judson’s second season, Ratliff and Wesselmann received a two-man show in May 1960. They did so at a transitional time for the gallery: the pastor so instrumental in its formation, Bud Scott, had recently left. Al Carmines became the assistant minister, and although he oversaw the gallery, his passion (and considerable talent) was in theater. Kaprow agreed to oversee exhibition programming beginning that fall; this would be his last effort at managing a gallery in New York.

THE KAPROW PROGRAM AT THE JUDSON GALLERY

While most accounts of the Judson Gallery concentrate on the radical breakthroughs made by Oldenburg and Dine, the space hosted other artists whose work was also in formation. Even as Kaprow was utilizing the Judson Gallery (and parts of the church) for his own environmental projects, he was also selecting four artists for solo shows. In addition to Martha Edelheit, whom he had earlier invited to show at the Reuben, Kaprow sought the participation of Gloria Graves and Dan Flavin (1933–1996), both working in assemblage, and Alison Knowles (b. 1933), better known today as one of the founders of Fluxus but who at the beginning of the 1960s was working as a painter. Kaprow’s choices demonstrate his commitment to young artists whose work was not easily categorized and fit into the “in between” disciplines he outlined in *New Forms–New Media*. (In fact, Flavin was included in that project.) Although the four artists had distinctive methodologies and aesthetics, each reflected Kaprow’s sense that artists were “no longer producing monuments or heirlooms,” but instead working with concepts of the ephemeral, “the connection between the impermanence of the physical life of their work and the principle of change.”¹⁵⁷

Kaprow’s fall 1960 season at the Judson opened on November 30 with his own *Apple Shrine Environment* (fig. 126), a “modern

Fig. 125. Dorothea Baer, *Don't Put All Your Eggs in One Basket*, 1960
Wood, metal, glass, eggshells, and mixed media, 12¹/₂ × 14 × 3¹/₄ in.
(31.8 × 35.6 × 8.3 cm)

Courtesy Uranian Phalanstery, New York

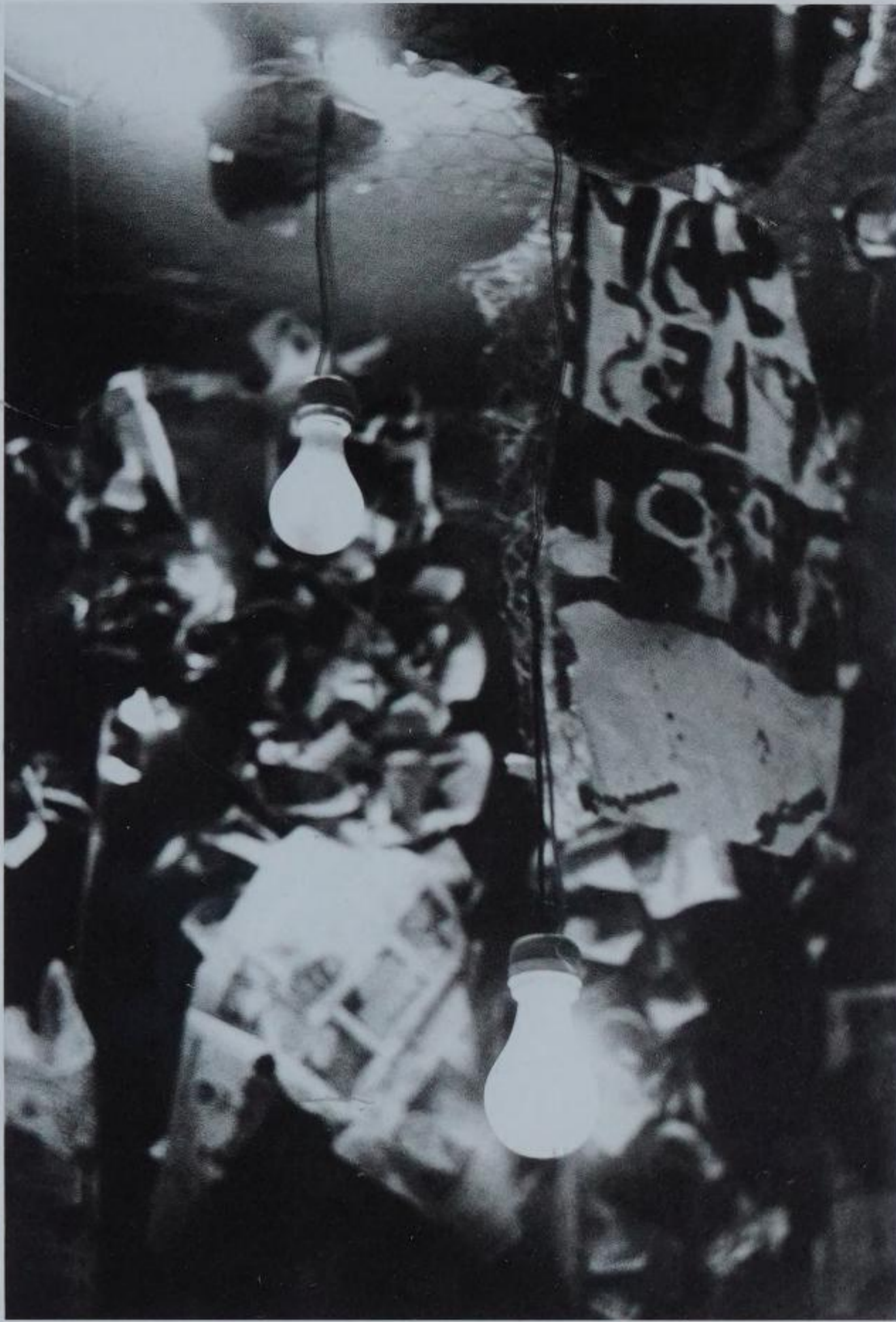


Fig. 126. Allan Kaprow's *Apple Shrine Environment*, Judson Gallery, Judson Memorial Church, New York, November 30–December 24, 1960
 Photograph: Scott Hyde. Judson Memorial Church Archive, Fales Library, New York University

labyrinth of narrow passageways constructed of chicken wire, ripped cardboard, rags, tarpaper, enormous quantities of torn and crumpled newspapers stuffed into the wire from ceiling to floor, and extending to the floor in heaps through which one slushed and waded.¹⁵⁸ Despite its being called by one reviewer Kaprow's most accomplished environment, in the wake of *The Street*, a trash-strewn space no longer seemed quite so revolutionary; only one other contemporary review appeared, in the January 1961 edition of *Art News*.¹⁵⁹ And indeed, a number of other artists had by then begun to expand the installation form in terms of duration, architectural breadth, and social message. As the artistic environment became more common, its novelty had worn off.

Undeterred, Kaprow turned his efforts to the Reuben Gallery's East Third Street venue and left the winter-spring



Fig. 127. Gloria Graves, *Kinder Toten Leiden*, 1960
 Mixed media, location and dimensions unknown
 Photograph: Collection of Lois Dodd, New York

of 1961 at the Judson to Graves, Edelheit, and Flavin. Graves exhibited constructions that were part diorama, part assemblage, reminiscent of Victorian mementos but without the sentimentality (fig. 127). The show's sensibility was likened to that encountered during "Ray Gun Spex," when objects were used contrary to their purpose. Because they were "cast-offs of industrial civilization," wrote Suzanne Kiplinger in the *Village Voice*, and not created or worked on directly by the artist, "the objects immediately move into one danger area"—that is, appropriation without manipulation. For Kiplinger, the artist's hand must be present, otherwise the work was simply an indecent debauchery of its true nature.¹⁶⁰

A more discerning critic, Jill Johnston, reviewed Edelheit's April exhibition at the Judson for the May issue of *Art News*. In it,



Fig. 128. Martha Edelheit, *Dream of the Tattooed Lady*, 1961
 Ink and watercolor on rice paper, 11⁷/₈ × 17¹/₈ in. (30.2 × 45.4 cm)
 Collection of the artist

she recognized a focus on private concerns that left the artist with “no use for esthetic niceties.”¹⁶¹ The exhibition was a breakthrough, not only for the artist, but also in its visionary exploration of the body, sexuality, and desire well ahead of feminist art of the 1970s. Her powerful line drawings appear at first to be playful, as her series title, *Children’s Games*, suggests. The games in question were not playthings, however, but violent war games resulting in disfigurement.¹⁶² In a display of harrowing acrobatics, partially clothed figures fall from swings, and menacing masqueraders sidle up to nudes or grab at overgrown children at play. In a suite of color drawings, particularly *Mr. America’s Cut Out Dream* (1961), parts of the body, including genitals, are set down on the page as though part of a macabre paper-doll set. In *Dream of the Tattooed Lady* (1961) a bound, fetus-like figure hovers in fear at the center, surrounded by characters in various states of abjection (fig. 128). Edelheit’s sexual allusions merge uncomfortably with cruelty and,

irresolute regarding the body and its functions, remain frightening to this day.

Edelheit found her source material close to home—her brother was in a veteran’s hospital recovering from a devastating accident, and during her visits, she encountered men in various states of distress. But the series also sprang from art-historical precedents. Egon Schiele’s emaciated figures, especially the erotic nudes; Japanese pillow books; and Romanesque and Carolingian wall paintings, with all their “dis-memberings, de-breastings, eye-gougings, (and) quarterings” of the saints, helped move her steadily away from Kaprow’s influence, away from abstraction into riskier terrain.¹⁶³

Equally prophetic was Edelheit’s series of text drawings built up from intricate scribbles in an indecipherable language, which anticipated language art and signified that communication occurs through approximation. She rounded out the show with

a series of reliefs built around circular shapes, referencing the moon (as pictured on her invitation) but also suggesting primal, female forms.

Kaprow's 1960–61 season at the Judson concluded with a solo project by Dan Flavin, *Constructions and Watercolors*. The two artists had met at the Hansa Gallery and also at *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*. Flavin's May 1961 exhibition included a series of mixed-media collages, made from items he found near his studio on Washington Street below Fourteenth Street, in the West Village. These accumulations of objects evoked his studio, a small, light-filled railroad apartment where he installed found objects. "The place quickly became chock full of curiosities—a rhythm of carefully distributed objects—arranged like a strange, dirty, cumulative composition but with a random appearance," he explained during a

Fig. 129. Dan Flavin, *Apollinaire wounded (to Ward Jackson)*, 1959–60
Crushed can, oil, and pencil on Masonite, and plaster on pine, 13½ × 19¾ × 7/8 in.
(34.3 × 49.2 × 2.2 cm)
Collection of Stephen Flavin

talk at the Brooklyn Museum Art School. "Most materials deposited there were found during wanderings near piers."¹⁶⁴

Flavin's earliest work was highly associative. In one of the constructions, *Apollinaire Wounded (to Ward Jackson)* 1959–60, which had earlier been included in *New Forms–New Media*, a metal can flattened into a shape that resembles a military helmet forms an arch at center, mounted on Masonite on pine (fig. 129). Into a background of thick impasto oil paint, Flavin carved the words "Apollinaire wounded," a reference to the modernist poet injured during World War I. A rusty bit at the top right of the can reads like residue from the bullet that ultimately ended Apollinaire's life.

Echoing other artists' passion for the grit of the Lower East Side, Flavin was enamored of the sights and light-filled spaces of the West Village's meatpacking district. He would often ramble through the market area, where freight trains still delivered goods to factory spaces along elevated tracks. He also spent time absorbing the tidal flows along the Hudson River, located just one block from his Washington Street studio:





For a year or more, I celebrated just about anything: crude Cézanne's self-portrait mask ennobled in a whirl of charcoal; drab tenements on the waterfront silhouetted in oil—sienna, umber, ochre, black and white; freight trains through the rain, indicated by fingered smears of black ink; misspent "ejaculations" of watercolor and ink out by themselves; words of the "Song of Songs" in my script, embraced by tenderly rendered washes which sustained sentiments such as giving breasts in the field in morning light; a Luis Lozano Pure Superfine Olive Oil tin found flattened in the gutter disclosed as itself fastened to a busily textured golden box marked "*mira, mira*".¹⁶⁵

Flavin's design for the invitation to his Judson Gallery show evokes his description above, hinting at both his distinctive process of assemblage and influences on his aesthetic. It reproduces a construction comprising a flattened tin of olive oil with the words "*mira, mira*"—Spanish for "look, look"—inscribed into the surrounding paint and underscoring the artist's process.

The last project that can be traced to Kaprow was scheduled for the winter of 1962, a one-woman exhibition of works by Alison Knowles that was held not long after she finished her art degree at the Pratt Institute. Knowles had met Kaprow in 1957, when he was studying with Cage. Although not a student of Cage's herself, Knowles was privy to his influence through her husband, Dick Higgins, who was. Very little is known about the content and installation of Knowles's Judson Gallery exhibition, and only one extant painting from the era has been located. That work, *Taxis-Busses* (1960), incorporates silkscreened elements that reference a red-and-white-striped popcorn holder prevalent in the 1960s (fig. 130); the smiling clown at the lower right was the brand's mascot. Running across the painting is an irregular pattern of light gray dots and dashes, together with other random elements: a rendering of chain links, silkscreened images from newspapers and packaging, and the words "Dissolved!" and "Taxis Busses." This buildup of information pulls the picture onto its flat surface, without any clear indication of a central point.

If *Taxis-Busses* is representative of her Judson show, then Knowles's work was moving toward Pop in its mining of mass culture while referencing the randomness in assemblage. Muted reception of Knowles's paintings gave her pause, however. As she later told an interviewer, "When I got out of Pratt, I had a big painting

show and somehow it was very sobering to me that it didn't mean more in New York. I don't know what I expected of New York or myself but I began to consider other expressive avenues."¹⁶⁶ She ultimately abandoned painting for print multiples and performance, in a mode that was far more collaborative with her audiences.

On a bulletin board in his East Fourth Street apartment, Oldenburg kept notes on the development of Ray Gun, including the observation that "the studio is right on a street, an unending source of material."¹⁶⁷ In his own musings, Bud Scott observed, "the arts are visionary, concerned with seeing, and with seeing deep into being and into its mysterious foundations. Art refuses to accept the conventional as true. . . . The stubborn insistence on the dignity of individual thought that is kept alive in the artistic community is accordingly of great spiritual importance to us all."¹⁶⁸ In these brief passages, the basic concepts underlying the Judson sensibility shine through. Its artists' ambition to break with convention was matched by the church's desire to combat commodity culture and other types of conformity.

The works exhibited at Judson Gallery shaped art history, making its name synonymous with avant-garde. The church's collaboration with artists shaped its cultural patronage; its withdrawal from the Washington Square Outdoor Art Show in 1965 is a case in point. The church's ministers deemed the long-standing festival "bland, stereotyped and mechanical," and also decried "its level of consistent mediocrity (that) represents all that has oppressed and stifled the artists of this community rather than the new and exciting ways of visual and technical artistry."¹⁶⁹ This unequivocal endorsement of non-conformity would grow in importance as the Judson Memorial Church took up a key role in the anti-war movement of the later 1960s.

New York City was a fertile subject, bringing representation back to the fore, and by 1960 it occasioned a major shift away from Abstract Expressionism and painterly figuration toward a rawer, more realistic aesthetic territory that straddled multiple disciplines—what Kaprow identified as "contemporary," not modern. Abstraction, of course, did not disappear. Rather, the literal aspects of shape, form, and space underwent a revolutionary reinvestigation. Many of the artists involved in that effort offered a realignment of both abstract art and the gallery space. That the majority of them came to New York from the West Coast is a significant phenomenon, one that is explored in the next chapter.

Fig. 130. Alison Knowles, *Taxis-Busses*, 1960
Oil and silkscreen on canvas, 96⁵/₈ × 54 in. (245.5 × 137 cm)
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. Purchased by Hanns Sohm 1969 from the artist,
AS 2012/1056



3. Space and Time

Time, intention (or non-intention), and audience are elements of art that cut across disciplinary distinctions. Artists at the Reuben and Judson galleries and the Delancey Street Museum were the first to bring experiential art to the fore in New York. They pushed nascent tendencies into the realm of performance. The notion of events happening “in real time” for an engaged audience was a harbinger of Conceptualism, a form of artmaking that would come to prominence in the later 1960s.¹ The Cubist basis for advanced artmaking as theorized by Hofmann and Greenberg had unraveled, and other possibilities were being pursued. In the 1950s and early 1960s, installation-based activities were considered largely in relation to Dada, particularly its “neo” form epitomized by Robert Rauschenberg’s Combines. And while neo-Dada art had champions, some artists and critics were frustrated in their attempts to analyze it in formal terms. A new system for evaluating works of art had therefore become necessary.

The challenge to reconceive art’s boundaries was not borne by the Reuben and Judson artists alone. Other areas were ripe for rethinking, abstraction foremost among them. Two different groups, both strongly influenced by spatiality, music, and geometry, furthered the consideration of duration and experience as abstract elements. From December 1960 through June 1961, a small interdisciplinary group participated in the music-oriented Chambers Street Loft Series (as it is now called) at Yoko Ono’s 112 Chambers Street loft, in the neighborhood now known as Tribeca. There, the body was harnessed as a conductor-generator for action-based situations that incorporated sound, movement, space, and time. The artist-theorist-musician Henry Flynt, a participant in the

series, defined the new tendency as being “closely bound up with language.” Calling the activities he was generating and observing “concept art,” Flynt was among the first to recognize “a kind of art of which the material is language.”² Yoko Ono (b. 1933), whose role at Chambers Street was foundational, characterized her experiments with language in relation to Futurism and Dada. She noted, “My paintings, which are all instruction paintings (and meant for others to do), came after collage & assemblage (1915) and happening (1905) came into the art world.”³ If art was equivalent to language—if it could be ideated or read—then the creation of an object was no longer the sole endpoint of aesthetic experience. Concept art not only drew on discrete cultural forms—music, dance, and visual art—it did so by rejecting conventions once believed inherent in those forms. For visual art, this meant a change in the object’s valence. Seeking to strip bare the primal aspects of artistic forms, musicians, dancers, and visual artists at Chambers Street introduced new prototypes grounded in ideas about impermanence and spatiality.

Two years later, space—although not in relation to durational time—was a central element in the projects organized by the artists who lived and worked at 79 Park Place, also in Tribeca. Except for the ground-floor diner, the five-story building was occupied entirely by artists, with the top floor used as an exhibition space. They would become known as the Park Place group. The critic David Bourdon isolated their investigations of geo-spatial realms, noting their artwork shared “genuine spatial ambiguities, some of which occur in time.”⁴ The merging of the principles of space and time underlies theories of the fourth dimension, or the way in which traditionally defined spatial dimensions—length, width, depth—can become warped when affected by time. This notion arose in part from the literature of the emergent space age.

Like the musicians, dancers, and artists involved in the Chambers Street Loft Series, the Park Place group adhered to an

Fig. 131. Robert Morris in his *Passageway*, 112 Chambers Street, 1961
Courtesy the artist



Fig. 132. Peter Forakis, Announcement for 79 Park Place Gallery, New York, November 1963

Postcard, 3 × 5 in. (7.6 × 12.7 cm)

Courtesy the Peter Forakis Art Foundation, Petaluma, California

ethos of collaboration and shared aesthetics. Their collective disenchantment with New York's gallery system, however, led them to rethink the gallery format, deliberately setting up dialogues between abstract sculptures and paintings, creating conversations that would be altered and changed periodically as the artists studied the artworks' effects in their loft. Park Place artists eschewed regular public hours in favor of issuing invitations to "openings." Indeed, the Park Place group's first such invitation, printed on a postcard, included a handwritten note instructing the recipient to telephone and set up an alternate time to visit if the listed date was not convenient (fig. 132). The announcements for the group's initial projects avoided the word "exhibition," though the list of participating artists left no doubt as to what the viewer could expect (fig. 133).

Traditionally, art-historical writing on the Chambers Street Loft Series and 79 Park Place examines them separately. Although each group occupied discrete conceptual terrain, points of convergence have also been identified. For example, artists involved at both Park Place (Peter Forakis, Robert Grosvenor, Forrest Myers) and Chambers Street (Robert Morris) were included in *Primary Structures: Younger American and British Sculptors*, held at the Jewish Museum in 1966.⁵ This watershed exhibition introduced new, non-assemblage sculptural tendencies and popularized Minimalism as a movement. Both Grosvenor's and Morris's sculptures in that show were V-shaped (the former's,

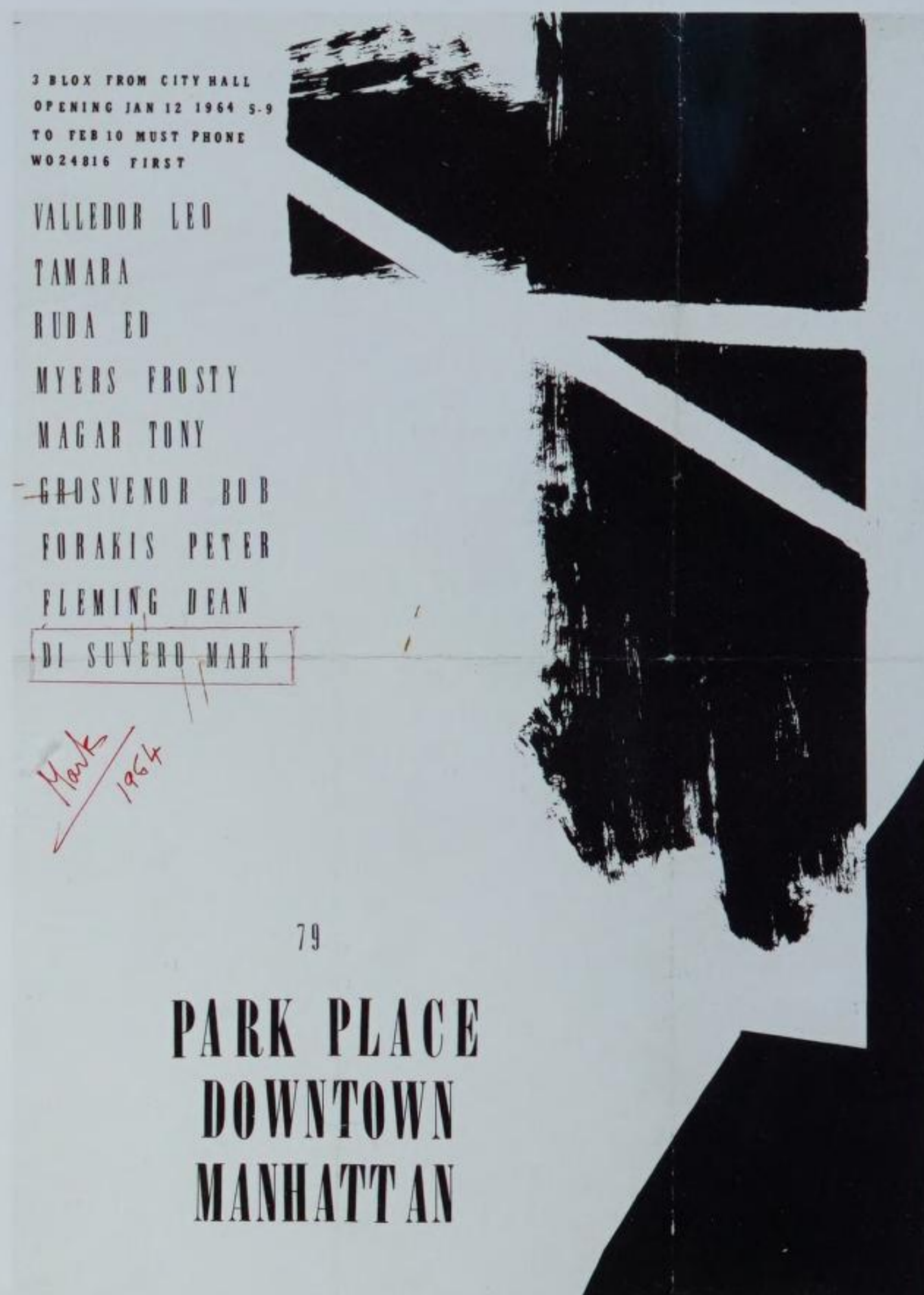
Fig. 133. Mark di Suvero, Announcement for *Park Place Downtown Manhattan*, with ink annotations by di Suvero's mother, 1964

Offset print, 17¹/₈ × 13 in. (43.5 × 33 cm)

Courtesy Spacetime C.C., New York

aerodynamic and anchored onto the ceiling; the latter's, stolid and floor-based), but their conceptual differences were not considered stark enough by some to warrant segregation into different categories. Indeed, in the first few years of the 1960s, before the rise of Conceptualism, artists like Grosvenor, Morris, and others were seen as having more in common than not, a function of formalism's attention to outward appearance.

This section of *Inventing Downtown* looks anew at these two groups in comparative terms—not to reassert a formalist analysis but rather to demonstrate how geo-spatial concepts are not solely the domain of Minimalism. Abstraction is more varied, and endlessly contradictory. Moreover, it is not incidental that the events at 112 Chambers Street and the rethinking of the exhibition format at 79 Park Place were undertaken by many West Coast performers and artists, particularly those from the San Francisco Bay Area. These emigrés had found the visual art community back home too conservative. However, the Bay Area's radical reinvention of poetry, dance, and music did, in part, influence a new approach to visual art in New York, in a new type of cultural space.



112 CHAMBERS STREET (December 1960–June 1961)

A significant first step in reframing the art object began when Yoko Ono and composer La Monte Young (b. 1935) organized a series of concerts, dance performances, and an installation at Ono's fourth-floor loft at 112 Chambers Street. It was Ono who arranged to rent the space, and it was her idea to use it for events. The present discussion examines how the space became a laboratory for Ono's groundbreaking action-based paintings and situates them alongside Young, choreographer Simone Forti, and artist Robert Morris, in order to view the Chambers Street Loft Series within a broader context of contemporary ideas, and to recuperate the space's significance in introducing "concept" as the subject of visual art.

BEGINNINGS

In the fall of 1960, Yoko Ono sought a space suitable as a performance venue but also, as specified in a typewritten addendum to the lease, as a painting studio.⁶ That December Ono rented the fourth floor of 112 Chambers Street for \$50.50 per month.⁷ Renting a space for public performances was highly ambitious, but Ono was accomplished. Married at the time to composer-pianist Toshi Ichihyanagi (b. 1933), Ono—a composer-performer—belonged to New York's impressive network of avant-garde musicians. Her circle included John Cage, Morton Feldman, Richard Maxfield, David Tudor, and Stefan Wolpe. Ichihyanagi and Ono had attended one of Cage's classes at the New School; Ono had met Cage earlier, through Wolpe, at the Russian Tea Room.⁸

As La Monte Young recalled, David Tudor introduced him to Ono in the fall of 1960. He studied music at Los Angeles City College, where his classmates included Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, and Billy Higgins, as well as at UCLA before beginning graduate studies at UC Berkeley alongside Pauline Oliveros and Terry Riley.⁹ Influences on his work ranged from Indian ragas and Japanese *gagaku* to jazz and works composed by Anton Webern and Arnold Schoenberg in the twelve-tone scale. Young's pioneering approach to music ultimately crystalized as an interest in repetition, simultaneity, and sequence, which he interpreted as a demonstration of control.¹⁰ Consequently, he sought out sounds that maintained a constant frequency, sometimes naturally occurring, such as the blowing wind or buzzing insects, but most often man-made, such as a whistling tea kettle or a humming motor. His fascination with sound began as a toddler in the 1930s, when he first discerned the drone of electricity. "If you create music that is in tune with this hum," Young explained, "then there can never be an interference with the music that you are creating."¹¹

Not long after Ono secured the Chambers Street loft, she invited Young to co-curate programs there. About the venue,

Young remarked, "if you were going to be creative, you had to have a space in which you could do things according to your own time and your own inspiration," outside the formal strictures of the concert hall.¹² Ono saw the loft's skylight as a kind of portal. She recalled, "When you were in the loft, you almost felt more connected to the sky than to the city outside."¹³ Ono brought in a baby grand piano, although the music performed there would incorporate sounds from a myriad of sources, both traditional and non. Between December 18, 1960, and May 20, 1961, Young and Ono organized seven programs at the loft. Two colleagues whom Young had met in California while working as music director of Anna Halprin's dance studio, Simone Forti and Robert Morris, also participated in May and June 1961, respectively, after the music performances concluded. While Ono participated in Ichihyanagi's performances, on January 7–8, 1961, she was not invited to present her own work.¹⁴ "There was no mention that I should have a concert there, and I wasn't going to be the one to mention it," she told a reporter in 1971, demonstrating how she, like so many other women artists of the period, was stymied by a lack of interest and support, despite her catalytic efforts. "Somehow my work was still suffering," she reported. "The idea had been to stop my suffering by getting a place to present my work and at last letting everybody know what I was doing. But it just went on like that."¹⁵ Nonetheless, Ono found a way to creatively insert herself into the programming, which garnered attention from the visual art community.¹⁶

The events at 112 Chambers Street constituted a watershed for both artists. Ono's unprecedented instruction paintings merged "Duchampian poetics and irony with *haiku* and the Zen koan" as a new basis for concept-oriented visual art.¹⁷ And, through Young's participation, we can "draw a line" from Halprin in San Francisco to the New York art community, a route separate from Ono's and, to some extent, distinct from Cage's, whose influence has overshadowed many previous histories of the period.¹⁸

THE VIEWER AS AUTHOR

In 1957 Marcel Duchamp offered a definition of art that recognized the gap between the artist's intention and what he or she is actually able to express, leaving it up to the viewer to further "refine" the object by imbuing it with meaning. "The creative act takes another aspect when the spectator experiences the phenomenon of transmutation," Duchamp explained. "Through the change from inert matter into a work of art, an actual transubstantiation has taken place, and the role of the spectator is to determine the weight of the work on the esthetic scale."¹⁹ Art, therefore, becomes a shared proposition in which the viewer has equal power, and the encounter is socially situated and durational. This idea would be tested at 112 Chambers Street.

When Young arrived in New York from the Bay Area, his theories on music and sound took a similar tack. For example, as part of the Chambers Street Loft Series, Young performed *Mudai no. 1: For La Monte Young*, an event score given to him by Ichiyanagi, about which he recalled:

It is an abstract pattern—a few calligraphic brush strokes on a white field—which give the impression of a half-dozen images. . . . This was given to me with no instructions, and *Mudai* means untitled. I had been thinking about the piece up to the moment of the concert, and I really hadn't come up with anything that was appropriate. Finally, when I passed a vegetable stand on the way to the concert, I decided I would buy thirty cents' worth of string beans. When I got there (to Chambers Street), I counted them.²⁰

Referencing parallels to Duchamp and Cage, Young explains how the action became music: it had a score, it had a prescribed duration of time, it involved sound (pulling the beans from the bag), and it was performed live. At a primary level, each aspect is related to the traditional definitions of music. Another example is Young's *Compositions 1960*, a series that included the following:

- #2 Build a fire in front of the audience. . . .
- #3 Announce to the audience when the piece will begin and end if there is a limit on duration. . . .
- #5 Turn a butterfly (or any number of butterflies) loose in the performance area. . . .
- #6 The performers . . . sit on the stage watching and listening to the audience . . .
- #10 to Bob Morris. Draw a straight line and follow it.²¹

Young presents these instructions as a series of steps that leave room for variables and interpretation; traditional instruments are not required. Audience members simply observe the performer and listen to the sounds being made by the actions indicated. *Compositions 1960* exemplifies how music, for Young, was “a plastic entity: sound as object, duration as dimension.”²²

Young's concept echoed themes not only in Ono's work, but also in that of Simone Forti and Robert Morris.²³ Both knew Young from Berkeley, and Forti had collaborated with him while studying dance and movement with Halprin, whose approach eschewed formalism to seek out the very basis of movement itself, to understand human anatomy. Halprin had pioneered a form of dance that was “universal to anybody's body,” “not dependent on anyone's personality,” and which moved dance from the “black box” to ordinary, non-theatrical spaces.²⁴ To find individual expression and movement,

she frequently included non-dancers (like Robert Morris) in her workshops, where equal exchanges took place across disciplines. “We didn't have to dance on a stage,” Forti remembered, “we didn't have to leap; we didn't have to wear certain kinds of costumes. We were artists, working in the medium of movement.”²⁵ Morris, who visited Halprin's studio frequently in 1959–60 to observe and sometimes participate, was similarly struck by the methodology: “In the workshop we were exploring props, or the idea of manipulating something that would be problematic, or a task of some sort that would result in something that would seem like an interesting structure. . . .” Among Halprin's references, Morris recalled, were methods developed by Gutai, the radical Japanese multi-media group who pioneered action-based pieces in Osaka in 1954.²⁶

Halprin's dance studio quickly became a destination, a place to meet artists similarly interested in reinventing their disciplines. As musical director, Young composed and performed as part of her workshops. Composer Terry Riley described the long, sustained tones of these initial compositions as “getting inside a sound,” with the aim “to make it so dense and intense one had no other choice.”²⁷ In 1960 Young composed *2 Sounds* for Halprin, for which he and Riley scraped at the large glass windows of the studio. The sound not only filled the room but also vibrated through the body, sparking a physical reaction.²⁸

This detour into Halprin's influential dance studio provides additional context for the Chambers Street series and further distinguishes it from the expansive activities taking place at roughly the same time at the Judson and Reuben galleries. According to Young, music was its own discipline, but held the potential to become something else through dialogue with other disciplines. In the following years these ideas, incubated in the Chambers Street Loft Series, would help instigate new tendencies.²⁹

REINVENTING MUSIC AND DANCE

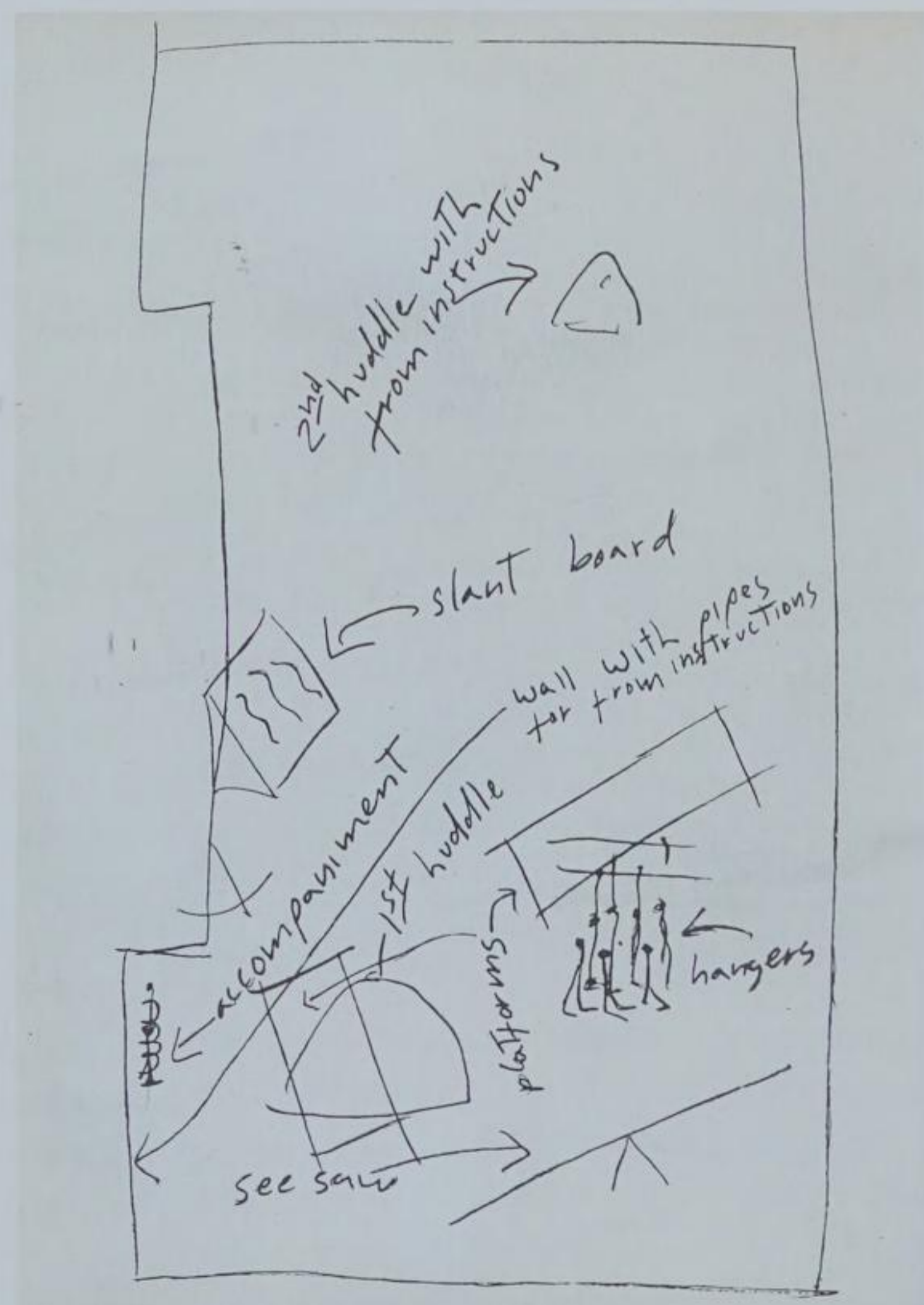
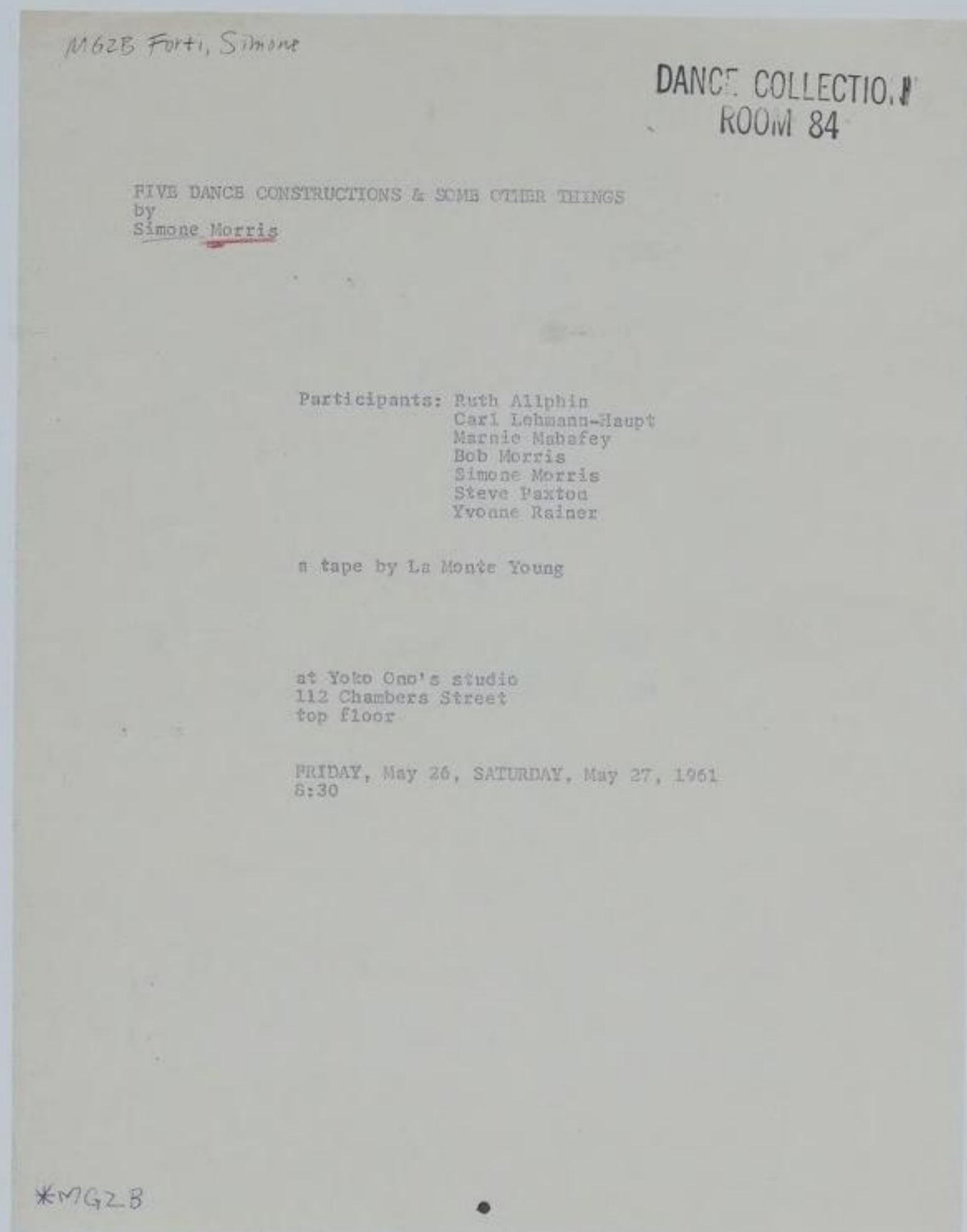
Young and Ono's manner of organizing the music series was innovative in two ways. First, they allowed composers and musicians to perform on two successive evenings, not, as was customary for new-music concerts, in twelve- to thirty-minute slots within a mixed program. Second, because Ono made the loft available for rehearsals, musicians had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the acoustics of the space and harness these specific qualities in their compositions. “It meant that the music could develop on a very high level, as opposed to [the] commercial situation,” Young explained. On the door to the loft and on the invitations, Young printed the message, “This series is not entertainment,” thereby adopting a critical stance reminiscent of Clement Greenberg's oracular pronouncements on art versus non-art. “I like to be entertained,” Young explained. “But I know the difference between entertainment and the kind of work that I am doing.”³⁰

The works produced at the Chambers Street Loft Series not only responded to the whole of modernist innovation but also revealed its fracture—as well as how artists were pursuing new directions with the shards. Simone Forti, for one, helped redefine choreography with *Five Dance Constructions & Some Other Things* (figs. 134, 135), performed together with Ruth Allphin, Carl Lehmann-Haupt, Marnie Mahaffay, Robert Morris, Steve Paxton, and Yvonne Rainer on May 26–27, 1961, several months after Forti's participation in the Reuben Gallery winter series.³¹ In addition to a reprised *See Saw* with Rainer and Morris, the program included *Accompaniment for La Monte's "2 sounds"* and *La Monte's "2 sounds,"* in which a performer stands on a loop made by a tightly twisted rope suspended from the ceiling. The performer spins, gradually unwinding the rope for the duration of Young's commanding composition, which immerses the space in sound. Forti developed four additional dance-actions, designed to be experienced in a sequence situated throughout the loft. All involved material exchanges between bodies and structures. In *Slant Board*, Forti secured a plywood board at a forty-five-degree angle to a wall near the entrance. Onto the board she fastened knotted ropes that extended from top to bottom. The dancers were instructed to remain on the board for ten minutes, using the ropes to navigate the awkward angle. They were free to move about or to remain still, but they were not allowed to interfere with another dancer. Next to *Slant Board* was *Huddle*, in which six performers formed a tight scrum. One dancer climbs over the top of the huddle and then rejoins it, followed by yet another dancer climbing over the huddle and repeating the action. In *Hangers*, five performers stood in loops made from ropes hung from the ceiling, while another four performers moved around them, causing those suspended to swing and crash into one another. In another piece, Forti climbed into a box (constructed by Morris) and, hidden from view, used her body to make sounds that thrust the otherwise inanimate box into a different relationship with the viewer.³²

Forti shifted dance toward corporeal challenges that would be resolved differently by each performer based on their physical abilities under the strictures of the artist's own rules. This analytic

Fig. 134. Announcement for Simone Forti's *Five Dance Constructions & Some Other Things*, 112 Chambers Street, New York, May 26–27, 1961
Mimeograph
Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library
for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations, New York

Fig. 135. Simone Forti, Floor plan for *Five Dance Constructions*, 112 Chambers Street, New York, May 26–27, 1961
Ink on paper, 10 × 7 in. (25.4 × 17.8 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Committee on Media and Performance Art Funds



shift in mode “challenged feeling via strategies of diffusion and brevity, by way of structures that (Forti) found in Cage and Young—tendencies of isolation, depersonalization, repetition, and a focus upon ‘things in themselves.’”³³ The inability of her rules to predict results—owing, in part, to her use of the ever-unpredictable body as a medium—laid a foundation for instruction-based work in visual art.³⁴

AN ENVIRONMENT/PASSAGEWAY

Existing somewhere within the gap between object and viewer identified by Duchamp was Robert Morris’s *Passageway*. He called the work “an environment,” a title that Kaprow had used in 1958, but to very different effect. Morris’s piece comprised two arcing plywood walls that gradually narrowed and curved, beginning at the door to the loft and extending approximately fifty feet into the space (see fig. 131). A ceiling of plywood planks followed the curve of the structure and effectively sealed the work off from the rest of the loft; no sense remained of the original architecture at 112 Chambers Street. Morris painted the entire structure gray and added the sound of a ticking metronome. Electric lightbulbs, necessary for viewers to see and move within the piece, were set at intervals every few feet.³⁵ *Passageway* was impossible to perceive in total—it had neither the functionality of architecture nor the autonomy of sculpture. Moreover, the piece was experienced in time, and its duration was dependent on the viewer, whose physical participation was required as he or she moved about the space. *Passageway* therefore placed the onus on the viewer to establish his or her own relationship with the work. As one theorist put it, “while the experience of a labyrinth is somewhat claustrophobic and disturbing, its exploratory situation grants the individual a degree of independence from the traditional relationship between viewer and reverential art object.”³⁶

Not all visitors were as receptive. Yvonne Rainer, who in 1961 was sharing a studio with Forti and Morris, remembered, “George Sugarman and I traipsed downtown and up the five (*sic*) flights expecting some kind of performance, only to be met, on opening the door, by a three-foot wide curving corridor with a seven-foot high ceiling that ended in a pointed cul-de-sac. I was so outraged that I wrote on the wall, ‘Fuck you too, Bob Morris.’”³⁷

INSTRUCTION PAINTINGS

Directions of a different kind lay at the root of Yoko Ono’s Instruction Paintings, which were installed throughout the loft during the Chambers Street Loft Series. All of her paintings from this period are said to have been made from a single bolt of canvas, a suggestion supported by a photograph, taken by Minoru Niizuma, that shows Ono standing at the loft’s piano with two friends; behind them, a canvas winds across the space, forming a horizontal band.³⁸

Although Ono’s work is rarely situated in relation to that of Forti and Morris, the former’s instruction-based dances and the latter’s appeal to the spectator’s involvement are important developments concurrent with Ono’s activities.³⁹ The three artists’ most resonant point of crossover is a shared concern with process, not in terms of crafting a piece, but rather of experiencing it in real time. Ono’s Instruction series, however, incorporates the record of its making. And in a gesture echoing Duchamp, this process involved random acts that had little relationship to visual art as traditionally defined.

Ono’s path to painting was itself unconventional. In 1952, she had been the first female student admitted into the philosophy program at Gakushuin University in Tokyo, but she left after two semesters to join her parents in New York. “My strength at that time was to separate myself from the Japanese pseudo-sophisticated bourgeoisie,” she explained. “I didn’t want to be one of them. I was fiercely independent from an early age and created myself into an intellectual that gave me a separate position.”⁴⁰ Ono then enrolled at Sarah Lawrence College, where she studied poetry and music composition. But in 1955, she again defied expectations by eloping with Ichiyanagi. Although no one factor caused her to gravitate toward visual art, Ono began experimenting with materials and canvas, extending her event scores and poems into paintings. The resulting works operate as compositions in both the musical and visual sense of the term.

In total, Ono made six paintings at 112 Chambers Street: *Kitchen Piece*, *Smoke Painting*, *Pea Piece*, *Shadow Painting*, *Add Color Painting*, and *Painting to Be Stepped On* (fig. 136). (With regard to this last one, which was laid flat on the floor, she remembers hoping “Marcel Duchamp would notice when he came to the loft for a concert, but he didn’t.”)⁴¹ Each work depended on the viewer’s following a set of instructions prescribed by the artist. For example, *Shadow Painting* depended on the play of shadows to create a transitory form on the picture plane; for *Smoke Painting* visitors were told to burn the canvas with candles, observing how the smoke rose from the fabric. One audience member, George Maciunas, was so captivated by Ono’s paintings that he arranged to show them at his short-lived AG Gallery, on Madison Avenue, in the summer of 1961.⁴²

Perhaps the most frenetic of the Instruction Paintings was *Kitchen Piece*, made in January 1962, which called on participants (including Ono) to hurl food at a canvas. One observer recalled:

Yoko ran to the refrigerator, took out some eggs, ran to a wall covered with a huge piece of white paper and hurled the eggs. . . . Then she ran back and got some jello, which she also threw at the wall. Then she splattered some sumi-ink on the paper and used her hands as paint brushes. When the painting was completed, she took a match and set fire to the [canvas].⁴³



Fig. 136. Yoko Ono, *Painting to Be Stepped On* from *Paintings and Drawings by Yoko Ono*, AG Gallery, New York, July 17–30, 1961, installation view.

Photograph: George Maciunas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift, 2008

What motivated Ono's combination of *sumi-e*, a form of traditional Japanese ink painting, with actions bordering on the violent? Was the title perhaps suggesting that the kitchen, long defined as the domain of women, had become a space of bellicosity rather than domesticity? This "semiotics of the kitchen" would be interrogated a decade later by the feminist artist Martha Rosler, but Ono was the first to call to mind a similar disengagement of the signifier (kitchen = women) from the signified (sexism = trauma).⁴⁴

Ultimately, Ono's instruction-based paintings, music, and poems laid a foundation for Fluxus, while Young's rigorous logic furthered the tendency that a year or so after the series concluded would be defined as Minimalism; both paved the way toward Conceptualism. Uniting these distinct aesthetic experiences at Chambers Street were physical actions generated by Forti and Morris and the search for the primary elements of a discipline. "It's like looking for universal constants," remarked Young about his process. "Eventually we're all looking for these special frequencies to which everything else is related, frequencies that have then a harmonic structure, which in turn is related to the structure of the universe."⁴⁵

79 PARK PLACE (November 1963–March 1964)

Yvonne Rainer was not the only contemporary of Robert Morris's to object to his form of sculpture. Not long after the Chambers Street Loft Series ended, Morris secured a temporary studio on the ground floor of Mark di Suvero's (b. 1933) building. Morris recalled that di Suvero had "that big floor up there, I had a tiny, little room down below. And I had a Skilsaw and I made a lot of plywood pieces there. I would hear Mark sometimes coming down. . . . I would hear this clomping as he was coming down the hallway, and the door would open and he'd look in and say, 'Don't stop working. I just came to hate it.' [Laughs]." And artist Dean Fleming (b. 1933), a former studio mate of Morris's in San Francisco, recalled: "When [Morris] got to New York, he was doing these boxes. And I remember having an incredible time when he came over one time to di Suvero's, and we all kept yelling at him, 'this is not art, this is not even a good sculpture stand!'"⁴⁶ Clearly Morris's theories about sculpture had not yet found adherents in the early 1960s. Not until 1966 would his highly influential two-part essay analyzing sculpture as a phenomenological experience, "Notes on Sculpture," be published, helping to define those minimalist and postminimalist tendencies in which the object ceded its own authority to incorporate context and bodily experience as coequal factors.⁴⁷ But in 1962 he had not yet codified these theories, and his Bay Area friends found much to tease about in the execution of his "boxes."

Some of these West Coast transplants would join the Park Place group, which embraced a set of concerns quite different from Morris's. For one, they cleaved to *Scientific American*, the

mathematical theories of David Hilbert and Stephan Cohn-Vossen's *Geometry and the Imagination*, and the utopian ideas of modernist architect Buckminster Fuller.⁴⁸ Like scientific experiments, their art saw the process of its making as separate from the resulting object. Aesthetic decisions could not be mapped out and given to others (especially the audience) to produce; the object, in other words, still had to come from the artist's own hand.

Yet Morris and the Park Place artists agreed that clearly delineated shapes engendered instinctual reactions outside of the personal or emotive. Morris wrote on the gestalt, a visceral reaction to simple, "unitary forms" whereby the object is perceived not through a part-by-part relationship but all at once by the mind-body. Such recognition is primal and individuated.⁴⁹ Park Place artists worked with complex forms resistant to gestalt as defined by Morris, but their forms were no less commanding. The shapes they explored changed and shifted within the object and as viewers moved around them. For them, shape was not a fixed entity but rather altered by volumes permeating the canvas or actual space. This lack of predictability meant that the shapes proffered by the Park Place artists were challenging to perceive all at once. Their de facto debate with Morris forms a dialogue about shape as a subject for art. The group at 79 Park Place defies easy categorization. Some Park Place artists responded to the city, abstracting what they saw into geometric patterns that sparked vibrant visual effects, a method divorced from Expressionism's subjectivity. Others turned to optics, testing concepts of form, volume, and color.

All, however, were attracted to the notion of community; in fact, the group functioned like a commune, a type of collective living based on shared values. "I think that the major, major definition to Park Place as opposed to everything else that was happening in New York was that it was about freedom," Fleming remarked, an opinion seconded by di Suvero, in slightly different terms: "I was idealistic, if you want, but it was a different vision" from what he experienced among Tenth Street co-ops and in the commercial galleries; "our model was like the Bauhaus."⁵⁰ For di Suvero especially, Park Place was a rejection of the New York art world during the ascendancy of Pop. In co-founding the group, he ended his affiliation with the uptown Green Gallery, the venue for his stunning 1960 sculptural debut (see Chapter 5 in this volume). "I was quitting the market, the art market and everything in order to build something that was completely different," di Suvero explained.

Among these future Park Place artists, the Bay Area ethos that weighed living and creating as equal experiences prevailed. Di Suvero had previously studied philosophy at UC Berkeley, but the majority of the group's founders—Dean Fleming, Peter Forakis (1927–2009), Forrest "Frosty" Myers (b. 1941), Tamara

Melcher (b. 1939), and Leo Valledor (1936–1989)—had studied at the California School of Fine Arts (today, the San Francisco Art Institute). Also in the core group were two New York artists, Robert Grosvenor (b. 1937) and Edwin Ruda (1922–2014), and the British artist Tony Magar (b. 1936). In the 1950s San Francisco was an important nexus for Beat literature and poetry, and witnessed the emergence of “free jazz.” This ethos infused the campus of Cal Fine Arts and converged at San Francisco’s Six Gallery (1954–57), which was founded by four artists, including Wally Hedrick (1928–2003), a teacher at the school; and two poets.⁵¹ At the Six Gallery, visual art stood shoulder to shoulder with poetry and music. Its founders eschewed Young’s analytic rigor, however, to see past art into other areas of society. These San Francisco artists brought the community-gallery concept to 79 Park Place in New York and established a new standard for art, free from commercial concerns.

FREE JAZZ

Although the Park Place group did not officially coalesce until 1962, the years between 1959 and 1962 were vital to its formation. Di Suvero had driven to New York from the Bay Area with Charles Ginnever (b. 1931) in 1957, and Forakis made the cross-country trek the following year, joining the Brata Gallery in 1960. Magar also arrived in 1958, and worked closely with di Suvero beginning in 1960; Fleming and Valledor, in 1961.⁵² They gathered either at di Suvero’s three-story building, on the corner of Front and Fulton streets in the heart of New York’s fish market, or at a loft rented by Forakis and his wife, Phyllis Yampolsky, in the meatpacking district farther uptown.⁵³ Both di Suvero and Forakis showed their work on Tenth Street, and their studios became meccas, especially for arriving San Franciscans. Jazz, not (as Fleming put it) “academic discussions,” became the central activity during their gatherings.⁵⁴ Sometimes joined by Ronald Bladen, who had also studied at Cal Fine Arts and was showing at the Brata with Forakis, the artists initially made noise by banging on the wood and metal sculptures or by taking turns on a soundboard di Suvero had rescued from an old piano, which they played like a harp. Eventually they began buying secondhand instruments. Fleming and Valledor purchased saxophones; Magar bought a trumpet.⁵⁵ In 1962 Melcher and Myers arrived in New York, and the latter added a drum set to the sessions. “For us, our saints, the people we looked up to were Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane, and they were considered a weird fringe of jazz, even then,” di Suvero recounted. “But we tried to make music all of us together, and it got pretty crazy.”⁵⁶ Their sessions lasted as long as six hours.

Jazz also served as a catalyst for intensifying visual perception, a connection first forwarded by the early-20th-century De Stijl artist Piet Mondrian. In the 1950s, when Valledor was working in a painterly abstract style, his earliest exhibitions at the Six Gallery

included a record player and a selection of 45s with instructions on which jazz recording correlated with which painting. For Fleming, who was working at the gallery at the time, playing the recording while viewing Valledor’s artwork “changed the way I saw the paintings”; they became “lifelike,” and the rhythms changed the way one’s eye traveled across the canvas.⁵⁷

ENERGY

Writing in 1961, Richard Brown Baker (1912–2002) described di Suvero’s Front Street studio, in what was formerly a factory for ship’s sails: “The di Suvero studio spreads through several low ceilinged rooms. His sculptures, whether of wood or metal, are enormous. The place is old, no doubt a firetrap. It seemed to belong more to the country than the city—a blacksmith shop perhaps.”⁵⁸ Rudy Burckhardt photographed the place in 1962, documenting the interplay between the space and di Suvero’s sculptures, most of which occupied entire rooms (fig. 137).

The year 1962 was a transitional one for di Suvero. He had spent more than a year in the hospital undergoing surgeries and rehabilitation following a devastating spinal-cord injury in March 1960.⁵⁹ His physical condition restricted his mobility, and he could no longer scavenge large-scale, industrial wooden beams and assemble them using chains and nails, a process that had been elemental to his artmaking. For a time, the sculptures he made before the accident were left in situ. They represented the end of a series and the beginning of the artist’s major rethinking of materials, scale, and construction. The San Francisco artists would prove to be vital collaborators in di Suvero’s evolution. But first, he needed to modify the Front Street building to make it more accessible. Fleming remembered:

There was all these nets there, it was (formerly) a sail loft and there were lots of fishing nets, and he put them around so he could jump from one floor to the next, he’d jump from the top floor down to the next floor and land in the net! . . . He was swinging from place to place, and his upper body was strong, and amazingly strong. And then he just had this great energy. Whatever was happening, it was energy.⁶⁰

Such physical movement, albeit not choreographed, formed an important basis for di Suvero’s understanding of space, and he recognized few rules apart from those naturally occurring via gravitational force.

By 1963 di Suvero had begun a series of smaller-scale, movable sculptures, or “toys,” as he called them, that hovered somewhere between playground equipment and assemblage. The sculptures were propositional—that is, one needed to engage with them, swing

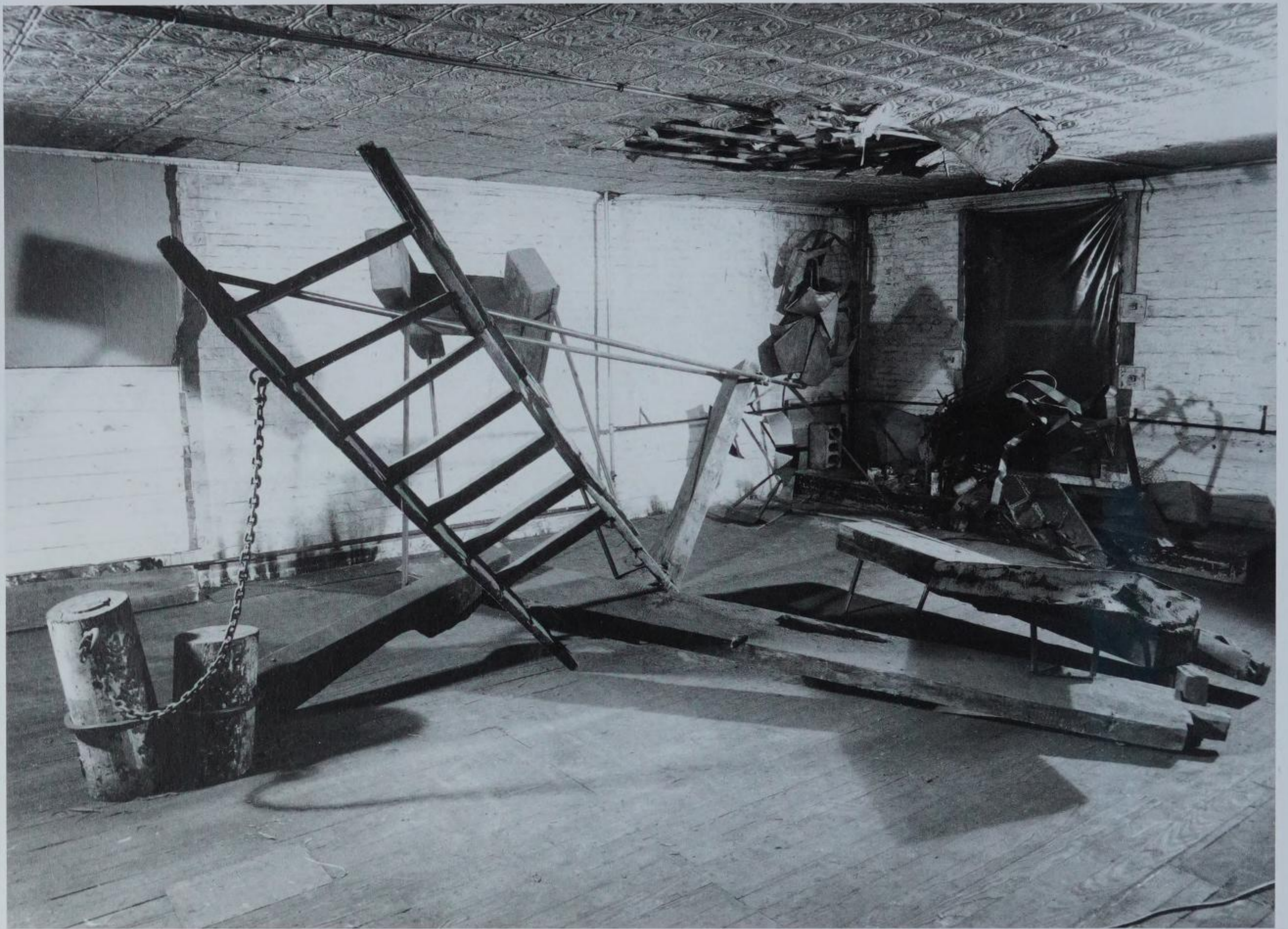


Fig. 137. Mark di Suvero's *Ladderpiece* in his studio on Front Street, New York, 1962
 Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Courtesy Spacetime C.C., New York

on them, ride them. Before his accident, di Suvero's sculptures implied movement; in their volume and suspended tension, one could sense the tremendous physical effort that went into their construction. But by 1962, di Suvero's understanding of energy and mobility had been radically altered. Hurling his body through space and seeing others swing from the toys he constructed in his studio would result in his making sculptures that actually moved. His materials shifted away from wood toward found rubber and metal, which he could weld. Ruda was especially captivated by this vigorous sense of play: "We'd have these wild dazzling affairs where everybody would get on these toys (and) bump into each other, leap from ropes, fly into nets. . . . It was physical; it was enjoyable; it was full of optimism; it was full of youthful spirit."⁶¹

Jazz and the sense of physical abandon epitomized by di Suvero's toys were formative to the Park Place sensibility. Yet

one more factor was responsible for drawing the group together: scientific theories on energy and its coefficient, space-time. As the space race accelerated under John F. Kennedy's presidency, discoveries chronicled in *Scientific American* generated interest among the artists in science and technology. "They all read books and periodicals on mathematics and science, mainly as a stimulus to their art," David Bourdon wrote in 1966 in his wittily titled profile of the group, "E=MC² à Go-Go."⁶² Topologies and the fourth dimension were particularly important elements, in which artists found an update of Mondrian's compositional grid. "The frame-bordered horizontal-vertical grid of De Stijl composition has been

Fig. 138. Danny Lyon, *79 Park Place*, from the series *The Destruction of Lower Manhattan*, 1967
 Courtesy the photographer and Magnum Photos

replaced by a diagonal grid structure," Bourdon observed, and from the diagonal, the "isosceles triangle, the rhomboid, all the more 'ambiguous' shapes dominate their art, often inducing a centrifugal velocity that leads the eye outward to the periphery." Leo Valledor explained the idea as "seeing space on the outer edges of your eye," a theory he put into practice with his extended horizontal paintings beginning in 1964.⁶³ The artwork conveyed energy through color-compositional dynamism and commanded viewers' interaction both visually and physically. Such application of new geometric theory was deeply rooted in universalist thinking, like La Monte Young's droning soundscapes. But Park Place artists enjoyed unbridled optimism about art's visual effects, connecting them to early modernist utopian theories that pointed to abstraction's basis in reality.

79 PARK PLACE

Finally, in 1962, after living on the Lower East Side for a year, Dean Fleming visited an empty five-story building owned by Columbia University at 79 Park Place, in Lower Manhattan near the former Washington Street vegetable market (fig. 138). The upper floors were empty because of a fire on the top floor, but a Greek coffee shop remained in operation at street level. Each floor was approximately 2,500 square feet. Fleming agreed to rent the third floor for \$35 per month, and together with his friends Leo Valledor and his wife, Mary Leahy, and the recently married Forrest Myers and Tamara Melcher, they made it habitable:

What I had done on the third floor, when I got the building, I just went from floor to floor and I liked the third floor and I brought the gas up from the basement, and I had a little gas heater, and then I brought the



electricity in from the hall lights, so I had all my lights and music and everything coming off the hall, but it was such a funky building that the basement was flooded and the meters were on the opposite end from the end of the basement, they were on the far wall, and nobody was going to wade through the waters to check the meters, so I had free electricity and utilities.⁶⁴

Valledor and Leahy took the fourth floor, and Melcher and Myers the second, where the ceiling was higher. “It had been a factory space,” Melcher recalled. “We had a tiny, little living area that was way in the back and had a door in front of it, and we put up fabric in case the fire department came to inspect—they would not know anybody lived there.”⁶⁵ The building was not rectangular but trapezoidal, rendering Melcher and Myers’s studio-home an oblong shape:

The front section was seriously larger than the back section. The back section was partly remade; there was a door between the two sections. In the back we made one-third the living area. Living, we’re talking toilet, loft bed, cook stove, and a tiny table. . . . The other two thirds

of that back section was my studio. And Frosty had the big section in the front, with the windows.⁶⁶

As 79 Park Place became a destination for both the Cal Fine Arts graduates and New York artists friendly with di Suvero—including Edwin Ruda and Robert Grosvenor—their music sessions became increasingly frequent, to the point of distraction. “You would be right in the middle of painting something,” Fleming explained, “and suddenly all these characters would show up and start playing music.”⁶⁷ At some point in the spring of 1963, the artists in the building decided to fix up the fire-damaged top floor and create a music studio, and Valledor obtained the lease, but with the proviso that all the artists involved would help pay the \$35 rent.⁶⁸ This fifth-floor space was an open-plan, brick-walled loft, light-filled thanks to thirteen windows that ran across two sides of the building. While Valledor and Leahy; Fleming and his girlfriend, the painter Patsy Krebs; and Myers and Melcher cleaned and whitewashed the charred walls, Grosvenor contributed an engineering marvel:

There was a hole in the top floor where the fire had been, so [Grosvenor] just built this incredible, cantilevered drain that went from the middle of the ceiling out the window and brought the water down into the parking lot, and if you really studied that you would see it had a lot to do with his subsequent work, which was cantilevered from the ceiling.⁶⁹

Once the space was ready, di Suvero, Fleming, Forakis, Grosvenor, Magar, Melcher, Myers, Ruda, and Valledor installed their artworks (fig. 139). “You would get up there, and it was quiet, it was beautiful, it was peaceful, and it was completely full of all different kinds of art,” Fleming remembered. The fifth floor thereafter became a workshop in which to test ideas and to challenge one another, and over the following six months the artists—occasionally joined by others—formalized their ways of using the space to show art without ever becoming a gallery.

Di Suvero wrote a manifesto, which no longer survives, but according to his recollections and Ruda’s published writings, it aligned the group ideologically. Beyond showing art together, they would “work on each other’s art,” which might have been a reference to large-scale sculptures or works in fiberglass that required additional labor. Perhaps more importantly, however, they “were going to split whatever got sold of each other’s, and divide it up.”⁷⁰

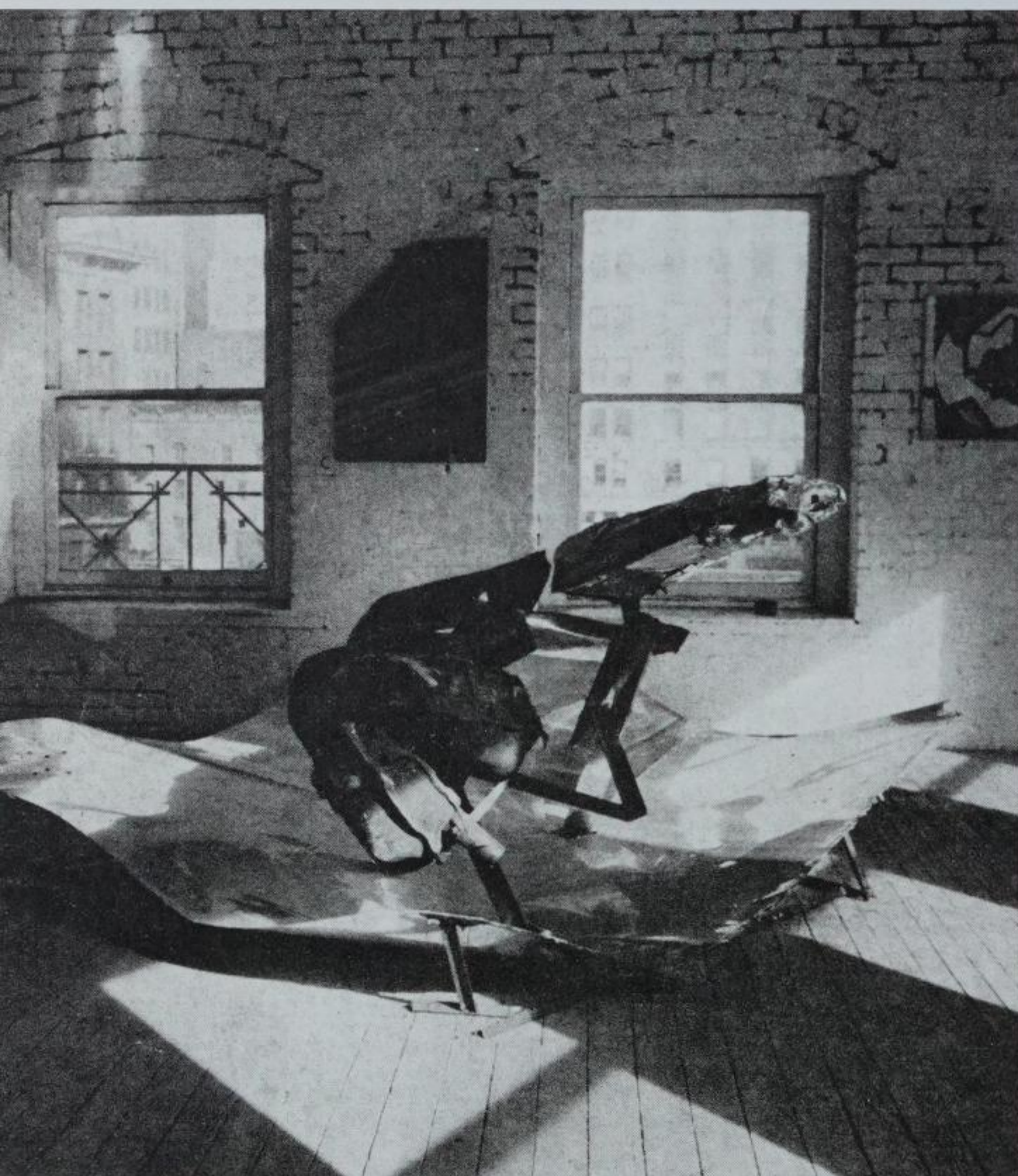


Fig. 139. Sculpture by Robert Grosvenor and paintings by Leo Valledor, 79 Park Place, New York, 1963, installation view
Photograph: Cora Kelley Ward. Collection of Maurice Badon, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

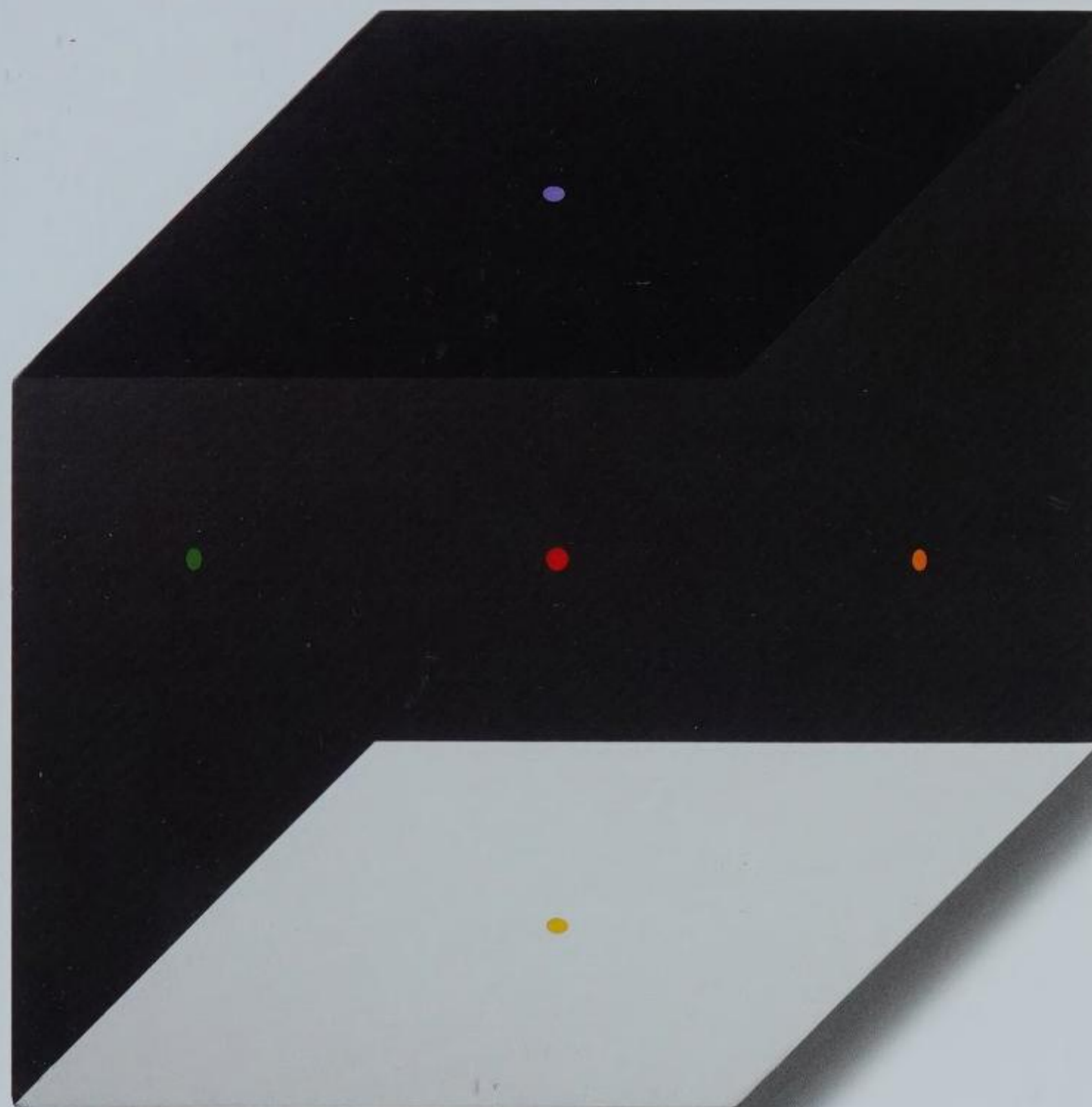


Fig. 140. Leo Valledor, *Evidence*, 1964
 Liquitex on Masonite, $23\frac{3}{4} \times 23\frac{3}{4}$ in. (60.3 × 60.3 cm)
 Collection of Randy and Sheila Ott, Champaign, Illinois

Di Suvero's desire to share proceeds was radical, for in 1962–63, he was the only artist in the group with active sales, meaning his contributions to the shared pot would be significant. Clearly he was attempting to reconcile his disdain of the art market (and the inequities of capitalism) with his socialist beliefs. His platform “was somewhat like a call to arms for a bastion of independence and purpose,” Ruda marveled. “Tough minded like Castro.”⁷¹ Other group members were critical of American capitalism and of the critics’ assertion of an “American art” at a time when American foreign policy was increasingly imperialistic. “Most of us, Mark especially, were very much against the idea of an American artist; we felt art went beyond the boundaries,” Ruda told Bourdon.⁷²

Di Suvero's manifesto was ultimately rejected for its “archaic” political associations, which stood in contrast to the group's anarchic tendencies. “It was time for artists to express themselves any way we wanted, and we (were) not going to have any rules or any inhibitions about it,” Fleming remembered.⁷³ Even without a defining document, that first year the group was at its “most radical,” di Suvero said, and “Park Place I,” in his estimation, “had all of the impulse to it.”⁷⁴

CORE GROUP INSTALLATIONS

Few photographs of 79 Park Place survive, and it is not possible to reconstruct the installations. Statements from the artists, however, reveal the complementary nature of the ideas being tested in the space. As noted, there were two projects to which the public was invited, the *79 Park Place—Gallery* exhibition which opened on November 17, 1963, and was accessible by appointment; and the *79 Park Place Downtown Manhattan* show which was open from January 12 to February 10, 1964, again without regular hours. The Park Place “exhibitions” offered total environments, or total experiences with art. But unlike the immersive experiences created by single artists with a singular vision (Kaprow, Oldenburg), the Park Place artists sought relationships between artworks by different individuals. They did not use the term “group exhibition.” Experimenting with the space, they installed, removed, and reinstalled artwork for six months, starting in June 1963.

Leo Valledor's fields of sheer color on canvas of 1962–64 incorporated vivid dots, often at the center of a canvas (fig. 140). However, he found the visual effect “too subjective” and the effect

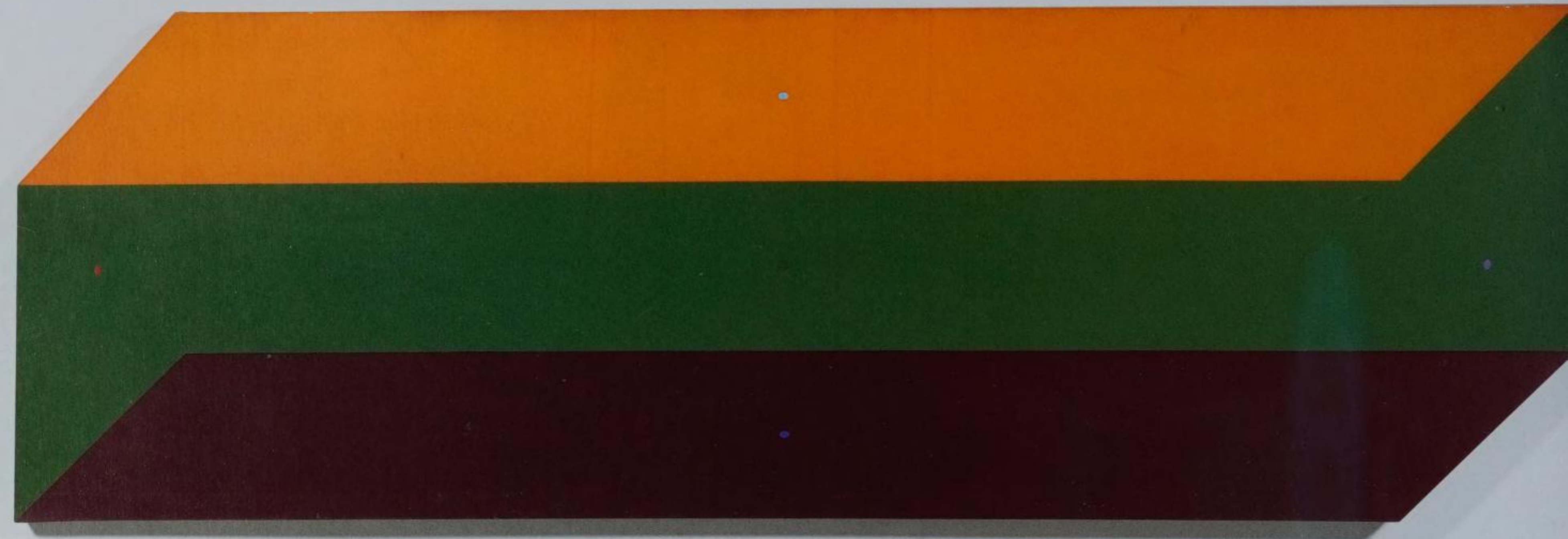


Fig. 141. Leo Valledor, *Odelight*, 1964
Acrylic on canvas, 36 × 109½ × 3 in. (91.4 × 278.1 × 7.6 cm)
Courtesy Spacetime C.C., New York

of the dots perceptible only to himself. He wanted them to project from the picture plane and imply linearity: “I saw the lines there, I could actually see them between the dots and I still can. I asked people: Can you see the line there in between the two dots? And they said no, and I said (wow wow) I’m not getting over.”⁷⁵ By the end of 1963, Valledor had begun making the lines visible. In both *Serena* and *Odelight* (1964), three wide, colored stripes thrust horizontally across the image, breaking at each end to suggest a rectangular box seen in perspective. On the central axis and at each end, small colored dots complicate the viewer’s attempt to grasp the work’s spatial interplay (figs. 141, 142).

Edwin Ruda’s pursuit of geometry initially began within the rectangle of the canvas, as in *Hampton* (1962), in which a painterly gray parallelogram hovers unevenly at center, with areas of flat color—green, magenta, purple, and black—floating in the background (fig. 143). A band of red intersects the gray in a strict vertical, cut at different angles by two lines of yellow. The effect is at once whole and dizzying: the imprecise geometries

engender tension, or a sense of irresolution. Ruda’s work would soon abandon the rectangle and, as it did for Valledor, the shape he devised would become the form. One example is *Redball* (1965), a circle of plywood painted in red acrylic with two wedges cut from it at what seem like random intersections, their points not quite reaching the central axis. Receding striped triangles painted in contrasting green, black, and orange jut inward from the bottom right, extending past the central axis. Here Ruda advances the lack of symmetry within a symmetrical form.

Like Valledor and Ruda, Dean Fleming began working in an Abstract Expressionist style but then migrated to an investigation of color and shape effects. Dividing his canvases and works on paper into grids, Fleming devised complex patterns with mathematical precision. In a self-published catalogue he described his process as follows: “I had always used colors of the highest contrast—primaries, complementaries, and black and white which continued unabated in the new hard-edged imagery which was inspired by some of [Carl] Jung’s theories and by P. D. Ouspensky’s

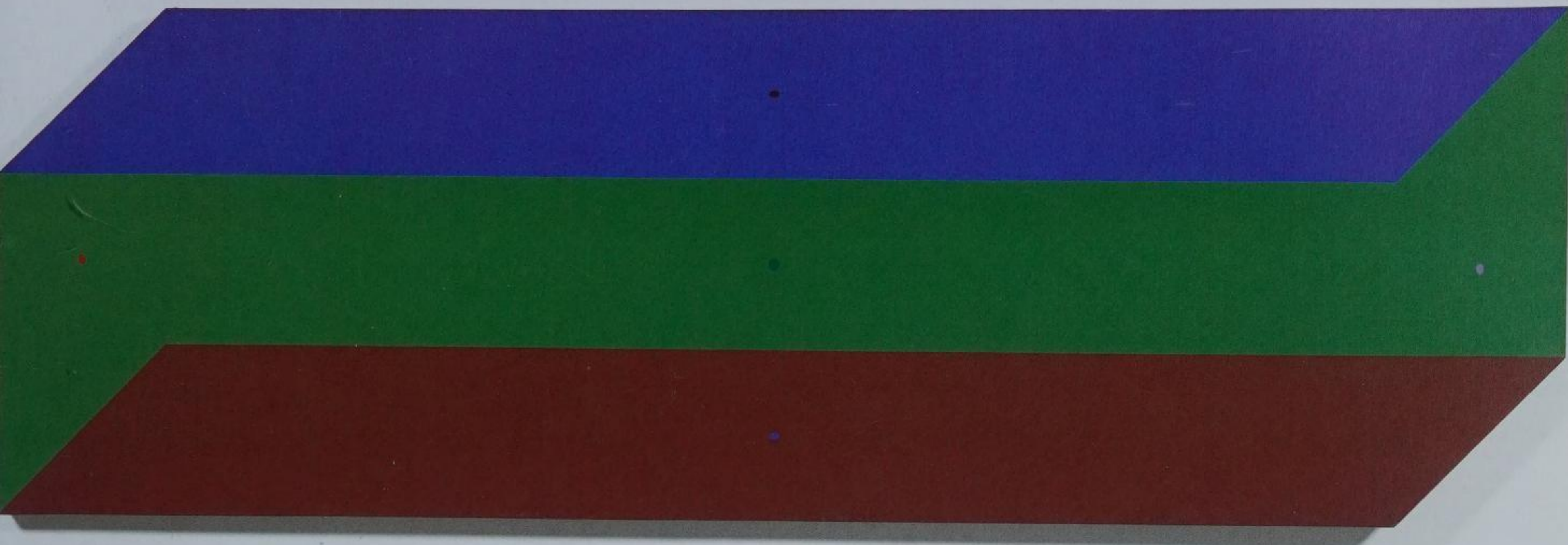


Fig. 142. Leo Valledor, *Serena*, 1964
Acrylic on canvas, 36 × 109½ × 3 in. (91.4 × 278.1 × 7.6 cm)
Courtesy Spacetime C.C., New York

Tertium Organum (1912) in which artists search for the non-visual Fourth Dimension.”⁷⁶ Ouspensky was an early-20th-century Russian mathematician whose esoteric theories advanced the existence of multiple states of consciousness and self-awareness, among them an imperceptible fourth dimension that lies outside our materialist (empiricist) understanding of space and time. Scientists conceive the fourth dimension as lying at right angles to three-dimensional space. Thus, rather than comprehending time as durational, or as moving in only one, forward direction, theories of the fourth dimension consider time in relation to space, which is by definition multi-directional.⁷⁷

This concept of space-time infused Fleming’s practice. Beginning in 1962 he embarked on a series of paintings and works on paper that invited viewers to enter into a multi-dimensional space. Introducing irregularities into his grids, he created dazzling optical dualities: areas that popped while others receded, and areas that expanded while others appeared pinched. One of Fleming’s untitled drawings (fig. 144) helps parse the structure

girding his paintings. Uniting the composition are clear vertical and horizontal lines that have drawn comparisons to those of Mondrian. But the diagonals held within Fleming’s squares and rectangles are far from static. As though manifesting Ouspensky’s theories, the drawing puts forth a more expansive definition of space, and proposes a new level of consciousness.

Another member of the Park Place group, Tamara Melcher, who had studied painting with Richard Diebenkorn, enriched her exploration of color-fields through acrylic paint, which affected the texture, consistency, and translucency of her brushstrokes. Discussions with group members about color and shape led her to incorporate sharper edges and more defined geometries. Melcher began her transition with sharp-edged construction-paper collages that were purposefully asymmetrical. In one, uneven rectangular lines, slumped squares, and torn triangles float and intersect on a ground built up from various shades of blue paper (fig. 145). Another contrasts high-keyed blues, oranges, and pinks with whites and browns—a chaos of color and form with



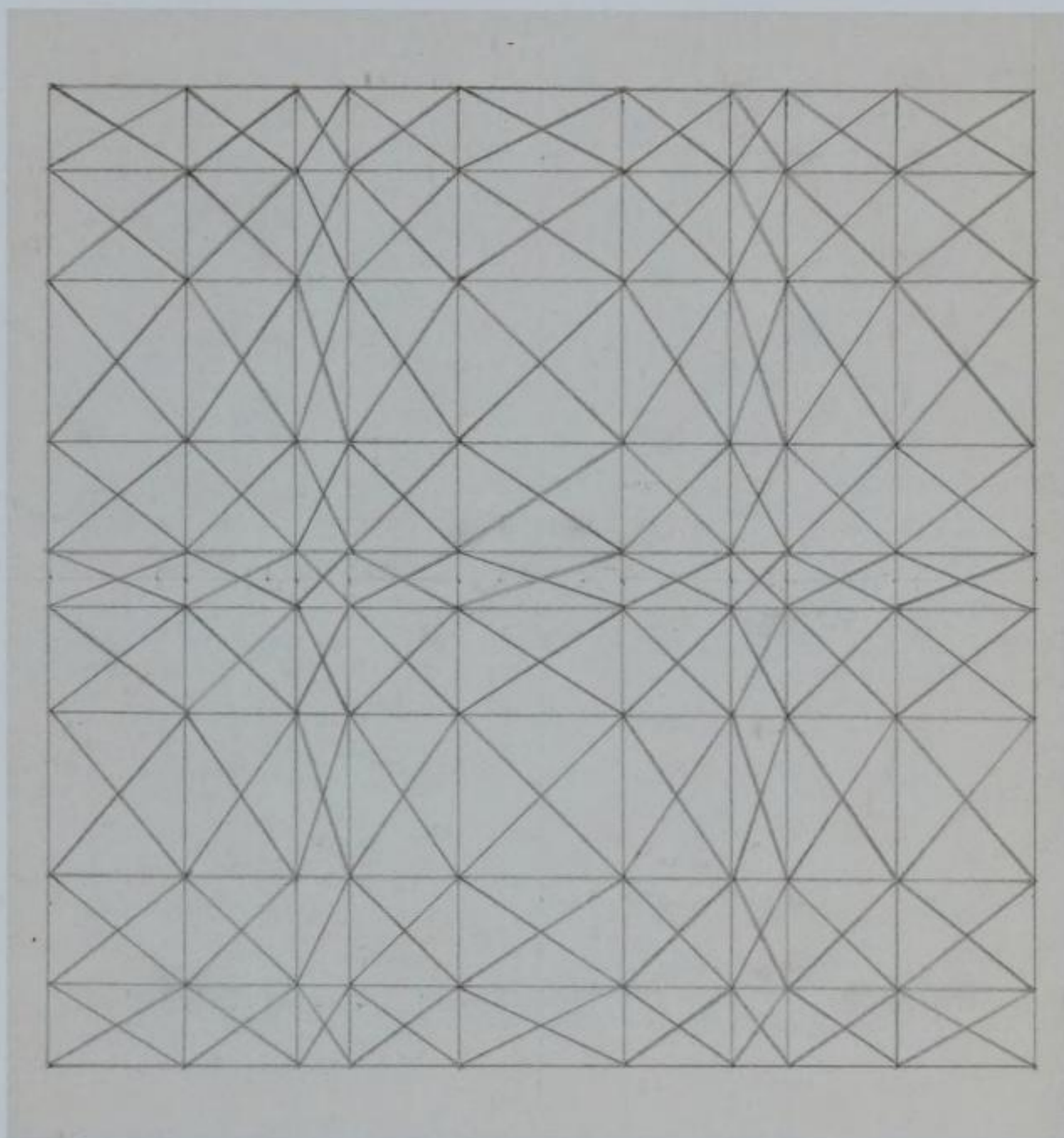


Fig. 144. Dean Fleming, *Untitled* (known as *Ouspensky's Grid*), 1964
Graphite on paper, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ in. (11.4 × 11.4 cm)
Courtesy the artist

complex areas of stasis and movement. In a process of continual modification of color, proportion, and shape, Melcher built each collage “until slowly, slowly I got into doing larger pieces, and getting more clear about what I actually was after, and what I wanted to see.”⁷⁸ In 1965 these exercises developed beyond color studies to “dual spaces,” as she referred to them, incorporating irregular patterns and highly contrasting colors.

Peter Forakis’s “open” sculptures made from wood planks, and his rectangular paintings and hanging forms from the early 1960s incorporated imprecise, designed patterns. His painted forms foreground a handmade sensibility akin to that of assemblage. (In fact, Forakis was included in Martha Jackson’s 1960 *New Forms—New Media* precisely for his facility with manual assembly.) His subject matter conveyed a fascination with “essential symbolic forms”—brightly painted totems he would suspend from the ceiling or set on the floor.⁷⁹ In 1963 Forakis ventured into metal, and his shapes became sparer. He made *JFK Chair* (1963) from a single sheet of aluminum, cutting an oval in the center and bending the top to

Fig. 143. Edwin Ruda, *Hampton*, 1962
Acrylic on canvas, 36 × 28 in. (91.4 × 71.1 cm)
Private collection



Fig. 145. Tamara Melcher, *Untitled*, 1963
Construction paper mounted on paper, $8\frac{1}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$ in. (20.6 × 21.3 cm);
mat: $13\frac{1}{2} \times 15\frac{1}{8}$ in. (34.3 × 38.4 cm)
Courtesy the artist

create a chair (fig. 146). Apparent in the work’s final form are both the simplicity of his approach and the conditions of its making.

Forrest Myers, keenly interested in space travel and new scientific technologies, went a different direction, making marvelously strange sculptures that sought “to alter the viewer’s perceptual experience of space within the gallery”⁸⁰ (fig. 147). An untitled aluminum sculpture, for instance, echoes both a space-time grid and a spaceship, its top portion hovering like the blades of a helicopter. He experimented with warped geometries and new materials, among them acrylic spray paint and plastics that lent his work the appearance of changing in form and expanding in size. Tony Magar’s work also explored self-contained spatial dynamics, but in a manner closer to di Suvero’s expressive forms. In *Untitled* (1962), for instance, a beam juts out at an awkward angle with planes of metal hovering around it (fig. 148).

During the summer of 1963, using the parking lot in the rear of the building as a staging area, the Park Place members built a pulley system and hauled di Suvero’s large sculpture *Love Makes the World Go ‘Round* (1962–63) to the roof (fig. 149). The wishbone-shaped structure on wheels operated like a carousel: with a push from participants, the piece spun around and “swung out over the street,” as di Suvero remembered, though not quite past the

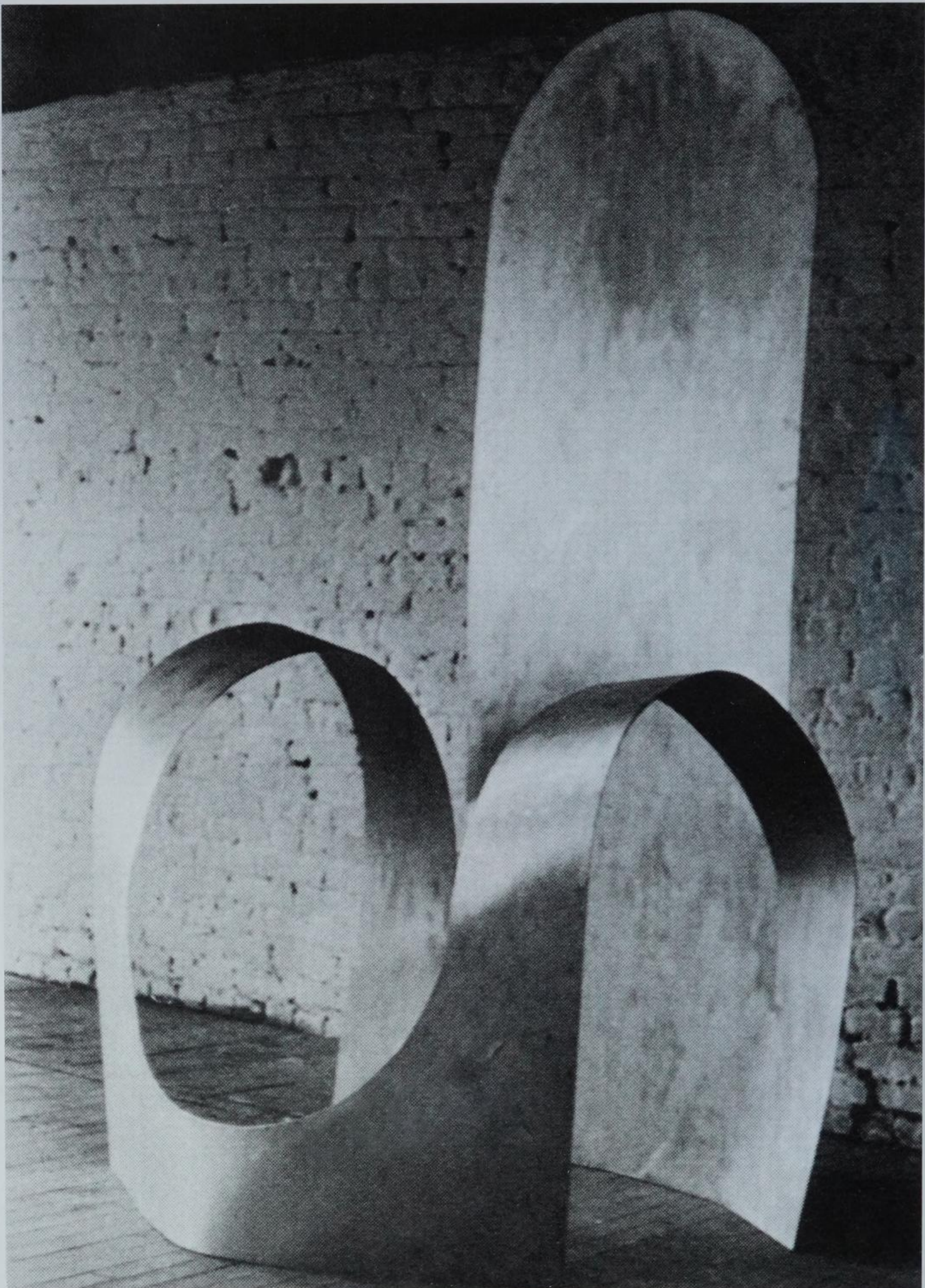


Fig. 146. Peter Forakis, *JFK Chair*, 1963
Aluminum, 88 × 40 × 40 in. (223.5 × 101.6 × 101.6 cm)
Courtesy the Peter Forakis Art Foundation, Petaluma, California



Fig. 147. Forrest Myers, *E=MC3*, 1963
 Aluminum, 13 × 16 × 15 in. (33 × 40.6 × 38.1 cm)
 Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

edge of the building. Emboldened, perhaps, by this semi-public showing of their work, by November of that year, the group felt ready to open Park Place to visitors. The invitation postcard listed Myers, Valledor, and Fleming as participating artists, along with di Suvero, Magar, Ruda, Grosvenor, and Forakis. A second group showing was announced, by poster, for January 12, 1964, this time including Melcher. The installation drew in critics, including Donald Judd, who noted the group's atypical collectivity, its desire to "be free from uptown galleries," and members' attendant values that were "inimical to art."⁸¹ While Judd dismissed the group's communal ethos—or "obsolete purity," as he called it—he was struck by the works' divergence from di Suvero's style, an indication of narrowing conceptions about influence in an era of increasing art-world fame. Citing the arresting optics of Myers's reflective metal, glass, and plastic sculptures, and various painters' "ungeometric" use of geometry, Judd reserved his most sustained

Fig. 148. Anthony Magar, *Untitled*, 1962
 Stainless steel and iron, 34 × 33½ × 24 in. (86.4 × 85.1 × 61 cm)
 Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut.
 The Athena Fund, 1962.610

admiration for Valledor's *Constellation*, calling the overall effect of the work's purple, yellow, and green dots and green chevron stripes "exceptional."⁸²

The third and final project at 79 Park Place was *Park Place Invitational Show*, which opened on March 15, 1963, and included all the founding members plus twenty-six additional artists, among them John Chamberlain, Ronald Bladen, Tom Doyle, and David Weinrib. Non-members were invited by Fleming, Myers, or di Suvero, not through communal discussion. "We believed in each other to start with," Fleming explained, "and so we would say, okay, you go out and get three people that nobody's heard of, or that's very special, and bring them in for the group show."⁸³ The most notorious piece was Raphael Montañez Ortiz's (b. 1934) decomposing lamb wrapped in a burlap bag. Ortiz was interested in the effects of decomposition; most likely the smell of the rotting meat induced the members to eventually enclose the piece in plastic.⁸⁴ The final selection of artworks was kept secret from other Park Place members, adding an element of surprise that prevented the show from becoming thematic and kept visitors' experience close to the work and its presentation. At some point during the late spring of 1964, the artists living at 79 Park Place received a notice that the building was scheduled for demolition—ultimately to make way



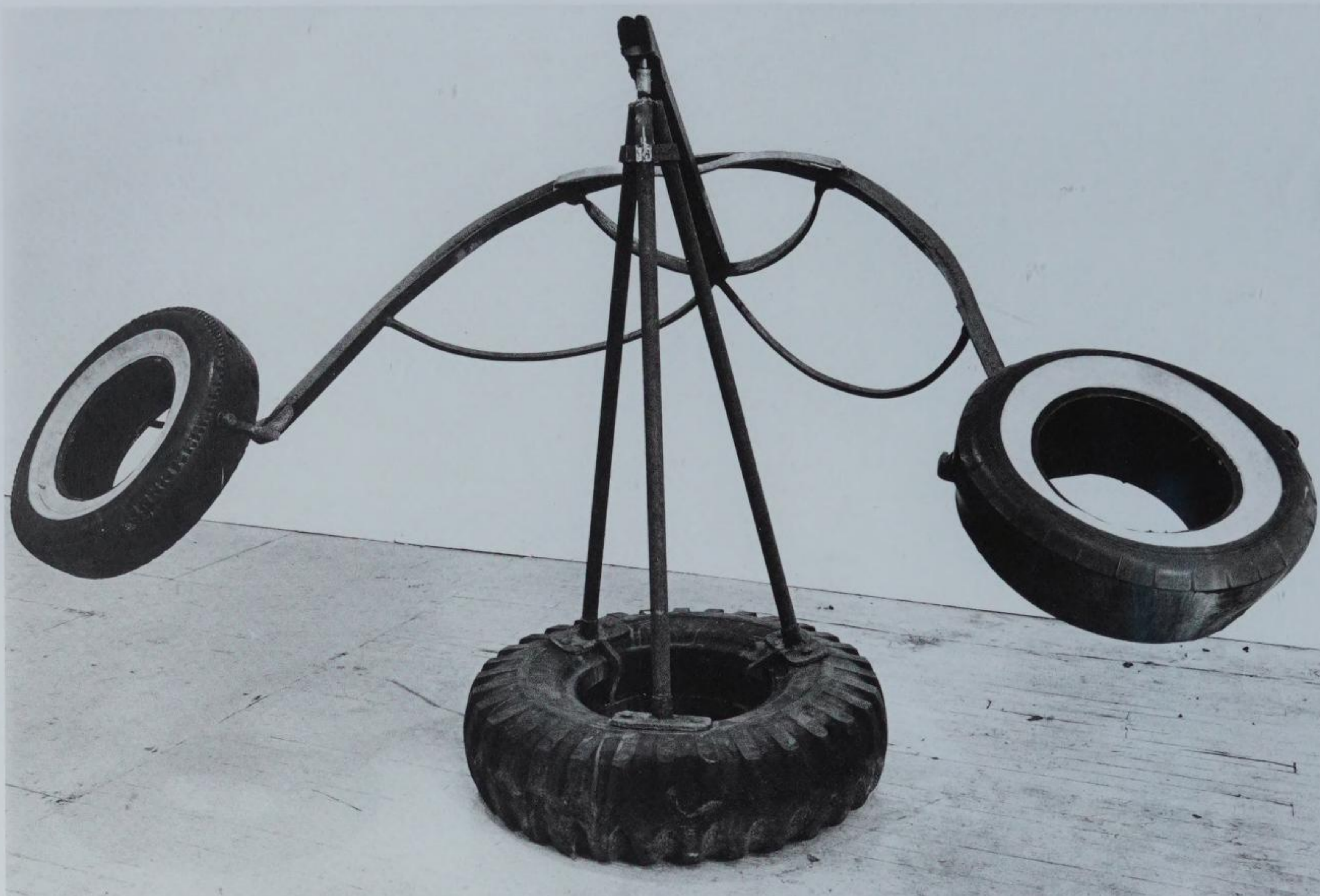


Fig. 149. Mark di Suvero, *Love Makes the World Go Round*, 1962–63
Steel and rubber tires, 73½ × 119 × 75 in. (186.7 × 302.3 × 190.5 cm)
Courtesy Spacetime C.C., New York

for construction of the World Trade Center. But the group managed to stay together, and in 1965 they secured a new space at 542 West Broadway, becoming one of the first galleries in SoHo. Park Place's collaborative experiments, and their strong resistance to the traditional exhibition format, distinguished the group from other galleries, even those run by artists. And their desire to create community outside the New York art market later extended to public art and to nonprofit, alternative spaces. Ruminating on the Park Place group's universality (from a different point of view than Young's), di Suvero stated: "I think this is a movement that has been constant through the arts, and they may look at [it] as idealistic, but it goes way back to the cave art. . . . Art is what unifies people. Art is what gives them, when they are all in a big, giant stone building and they all are singing 'Ave Maria' together, you know, it is the art that is uniting them. And when you begin to see that, then you realize that it is the poetry [that draws people together]; it isn't

necessarily the formulas, it isn't necessarily the markets that pit people against each other."⁸⁵ Park Place's belief in art's potential to forge community served as a unifying force. Pursuing their values in the making of art and music, the artists responded to the specific circumstances of their space and time.

At a 1966 symposium held in conjunction with *Primary Structures*, art critic Barbara Rose identified three of her fellow speakers, Robert Morris, Mark di Suvero, and Donald Judd, as the first to "establish and make explicit new positions in sculpture"—that is, to build relationships among shapes that repositioned sculpture away from assemblage, which had for a time been the dominant approach. In tying these three artists together, Rose looked past their strongly divergent styles and methods of production. By 1966 Judd's sculpture was being produced in factories according to his specifications—a practice that di Suvero abhorred. He saw

industrial fabrication as nihilistic, eliminating “the most crucial part of modern sculpture” in its negation of the object.⁸⁶

Morris, in contrast, rejected outright the notion that anything handmade was inherently more credible as art: “I don’t think whether you fabricate it yourself or have somebody fabricate it for you has anything to do with making art. My interest is in having the work as well executed as possible.” Di Suvero’s objections, however, did not rest solely in how a thing was made, but rather in what was lost when the artist’s skill was subcontracted to others. He argued that something fundamental to the entire notion of being an artist was altered when practitioners lost their willingness to make mistakes, and that lessons of shape, scale, and composition could arise only during a process of making. Both Morris and Judd rejected di Suvero’s conceptions as romantic, and entirely modernist in their values. Ultimately, Morris and Judd prevailed, sparking a further dematerialization of art in the ensuing decades.

Morris and Judd’s rejection of the idea that current art is in dialogue with the past was anathema for di Suvero, and by extension his fellow artists at Park Place, whose interest in interchange began with connections between art and science. “I think that it meant something then and it still means something now. It’s a special kind of approach to a problem which is explorative. . . . You [Judd] use a man as a tool. And I object to that because I think that we should use everything we have in the communicative world.” For di Suvero, art made in factories at the direction of artists brought up the entire history of labor, a history

that was exploitative and anti-humanist. But Judd would have none of this. “The sort of connection you’re making is exactly the kind of analogy-making that I object to,” Judd responded. The discussion ended without rapprochement.

Critical histories of the Park Place group and Yoko Ono’s 112 Chambers Street series remain respectful of such distinctions and of the artists’ divergent concerns, especially as defined by Morris and Judd. Yet for a brief period in the early 1960s, new concepts about three-dimensional artwork united the three, despite differences in their conceptualizations of art. Bringing together both tendencies—conceptual and material—offers us the opportunity to ponder these differences in a new light.

As the 1960s continued, the Chambers Street and Park Place artists became involved in the social and political organizing sparked by protests against the war in Vietnam and the student and countercultural movements across the U.S. The Park Place group in particular, which had already embraced a communal ethos, were further radicalized in opposition to skyrocketing elitism in the contemporary art world, owing in part to the ascendancy of Minimalism, which was ushered in by artists like Morris and Judd. Yet Morris and Judd were also concerned about world events, and, by the mid-1960s, they joined efforts to democratize established institutions, especially the Museum of Modern Art. After 1960 politics and art—indeed, politics *as* art—stood in direct correlation. The next chapter explores four groups that grappled directly with issues arising from American Cold War policies and the burgeoning civil rights movement.



4. Politics as Practice

Writing in *Esquire* magazine on the 1960 Democratic convention in Los Angeles, at which John F. Kennedy was nominated for president, Norman Mailer detected strain beneath the glamorous facade. Kennedy was a sparkling new face in American politics, but what did it mean to have a candidate who was as polished as a movie star? For Mailer, Kennedy appeared calibrated to match the latest in retail innovation, the supermarket, “that homogeneous extension of stainless surfaces and psychoanalyzed people, packaged commodities and ranch homes, interchangeable, geographically unrecognizable, that essence of a new postwar SuperAmerica.”

“SuperAmerica,” however, concealed a conflicted society. The Kennedy administration came to power six years after the landmark Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, which found “separate but equal” laws based on race unconstitutional. Nonviolent protest activities organized by a consortium of black churches in the south and civil liberties groups in the north sparked dramatic, troubling confrontations with opponents. Media images depicted angry white mobs—including police—attacking protesters of all races, and Kennedy’s election did not provide a resolution to the struggle. Instead, after a decade of repressive McCarthyism, political dissent had spawned the New Left, while Betty Friedan’s 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique* ignited the second-wave feminist movement.

Civil liberties were only one of the pressing issues during Kennedy’s brief tenure. Between 1960 and 1963 events abroad signaled changing global dynamics. Nationalist, postcolonial governments came to power throughout Africa and changed

international alignments into First, Second, and Third World countries, with the United States and the Soviet Union as the dominant axes of power. The 1959 overthrow of Fulgencio Batista by Cuban revolutionaries, who then aligned with the Soviets, led to a hardening of U.S. Cold War policies in Latin America, most publicly in the CIA-led Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis the following year. The very real threat of nuclear warfare brought home the realization that mutually assured self-destruction was not only possible, it was inevitable if American foreign policy continued its course.

Throughout the 1950s, social activism and art had generally been considered separate activities, but in 1960 this bifurcation began to weaken. Between 1960 and 1965 artists’ responses to contemporary sociopolitical events went hand in hand with a rising critique of the art world’s commercialism. Previously galleries, even those run by artists, had kept their distance from the social transformations taking place in the U.S. and abroad. But was there room within a gallery context to support activism? This section examines four artist groups that addressed this question. Their art reflects deep engagement with civic responsibility, politics, and identity. Each group reconceived galleries as forums, with uneven results, owing in part to the groups’ open-ended nature. Most of their projects were rough, incomplete, or inconclusive. The value of these projects was in the group gatherings—in the artists’ debates and conversations—and contemporary critics found the art itself difficult to assess outside of that context. Political art was not supported by the art system of the early 1960s, and this lack of support furthered these groups’ sense of disenfranchisement from established galleries. Moreover, the rise of the contemporary art market (due largely to the appeal of Pop Art) aligned with Mailer’s conception of a hyper-commercial “SuperAmerica,” and reinforced an ideology

Fig. 150. Peter Moore, Poet Jack Micheline reading at Hall of Issues, with Phyllis Yampolsky seated at right, Judson Memorial Church, New York, 1962 Estate of Peter Moore. Courtesy Fales Library, New York University

that helped to keep the issues surrounding the Cold War and the struggle for civil rights out of galleries.

The artists examined in Chapter 4 devised spaces that are similar, but not quite equivalent, to galleries. The March Group (later known as NO!art), the Hall of Issues at Judson Memorial Church, the outdoor interdisciplinary projects produced by The Center, and the Spiral Group all offered new paradigms for gallery structures in which the artwork was less important than the issues it investigated. In that sense, these groups were prescient in anticipating the confrontational aesthetic strategies that would pose serious challenges to the art market's complacency during the later 1960s.

MARCH GROUP (1960–62)

Until fall 1960, the March Gallery was typical of most of the Tenth Street co-ops that arose during the late 1950s: the membership represented a range of styles and no one idea dominated. Their exhibitions took place at 95 East Tenth Street in the basement, a squat, cramped space with exposed pipes, a tin ceiling, and whitewashed brick walls.² One of the founding members was Boris



Lurie (1924–2008), who had arrived in New York with his father in 1946 after four years in a Nazi concentration camp.³ The artwork he first showed at the March Gallery ranged from lyrical ink drawings of his wife, Béatrice LeCornu, to abstract works reflecting on his wartime experiences. Women were his favorite subjects. He was especially compelled to depict those whose lives were less than ideal, like the women in the Fourteenth Street clubs who were paid to dance with men. Lurie's friend, the poet Jack Micheline, immortalized a scene in which "thirty girls stood on the dance floor waiting for the doors to open, to get on with their job, to get it over with. The sweating, panting men climbed the stairs and checked their coats. . . . Legs, arms, thighs, ass, eyes, nose, legs. . . . Observing the frantic passion of the evening Boris Lurie sat among this humanity of the cities sketching these creatures of the night."⁴

In his Dismemberment series, Lurie combined combat matériel, especially propellers and motors, with fragmented female body parts. These elements explode against a solid-color ground, in murals spanning twenty feet—what Lurie called "scrolls." He began the series not long after settling in New York in 1950, but appears not to have exhibited any of the works until his three-man show at the March Gallery in January–February 1959. But contemporary New York critics studiously avoided the subject of war, and their reviews stuck to formal analysis, eschewing any discussion of content or social references.⁵

Lurie expressed his frustration with art's limits in a solo exhibition at the March Gallery in April 1960. He considered it an installation, similar to Oldenburg's *The Street* and Dine's *The House* at the Judson Gallery the previous January. The project, *Les Lions*, comprised a series of collages, some of the largest, at eight feet tall, just barely fitting into the basement space. These collages combined tabloid news reports of the Algerian war for independence from France; magazine cut-outs of society parties, new products, and slogans; and a plethora of naked or scantily clad women clipped from stag magazines. Lurie united these disparate elements through his application of paint, which either accentuated or partly obliterated images (fig. 152). Sometimes he included a yellow Star of David like those used by the Nazis to identify Jews. At a time when the Holocaust had not yet surfaced in American consciousness—indeed, discussions of wartime atrocities were rare until the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem—Lurie's juxtaposition of Nazi symbols with naked women was discomfiting. And that was the point.

Lurie felt particularly exultant about his 1959 collage *Les Lions*, which provided the title for his show, and in the exhibition's accompanying brochure offered a prose poem on how he made

Fig. 151. John Cohen, March Gallery, c. 1960

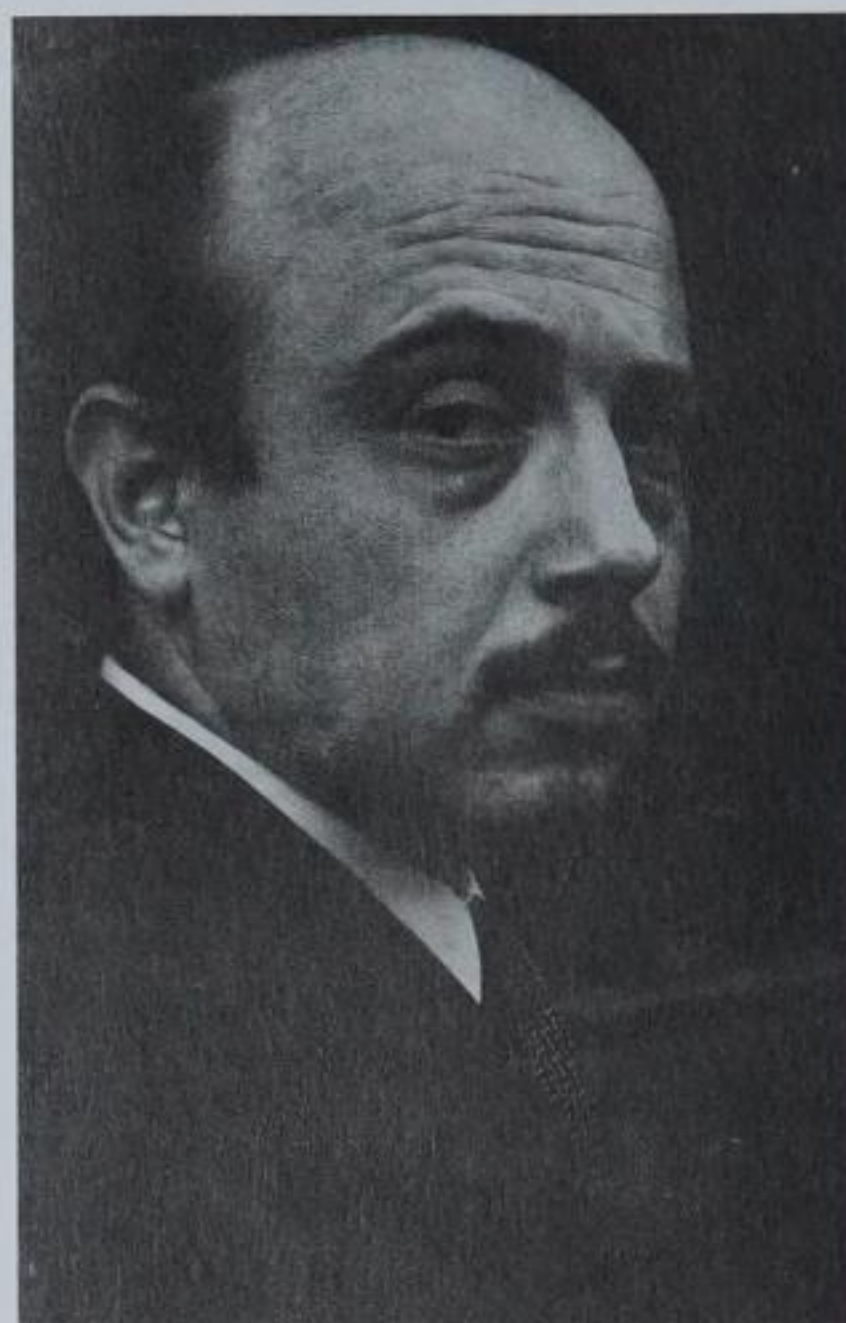
Photograph: © John Cohen. Courtesy L. Parker Stephenson Photographs, NYC



Fig. 152. Boris Lurie's collages on canvas, *Involvement Show*,
March Gallery, New York, April 1961
Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York

the work. After sorting through the chaos of hundreds of girlie-magazine clippings, he sought to make legible order from the material. According to the artist, *Les Lions* was a large-scale mash-up of news and advertising: "The stripper becomes a moon shining on the Cadillac. (Nikita) Khrushchev offers the United Nations his long awaited Appleberry (ranch-style home) Plan. Colonel Terreur (Algerian freedom fighter Amirouche Aït Hamouda) is dead, fallen in combat. Les Lions (French occupiers) rest content."⁶ In contrast with his previous paintings and drawings, Lurie's collages display a jolting combination of the louche, the political, and the commercial.⁷

The pamphlet, which includes a sensitive portrait of Lurie on the cover (fig. 153), was, in part, a collaboration with photographer and fellow Holocaust survivor Charles Rotmil (b. 1933). Unlike Lurie, Rotmil was spared the concentration camps, but his experiences were no less horrific. After seeing his mother and sister killed and his father deported to Auschwitz, he spent 1941–45 in hiding with families in France, near the Austrian border.⁸ Both artists have spoken of how, after arriving in New York, they attempted to reconcile past traumas with American culture's mixed messages of optimism and repression. On the one hand, they felt free to pursue art, but on the other, they found American domestic and



BORIS LURIE LES LIONS

Fig. 153. Boris Lurie, Pamphlet for *Les Lions*, March Gallery, New York, 1960
Offset print, 10½ × 5¼ in. (26.7 × 13.3 cm)
Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York

first glimpse of New York Harbor for all immigrants arriving by ship. Taken from a ferry facing away from the city's skyline, the photograph depicts the statue seemingly at sea, an elegiac statement of liberty's increasing distance from everyday life.

Most likely the March Gallery would have continued as an artists' co-op, but in the fall of 1960, Lurie and Sam Goodman (1919–1967), an artist not affiliated with the March, somehow assumed possession of the basement space and suspended the co-op arrangement. The two had met around 1957, when Goodman helped found the Camino Gallery. Although Lurie credited Goodman as “the brains” behind the Camino, published accounts by other Camino artists and by Nicholas Krushenick, who secured the space, never mention him at all.⁹ Goodman broke with the Camino after a short time, and Lurie suspected that he either left or was asked to leave for non-payment of dues and, perhaps, his opposition to “careerism.”¹⁰ At some point afterward, Goodman's friendship with Lurie deepened. In retrospect, it seems likely that *Les Lions* struck him as a major aesthetic departure from the rest of Tenth Street. Goodman's own work during the 1950s moved between abstraction—he lay his canvases on the floor, using a brush affixed to a hockey stick or a pole to make long, continuous strokes across them—and representational nudes and landscapes. But Lurie's pin-up women were so challenging and bold, they no

foreign policies deeply troubling—especially racial discrimination and virulent anti-Communism. With *Les Lions*, Lurie began to push against these contradictions. The work's title contains a sly double meaning, referencing not only France's president Charles de Gaulle, the occupier, but also the Barbary lions, which were indigenous to Algeria until the early 20th century and served as an enduring symbol of its nationalist might. Like the women paid to pose nude in the stag magazines Lurie used, the Barbary lions represented what those in power were trying to suppress. On the exhibition brochure's back cover, Lurie included a photograph by Rotmil of the Statue of Liberty, that iconic

doubt appealed to Goodman's “uncanny insight into ‘the strategy of esthetics’ (meaning . . . an ability to determine what move was truly important).”¹¹ In response to *Les Lions*, Goodman shifted his approach to assemblage.

In Lurie, Goodman found a partner in rejecting Tenth Street values and making polemical social statements. Both defined the art world, even downtown, as being driven by market values: “The paramount aim of most artists (on Tenth Street) is an arrangement which will give them a better economic standing in exchange for freedom of expression,” a compromise they both rejected.¹² Instead, they determined that the “marketplace” would have no role in the March Gallery. The artwork they made and invited others to exhibit would be so difficult and provocative that assimilation into a market system would never be possible.¹³ Lurie is widely acknowledged as leader of the March Group, as they called themselves, and Goodman as the theoretician. Initially Lurie found some of Goodman's ideas “crude,” if not simplistic; Lurie later recognized the “pure, unadulterated directness” at the core of Goodman's approach, and that his lack of nuance lent urgency to the cause. Ultimately, Lurie deemed Goodman's strategy “brilliant.”¹⁴

Goodman and Lurie also bonded through their shared fascination with Holocaust photographs, but from opposite perspectives. During World War II, Goodman, a Toronto native, served in the Canadian army in what was likely a propaganda unit, preparing news and graphics for the Canadian Film Board. He had deftly arranged for this assignment, likely based on his skills as a cartoonist, and was able to avoid combat duty overseas. Goodman's wartime experience constituted such a stark contrast with life in the camps that, after seeing images of nearly starved prisoners liberated by the Allies, he became tormented by them, viewing them as evidence that he had abdicated his responsibility as a Jew. Impulsively, he either purloined or made copies of the concentration camp photographs that came to the Canadian Film Board; he also clipped images as they appeared in print. After the war, he maintained this archive for years. Upon encountering Lurie's *Les Lions*, he made a decision. As Lurie recalled, “Sam collected concentration camp pictures all along, which he later on passed on to me and which I used in my collages.”¹⁵

Around the time that Goodman and Lurie began to plan and prepare new artwork for the reconstituted March Gallery, they met the poet Stanley Fisher (1926–1980), who was editing an anthology of East Coast Beat poetry and had wanted to include Lurie's collages in the book. A Brooklyn native, Fisher had trained as a medic in the U.S. Army. He took part in the 1944 Normandy campaign, arriving just after the invasion to treat the wounded. His experience of the horrors of combat would find an artistic outlet under Lurie and Goodman's tutelage. These three Jewish artists cohered as a group,

mining newspapers and magazines for titillating and shocking images from across the globe. Embracing this common dialectic, they rejected American “supermarket culture,” and later defined their work as “anti-Pop.” Lurie considered Fisher’s skill at writing communiqués prophetic but was less impressed by his attempts at collage and drawing: “We accepted Stanley as a poet, but not quite at first as a visual artist.”¹⁶

The March Group produced three exhibitions over the course of one year, beginning in fall 1960. The titles are all theatrical in tone: the *Vulgar Show* (November 1960), the *Involvement Show* (April 1961), and the *Doom Show* (November 1961). These collective projects “grew even after the opening of the shows,” Lurie remembered, “with people bringing in work done towards the theme of the show; often the collective execution of a show would point out the theme of the next show; in other words, an organic and thematic approach was used.”¹⁷ These exhibitions challenged conventional studio practices, advocating instead for Goodman’s conceptual processes:

[Goodman] never worked in his studio like many artists do, every day that is; instead he seemed to be working only in case of an exhibition coming up, or another occasion of urgent concern—this seemed to me very “lazy” and “unartistic” at the time—there was a romantic concept about art—but later on I came to see this “laziness” as being very much in tune with the time and with the realistic attitude (such as painting away and piling up paintings and practically evicting oneself from one’s studio) bridging the cleavage between an artistic existence seemingly led for itself and outside reality of history, economics, etc.¹⁸

Goodman’s influence was instrumental in transforming the March Gallery from a co-op into an artists’ workshop. Materials were brought in and, according to documentary photographs, sculptures were constructed in the gallery space. The March’s three exhibitions were indebted to Oldenburg’s *The Street* at the Judson Gallery in the way that one artwork appeared to bleed into another, reducing the importance of any single piece. Unlike Oldenburg, however, the March artists did not resuscitate formalist aesthetics. Instead, their shows were imbued with anti-formal, transgressive agitprop.

The group lobbed their first volley against the art world: Fisher’s statement for the *Vulgar Show* declared, “the new March Gallery is a citadel for the idealistic, and bastion for those who would like to make a last stand against the commercial degradation of uptown galleries. We stand on the threshold of a new art, an art committed to speak out, an art involved with issues.”¹⁹ In addition to Lurie, Goodman, and Fisher, the artist-poet John Fischer (b. 1930)

contributed a series of baguettes placed in vises and clamps, a gesture that has more in common with Surrealism than vulgarity. It is difficult to determine exactly what Goodman, Lurie, and Fisher included in the *Vulgar Show*; it is worth noting, however, that in 1959–60 Lurie was concentrating on large-scale, brightly painted collages, several of which he included in a solo show at Roland de Anelle Gallery in November 1960, concurrent with the *Vulgar Show*.²⁰

If the *Vulgar Show* announced the March Group’s intolerance for the business of art, its April 1961 *Involvement Show* broadened the attack to a wholesale condemnation of American democracy. This was the largest of their three exhibitions and the only one to extend an open call for other artists to participate. The respondents were Isser Aronovici, Lee Zach, Augustus Goertz, Michelle Stuart, Jerome Rothenberg, Bob Logan, Susan Long, Michal Misarit, Lara (who went by one name), John Fischer, and Gloria Graves. The poet Ted Joans also contributed, most likely through Fisher. Despite these additional collaborators, however, Lurie and Goodman themselves created the overwhelming majority of the works on view.

According to a statement by Fisher, the *Involvement Show* was so titled not in a nod to customary forms of democratic participation and debate, but rather to signal its investigation of the ways in which “involvement and innocence become the sacred symbols of survival. . . . We stand on the threshold of a new art, an art committed to speak out, an art involved with issues. We are not afraid of confronting the Hiroshima Hells and Buchenwalds of a world in trouble. We offer no tranquilizers. We face truth.”²¹ Fisher firmly situates the language of anti-art in a political context, one grounded in the mass-killing strategies of total war.

Fisher’s critique of Western culture is most effectively manifested in two large-scale (seven-foot-wide) collages by Lurie: *Liberty or Lice* (1959–60) and *December (Lumumba is Dead)* (1960).²² The more painterly of the two, *Liberty or Lice* (fig. 154), is crowded with references both personal and social; not all have been decoded. This much, however, can be deduced: the title is (once again) a play on symbols. First is Patrick Henry, an American Revolutionary War hero, who famously proclaimed, “Give me liberty or give me death” to rally troops against the British. (Lurie’s small text painting titled *Liberty or Death* was also in the exhibition.) For Americans this well-known cri de coeur refers to noble sacrifice, but in *Liberty or Lice* it points to state-sanctioned murder. A fragment at top center reads, “Chessman Goes to Death, Misses Stay by Minutes,” a reference to the May 1960 execution of Caryl Chessman at San Quentin State Prison in California. His death in a gas chamber—an extermination technique that had been used by the Nazis—galvanized the American movement against capital punishment; Lurie’s inclusion of the reference, however, is not activist but fatalist.²³ Next to the headline, at the upper right, is a photo clipping showing empty streets blocked off by



Fig. 154. Boris Lurie, *Liberty or Lice*, 1959–60
Collage on canvas, 65³/₈ × 84⁵/₈ in. (166 × 215 cm)
Tel Aviv Museum of Art Collection. Gift of Vera and Arturo Schwarz, Milan

barbed wire—most likely in an abandoned Jewish ghetto—adding an oblique reference to the abject conditions in the ghettos and camps that bred lice and typhus. Further reinforcing the Holocaust connection, Lurie again included a six-pointed yellow star.

Striking a very different mood in *Liberty or Lice* are its references to fashion. Appearing throughout are cut-outs and drawings of elegant high-heeled pumps, the drawings perhaps made during the late 1940s or early 1950s, when Lurie sought work as a commercial illustrator. Signifying the urbane female, they may reference LeCornu, who worked as an agent for fashion photographers. Her portrait appears at the center of the canvas, adjacent to a caricature of Lurie.²⁴

December (fig. 155) was set into a temporary wall built kitty-corner to *Liberty or Lice*. Its massive canvas is swathed with images of naked women, occasionally bisected by a portrait, swastika, or news clipping. The women are not nude, they are *naked*—that is, they are frankly sexual beings, whom Estera Milman aptly called “smiling sex workers.”²⁵ The sheer volume of women in all manner of provocative poses is overwhelming, and their unrelenting parade of propositions consequently loses

Fig. 155. Boris Lurie, *December (Lumumba is Dead)*, 1960
Collage on canvas, 71⁵/₈ × 77¹/₈ in. (182 × 196 cm)
Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York

any sense of eroticism. Across the work's top, the same blond model appears in various states of undress, clad in leather belts and gloves. These images are interspersed with the phrase "why Cuba Hates US," a timely theme given the failed American invasion of the Bay of Pigs on April 17–19, 1961. Painted at the center is the Nazi flag, its ominous swastika partly obliterating a portrait of Lurie. This depiction apparently represents Nazi actions against his person and his family—Lurie felt that he had nearly been annihilated. The headline "Adieu Amérique" again references Lurie's abiding despair about his alienation from American culture.²⁶

For his part, Goodman also pushed the nude toward the grotesque. In *Female Fetish* (fig. 157), an assemblage suspended from the ceiling in a corner of the gallery, Goodman emphasizes the figure's breasts, rendering them as missiles: an American fertility goddess-cum-killing machine. These missile-breasts are pendulous and well out of proportion to all the assemblage's other elements. Thin legs dangle from under her tulle skirt, and her high-heeled pumps sway inches from the floor. A companion work, *Male Fetish*, installed adjacent to the female version, has a head made out of a toilet seat framing a photograph of Hitler. Broken toys and debris float down the support and the "body," a



pipe; a mannequin hand with folded fingers appears at the bottom, out of anatomical order. Goodman also included a series of loose, large-scale abstractions, as though (and perhaps) made on the spot. Into the swirls and sweeps of paint, Goodman scratched the words “howl” and “talk” in a rough graffiti style.

Not all the work in the *Involvement Show* was agitprop. In one corner hung a selection of Lurie’s ink drawings—a delicate bird (with Lurie’s face), a cat, and female nudes and dancers. Interwoven among the drawings were a few abstract washes on canvas board by both Lurie and Goodman (fig. 156). In these works, “involvement” refers to the mental absorption of drawing, a private act in which ideas are not yet fully formed. The exhibition included other less-polemical works by these two artists. Their subject matter also included nudes, personal iconography, and drawings of private spaces, all divorced from geopolitics. Such “quieter” works convey another side of Lurie and Goodman, as artists of nuance and subtlety.

Concurrent with the *Involvement Show* was the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a high-ranking Nazi commander. He had been captured by the Israeli secret service in Buenos Aires in 1960 and sent to Jerusalem for trial. During his trial, the mechanics behind Nazi-era atrocities were publicly scrutinized for the first time. For Lurie, this outrage over Eichmann’s crimes came too late: “Eichmann alive . . . Eichmann dead . . . who cares for Eichmann? Now they tell us all about the concentration camps. Bergen-Belsen has been



Fig. 157. Sam Goodman’s *Female Fetish* (center) and *Male Fetish* (far right) in *Involvement Show*, March Gallery, New York, 1961
Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York

turned into a beautiful park. Thousands kept starving after the Liberation.”²⁷ The artist’s subsequent actions, however, belie this seeming nonchalance: he began to select concentration-camp images from the stash Goodman had given him, and to juxtapose them with sex pictures.

One of Lurie’s early forays into this explosive material was *Lolita* (1962). The title references Eichmann’s reported reading of Vladimir Nabokov’s novel about a middle-aged man’s illicit affair with a preteen girl, which was given to him by an Israeli guard. Eichmann returned it two days later, pronouncing it “quite an unwholesome book.”²⁸ Eichmann’s prudishness about sex but lack of remorse for committing mass murder provided the starting point for Lurie’s stark comparison: In the upper left corner of a four-foot-high canvas, he pasted a photograph of dead bodies, either Jewish prisoners or Nazi guards killed by the Allies. At least three corpses lie prone next to a wooden barrack, with straw scattered around them. At the focal point is a man, wedged between the outside and inside of the barrack, his hand partly covering his face, as though he had dug a hole to peer through and had been killed as a result. The man’s ambiguous identity and his frozen gaze are brutal to behold. Countering this photograph, affixed horizontally at bottom



Fig. 156. *Involvement Show*, March Gallery, New York, 1961
Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York



Fig. 158. Boris Lurie, *Saturation Painting (Buchenwald)*, 1960
 Photographs and newspaper clippings on canvas, 35¹³/₁₆ × 35¹³/₁₆ in. (91 × 91 cm)
 Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York

right, is Bert Stern's sensual photograph of the actress Sue Lyon wearing heart-shaped sunglasses and sucking on a lollipop, an image used in the marketing campaign for Stanley Kubrick's 1962 film version of *Lolita*.

Lurie's *Lolita*, however, is positively subtle in comparison with his *Saturation Painting (Buchenwald)*, where sex and Holocaust imagery are juxtaposed in a far more transgressive, and arguably incongruous, manner (fig. 158). In this three-foot-square canvas,

which Lurie began in 1960, twelve photographs of the same woman gradually disrobing line the perimeter, overlaying and nearly obscuring the text of an authoritative article about the Eichmann trial by Hugh Trevor-Roper from September 1961. At the center, Lurie placed Margaret Bourke-White's now-iconic photograph of prisoners at Buchenwald—where Lurie was imprisoned—watching from behind a barbed-wire fence as Allied troops arrived to liberate them in 1945.²⁹

In this collage, the terrible, the prurient, and the tragic infiltrate art, eliciting mounting horror in the viewer. Downtown junk aesthetics went only so far as an “anti-art” ethos, but if all images were up for grabs, why should sex and war be verboten? The answer involves social boundaries. Recently curator Norman Kleeblatt took a step back from the precipice Lurie approached in works like this one and asked, “Who sets these boundaries, and who dares to traverse them? Not least, who has the right to?”³⁰ As a survivor, Lurie (with Goodman’s support) claimed his right to represent the Holocaust, not only as a moral dilemma but also as a psychosexual tragedy—a perspective rarely explored in populist histories. Typically, risqué subject matter becomes tamer with time as the subject is “normalized” in society. But to this day, Lurie’s artwork has resisted normalization. “We remain at an impasse,” Kleeblatt reflected, “and serious issues proposed by this survivor are left unresolved.”³¹ Lurie exhibited these collages in 1963—not, however, at the March Gallery, but rather at the uptown Gallery Gertrude Stein. By this time, the March Group had become known as NO!art.

Before ending their March Gallery experiment, Goodman, Lurie, and Fisher mounted one more exhibition, the *Doom Show*, which opened in November 1961.³² This exhibition was framed by rising tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, a power struggle that centered on the newly built Berlin Wall. In July 1961, President Kennedy went on national television to announce

his request for congressional approval to increase the U.S. military presence abroad; men eligible for the draft were required to serve. In October, Kennedy urged all Americans to build basement shelters supplied with survival kits to protect them against nuclear fall-out in the case of a Soviet attack.³³

Lurie, Goodman, and Fisher were shocked by the prospect of nuclear war and saw the fall-out shelters as an exercise in denial. Yet their installation for the *Doom Show*, which also included contributions from French artist Jean-Jacques Lebel (b. 1936), was seen as reactionary, a visual “chamber of horrors”—and critical reaction was savage.³⁴ The *Doom Show* took full advantage of the basement’s bunker atmosphere. Outside the gallery Goodman placed a doll whose disemboweled torso and head had been burned, with dead flowers protruding from its cavities (fig. 159). The basement venue’s menacing vibe, along with Fisher’s and Goodman’s creepy contributions, were criticized as youthful bombast, “which persists in contemplating unblinkingly all ultimates, such as death and disaster.”³⁵ Given the gravity of nuclear war, the March Group’s strident rhetoric further alienated the art establishment from their cause, although the artists did also engage in other, more sober attempts at debate. As Fisher noted in the press release, “the gallery has organized demonstrations, prepared dramatic tapes, experimental films and talks highlighting the madness involved in the preparation of atomic wars without pulling any punches and welcomes correspondence from anyone and anywhere on this globe.” And Goodman found points of crossover between the *Doom Show* and the rise of performance art, noting, “we are concerned with happenings, ‘real’ happenings.”³⁶

Much of the *Doom Show*’s exhibition space was given over to Stanley Fisher’s collages. Unlike Lurie’s complicated verbal and visual referents, Fisher’s were far more direct: loose constructions composed of female body parts and a few wall reliefs made from trash, on top of which he scrawled the word “DOOM.” Whether working in collage or assemblage, Fisher reveled in the ghoulish. He hung an open guitar case revealing a mannequin’s hand on a wall (fig. 160). He filled a roughly hewn, casket-like trunk with trash—crumpled magazine photographs, brown paper, and assorted found objects, including a bottle of Thunderbird wine, a highly alcoholic spirit infamous as the Bowery bum’s drink of choice. “Christ in a Fall Out Shelter,” Fisher scrawled in response to Kennedy’s plan for surviving a nuclear annihilation. “The fall-out shelters are ovens in which our self cremation will become finalized, a death without meaning,” he elaborated.³⁷ Knowing that his reactionary stance would be dismissed by the larger art community, he charged that disengagement was cowardly; artists not addressing the nuclear



Fig. 159. Outside the March Gallery during *Doom Show*, New York, November 1961
Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York



Fig. 160. Stanley Fisher artwork in *Doom Show*, March Gallery, New York, November 1961

Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York



Fig. 161. Sam Goodman's *Psyche and Vanity* in *Doom Show*, March Gallery, New York, November 1961

Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York

missile crisis merely “paint the gruel of an idiotic world which cannot face powerful emotions of existence, or the hazards of life.”³⁸

Goodman’s work for *Doom* was also dark, but its embrace of artifice and exaggeration propelled it into the territory defined by Susan Sontag as “camp.”³⁹ Some of his assemblages incorporated burned or broken children’s toys, especially dolls. In the cylindrical plaster sculpture *Psyche and Vanity*, the viewer confronts a skull set into a body made of chicken wire and plaster, and holding three rifles (fig. 161). A broken helmet inscribed with the phrase “Take me to your leader” is topped by a pathetic, nearly destroyed umbrella. On the back, Goodman glued an illustration of the Native American warrior Geronimo grasping a rifle and surrounded by coins, flowers, and other cast-offs found on the street. Next to *Psyche and Vanity* was another sculpture, its title unknown, in which a cascade of objects, including a “severed” glove and a doll hanging by its legs, were hooked onto a rope suspended from the ceiling like a giant charm bracelet. In her writing, Sontag

described the dual effect of being both drawn in and offended by artwork that “converts the serious into the frivolous,” noting how such works emphasize style over substance.⁴⁰ And indeed, Goodman’s assemblage, with its “go for the jugular” message, resided squarely at the surface. His most effective piece in the show, *Chess Set* (fig. 162), delved more deeply: the pawns are replaced by

Fig. 162. Sam Goodman’s *Chess Set*, 1961

Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York





mutilated arms removed from tiny dolls, and the other chess pieces are toy soldiers in various states of decomposition. In this war game, there are clearly no winners.

In his assemblage sculptures, Jean-Jacques Lebel also referenced dismembered bodies, but with greater precision and sensitivity to materials. In one untitled sculpture, he built a figure from a series of wooden boxes, using television parts to create the head (a shimmering face with closed eyes), breasts, painted intestines, and anus. (fig. 163) This work's body-machine interplay recalls Surrealism. Lebel made another untitled sculpture from a partly destroyed dressmaker's male mannequin onto which he splattered paint and attached a codpiece made from a urinal drain cover. Both sculptures deploy anthropomorphic humor, and they are far more lighthearted than Goodman's.

Lurie's contribution to the project is harder to pinpoint because he left for Italy soon after the *Doom Show* opened, to help arrange for a fall 1962 show of the group's work at the Arturo Schwarz Gallery in Milan. Perhaps for this reason, Lurie's work was less prominent in the *Doom Show*. Surviving documentation shows that he contributed a series of smaller paintings, layered with cut-out fragments that are difficult to decipher. These incorporated figural elements, marking a return to the technique used in his Dismemberment series. Indeed the consequences of war, which Lurie experienced firsthand, find their most chilling expression in dismemberment—the fragmented chaos left behind when the body is torn away from the psyche.

While Lurie was abroad, the young art collector Gertrude Stein (no relation to the American writer Gertrude Stein [1874–1946]) visited the *Doom Show*, prompting Goodman to send him an excited note: “[She] was wild about the work, was contemplating opening a gallery uptown.”⁴¹ Upon Lurie's return to New York, he arranged with Stein for the artists, above all Goodman and himself, to direct all her projects featuring their work. Gallery Gertrude Stein was also in a basement space, uptown at 24 East Eighty-first Street. Its first group exhibition opened in October 1963 and was called the *NO! Show*; thereafter, the group became known as *NO!art*.⁴²

Lurie amassed an archive documenting his four-year collaboration with Goodman and Fisher, which ended in 1964, when Lurie's father died and he lost his desire to carry on with the group. Sam Goodman's death three years later proved galvanizing for Lurie, spurring his efforts to preserve *NO!art*'s legacy for posterity. He spent the next decade compiling his and Goodman's

Fig. 163. Jean-Jacques Lebel, *Foursome*, 1961
Assemblage, 47¹/₄ × 18⁷/₈ × 5¹/₈ in. (120 × 48 × 13 cm)
Boris Lurie Art Foundation, New York

archival material for *NO!art: Pin-Ups, Excrement, Protest, Jew-Art*, a documentary history that includes artist statements, critical responses, and artist profiles, which Lurie co-edited with critic Seymour Krim. In his personal archive Lurie saved voluminous letters, to the book's contributors, which are far less strident in tone than his published statements and which reflect on the group's tendency to alienate artists and dealers who were otherwise sympathetic to their politics. The March Gallery / NO!art group has never found its way into standard critical histories of contemporary art.

Commenting after the fact on his use of voyeuristic images of women, which by the late 1960s was generally deemed a sexist practice, Lurie emphasized the participation of women artists in the *Involvement Show* and isolated a theme of fear running through their work. A similar thread was detected in Lurie's work by critic Dore Ashton, who noted his keen sense of "the threatening and transitory aspects of human relations."⁴³ And although Michelle Stuart wrote admiringly in *Artforum* of NO!art's inclusion of women artists in its exhibitions, she noted that women never assumed a leadership role in what was predominantly a male collective.⁴⁴

Stuart more positively endorsed NO!art in arguing that "the March Gallery group is one more example of the continuing need of the artist to re-evaluate and re-define his world, using all conceivable means to remain vital."⁴⁵ Ashton likewise praised the group for serving as the social dissident faction of Tenth Street, raising uncomfortable issues in a form of "political negativism." The March Gallery "became a focal point (for Downtown artists who) watched the political events of the 1950s with increasing discouragement," she wrote.⁴⁶ In their projects, the question of aesthetic value was supplanted by expressions of political dissent.

But this ante could only be upped so far. In Tom Wolfe's 1964 gimlet-eyed profile of the group, he observed, "all the modern-day Babbitts who come around, mainly the art critics and other esthete-intellectuals, as Boris calls them, just keep saying things like that's fine, Sam, that's fine Boris, keep it up, we are with you in this heroic struggle. So all right, said Sam, let them try this on for size."⁴⁷ "This" was the infamous *NO!Sculpture Show* at Gallery Gertrude Stein for which they formed plaster into excrement-like shapes, an exhibition dubbed the "shit show." It marked the group's final statement on art-world consumerism in a time of social crisis.

HALL OF ISSUES AT JUDSON MEMORIAL CHURCH

(December 1961–January 1963)

The March Group's bellicose tenor left plenty of room for other strategies for merging art and politics. Into the breach stepped artist Phyllis Yampolsky, who embraced inclusiveness as the centerpiece of her gallery project, the Hall of Issues, sponsored



Fig. 164. Hall of Issues, Judson Memorial Church, New York, c. 1961
Photograph: Steven Schapiro. Courtesy the photographer

by the Judson Memorial Church between December 1961 and January 1963. Charging an entry fee of twenty-five cents, the Hall of Issues presented work by "anyone who has any statement to make about any social, political or esthetic concern" in displays that changed every Sunday.⁴⁸ Its informal format—materials were taped or pinned to temporary Celotex panels lining the walls in Judson's Long Hall—granted equal value to the weekly dialogues, which took place on Wednesday evenings and brought together artists, community activists, and experts in a variety of fields.⁴⁹ These Wednesday forums resembled the consciousness-raising summits that grew out of the New Left's social activism, with which Judson Church was aligned, but also took what sociologist Daniel Bell has called the apolitical "end of ideology" stance so pervasive among artists downtown.⁵⁰ This dichotomy kept the Hall of Issues approachable, testing art's intersection with local and national concerns without ever becoming truly polemical. Such openness promoted diversity, but lack of a clearly defined political goal kept the project as an art initiative diffuse, fractured, and ultimately uneven.

Yampolsky had moved to New York from Philadelphia in 1956 to study with Hans Hofmann. In 1958, when Hofmann closed his school, she approached galleries directly. "I went up to the galleries whose exhibits appealed to me," she wrote, "and asked them to come see my work."⁵¹ Born of naïveté and chutzpah, her effort paid off: Bud Scott of the Judson Gallery agreed to schedule a "one-man show" of her work in 1960. Though Yampolsky took part in Judson events, she was never integral to the Oldenburg-Dine-Kaprow trio. For one, she was married to Park Place artist Peter Forakis and

starting a family with him. Also, the Judson's urban sensibility did not sync with her aesthetic, which blended sensual subject matter with graphic design. In other words, she was independent, she had confidence, and she sought to lead.

Yampolsky's Hall of Issues project was initiated on July 27, 1961, in a letter to the Reverend Howard Moody, which is halting in tone because her concept was not yet fully formed, but is nonetheless passionate, conveying disillusionment with art's present direction, especially its "crimes against beauty" and rejection of compositional theory.⁵² Yampolsky historicized the shift, likening it to "non-objective painting when paint becomes the subject, and there is little or no importance in form. Now it's reversed—the form *is* art."⁵³ In her view, art had become insular and entirely self-referential, not, as some (especially Kaprow) suggested, more accessible to a broader public. She urged artists to move away from "collage, accident, ready-made, the happening" to what she identified as "a responsibility to the importance of the society you live in."⁵⁴

Included with her letter was an impassioned statement by her friend, the writer Meg Randall, which suggested (prophetically) that the political begins with the personal—that "from a world of personal justice, universal justice is inevitable."⁵⁵ In Yampolsky's own statement, "Against the Inevitable Decline of a Great Nation," she astutely defined the early 1960s as a moment when America's enemy was not a foreign power but America itself. Echoing themes in Norman Mailer's critique of the Kennedy campaign, she dismissed the newly elected president as no more than "a wooer trying to lure the young and passionate to his silken lair." Kennedy's interests were not aligned with civil rights, but rather with "Advertising Agencies (that) are equipped (*sic*) to sell abroad what we are"; before long, Americans would lose their critical faculties and believe the sloganeering.⁵⁶

At the top of Yampolsky's letter, Moody jotted a note to his assistant asking that it be passed along to the ministers, including Al Carmines, who had replaced Bud Scott and was in charge of cultural programming. "Think there is the germ of a good idea here," he commented, and noted that he planned to meet with Yampolsky on return from his vacation. As the church had done for artists at Judson House, they readily offered space, in this case the Long Hall adjacent to the sanctuary, as the program's venue—hence the "Hall" of Issues. The church also put Yampolsky in touch with community groups they were supporting, from good-government organizations to committees on improving downtown parks. Despite her collaboration with activists, however, Yampolsky had no intention of turning the Hall of Issues into an organized platform for social change. Instead, she designed it to capture spontaneous reaction to any topic she deemed relevant. An unsigned notice in the *Village Voice* picked up on the project's tepid politics and declared, "any non-joiner who has anything social,



Fig. 165. Man examining sculpture at the opening of Hall of Issues, Judson Memorial Church, New York, December 3, 1961
Photograph: Steven Schapiro. Courtesy the photographer

political or aesthetic to say on any subject will have a place to say it when the Hall of Issues opens."⁵⁷

That day arrived on December 3, 1961, garnering interest from metro reporters but, significantly, not from the art press. Photographs portray an installation with the random spontaneity of a union-hall bulletin board: drawings covering the Celotex panels like wallpaper; a prosthetic leg discarded next to a cleaning bucket. One simple collage consisted of an alternate news photograph taped to an existing front page of the tabloid *New York Mirror*, while a more elaborate collage nearby was assembled from comics, classifieds, and scraps of other materials. A partly broken sign proclaiming "WAGNER," referring to the mayor's recent re-election, was hastily put together, propped up in a bucket of plaster. One person questioned the participation fee, writing directly onto Yampolsky's Hall of Issues announcement, "WHY ISN'T A THING LIKE THIS FREE?" (fig. 166).

Among the art-luminary contributors was Claes Oldenburg, who made a plaster floor sculpture of a window shade, unrolled and tilted at a 30-degree angle, intended for use as a speaking platform (fig. 167). Sam Goodman presented an artwork titled *Dollar Christ*, and Stanley Fisher installed an assemblage from his series *Christ in a Fall Out Shelter*; both pieces aimed their nihilist provocations at the church. Their March Gallery quasi-collaborator Jean-Jacques Lebel “lugged” a bomb “painted in vivid colors, plastered with photos of young men in muscle magazines and perched on a coffin-like box, open at the front and fitted with a flashing red light.”⁵⁸ Lebel told the *New York Times* that the work “symbolized growing ‘rotteness, decadence and homosexuality’ in a world haunted by the specter of nuclear war,” a stance quite breathtaking in its intolerance of sexual difference at a church where such thinking was abhorrent.⁵⁹ Yampolsky herself contributed one of the more compelling installations, a series of drawings titled *Man as a Historical Environment*.⁶⁰ Her Park Place friends Forrest Myers and Dean Fleming also exhibited—in Fleming’s case, a drawing or painting called *The Studio*.⁶¹

Steady coverage of Hall of Issues programs was due in no small part to Yampolsky’s vigorous promotional campaign, which involved mailing an opening announcement and a truncated version of her statement to 2,500 people, including newspaper, television, and radio reporters.⁶² Much of the press coverage was delivered in a mocking tone, however. Nan Robertson, writing in the *New York Times*, conveyed a sense of the project’s randomness by itemizing objects as she experienced them, in no particular order: “from bomb shelters and birth control to painless eyebrow tweezers, the Twist and the House of Krupp . . . a 100-pound surplus bomb, a rotten apple core, a baby’s shoe, a rubber bathroom plunger, a harmonica, a wooden door and the front page of the

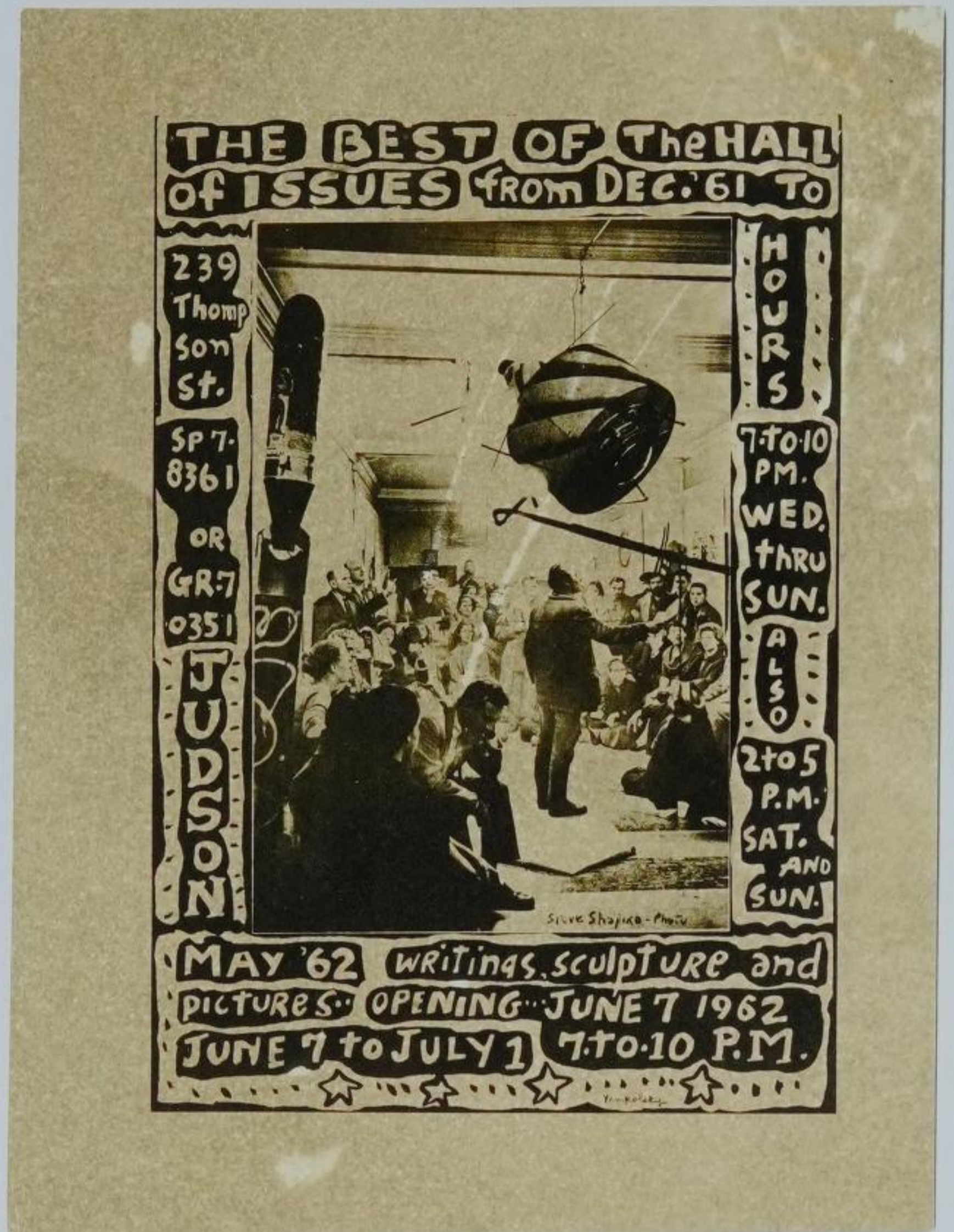
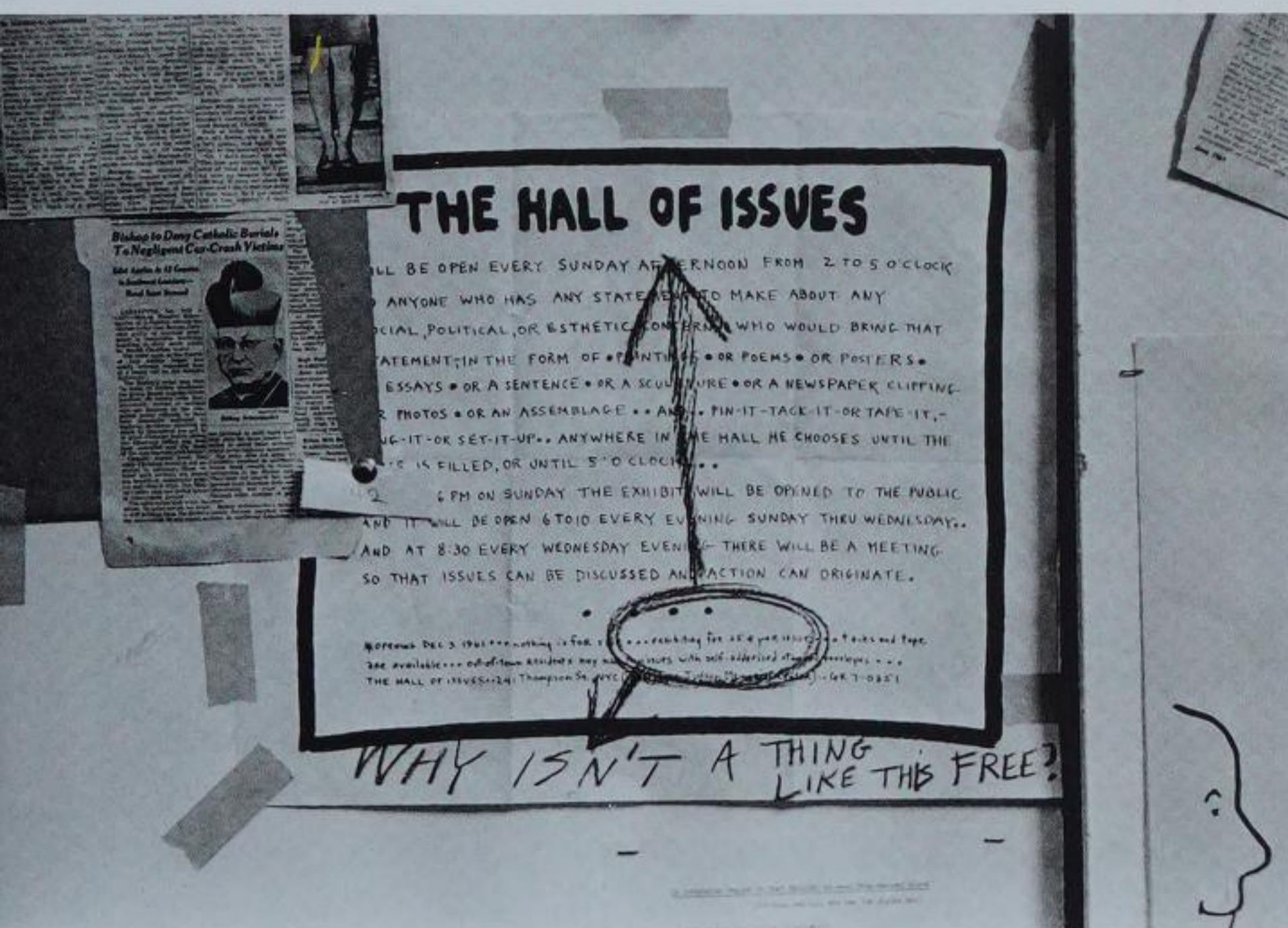


Fig. 167. Phyllis Yampolsky, Announcement for *The Best of the Hall of Issues*, Hall of Issues, Judson Memorial Church, New York, June 7–July 1, 1962

Offset print, 11 × 8½ in. (27.9 × 21.6 cm)

Judson Memorial Church Archive, Fales Library, New York University



New York Mirror.⁶³ And the *Voice* wryly suggested that all was not harmonious among the exhibitors. “A small protest was tacked to one wall objecting to the 25-cent fee for the right to protest charged by the Hall of Issues,” the article noted. “At the same time, Perry Davis, treasurer of Judson Memorial Church . . . eyed the huge exhibit put up by the Committee to Preserve Tompkins Square Park and muttered that space-hogs should be made to pay more than 25 cents.”⁶⁴

The Wednesday-evening programs provided additional fodder for the metro beat. One of the first events featured Edward Koch, a lawyer who, as mayor of New York City, would come to national prominence in the late 1970s. In planning the event, Yampolsky,

Fig. 166. Graffiti on announcement for Hall of Issues, Judson Memorial Church, New York, c. 1961

Photograph: Steven Schapiro. Courtesy the photographer



Fig. 168. Hall of Issues, with Phyllis Yampolsky at right, Judson Memorial Church, New York, 1962

Photograph: Dave Heath. Courtesy Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto, and Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York

Koch, the sculptor Charles Ginnever, and local activist Sandra Fein met at a Greenwich Village restaurant, an occasion considered newsworthy enough to be captured by *Village Voice* photographer Gin Briggs.⁶⁵ Koch took the unusual step of drafting his own letter of agreement to moderate the discussion, eschewing any liability associated with the event.⁶⁶ The media regarded these gatherings with bemused diffidence, likening the discussions to a “way-out’ klatching spot.”⁶⁷

At the programmed events, discussions most often began with statements from the exhibitors. “Time is called for each speaker by each week’s new moderator, who invites the audience to give their views,” wrote Sidney Bernard, the Hall’s most comprehensive chronicler.⁶⁸ Though labels of any sort were disdained, Bernard observed social distinctions (in a phrase borrowed from Isaiah Berlin) as “foxes and hedgehogs.”⁶⁹ The foxes were members of activist organizations, used to grappling with a variety of perspectives, while the hedgehogs, epitomized in the March Group, had a singular, uncompromising idea and “insist upon a one-to-one relationship in all matters” to get to the root of issues. But the artists’ general sensibility escaped Berlin’s categories, boiling down to “petitioning yes, official speeches—no.”⁷⁰

One of the more newsworthy exchanges occurred on an evening in May 1962, which began with a screening of Forakis’s “moving paintings.” The artist fashioned adding-machine tape into a hand-drawn filmstrip and projected it through a hand-cranked movie projector, while “wild, dissonant, sometimes funny background

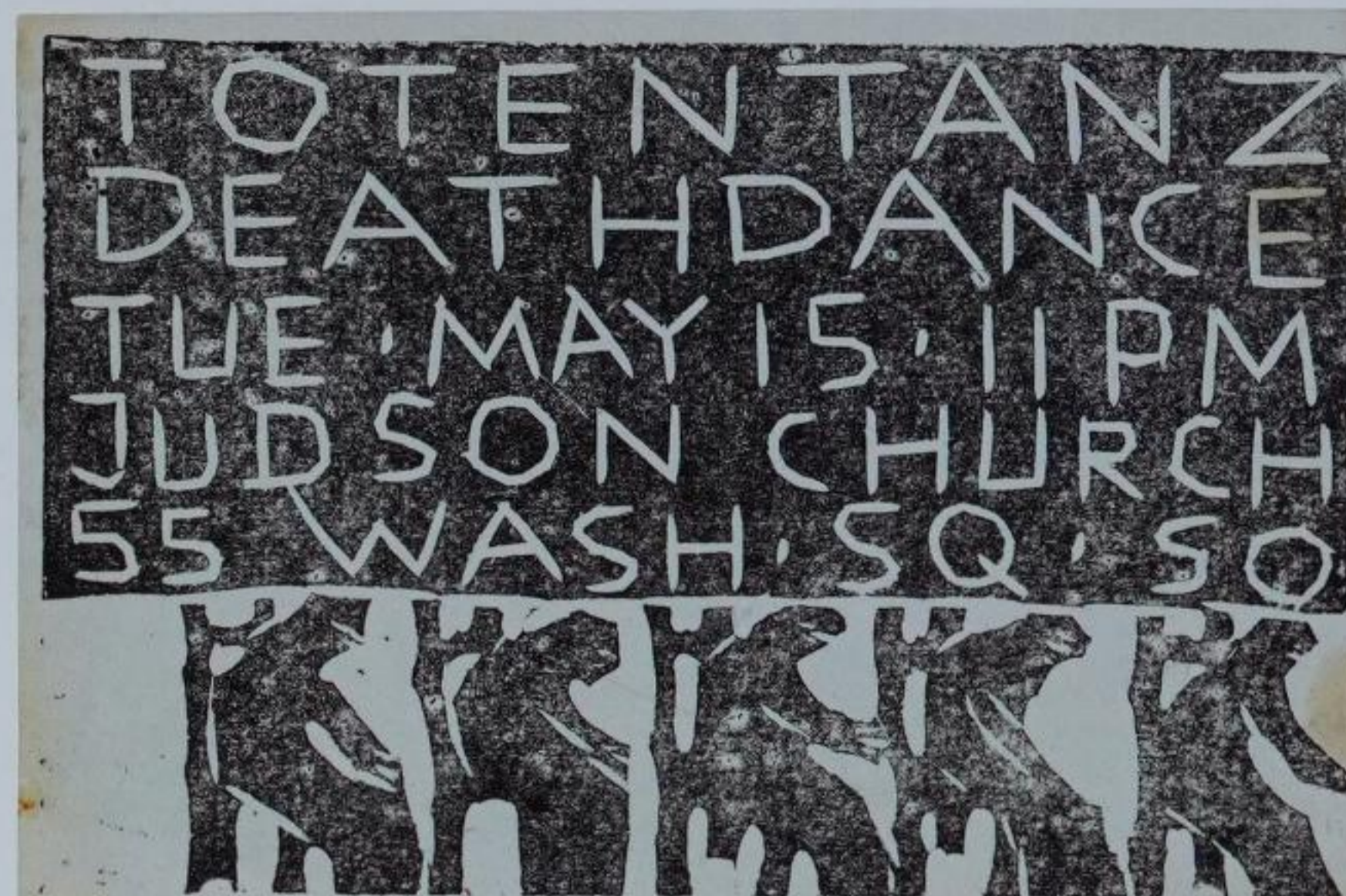


Fig. 169. Peter Schumann, Announcement for Schumann’s *Totentanz*, May 15, 1962
Woodblock print, 6 × 9 in. (15.2 × 22.9 cm)

Courtesy the artist and the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York

music was heard.”⁷¹ Next up was a moderated discussion between Sidney Bernard and Oleg Kalugin—billed as a United Nations Radio representative from the USSR, but later revealed to be a Kremlin spy.⁷² The dialogue began with benign questions. When asked if he preferred life in New York to Moscow, Kalugin chose Moscow, because “East or West, home is the best,” in a facile response that drew groans from the audience and a request to “bring back the movie.”⁷³ Bernard began wading into rougher waters by querying Kalugin on the newly erected Berlin Wall, until a voice broke in: “Can we have the music movie, if you please!” The uproar grew until Miss Yampolsky—the wife of the moviemaker Forakis—said firmly: “Will the movie contingent please leave?” They stamped around and remained.⁷⁴

Unlike the Judson Gallery, which the artists had successfully managed on their own, the Hall of Issues involved a number of the church’s stakeholders, in relationships that were built up over decades and cut across social divides. The dialogues had a free-for-all atmosphere that was gently scrutinized by a church committed to free speech, especially when they disagreed. In a carefully worded memo, Judson officials “discovered it had a larger responsibility than merely providing a place,” as they had done with the gallery, because the Hall of Issues directly overlapped with their ministry. And “if the Hall is to be part of our ministry, we must be personally involved.”⁷⁵

At a church meeting on February 4, 1962, Al Carmines reported to senior ministers and staff on his impressions of the Hall of Issues. Like Sidney Bernard, Carmines identified distinct camps, but his observations were more nuanced, distinguishing between “those who feel art can be used to express some opinion or purpose, and those who say art exists for its own sake; also between those who want to take action against what they see as evils in the

world, and those who feel no action is desirable or possible and simply want to express how they feel." During the Wednesday discussions, conflicts arose from "ego-centric persons who want to dominate the entire Hall and will not allow expression of other viewpoints; and pure perversity." Carmines ended his report on a hopeful note. "The Hall has value for the Church because the Church speaks not only of salvation but also of creation." He himself was the subject of verbal attacks during the meetings, an experience that "furthered his own education" and committed him to "be willing to listen to others."

But taking on an active role in the Hall of Issues, on top of a full schedule of other engagements, was not a sustainable proposition. During the summer of 1962, Yampolsky curated *Best of the Hall of Issues*, a selection of art, film, and music, as well as a repeat performance of Peter Schumann's acclaimed *Totentanz* by the Bread and Puppet Theater (fig. 169). The invitation for *Best of* featured a photograph taken during the first Wednesday-evening forum, which shows a lively crowd surrounding artist Aldo Tambellini speaking atop Claes Oldenburg's floor sculpture (fig. 167).⁷⁶ Ed Koch is visible on the left. In the Hall of Issues, Tambellini found an important precedent for his wide-ranging, community-based multimedia spaces (see "Aldo Tambellini and The Center," below).

The Hall of Issues at the Judson Memorial Church ended in January 1963. The Judson's path toward social justice was more direct than that of the Hall of Issues; the Judson's art program would become radicalized and directly engaged with the anti-war movement under the direction of Jon Hendricks, beginning in 1966. In his 1963 letter to Yampolsky ending the Hall's residence at Judson, Reverend Moody did not mention ideological differences; instead, he alluded to the "difficult aspects to the function of this program and these are always a part of the risk of any such undertaking."⁷⁷ At the same time, he graciously offered Yampolsky "a deep sense of gratitude for the original concept of the Hall of Issues and the time and effort which you have put into it." Artists' reluctance to adhere to a "party platform" would never change entirely, though for a brief period the Downtown community would embrace counterculture protests in the late 1960s, during the creative explosion of New Left ideology. Yampolsky went on to use what she had learned in directing the Hall of Issues to organize similar efforts, continuing to develop her vision of a forum for social exchange.⁷⁸

ALDO TAMBELLINI AND THE CENTER (1962–65)

While the March Gallery and the Hall of Issues both made space for dystopian worldviews circumscribed by nuclear deterrence policies, Aldo Tambellini (b. 1930) saw in the atomic age the potential for utopia. Tambellini was born in Syracuse, New York, spent formative years in Lucca, in the Tuscan region of Italy, and then returned to



Fig. 170 Lower East Side, c. 1960
Photograph: Charles Pratt. Estate of Charles Pratt

Syracuse after World War II.⁷⁹ Arriving in New York City in 1959, Tambellini settled on the Lower East Side. Like Oldenburg and Dine, Tambellini was entranced by the Lower East Side, struck by the way massive, federally financed housing projects were clearing city blocks to make way for new apartment complexes in a wave of urban renewal. But before the new housing was built, piles of bricks from demolished buildings littered the area, especially near Tambellini's storefront studio at 217 East Second Street:

Past Delancey Street, in the Jewish neighborhood, they were tearing down block after block. It looked like

a bombed out area from World War II. I vividly remember a dismembered wall remaining standing from an old synagogue with a big mural of the Lion of Judah. In the rubble is where I found the inspiration for what became a rapid succession of my new development in sculpture.⁸⁰

Working in his building's backyard, and selecting objects from the debris surrounding demolished buildings—he especially favored discarded washbasins, pipes, and joists—Tambellini cast them into concave forms using Hydrocal plaster. While a mold was hardening, he added nails, shards, piping, and beer cans, resulting in sculptures that were part testament to the neighborhood, part fossilized relics. Inside his studio (where he also lived), Tambellini made hundreds of drawings, all circular forms in black Duco paint (fig. 171). He sometimes burned wood with a blowtorch, blackening the ends to make dark, rich charcoal. Black became



Fig. 172. Aldo Tambellini with neighborhood children and one of his sculptures, New York, c. 1962

Aldo Tambellini Archive, Salem, Massachusetts

central to Tambellini's art and would later dominate the still and moving images he produced, as would circles and spirals. The series was inspired by cosmic rays—swirls of light emitted from outside our solar system—that he had observed in the physics lab at Syracuse University.⁸¹

Tambellini treated his studio as a community space, inviting his neighbors inside. Taking advantage of the storefront window, he installed sculptural tableaux. "I had several skulls and bones from cows and hung them . . . together with one of the early sculptures which was coated in black tar. I lit the whole thing with candles," he remembered.⁸² The installation alluded to ritual, and the Puerto Ricans living nearby called Tambellini the *brujo*, or witch. Local youth would bring him objects to cast and help him arrange sculptures in the building's courtyard. In 1960 or 1961, working with neighborhood helpers, Tambellini fenced in a recently cleared lot, adjacent to his backyard space, which extended to East Houston Street, a half-block south of his storefront. There he fashioned an outdoor sculpture park entirely

Fig. 171. Aldo Tambellini in his studio, New York, c. 1963

Photograph: Don Snyder. Aldo Tambellini Archive, Salem, Massachusetts

from his cast works. Photographs show young children sitting among the sculptures, with Tambellini's slight figure crouched nearby (fig. 172). This impromptu park resonated with local Puerto Rican youths, in a bond that deepened as Tambellini worked on his Spanish.

Tambellini's fascination with space, combined with his interest in Marshall McLuhan's theories of electronic media,⁸³ prompted him, in 1962, to create a new series using glass slides of his work. He altered the images by scratching, burning, and adding paint to their two-inch-square surfaces. From the roof of a building on East Sixth Street and Avenue D, he projected these slides onto the facing buildings.⁸⁴ Black was the predominant color in his projections, despite lighter areas where scratches in the emulsion produced spiral, "solar" images.⁸⁵ He called the slides "Lumagrams," or photograms referencing "lunar" and "luminous" refracted light (fig. 173).

Tambellini's combination of the temporal and the electronic—a genre he christened Electromedia—was a breakthrough. Significantly, although the projection was a live event, its meaning and aesthetic goals had nothing to do with performance. "The Happening was more like a theatrical kind of idea," Tambellini explained, "and what I was involved in was another theatrical idea, bringing poetry, sound, film into a time and space reorientation. . . . It was visual media."⁸⁶ In these works, paint was mediated by the electronic, complementing McLuhan's idea of the extended body plugged into a man-made environment. In his pursuit of art as a social experience, Tambellini occupied the forefront of "inter-media" art.

As his outdoor sculpture park began receiving wider attention, even from art-world notables such as Henry Geldzahler at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and *Arts* critic Sidney Tillim, Tambellini became increasingly critical of the art world and of the careerism found in co-op galleries, a system he now deemed irreconcilable with his goals. He was invited to join the Brata Gallery after it moved to 56 Third Avenue in late fall 1960, and he even had a one-man show there in November 1962, titled *Black and White*. But by late 1962 Tambellini was convinced that the Tenth Street co-ops should hold themselves distinct from the commercial sector. He reflected, "none of the co-op galleries had the kind of feeling [of] cooperation, mutual aid. . . . The galleries ran pretty clean-cut business models. The artist presented his work and a request for membership. The gallery accepted him as a member or rejected him and from the dues paid by the artist, the artist had a right to participate in group shows and have a solo show once a year."⁸⁷ Tambellini objected to the co-ops' transactional activities. In November 1961, writing of an encounter with Tambellini a year before his Brata show, a reporter for the *New York Herald Tribune* characterized the artist as "violent," but later in the article



Fig. 173. Aldo Tambellini, *Lumagram*, c. 1962
Acrylic on glass, 2 × 2 in. (5.1 × 5.1 cm)
Aldo Tambellini Archive, Salem, Massachusetts

elucidated his clashing values. "The tension, the anxieties, build up to an enormous pitch," Tambellini is quoted as saying. "I am paying the price that I am unrecognized. I feel terribly lonely. I never go to cocktail parties or play artistic politics. I get so violent because I do not respect these people—the galleries and collectors."⁸⁸

Gradually, Tambellini navigated a path from studio to backyard to commandeered land to, finally, neighborhood slide projections. The term "public art" was never used to describe his various endeavors. In the early 1960s public art was still associated with the federally sponsored art projects of the 1930s—especially the WPA murals adorning post offices, courthouses, and hospitals—and antipathy lingered about the nationalism at their core. Public art's subject matter was perceived to be dictated by a project's financial sponsors, and to be compromised by the sponsor's ideology. "Anyone who speaks of using art to further any local, municipal, national, or international relations is out of his mind," Ad Reinhardt (1913–1967) wrote in 1962, a testy rejoinder to the growing interest in reviving art for the public sector under the New Frontier policies of the Kennedy administration.⁸⁹ Reinhardt did not have the final word on the subject of public art in the early 1960s, however. Tambellini's passion for organizing, his belief in art's efficacy outside the art community, and his interest in complementary efforts among poets and performers fueled the formation, in 1962–63, of The Center—a new type of artist-run organization driven

not only by commitment to social activism but also by the artist's personal aesthetic impulses.

CENTERS AND PERIPHERIES

Tambellini had grown up surrounded by public art: literally tens of thousands of religious paintings, sculptures, and stained-glass windows in Tuscany, including those found in the one hundred churches in Lucca, his hometown. His senior thesis at Syracuse University, "The Church as Integration with the Arts," explored church projects by modern artists in postwar France, notably Matisse, Rouault, and Léger. The ideas developed in Tambellini's thesis helped inform his plans for The Center.⁹⁰

Critic David Bourdon noted that while The Center "attracts a loosely knit band of artists in various fields, the group has only three fulltime members and no real center except the corpus of Aldo Tambellini."⁹¹ And indeed, although other artists would collaborate with him, none of them had his vision or visual acuity; Tambellini was definitely the driving force. As key instigator and theorist, he made situating art in churches the goal.⁹² In Tambellini's view, churches had the power to both bolster the Downtown artist community and enable artists to form an alliance with the surrounding non-artist population. He enlisted his wife, Elsa, as his administrative partner and held discussions with poets and neighborhood friends to redefine art as a form of community building, a concept that had only recently been recognized as legitimate. Core collaborators included the sculptors Jackie Cassen, Ron Hahn, and Peter Martinez, the photographer Don Snyder (1934–2010), and the young painter Ben Morea (b. 1941), just out of high school.⁹³ The group's statement of purpose read, in part:

Our common bond is not an aesthetic creed but the recognition that the artist in our society, no matter what his particular field, has similar problems. In a commercial system dependent upon a constantly expanding market, the contribution, the message and the integrity of the creative individual is destroyed. We therefore propose a non-commercial forum which would present the artist and his work.⁹⁴

In addition to visual art, Tambellini was interested in poetry. In the early 1960s, a poet friend of his from Syracuse University, Tom Dent (b. 1932), moved across the street from his East Second Street studio. Dent's apartment became a meeting place for black poets living on the Lower East Side, and it was where the journal *Umbra* (the darkest, innermost part of a shadow) was launched. This journal became an important forum for the nascent Black Arts movement.⁹⁵ *Umbra* poets presented readings, including events in Tambellini's sculpture garden, which asserted the black experience

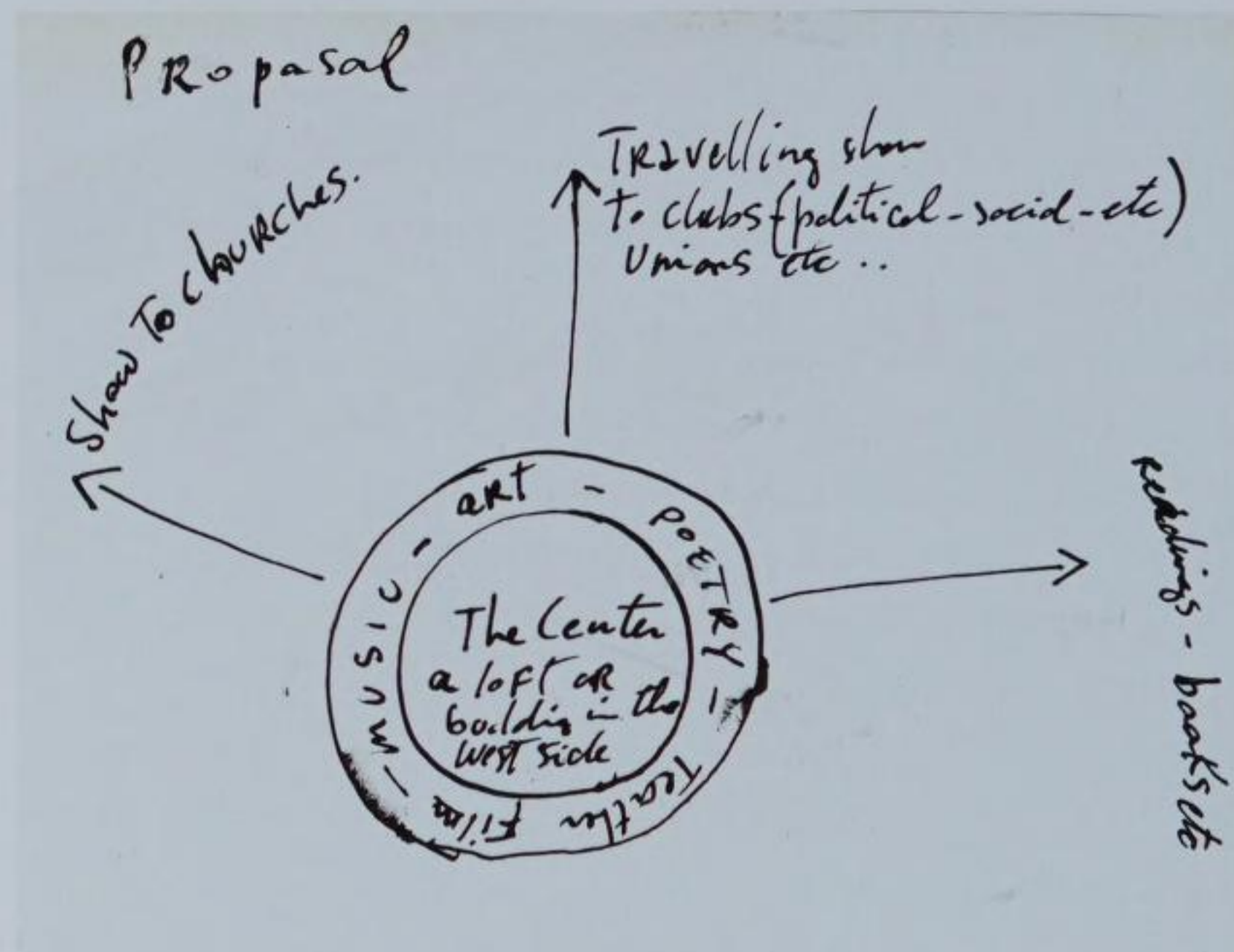


Fig. 174. Aldo Tambellini, *Proposal (Chart for The Center)*, c. 1962
Aldo Tambellini Archive, Salem, Massachusetts

in an otherwise white-dominated art form. As Tambellini aimed to do with his art, Lorenzo Thomas sought to embed his poetry in daily life. "The idea was that poetry was something that we lived with every day, and there was nothing esoteric about it—it was living art. We thought we were continuing the great tradition of poetry that informs African American poetry as a living language."⁹⁶ Making poetry relevant to a larger audience overlapped with the Tambellinis' approach to democratizing art, and the *Umbra* poets were heretofore included in most of The Center's programs.

The Center's initial strategy, to engage churches in cultural activities, called for them to host ongoing exhibitions along with lectures and demonstrations by artists. "In return we ask that each church give some sort of financial assistance depending on the situation of its own parish. The monies from this will be put into a fund to be distributed to those artists who have the most economic need."⁹⁷ To symbolize The Center's purpose, Tambellini quickly sketched a diagram of two concentric circles and wrote in the middle, "The Center. A loft or building on the west side," by which he meant the less expensive, industrial part of Greenwich Village (fig. 174).⁹⁸ Surrounding that core idea are the arts: visual art, poetry, theater, film, and music. Three arrows lead away from the circle toward exchange with the public: churches, traveling shows for clubs (unions, social, political), and readings at bookstores.

Tambellini's diagram embraces the arts and, at the same time, directs creativity away from the art system. And his tactic of collaborating with churches suggests that he felt that The Center would benefit from the public trust accorded to a house of worship. However, the language he used to describe the group's purpose is still invested with artistic concerns and presumes a working-

class community's level of interest. One of the group's typical statements reads, "The artists of THE CENTER will organize a series of exhibitions to be held in each church and will volunteer to give informal lectures and discussions on the nature of art being represented and the situation of the young artist, (and offer) (ex.) printmaking demonstrations."⁹⁹ Such language implies a one-way relationship, a stance that would become increasingly problematic as site-specific art gained momentum and drew communities into dialogue with artists, particularly during the 1990s.¹⁰⁰ But in 1963, such one-way discussion was seen as a legitimate starting point.¹⁰¹

It is not clear how many churches The Center solicited, but one church did take an interest: the Episcopal St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery, then under the new leadership of the Reverend J. C. Michael Allen, a former editor of *Look* magazine. The Center began planning an exhibition to be held in and on the grounds of the church. They also arranged co-sponsorship by the social service agency the Lower East Side Neighborhood Association (LENA), a partnership that brought a non-art network to their efforts.¹⁰² Organizations such as LENA did not see the Lower East Side as a cultural mecca, but rather as a place mired in social challenges, such as gang violence and drug addiction. Clearly LENA found Tambellini's proposition enticing in an area teeming with underserved youth. Reflecting on his desire to use art for community outreach, Tambellini wrote of his "social idea to not be a gallery, but to bring our creations directly to the neighborhood, to be part of the neighborhood."¹⁰³

The first programs produced by The Center at St. Mark's Church took place in June 1963: a small exhibition of paintings and a two-week "LENA Festival" featuring outdoor jazz concerts, poetry readings, and film screenings.¹⁰⁴ The inviting open-air atmosphere and partnership with locally known LENA generated high attendance. While a report in the *New York Post* noted the painting show inside the church, it emphasized the vibrancy of the evening performing-arts programs, crediting LENA director Martin Livenstein for helping to make the event a success. For his part, Tambellini felt the project legitimized the Lower East Side artists as a community that was there to stay: "The time has come . . . for the exposure of the work of a great many creative people. We knew this was the area, the place where the underground is moving and breathing."¹⁰⁵

Positive response to the LENA Festival led to a second, much larger event. On October 11, 1963, the *Sculpture and Drawing Show* opened inside the church and on its grounds (fig. 175). The organizers' approach was simple: bring together all the artists in the neighborhood, regardless of aesthetic approach, to share their works with anyone in the area. "I think initially in the sculpture show we had about fifteen or sixteen people, and we ended up having over forty artists," Tambellini remembered. "People kept on coming and bringing a sculpture, some of them not from the Lower East Side!

SCULPTURE & DRAWING SHOW

opening OCT. 11 8-10 p.m.

RICHARD STANKEWICZ PHILLIP PAVIA
 GEORGE SPAVENTA PETER AGOSTINI
 MARY FRANK ALDO TAMBELLINI
 RUBEN KADISH ERNEST MARCIANO
 MARK DI SUVERO JACKIE CASSEN
 TOSHIO ODATE KENNETH CAMPBELL
 ARNOLD PRINCE JOEL KRAUSE
 KEN KADISH JOHN HOFFER
 JAMES KLEEGER MIKE KIRBY
 SAL BARONE HANS HOKANSON
 BENN MOREA TOM DOYLE

ST. MARK'S IN THE BOUWERIE 2nd AVE. at 10th ST / OCT. 11 - NOV. 10

Fig. 175. Announcement for *Sculpture and Drawing Show*, 1963

Offset print, 11 × 8½ in. (27.9 × 21.6 cm)

Aldo Tambellini Archive, Salem, Massachusetts

It became quite a sensation, it was a big, big show."¹⁰⁶ Among the exhibitors were sculptors Peter Agostini, Louise Bourgeois, Tom Doyle, Mary Frank, Mark di Suvero, Philip Pavia, Raymond Rocklin, George Spaventa, and Richard Stankiewicz. Tambellini contributed a sculpture, and the young artists affiliated with The Center also participated. It was the largest outdoor exhibition of contemporary sculpture in New York City to date, a watershed event. But installing the works outdoors had less to do with site-specificity than accessibility. St. Mark's, at the corner of Second Avenue and Tenth Street, held the only park area along a fourteen-block stretch that included very little green space (fig. 176). With the LENA Festival, the community gained ready access to their artist-neighbors' efforts.

The Center tried to generate interest for the show among college groups by sending a solicitation letter to more than twenty instructors and heads of art departments across New York City. Art teachers were invited to use the installation as a platform



Fig. 176. Aldo Tambellini at the *Sculpture and Drawing Show*, grounds of St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery, New York, 1963
 Photograph: Don Snyder. Aldo Tambellini Archive, Salem, Massachusetts

for training. "We believe that this show has a high education value because of the many directions represented," the exhibition committee wrote. "The pieces were selected with a particular interest for the many media employed, i.e. polyester, fibre glass (*sic*), bronze and lead casting, wood construction, combines and assemblages, direct carving from stone, as well as good examples of environmental sculpture, sculpture related to motion and sculpture related to playgrounds."¹⁰⁷ The Center even offered to extend exhibition hours past 5:00 p.m. to accommodate evening classes at schools.¹⁰⁸

Curiously, given his stance on public art, The Center hosted a lecture by Ad Reinhardt, "The New Revolution in Art," on October 18, 1963, likely a prelude to his 1964 published tract "The Next Revolution in Art (Art-as-Art Dogma, Part II)."¹⁰⁹ Reinhardt's ideas were severe, even hostile, toward New York's early 1960s contemporary-art scene, and in him, Tambellini found an articulate elder statesman who similarly yearned to see commercial values in art demolished. Reinhardt dolefully outlined how collectors had infiltrated art and the museum "to support and promote a vulgar, postexpressionist, postsurrealist, 'pop abstraction,' for capitalist gain, and he predicted forthcoming cultural revolutions that would lead to the disappearance of dealers, the art market, Happenings, the New York School, the schooled artist, and interdisciplinary art. "Art's nature fixes a boundary that separates it from everything else. Anything cannot be art," Reinhardt argued, a rarefied position that ran counter to the general direction of 1960s art.

For his part, Tambellini also probed the perpetual conflict in the duality of destruction and creation. The overlap between his ideas and Reinhardt's ended there, however. Achieving purity in art—the so-called art-as-art dogma—was never Tambellini's goal, nor that of The Center. If anything, he saw art's salvation in its incorporation of other art forms. The poetry and music festivals were one example; radical ideas emanating from theater were another. In 1963 The Center invited the Living Theatre's Julian Beck and Judith Malina to speak at another space, a former synagogue, they had secured on Forsythe Street. Beck and Malina's topic, "Revolution as an Alternative," was scheduled for March 10. To promote this forum, the Tambellinis wheat-pasted flyers around the neighborhood which were promptly torn down—perhaps, as Tambellini suspected, because they included the word "revolution."¹¹⁰ Undeterred, if not chilled, by the undertones of censorship, the couple reprinted and posted the flyers again the following night.

In 1964 the Tambellinis moved to 416 West Broadway, in what was then called the South Village and is now known as SoHo. Under the name "Centrefugues," they enlisted their close collaborators Jackie Cassen, Jeriann Hilderlay, Eileen La Rue, and Peter Martinez to host open exhibitions and events in their lofts, also located in SoHo, over the weekend of March 6–8, 1964. And as he had done on the Lower East Side, here too Tambellini sought the partnership of the non-art sector, this time from politically minded groups such as the well-organized Italian American social clubs in Greenwich Village. "For too long there has been a break-down in relations between the creative man and the politician," Tambellini described in a letter, setting the proverbial stage for interaction. "It has become so clear that with my Italian heritage and education, I could form the bridge between the creative potential and the Italian Americans."¹¹¹ While no response to Tambellini's optimistic overture survives, his efforts did seem to generate broad interest in the open-loft weekend—from metro reporters and uptown cultural tour groups, but not the art press.

In January 1965 Tambellini organized a forum whose discussion points included the artist's responsibility and commitment to one's self and to the world; the meaning of participation; the notion of the "anti-Beat," a response to the Beat movement's facile popularization (an attitude supported by the participating poets, particularly Jack Micheline and Allen Ginsberg); and the "boiling point" for ideas and philosophies. Another theme put forward but not discussed was the duality of the scientist and the artist.¹¹² The Center's concerns were clearly transitioning away from neighborhood-mindedness toward a greater concern with the state of the arts. Indeed, the event's agenda included finding a permanent space where The Center could hold gatherings promoting its cause.

Beginning in late 1964, the Bridge Theater on St. Mark's Place proved hospitable to The Center's events, particularly those featuring Aldo Tambellini's growing interest in film and media. But when the theater burned down in 1965, the Tambellinis elected to end their nomadic organization. They acquired the Gate Theater, on Second Avenue near Tenth Street, where Tambellini continued to experiment with electronic media until 1976, when he left New York to become one of the first artist-fellows under artist Otto Piene at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.¹¹³

Today, Aldo Tambellini's work of the early 1960s is often presented solely as a quest to merge technology and visual art, but his larger aim was to determine humankind's relationship to the "huge black forms out there," and to examine how new technologies, rather than proving alienating to man, could "take hold and give life."¹¹⁴ Tambellini's framework proposed a "social-spatial" concept, one that explored how "space-era problems (could be) solved in terms of actual inventions, what man is creating."¹¹⁵ In other words, his aesthetic concepts were, above all, both inclusive and utopian.

Tambellini's use of black in his work is especially noteworthy, as he acknowledged its symbolism beyond the aesthetic sphere (fig. 177). "Blackness is the beginning of the re-sensitizing of human beings," he wrote in his autobiography. "I strongly believe in the word(s) 'black power' as a powerful message, for it destroys the old notion of Western man, and by destroying that notion it also destroys the tradition of the art concept."¹¹⁶ Tambellini's frequent declarations of this belief prompted a 1965 invitation to speak at the New School with the black artist collective the Spiral Group, a name inspired, like Tambellini's own efforts, by the latent power of untapped energy.

SPIRAL GROUP (1963–65)

If you don't like it, what you gonna do about it. That was the question we asked each

other, &

still right regularly need to ask. You don't like it? Whatcha gonna do, about it??

—Amiri Baraka, "A New Reality Is Better Than a New Movie!"¹¹⁷

Fig. 178. Reginald Gammon, *Freedom Now*, 1964

Acrylic on canvas, 41⁵/₈ × 37¹/₂ × 1³/₄ in. (105.7 × 95.3 × 4.4 cm)

National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, Wilberforce, Ohio

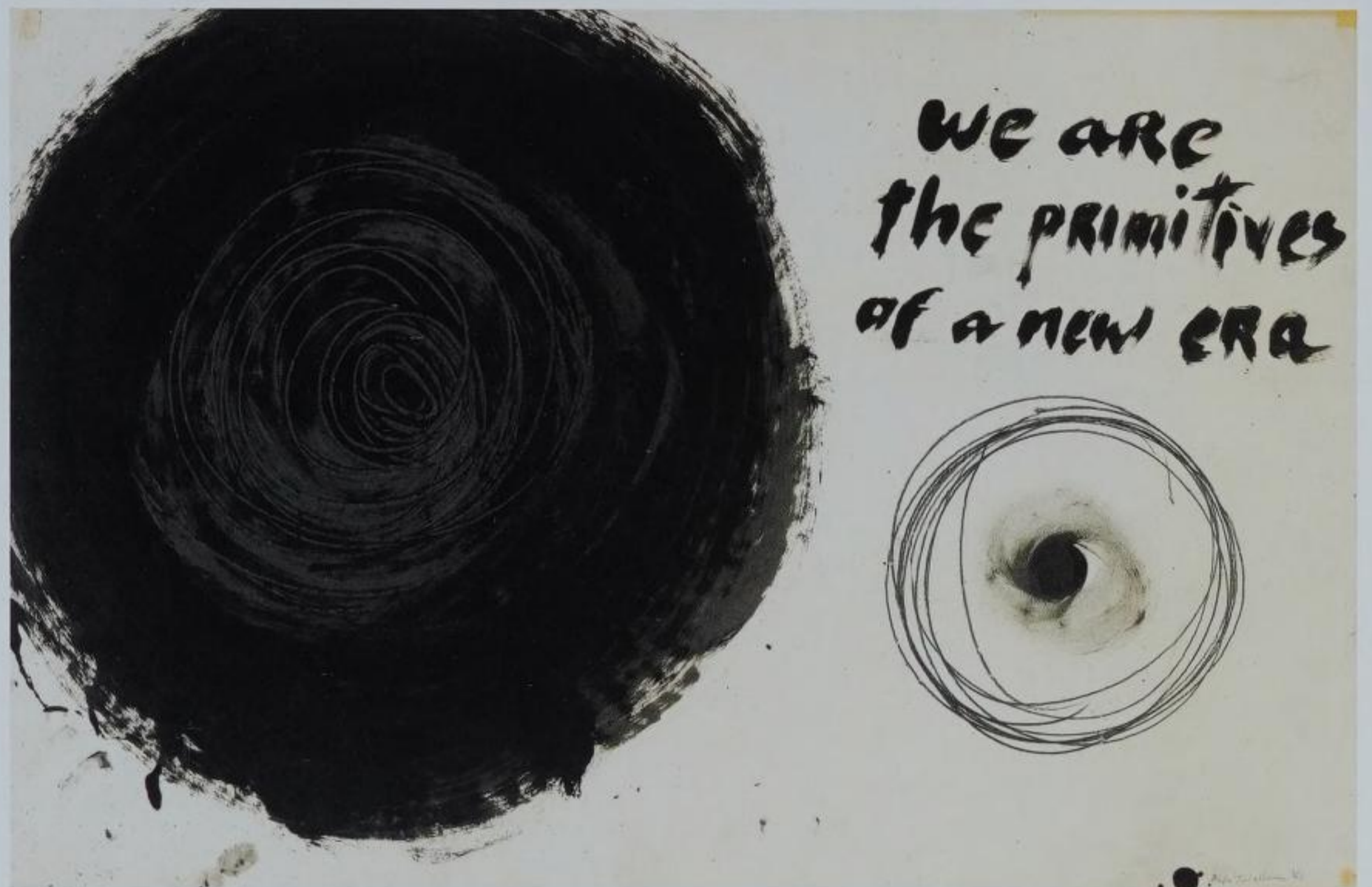


Fig. 177. Aldo Tambellini, *We Are the Primitives of a New Era*, from the Manifesto series, c. 1961

Duco, acrylic, and graphite on paper, 25 × 30 in. (63.5 × 76.2 cm)

Aldo Tambellini Archive, Salem, Massachusetts





Fig. 179. Hale Woodruff, *Blue Intrusion*, 1958
Oil on canvas, 70 × 40 in. (177.8 × 101.6 cm)
Grey Art Gallery, New York University Art Collection. Anonymous gift, 1958.35

Poetry was integral to the creative life of the Lower East Side, where the main venues for readings in the early 1960s were Le Metro, on Second Avenue between Ninth and Tenth streets, and Les Deux Mégots, on East Seventh Street. The informality of the café setting transformed Downtown poetry from a solitary endeavor to a performative art. Challenging the prevailing, predominantly white aesthetic was an influential group of black poets, who descended on the two cafés in what Lorenzo Thomas, a member of the Umbra group, recalled as a deliberate strategy, devised in fellow-poet Tom Dent's apartment, to "hijack the readings at Le Metro and blow them all away." Thomas and his cohorts rejected the public's tendency to single out successive black writers as "representative of 'the black writer,'" and they tried to counteract such tokenism by arriving en masse, as many as eight or ten, per reading.¹¹⁸ The Umbra poets asserted themselves into the Downtown scene between 1962 and 1965, at the cusp of the Black Power movement, without waiting to be invited by whites. As the poem by Amiri Baraka (1934–2014) declares, everyone dissatisfied with society had a responsibility to do something about it.

The Umbra poets' tactics were part of a broader realignment in the civil rights struggle. Before Kennedy's assassination, in November 1963, nonviolence was generally deemed the best strategy to end segregation. But police forces' repressive "Gestapo tactics" against African Americans during the eight-year campaign to end segregation in the South had frayed patience and lent momentum to militant assaults against the status quo. One sign of change can be found in the rhetoric. As perceptive about language as he was about race, Malcolm X rejected the term "Negro" in favor of "black," and in 1964, he introduced "Afro-American" into the lexicon.¹¹⁹ Liberation, he argued, lies in part in linguistics.

Unlike the black poets and activists who chose to confront racial bias directly, African American artists did not aim to upend the gallery structure during the early 1960s. In visual art, there remained a strong belief in the autonomy of the object and the universality of art, two central ideas driving modernist theory. To incorporate race into aesthetics, to ask whether there was an essentially "black" art, was seen as

contentious. Before the Black Arts movement, which arose in 1965, the use of race as a subject, some argued, meant that the resulting works would be condemned as sociological, not aesthetic. But could artists remain dispassionate, separate from the tumultuous events of the early 1960s, especially if they were African American? Could modernism incorporate politics? And did African American artists place themselves at an even greater disadvantage in the art world if they too closely identified themselves and their work with race? Such concerns lay at the heart of the Spiral Group, a coalition of some fifteen artists who met between the summer of 1963 and the fall of 1966. This group represented the only effort by visual artists to self-consciously align with the civil rights movement before 1965.

Hale Woodruff (1900–1980), a founder of the group, selected the spiral as their symbol. He favored the Archimedean spiral because, in the words of another founder, Romare Bearden (1911–1988), “it moves outward and upwards, symbolically embracing all peoples, yet moving them toward a higher level of achievement and comprehension.”¹²⁰ The Spiral Group formed just prior to the August 1963 March on Washington, the largest protest event in the history of the United States. According to member Richard Mayhew (b. 1924), their coming together was precipitated by labor organizer A. Philip Randolph, a coordinator of the march, who asked Bearden and Woodruff whether black artists would like to have a presence *as artists* at the protest. Bearden and Woodruff were veterans of the Depression-era Harlem Arts Guild,¹²¹ and though Randolph’s notion of having artists march as a group was not realized, it did spark a formal dialogue about the extent of artists’ responsibility to the civil rights movement.¹²² In addition to Woodruff and Bearden, Charles Alston (1907–1977), Norman Lewis (1909–1979), Felrath Hines (1913–1993), and James Yeargans (1908–1972) began to meet in Bearden’s loft on Canal Street through the summer of 1963. At some point, younger artists who had not yet begun to exhibit in New York were invited to attend—Emma Amos (b. 1938), Calvin Douglass (b. 1931), Reginald Gammon, Jr. (1921–2005), Alvin Hollingsworth (1928–2000), Mayhew, and Merton D. Simpson (1928–2013), who was also a dealer of African art, among others.¹²³

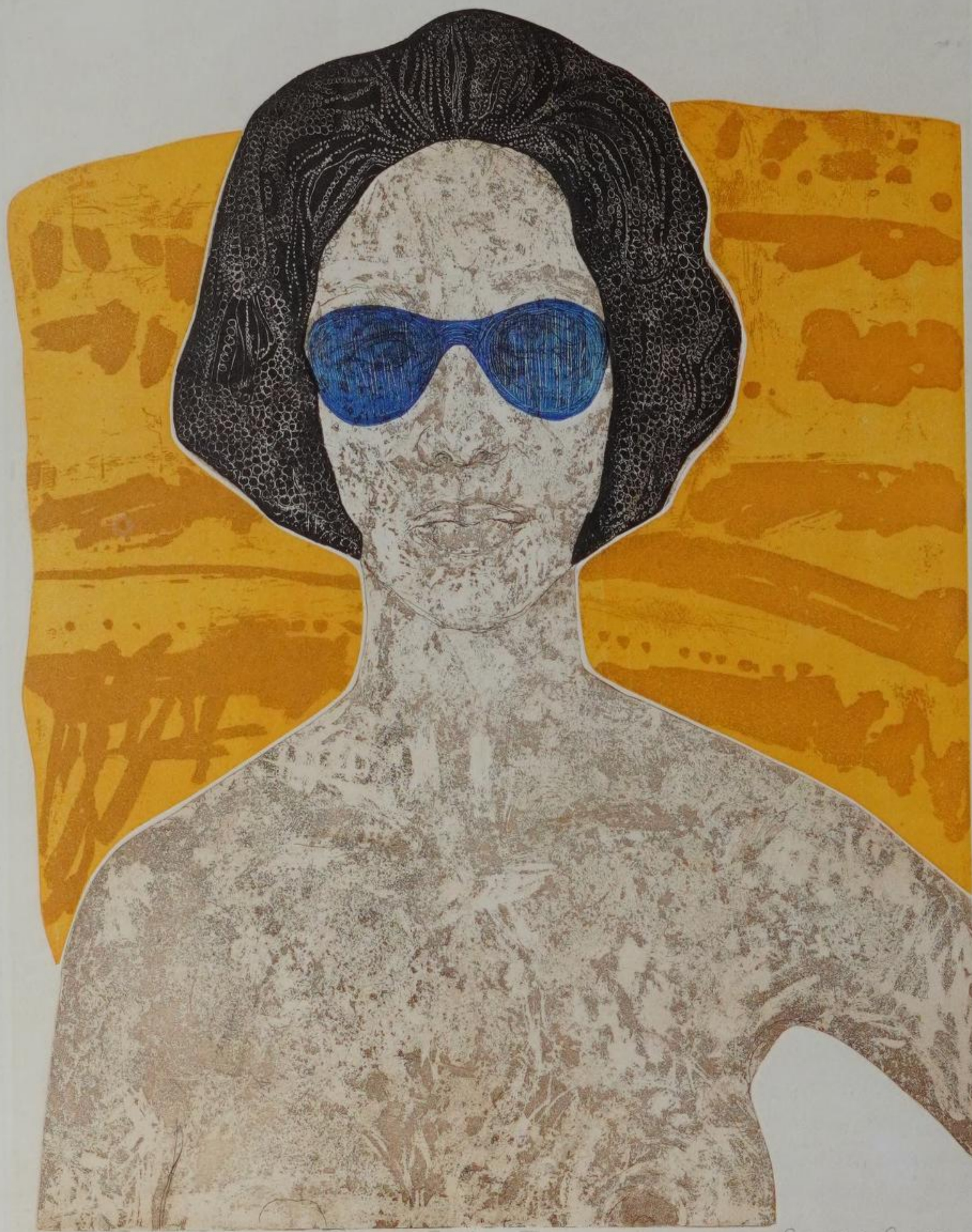
The first authoritative feature on the Spiral Group, Jeanne Siegel’s report on a roundtable discussion among fourteen of its members, appeared in *Art News* in 1966. While acknowledging individual artists’ agency in determining their participation in and definition of the group, her foremost question was about Spiral as a collective entity, specifically, What should be their attitudes and commitments as Negro artists toward the present struggle for civil rights?¹²⁴ Scholarship has revealed the Spiral Group to be more fractious and less cohesive, and with fewer mutual goals, than had often been assumed. As Courtney Martin’s 2011 research demonstrates, “Spiral provides a lasting glimpse into

the collective frustrations of black American artists in the late twentieth century.”¹²⁵ In fact, reaching agreement to produce even one exhibition was laborious due to members’ ambivalence toward merging aesthetics with racial identity. The group worked slowly, even fitfully, taking two years to establish consensus before their single group show.

The Spiral Group’s lack of an exhibition program sets it in marked contrast to the other artist-run galleries examined in *Inventing Downtown*. This lacuna is especially surprising in light of the fact that members pooled their resources to rent a storefront for \$95 per month at 147 Christopher Street, a space they maintained until 1966. This location, on the far west side of Greenwich Village, at a significant distance from Tenth Street, no doubt contributed to the group’s separation from the Downtown scene. In contrast with other artist-run efforts of the era, the Spiral Group was led by artists in their fifties and sixties, of the same generation as the abstract painters who for the most part held themselves apart from the artist communities under discussion here.

Exploring issues confronted by the group during the two-year process of producing their exhibition brings to light the tensions surrounding the issue of race—some aesthetic, some generational—among New York’s non-white artists. First among these is the exclusion from the group of certain notable black artists, among them Ed Clark, Emilio Cruz, and Bob Thompson. The theme of race runs through Thompson’s work, making him an especially peculiar omission. Hollingsworth voiced his feeling that the group “blackballed” certain African American artists, but did not elaborate further.¹²⁶ Amos, another of the younger artists involved in Spiral, and the only woman, provides a clue as to the membership criteria: “Why would [they] invite a twenty-two-year-old girl to join a group like that? I was not threatening to them, or so they thought.”¹²⁷ In contrast, many of the African American artists already active downtown were past being mentored, with fully mature art and self-produced exhibitions to their names. (Thompson had begun to show with Martha Jackson, and Cruz with Virginia Zabriskie.) Their independence from older artists like Woodruff and Bearden challenged the authority of Spiral’s leadership.¹²⁸ Bearden admitted that he observed askance the Downtown scene and was wary about art’s direction: “The artistic expression of this culture concentrates on themes of ‘absurdity’ and ‘anti-art’ which provide further evidence of its ill health.”¹²⁹ Spiral had another mission, one that has received far less attention in the literature on the group: to realign artmaking with modernist principles. This effort united participating artists but did not hold much sway downtown.

What did racially based modern art look like? “I feel that Franz Kline in his paintings with large contrasts of black against white, and Ad Reinhardt in his all-black painting might represent something more Negroid than work done by Negro painters,”



4/30 1965

Without Feather Boa

Emma Amos

Fig. 180. Emma Amos, *Without Feather Boa*, 1965
Etching, 30 × 22½ in. (76.2 × 57.2 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Ryan Lee Gallery, New York

Lewis argued, suggesting that the black experience, like the white experience, transcended racial identity.¹³⁰ Amos took Lewis's suggestion one step further when she asserted, "I don't believe there is such a thing as a Negro Artist."¹³¹ But other artists situated their aesthetic as part of their racial identity. James Yeargans, for one, identified his art as black because of "certain rhythms that are peculiar to my experience as a Negro."¹³²

Recognizing that the issue of race as a subject would probably never be resolved, the group continued to discuss their purpose. With little stylistic overlap among them, many in the group, especially Charles Alston, voiced strong resistance to exhibiting as a group. Their only common denominator was race, and Alston considered race-based exhibitions to be a form of segregation. "I have always been pretty unalterably opposed to the segregated show," he told the literary critic Albert Murray in the late 1960s. In Alston's words, a group show of all-black artists would set up "a false premise—that there is such a thing distinctively in this country as a Negro art. I don't think so. I think you have a certain kind of American experience, be it an experience as a Negro in America, but it is an American experience. And I think it's an important experience and I think it ought to be in the mainstream of American experience."¹³³

One way around the issue, Bearden reasoned, was to collaborate on a group project in which authorship would be blurred. In 1964 he brought to Christopher Street an "enormous picture file" of magazine and newspaper images, many of African Americans, and spread them around on the floor:

I thought that if we had photographs, maybe we could each paste some down. And I mentioned this to several artists, one who was a landscape painter (Mayhew). I cut out some trees and I cut out some figures, and I said, maybe you could make a landscape and I could paste some of the figures on it, and let's see what we can do. I worked on one or two alone, just to try to get the idea myself to show the other artists. But they didn't seem to be too interested in it and I continued.¹³⁴

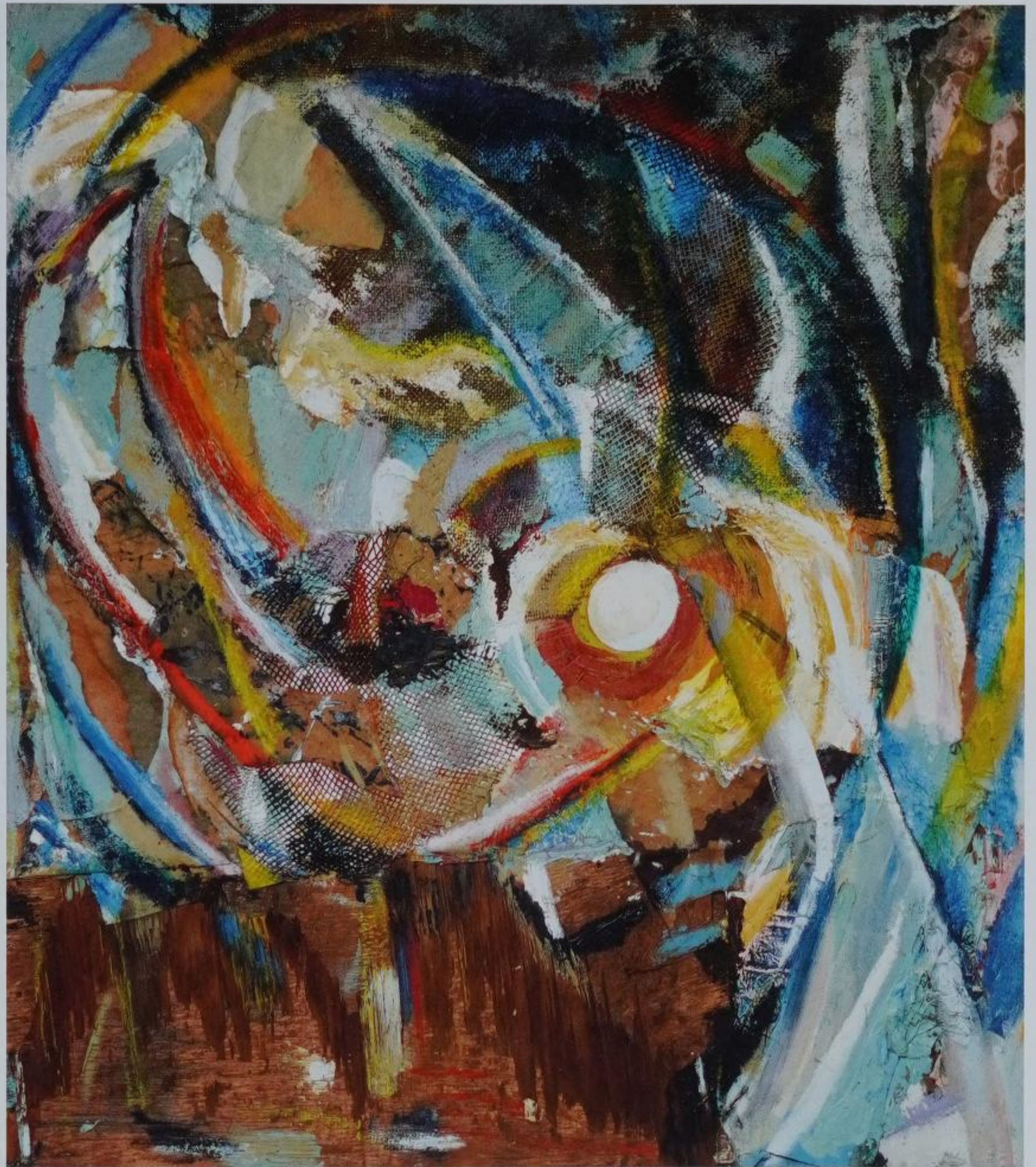


Fig. 181. James Yeargans, *Sun Above City*, 1962
Oil, crayon, gauze, and paper on board, 32 × 27½ in. (81.3 × 69.9 cm)
Private collection

James Yeargans, who was already using collage in his work, was interested in Bearden's experiment. After studying art in Kansas City with Aaron Douglas (1898-1979), Yeargans had moved to Harlem in the 1930s, working as an illustrator for left-wing and Communist newspapers. His artwork was lyrical, but Bearden and Lewis criticized its "literary" qualities. Possibly in response to such criticism, Yeargans eschewed representational imagery in the early 1960s and began making collages out of scraps of burlap, paint-treated paper, and applied paint (fig. 181). In a journal entry dated April 4, 1965, he wrote of his break with representational art:

A picture is no longer a window out of which one sees an attractive little bit of nature; nor is it the means of demonstrating the personal sentiments of the artist: it is itself, it is an object, a new unity expanding the idea of the term beauty. This “beauty” is not a quality that can be explained in words: if it can then the words will be enough: the picture will be superfluous.¹³⁵

After his attempt at a group project was nixed, Bearden transported his picture files to his loft and continued to work with the clippings. He began creating scenes remembered from his childhood in rural North Carolina and Pittsburgh, and from his early years in Harlem. Hewing to horizontal and vertical geometries, and avoiding diagonals or oblique angles, he focused on commonplace events in black community life, the architecture and rhythms of the urban streets, and the arts of Africa. He then made Photostats that flattened and evened out the completed collages’ tonalities, increasing the works’ graphic clarity (fig. 182). Bearden explained,

What I’m trying to do then is establish a vertical and a horizontal control of the canvas. I don’t like to get into too many slanting movements. When I do, I regard this as a tilted rectangle and I try to find something that compensates right away for a slant or a tilt or a diagonal movement on the canvas. I like the language of what I’m trying to do to be as classical as possible, but I don’t want complete reductionism like a Malevich or white on white where you end up with an empty canvas.¹³⁶

While Bearden resisted the renewed interest in Kazimir Malevich and Constructivism among Downtown artists in the mid-1960—who were especially interested in the Russians’ approach to site-specific art—the immediacy and relevance of Bearden’s collages during the civil rights era was recognized



Fig. 182. Romare Bearden, *The Prevalence of Ritual: Conjur Woman*, 1964
Photostat mounted on paperboard, 35 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 28 in. (89.2 × 71.1 cm)
Courtesy Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York

by his dealer, Arne Ekstrom. Ekstrom provided the series title, *Projections*, with which the collages were introduced in 1964, at Cordier and Ekstrom, his uptown gallery at 980 Madison Avenue.¹³⁷ In fragmenting and delineating African culture with snippets of African American life, Bearden created a visual counterpart to what literary historian Daniel Kane has described as a critique of modernism by the Umbra poets. “The (poets’) strategy, then, was never to ‘catch up’ with Euro-American modernism,” Kane explained, “but rather to interrogate it, rupture it, and reclaim an unacknowledged black modern that had existed within and as

enabling strata.”¹³⁸ Even without direct references to the fight for civil rights, Bearden’s Projections created a space for asserting American black consciousness. As a result, his contemporaries read his works against the events of their time—an interpretive strategy that remains valid today.

It was perhaps through Bearden’s own initiative that discussion of a Spiral Group exhibition was rekindled. In June 1964, three civil rights workers were murdered in Mississippi by members of the Ku Klux Klan and local law enforcement.¹³⁹ To the moral outrage of many Americans, the murders demonstrated the extent of opposition to integration, and they helped spur passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. In July 1964 Harlem exploded in riots after a fifteen-year-old African American was shot and killed by police. Just as Spiral was born from the March on Washington, the group pondered how best to respond to the increasingly violent resistance to the push for civil rights. Members considered a theme-based show to be called *Mississippi ’64* or *Mississippi USA*, to demonstrate solidarity with civil rights workers.¹⁴⁰ While that particular project did not happen, perhaps owing to the Harlem riots, the group continued to discuss mounting an exhibition, into 1965.¹⁴¹

But after nearly two years of meetings, many still questioned the point of an exhibition—was it to announce the meaning of Spiral to the art community? That question gave rise to further questions: Was the group’s formation a reaction to the civil rights struggle, or were the artists themselves activists? Could they be both artists *and* activists? The group’s consensus was to avoid specificity and instead find an aesthetic parallel common to all members. As Reginald Gammon recalled, many members found black/white duality an apt theme, but questioned attempts to reduce an issue as complex as race to this most basic of color dichotomies: “It would be better to say a black and white show and present our views, no matter how we painted them. Most of those men did abstracts. It was black and white and it was basic.”¹⁴² Most likely, Lewis suggested this approach; he had recently completed *Procession*, a black-and-white painting in which brushstrokes suggest figures dancing across the thirty-foot-long canvas.¹⁴³ Bearden’s Projection series was also predominantly black and white.

Spiral: Works in Black and White opened at 147 Christopher Street on May 14, 1965, and ran through June 4. The show was accompanied by a pamphlet, but no other ephemera—press release, posters, postcards, and so on—has come to light, and no reviews have been found. Only one photograph has been located, taken by Paul Yeargans, son of James Yeargans and an anthropology student at Hunter College at the time (fig. 183). It shows three of his father’s abstract ink drawings; in the center hangs *Shadows and Light* (1964).¹⁴⁴

To prepare for the opening, the Christopher Street space was painted and its plumbing repaired. Although the venue was not in pristine condition, “it had a big gallery space that could hold at



Fig. 183. Works by James Yeargans in *Spiral: Works in Black and White*, exhibition organized by the Spiral Group, New York, May 14–June 4, 1965
Photograph: Paul Yeargans. Collection of Paul Yeargans, Montreal, Canada

least one work by everybody who wanted to be in that show, and it had a little side space where Al Hollingsworth did an installation. It was not a bad showing space.”¹⁴⁵ Hollingsworth’s installation caused some consternation: he had deviated from the prescribed black-and-white palette and included brown—perhaps in a nod to his self-professed resistance to fully identifying with the Spiral Group. “I wonder why it should be necessary to seek one particular image,” he wrote. “Even the experiments of Pop Art paint in divergent ways.”¹⁴⁶ It seems likely that this comment irritated the older artists, who dismissed recent trends.

Such infighting, particularly between the younger artists and their elders, apparently never let up. William Majors (1930–1982), one of the younger artists briefly affiliated with the group, found the membership’s lack of constructive critical discourse stifling: “If the educators who haven’t painted for years would paint instead of giving advice, there wouldn’t be any Spiral.”¹⁴⁷ This is a sly reference to Woodruff, an art professor at New York University, whose frustration, according to scholar Courtney Martin, eventually led him to stop attending meetings.¹⁴⁸

This epochal divide would only intensify in succeeding years, as the unambivalent Black Arts movement, spearheaded by Amiri Baraka in Harlem, took hold. In moderating an intergenerational discussion among black artists at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1968, held on the occasion of its controversial exhibition



Fig. 184. William Majors, *Ecclesiastes VI:12*, 1965
 Etching and aquatint, 13⁷/₈ × 17 in. (35.2 × 43.2 cm)
 Indianapolis Museum of Art, Gift of the Art School Committee,
 Herron School of Art, 66.13K

Harlem on My Mind (which included documentary photographs but no artwork), Bearden sought common ground in focusing the discussion on earning a living as an artist—a seemingly ubiquitous, non-ideological concern.¹⁴⁹ But no one, not even artists resistant to Black Nationalism, took kindly to this plan. Despite Bearden's efforts, the debate veered into dichotomous territory: ethnic identity versus aesthetics.

The Spiral Group's artists offered the first sustained exploration of race as it was being redefined during the civil rights era. The group was an exercise, albeit limited, in community building. Moving beyond his initial criticisms, Richard Mayhew ultimately recognized that Spiral "discussed the history of African consciousness, and how it affected American society, and how it's involved discrimination," and he proclaimed that Bearden and

Lewis "weren't just artists, these were the mentors to the future of American society."¹⁵⁰ For the older artists, participation in Spiral recalled the collective, socially minded ethos of the federally funded programs they had participated in during the Depression. "We just felt that we needed to get together and discover whether we had things in common and, if possible, work out some kind of general broad philosophy," explained Charles Alston. "And I think this kind of thing does help."¹⁵¹

Following a rent hike at 147 Christopher Street in 1966, Norman Lewis tried to convince his fellow members to search for a new venue, but there was little interest, and the group dissolved. Blaming the group's dissolution on the recent successes of a few of the younger members, Lewis asserted that the "white power structure can divide and conquer, (and) some of the artists were

singled out (by museums and galleries), which destroyed the group."¹⁵² Romare Bearden also lobbed more vehement criticism at the art system and its persistent racial discrimination, namely in terms of the nearly all-white membership of The Club.¹⁵³ The profound impact on black artists of racial discrimination in the visual arts during this era is perhaps best expressed in Emma Amos's exchange with a critic who asked, "Why are there never any Negroes at shows or openings or anything?" And he's really one of the biggest critics and he writes for two major magazines and he is the hottest thing going. And he really thought that there was no discrimination."¹⁵⁴

The Spiral Group initiated a groundbreaking intergenerational discussion about the significance of race and artists' responsibilities toward the civil rights struggle. Not long before he was murdered, in 1965, Malcolm X spoke in Harlem of culture's fundamental importance in building a new black consciousness:

Our cultural revolution must be the means of bringing us closer to our African brothers and sisters. It must begin in the community and be based on community participation. Afro-Americans will be free to create only when they can depend on the Afro-American community for support and Afro-American artists must realize that they depend on the Afro-American community for inspiration.¹⁵⁵

Malcolm's call to arms catalyzed black artists downtown and galvanized the Black Arts movement. New spaces in Harlem and in Jamaica, Queens, and a community gallery at the Brooklyn Museum incubated new art forms based on ethnic identity, thereby posing a challenge to the American art vanguard's values. Spiral Group artists did not fully embrace separatist strategies, nor did they reject modernism. They believed in their American-ness, and they felt certain that black experience would inform and define American culture as it continued in its fitful, at-times violent progress toward integration.

In the early 1960s, using the visual arts as a tool for political action was a fraught exercise. As close scrutiny of the four organizations in this section reveals, however, their artists felt it imperative to wrestle with issues of power, social inequity, and civil rights for all Americans. Clearly, during this period artists' engagement with politics did not fit within the parameters of a conventionally understood gallery. Indeed, these equality-seeking groups found the gallery model fundamentally problematic due to its basis in commerce: they were deeply troubled by the increasingly powerful contemporary-art market. Even as uptown galleries were beginning to define Downtown art, control of the discourse was shifting away from artists. How and when did this shift take hold? The next and final section of this study, "Defining Downtown," proposes an answer.



5. Defining Downtown

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

In December 1960 artist-critic Sidney Geist asked, How do we recognize when an artist has achieved greatness? Geist felt compelled to grapple with this question after he visited Mark di Suvero's October 1960 sculpture show, the exhibition that inaugurated the Green Gallery. Pronouncing di Suvero "the high product of modern thought" and his magisterial sculptures a revivification of both Cubism and Constructivism, Geist went on to invoke Friedrich Nietzsche's thoughts on artistic creation, from his 1886 book *Beyond Good and Evil*: "Artists . . . know only too well that only when they do nothing 'willfully' and everything 'of necessity' does their feeling of freedom, subtlety, full powers, of creative placing, disposing and forming reach its height . . . that necessity and 'freedom of the will' are one and the same when they create."¹ This act of creation—the bringing into being of the ineffable—has its corollary in knowing, in the ability to harmonize one's inner vision with the physical execution of an object. To capture that moment, one must be sensitive enough to perceive "an order of rank in psychic conditions which approximates to the order of rank in the problems to be solved."² Such greatness, of which only a few are capable, transcends medium and style; it is a singular, individual accomplishment that can evoke a feeling of freedom in both the maker and the attuned perceiver.

Geist's reference to Nietzsche in his first discussion of the Green Gallery was auspicious, for the gallery was, according to a contemporary chronicler, "the place where the work was likeliest

to be unhackneyed, possibly baffling, and fully professional in quality. It was a good place to go if you were impatient with your own work and bored silly with everyone else's. It offered a sense of fresh possibilities."³ The Green Gallery's director, Richard Hu Bellamy, was exuberant about the art of his time. As he had done at the Hansa Gallery, he forged a spirit of collaboration with its artists, an approach that defined the Green Gallery from the beginning. But the gallery did not operate on an altruistic basis; it was not an artist's space. It was incorporated as a commercial business and financed by Robert Scull (1916–1986), co-owner of a successful taxi and limousine company and a collector of contemporary art, who approached Bellamy in 1960 with the idea of opening a gallery. When Bellamy learned that the second-floor gallery space at 15 West Fifty-seventh Street would be available that fall, Scull agreed to rent it for their venture. The Green Gallery's commercial status and uptown location complicate its inclusion in *Inventing Downtown*, even though its exhibitions were in sync with the risk-taking activities happening downtown. That said, a lot of artwork generated in downtown spaces began to migrate uptown in 1960, and this chapter examines Richard Bellamy as the most astute of the uptown gallerists in recognizing emerging tendencies in art. Yet for all its critical success, Bellamy's approach was not sustainable. The Green Gallery exemplifies that moment described by Nietzsche, when an artist's "greatness" is surpassed by an "enemy," which he called "the ideal of his day"—in this case, the commercialization of contemporary art.⁴

BRINGING DOWNTOWN UPTOWN

Situated on Fifty-seventh Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, the Green Gallery lay at the heart of Manhattan's commercial gallery district. It is most closely associated with the emergence of Pop Art and Minimalism, the two successor "styles" that supplanted

Fig. 185. Mark di Suvero exhibition, Green Gallery, New York, October 1960, with Hankchampion and Barrel, and left to right: Sidney Geist, Richard Bellamy, and unidentified woman

Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Courtesy Spacetime C.C., New York

Abstract Expressionism. The brouhaha surrounding the advent of Pop and Minimalism eclipsed the so-called second-generation Abstract Expressionists at the core of *Inventing Downtown*, ensuring their collective disappearance from critical discourse. As is now recognized, Pop and Minimal art were far less unified and more complex than previously had often been assumed, and the Green Gallery embraced this spirit of artistic plurality. In the exhibitions he organized, Richard Bellamy never grouped works into categories, instead using the term “new work” or the artist’s name as a show’s only rubric. Indeed, one of the gallery’s greatest virtues lay in Bellamy’s lack of interest in titles—his ability to see art on its own terms, as an artist might. Reflecting on the early 1960s, Bellamy stated, “I hadn’t formed any allegiances or opinions yet. . . . There was not static around the art that interfered with what I was seeing. . . . I was registering things very clearly, with an innocent eye. I had an intensity of perception, where things just got interiorized immediately.”⁵ The essence of his approach lay in seeing works of art not as part of a movement but rather as varieties of visual expression. He viewed each artwork, whether coolly ironic or emotionally evocative, as an individual act.

The most incisive scholarly account of the Green Gallery is found in James Meyer’s *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties*.⁶ Of particular note are his analyses of Robert Morris’s, Dan Flavin’s, and Donald Judd’s exhibitions. Ultimately, however, Meyer’s study is incomplete and partial to his subject, Minimalism. Although he generally lauds Bellamy, he laments the gallery’s overall lack of aesthetic clarity, or, in his words, its “cacophonous mix.”⁷ Yet it was precisely this dissonance that lent the Green Gallery its independence and distinction from other commercial galleries of the time. For example, the gallerists Leo Castelli, Martha Jackson, and Sidney Janis also included Downtown New York artists in watershed exhibition projects, but they situated Downtown art as part of broader movements—neo-Dada, New Forms, New Realism—invoking art history as a form of marketing.⁸ In commercial galleries, artwork was not autonomous from business strategy, and by 1963 the marketing of Downtown art began to divide New York’s gallery community into Uptown and Downtown “factions.”

Bellamy operated differently. “I saw an enormous amount of work,” he said. “Because we were still a new enterprise and my duties were quite undefined, I felt I should look at as many artists’ work as possible.”⁹ The goal was not to identify a direction for American contemporary art but rather to show “something original and new . . . not something that claimed attention but was deserving of attention.”¹⁰ From October 1960 through 1962, Bellamy hewed closely to the Downtown scene from which he had emerged, and although the artists whose work he showed were overwhelmingly male, he also included seven women: Lilly Brody (1905–1986), Jean Follett, Joan Jacobs (1934–1985), Yayoi Kusama, Sally Hazelet

Drummond, Lee Lozano (1930–1999), and Pat Passlof (1928–2011). Only three, however, received solo shows at the Green Gallery, Passlof (1961), Hazelet Drummond (1962), and Jacobs (1962). Just as Pop Art was becoming a media sensation, Kusama was included in a June 1962 group exhibition, and when the tide turned to Minimalism, Lozano appeared in a group show in October 1964. Except for Lozano, after 1962 the Green Gallery stopped showing women artists.

Bellamy’s decisions during the gallery’s first two years coincided with Robert Scull’s initial reticence about the direction of and publicity for his collection. Scull belonged to a small group of American collectors who were focusing primarily on Abstract Expressionism, but when Bellamy began pursuing new work that challenged abstraction’s dominance, Scull saw an opportunity to distinguish himself.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first, a thematic and loosely chronological exploration of selected exhibitions organized by Bellamy, examines the critical developments that challenged previous aesthetic paradigms, while the second part looks at Scull’s personal influence on the Green Gallery. What emerges is a clearly observable transition away from formalist analysis, which sought to position contemporary art in relation to established art-historical tendencies, toward a hybrid form of criticism that merged aesthetics and perception. This new criticism is at once hyper-aware of the object and discerning about art’s conceptual aspects, especially its shifting, autonomous status. Throughout this chapter, Bellamy’s decisions and assessments are considered in dialogue with his ideas about art.

AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING, 1960–62

Armed with an introduction from painter Pat Passlof, Bellamy first visited Mark di Suvero’s studio in the winter of 1959–60.¹¹ From the moment he stepped over the threshold, Bellamy “knew (di Suvero) would be my opening show and that the space that I had to find would be space that would accommodate showing his sculptures.”¹² Described by Jean Follet as “breathtakingly beautiful,” the Green Gallery’s stately proportions provided a distinguished setting for di Suvero’s first major series.¹³ “As you walked into the Green Gallery,” Robert Scull’s wife, Ethel, remembered, “you saw wooden pieces of sculpture that were put together by a rope of the most heroic proportions that you had ever seen . . . and it was so big, that the gallery only had room for two of them.”¹⁴ There were, in fact, three: *Hankchampion* (1960) and *Barrel* (1959), each between twelve and fifteen feet long, were installed in the main room, while the slightly smaller (8½ × 7½ feet) *Che Faro Senza Euridice* (1959) was placed on a plywood base in the small space behind. In addition, a carved-wood totem-like sculpture was positioned between the two galleries, and four smaller wax sculptures and six detailed drawings, all of hands, were included.

According to eyewitnesses, the sculptures' command of real space confronted but did not overwhelm the viewer. As such, they escaped the medium's condition of "thing-ness," which was often considered problematic. Geist felt that di Suvero's work, in its particular geometries and spatial relations, engendered an entirely new sensation. Geist further argued, following Nietzsche, that di Suvero's sculptures exuded far more than a record of the energy necessary to make them—they were themselves energizing. As if anticipating mid-1960s debates on how to define sculpture, Geist unequivocally asserted, "these pieces always remain in that indigestible condition known as sculpture, and are never assimilated by the idea of architecture or of place."¹⁵ But, in discussing scale, Geist was cautious. "Employing as they do some of the means and materials of architecture," he wrote, "occupying large areas, they raise the disturbing question whether constructions at this size can properly be called sculpture."

In Donald Judd's review of the show, he proclaimed di Suvero's sculptures "thunderous" in both size and strength.¹⁶ Overall, Judd was more restrained than Geist, emphasizing the geometries in each piece. *Hankchampion*, the largest work on view, held his interest with the force of its parallelograms rising out of triangles; he described the relationships among planks in *Barrel* as "verging" from parallelograms into trapezoids. "The force is so evident and the structure so much one of oppositions and parallels that the resulting quality is somewhat general," Judd noted. His impression of diminished impact diverged from Geist's assessment, and would later form the basis for Judd's more sustained critique of di Suvero's sculpture.¹⁷

Di Suvero saw scale as an expression of freedom, a condition that "can only exist when there is real choice," and in which ethical, not only aesthetic, concerns are part of one's consciousness.¹⁸ Having studied philosophy at the University of California at Berkeley, di Suvero felt conflicted about philosophical theory's role in the creative process. "The will to poetry is opposed to the will of philosophy," he wrote. "Poetry is the need for resolution-by-embrace of paradox, unhinging independence of sense," while philosophy "is the need for *claritas* and explanation . . . the need for a system."¹⁹ Di Suvero's sculptures hover between clarity of materials and paradox of form. The latter changes, as does one's perspective, as one moves around the sculptures.

This show, the Green Gallery's first, set the standard for independence of expression, and the range of works exhibited there during its five-season history exemplified di Suvero's "freedom of choice." In nearly every case, its solo exhibitions presented complete, accomplished bodies of work that sent core concepts about painting and sculpture into new directions. In large part, Bellamy owed his keen ability to discern when an artist had produced a major series to his visits to artists' studios



Fig. 186. Announcement for *Mark di Suvero* exhibition, Green Gallery, New York, October 18–November 10, 1960
Offset print, 21⁷/₈ × 16³/₄ in. (55.6 × 42.5 cm)
Courtesy Spacetime C.C., New York

and other activities downtown. During the studio visits, he was frequently accompanied by Ivan Karp, then a dealer with Leo Castelli, and a trio of curators: Henry Geldzahler, who had joined the staff at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1960; and William Seitz and Peter Selz, both at MoMA. Bellamy's comfort in artists' studios enabled him to home in on the unrecognizable—seemingly strange works that at the same time were clearly rooted in the present moment.²⁰ He was closely attuned to shifts away from the tactile painterly qualities that had previously been held in the highest esteem. Unlike the Hansa Gallery, which championed assemblage, the Green Gallery continued to investigate realism and abstraction, both of which were being reinvented by artists downtown, and with far greater nuance than the ex post facto categories of Pop and Minimalism. Of all the abstract painters whose work Bellamy exhibited in his five-year career at the Green Gallery, only two were unequivocal about their debt to Abstract Expressionism: Pat Passlof and Philip Wofford (b. 1935). After 1963, however, the Green Gallery ceased to exhibit painterly abstraction.



Fig. 187. Pat Passlof, *Ile Fra*, 1960

Oil on canvas, 80 × 144 in. (203.2 × 365.8 cm)

© The Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation. Courtesy Elizabeth Harris Gallery, New York

Pat Passlof constituted an especially interesting choice for Bellamy. She was one of few artists to have studied formally with Willem de Kooning, both at Black Mountain College, in 1948, and at his studio on Fourth Avenue. She was married to Milton Resnick, and comparisons between his paintings and hers proliferated in reviews of her work. In March 1961 Bellamy organized her first uptown one-person show, which comprised paintings made between 1959 and 1960.

A close look at Passlof's work uncovers vague references to actual objects. Her use of color is confident; each painting is built from forward-thrusting diagonal brushstrokes set into clearly delineated areas. Inside each area, the color is nearly pure, with very little blending. This clarity sends the outlined shapes and interior swirls of color reverberating across the canvas. Passlof's looser, lighter-toned *Cherokee* (1959) and *Mark's House* (1960), the latter of which probably refers to di Suvero's building on Front Street, are luminous, while her darker and denser *Fortune* and *Ile Fra* (fig. 187), both from 1960, feel constricted despite being considerably larger in size.²¹ Valerie Peterson wrote rapturously of what she called *Ile Fra*'s "luxurious beauty," while Donald Judd pinpointed Passlof's "scribbly brush work" within her organized compositions.²²

Judd went on to cite the Expressionist painters and Monet's late period as influences, but he also recognized Passlof's personal compositional strategy, noting that "an inconspicuous placing of the clusters of strokes prolongs or halts opposing movements."²³

Passlof's reconciliation of Post-Impressionism and Abstract Expressionism was, by 1961, no longer cutting-edge. Concurrent with the Green Gallery's exhibitions, downtown spaces were challenging painting's Cubist and Post-Impressionist paradigms, showing works by artists who were deliberately de-skilling both their method and their composition. Bellamy's strategy included working against the vanguard, which led him to several artists outside his network, all of whom were taking abstraction in new directions: Joan Jacobs, Tadaaki Kuwayama (b. 1932), Sally Hazelet Drummond, and Richard Smith (1931–2016). At the time Bellamy met them, neither Jacobs, Kuwayama, nor Smith had ever exhibited in New York.

In January 1961, the year of her solo show at the Green Gallery, Joan Jacobs was married to the Los Angeles dealer Everett Ellin, who helped arrange her New York debut.²⁴ In his oral history, Ellin does not specify how he had met Bellamy, but it is known that when Ellin moved to New York in 1959 to work for the gallery French & Company, Jacobs remained in California. During the year he spent

in New York before returning to Los Angeles in 1960 and restarting his gallery there, he worked closely with Clement Greenberg (an adviser to French & Company) and met numerous New York artists and dealers, including Leo Castelli. These contacts proved fortuitous for Jacobs, who at the time was transitioning from expressionistic paintings on canvas to strong graphic compositions on aluminum.

Very little documentation of Jacobs's solo show at the Green Gallery survives.²⁵ The announcement, a black-and-white poster printed on a metallic surface, reproduces a square painting (likely on aluminum) onto which Jacobs painted, in concentric fashion, a circle, a diamond, and a cross shape. The original artwork likely deployed color, as she was very interested in optical effects. The work's impact is both direct and strange—what could it mean? Writing for *Arts*, Vivien Raynor noted Jacobs's interest in symbolic forms and identified a “mystical-religious flavor” in her work. The scale of Jacobs's paintings ranged from sixty-eight to twenty-four inches square. Not all were on aluminum—the larger ones were on canvas—but Raynor liked the aluminum paintings best. They offered “bare though burnished” areas of paint where the aluminum glistened (fig. 188). “Miss Jacobs uses her thin color only to distinguish one part of a shape from another,” she wrote, “yet this lack of sensuality is very suitable for her stark and effective images.”²⁶

Also enthusiastic was artist and *New York Times* critic Brian O'Doherty, who found in Jacobs's aluminum works “a curiously disturbing visual effect.” He noted, “in one picture a cross is contained in a circle on a blue square, outlined again on another square of dark gray, all placed against a hidden source of light that radiates outward in barely perceptible rays.”²⁷ Critics generally deemed Jacobs's work on canvas overly large and lacking in power, however. *Art News's* Jack Kroll offered a rather pompous dismissal of her work. Finding Jacobs's painting style overwrought despite her spare iconography, he wrote, “the weave of the canvas is replaced by the unperturbable mirror of our industrial epidermis.”²⁸ Embedded in his tone is a hostility, common among many contemporary art critics, toward artists' increasing use of non-art materials and non-emotive subject matter. During his two one-man shows at the Green Gallery, in January 1961 and February 1962, painter Tadaaki Kuwayama, who was also exploring pure form but using traditional materials, received a warmer reception from the critics.

After arriving in New York in 1958 on a student visa, Kuwayama met Bellamy through Ivan Karp in 1960.²⁹ By that time he had already mastered traditional Japanese *nihonga* painting techniques at the Tokyo University of Art. Once enrolled at the Art Students League, but mainly through his visits to galleries, he quickly absorbed American and European art, especially the color-field paintings of Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman. Bellamy visited Kuwayama's studio to view a new series of paintings, each eight feet high by three to four feet wide. To



Fig. 188. Joan Jacobs, *Requiem*, 1962
Canvas and oil on aluminum, 36 × 36 in. (91.4 × 91.4 cm)
Collection of Reneta E. Nunn

make this series, Kuwayama wrapped cotton canvases in folded Japanese rice paper and joined the panels in order to enlarge each work to approximately six feet wide. The labor of three men—Kuwayama, Bellamy, and the writer-artist Lawrence Campbell (who subsequently wrote an enthusiastic review)—was required to install just one painting for Kuwayama's January 10–February 4, 1961, show.³⁰ Among the other works on view were *Untitled: (Red and Blue)*, *Untitled: (Red)*, and *Untitled: (Black)*, all completed just before the opening.

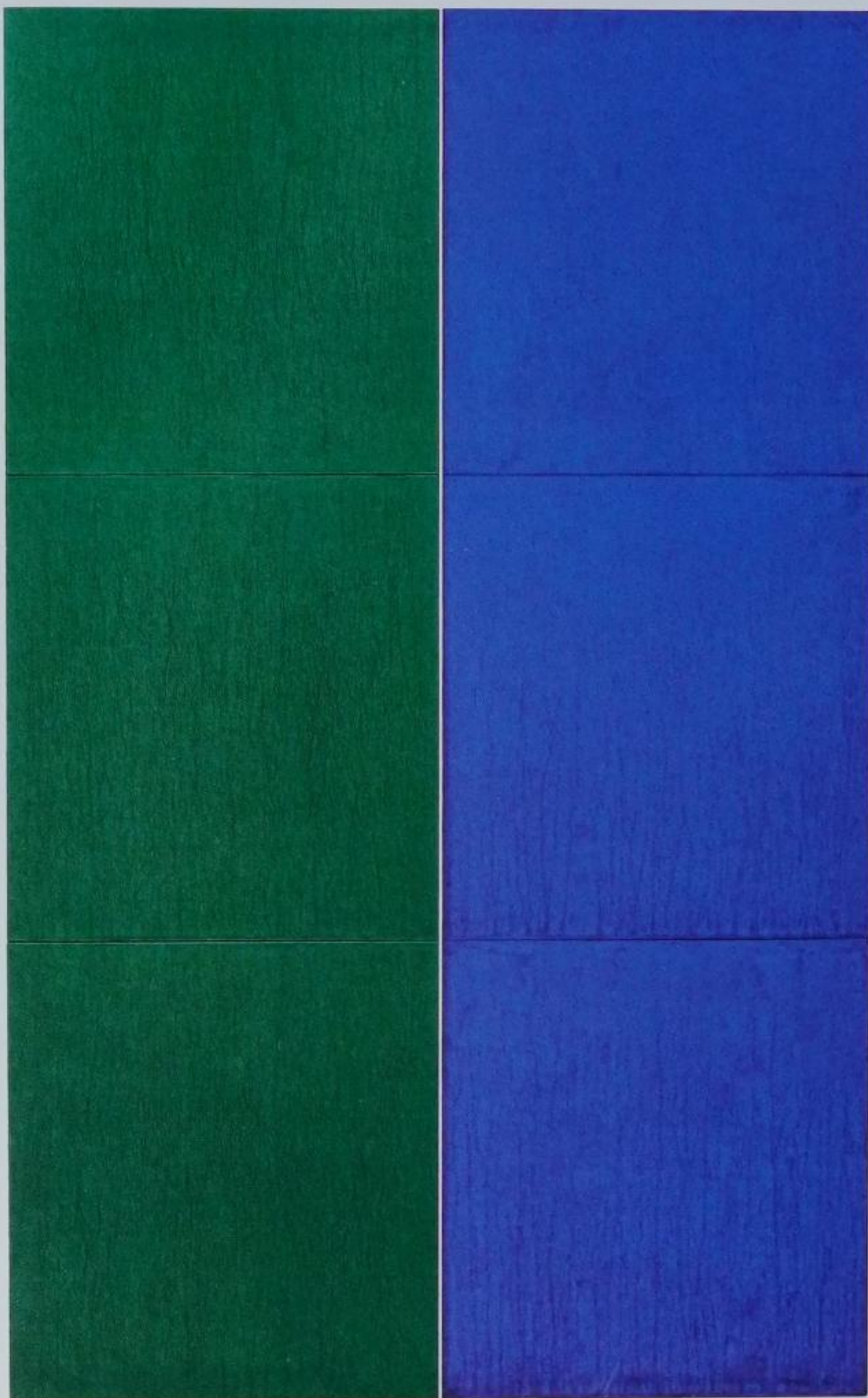


Fig. 189. Tadaaki Kuwayama, *Untitled (Blue/Green)*, 1961
 Dry pigment and acrylic on Japanese paper with aluminum, mounted on Masonite,
 48 × 30 in. (121.9 × 76.2 cm)
 Courtesy the artist

Through his use of folded rice paper, Kuwayama created a textural effect that is visible only at close range: each painting is anchored by a central vertical axis where the panels join. Onto the paper Kuwayama applied dry pigment; unlike paint, dry pigment on paper becomes saturated with color, diminishing tactile evidence of the brush. In some paintings, Kuwayama cut the paper away, revealing an area of canvas where the paint had loosely fallen. Many of his paintings incorporated contrasting bands of color, such as silver leaf or aquamarine, that are difficult to see in photographs. The overall visual effect is one of sheer color (fig. 189). In Kuwayama's works, large scale asserts a sense of atmosphere. As Kuwayama told an interviewer in 2012, "The beginning of the

1960s was still a time when people, myself included, were making 'artistic' works," and he characterized the painterly aspects of his first series at the Green Gallery as part of that tendency. He expressed his then-desire "to make work that would stand apart from the world of so-called 'art,'" betraying a forward-looking attitude that ran contrary to his classical art training.³¹

Coining a word, Donald Judd deemed Kuwayama's Green Gallery show "presageful," and he detected both Japanese and American references in the series. Echoing Ad Reinhardt, Judd approached Kuwayama's approach philosophically—as art that derives from art:

Since a style formed in part by early enthusiasms (which were wise to admire great work and unwise to overlook its historical position) obscurely contains some of a painter's permanent references, the problem is how to get from the first to the second stage while maintaining the continuity of those basic elements which make more recent influences relevant. The continuity and complexity of this serious proceeding is evident in Kuwayama's work.³²

Bellamy also recognized how Kuwayama had, metaphorically, mastered a new language, albeit one couched in a familiar vocabulary, and he saw in the smaller, square paintings of Sally Hazelet Drummond the same "art from art" method.³³ It seems likely that he was struck by her work when he first encountered it, at her one-person show at the Tanager Gallery in April 1960. Hazelet Drummond fell outside his network of artists, and she recalled, "I was always a little shy around him because Dick's circle of friends and mine didn't overlap."³⁴ But for Bellamy, friendship was not a valid criterion for selection of an artist.

Hazelet Drummond stood out for her independent approach and the consistency of her subject matter. Her slow, deliberate method mined French Pointillism, particularly Seurat, but translated that technique into abstract color forms on square canvases (fig. 190). From a distance her paintings appear monochromatic, but closer inspection reveals thousands of distinct multi-colored dots. These "loose globular points" move in circular patterns around the square canvas, producing an overall monochrome effect with gradations from light to dark, cohering in the darkest area at the center.³⁵

Bellamy included works by Hazelet Drummond in two group exhibitions before organizing her solo show, on view March 13–April 7, 1962. The critics were enthusiastic. Hazelet Drummond "aims at the eye," wrote Brian O'Doherty in the *New York Times*, "and then slowly for the mind behind it." In describing her paintings' effect on viewers, O'Doherty noted that, "from close up—about a nose-length away—Miss Drummond's dots almost bounce off the eye. The central area persists like the afterburn when one's eye has been hit

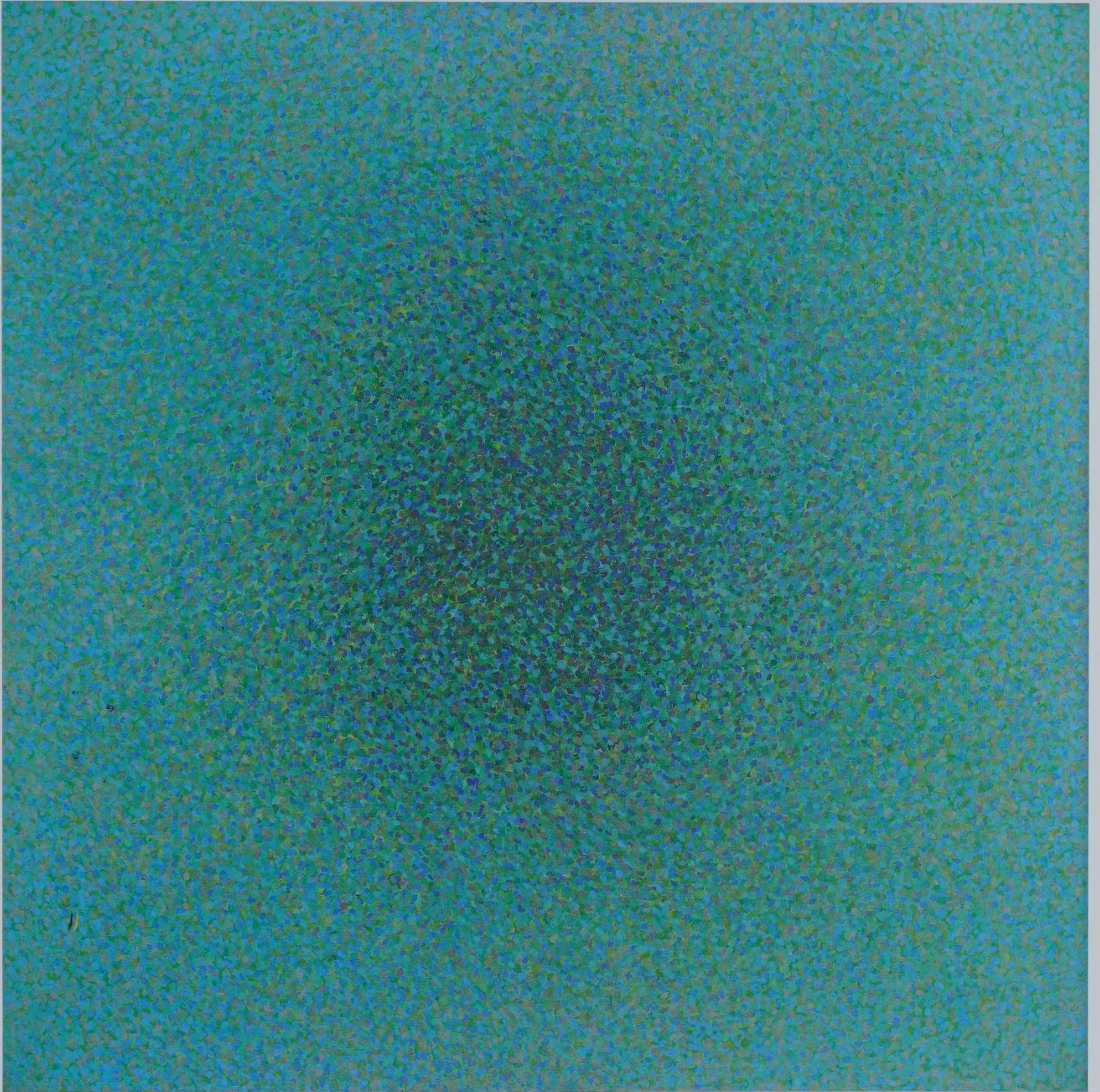


Fig. 190. Sally Hazelet Drummond, *Blue Bird*, 1960
Oil on canvas, 24 × 24 in. (61 × 61 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Alexandre Gallery, New York

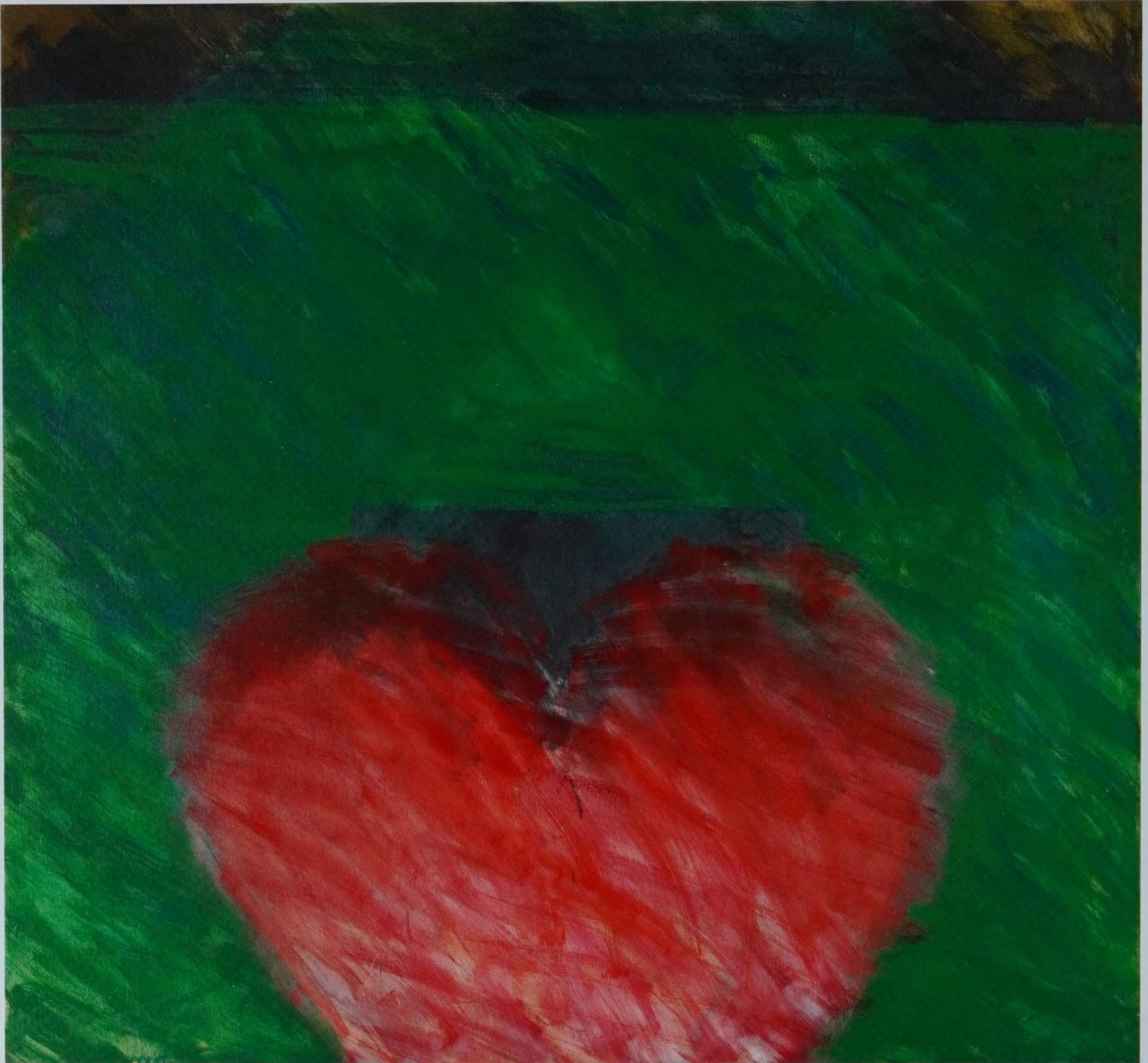


Fig. 191. Richard Smith, *McCall's*, 1960
Oil on canvas, 84 × 90 in. (213.4 × 228.6 cm)
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven. Richard Brown Baker, B.A. 1935, Collection

by a sudden glare.”³⁶ Donald Judd also noted Hazelet Drummond’s mindful opticality. He commented on her textural buildup of tiny painted circles in contrasting and complementary colors, which “combine into a harmony, a projected and inclusive emotion.” He pointed to hue as the only changing element; otherwise the artist treated each dot exactly the same, “waver(ing) curiously between the color and contrast which they are and a texture which they are not.” Judd ultimately categorized her work as modernist in intent and in certain affinities of form, but not to the extent that it could be labeled derivative.³⁷ O’Doherty similarly found the strong, formal

compositional elements of Hazelet Drummond’s work easier to write about than that of the burgeoning realists who were making a more decisive break with modernism.

In Richard Smith, Bellamy found a painter who encompassed the abstract-to-realist spectrum. Smith had come to New York from London in 1959 on a Harkness Fellowship. He was attuned to the activities of the Independent Group, a gathering of artists, architects, and critics who met at London’s Institute of Contemporary Art to investigate popular imagery and its influence on contemporary consciousness, though Smith was not especially influenced by

them.³⁸ But New York differed from London in nearly every way, be it “the tubes of Grumbacher” for sale instead of the “little Windsor & Newton tubes” found in England, or the canvases stretched on thick supports, which were custom made to fit the larger New York loft spaces and precipitated a different approach to painting.³⁹

Smith credited the environment of the city itself as the foundation for his New York work: “the painting became less loose and much more formal.”⁴⁰ The sheer physicality of the materials and spaces at hand led Smith to redirect his compositional structure toward wholeness, a tendency he ascribed to de Kooning. He wanted his paintings to register like corporate logos, and their titles provide a clue as to what he was seeing and experiencing in New York: *McCall's* (fig. 191), *Billboard*, and *Chase Manhattan*, whose corporate headquarters in Lower Manhattan were close to many artists' lofts. Circles, a frequent motif, recall the gyrations of Times Square at mid-20th century, all “spinning wheels, spinning tops, revolving things, and . . . neon signs that go click-click-click.”⁴¹ By combining areas of clearly delineated form with expanses of controlled but painterly gesture, Smith occupied a space between mass culture and Expressionism. He moved away from the meticulousness of push-pull composition to render his images more centralized and emblematic.

Bellamy first met Smith at his studio on Walker Street, in the neighborhood now called Tribeca, during one of his Lower Manhattan excursions in the winter of 1960–61. “I certainly hadn't seen any paintings like them, which is one of the reasons I was so eager to show them,” Bellamy recalled, underscoring his attraction to the unknown.⁴² Though encouraged by Bellamy's confident attitude, Smith confessed to feeling not entirely prepared to exhibit his work. But for Bellamy, the work that Smith had completed over the course of a year constituted a show, one he was especially enthusiastic about mounting.

Bellamy scheduled his first show of Smith's work for April 1961 and arranged to have the paintings delivered the month before, offering the collector Richard Brown Baker a preview. “This is Richard Bellamy, your friendly dealer,” heard Baker when he picked up his phone in March 1961.⁴³ Unbeknownst to Bellamy, Baker had visited Smith's studio a year earlier and had greatly admired *McCall's* but did not purchase the work at the time. Ushered into the Green Gallery's back room together with Henry Geldzahler, Baker described experiencing Smith's paintings outside the studio:

His painting impressed me favorably, especially (*McCall's*,) a huge canvas of a heart rising against a field of green. (*McCall's*) had several times been brought out. At first I had not liked it as well as my memory of it [in Smith's studio], then the lighting on it was altered

and I was again impressed. Mr. Geldzahler said it was for a museum. I had the smaller one (*Pepsi* (1961)) I liked placed beside it. . . . I asked Richard Bellamy to reserve these two for me, made my excuses and fled down the street for tea and a toasted English muffin.⁴⁴

This passage from Baker's diary offers a rare glimpse into Bellamy's acumen in building a reputation for the unknown Smith. His strategy mocked his role as a “salesman,” but he was serious about appraising the work to be sold once Baker arrived at the gallery.⁴⁵

During a recorded interview in 1992, Smith asked Bellamy what he'd seen in his works in 1961, and Bellamy answered, “What more is there than to like them?” This deceptively simple response locates judgment within perception. He went on: “Richard's paintings have a breathiness and color and a kind of newness absolutely separate from Pop Art, separate from color-field. . . . They were truly idiosyncratic, really beautiful. It's enough.”⁴⁶

When reviewing Smith's 1961 show at the Green, Irving Sandler found the work ambitious but took issue with the overt symbols lacking emotion, which he interpreted as an absence of personal investment on the artist's part.⁴⁷ In contrast, Gene Swenson regarded Smith's impassive subject matter as intrinsic to the work's significance, especially in *McCall's*:

The heart space is in part simply a device, no more concerned with its traditional meaning than the magazine's advertising campaign was concerned with human relations. Unlike the advertisements, the heart does to some degree revive old meanings while making its comment upon modern society; most of all, however, it moves us by the splendid beauty of its color and form.⁴⁸

Bellamy's attraction to such undefined looseness made him especially receptive to artwork that was not abstract. Although Smith's work teetered on the edge of realistic subject matter, it ultimately stopped short and was more aligned with abstraction. His incorporation of signs and symbols was allusive, not direct.

NEW REALISM: POP COMES TO THE FORE

While Smith negotiated between abstraction and realism, four other artists Bellamy showed in 1961 and 1962 incorporated the actual in a manner distinct from both assemblage and figuration: James Rosenquist (b. 1933), George Segal, Tom Wesselmann, and Claes Oldenburg. Along with exhibitions in other commercial galleries, their shows helped establish Pop Art as a “movement.”⁴⁹ At the time of its first emergence in 1961, however, Pop was not enthusiastically embraced by the art world. Curators and critics



Fig. 192. James Rosenquist, *Sitting Around Screaming*, 1962
Oil on canvas, 40 × 34 in. (101.6 × 86.4 cm)
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven. Richard Brown Baker, B.A. 1935, Collection

who favored humanism in figuration were especially dismissive, and in 1963 *Art News* published an editorial claiming that Pop Art had been invented by collectors:

And from their craving for modish discoveries, they produced a “phony crisis” in American art by claiming that all the issues posed by Abstract-Expressionism have been resolved, that it is finished as a living idiom; the Action Painters have had it. The new is Pop, and only the new deserves the fare.⁵⁰

Dealers and collectors did in fact play a powerful role in Pop’s emergence, and in its success as a major new art trend. For the purposes of this discussion, we will turn away from the burgeoning art market in order to examine more clearly how the work itself was received, independent of the Pop label. To begin, what did the artists think? None wholly accepted the “Pop” designation, and Wesselmann outright rejected it. Bellamy remained agnostic on the idea of a Pop Art “movement,” and he was not always drawn in by what he was seeing. After all, he witnessed firsthand Downtown artists’ conception and development of new

ideas, in terms of their individual aesthetic trajectories and on their own terms.

James Rosenquist first showed at the Green Gallery in January–February 1962, having recently completed a series of paintings using techniques he had learned on the job as a billboard painter. Working with *Life* magazines from the late 1940s and 1950s, he cut out pictures and isolated fragments that he felt had “the look of something.” He then enlarged the fragments onto canvases eight feet high or taller. Rosenquist described his process in making his first work in the series:

I thought the problem [was] eliminating images from a non-objective painting and I would use imagery as a guide to show what things will be looked at first, like in a game. . . . But I’ll use this with the same power that I had painted billboards—the same strength and intensity and exactness used for selling these products, but they won’t be made and they won’t be painted to be sold. . . . I was going to work in this advertising media numbness. . . . I painted them over and over and over. And I was experimenting. . . . All sorts of surrealistic things, yet the scale was too large for what I thought surrealism was.⁵¹

Furthermore, Rosenquist wanted to maintain a degree of anonymity in his style, “to paint it so well that you wouldn’t see my brushstroke.”⁵² His efforts to achieve a sort of quasi-industrial purity (for his art was still made by hand) echoed Frank Stella’s (b. 1936) well-known dictum to “get the paint out of the can and onto the canvas” and “keep the paint as good as it was in the can.”⁵³ The scale of Rosenquist’s work, however, abstracted the familiar. One could not identify, from close up, precisely what was being depicted. The objects and figures came into focus only from a distance. His use of fragmentation—his self-described Surrealistic juxtapositions of seemingly unrelated images—further fracture the viewer’s experience (fig. 193). “When I use a combination of fragments of things,” he explained, “the fragments or objects or real things are caustic to one another, and the title is also caustic to the fragments.”⁵⁴

The exhibition was a critical success, and drew substantive reviews by Sidney Tillim in *Arts* and Lawrence Campbell in *Art News*.⁵⁵ By 1962 Rosenquist was labeled a Pop artist, but he knew that such designations were transitory: “As time goes by the brutality of what art is, the idea of what art can be, changes, different feelings about things become at home, become accepted, natural.”⁵⁶ Rosenquist’s work was challenging both visually and intellectually, activating a New Realist sensibility (the term derives from Sidney Janis’s November–December 1962 exhibition). Gene Swenson’s seminal essay “The New American ‘Sign Painters’” in



Fig. 193. James Rosenquist's *Silver Skies* in his studio, New York, 1962
 Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Rudy Burckhardt papers, Archives of American Art,
 Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

the September 1962 issue of *Art News* singles out Rosenquist for his work's density in comparison to that of Lichtenstein and Warhol, whose paintings he found easier to grasp in full. "Rosenquist uses recognizable fragments of our environment as echoes," Swenson observed, "every aspect is ultimately seen for its importance to the whole."⁵⁷

In order to hang more paintings in the gallery, Bellamy turned canvases into walls dividing the space, hanging paintings back-to-back from wires anchored in the ceiling. This almost theatrical transformation of the gallery space was a skill he had honed at the Hansa, and he tapped into it in nurturing George Segal's transition from painting to sculpture. Segal's first show at the Green Gallery,

held in November–December 1960, comprised mainly large-scale paintings and smaller pastels. Reviews were tepid. "Method Acting' has come to painting in the works of George Segal," Sidney Tillim declared, noting the life-size scale of the canvases, the relative "flatness of the décor," and a "slovenliness . . . laid out in diluted washes." Though Tillim was generally underwhelmed by the series, he did anticipate Segal's "feeling for corporeality," which would prove to be his breakthrough.⁵⁸

Months later, in 1961, Segal began expanding his experiments with plaster. Instead of working on the usual wire-mesh base, he began making casts directly from the body, initially his own and later his wife Helen's. Segal's second show at the Green Gallery,



Fig. 194. George Segal's artwork in *Recent Paintings and Sculpture*, Green Gallery, New York, May 8–June 2, 1962
 Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Rudy Burckhardt papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

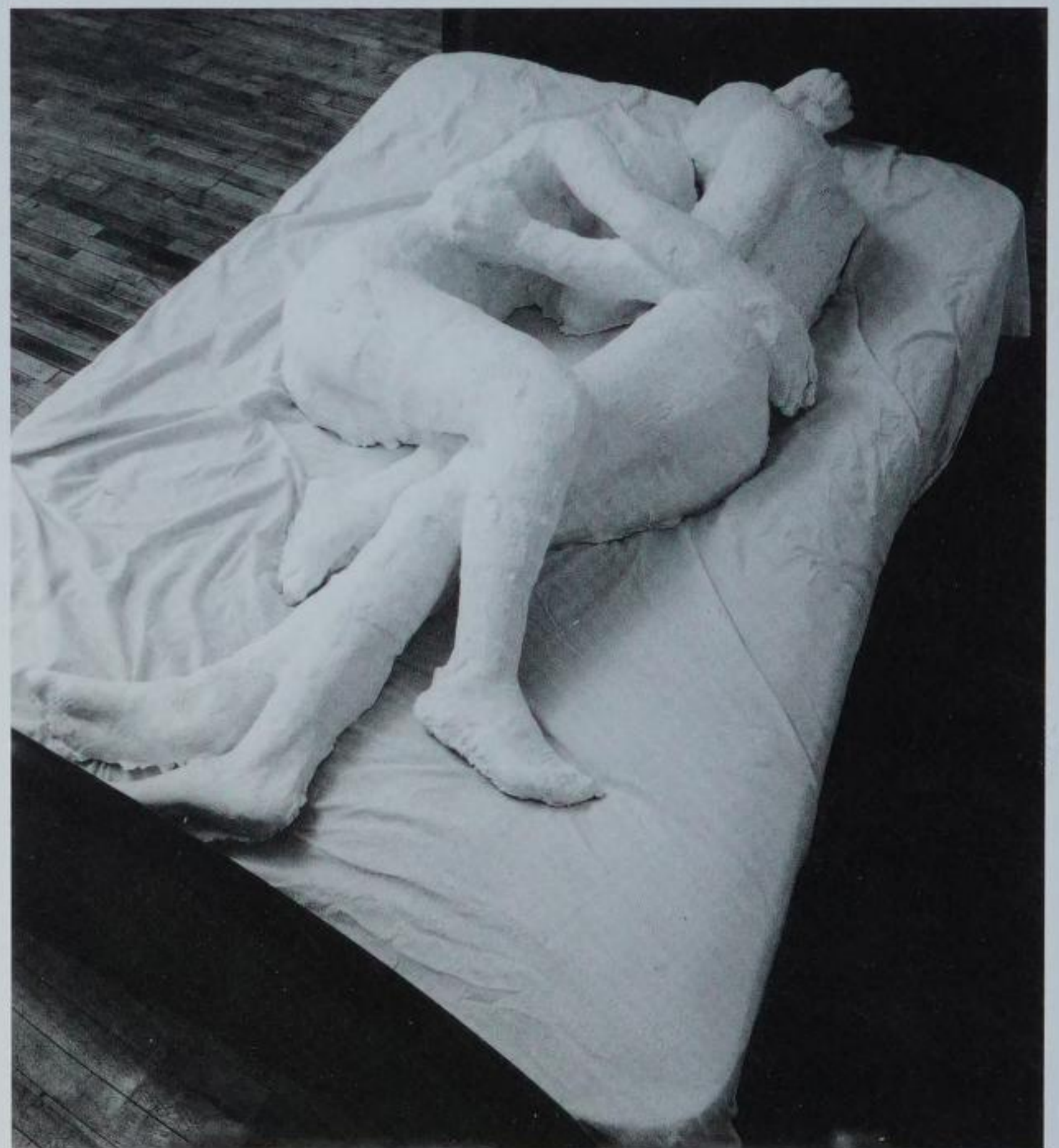
held May 8–June 2, 1962, heralded his turn to sculpture. The artist transformed the space into a *tableau vivant* of unpainted plaster figures engaged in ordinary, not especially significant moments. A woman removes her bra before a mirror, not provocatively but rather as part of the everyday routine of changing her clothes (fig. 194). Another stands with one leg perched on the edge of a bathtub, shaving her legs. Segal also captured men alone with their thoughts. One sits in a worn-down chair beside a Coca-Cola machine; others are situated randomly throughout the gallery, sitting or squatting, waiting for something to happen (fig. 196). The only titillating scene was a plaster couple entwined on a bed, a rare instance of human connection (fig. 195). Segal explained his work as a joining of art and life, but not, in a departure from

Fig. 195. George Segal's *Lovers on a Bed*, 1962
 Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Estate of Rudy Burckhardt.
 Collection of Erik La Prade, New York

Allan Kaprow's method, a repudiation of the object. For Segal, this series represented "an art in formation now, announcing a new relationship between art and life, between art and society."⁵⁹

Brian O'Doherty detected in this show the notion of sculpture's merger with life. "Transformation as a concept has given way to the idea of relationships as a criterion," O'Doherty wrote, abandoning formalist terms for performative ones. "The tensions established between 'art' and raw objects are forced into an interaction by the participation of the observer."⁶⁰ In contrast, Donald Judd seized the opportunity to think through sculpture as a discipline: "There are two insuperable difficulties to the use of the figure: the depiction of its volume requires a unified, illusionistic space inconsistent with even moderate flattening and brightness of color; that unified space, or shreds of it, signifies a unified and idealistic world." According to Judd, the abstract nature of the lifelike situations into which Segal thrust the plaster figures allowed him to skirt this plastic problem altogether. "The sculpture is especially unidealistic, is even scroungy and matter-of-fact—which is great." The plaster's whiteness lent both figures and setting a sense of indifference akin to the "plain objectness, the simple existence of some recent abstract work."⁶¹

While Bellamy supported Segal's sculpture, he did not entirely understand it. In a 1964 television documentary about new trends in contemporary art, an interviewer asked Bellamy if he felt certain about the importance of the artwork he presented at the Green Gallery. Unlike the confident and polished Sidney Janis,



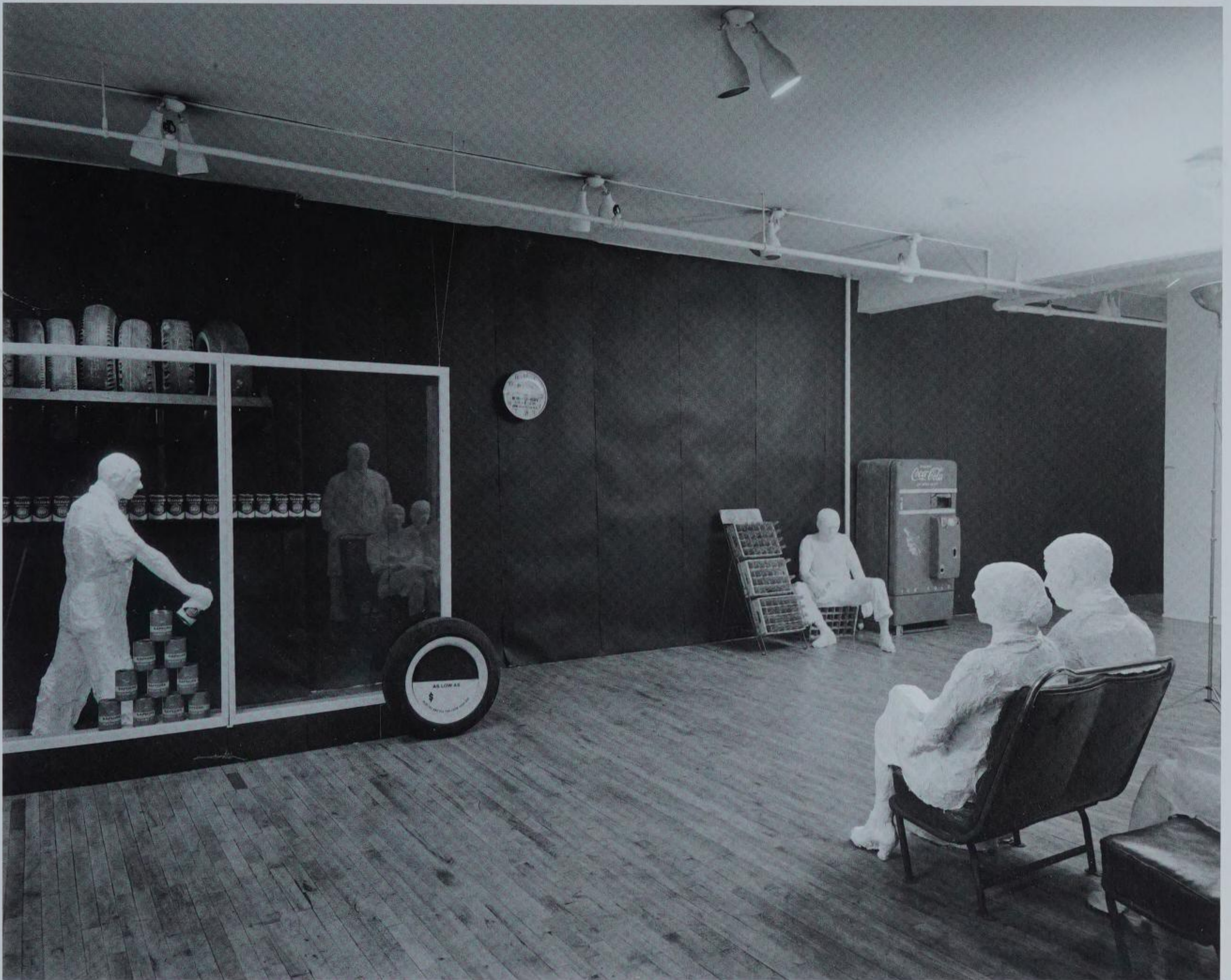


Fig. 196. George Segal's artwork in *Recent Paintings and Sculpture*, Green Gallery, New York, May 8–June 2, 1962

Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Rudy Burckhardt papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

who also appeared in the program, Bellamy projected an air of discomfort and uncertainty. Recalling his reaction to George Segal's sculptures, he hypothesized:

I didn't really understand what it was. And I looked at it for three weeks out in the gallery. We were moving it out of that particular show, and I just saw it on the instant it went out on the elevator, and I said, "George leave that here for another three weeks." So that was that, but I still didn't get it.⁶²

Bellamy's continuing inability to grasp his own reaction to Segal's sculpture comes across as indecisive—might he be saying something that undermines the artist? And if so, what would his motivation be, especially as that artist's dealer? "All of his decisions were conducted as if they were poetic," Lucas Samaras recalled. "His mind was open, and as he was talking it was as if you had access to his mind."⁶³ For Bellamy it was more interesting to answer questions by exploring the answers' complexities. In other words, Segal's sculptures fascinated Bellamy precisely because he found the artist's work difficult to understand.



Fig. 197. Tom Wesselmann, with his *Great American Nude* (far left) and *Still Life* paintings, Green Gallery, New York, 1962
 Photograph: Jerry Goodman. Estate of Tom Wesselmann, New York

Another artist Bellamy found challenging was Tom Wesselmann. The dealer deliberated for more than a year before offering Wesselmann a show, visiting his studio first with Henry Geldzahler and then on his own, sometimes even sleeping in the space. “Bellamy wouldn’t so much enter the room as he would suddenly be in it,” Wesselmann recounted. “He’d look all over somehow and he’d comment on things before he’d even look at the paintings, or he’d look at the paintings and he’d look at everything else and he wouldn’t say anything for maybe half an hour about the paintings. He sort of wanted to let them soak into him a little bit. He didn’t seem to go too much with first responses.”⁶⁴ At the time, Wesselmann had begun using elements drawn from advertising, pushing his exquisite small-scale collages in a larger, more literal direction:

One day I used a tiny bottle picture on a table in one of my little nude collages. It was a logical extension of

what I was doing. I use a billboard picture because it is a real, special representation of something, not because it is from a billboard. Advertising images excite me mainly because of what I can make from them. Also, I use real objects because I need to use objects, not because objects need to be used. But the objects remain part of a painting because I don’t make environments.⁶⁵

Wesselmann’s Green Gallery debut, in November–December 1962, introduced the artist’s large-scale painting-collages, the artwork for which he is best known today. The exhibition was densely hung, with little more than one foot between pieces. Works from his *Great American Nude* series were mixed in with still lifes and landscapes, all of them incorporating drawings and magazine blow-ups, including direct references to popular brands such as Libby’s, Del Monte, and Lipton. The effect was not unlike walking into a life-sized magazine.⁶⁶ One recurring motif was stars from the American flag,

not always on a blue ground. In fact, reds, white, and blues dominated the artist's palette, along with yellow and gold (fig. 197).

The works garnering the most attention were the Great American Nudes, which show a female figure, often in a suggestive pose, made more eye-catching through its rendering in a flat, high-keyed color such as fuchsia. Although the painted figures clearly reference Matisse, critics situated Wesselmann among the so-called New Realists, or Pop artists, whose works were on view concurrently at the Sidney Janis Gallery, in a show that also included works by Wesselmann. From the outset, he rejected the Pop label and denied that his work had social content. "I was only interested in visual or literal things," Wesselmann told Irving Sandler. "When people began to talk all the time about Coca-Cola or the Campbell (sic) Soup cans and all that sort of stuff, I began to get very uneasy because that was subject-matter talk, and I was involved in important, aesthetic matters, I felt, not subject matter."⁶⁷ The critics failed to recognize this. O'Doherty likened Wesselmann to an entertainer who "takes the produce of his society and turns it into blankly empty, fascinating non-statements," though he did concede that the artist cleverly maneuvered "all sorts of switches between the real and the illusory."⁶⁸

At the Green Gallery, all but one of Wesselmann's works were hung from picture wires suspended from the ceiling. The outlier, mounted on a pedestal placed against the wall, incorporated an actual, functioning window shade and hinted at Wesselmann's next series, in which the use of fully operational objects, not junk, pushed collage-assemblage in a different direction. "If there was any single aspect of my work that excited me, it was . . . not just the difference between (representations) but the aura each had with it," Wesselmann told an interviewer in 1962. "A painted pack of cigarettes next to a painted apple wasn't enough for me. . . . But if one is from a cigarette ad and the other a painted apple, they are two different realities and they trade on each other."⁶⁹

Wesselmann's second show at the Green Gallery, in February–March 1964, embraced an industrial aesthetic (fig. 198). Using metal, plastic, and Formica shelving, he installed mass-produced commercial products in a series of still-life wall reliefs. Several artworks were designed as light boxes, illuminating both the picture plane and the surrounding space. This second series had



Fig. 198. Tom Wesselmann exhibition, Green Gallery, New York, February–March 1964, installation view
Photograph: Jerry Goodman. Estate of Tom Wesselmann, New York

none of the hand-drawn elements seen in Wesselmann's initial collages, and their link to industry and manufacturing was even more direct. The artist also incorporated sounds—a radio playing in one, effervescent champagne or cola being poured in another.

The critics found the series troubling. Vivien Raynor, who attacked it as "instant, disposable art," was especially dismissive of Wesselmann's motivations:

It's all an enormous anti-intellectual ball, the more so if you remember that this year's anti-intellectuals were last year's intellectuals who never went anywhere without their Vivaldi records. They are now busy exploring neo-Dada attitudes which involve taking everything quintessentially American that was previously abhorred and making art in giant quotation marks.⁷⁰

Raynor could not see past Wesselmann's subject matter. For her, there was no depth in his work beyond immediate apprehension. She missed how the paintings, as three-dimensional reliefs, occupied a terrain more commonly found in architecture. For Wesselmann, this was the point: "All painting is fact, and that is enough; the paintings are charged with their very presence. The situation, physical idea, physical presence—I feel that is the comment."⁷¹



Fig. 199. Claes Oldenburg, Poster for group show, Green Gallery, New York, September 19–October 14, 1961
 Offset print, 22½ × 17½ in. (57 × 44.4 cm)
 Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York

CLAES OLDENBURG

In critical writing of the period, the Green Gallery's Rosenquist, Segal, and Wesselmann shows helped solidify the notion of Pop Art, if not as a movement, then certainly as a trend. One artist stood apart from initial critical analysis, however: Claes Oldenburg. His work remained challenging to classify. Though the ideas and images in his *The Street* were informed by newspapers and events he had witnessed in the city, Oldenburg did not appropriate mass-media imagery; indeed, until 1962, his artwork lacked the jolt of the recognizable, and it was not industrial. Yet it displayed a close relationship with photography, in the strobe in *Snapshots*, for instance, and in the *Fotodeath* segment of *Circus: Ironworks/Fotodeath* (1961), a Happening that incorporated a photographer. When Oldenburg employed literalism, he placed it alongside allusion. In appropriating quotidian objects, he also transformed them through his manipulation of materials. Oldenburg's sculptural environments

were more architectural than Segal's. Indeed, Segal's tread into the environmental in May 1962 was nearly the opposite of Oldenburg's. While Segal's demarcation of space was highly contained, regulated by the human narratives governing each scene, Oldenburg's was less programmatic and therefore less predictable.

Oldenburg had first encountered Bellamy at the Hansa Gallery in the 1950s, and Bellamy in turn had attended the artist's exhibitions and performances at the Judson and Reuben galleries. After joining the Green Gallery in 1960, Oldenburg initially participated in group shows, twice designing the announcements (see fig. 199). But it was his September 24–October 20, 1962 solo exhibition that was to become a watershed project for the gallery, the artist, and, ultimately, for art history.⁷² Gestated downtown, Oldenburg's concept for his Green Gallery show extended his work into performance and expanded the ideas he had been testing in his new studio. In June 1961, following the Reuben's closure, he rented a storefront at Second Street and Second Avenue; dubbing it *The Store*, he worked that summer and into the fall making plaster objects based on merchandise in Lower East Side shops, which he then put on display. Oldenburg filled the storefront with colorful hand-painted sculptures, from pastries and burgers to women's underwear.

In December of that year, *The Store* became affiliated with the Green Gallery. Bellamy arranged for modest financing, including for the five Ray Gun Theater performances that Oldenburg staged between January and May 1962.⁷³ His promotional announcement for *The Store* resembles the Puerto Rican theater posters commonly seen on the Lower East Side. Printed by the same East Harlem company used by the theaters, it announced the studio's hours, as well as the Green Gallery's role as sponsor (fig. 200). In addition, Oldenburg designed two postcards announcing the Ray Gun Theater program, which made its debut in February 1962. One postcard showed Oldenburg gesturing to a woman, Judy Tersch, wearing frilly underpants, while in the center Lucas Samaras sits on a stool before a panoramic poster of New York Harbor. The second card was a photograph of his then-wife, Patty Mucha, holding a long metal pole with a winglike span of canvas attached, an image from the *Fotodeath* performance.

In the summer of 1962, Bellamy turned the Green Gallery over to Oldenburg and Mucha for use as a studio, where they constructed a new series of soft sculptures made of sailcloth. Mucha, a master seamstress, did the sewing. As Oldenburg became more familiar with fabric, he made small-scale cardboard models

Fig. 200. Claes Oldenburg, Poster for *The Store*, New York, December 1–31, 1961
 Letterpress, 28¼ × 22⅛ in. (71.8 × 56.2 cm)
 Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York

RAY-GUN MFG. CO.

DICIEMBRE 1 AL 31

**THE
STORE
BY
CLAES OLDENBURG**

107 E. 2ND ST.

HOURS: FRI., SAT., SUN. 1 TO 6 P.M.

AND BY APPOINTMENT

IN COOPERATION WITH

THE GREEN GALLERY

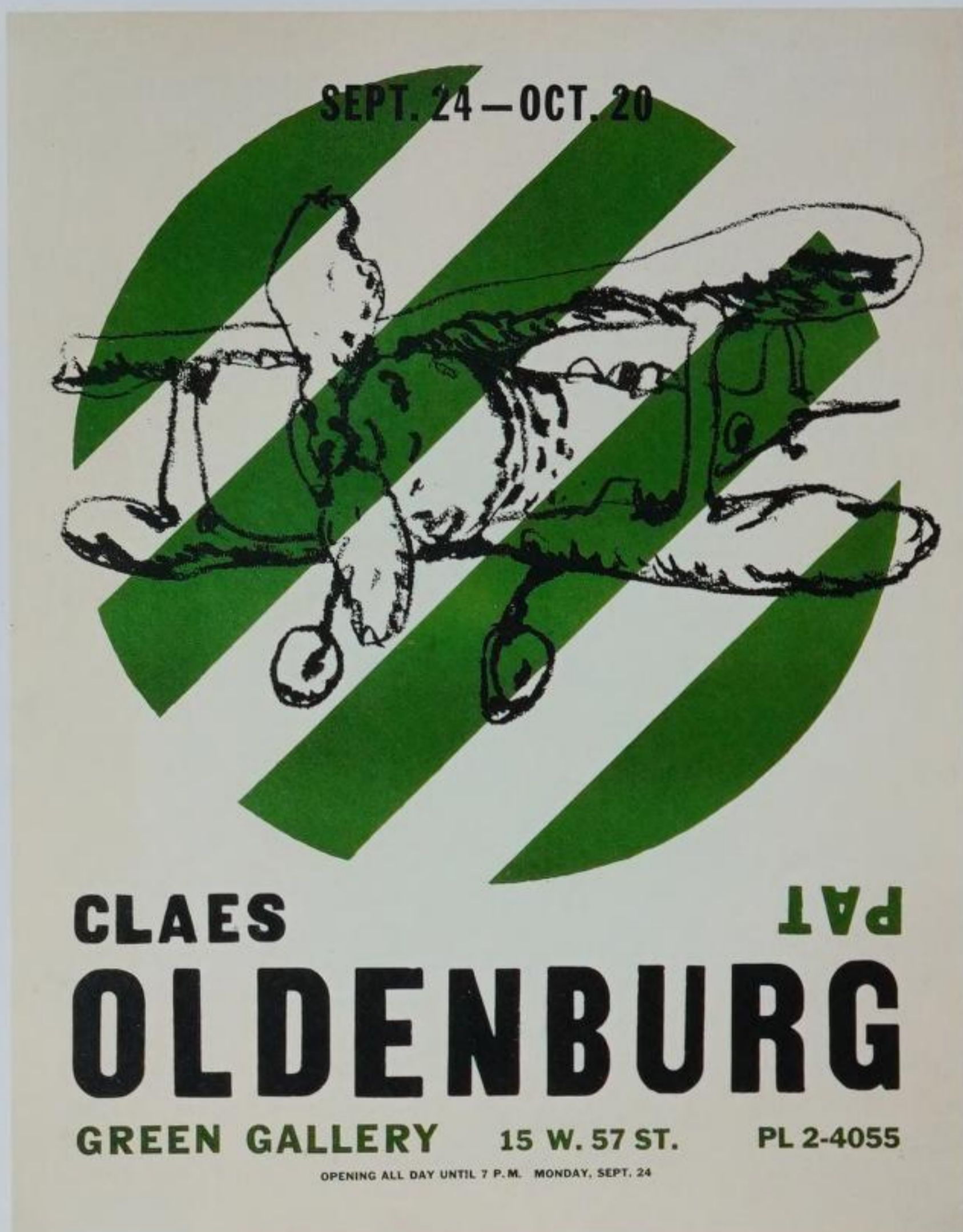


Fig. 201. Claes Oldenburg, Poster for *Oldenburg* exhibition, Green Gallery, New York, September 24–October 20, 1962

Offset lithograph, 22⁵/₈ × 17¹/₂ in. (58.1 × 44.5 cm)

Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York

on which to base his patterns. Initially, all his fabrication was done in situ. “I worked in the gallery all summer with Patty,” Oldenburg recalled. “We sewed big pieces, the Hamburger, the Cone, Cake, we made a lot of plaster pieces downtown [which I brought uptown].”⁷⁴

Oldenburg also arranged for photographer Robert McElroy (1928–2012) to document their progress, suggesting the importance Oldenburg placed on creating and installing his work. McElroy recorded the artist at work throughout the summer and continued up to the show’s opening on September 24. His color slides and black-and-white photographs show the gradual transformation of the gallery space into a warehouse for the stuffed but flaccid sculptures (fig. 202). While Mucha labors at the sewing machine, seemingly swallowed at times by great volumes of cloth, Oldenburg applies color to the sewn sculptures. One artwork, *Soft Calendar* (documenting August, the month they worked), underwent several changes in the ordering and placement of the numbers and colors used—ultimately leaving a few numbers out of sequence, and all

but five painted white (the others are red). McElroy also captured the installation process—Bellamy and an unidentified assistant are present in some shots—including various attempts at arranging pedestals before most of them were removed in favor of placing the artwork directly on the floor.

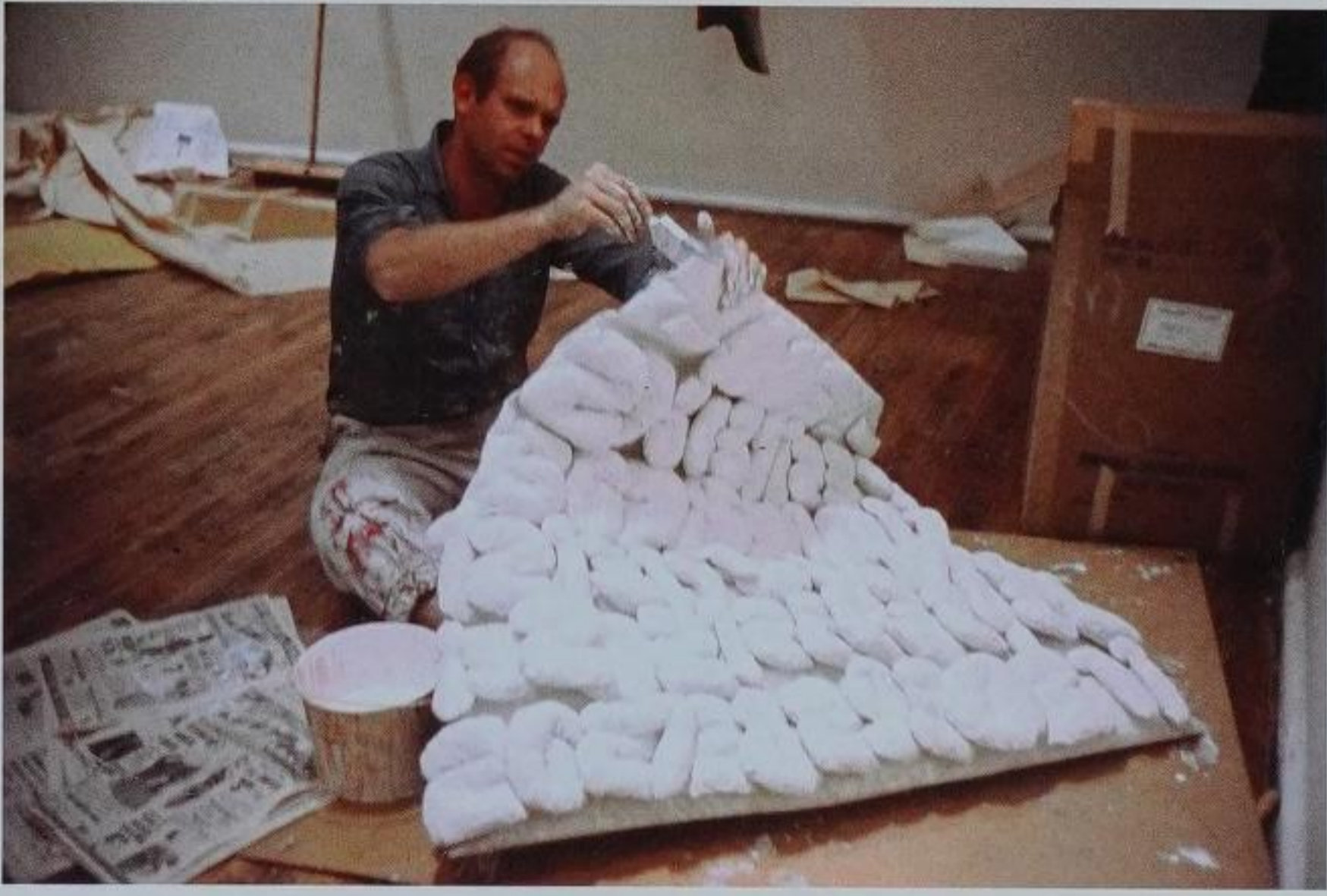
Oldenburg’s poster for the show plays on both the handmade (a drawing of an early aircraft, conveying a whiff of nostalgia) and the commercial (radar-like green bars forming a circle around the plane; a sans-serif font). Significantly, it credits the participation of both Oldenburgs, with Pat’s name appearing on the right margin, in green letters, upside down (fig. 201).

The exhibition sparked debate. Instead of reviewing it, Sidney Tillim contributed a sustained discussion of Oldenburg’s show and its implications for realism in the *Arts Magazine* column “Month in Review.”⁷⁵ Referencing a conversation with a “respected fellow-critic” who did not believe Oldenburg worthy of sustained analysis, Tillim felt it necessary not only to confront the Green Gallery show but also to place it in relation to Oldenburg’s earlier projects, especially *The Store*. Although Tillim himself was never especially engaged by Oldenburg’s artwork—he had deemed the artist’s Reuben Gallery show a three-dimensional derivative of Dubuffet—he recognized in Oldenburg’s method “a seeming flight from intelligence, but it is a flight well planned, despite all the messiness and fragility which comes from giving, on the one hand, a priority to his means through indifference, and, on the other, from demonstrating an idea at the expense of craft.”⁷⁶ In other words, he did not like the Green Gallery exhibition, but he respected its seriousness.

In Oldenburg’s work, Tillim pinpointed a problem in representation and its future as an art form. He saw this future as bleak indeed, for “neo-Dada” strategies such as Oldenburg’s did not strike him as cathartic but rather as “lamentable.” His hope was for Oldenburg, like all artists working in representational modes, “to find a reality—and a way of seeing reality—that acknowledges the continuity of representational images in art, yet enables him to assert his imagination.” He found the “fantastic simulacra” made for *The Store* to be a promising start, presenting “the most consummate ‘artistic’ form this renunciation has yet achieved.” But for him, the Green Gallery show’s “mix of crudity with nostalgia” did not delve deeper into Oldenburg’s new figuration so much as trend toward Pop, where the existential was replaced by “mass-produced sophistication.” In other words, the soft sculptures were cleaned-up, more refined versions of the plaster pieces, which

Fig. 202. Claes Oldenburg and Patty Mucha constructing and installing sculptures, Green Gallery, New York, August–September 1962

Photographs: Robert McElroy. Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York, and Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles



pleased bourgeois taste and thus, ipso facto, ceased to be avant-garde. Tillim concluded:

For at no time in Oldenburg's work was there ever a possibility for form to have a destiny. Instead there was only the furious brilliance of its moment of object-truth and the rest, as we see, becomes a throttling convention. . . . [The] area of useful visual reality which he has illuminated must now fall to more conventional artists who are willing to accept real time once more as a dimension in art.⁷⁷

Tillim's dilemma did not just portend a crisis for representation, it precipitated a fissure in critical discourse.⁷⁸ Tillim's formalist criteria meant that he measured Oldenburg's work in terms of modernist standards, and for him, art that existed after modernism—outside the issues of plasticity relating to form—could not be serious. For the formalist, the conceptual was simply conventional.

Astonishingly, Tillim's essay ignored altogether the exhibition's three-dimensionality, an omission corrected by Donald Judd in his reviews of Oldenburg's shows after 1963, when he left the Green Gallery for Sidney Janis in New York and the Dwan Gallery in Los Angeles. "Half or more of the best new work in the last few years has been neither painting nor sculpture," reads Judd's famous opening salvo in "Specific Objects." As a critic Judd relied on close visual analysis to measure a work's acuity. In "Specific Objects" he sets forth his criteria for gauging "interesting" work, based on simplification of form and perceptual wholeness. His qualifying rubrics included whether the work had legibility (that is, specificity) in materials and form, and whether it avoided illusion. Judd discerned in Oldenburg's process and creations an existence between two disciplines, painting and sculpture: "Oldenburg exaggerates the accepted or chosen form and turns it into one of his own. Nothing made is completely objective, purely practical or merely present. Oldenburg gets along very well without anything that would ordinarily be called a structure."⁷⁹ Judd's argument for an art that straddled disciplines and for Oldenburg's importance in creating this mode generated heated critical debate and, ultimately, laid the groundwork for postmodern criticism.

For Richard Bellamy, Oldenburg's show (along with Rosenquist's) had the practical effect of stabilizing the Green Gallery's teetering finances. The gallery's business records, which are most comprehensive between 1963 and 1965, document numerous sales of Oldenburg's sculptures at prices ranging from \$55 (for the lithograph poster announcing *The Store*) to \$1,800, with most works priced between \$100 and \$300. Buyers included the prominent collectors Count Giuseppe Panza, Ileana Sonnabend,

and Holly Solomon. An entry in the amount of \$3,200 by the Green Gallery—that is, by Robert Scull—records the purchase of unspecified "assorted pieces."⁸⁰

SHAPE AND SCULPTURE, 1963–65

Of all the exhibitions at the Green Gallery, those of three artists have become fundamental to the study of art since 1960: Donald Judd in December 1963; Dan Flavin in November 1964; and Robert Morris, who had three solo shows, in October 1963, December 1964, and March 1965. Cumulatively, they established Minimalism as a new art form. The exhibitions reconceived the autonomy of sculpture and transformed the discipline in terms of its use of space.⁸¹ The following discussion does not delve into the critical history of Minimalism but rather analyzes how those exhibitions functioned within the Green Gallery dynamic. Complementing this examination of Judd, Flavin, and Morris is a look at Lucas Samaras, an artist who epitomized the Green Gallery's ethos of openness and avoidance of orthodoxies. Samaras's two solo exhibitions there (in 1961 and 1964) counter common views of the period as completely dominated by Pop and Minimalism. On the contrary, Samaras invented a new visual language that resists easy classification.

Bellamy's curatorial interest in new sculpture other than Mark di Suvero's was realized in three group exhibitions: the first presented June 5–July 21, 1962; the second, *New Work: Part I*, January 8–February 2, 1963; and the third opened in May 1963.⁸² By that year, di Suvero had resigned from the Green Gallery, disillusioned with the commercialism surrounding Pop Art. These three group shows indicate Bellamy's new interests, and demonstrate his ability to incorporate entirely new concepts developed at Downtown galleries—seen especially in his embrace of Rosenquist, Kuwayama, Smith, and Oldenburg.⁸³ The June–July 1962 group show is notable as a transitional project. It included startling sewn sculptures, from Yayoi Kusama's *Accumulation* series, in which hundreds of sewn and stuffed "white erections" cover once-functional objects (fig. 203). Most likely Bellamy had seen Kusama's celebrated Brata Gallery exhibition in 1959, but how they met remains unknown. Kusama's biographer Midori Yamamura cites Bellamy's postcard dated August 18, 1960, as the earliest instance of his interest in her artwork. At the time, he was finalizing plans with Scull to open the Green Gallery. But Kusama had secured another dealer, Stephen Radich, who was considerably more established. When she ended her contract with Radich in the fall of 1961, she began exhibiting with other dealers, including Bellamy.⁸⁴ Also included in the June–July 1962 group show was a plywood floor plank by Robert Morris, a strange, spare object placed among large-scale wall paintings by Rosenquist, Whitman, and Smith; and two paintings demonstrating opposite tendencies, a thickly painted abstract work by Wofford and a silkscreen by Andy



Fig. 203. *Group Show*, Green Gallery, New York, June–July 1962
 Clockwise, from upper left: works by Claes Oldenburg, Philip Wofford,
 Yayoi Kusama, Richard Smith, and Robert Morris
 Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Estate of Rudy Burckhardt. Collection of Erik La Prade, New York

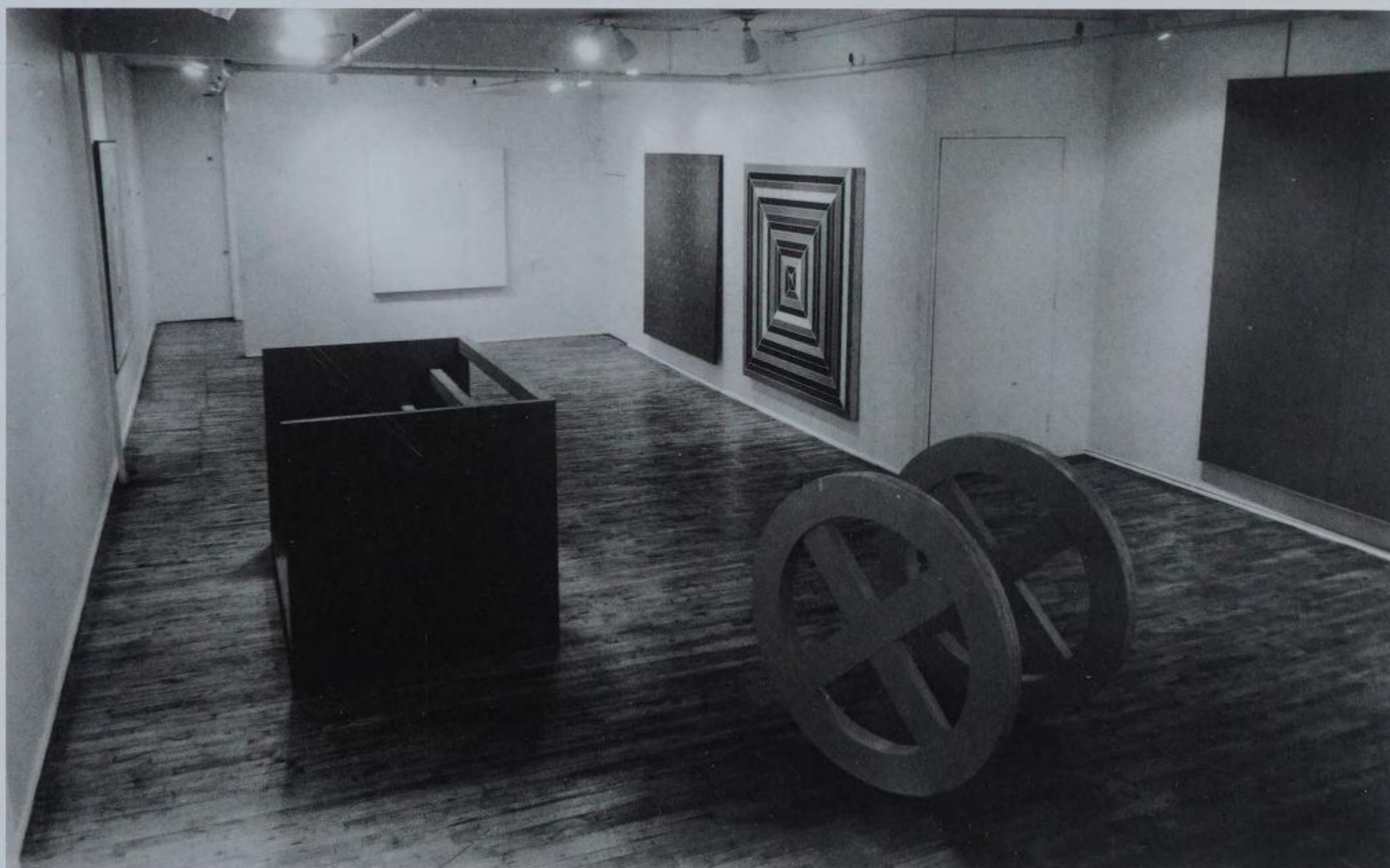


Fig. 204. *Group exhibition*, Green Gallery, New York, May 1963
 Clockwise, from foreground: works by Robert Morris, Donald Judd, Kenneth Noland, Ellsworth
 Kelly, Larry Poons, Frank Stella, and Tadaaki Kuwayama
 Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Estate of Rudy Burckhardt. Collection of Erik La Prade, New York

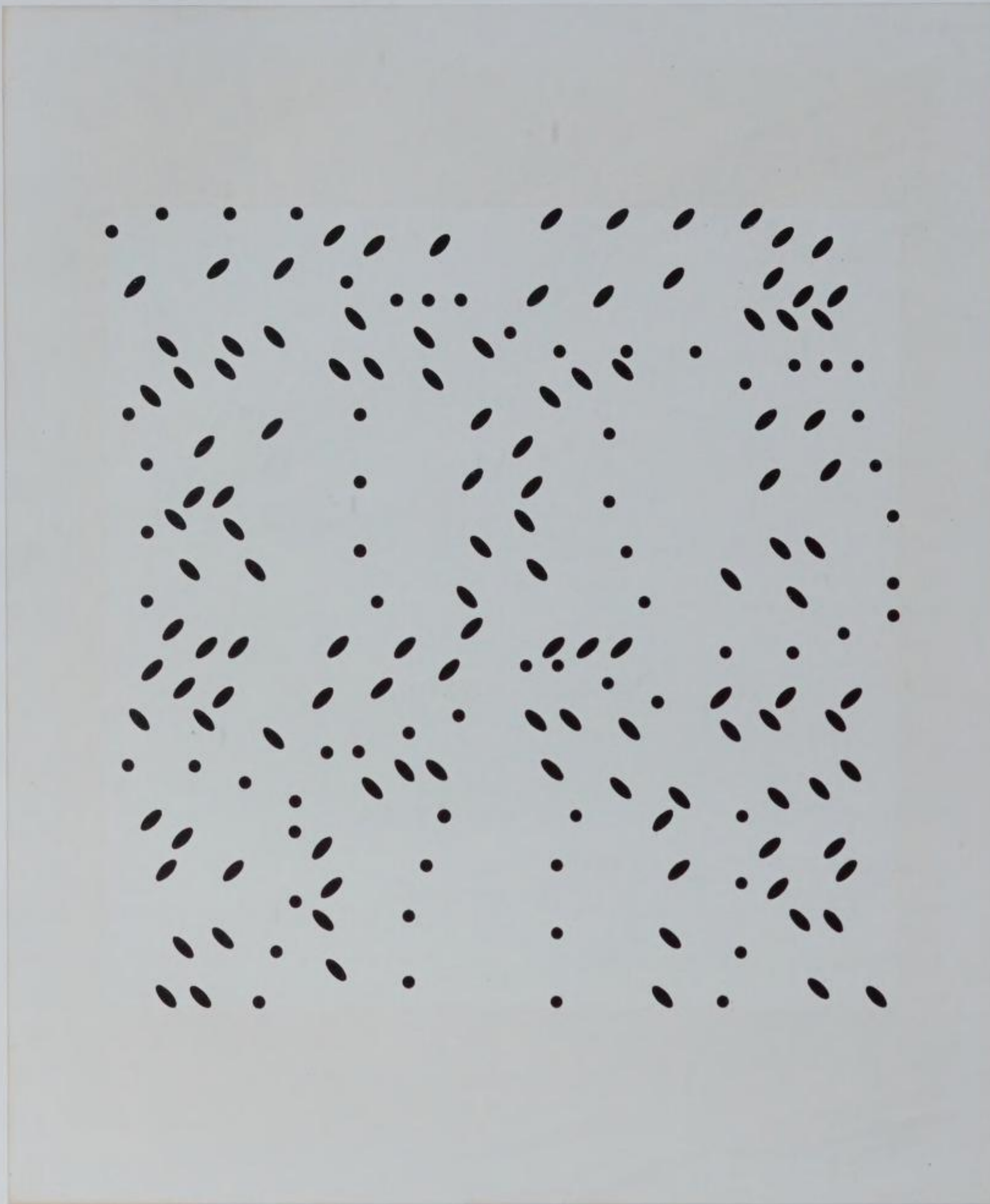


Fig. 205. Larry Poons, *Untitled* (copy 2), 1964
 Serigraph on paper, plate: 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 16 in. (41 × 40.6 cm)
 Grey Art Gallery, New York University Art Collection. Museum purchase, 1965.11f

Warhol, *200 One Dollar Bills* (1962), owned by the Sculls. Except for Wofford's work, this mix of strikingly independent styles was held together by a literalist use of materials or images.

Two group shows the following year signaled a new direction distinct from Pop. Both *New Work: Part I*, which was on view January 8–February 2, 1963, and the May 1963 group show (fig. 204) investigated sparer forms that produced strong optical effects. In these exhibitions Bellamy included four artists who went on to join the gallery: painter Larry Poons and sculptors Judd, Morris, and Dan Flavin. Bellamy met Flavin through Allan Kaprow, and Poons through James Rosenquist. Both Morris and Judd had approached him directly.⁸⁵ Among artists represented by other galleries who were sought by Bellamy were, most notably, Ellsworth Kelly,

Kenneth Noland, and Frank Stella. Taking a nuanced view, Bellamy included complex works by Kuwayama, Samaras, and Smith in shows where a sparer sensibility dominated, thereby providing points of comparison.

Flavin's contribution to the *New Work: Part I* group show, wood boxes hung on the wall, represented a shift from his 1961 Judson Gallery collages. To the boxes' sides he affixed sockets and wiring for working lightbulbs. He called these works "icons." Several of Judd's large wall reliefs were also included, among them *Untitled (Letter Box)*. On a rectangle of textured Masonite, wood, and metal, Judd painted in oil, wax, and Liquitex, always in cadmium red light. Adjacent to this work hung another wall relief by Judd, this one made of polished metal and red-painted strips of molding, curving in at top and bottom like a cornice. He also included two floor sculptures, the rectangular *Untitled (Bleachers)* and the plywood *Untitled*, also painted cadmium red light, joined by an elbow-shaped plumbing pipe.

In the May 1963 group exhibition, Poons exhibited one of his large-scale optical paintings that "blinded" the viewer, a gesture that, like Flavin's, sidestepped close scrutiny (fig. 206). Morris was represented by constructions deriving from his collaborations with dancers, including *Wheels* (1963). He also included *Card File* (1962) which continued the investigations of

form he had first begun exploring at Yoko Ono's Chambers Street loft. Taking an index-card filing system of the kind then in common use, Morris mounted its frame onto a wood plank and hung it on the wall. Most, but not all, of the cards were labeled with a term, for example, "Title" and, on the verso, "Card File." Each term contained a short rumination on both art and the filing system, to self-referential effect. Morris's playful use of language delighted his critics.⁸⁶

In 1962 Morris had gone to several galleries with the hope of arranging a visit to his Church Street studio. The only dealer to respond was Bellamy, perhaps in part because he had previously met Morris through Mark di Suvero. He might also have seen Morris perform at the Reuben Gallery. During the studio visit, Bellamy encountered a series of objects that investigated language while expanding upon Duchamp's readymades, alongside large, simply shaped plywood sculptures. Tension between propositional and actual ran like a leitmotif through Morris's three solo exhibitions at the Green Gallery.⁸⁷ In her review of the

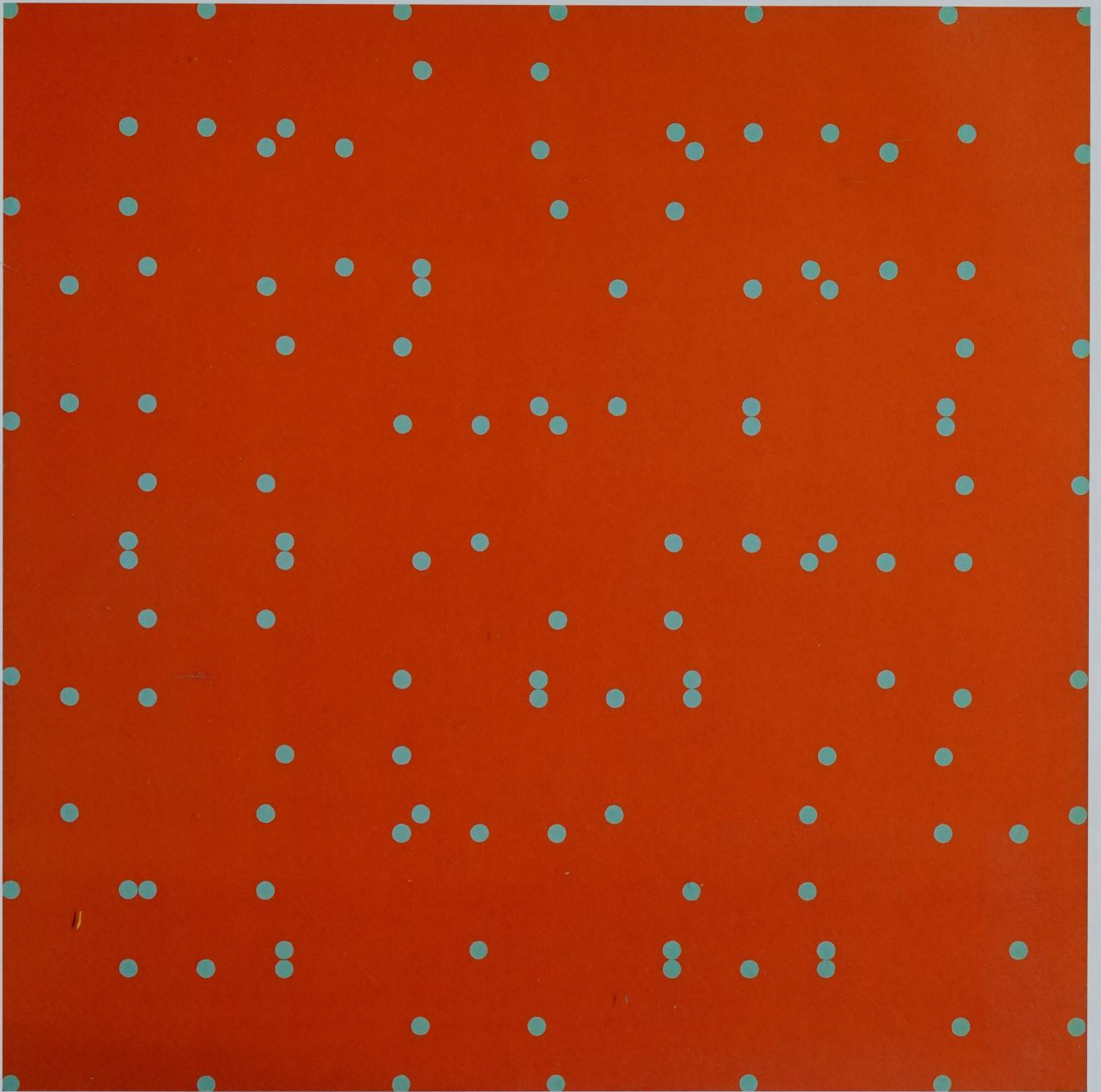


Fig. 206. Larry Poons, *Orange Crush*, 1963

Acrylic on canvas, 80 × 80 in. (203.2 × 203.2 cm)

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. Gift of Seymour H. Knox, Jr. 1964, K1964

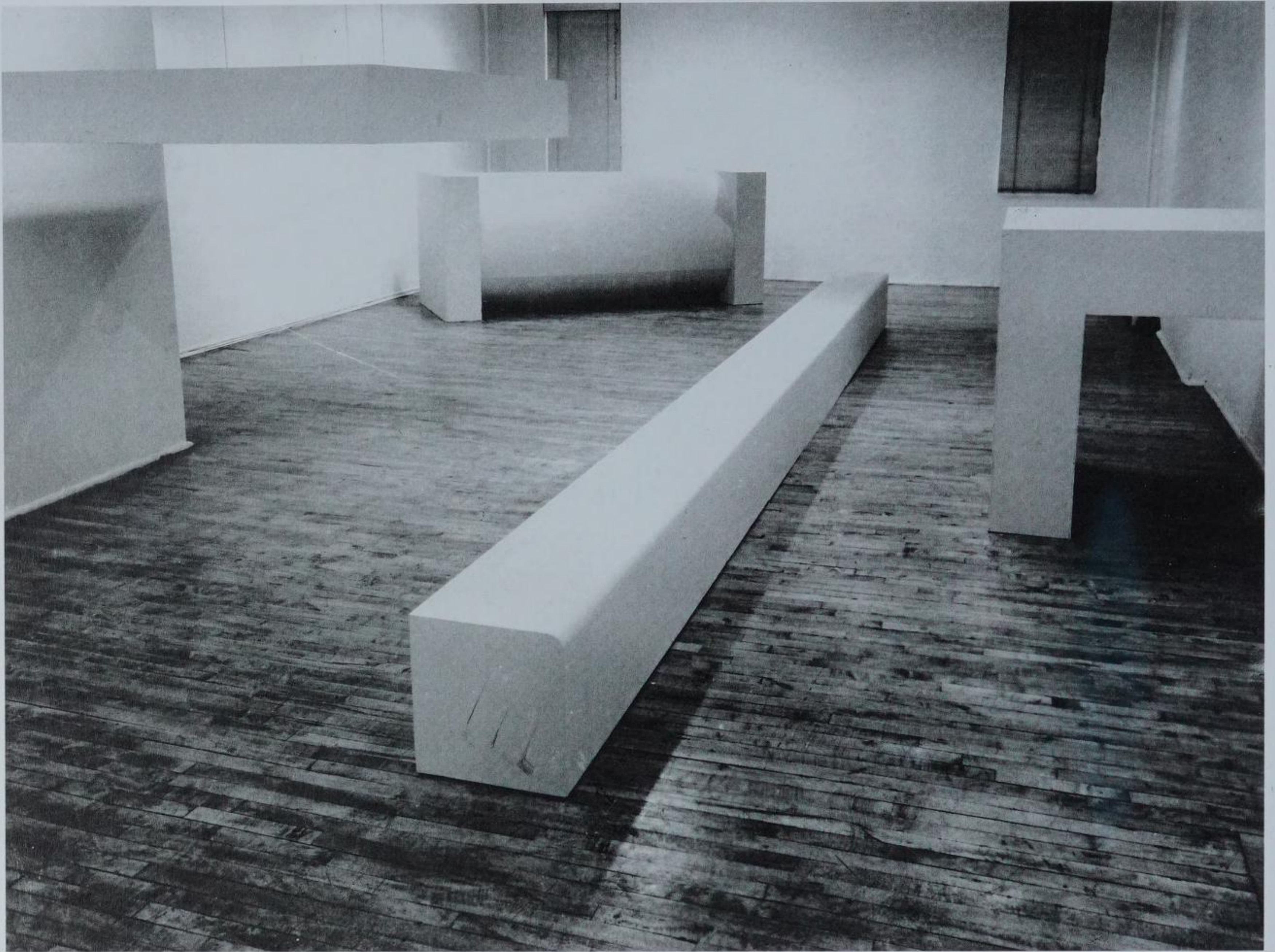


Fig. 207. Robert Morris, *Sculpture*, Green Gallery, New York, December 16, 1964–January 9, 1965, installation view
 Courtesy the artist

first (October 15–November 2, 1963), Jill Johnston found Morris's references to Dada smart, witty, and appealing. Reacting to his matte gray painted plywood sculptures, she wrote, "one sees and feels the impact of the idea as an essential condition beyond the reality of its physical embodiment."⁸⁸ With regard to the small *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961), for which Morris made a sound recording of himself constructing the titular box and then played the three-hour audiotape from inside the box, Johnston appreciated the logic in the work's literalism: "The action itself is the total purpose."⁸⁹ A similar logic governs *Metered Bulb* (1963), in which a single lightbulb is attached to a meter that records its use of electricity. Each object performs precisely the function for which it is designed.

In his apt description of the installation, Sidney Tillim wrote, "You see things but you hear them first. Water is running onto

a bucket high on the wall at the far end of the room. It has no apparent source and the mechanical magic of it takes you in. It's *silly* and you laugh. But this is misleading." The critic homed in on the deductive logic informing Morris's plywood structures, suggesting a "brute fascination" with woodshops and construction. For Tillim, beneath the directness in Morris's method lay the complexity of Duchamp's *Fountain*, which in 1917 posed the question, Why is this art? According to the critic, "it is art if you say it is and give it a certain context. . . . And since Morris's works are propositions about the nature of things and art, they are stimulating and intriguing."⁹⁰

While these Duchampian gestures provided a modernist filter through which to view Morris's 1963 exhibition, his second Green Gallery show, in December 1964, embodied an entirely different

sensibility. Responding to the gallery's cubic volume and floor plan, Morris made seven large-scale plywood sculptures—slabs, beams, and triangles, all painted “Merkin Pilgrim gray”—which he laid on the floor, hung from the ceiling, and set into the walls at right angles (fig. 207). The sculptures' intervention in the gallery's space rendered them dependent on its architecture. In his assessment of Morris's simplified shapes, Judd asserted that “aspects often thought essential to art are missing” in the “cool” geometric forms, the sculptural qualities of which were, in Judd's word, “minimal.” “They've been made on purpose, not found, to be minimal, unimportant, relatively unordered objects,” he elaborated. “Morris's pieces are minimal visually, but they are powerful spatially.”⁹¹

Judd's critical interest in spatiality was evident in his own solo show at the Green Gallery, which opened on December 17, 1963, and comprised nine pieces. He again presented the wall reliefs shown in *New Work: Part I*, together with a series of floor sculptures, among them several different approaches to rectangular forms (fig. 208). At the rear of the gallery Judd installed an untitled wood box, which was purchased by the architect Philip Johnson.⁹² Painted cadmium red light, the rectangular box holds upright an iron pipe that is partly secured in a groove. The rectangle's span is based on a multiple of the pipe's diameter. Situated in the middle of the gallery space was a similar work, also a rectangular wood box, referred to informally as “Record Cabinet” because some of its elements resembled that today-antiquated object, the metal record holder. Alongside these quadrilaterals were sculptures made from triangles and diagonals. The boxes were handmade by Judd himself and, with financial support from the Green Gallery, the metal elements were produced by the Bernstein Brothers in Long Island City, Queens, or by Treitel-Gratz in Manhattan.⁹³ Judd preferred saturated color that did not appear to have been applied but rather integrated into the material, as in the case of colored resin. At this early point in his career, however, Judd had to settle for oil paint, most often choosing cadmium red light, which he considered “the only color that really makes an object sharp and defines its contours and angles.”⁹⁴

In his essay “The New Avant-Garde” in the February 1964 issue of *Arts Magazine*, Sidney Tillim opened his discussion of Judd's work with a sweeping critique: “As Harold Rosenberg, of all people, said some time ago in, of all places, *Art News*, ‘Action painting solved no problems.’ Its achievement, he said, lay in its being creative anyway. But the new avant-garde operates in the face of the unsolved matters of that ‘achievement.’”⁹⁵ In his 1967

essay “Art and Objecthood,” Michael Fried went on to refine the notion that Judd's artwork was an intellectual exercise lacking in transformative qualities,⁹⁶ but Tillim was the first to make this critique.⁹⁷ Comparing Judd unfavorably to Frank Stella, whose spare geometric paintings are also based on a logical system, Tillim posited that Judd failed precisely because his work never moved past the idea stage. In Stella's work, by contrast, there remained a quality of unknowability, particularly in the imperfections, that brought it into relation with all of art. “Judd's work has no comparable link to the past,” Tillim argued, and this severing pushed him outside the domain of art.⁹⁸

Gene Swenson, so enthusiastic about the “New Sign Painters,” was similarly unconvinced by Judd's spare statements. He, too, criticized Judd's intellectual pretensions and deemed the sculptures and wall reliefs “neither lean nor intellectual enough to *look* as demandingly simple as they should. . . . It never seems to exist as pure fact (which it is in complete simplicity) nor as an illusion (more or less than what



Fig. 208. Donald Judd, Green Gallery, New York, December 1963–January 1964, installation view
Photograph: Rudy Burckhardt. Courtesy David Zwirner, New York and London

it is)—which is a logical if not visual paradox.” Ultimately, he was disappointed “that the visual paradox is so weak.”⁹⁹

For his part, Bellamy was surprised to learn that Judd, whose art criticism he admired, was also a working artist. Intrigued, he asked to see his work. Bellamy’s initial reaction was to advise Judd to seek out Leo Castelli, a suggestion Judd rejected. Bellamy speculated that Judd chose to join the Green Gallery because “this first body of work still hadn’t made a complete statement, and that therefore he preferred to be with a gallery that was forming. . . . (Or) it might have been as simple as the fact that the Green Gallery space was larger.”¹⁰⁰ Judd was indeed familiar with both the gallery’s proportions and its potential, as demonstrated by Mark di Suvero. Whatever Judd’s rationale, “I think he was sincere about entering the art world in some less-established way,” Bellamy reflected.

Dan Flavin remembered Bellamy’s awestruck reaction upon seeing his curiosities-filled West Village apartment, which the gallerist wished he could reinstall in toto at the Green.¹⁰¹ But it was only after he and his wife, Sonja Severdija, moved into a loft in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, that Flavin was fully able to pursue the experiments with light that he had first begun in 1963. It was there that the so-called icon pieces were born.

Flavin’s solo exhibition at the Green Gallery, which ran from November 18 to December 12, 1964, was unprecedented in the artist’s use of light and space (fig. 210). He had planned out the exhibition carefully, diagramming the installation in response to the different hues and temperatures cast by white and colored fluorescent tubes (fig. 209). He described his transition from using incandescent lightbulbs (associated with the home/private space) to industrial lighting systems as a more direct way of making light the subject:

The radiant tube and the shadow cast by its supporting pan . . . seemed to sustain itself directly, dynamically, dramatically in my workroom wall—a buoyant and insistent gaseous image which, through brilliance, somewhat betrayed its physical presence into approximate invisibility.¹⁰²

James Meyer argues that Judd’s critical endorsement of the icons was instrumental in precipitating Flavin’s shift to this new mode.¹⁰³ In realizing his predilection for installation-based art, Flavin followed in the footsteps of Oldenburg and Lucas Samaras, whose work is discussed below. Although his solo show more directly opened the field of sculpture to spatial concerns, Flavin was not a sculptor in the traditional definition. Instead, his artwork relied on the wall, falling somewhere between painting and relief. Each of his carefully conceived pieces comprised one or more light tubes, not always of uniform size. He sometimes set his works at an angle and, at other times, on a strict vertical axis. The depth and

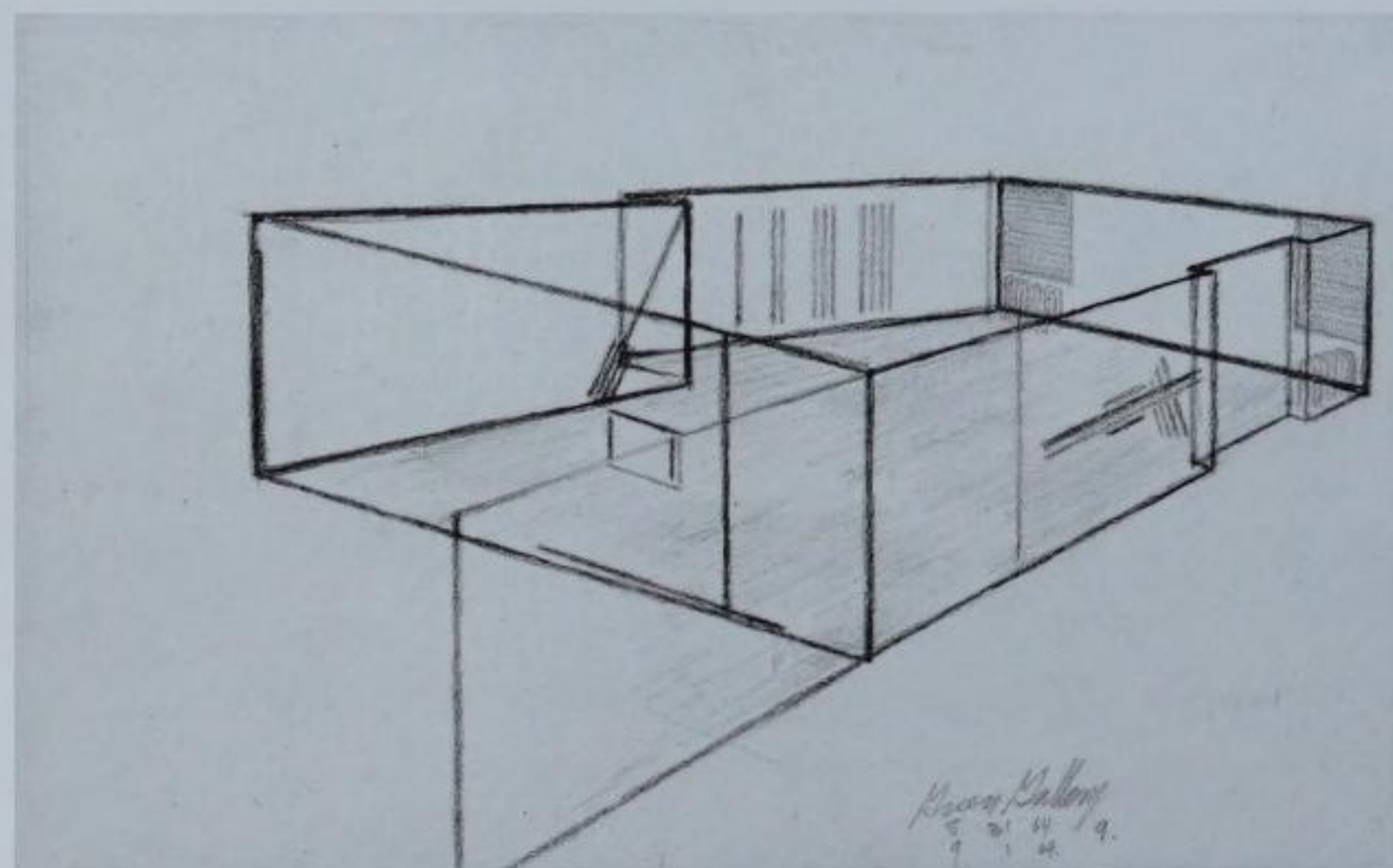


Fig. 209. Dan Flavin, *Untitled (Green Gallery)*, 1964
Pencil on paper mounted on cardboard, 4¹⁵/₁₆ × 8 in. (12.5 × 20.3 cm).
Collection of Stephen Flavin

effect of a work’s light emission depended on the dimensions of the room. Judd argued persuasively for the importance of Flavin’s work, asserting that his first fluorescent piece, *The Diagonal* (1963), occasioned an entirely new, advanced art:

Flavin has been using lights for about four years. He has thought more about them and done more with them than anyone else. A single daylight-white tube has been placed at a diagonal on approximately an eleven-by-eleven wall at the end of a short corridor just off the court. It makes an intelligible area of the whole wall. . . . The light is an industrial object, and familiar; it is a means new to art.¹⁰⁴

Flavin was not the first artist to make use of industrial objects specifically for their functionality; Tom Wesselmann had done so with a window shade in 1962. But Flavin’s approach was far more concrete. With essentially no armature surrounding the light tube, the object and its ambience were rendered coequal, and the artist’s use of his material made literal. Wesselmann’s window shade, in contrast, suggested a narrative construct.

The most sustained analysis of Flavin’s 1964 solo show came from a then-emerging critic, Lucy R. Lippard, who was not convinced by his wall reliefs. Calling the icons “paintings in light,” Lippard did not believe Flavin was in complete control of the situation he had created. She rested her argument on “the work’s lack of materiality,” claiming that Flavin had “not yet succeeded in coming to terms with or adequately exploring the nature of fluorescent light and color, which is characteristically bland, sentimental and generally diluted in intensity.”¹⁰⁵ The word “sentimental” is an interesting choice. In fact, the notion

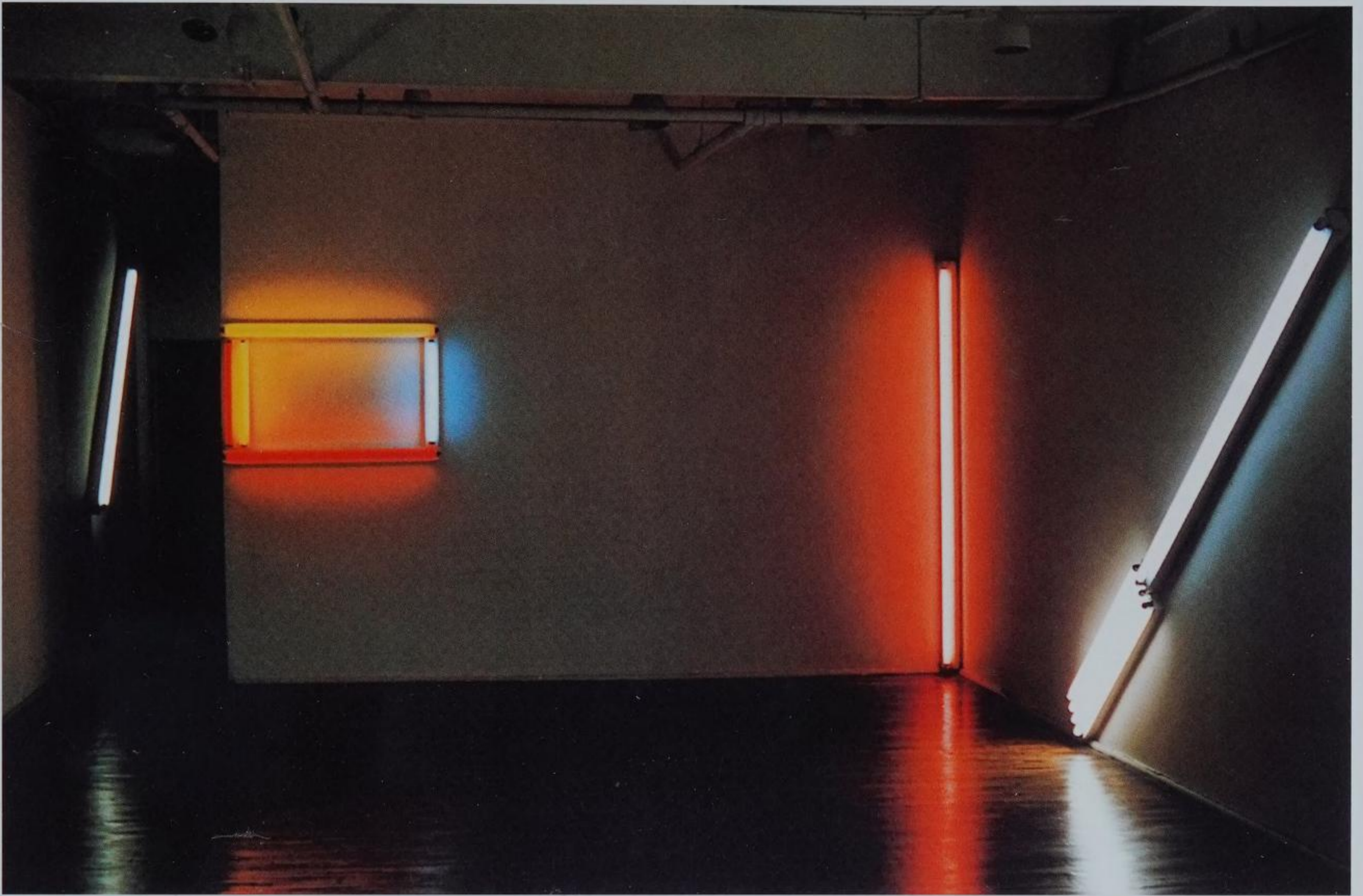


Fig. 210. *dan flavin: fluorescent light*, Green Gallery, New York, November 18–December 12, 1964, installation view
Estate of Dan Flavin. Courtesy David Zwirner, New York and London

that Flavin's strict, unadorned industrial lights deny poignant associations is belied in their glow. Clues may be found in his titles, which often allow for associations and various avenues of interpretation wholly outside the empiricist approach at the heart of Minimalism and, to a lesser extent, Pop.

LUCAS SAMARAS

Once material pragmatism had succeeded assemblage as the new cultural determinant, was there still space for an alternative approach? Two exhibitions at the Green Gallery of the work of Lucas Samaras, the first held December 5–23, 1961, and the second September 16–October 10, 1964, suggest that there was. Examination of Bellamy's curatorial viewpoint would certainly be incomplete without taking these two powerful shows into consideration. Samaras's exquisite pastels, plaster figurines, and textured forms of liquid aluminum and Sculpmetal could not be pigeonholed into critic-defined "movements" nor, indeed, be received on any other

terms but the artist's. "I'm trying to shift the minor arts into the major arts," Samaras wrote in a 1963 self-interview, a singular approach that prompted Bellamy to assert, "I'd never had the experience before of knowing anyone who was so totally autotelic (or) self-engendered."¹⁰⁶

Bellamy had first met Samaras in 1958, when Allan Kaprow was advocating for his membership in the Hansa Gallery. Although Samaras did not join the Hansa, he was included in several of its group shows during Bellamy's tenure as director, and his pastel still lifes and self-portraits, along with his aluminum-support paintings rendered in oils and smoke residue, garnered critical attention. Bellamy had undoubtedly seen Samaras's one-man show at the Reuben Gallery in November 1959, where the artist presented his first sculptural objects, small figures made of fabric dipped in plaster. Samaras recalls that it was thanks to George Segal that he was asked to join the Green Gallery in 1960—though given Bellamy's familiarity with Samaras's work, his need for Segal's advocacy is



Fig. 211. Lucas Samaras's *Pastels–Plasters–Boxes–Etcetera*, Green Gallery, New York, December 5–23, 1961, installation view
 Courtesy the artist and Pace Gallery, New York

debatable. In his early work, Samaras shared an affinity with the figurative painters Bellamy favored, especially Jan Müller, and in December of 1960 he included Samaras in a large group exhibition.¹⁰⁷

Samaras's first solo show at the Green Gallery, in December 1961, was one of the gallery's few exhibitions to have a title: *Pastels–Plasters–Boxes–Etcetera* introduced the artist's second sculptural series (fig. 211).¹⁰⁸ An inveterate collector, Samaras began in the late spring and summer of 1960 to incorporate into his sculptures various materials and objects he had saved. "I was using things that were partly ruined or about to be thrown away," he explained. "I think I was interested in the idea that when something became useless I could rescue it and give it a dignity it never had."¹⁰⁹ The boxes he made, crudely overstuffed with cloth and plaster-covered feathers, have the look of something medicinal, like a container for used bandages from a past era. Sometimes a face emerges like a specter from the density, but it is indistinct; the materials

dominate. In another series, devoted to the ritual of dining, broken porcelain, cracked wineglasses, and twisted cutlery are set on pedestals and slung from the wall like the ossified remnants of strange meals. Yet the materials maintain a certain elegance. In *Small Breakfast*, for instance, a blackened substance mars an otherwise delicate porcelain plate (fig. 212). Nearby, a fork's tines stretch like fingers, and a thin goblet contains dentures that once belonged to the artist's mother.

Samaras's attraction to detritus stemmed from his childhood in war-torn Greece, where he regularly fabricated toys from candy wrappers, empty food boxes, and even stray bullets.¹¹⁰ His facility for transformation, a prevalent theme in his work, combined with his tendency to build up dense layers and textures, led William Seitz to include him in *The Art of Assemblage*; Samaras's sensibility, however, was steeped not in modernism but rather in Byzantine reliquary objects, early Christian iconography,

and Persian art and architecture.¹¹¹ His box constructions contain implied narratives, each item and texture within imbued with a symbolic weight that adds up to a personal system of meaning. His work rewarded patience—countering the then-prevailing style, which enabled the viewer to absorb an image in a single glance—and drew comparisons to the work of Joseph Cornell (1903–1972) and the Surrealists.

Several of the boxes have pins and tacks glued to their surfaces with the sharp ends facing outward, toward the viewer. “A half-open black box, on end, before which you put your hands behind your back, is filled on one side with rags and string painted white and contains on the other side a mirror to which carpet tacks are glued,” Judd noted in his review.¹¹² In another, marginally less dangerous piece, Samaras experimented with liquid aluminum, treating it like paint to create textured areas instead of pouring it into a mold. Along the work’s edges, he fashioned a kind of frame from short diagonal rows of Sculpmetal. At the center and nearly invisible to the viewer, the sharp end of a safety pin sticks straight out at eye level. “First you see the object by its shadow,” writes his biographer Kim Levin, “and then you are confronted by the fact of its sharpness and the shock of its threat.”¹¹³

Donald Judd signaled his approval: “Samaras’s work is messy and improbable, as well as exceptional, and should present a general threat to much current cleanly dullness.”¹¹⁴ The two artists’ works appeared together more than a year later in *New Work: Part I* (1963), at which Samaras introduced a new series of pin-covered boxes, along with sculptures incorporating brightly colored wool yarn. In some cases the yarn was carefully affixed to a work’s surface in concentric circles, reminiscent of Samaras’s pastel and graphite drawings. In others the yarn oozed from boxes, abraded by pricks from thousands of straight pins haphazardly covering the surface. Bellamy installed the boxes at the gallery’s entrance, in a small room just outside the elevators that served to introduce the main gallery space beyond.

Even as Samaras was making these boxes, he began to work with books. In 1962 he decided to end his studies at Columbia University, where he had been pursuing a graduate degree in art history. He took some of his course books—*Treasures of the Metropolitan Museum*, *Treasures of the Louvre*, and *Dante’s Inferno*—and systematically covered them with pins. In a few works, such



Fig. 212. Lucas Samaras, *Small Breakfast*, 1961
Mixed media, dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Pace Gallery, New York

as *Book #4 (Dante’s Inferno)* of 1962 (now in the Museum of Modern Art), Samaras covered only the volume’s exterior, leaving parts of the text visible. Into the pages, he inserted a butter knife, tin foil, scissors, a razor blade, and other items, joining the text with his favorite motifs. “My books have what they contain on the outside,” Samaras wrote to curator Martin Friedman in 1966. “I was burying their content knowledge, covering it up and substituting a textural vocabulary. They also relate to Byzantine silver Bible covers that have saints and designs. The fact that they are difficult to touch because of the pins reminds me of the fact that certain objects in a Greek church must not be touched by people other than priests.”¹¹⁵

In his journals, Samaras drafted an interview with himself, discussing the major themes of his work up to 1963. Noting his



Fig. 213. Lucas Samaras standing in his *Room #1*, Green Gallery, New York, fall 1964
 Courtesy the artist and Pace Gallery, New York

father's work as a shoemaker and furrier, for which pins, tacks, and nails were essential tools, he meditated on these objects' impact on his work and on his personal associations with them:

(1) When I use them with the flat paintings they create a net pattern which breaks up the flat picture and creates a stranger illusion. (2) Pins are marks, lines, and dots. (3) They are relatives of nails. . . . I was raised up by a very religious family. The nailing on the cross . . .¹¹⁶

In Samaras's second and final exhibition at the Green Gallery, in the fall of 1964, these autobiographical strategies became increasingly direct. Following his parents' and younger sister's recent return to Greece, Samaras had been forced to find a new place to live and work. His bedroom, which had also been his studio, was a gathering place for his artist friends, despite being so small as to accommodate only a bed, some cabinets, and the floor

space on which he worked. Alongside his books and his collection of source materials, organized and neatly arranged, his finished artwork was hung salon style. With the support of Richard Bellamy, who had long been fascinated by artists' private quarters, and following on the sculptural installations and environments of Kaprow, Oldenburg, and Segal, Samaras decided to re-create his bedroom at the Green Gallery for his final show there. He called it *Room #1* (figs. 213, 214).

For this exhibition, Samaras built a discrete space in the main gallery reproducing the exact dimensions of his bedroom (15 × 7½ × 10 ft.), and making use of one of the space's two windows. This room was entirely closed off from the rest of the gallery, where

Fig. 214. Lucas Samaras's *Room #1*, Green Gallery, New York, fall 1964, installation view
 Photograph: Geoffrey Clements. Courtesy the artist and Pace Gallery, New York



Samaras's new works were on view: a series of boxes and objects, including wall reliefs made of pins and yarn. But it was *Room #1*, which re-created rather than duplicated an existing environment, that drew the greatest critical attention. This work followed the logic of a period room or diorama but with the important difference that visitors were allowed to walk inside, lie on the bed, touch the objects. With this gesture, Samaras made a very private space public. *Room #1* was a singular artwork, an immersive space that welcomed the viewer wholly into the artist's concerns but, like an art object, also kept him or her at some remove.

As Samaras's "bedroom" was being dismantled to make way for the next exhibition, he penned an artist's statement about the piece:

Room. It is a bedroom, a workroom, a storeroom. It has a door. It is real in that it has real things and you can walk in, poke around, sit down and make love. It is presented as art. Things don't have to be glued down. Relationships are not fixed but fluid. It is not a ready-made although it has ready-made clothes and books. It is not a reproduction of another room that once existed for me. The other room was the sketch, the germ, the idea. This room is the reality, the presentation, the art.¹¹⁷

Picking up on this notion of realism via reproduction in art, Jill Johnston wrote, "It is in fact a 'real' room, an environment which strikes out beyond other constructed environments to project, as both reality and conception, the artist himself as he lives and works, a portrait of the artist-in-process."¹¹⁸ Samaras explained:

I guess I wanted to do the most personal thing that any artist could do, which is, do a room that would have all the things that the artist lives with . . . clothes, underwear, artworks in progress. I had books that I had read or that I was reading. I had my writing or my autobiographical notes. It was as complete a picture of me without my physical presence as there could possibly be.¹¹⁹

Room #1 was certainly a personal reflection of Samaras himself—a portrait of sorts, as Johnston observed. And indeed, in the body of work that followed, Samaras came increasingly to incorporate photographs of himself and his family.

Bellamy's interest in the artist's private space—from his nominal support of *The Store* in 1961 to Samaras's *Room #1*—enjoyed one more flowering during the spring before the gallery's final closing in Bellamy's support for Swiss-Romanian artist Daniel Spoerri's quasi-open house in room 631 at the Chelsea Hotel, March 3–15, 1965. Between the hours of 4:00 and 8:00 p.m., Spoerri regularly left the hotel and Bellamy arrived, allowing the curious

entrée into the space. Spoerri told *Times* reviewer Grace Glueck that he intended for the public to see his art in situ, and she noted the "sly, surreal assemblages" in process, amid residue from meals.¹²⁰

As a forum for many tendencies, most of which were either outside critical discourse or offered parallel conversations with other, more mainstream dialogues, the Green Gallery is a challenging object of study. But reconstructing Bellamy's consistently adventurous choices and the risks he took affords us a broader view of the concerns of Downtown artists, even after they relocated uptown. Remarking on his own move north, Oldenburg stated, "The feeling was that Fifty-seventh Street was a very formidable place and up to that point (1962), I had avoided it." He continued, "But the Green Gallery was a way to feel at home on Fifty-seventh Street for the first time. It was a very unpretentious place. The installations were very straight ahead. There was nothing fancy about it; it was like the downtown moving uptown."¹²¹

CODA: ROBERT SCULL, POP POWER BROKER

Even as popular culture and media imagery presented 1960s America as youthful, vigorous, and leisurely, Pop Art entered "phase two"—that is, aesthetic strategies became more consolidated and, in the words of Lawrence Alloway, "everything shrank to an iconography of signs and objects known from outside the field of art." Arthur Danto concurred: Pop Art, he asserted, came down to "transfiguring emblems from popular culture into high art."¹²² This merging of art with everyday life felt familiar to the general public and was greeted with great enthusiasm by media outlets. For the first time, artists were being presented in magazines such as *Vogue* as handsome and fashionable, not tortured and alienated. Art as a form of self-making with the aim of creating masterpieces had become outmoded. Instead, artists and critics, with support from the media, redefined art as a part of daily life. In its exuberance and its use of common imagery, Pop Art in particular became Nietzsche's so-called ideal of the day.¹²³ For some, this shift signaled the end of art as a progressive series of histories.

That the Green Gallery participated in this transformation is undisputed, but its legacy is complicated by the omnipresence and insatiable appetite for publicity of its financial backer, the collector Robert Scull, whose involvement in the gallery is inextricably linked to Pop Art's dominance. He and his wife, Ethel Scull (1921–2001) opened their homes to the art world in the early 1960s and, after 1963, to the media. Pontificating on the meaning of Pop Art for television cameras and newsweeklies, he relished being associated with the art he admired and collected. Lingering over Andy Warhol's silkscreen portrait of his wife, *Ethel Scull 36 Times* (1963), and George Segal's 1965 *Portrait of Robert and Ethel Scull*, for which Ethel famously sacrificed an expensive pair of Courrèges boots,

Scull asserted that they were not merely collectors of the new; they were muses. “I became part of that creative process,” Scull testified. “I became part of the painting.”¹²⁴

Unlike other commodities, fine art gains monetary worth through the critical discourse it generates. Without this discourse, the object lacks cultural capital. But not just anyone can take part in the discussion. Art historians, dealers, collectors, critics, artists, aficionados—these are the experts who determine an object’s power to inspire and, it follows, constitute the driving forces behind its financial value.¹²⁵ Robert Scull had an instinctive understanding of this system. He and Ethel amassed a major collection of American art of the 1950s through the early 1970s, and they did so publicly. Their simultaneous promotion of their collection and of themselves brought them a great deal of social capital—recognition and power within the burgeoning new art society. But their notoriety repelled the art establishment. At a gathering of collectors and dealers at Richard Stankiewicz’s sculpture studio in the fall of 1959, when Scull was still mainly collecting abstract art, Richard Brown Baker took note of his ostentatious manner: “Mr. Scull held the floor, talking so clearly in terms of himself and his own acquisitions that at moments I felt embarrassed for him.”¹²⁶ By 1966, a year after the Green Gallery closed, the Sculls reportedly owned at least 260 paintings, 135 sculptures, and about 300 drawings by the era’s hottest artists. The media dubbed Scull the “pop of Pop” and the “Medici of Minimalism,” social markers that reflected his dominant status in the world of new art.¹²⁷

An art dealer does not enjoy the same status as a collector. A dealer operates in two worlds, the realm of art (securing cultural capital) and the realm of commerce (securing literal capital), each of which maintains its own logic and customs.¹²⁸ A dealer caters to and bargains with collectors, but a dealer or gallerist who is also a collector does not receive the same degree of attention. In fact, gallery owners were denied membership on museum boards due to perceived conflicts of interest. Their social status thus circumscribed, dealers became even more subservient to their clients. So why would the Sculls, who had benefitted socially as serious collectors, want to risk their hard-earned status by opening a gallery?

The Sculls had made their fortune from Super Operating, Inc., a Bronx-based fleet of some two hundred taxicabs with a business model built on cash transactions. Court testimony from a 1983 lawsuit indicates that Scull amassed his art collection with cash drawn from the business, perhaps without reporting it as income and definitely not divulging this expensive habit to Ethel. In light of their questionable business practices and the very public flaunting of their wealth, the Sculls were only grudgingly accorded their due as collectors, despite such legitimate qualifications as possessing the largest private holdings of works by Jasper Johns. Scull’s hardball tactics did not stop at business deals. When Leo

Castelli sold Johns’s *White Map* to rival collector Burton Tremaine, Robert Scull retaliated by withholding payment for a Frank Stella until the dealer consented to selling him a Roy Lichtenstein to make up for it. “Fuck him,” Scull wrote to his wife. “White map who!”¹²⁹ And as part of the contretemps over another thwarted purchase, Scull kept Lichtenstein’s *In the Car* (1963), also purchased from Castelli, in storage, thereby consigning it to obscurity.

Backing the Green Gallery enabled Scull to circumvent other collectors and their middlemen, the dealers. “He could get an early in on new talent and be able to get deep discounts and make a good profit,” artist Alfred Leslie explained.¹³⁰ Backing a gallery was a logical means toward achieving his goal of amassing a large collection. Ethically and socially, however, this proved problematic. His involvement would have to be kept a secret.

As Richard Bellamy explained, “Ivan Karp had introduced me to Robert Scull, who wanted to open a gallery without having it known that he was the backer.”¹³¹ But Scull cast his involvement in a different light, claiming that it was Bellamy who was looking for a backer: “I was introduced to him by Ivan Karp. We met up at the Museum of Modern Art, on the roof (penthouse restaurant). I met him for the first time, found him to be a tremendous character . . . (with) an extraordinary perception of contemporary art.”¹³² In the spring of 1960 Scull hired Bellamy to run his gallery. And Bellamy, with input from Karp, came up with the name. “Green” had associations with newness, money—and, possibly, something slimy or underworld.¹³³

EMBEZZLEMENT

Scull provided the initial cash outlay of \$25,000, or about \$200,000 in current value. In exchange, he obtained the right of first refusal on works by gallery artists. Sometimes he would pay for the artworks he acquired, but most often he took them in repayment for the gallery’s operating expenses. “We would go up to the gallery,” Ethel recalled, and “before (an exhibition) was even hung, those pieces were sold to us and then it was put out on exhibition. That was the privilege of having a gallery.”¹³⁴

Bellamy’s lack of control over the gallery’s finances, including his own salary, those of his assistants, and payments to artists, placed him in a deferential position. The books were kept by Marie Dickson, Scull’s longtime administrative assistant at Super Operating, and Manny Davis, Scull’s business attorney. The logic was direct: “They can set up the corporation for Green Gallery and then when it’s time we will be able to take paintings against the money we have put up in there and then take it out and get (art) for either nothing or we pay very little for it,” Ethel recounted in 1983, during her protracted lawsuit to recover artwork held by her then-former husband.¹³⁵ Dickson visited the gallery on weekends to determine the expenditures and track Scull’s contributions. She maintained her own books and reported directly to Scull, often

leaving matters, as far as Bellamy's interests were concerned, entirely unresolved. "LET ME KNOW WHEN & TO WHOM YOU PAY," Bellamy typed in all caps in a memo, "SO I CAN KEEP MY RECORDS STRAIGHT AT THIS END."¹³⁶ Ultimately, however, Bellamy's lack of fiduciary responsibility suited his temperament:

I would just take what came. I won't say it was indiscriminate, but there was no real thinking about the business aspect, or what a stable of artists means, or what a dealer does to promote them apart from sitting there and trying to sell a painting every time someone asks the price of it. If I got stuck at the end of the month, Scull would buy paintings or pay in advance for the things he would eventually buy. He wanted to make it possible for the gallery to survive, but he's not an altruist. He would have wound up with fewer paintings and sculptures if other people had been buying.¹³⁷

On a roughly weekly basis, Bellamy drew up a list of sales and expenditures owed by the gallery to its artists. His notes to Dickson often contained a maze of discounts, delayed payments, and deductions from sales for immediate needs.¹³⁸ In an undated document of about 1962, frankly titled "Petty Cash and Embezzlements," Bellamy outlined the income situation: "On June 7 A. Ordover paid \$50 final payment on a Lucas Samaras sale. I kept the \$50 for petty cash. It seems I embezzled most of it." He went on:

I also owe the gallery \$150 through a deal that is too involved to explain here. Suffice it to say I received a check from another dealer for a commission to this gallery for a sale; the check was mistakenly made out to me instead of the gallery, that very day the landlord was in town trying to collect 2 months back rent and I had to endorse it to him.¹³⁹

Bellamy sought to clarify the costs assumed by artists in producing their exhibitions. From 1960 to 1962, artists were responsible for shipping their own work and co-paying for all print advertisements for a show. But the fact that they were not always paid on time when their artwork was sold weighed heavily on Bellamy. In an undated memo to Dickson, his stress on behalf of the artists peeks through his usual insouciance:

I must remind you again, reiterate, rather that we must arrange to get [Richard] Smith another sizeable hunk of money, pay Kuwayama, di Suvero & Samaras soon. If it's possible to get a check to di Suvero in the mail today, that will expedite things greatly.¹⁴⁰

Day-to-day expenditures mounted. When Leo Castelli began paying his artists a monthly stipend against future sales and a standard 50 percent commission, other galleries, including the Green, felt obliged to follow suit in 1963. When these monthly fees began absorbing the gallery's sales revenue, profits owed to artists went unpaid. Records from the Sculls' divorce proceedings suggest that gallery expenditures exceeded Scull's resources. He hedged, avoided, and, ultimately, abdicated his financial obligation to the gallery. Yet he kept acquiring art, and in 1962 moved from Great Neck, Long Island, to an eleven-room apartment at 1010 Fifth Avenue, across from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹⁴¹ His razor-sharp interest in Pop put new pressure on Bellamy, and the 1962-63 season reflects the shift: artists such as Passlof, Hazelet Drummond, and Follett were out. At the same time, Mark di Suvero became disillusioned enough to begin separating from the Green:

I realized that if I were to continue [at the Green Gallery], I would be working for more dealers, museums, and collectors. I became very "socially conscious." Then, the children of the [Lower East Side] who lived in the projects came, and I began to make toys. As often when one does something good for someone, one receives without knowing it. They taught me more than the market and what the market does not.¹⁴²

Other artists were more philosophical about the Scull-generated media frenzy. Lucas Samaras reflected:

I think Scull was very instrumental [in establishing Pop Art], because he had a financial stake at the Green Gallery, so naturally he wanted the gallery to succeed, and a large chunk of the Pop artists were at the Green Gallery. So he functioned both as a gallery person as well as a promoter, because it was to his benefit for artists to wind up in collections, and so on.¹⁴³

The Sculls' Fifth Avenue apartment served as a showcase for their collection. In a half-hour documentary on Pop Art that aired on CBS in March 1964,¹⁴⁴ Scull appears at the Green Gallery's January 1964 James Rosenquist opening and submits to an interview at his apartment. It was Scull who emerged as the program's star, not the artists who were its ostensible subject. Like an astute politician, he looks past his interlocutor, Harry Arouh, to address the audience watching at home. Thanks to the film's editors, who left views of Arouh on the cutting-room floor, Scull alone provides the narrative. Ethel Scull is not even allowed to tell her own story about her commissioned portrait by Andy Warhol. Footage of "ordinary" moments in their home is accompanied by

Scull's voiceover proclaiming the significance of his collection. This final segment goes on for nearly ten minutes.

Yet not even media attention and artists' accolades could raise the Sculls' cultural capital. The final straw came in 1964, when the Museum of Modern Art denied Ethel membership in the prestigious Junior Council because of her rumored connection to the Green Gallery. Overextended financially and marginalized by the upper echelon, Scull promised his wife that he would completely divest his holdings in the gallery, going so far as to speculate about other potential backers.¹⁴⁵

In his own right, Scull was not able to achieve his ambition to build a collection important enough to place him at the center of New York's social scene. He needed someone with access—someone independent who had confidence and conviction about new trends in art. Bellamy had that ability. Scull, in turn, popularized Bellamy's choices, but he did so on his own terms, which included publicizing constructed "movements" such as Pop and, later, Minimalism. Ensuring public recognition outside the established art world through the mass media, Scull cemented his position as an adventurous collector. But when backing the gallery came to imperil the social status they had fought so hard to reach, the Sculls folded their support in 1964, precipitating the Green Gallery's demise in June 1965.

The Green Gallery's closing was greeted with astonishment. Amy Goldin's 1966 "Requiem for a Gallery" attempted to reconcile its ostensible success with its precarious finances. "The artists that Bellamy chose established the reputation of his gallery and defined its character," she wrote. "The very fact of the gallery's existence supported experimental production, because it implied the possibility of patronage."¹⁴⁶ Goldin reminded her readers that previously the market had been only one of several factors in building an artist's reputation. But now this was no longer true; money had become the sole criterion of success.

Along similar lines, George Segal, whose own extraordinary rise occurred parallel to the gallery's, offered this assessment:

The quick and enormous success of the gallery and a few of the artists made an overnight change necessary that perhaps Dick [Bellamy] could not or would not face. Shrewd and realistic men did simple counting on their fingers: this weird, skinny guy chose artists and one out of three could become a sky-rocketing star. They wanted either the work, the artists, or Dick. The artists who sold work expected to collect their 50% share, the new artists expected the Green to send them monthly checks and pay for their materials. The collectors demanded huge discounts as their virtuous reward for gambling on new, untried work.¹⁴⁷

Bellamy's reaction to Scull's withdrawal of support was muted, though he did mention the incongruity of becoming a dealer in the first place. Having formed a valuable bond with Robert Scull, Bellamy redirected his disappointment over the demise of the Green Gallery toward Ethel. In 1983, during the lawsuit Ethel filed against Robert demanding a larger percentage of the art collection than she had received in their divorce settlement, Bellamy testified for Robert, going so far as to deny that Ethel had played any role whatsoever in the enterprise. Further, Bellamy told the court that Ethel rarely visited the gallery, never expressed aesthetic judgment about the works on view, and never determined what the couple acquired for their collection. He blamed Ethel's desire to be on MoMA's Junior Council as the sole reason for the gallery's closure, conveniently ignoring the impact of Robert's ongoing financial problems.¹⁴⁸

Bellamy later recalled one particularly contentious incident when Ethel "summoned" him to Great Neck, likely in 1962, to warn him that his job was in jeopardy. He recounted his journey back to Manhattan:

At the end of the day she offered me a ride back to the city in the limousine. I sat in the back seat, and she sat up front with the chauffeur. She told me that Bob was thinking of pulling out of the gallery, that he was very grieved about it, but I was such a mess that things had become intolerable. It shook me up a little.¹⁴⁹

Ethel clearly had no patience for Bellamy's personal conduct or managerial style. And unlike her husband, she did not find him fascinatingly bohemian. It was only a matter of time before her discontentment coupled with Bellamy's disinterest in business and her husband's limited finances would come together and bring the gallery to an end.

In 1965 Bellamy found refuge at Noah Goldowsky Gallery, a secondary-market business where he was given the freedom to operate independently. He opened Oil and Steel Gallery in Tribeca in 1980, moving five years later, when the neighborhood became too costly, into Spacetime C.C., di Suvero's studio complex in Long Island City.¹⁵⁰ Though Bellamy remained involved in art for the rest of his life—he died in 1998 at age 70—he never again achieved the prominence he had enjoyed at the Green Gallery. For despite the divergent goals at the heart of their joint venture, Bellamy and Scull made a formidable pair. The former's legendary openness to art in combination with the latter's boundless promotional energy enabled both to achieve something new and extraordinary.



Afterword

Speaking of the New York art scene of the late 1950s, critic David Bourdon recalled:

It was such a complicated period. I wonder if it's so hard for me to tell because this was my emergence . . . but then, I look at other periods of history, they all look so cut and dry. In the late '50s I was so interested in what was called Neo-Dada and junk art. . . . Pop Art was a little afterthought. It was all this scrap stuff that was supposed to be the big movement. So I was so amazed when Pop came along and demolished everything else.¹

Clearly, for some people, Pop seemed to come out of nowhere. But the style was, in fact, a direct outgrowth of figuration and assemblage, antecedents that were downplayed by galleries and media outlets keen to seize on the notion of a "movement." And with time, this fabricated movement became an accepted reality. But as Bourdon noted and this book aims to prove, the history of late 1950s and early 1960s art in New York was not so neatly circumscribed. Indeed, its nuances make the story all the more compelling.

It is indisputable that the 1950s and early 1960s witnessed a reinvention of both abstraction and figuration through artists' use of sparer, more direct methods that make their work difficult to situate within a modernist canon. At the same time, assemblage lurched toward the environmental and performative, breaking away from a sole focus on the object itself to incorporate the body. As had been the case with abstract painters of the 1940s and 1950s,

aesthetic merit was determined not by market success but rather by artists and their critics, who were often artists themselves. Writers have stressed the small size of 20th-century New York's art community, but while its manageable size encouraged wide exchange, size alone does not account for the art world's rapid movement away from Abstract Expressionism. Artist-run galleries were core players in the shift because they provided arenas where artists could test out new ideas, strategies, and styles. Their communities' insularity allowed for the coexistence of many different strategies, but the co-ops' overall lack of sales enforced penurious conditions for many. Life on the Downtown scene was chaotic and the future uncertain; the era's artist-run galleries were an assertion of control assuring visibility.

For a number of (mostly male) artists, the co-op galleries represented a first step toward uptown commercial representation. In the 1950s and early 1960s, artists' values, unless they were engaged in political organizing, were not entirely out of line with those of the market. Artists were generally grateful for commercial representation and preferred it to operating their own galleries, owing to the costs and restrictions of selling outside the established system. Thus, artist-run galleries were not rebelling against Fifty-seventh Street—a point artists make time and again in the literature. Pat Passlof, for one, asserted that artists "would have given their eyeteeth to be uptown!"² And Budd Hopkins, a frequent exhibitor in co-op galleries, when asked about his memories of Tenth Street, wrote: "[T]o tell the truth, none of us really wanted to be showing there. We all longed for uptown—Janis, Kootz, Betty Parsons, Poindexter, Martha Jackson and all the rest. Without saying so, we felt that on Tenth Street we were in a holding pattern, waiting for the tower to summon us to the glory of a successful uptown landing."³ For the postwar generation, the artist-run galleries were a first step, a way to get their artwork seen, and

Fig. 215. Richard Bellamy, Miles Forst, Claes Oldenburg, and Donald Judd at Yam Festival at George Segal's farm, South Brunswick, New Jersey, May 1963. Photograph: Peter Moore. Estate of Peter Moore. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

for that reason they fostered aesthetic ambition even as they were considered transitional.

The artists' voices distilled in this project reveal a broadening of aesthetic methodologies, one mindful of the European legacy. But Greenbergian formalism's primacy—that is, the faith that an object's appearance is singular and its meaning universal—was challenged in artists' profoundly expansive discussions about subject matter and composition. During this period, an object's significance increasingly depended on the viewer's direct engagement. Artists involved in operating galleries were aware of this critical shift and welcomed the polyphony of voices it effected, recognizing that not every voice challenged the integrity of the art object itself. Practitioners and critics were united in acknowledging that Abstract Expressionism had been a groundbreaking movement, but how to extend its legacy, and whether it should or could be extended, sparked much debate.

Some scholars have argued that the rise of American abstraction in the 1940s and the relocation of the art world's nexus from Europe to the United States were dependent on Cold War policies that benefited the U.S. at the expense of Europe, and that these events were predicated on visual strategies “stolen” from European modernists.⁴ And indeed, at the time, the idea of an “American art” was seen as problematic, difficult to define in a multicultural society and never fully articulated. American artists of the immediate postwar period, however, basking in attention after decades of relative obscurity, saw their aesthetic as a synthesis of European modern art with American subject matter. Greenberg consistently argued that American abstract painting had not only extended the ideas found in Cubism, it had surpassed them. Before Abstract Expressionism, argued Greenberg, America “had not yet made a single contribution to the mainstream of painting or sculpture. What united the ‘abstract expressionists’ more than anything else was their resolve to break out of this situation.”⁵ But by the early 1950s Action Painting's dominance was being challenged, not only by the traditional arbiters of taste—curators, critics, and galleries—but also by other artists, the so-called second generation. This challenge began as a questioning of modernist values.

As Leo Steinberg noted, second-generation artists were “deprived even of the tradition of revolt, for there [was] at the moment nothing in view to be overthrown.”⁶ He suggests that theirs was an art of dullness and complacency, for without a rebellion, can art be truly radical? But American art's credibility was not at stake. Rather, artists of the era looked forward, yearning to surpass the success of Abstract Expressionism. A number of them did so by returning to the lessons of the Post-Impressionists, insisting that quotidian subject matter was not necessarily regressive. The abstract painters had rejected the everyday, but in their successors'

studies of friends, lovers, and urban scenes lies a new assertion of identity—a way of working through both materials and perception.

The first-person testimony collected in this study reveals that the history of art from the 1950s and early 1960s is rife with contradictory opinions, many of which still remain unresolved. Amid the fray, however, there were moments of accord. Artists and some artist-critics rejected Cubism's primacy, most famously Donald Judd, who postulated, in regard to the new art of the early 1960s: “Three dimensions are real space. That gets rid of the problem of illusionism and of literal space, space in and around marks and colors—which is riddance of one of the salient and most objectionable relics of European art.”⁷ Judd's disavowal was indebted to the American color-field painters, who came out of Abstract Expressionism and represent a trend that continued into the 1970s, the period when New York rose to dominate the market. On the other hand, artists' use of everyday materials in assemblage, simply termed “neo-Dada” by the critics and epitomized in the work of Robert Rauschenberg, was in reality a far more complex terrain. The Hansa artists, and Oldenburg's breakthrough projects at the Judson Gallery, were all part of rethinking representational art quite separately from the legacy of Post-Impressionism.

Buyers' enthusiasm for American contemporary art during this era was generated by a handful of dealers—most famously Leo Castelli, Martha Jackson, and Sidney Janis, but also Richard Bellamy and Robert Scull. Artists' movement to an increasingly large cohort of uptown commercial galleries reflected larger aspirations for American art. These centered on Pop and, later, Minimalism, and as these modes gained mainstream—that is, Uptown—appeal, the art community's energetic core shifted away from Downtown. “Among recent ‘revolutions,’ the change in the American artist's popular image, from pariah to celebrity in a decade, is one of the more startling,” Peter Schjeldahl wrote in 1967. “The uptown galleries, on the wave of public mania for novelty and big-time art, preferably in tandem, have seized the prerogative of introducing young artists and setting trends.”⁸

But if it was suddenly possible to be plucked straight from the studio into a commercial gallery, a rarity before 1962, then what was Downtown's relevance? It is important to bear in mind that downtown art spaces—despite serving as laboratories for dialectical concepts such as spatiality and the object's autonomy, the performer and the viewer, politics and modernism—were formed not as an alternative to, but rather as a training ground for, the eventual shift uptown. Thus, when the Tanager Gallery closed in 1962, it signaled the end not only of the co-op era but also of Downtown's accord with market values. As Schjeldahl keenly observed, “the bridges to uptown all seem to have definitively fallen down. As a rule, today's young artist either is born on the uptown side or is likely to die on the other.”⁹ This fissure, coupled

with the market's rampant sexism and racism, sparked the formation of self-consciously "alternative" spaces in the later 1960s.

Pop Art's salability and salaciousness quickly telescoped into a history of male practitioners. Though the concerns of women artists, particularly Marcia Marcus and Rosalyn Drexler, overlapped with those of their male colleagues, the women were largely excluded from uptown shows. They did not fare much better within Minimalism: Sally Hazelet Drummond, Joan Jacobs, and Yayoi Kusama, who were critically well received before 1962, did not fit the new paradigms. "We were violent against the women artists, who weren't as good as the men artists," Samaras recalled. "So in other words if there was a second rate painter, he wasn't attacked as much as a second rate female painter."¹⁰

Discrimination within the art system, which extended to non-white artists as well, mirrored that found in 1960s American society at large. The relative egalitarianism of some artist-run spaces—the Brata Gallery, the Delancey Street Museum, and especially the Spiral Group—was, therefore, exceptional. The vast majority of non-white artists were left out of the mainstream, in both artist-run and commercial galleries.

Allan Kaprow and Richard Bellamy embody an ethos of inclusiveness because they ventured beyond their initial network. As "curator" in both the Reuben and Judson galleries, Kaprow displayed both a discerning sensibility and an expansive approach toward aesthetic concerns. He was also receptive to female artists' work. Kaprow broke important new ground as a curator and as an adviser to collectors and museums. Full appraisal of his influence outside of his artwork is yet to be written. As for Bellamy, his friend Alfred Leslie recalled, "he was able to recognize quality in different categories, different areas: . . . It meant that he was discriminating by virtue of the fact that he made up his own mind and was not following any particular leads."¹¹ Bellamy would ultimately apply this approach uptown at the Green Gallery, to great effect, but he developed his methodologies by interacting directly with artists in their studios and at the artist-run space he oversaw. Robert Smithson, whose pioneering Land Art works would transform sculpture in the late 1960s, remembered the salon-like atmosphere Bellamy fostered at the Hansa: "When I was still going to the Art Students League I used to drop around the corner to see Dick Bellamy. He was very encouraging."¹² It was a sentiment seconded by Lucas Samaras in his recollections of the Green Gallery: "In the first couple of years, the gallery was almost like a thinking place where people would just come in and go in the back, sit down and have a conversation."¹³ Yet it is also important to remember that after 1962

Bellamy, with Robert Scull's direct involvement, essentially ceded the Green Gallery to male artists exclusively.

The artist-run gallery spaces examined in *Inventing Downtown* eluded traditional definitions. While the Tanager Gallery and the Spiral Group did address the issue of categories, their efforts are remembered more for each artist's independent tendencies than the terminology they devised. This study, then, proposes, through first-person artist testimony, that the galleries under discussion all sought to redefine modern art, as manifested in their exhibitions and projects. What emerges is more a dynamic history than a linear, movement-based narrative. The latter would have omitted women and artists of color and imposed false notions of proximity between artists working in discrete modes. This project is indebted to similar efforts by certain curators, critics, and art historians—particularly Linda Dalrymple Henderson, Norman Kleeblatt, and Julia E. Robinson—to keep difficult-to-classify artists in the critical discourse and the public eye. Each of these scholars has set an admirable precedent in speaking directly with artists of the era to reconstruct its history and rekindle debate.

As *Inventing Downtown* reveals, the rise of contemporary art in New York in the late 1950s and early 1960s was not primarily due to the actions and assessments of galleries, museums, and critics—artists made it happen, and they did so in great part by establishing their own galleries. In the past, art history often ignored the study of institutions. Artists and their creations were the discipline's central focus; venues were immaterial. The rise of institution-based practices in the late 1960s, however, awakened chroniclers of contemporary art to the importance of exhibition practices, and the ideologies undergirding the entire art system. *Inventing Downtown* demonstrates that the study of institutions does not lead inexorably to the conclusion that makers are exploited for the profit of sellers. In the realm of artist-run organizations, the "investors," so to speak, were the artists themselves. Financial gain was secondary to a shared commitment to furthering aesthetic ideas, a quality that distinguishes the 1950s and early 1960s as a unique and extraordinary era.

As Claes Oldenburg asserted in 1959, "art must do more than hang in galleries." He envisioned an art that would "appeal to people in a way that they need it. . . . My aim is not exclusive. I would like to reach as many people as possible."¹⁴ Such visibility is at the core of *Inventing Downtown*, which brings to the fore the adventurous and ambitious artists, both well and under-known, who changed the course of American art through the galleries they ran during the "break years."

CHAMBERLAIN
ROLLETT STATION
DISCOVERED
OLDENBURG
SEMPARS
GREEN BATTERY
15W 57

Billy Klüver and Julie Martin

Interviews with Artists, Critics, and Dealers

EXCERPTS SELECTED BY MELISSA RACHLEFF

After we published *Kiki's Paris: Artists and Lovers 1900–1930* in 1989, Billy Klüver and I decided to begin a new project. Calling it “The Break Years: Art and Artists 1945–1965,” we focused on another great generation of artists’ communities, a significant number of which were located in New York. We soon extended our research to encompass other parts of the world, including Europe and Japan.

Billy, with his engineering research background, decided that in order to achieve a complete and nuanced picture of the New York art scene during these years, we should interview artists, critics, gallerists, collectors, art historians, and museum staff to determine what events, activities, and people they felt were most important. We focused on people who had been born from the mid-1920s to mid-1930s and had begun to work in the early to late 1950s. Active in the art world since moving to New York in 1958, Billy had worked with or knew many of the people we decided to interview. The list grew organically as we asked interviewees to recommend others. Mainly between 1990 and 1993, we traveled and recorded conversations with more than three hundred people.

The book was never completed, and our audiocassettes remained in their neatly labeled boxes for some twenty years, until 2011. Then I met Melissa, who was just beginning her research for *Inventing Downtown*.

Julie Martin
Berkeley Heights, New Jersey, 2015

The following excerpts, drawn from thirty-three of Klüver and Martin’s interviews, focus on the speakers’ experiences with ten of the artist-run galleries included in *Inventing Downtown*. Their recollections are impressionistic, not always fully accurate or in accord with one another. Of course, that is part of what makes “The Break Years” illuminating; readers are encouraged to tolerate discrepancies. The excerpts are organized in approximately chronological order. Some of the interviews have been edited by the speakers.

Melissa Rachleff

Claes Oldenburg, Original collage for group show poster,
Green Gallery, New York, 1961 (not used)
Ink, crayon, and newsprint on paper, 24 × 18 in. (61 × 45.6 cm)
Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York

TANAGER GALLERY (1952–62)

ROBERT BEAUCHAMP: All those galleries were co-ops. It's a good thing that it existed, because it gave a lot of artists a chance. The Tanager had an extraordinary amount of people pass through it, people who later became pretty famous. . . . Everybody was friends. If they weren't friends, they soon became friends, or enemies, either one. An artists' co-op is sometimes a hectic situation to be in, there (are) meetings that get so emotional, and there's no money, and you have to share the work, so it can become very involved.

—March 27, 1990, New York

FRED MITCHELL: I found a little cheap place where Miles Forst lived; he found this place on Bleecker Street and I moved into there for a while, number 6 Bleecker. While I was down there, an old friend of mine from Rome, Angelo Ippolito, came over for dinner one night, and we'd been taking our paintings up to some galleries without any success, and he said, "You know, we have to do something, maybe open our own gallery." I said, "That's a wonderful idea." And we were walking on the way to my house and saw a little vacant former barber shop. It said, "For Rent," so we decided to inquire, and the next day we decided to rent it for \$59 a month, and we got Lois Dodd, Bill King, and Charles Cajori, and we formed the Tanager Gallery. Everybody said, "You're crazy." It was the summer of 1952. "No galleries are opened in the summer," they said. We'd already paid one month's rent; what (were) we going to do? So we had to open. We got some former students of Hans Hofmann, Bobby Beauchamp particularly, and then John Grillo was there. We tried to get Wolf Kahn and his friends, but they decided to form their own gallery, which became the Hansa. . . . I remember the idea was we'd show work of all the artists we liked.

In those days, most galleries were showing the School of Paris. There was very little American painting being shown uptown. Even Sidney Janis was not very brave then. It was only Betty Parsons and Charlie Egan and the Downtown Gallery. . . .

Then the studios were very new, you had clusters (of artists). For example, in a show of 1955, a Christmas show, we showed eighty-five different artists. I said, "Listen, let me invite Bob (Rauschenberg) and Jasper (Johns), they are right downtown there," so we got them in that show. I'm trying to find a photograph that somebody made of an installation. It shows the little poor piano that Jasper had in that (*Construction with Toy Piano*, 1954); it showed the three little paint cans in a little frame that Bob had made. That was the atmosphere then. Everybody was sort of in it together. Oh, and Leo (Castelli) hung our first show, when we were still on East Fourth Street. I think Milton Resnick called him up. He knew him, and Leo came down. He had just hung Joan Mitchell's first show in something called The New Gallery, and so

he came down and hung our first exhibition. And he was often in to see it.¹

—February 11, 1990, New York

JASPER JOHNS: I think the first thing I showed in New York was at the Tanager Gallery on Tenth Street, in a group show. I think Bob (Rauschenberg) arranged it. It was a little—I have forgotten the title of it—collage, on top of a little piano. It's (now) at the Kunstmuseum in Basel (*Construction with Toy Piano*, 1954).

—February 26, 1991, New York

LOIS DODD: Over the ten-year period, there were about twenty members (at the Tanager Gallery) altogether.

JULIE MARTIN: How did you get the idea to do it?

LD: Well, actually, it partly came out of Angelo (Ippolito) and Fred (Mitchell) in Italy (1949–50). Bill (King) and I had been there, and that's where we met Angelo and Fred. Bill had a Fulbright, and we were in Rome. Angelo was there on the GI Bill, and Fred was there, I guess on the GI Bill also. When we came back (to New York) we got together and we were reminiscing about Rome, you know, NYC not having any of the cafés and this and that. There was a little bit of a toss-up about whether we should open a café, a place where you could come, a coffeehouse-type thing, or a gallery, but we knew we needed a gallery. So that's what we opened, and it was on East Fourth Street. We found a little place that might have been an ex-barber (shop). It was very tiny, and we called it "Tanager."

JM: Where did that come from?

LD: It was a parlor floor, and it was tiny, but up in the top, one of the glass panes above the plate-glass window had been painted this orange color. So we thought, we should call it the Orange Gallery. We then figured, what bird is orange? And we got to the tanager. So the tanager (points to metal sculpture) is hanging over there. . . . Bill King made the bird, we hung out the bird as our sign. . . .

The first show was a group show. In fact, we kept on with group shows for quite a while, and many people came through there, the New York art world. That's where I began to meet everybody. The first one-man show was John Grillo's. We were on East Fourth Street for about a year. The elevated (Third Avenue subway) was still up. . . . Then Philip Pavia told Angelo about a place on Tenth Street, and so we moved up there about a year later. It was a bigger space, about twice as large. It still wasn't huge by any standard, but it was plenty big enough, and the rent was less. We were paying \$55 on Fourth Street for this little ex-barber shop. And the space on Tenth Street was only \$40. We had a monthly rent of \$40, stamps were a nickel, and when we would print up a card it would cost

us \$20. Angelo would go to the printer and they'd set the type. No reproductions, they [announcements] were nice, though, colored inks and paper, but it was always cheap. It went on for a long time at that price. We all put in money, \$10 a month, and the various invited artists covered the cost of their announcements. Some way or another, it was all shared. And then we took turns sitting (during gallery hours). At a point we got sick of that, and we got some help. It was Elise Asher who had a friend who came and sat, and she also was helping us with money at the time.

JM: Who is Asher?

LD: She's a painter. She was married to Nanno de Groot way back then. Then at a certain point, Sally Hazelet, who was a member of the Tanager, her father said he would fund us. That kept us going. But we always had someone sitting there; various people sat. I sat, Sally sat. We got paid a little bit. And Irving Sandler sat. Finally Enid Furlonger sat for the last part of the ten-year period that the Tanager lasted.

JM: I love the word "sitters." There isn't the idea of selling.

LD: No, that's right. The Tanager wasn't a [commercial] gallery. . . . The idea was to show what was going on. . . . Even today, there is still a lot of good stuff out there that for one reason or another is not getting shown. So that was our circumstance, and we felt like we wanted to show and we knew a lot of other people whose work should be shown. The art galleries were uptown, and there weren't too many of them. If people like de Kooning and Kline were just beginning to be seriously shown, you knew you weren't going to race up to their gallery and get in. There was a generational difference. . . .

The question was whether to include other people as members of our gallery or not. We decided that we could get into enough disagreements between the five of us, let alone ten or more. We'd had a few very interesting meetings with other artists in 1952, realizing that we all had the same idea, but that we were all a little different. . . . We figured that we five could keep a more open point of view about art. And we wanted to do that, which was a little different than, "Let's just show this point of view." . . . We visited studios and saw other artists' work for exhibitions, and we showed ourselves. Some of us then had other galleries uptown, like Angelo and Cajori both showed at Bertha Schaefer's gallery uptown. Perle Fine was involved too at a point. She had already shown other places, but she showed at the Tanager and became a member. And then every year at Christmas we would have a huge group show and invite everybody, and limit the works to tiny little paintings and sculptures. People would bring them in and we would hang them up.

JM: And you had people you didn't know who would bring things in?

LD: No, it was an invited show. We would make these long lists, right? Other people would tell us about somebody; people got there by different means. But it wasn't like we put a sign up and people brought things. It wasn't that open. . . .

[The Tanager] got to be very lively, and everybody came there for the openings on Friday evenings. They also came during the day and sat around and talked, especially [Landes] Lewitin and [Aristodimos] Kaldis. They both like to talk a lot. Milton Resnick, Bill de Kooning, and Esteban Vicente, who had studios on that block, stopped in, as well as Jack Tworikov, who was very supportive of our shows. You could sit there and sooner or later Kaldis would stroll in or Lewitin and other people too. The Tanager was in the middle of an artists' area, and in the afternoon artists stopped in. . . . It was a really interesting time on Tenth Street, and sitting there was very educational. I didn't do a master's degree in college, I did a master's degree on Tenth Street, just talking to artists. . . .

At any rate, once we had moved to Tenth Street, and the Hansa opened around the corner on Fourth Avenue and Twelfth Street, others followed. The Camino Gallery, the March Gallery, Area Gallery all opened up, a photography gallery opened farther east, and also a print gallery run by a young Frenchwoman, and Tenth Street became a block of galleries. The Phoenix Gallery was around the corner from Tenth Street on Third Avenue.

—April 19, 1990, New York

JULIE MARTIN: How did the Tanager get started?

PHILIP PEARLSTEIN: It got started by a group of artists who met in Italy. Some on a Fulbright and some just living there, in the late 1940s and early 1950s. And I knew one of the original members. . . . Fred Mitchell. You know Fred?

JM: Yes, we talked to him; I had forgotten he was in the Tanager. How did you meet him?

DOROTHY PEARLSTEIN: He was in your class in college.

PP: Yes, before the war. He came from Mississippi to attend Carnegie [Institute]. And we were in touch during the war; occasionally we'd write letters to each other. . . . There was Angelo Ippolito, Charles Cajori, and William King and his wife, Lois Dodd (besides Mitchell). And they started the gallery. And Castelli became friendly with Angelo. . . . He was at the center of everything.

DP: He was. He was "Mr. Tenth Street." Angelo set the style in terms of taste.

PP: Although the first [Tanager] gallery they opened was on East Fourth Street, it was extraordinary looking, and it really set the style for galleries. It was the first to have that loft look, even though it was a small space.

DP: It was just the standard of cleanliness, and degree of precision in terms of hanging. Not precision in terms of architectural detailing, what we would think of now, but the precision in the arrangement of paintings, the precision in lighting, even if the lighting was crude technically. The sense that people worked at keeping the space clean and stylish.

PP: It had a style that was invented by Angelo. And Castelli was not yet a dealer. He was a collector Angelo had met, and he offered to hang the first show. And he did. . . .

JM: You were all friends, there wasn't an ideological—

PP: No, there was no stylistic ideology. But we had a sense that there was something you could call good. [Laughs] It was a matter of judgment. We voted on everything, and we made a point of going to see everybody's studio who asked us to. At least two of us would go out.

JM: How would that work?

PP: [An artist] wanted their work to be looked at, so two [Tanager] people would go. And if those two members thought highly of the work, other members would also visit. But we never discussed the person's work with them. We didn't pretend to be critics or teachers. And that unnerved a lot of people. They wanted discussion.

DP: You made a lot of enemies.

PP: We made a lot of enemies for not showing certain people. . . . We were after what we thought was quality. We were running our own private museum at a certain point. We were maintaining it not just to show our own work.

—January 28, 1992, New York

LESTER JOHNSON: Tenth Street was where the action was; I exhibited quite a bit. I joined both the March Gallery and Tanager Gallery for a short time.

During that time I was going very strongly into figurative art. I was really the basic figurative artist, and I thought I was always getting into trouble being a figurative artist in this hotbed of Abstract Expressionists. The Tanager put on a Christmas show of paintings. It was a nice show, just wallpapered with paintings; it had to be small, but everybody had a painting at the show. I was a figurative artist, and they put me in the back. I had a tantrum and quit the Tanager. I thought they shouldn't have allowed that to happen. . . . Alex Katz was active at the Tanager at the time, and he tried to talk me into not quitting, because they sort of needed me, but I told him, "All you want is a figurehead. I'm the guy you want just for appearances, to have figurative painters, so they will have

me sitting up in front or something, and then they can't be accused of favoring abstract art."

—February 27, 1991, Connecticut

IRVING SANDLER: I got a job at the Moors in Provincetown, as a dishwasher [summer 1953]. By then I already knew something about art. One of the waiters was Angelo Ippolito, and I became friendly with him, and he got me a job at the Tanager Gallery a little later, in 1956.

There was no aesthetic, although New York School painting was generally painterly; it was not School of de Kooning, although Clement Greenberg has made claims that Tenth Street was School of de Kooning. . . . There was a considerable amount of variety on Tenth Street, although most of [the works] seem to have been painterly figuration. Of the Tanager members, Perle Fine was a distinct abstract landscape image painter, but Sally Hazelet was not, she was nonobjective. So was Ben Isquith, but Nic Marsicano was figurative.

The gallery didn't only show its own members. As a matter of fact, many other artists were introduced by the Tanager group, including Al Jensen and Tom Wesselmann. Jensen was never a member, and I don't think Tom was either. The gallery did have a kind of sense of mission that we were speaking for the art community and therefore didn't limit our shows just to members. . . .

JULIE MARTIN: Did you make an announcement for each show?

IS: Oh absolutely, a very elegant announcement. They were done mostly by Angelo Ippolito, who also fixed up the gallery and helped install all the shows. He had wonderful taste.

JM: He would do the installations?

IS: All the artists would be there, but it would end up being his taste. . . . He had a large studio on Tenth Street between Avenue A and Avenue B and it was furnished with junk he picked up on the streets, but with such exquisite placement.

BILLY KLÜVER: What color were the walls?

IS: All the walls were always white.

BK: Who had the idea of painting studio walls, do you know where that came from?

IS: I have a feeling that if you moved into one of these absolutely dark and dingy and grimy New York loft spaces, the first thing you did was paint the walls white, as white as you could get them. Then you put a white canvas up against a white wall, and you reached for black. It's a theory. . . .

In the three years that I worked for the Tanager Gallery, from 1956 to 1959, I sold one work. Nobody expected more sales. This lady

comes in during a Christmas show. The Tanager Gallery was maybe sixteen feet by ten. It was tiny, although it looked big. At any rate, this woman comes in, and we have about a hundred works on view, all of them tiny. She stops before a little abstract metal construction by Joe Messina, and looks at it and comes over to the desk and says, "I'd like to purchase that work." So I walked over to it with her and she said, "How much is it?" I said, "It's a hundred and twenty-five dollars." And she waited, and I waited; I'm figuring to myself, it's too much. And Joe did need the money, I think one of his children was ill at the time, and I said, "But the artist needs the money, I'll accept eighty." She said, "No, I'll pay the full amount." By that time my brain was mush, so I said to her, "Can we keep it for the duration of the show?" She said, "Of course." I said, "Will you leave a deposit?" She said, "No, I'll write a check for the entire amount." I said, "And when the show is over, where shall we deliver it?" She said, "Deliver it to the Museum of Modern Art." I said, "And what is your name?" She said, "I'm Mrs. Mellon," and so help me God, I said, "How do you spell that?" I knew that I would never be a dealer, and that is the only job I have not held in the art world, because I have held every other job, from museum director on down, you name it. But I have never been a commercial dealer. I knew I could never do it after that. A nice lady, though. I remember her fondly.

Next door to the Tanager, at 88 East Tenth Street, was de Kooning, and (Milton) Resnick. At 92 East Tenth Street was (Esteban) Vicente, and so was (Philip) Pavia. Across the street you had Pat Passlof; down the street, Gabe Kohn; (Philip) Guston for a period of time was a couple of houses down, just on that block. The Tanager Gallery did a show in 1956 of twenty-five artists who lived on Tenth Street (*Painters Sculptors on 10th Street*, December 21, 1956–January 23, 1957).

Most artists were living on air, and elegantly. I don't know how they did it. . . . Poverty had an upside. There wasn't then the division between the successful artists and unsuccessful artists. It was an open situation.

—March 29, 1990, New York

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HANSA GALLERY (1952–59)

ALLAN KAPROW: 1952 and '53 was a very key period, in my memory, of the growth of an art community. . . . The artists lived somewhat separated from each other, all the way (on) the West Side, near the river, where the prices were cheaper, or extremely east, say Avenue A, B, C, in the Polish neighborhood, where you could get railroad flats pretty cheap. I had one for \$13 a month. Very small, but it was still very cheap.

So by 1953 when the Hansa Gallery was under way, that was just a hop, skip, and a jump away from the big development of an

art community, which was self-conscious about its identity and about its common concerns, and would in fact start the big gallery development down there on Ninth and Tenth streets. . . .

In 1952 I was a painter and I believe we had already started the Hansa Gallery, composed mostly of former graduates of (the) Hans Hofmann School of (Fine) Art. And our first exhibit was at Wolf Kahn's 813 Broadway studio (December 1951), which was shared by Felix Pasilis as well. The loft was divided in two, and they agreed at that time to show the work in a kind of semi-private way to a group of us who didn't live there, but nevertheless hung out together and saw each other frequently. And at that time I remember we began to exhibit in coffeehouses, which began to spring up around Thompson Street. The Rienzi, which still exists, I believe, was a kind of American transplant of the European coffeehouse, where you could sit at the tables in a relaxed, informal atmosphere, usually very dark. Paintings were hung around, which were very regularly changed as artists put them up, took them down, and (they were) replaced by other artists' work. . . . It was the background for our early exhibit at Wolf and Felix's loft. And that became the Hansa Gallery very shortly after that, in a rented loft that was redone by us on Twelfth Street. . . .

I was very close to Wolf and some of the others. He and Bob Beauchamp were very conservative in their approach to painting; the work essentially referenced the European tradition. I appreciated their work, without any question. Jan Müller's too. But I think it would be fair to say that I made a choice there; I would be friendly and appreciative, but my direction had to be exactly the opposite. . . .

BK: You were talking about where the name Hansa came from.

AK: Well, originally Richard Stankiewicz, who had been elected as president of the Hansa because of his probity and calmness, had suggested a much too cumbersome name, Dodeca, because there were twelve members. And we thought that sounded a bit pretentious and hard to say. It obviously alluded to dodecaphonic music theory at that time, twelve-tone technique, but somebody, I don't know who—probably among the German-speaking members like Wolf Kahn and Jan Müller, there was the notion of Hansa. And everybody thought that would be a little more communicative, and besides, the underlying joke of feminizing the word Hans from our teacher was there too. So with some levity we decided on that name, and I think most of us probably forgot its origins afterward.

BK: Did it have anything to do with the German Hansa?

AK: Yes, of course. That was clear. We thought that would communicate to everybody, which indeed in most cases was true—they had heard of that historic alliance. So (it gave) the

sense that we were a co-operative, in effect a group of territories working together in some mutuality. I don't know if anybody ever told Hofmann.

—February 23, 1991, New York

WOLF KAHN: In 1951 I met with a group of ex-Hofmann students, Jan Müller, Richard Stankiewicz, Jean Follett, and Miles Forst, all kinds of people, also Felix Pasilis and Joan Mitchell. I found this loft at 813 Broadway together with Felix Pasilis. We fixed it up and we paid \$35 a month in rent in 1951. . . . And nobody had any money. We needed to have a gas line put in, and we didn't know how to do it. So Milton Resnick did it for us. (He was an older painter, and already a little more established than we were.) And of course The Club was getting started. And de Kooning was over on Fourth Avenue, and Tworkov was also on Fourth Avenue, and we all felt that we were the inheritors of the future. And we all lived around here. And Tenth Street, which finally got started a few years after that, was only a few blocks away. . . .

I remember Jan and Felix were sitting around in the kitchen talking about starting a gallery. I was just a nineteen-year-old kid, and I said, "Oh, come on, none of us are ready." I knew their work, and I knew that they all were hard-working artists, art students, and that there was something interesting going on, but I didn't think we were wonderful. I thought we were a bunch of Franciscan friars who were united by the vow of poverty. But that's all. And then they were going around looking at other people's work in order to find a group in order to found a co-op. We figured we needed at least twelve people. And I thought the whole thing was doomed to failure until they took me to Stankiewicz and Jean Follett, and I saw that work, and I right away took fire. I said, "Listen, if there are good artists like that around, I want to be part of it." And then we got started; I actually was the guy who negotiated in Yiddish with the landlord, because he was another Jew. We took a loft on the corner of Twelfth Street and Fourth Avenue, and that was the Hansa Gallery.

JULIE MARTIN: What floor?

WK: It was one flight up. This was in 1952. . . . The Tanager was only two blocks away too. We were all very close. Philip Pearlstein, Alex Katz, all these people, we were all friends. We all knew of each other, we all took an interest in each other's work, although in the Hansa group, the core were primarily Hofmann students. At Tanager, the core were not Hofmann students.

BILLY KLÜVER: Allan (Kaprow) wasn't involved in it?

WK: Oh yes, Allan became part of Hansa, through me.

BK: Right from the beginning?

WK: No, not in the beginning. . . . I don't think he was part of the very first group; he was away. He had his first installations at the Hansa, and he had his first show of paintings there.² And his paintings at that time were very influenced, strangely enough, by me.

BK: They were panels?

WK: They were paintings he mostly destroyed. . . . In '52 and '53 he was painting; his work was very influenced by everybody, by Bonnard. Also Larry Rivers, whom we were also interested in. Larry was doing interesting work in '52 already. And Larry and I used to go out sketching together a lot, we were very good friends then. . . . There was no frantic careerism in those days. It was amazing how idealistic we were, and unself-interested. Nobody thought anything was going to come of it, or make anyone rich or famous. We knew that even de Kooning wasn't even rich or famous, so what could we expect? We had a need to form a community. And Tom Hess (editor, *Art News*) came in very early and took an interest in the Hansa Gallery. In 1956 he published "New Directions in American Art" in the *Art News Annual*. . . . Once this came out, all the museum people started trooping after, they started coming up here and looking at my work. And I sold things to museums, and I got an article in *Time* magazine with a reproduction in 1957, but this was the first time the group of us became public. We became famous right away.

We felt that we were already getting painting away from abstraction. Because Hofmann used to say. . . . the problem with modern art is that it doesn't have enough human content. He felt that abstraction wasn't going to get into the concerns of the mainstream of the culture of the moment, and we listened to that. And we said, "Why can't we do what the Impressionists did and paint everyday life?" And we tried. We painted American things and images from popular culture. So I really think our group was a real transition between the first-generation abstraction and the Pop artist.

—January 10, 1991, New York

JANE WILSON: I was invited by Wolf Kahn, Felix Pasilis, and Jan Müller to be one of the members of the Hansa Gallery. So I was one of the twelve founders. . . . My first New York show was in 1953 at the Hansa, a one-person show (October 13–26, 1953).

JM: How did Hansa work?

JW: It was a co-operative. I remember something like \$18 dues to pay for the rent, the electricity, the—whatever else it was that we had to pay for. And probably the painting and all of that. It was all co-operative. And we took turns at the desk, until Wolf one day said, enough is enough. He is such an organizer. (Laughs) It just comes out of him! He found a wonderful girl who had financial security who

would sit in the gallery for \$7 a week. Of course the Hansa members met and were really supercilious about whether we wanted this person! (Laughs) And she was a really terrific woman (Anita Coleman). . . . Wonderful, good, amply good-natured. You know? She would not let things be irritating. She would not allow this kind of seething and grumbling that artists are so good at (laughs), which does rub off, unfortunately. So she was a real blessing. She was there for a number of years. Then the point came when Richard Bellamy and Ivan Karp became the co-directors of the Hansa Gallery, after they moved uptown to Fifty-ninth Street.

JM: Do you remember why you moved?

JW: I don't know if there were any technical things about leases there, but I think instead of us moving to other galleries, we (decided we) would move the gallery to near Fifty-seventh Street. I think it had to do with trying to better the establishment. And it ran exactly the same way. It was a much smaller space, as I remember. But it was a very nice room facing the park. We continued to have our shows there. And there was a really impressive roster of people who came out of the Hansa.

JM: How often would you show there?

JW: Well, you sort of decided when you were ready. It turned out, I was a two-year person. So that worked out very well. I stayed there until 1957. When Ivan and Richard came, there was such a shift, as there was in the art world in terms of what is the going, vital thing. Pop was beginning to come up. And Richard was in contact with the artists who then became members of the Green Gallery. I simply felt that whatever I was after in my painting was not a direction they would be interested in. And I thought, rather than wait around and have a bruised ego, I think I will go without bad feelings.

—July 25, 1993, Water Mill, New York

RICHARD BELLAMY: Miles Forst was my oldest friend; he was friends with the painters. The Hansa Gallery had (Richard) Stankiewicz, Jan Müller, Wolf Kahn, such people, George (Segal) became a friend, you know the whole story, and so eventually, after five years, knowing these guys, hanging around with artists and seeing everything I could, they asked me, the Hansa Gallery people, to be one of their directors, that is, to sit in the gallery, which was a position, in 1955.

BILLY KLÜVER: It was still downtown then?

RB: No, they had just moved to Central Park South. There was a lady named Anneta Duveen, who had been the director before me, and before that Barbara Bluestein, people like that, Jan Müller's girlfriend, and the girlfriends of the artists who would sit. I went to

their exhibitions downtown, when they were on Twelfth Street. But I had never thought of becoming a dealer, it was not my intention. . . .

JULIE MARTIN: Did you do ads?

RB: Artists were kind of obliged to put their little quarter-inch ads at the end of art magazines. I remember Richard Stankiewicz saying that we have to support magazines. Take an ad I guess in *Art News*. . . .

BK: And how did they pick up Ivan (Karp)?

RB: I'm responsible for Ivan. . . . I was there for a year, '55, and living out of the closet on a mattress and usually had a half pint of Napoleon brandy at my side. Ivan had been writing art reviews for the *Village Voice*. . . . So I met Ivan by his having come to the Hansa for reviews. And I think it was the next year I decided I didn't want to spend five days a week there. Or else they suggested it, that is, the artists suggested maybe I should get somebody. I recommended Ivan, and that's how that happened. So we were working together, that would have been for about two years (1956–58). He half the time, and I half the time, or I was there a lot of the time; I was in the closet. And then he left to go to Martha Jackson Gallery, and I was alone there the last year (1958–59). And actually, at a meeting of the members, I was voted out, they dispelled (sic) me. And I told them, "Okay, I'll stick around till you find somebody else, I don't want you to be bereft." And of course, they weren't able to get anybody else. It closed the summer of '59.

JM: It closed because people were not interested?

RB: It had already gone on too long, and some of the best artists had departed. Jan (Müller), Stankiewicz had gone to Stable, and Wolf was somewhere else; the association had lasted too long, there were lots of weaknesses in the gallery, and it cost the artists a lot of money to run it. . . . I mean, you look at dues, nearly \$50 a month, and everybody does the stamps for mailing, that had been going on for seven years, so it was time to shut down. I think they tried to keep it going; they had benefit shows to try to sell, but there was dissension over the obvious problems inherent in a co-operative that ran its course.

JM: Did you sell toward the end?

RB: Jan's paintings began to sell and Richard's work had begun to sell, and then there were occasional sales of the other artists. The dues kept going up—\$30, \$35, \$40 a month. That was a lot of money in those days. . . .

Abstract art was my world at that time, although I knew something about (figurative), but not much. Figurative was embodied, for me, in Jan Müller, and hearing pronouncements he made, or I would hear reported that he made, that astonished me.

That is to say, explaining, defending, the kind of paintings that he was making, against this huge prevailing presence of abstract painting. There were a lot of things that Jan said, and at the same time, my believing in Jan as an artist. I had been as moved by Jan's paintings, and Jan as a person, an artist, as much as I had by anyone, so that offered me a great dilemma. . . . There were certain articles in the mid-'50s, and toward the end of the '50s, abstraction versus figuration. . . . I didn't understand why Jan would make some outlandish statements at that time. "Jan, you really don't mean that?" He would say, "Yes. My paintings are literary paintings. De Kooning paints like shit, but there is the struggle."

(Red) Grooms and Jay Milder (visited) the Hansa Gallery during its last years, whatever it was, '59 or '58, and I remember the sensation and almost the very images of Jay and Red coming in . . . and looking at the paintings with a kind of peasantlike intensity and delicacy that I had never seen.

—March 4, 1991, New York

IVAN KARP: In 1955 I wrote a review for the *Village Voice* on (Franz Kline). I used to go to the various galleries, and I went up to the Hansa Gallery on a regular basis. The Hansa Gallery was a co-op and it was being managed, if you want to call it that, by Richard Bellamy. . . . One day when I went to visit the gallery, Dick Bellamy said, "You know that piece you wrote about one of the artists, that was terrific, they all loved that, everybody in the gallery loved it. They'd love to have you be the co-director of this gallery." I already had a kind of friendship with (Bellamy,) who I considered to be one of the remarkable eccentric personalities in the city. . . . He used to sit on the floor of the gallery on a battered rug, in a little office that was there with a typewriter on which only four keys worked, reading esoteric poetry. I was very impressed by that. (Dealer) Sam Kootz didn't read any poetry that I could make out, and neither did Martha Jackson or Eleanor Ward. . . . The salary was \$12 a week for three days, we each did three days, and it was 10 percent commission, but we never sold anything. We began to sell a few Jan Müllers at a certain time. There were very turbulent meetings those days in the cooperative, which had to pay its bills, had to pay its rent . . . probably \$75 a month for Central Park South! Astonishing, but it was more than the gallery could meet the expenses of, running it, which was \$12 each for me and Mr. Bellamy, the rent, the electric bill, and the telephone bill, very circumspect about using the telephone—we recorded every call we made.

So there were turbulent meetings about how the gallery should survive, and the fair share of the dues, and how Mr. Bellamy and I should reach out into the art community and try to dramatize the situation there and increase sales—impossible, the artists were hardly known. The location on Central Park South, there were no other galleries near us. Around the corner was the Stable Gallery,

that was all. Otherwise everything was on Fifty-seventh Street or Madison Avenue. So we were an outpost of civilization, and I don't think we had more than twenty-five or thirty visitors a week. But we did have some interesting visitors; Richard Brown Baker used to come to the gallery all the time. And a curious little slender Italian man named Leo Castelli, he came there several times. . . . He had just opened his gallery in 1956, 1957 (February 1957). He felt he was obliged to look around the art scene, and he came into the Hansa Gallery where these young upstart new artists were showing and these two curious directors were at work. . . . As you can imagine, we were all strong personalities. Allan Kaprow was there also. He had powerful opinions. Stankiewicz had strong opinions. His friend Jean Follett was there, who's never come to the degree of notoriety and fame that she was worthy of. Everybody had very strong convictions. . . . Bellamy was very passive and mild-mannered and poetic. He never disputed the opinions, but sales were not what you'd call dramatic. Let's face it, we just sold a few pieces. I remained with that gallery through 1958. I was there in 1956 and 1957. I had given up my job as critic; it seemed like a conflict to be an art critic and to run an art gallery.

—February 7, 1990, New York

DODY JAMES MÜLLER: Dick (Bellamy) was a very good friend of Barbara and Miles (Forst), that's how I knew him before he "babysat" at the Hansa. Ivan was writing for the *Village Voice*. Ed Thatcher, who was one of the founders of the *Voice*, courted me at the time, so I knew Ivan vaguely through Ed Thatcher, and then Ivan came to work at the Hansa too. That turned out to be a blessing because people tended to either hate Ivan and were crazy about Dick, or hated Dick and were crazy about Ivan, so all the artists in the gallery had the best of both worlds. If you didn't like one, you could just go to the other.

BILLY KLÜVER: Was it because of you that the *Voice* was positive toward the artists? Because there was no reason that they should be.

DJM: Norman (Mailer) was one of the founders. It was Ed and Norman, and Norman was a friend of ours. And he knew all the painters, so there was a direct connection. Norman and Miles were very good friends at the time.

Jan (Müller) was one of the founders of the Hansa. It was Barbara and Miles Forst, Richard Stankiewicz and Jean Follett, Wolf Kahn, maybe Jacques Beckwith. That was in 1952, over on Twelfth Street. . . . Then they moved up to Central Park South, and that was maybe 1955.

JULIE MARTIN: Do you know why?

DJM: Well, it was cheap. It was near the more prestigious galleries, and the Stable was nearby. The Stable had begun to take off with

young artists too, and it was a pretty space. Frank Stella lived upstairs, and Barbara Rose.

JM: Well, Barbara lived there, maybe Frank stayed with her.

DJM: That's when Dick and Ivan started working, that was uptown. Before that, Anneta Duveen worked there for a while, and Barbara Bluestein . . . I think Anneta worked uptown too for a while as well.

JM: What did they do? Were they more like sitters?

DJM: Really babysitters. The gallery began to get a fair amount of traffic, and young collectors were starting to buy. Out of all that whole gang—I make it sound like the art world was gigantic, which it wasn't. Jan was the first to sell a painting to the Modern (Museum of Modern Art). He sold a *Faust I*. I think Alfred Barr bought it. Dorothy Miller came to the gallery a lot too.

—March 22, 1990, New York

GEORGE SEGAL: In a strange way the Hansa Gallery was mostly students of Hans Hofmann. Myron Stout was extremely black and white with organic shapes, black shapes against a white field. But he called those shapes "the seed pods of the gods." So it was extreme abstraction that he felt was charged with this religious fertility, like the birth of religion. I felt extremely sympathetic to Myron. Jan Müller was painting scenes out of Shakespeare and Goethe.

I was very sympathetic to going back to literature and myth and history. I didn't want to lose any of the vigor and the energy of abstract painting, but I wanted to put back what I thought had been unfairly excluded. Hansa Gallery was like that. Like a seething pot with all these contradictory impulses. Stankiewicz and Follett were making what seemed to be abstract sculptures out of debris from the street: old typewriters, rusty bolts, stuff that was fished out of a dumpster. It was like David Smith gone figurative and wild. In later years Stankiewicz rejected all the figurative impulses and became more abstract. But he was the rare exception in the whole group. Mostly, Kaprow was doing abstract environments. He had a show where he used straw and lights and made a place, but very quickly that went into Happenings, and Happenings quickly moved downtown.

—February 16, 1990, New Jersey

RED GROOMS: I went to the Hansa all the time. I went there when I first came to New York (1957), before I knew anybody. . . . I was a regular, I went to see all their shows. And there was a real taste, you could really sense a nice something going on there. Who was showing? There were some women showing there. Who were they? They were important. It was a good group. It was a halfway house between really being Uptown and being Downtown. The (artists) had an Uptown feel to them.

I was well aware of Allan (Kaprow) a lot of different ways. I met him and George (Segal) at the Cedar Bar. . . . I saw his shows at the Hansa. I saw the one he did with the smells, in the whole room (*An Environment*, 1958). That was very influential because it was an art show, but it definitely had theatrical implications. He had sound, tape recorders, and smells, and there were lots of words written on this wall panel. It was broken up architecturally too. So that was great. And that must have been in '58 or something. I probably saw the show before I met him.

—February 15, 1991, New York

ROBERT BEAUCHAMP (on Kaprow's environments at the Hansa Gallery in 1958): I always had this theory about why he developed the way he did. If you project Hofmann's ideas off the canvas and into space, you have a Happening, in a sense. And so Allan's liberation as far as plastic concerns, I think came from being a student of Hofmann's. I think one of his first Happenings was a room full of colored plastic hanging down. That's almost literally taking Hofmann's rectangles and putting them in three dimensions.

—March 27, 1990, New York

BARBARA ROSE: I was a graduate student in the Columbia University art history department in early 1960 when I moved in with Terry Brook (de Antonio), who had been my Smith College roommate. She was renting a brownstone apartment at 210 Central Park South, for which we paid, I remember, \$40 a month. We were on the third floor and the Hansa Gallery, an artists' co-op, was on the second, so we passed it every time we went in or out. Usually we stopped in to see the shows and kibbutz with the artists and Dick Bellamy and Ivan Karp, whom they hired to run the gallery. Ivan was writing his endless saga of the Visigoths, which he never finished. He planned a five-volume extravaganza and was always at work at his desk, feverishly writing. Dick mainly paced around, and was happy to talk about the work. I don't remember seeing anyone coming to the shows except the artists themselves and maybe their friends.

I think the idea for the gallery was Jan Müller's. He was the senior person and had been a student of Hans Hofmann, which was why the gallery was called the "Hansa"—in tribute to Hofmann. Jan Müller, who was sort of a hero, died young and became a sort of art martyr. Meyer Schapiro talked about his work and considered him very gifted. I think the African American painter Bob Thompson, who died of a heroin overdose in Rome in 1966, also showed there. So did George Segal, who was still painting chickens and had not yet started doing sculpture. I remember Robert Whitman and Allan Kaprow and I think Lucas Samaras all showed environments there. And there was a woman named Lilly Brody who was quite a good artist. I think Fay Lansner, whose

husband Kermit was the editor of *Newsweek*, was also in the group, and so was Mary Frank, the photographer Robert Frank's wife. She was gorgeous, with wild reddish hair and fantastic thrift-shop outfits. Ivan was an enthusiast and very verbal, but the haunting spirit of the gallery was Dick Bellamy; Dick was the strangest person in the world, he was absolutely bizarre. He was really a poet who loved art.

—March 19, 1990, New York

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BRATA GALLERY (1957–62)

AL HELD: We started another gallery on Tenth Street with a bunch of people, the two Krushenick brothers (Nicholas and John), who were old friends of mine from the Bronx. George Sugarman was part of that gallery.

JULIE MARTIN: What was the name of it?

AH: The Brata Gallery. The Tanager Gallery was the first one; the Brata Gallery was right across the street. And then the Camino Gallery and all those other galleries. Friday nights became the big, hot scene. It was the place to be.

BILLY KLÜVER: The Camino Gallery?

AH: No, I meant Tenth Street, the whole block on Tenth Street became the hangout. One hung out at the galleries and Friday nights were big social occasions, and it got to be very much the Downtown scene. Remember that de Kooning had a studio on that street; so did Milton Resnick; Ludwig Sander had a studio on that street; Adja Yunkers had a studio on that street; a whole bunch of other people. We're talking about one block—Tenth Street between Third Avenue and Lexington.

BK: Fourth Avenue.

AH: Well, Fourth Avenue, Lexington, whatever it's called. It was just one street with all these little galleries scattered up and down the street, and then above the galleries were these studios of a lot of older artists. . . .

JM: Who introduced you (to your first dealer, Ellie Poindexter)?

AH: That world was very small then—a few hundred people. I think that word gets around and people talk to one another. I was showing at the Brata Gallery and she, one day, asked to come down. And she came down and mumbled around and offered me some kind of show. By that time there was no loyalty to Tenth Street, because people were using it as a showcase to get out and get to uptown. So what happened was the uptown galleries began to siphon the cream off the top of Tenth Street. And that's what really destroyed Tenth

Street, because very quickly the uptown galleries began to come down and pick and choose what they wanted.

JM: Were there any people who you knew were collectors who were coming down?

AH: Oh yeah. This is late now, we're talking about the latter part of the '50s. (Robert) Scull came down.

BK: To Tenth Street?

AH: To Tenth Street.

—February 23, 1990, New York

BILLY KLÜVER: Was there anyone on Tenth Street that you liked?

FRANK STELLA: Bruce Glaser, I don't know how I met him, through either Carl (Andre) or Barbara (Rose), or someone, while I was hanging around. Anyway, I took paintings down for Bruce to see, and somehow I met the Krushenicks. They had the Brata Gallery and Bruce had the Camino Gallery. I took them gouaches, and I had a portfolio or something. And people at the Brata didn't like it at all, and Bruce had to bring a committee over to look at the paintings. They were early black paintings. . . .

BK: What year was this?

FS: The spring of 1959. It was a year after I left Princeton, because I left Princeton in the spring of 1958.

—January 31, 1991, New York

BILLY KLÜVER: Then in the later part of the '50s, when activities concentrated around Tenth Street, were there any sculpture galleries on Tenth Street?

GEORGE SUGARMAN: No, but I was a member of the Brata Gallery; the Krushenicks (Nicholas and John) started it. Do you remember the Krushenicks? They've both kind of faded away. But Al Held was there, and I was there, and Ronnie Bladen was in it. So you had quite a few artists. So I was showing there, but the most I ever had there was a two-man show. I was due the following season (1959–60) for a one-man show, and then Radich (Gallery) picked me up, because of what he had seen at the *New Sculpture* show (Hansa Gallery, September 24–October 14, 1957). So of course I dropped out of the Brata Gallery, and it carried on for a while.

—March 23, 1990, New York

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CITY GALLERY (1958–59)

RED GROOMS: I had this other group, Jay Milder and Bob Thompson, who were my compatriots. You see, (Robert) Whitman and especially

Jim Dine . . . we liked each other a lot, a lot of fun, great, tremendous spirit, but different lifestyle (because they had families). . . . Jay (Milder) was this guy from Omaha, Nebraska, this Jewish guy, who really had a nose for the city. He was here for two weeks and knew everything. He was down on Washington Street. He was all over the place; he had this terrific urban nose. He was a great catalyst for me, because I just went right behind him. It helped me adjust to the city, because I'm not really a catalytic person with people. . . . He was just great.

I took a loft at 735 Sixth Avenue; it was only \$65 a month. And that is where I opened the City Gallery, with Jay, and had shows. Jay and I showed there. I showed Alex (Katz). I showed Marcia Marcus—no, that was later.³ I showed Lester (Johnson), his early paintings, a pretty good show actually, but didn't sell anything. Nothing. But guys would come. Whitman, when he was in town, would occasionally come by. It was also my studio, so that was nice. And we had good openings. Lots of people came to the openings. And we were kind of like the young Turks, as opposed to the Tenth Street scene. We were sort of the far-out types.

BILLY KLÜVER: You had conflicts with the Tenth Street people?

RG: Oh yes. Definitely. We wanted to challenge them ourselves, personally. . . . (The City Gallery) was where Jim Dine painted the murals on the wall. And so did Steve Durkee, the forgotten Steve Durkee, ever hear of him? He later became the king of the hippies. He was a great friend of Robert Indiana, for one thing. And also one of the earliest settlers of downtown. He lived down on Wall Street, on Fulton Street. Anyway, we did murals on the wall going up to the third floor; Dine and I, Jay, and Steve Durkee, and Mickey (Weisselberg), Mimi (Gross) probably. The loft was crummy—but it was really cute, like a Parisian studio. It had atmosphere. There was a little bitty back room where I was living, and this larger room, which was the gallery. There were two doors, so you could come up and go into the gallery/studio space without going into my private area. But in my private area I must have had at least thirty gouaches by Dine that he had lent me for a show. I had them all up on the wall! If I only had one of them now, I'd be happy. But I gave them all back. But we didn't of course sell even one. I don't even know if I tried to. . . . I'm more interested in the show, I guess.

—January 10, 1991, New York

JAY MILDER: Red and I were living together (in Manhattan, in 1958). Bob Thompson had just quit where he was studying (a master's or something), and he came to live with us also on Horatio Street, right in the meat market. Then Red got a place of his own right away, and we both joined a co-op gallery (Phoenix); it was just forming, we helped form it with five or six other guys. And then we quit a few months later and started the City Gallery, which was in Red's

loft on Twenty-fourth and Sixth Avenue. . . . The first show there, we got drawings from everyone and we just hung them up and down the walls (*Drawings*, December 19, 1958–January 6, 1959). We got drawings from Milton Resnick, Franz Kline, and hung them up. And somebody even knew George Grosz at the time, a woman who was helping us (Michaela Weisselberg), and she went and got a drawing from him. We had something like 100 drawings up and down the walls and all over. And we became an instant type of success. And different shows were there. I think Jim Dine had a show there, and Bob Thompson, and Red. Lester Johnson had a show there. Lester used the loft in the evening for a drawing class.

We were all just painting all the time. That summer (1959), before we three headed for Mexico, we would hang out with Kaprow, Bob (Whitman) up there at Rutgers. I guess Red knew Allan (Kaprow). Bob Whitman, Lucas Samaras, and Bob Harding were all Allan's students at Rutgers. The idea was that after we came back we were all going to do these performance things, which turned out to be the Happenings. Red was game, and so was Whitman. But Bob Thompson and I figured that that wasn't our nature. So we just went on and had painting shows, and just kept painting. And these guys jumped into other things for a while.

—February 8, 1992, New York

MIMI GROSS: I met, separately, Jay (Milder) and Bob (Thompson) in Provincetown the summer of 1958. It turned out that Jay and Bob had become friends that summer too. I don't remember how they actually met, if it was through me and Henry (Geldzahler)? When the summer ended, Bob went back to the University of Kentucky, and Jay moved to New York, and I began my sophomore year at Bard College. And we all met again, minutes later, in New York because that fall the Phoenix Gallery opened near Tenth Street. So that would be October '58. And that is when I met Red (Grooms), because Jay met Red the same day. They had met that morning delivering their artwork to the gallery. We had this great night together, the three of us. Later Red and Jay talked about making their own gallery, and it was going to be where Red was living in a little Chelsea loft.

At that time Red was still in the aura of the (Provincetown) Sun Gallery, you know with Yvonne (Andersen) and Val (Falcone). . . . They made a City portfolio; it was not a book, it was an envelope, and in it were xeroxes by Red, Val, and Yvonne. I think Lester (Johnson)'s in it too, I'm not sure. The portfolio was called "City" and that was the element, I would say, from the very first, where I had that connection with Red, in terms of city as a subject.

The great thing about the City Gallery space was that it was on the corner, and it had these great corner windows. The very lively City Gallery had very crowded openings, where we met everybody, and then knew each other as a result.

BILLY KLÜVER: Was there any contact with the poets?

MG: I remember making a woodcut in the City Gallery, and there was a connection with the poets, but they were new poets. There was a poet who was around named Jack Micheline. Do you know who that was? The Cedar Bar scene is a whole other scene, simultaneous, and Jack Micheline would walk in and he'd read his poems and insist on you having to hear it. He was Beat style. I think he encouraged Jay and Red.

I remember that I read a story at the City Gallery called "Clown Mountain One," which was later published in Bard College's literary magazine. I read it again at Bard College and Saul Bellow was in the audience! Anyway, the rest of the month there was no one around, just like any gallery. Red had this very small living area that was always scrupulously clean and tidy, with two or three books. . . .

Toward the end of the City Gallery, it was in April or May, Red met Claes (Oldenburg) and Jim Dine. They decided to paint the walls of the staircase, and Red painted a wall, and Jim Dine did, and Claes did. We had another friend, Steve Durkee, who also painted on the wall. He lived on Fulton Street in this enormous loft. Many years later I learned that Rudy Burckhardt filmed the building being torn down, with the painted walls coming down. And still later I met a man who bought the walls, a collector. I don't remember who it was, but he told me he had them in storage.

—February 10, 1990, New York

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REUBEN GALLERY (1959–61)

BILLY KLÜVER: Was Allan running things?

ROBERT WHITMAN: To an extent he was running the Reuben Gallery, or at least participating.

BK: Was Dick (Bellamy) involved with the Reuben?

RW: No. Anita (Rubin) wanted to start a gallery because her sister Renée was a painter. It's almost that simple. Renée and Martie Edelheit were friends and somehow, Allan circled into this scene and became a cultural adviser.

I can remember a very bizarre event where we were all discussing the situation and trying to get people involved in this new cooperative gallery, but not a cooperative because it had a director, Anita. But we all had to put money in.

I remember Lucas and I went to Provincetown to see Red (Grooms), and Allan was already there. I know it's not the actual, first time I met Red, but it was the first contact. I remember sleeping on the floor in some place that he had there, and I remember how uncomfortable Lucas was through all this. . . . I don't know if Claes was there, I just don't know. Claes was a little

different, because he was obviously much older than anybody else in this circle, and much hipper and more savvy. Claes had an idea about things, about how to make his way in the world. So that was setting up the Reuben Gallery. You had Allan, you had Lucas and me and Claes, Jimmy, Red, Martie Edelheit, Renée, and Rosalyn Drexler, and one other guy whose name slips my mind (Herb Brown). . . .

BK: You met and decided that people were going to do this.

RW: Right.

BK: And then you were pretty much on your own?

RW: On East Third Street, the second year, I think you had three weeks in the space to fix your stuff, and then one week to do what you did. . . . The first year (at 61 Fourth Avenue) we had those nights of performance, twice, two separate performance events at the Reuben Gallery. . . . The first one (January 8–11, 1960), I did a piece called *Small Cannon* and Red did a piece called *The Magic Train Ride*. Allan must have done something there too (*The Big Laugh*). I just don't remember. The night that I remember the most is the one (June 11, 1960) where I did this piece called *E.G.* and George Brecht did something (*Gossoon*), Richard Maxfield was doing music there, and Allan did this other piece (*Intermission Piece*). I'm not sure, Jimmy did a piece, a vaudeville piece (*Vaudeville Collage*).

BK: So this was really the beginning there, those events.

RW: I think there was a little bit of difference between the kind of performance activity that was going on at the Reuben Gallery and performance anywhere else. This was artists making art. How could I put it? In the past you had the idea of the artist's performance being an adjunct to their work or the way they publicized their work, or a way to bring attention to their manifestos or whatever else was going on. I felt that, at the Reuben, this *was* the work. As far as I was concerned, this was the reason for doing all the other art. . . . I felt liberated enough to be able to do that stuff. But it was hard, and it was scary, and as you know, for me in particular, it was difficult to be in front of people doing all that stuff. . . . But I think the intention here was that the performance was in fact real, in the beginning. And I think everybody understood that, even though they later abandoned the idea.

—February 11, 1990, upstate New York

LUCAS SAMARAS: This woman, Anita (Rubin) Baker, was opening up a gallery, and she knew Allan Kaprow. And Allan I think suggested that certain people should be in that gallery, and she liked my work, I think, so I had a show there. . . .

JULIE MARTIN: It was an amazing place, the Reuben Gallery.

LS: Yes, well, in retrospect. Because while it's happening you don't say, "Gee, what a bunch of amazing people." It's when the next steps are taken, and they're good, then you say, "Gee, what a . . ."—but at the time it was just one grubby artist after another. . . .

The Reuben was very nice because it gave me the opportunity to have my first one-man show. It didn't have the best space. Leo's Seventy-seventh Street gallery with that front room, that square room, was a perfect space. Janis wasn't. Janis was like a gallery of living rooms in a fancy place, with gray walls, but it was a living room really. But Castelli's was the most spectacular I can imagine. So even though you were at the Reuben Gallery with the nice group of people and so on, it wasn't the place where you wanted to see your work hanging. Now if (I) would see a photograph of those shows, I would get this wonderful feeling of all that, of humanity and nostalgia, but it wasn't really related to that.

So then you'd go uptown where they could afford to paint the wall, where they could afford to have an even wall instead of having a tin ceiling, and so on. So the move uptown came to serve as a nice thing. But then instead of going into run-down places, you ended up going into fancy places, and that is not necessarily what life is about either.

—December 1, 1990, New York

ALLAN KAPROW: Well, the Reuben Gallery was formed by Anita Rubin and her husband at that time, whose name I'm sorry to say I forget.

BK: Max Baker.⁸

AK: That's it. At the suggestion of Anita's sister (Renée), who was an acquaintance of mine, a painter. The two women decided to start this gallery as something that might focus on the growing group of Happeners and environment makers, which they were aware of not only through me but also through what was going on the year just before, in 1958 or so, at the Judson. . . . So Judson was doing its thing in its beginnings, and Reuben was doing its thing, and over the next couple of years, these two institutions overlapped frequently, and I remember many occasions where the public events of the Judson Gallery took place, one after the other, while the same kinds of things but different went on at the Reuben.

BK: Where did they get the financing?

AK: From Max. Max was in advertising, I think, and I must say that the bill was pretty hard on him. But he didn't complain. He was very good at it.

—February 19, 1990, New York

MARTHA EDELHEIT: I had my first show in 1959–60 at the Reuben Gallery and I had just started painting on my own in 1958, '57 (or) '58. That is when I was painting full time, because I had been working up to then.

Up until I started showing, I knew there were people who worked at painting and sculpture, but they didn't have a gender, particularly. I became aware of gender when I walked into the Reuben Gallery and Jimmy Dine was there, and Claes was there, and Lucas, and Whitman, and various people, and if they were having a conversation and I walked in, it would stop. And I didn't pay any attention to this at first. I didn't notice it. Somehow, peripherally I was aware that the conversation changed. That there was a difference. I became aware that there were things that happened to women. For instance, there was a group exhibition (*Below Zero*, December 18, 1959–January 5, 1960), and I was in this group show, and it was a big show, it was like the Christmas show. I asked, "Where's Renée (Rubin Miller)'s work?" because Renée was not in the United States at the time. Someone answered, "Oh, what do you want to show that for?" I remember I made Kaprow and I can't remember who else go over to Renée's studio and take a painting for the show. And they were furious at me. And I don't think it had anything to do with the quality of the work.

—March 22, 1990, New York

JULIE MARTIN: You had a show at the Reuben Gallery?

ROSALYN DREXLER: Yes, in 1960. That's when everybody was there. Lucas (Samaras) was there. Claes (Oldenburg) was there. Jim Dine. Red Grooms. Robert Whitman. I was in a Happening, a Whitman Happening (*E.G.*) with Pat Oldenburg (Mucha), and me, and Whitman kept running at a wall, either he ran into it or ran up it. And Pat and I were in these round, sort of pea-shaped costumes with cut-out body parts, and Lucas ripped them off. It was all about violence, ripping it off. And I was told to have no expression. That was a characteristic of Happenings, no expression. No acting, please! (Laughs) Just be there. . . .

And I was doing eighty pieces of found objects and (working) with plaster at the time. I did a plaster bride, a sort of coffin thing with a white shrouded figure in it, and wood, and poured lead—at that time, I didn't know it was dangerous. All sorts of things. My *Christ on a Cross* was bought for the Vesey Street chapel downtown; there was a church. And (Ibram) Lassaw's wife, Ernestine, gave me one of his pieces for a small sculpture, and Franz Kline gave me one of his ink-wash drawings on a telephone page, he was doing those, and I later, we didn't have any money, so I had to sell it for \$500.

—June 18, 1993, New Jersey

BILLY KLÜVER: What about the Reuben Gallery?

JIM DINE: I don't know how they knew about us, but they came over to Judson. I think Kaprow and Anita Baker and Lucas (Samaras) came. I remember something like that; certainly Kaprow, and I think Anita Baker, asked us to come over and show. It was very

charming and generous, I thought. I remember I went over and saw the Kaprow *18 Happenings in 6 Acts (Parts)*, or whatever it is, which I thought was just so dopey, I couldn't believe it. But it had a smell about it I liked, and I liked the audience; I liked the look of the scene, it was nice. . . . It went on for three (six) nights, and the audience was pretty big. The next year I moved to New York City to teach school, and that's when Red Grooms did *The Burning Building* at the Delancey Street Museum. I was there once, they did it just for me, I was the only one in the audience.

BK: So the Reuben Gallery handled mailings?

JD: Absolutely. They handled the so-called publicity, whatever it took.

BK: But otherwise you put it together all by yourself?

JD: Absolutely.

BK: And your next Happening, *Car Crash*?

JD: *Car Crash* was the first piece of the second season of performances. There were two seasons: the first season I did two performances, one was *The Smiling Workman*, at the Judson, and the other was called *Jim Dine's Vaudeville*, I did that at the Reuben at 61 Fourth Avenue. The first space was 61 Fourth Avenue. The next space I found because I lived there, at 44 East Third Street. We lived in an apartment above this empty store, so we took the empty store. And *Car Crash* was the first thing that we performed there, because I used what was left in the store as the set, and sprayed it all white. It was like racks of rolled cork and stuff. . . .

In the *Car Crash* were Patty Oldenburg and Marc Ratliff, and a woman called Judy Tersch who lived with him (she was his girlfriend) and me. There were four of us in that. In *Vaudeville*, it was me, and then Lucas (Samaras) and Nancy (Dine) operated sort of a structure in the background, things I had moving. . . . I danced with these two women cut out of cardboard, so that each of my arms was there, right and left arm. See, I put my arms through a hole, so I had these women cut out of cardboard so they could move with me. So I guess it's not exactly performing alone! I performed alone most of the time because I didn't feel like trusting anybody else. I mean, I didn't feel like being a director. It was simpler to go through it by myself.

BK: How was Pat to work with?

JD: She was such a lively, inspiring person, she was so smart, and so instinctual that you felt you had a great, vibrating organism somehow, extremely sensitive, you didn't have to tell her much to have her do anything. She was great.

And then at Christmastime I did something called *The Shining Bed*, and that was it for me. I was out of there. It was starting to break down, I mean interpersonally with everybody. We were all a little confused about fame, I think.

BK: I don't remember if you charged anything?

JD: I don't remember either. I think they charged at the door; yes, they must have. I mean, I don't know how we paid for it. We must have paid for it ourselves.

—December 20, 1990, New York

PATTY MUCHA: Bob Whitman asked me to perform in *Small Cannon* (January 1960) along with Lucas Samaras, Olga (Adorno), and himself. Although it resembled a Happening, he insisted on calling his event a "theater piece." He transformed the Reuben Gallery with a series of props, one of which was a makeshift swing suspended from the high ceiling by thick ropes. . . . I could swing with utter freedom, dressed in my favorite purple dress . . . going up, up, up . . . I don't recall Lucas's role, but well into the performance, Bob's energy became volatile. After beating on the brick wall with a sledgehammer, he picked up an axe and he began swinging it. . . . Then he started to chop at the heavy rope that controlled the swing. . . . It crashed down, along with me, into an open space on the floor. I did not get hurt, nor did I topple into any of the stunned audience. It was a good role—dance and grace were in perfect balance with danger. . . .

[For Jim Dine's *Car Crash*, November 1960] I spewed out a hypnotic, sexually laced, free association of words. My monologue made a great deal of sense to Jim, although I must admit at the time I found the speech rather absurd and slightly off the wall, but perhaps (this) made it more effective. . . . Jimmy's whole life was a Happening at that point. He had this wonderful opening at the Reuben Gallery (April 1960). He had a white suit that Nancy dyed red. It was summertime, and he shaved his head and painted his face red. She wore a tulle tutu, with daffodils attached to it, so contrary to her image. His show was a Happening. . . .

Simone (Forti) asked me to be in (*Rollers*, December 1960) at the Reuben Gallery's East Third Street storefront location. . . . (Her) piece consisted of three large open-top pine boxes, approximately three feet by four feet at the base with sidewalls one foot high, mounted on large casters. Attached on one end was a strong, heavy rope. There was just enough room for one performer in a box. A person running ahead pulled the boxes, which caused the ropes to be either taut or loose, and as their tension changed the boxes careened . . . into the main staging area, in an action resembling carnival bumper cars as they crashed into each other. The uneven, old tiled floor of the Reuben made the boxes stop abruptly, jarring (me) . . . and then they swung out and crashed into each other again. I hated being in that box! . . . Years later when I admitted this to Simone she said, "I know, that's why it was so good." . . .

(Renée Rubin Miller's paintings) weren't hard-edge paintings, they were free-form from canvases that she made. Sharp and not so

beautiful. Harsh. It was harsh imagery. It was crude, I thought. But they were strong.

—November 21, 1990, Vermont

BILLY KLÜVER: What was the second season of the Reuben Gallery on Third Street?

ROBERT WHITMAN: What happened with the Reuben Gallery was that there was an agreed-upon idea that it would stop after the second year. But the second year was going to be all performances. And that's when we moved over to Third Street . . . 1960 or 1961. That winter.

JULIE MARTIN: So that's what happened, it stopped (after a season)?

RW: Yes, that was the idea, that it would do out that phase. It seemed like a good idea. The idea was that too many things get dragged on past their vitality.

—February 12, 1990, upstate New York

CLAES OLDENBURG: Eventually the activities at the Judson spread to the Reuben Gallery, where in May I did a show of figures and objects, of materials and writings found on the street, stimulated to a degree by works of Jean Dubuffet. After a summer spent in Provincetown, washing dishes and making flags and landscapes out of debris from the ocean, I returned to New York to do the performance *Blackouts* (December 1960) and after that, in February 1961, *Ironworks/Fotodeath* at the Reuben Gallery.

After *Ironworks/Fotodeath*, I began working in plaster and oil paint, making rough, colorful wall pieces of commercial objects, wholes and fragments, which were shown at the Martha Jackson Gallery in May (1961) along with various works by Allan Kaprow, Jim Dine, George Brecht, and others. The exhibition was called *Environments, Situations, Spaces*.

—April 21, 1992, New York

DELANCEY STREET MUSEUM (October 1959–May 1960)

RED GROOMS: It had been a sparring gym before I took it over. It was a crummy place. The place was crummier than the one I had on Sixth Avenue, but about the same size, same arrangement, giving space over to the gallery and the smaller place where I lived. And the small room I had was lined with lockers. It was the locker room, very small. And then there were stairs that went up into a skylight area, also very small, but it did have a cupola with a skylight, and I would sleep up there sometimes. There was no evidence of the (boxing) ring, but there were these church pews that were left. And when I did *The Burning Building* (December 4–11, 1959) I used the church pews as my seats. But what I did is

I cut some of them down so they were low in the front row and higher in the back. There were several rows, so the thing had a rake to it.

And then one nutty thing: obviously there had been some card playing there, because I had these heavy metal tables, with metal feet. And underneath (they) had these pushpins with rubber bands to hold trick cards. And I inherited a pile of poker chips, a great pile of them. And also a big pile of these boxing cards, the old-fashioned yellow boxing cards, advertisements for the fights. Typically, they were yellow in color and they would have pictures of the boxers and yellow type on them. And when I did *The Burning Building*, to block out the light, I put those pictures up to block out the light.

When I did these Happenings, I pretty much improvised it before we went on stage. If we had a rehearsal, it was one day before. And then it was like playing backyard football. You make the play up right on the spot, saying this is what we are going to do, and that was the way we would do it. And the opening night I was pretty scared and desperate, by myself, and I had built these sets on my own. Then these thugs came up, obviously gangster types, three men, and they wanted their tables back. And the tables were already in use—I was writing my script on the floor at the time they came, and it was probably an hour before they (the performers) came in, and the audience two hours later. And it looked so wild. The character that I called the Soundman sat on top of a chair on one of these tables. And they were so well embedded into the set that (the thugs) gave up and walked out.

BILLY KLÜVER: Who was in the piece?

RG: There were five: Jay Milder, Bob Thompson, Terry Barrell, Sylvia Small, Joan Herbst, and myself. And Thompson was actually a substitute, for either Terry Barrell or myself. He acted as a doorman and he had a shirt with a painted bow tie on it, just a crummy T-shirt. And somehow, my father ended up with that shirt and wore it for several years later. But all Thompson had to do, he made an announcement, "No smoking," and turned off the lights. That was his only assignment. But he did also—and it is recorded in the photographs—he played the fireman in some performances. You see, we did it for a week, we gave some nine performances.

JULIE MARTIN: Was that unusual?

RG: Maybe it was. I don't know why I pushed that many, but that was what we did. You see, it was my space, so I could do it as much as I wanted to. And it was so short. What I remember was the biggest thrill was, and I think this was in January—no, around Christmastime, or early December—and the Judson (Gallery) had a drawing show that had a lot of people (included), and they had an opening. I was doing *The Burning Building*, so we couldn't go

over to see it. We did at least two performances, and all the people from the Judson came over on the second performance, so we had a great audience, a terrific audience.⁹ And Claes was there, because Claes had gotten up the drawing show, and it was a great audience. A lot of people, a terrific ovation. We performed our best. It was really exciting. That was the highlight. And the lowlight, it was a weeknight, and the only person who showed up was Jim Dine. I think it was snowing. So we started to do it anyhow. And on the second floor of the building was a card club, and they came up because we were noisy, a lot of banging and stuff, a lot of jumping around. They demanded that we stop it. Which we did, actually. I guess maybe they didn't meet on the other days. It wasn't stopped after that. So we didn't make it through for Jim. I don't know if he made it to the other performances. . . .

Marcia (Marcus) knew so much, she knew everything that was happening. She was really into everything. She did this ballet that Thompson and I were in. . . . Historically, it was the only other so-called Happening that happened in my Delancey Street Museum because no one else came up with anything. I wanted to keep doing these performances, because my idea was you could just keep doing them quick because it only took a few days to get the thing ready. I did *The Burning Building* and Marcia did *A Garden*, and that was it.

—January 10, 1991, New York

JUDSON GALLERY (1959–62)

MARCUS RATLIFF: When I arrived at Cooper Union in 1956 the first thing I needed was a place to live since Cooper had no dormitories. With luck I discovered the Judson Student House, attached to the Judson Church on Washington Square. Problem solved. Furthermore, I was able to defray the cost of room and board by becoming the janitor and handyman. The assistant minister, Bud Scott, lived there with his wife and young daughter. He, along with the minister of the church, Howard Moody, together invited a steady stream of poets and writers and made the Judson House a place of lively artful discussions. In 1958 the literary quarterly *Exodus* was founded by Bud Scott, and I was appointed art editor. It became a showcase for artists including Claes Oldenburg, Richard Tyler, Red Grooms, and William Scharf.

There was a storage room on the lower level, with a door and a few steps up to Thompson Street. One day I asked if it might become a studio, or better still, a gallery space to show some of my work and work by other artist friends. No problem. But all the work to put it in shape and maintain the place was up to me and others yet unnamed. Oh, the other proviso was to make the first exhibition a show of a portfolio of lithographs or etchings of Christ figures by

Georges Rouault. Scott and Moody had access to the prints and they had never been able to show them properly. After that we could do as we liked with the space. In retrospect it was an extraordinary privilege to be given this opportunity without a clear vision of what the Judson Gallery might become in the next few years, along with the performance space next door in the church gym.

JULIE MARTIN: This was you and—

MR: Well, since I lived there, it was up to me to get it going. My old friend Jim Dine was ready and willing; he had recently moved to town a few blocks away, with his family. Tom Wesselmann was a friend and classmate at Cooper and he was all for it. Tom and I had recently met Claes Oldenburg. We had seen his drawings at the Cooper library and were first introduced to him there. He liked what we told him about the new space and was delighted to be asked to have the first of our shows. Richard Tyler, a friend and neighbor of his, was eager to show his woodcuts when he was told about it. So it all began with a vague agenda of some kind.

So in 1959, Claes had his first show in New York at the Judson Gallery. Isn't that amazing? After that there were some group shows as well as Happenings by Dine and Oldenburg. In 1960 Wesselmann and I had a two-man show. Our announcement consisted of a swatch of one of my cut-up paintings and a piece of wallpaper with a rubber stamp of a female head by Tom. The little "booklet" was then stapled together with a title page and mailed out to friends. I don't remember how many we made.

After graduation from Cooper I spent time at Yale in pursuit of an MFA, but the art world in New York was blossoming into what we now know was the famous '60s.

—January 30, 1991, New York

BILLY KLÜVER: Your contact with Judson, how did that evolve?

JIM DINE: Because my high school friend Marc Ratliff lived at the student house. His friend was Eva Hesse, and they both went to Cooper, and a lot of Cooper students lived there. So he knew this minister, Bud Scott, who was there at the Judson, who was a kind of culture minister. Scott was hired by the church to be a liaison between the church and the art community. And through Bud Scott we started the gallery. I'm trying to figure out the year.

BK: 1959?

JD: It was 1958 when I came from Ohio, so it must have been the beginning of the next year.⁴ That was how it began, and that's when Ratliff brought Claes (Oldenburg) over. We knew Wesselmann too, because Wesselmann was at Cooper with Ratliff. And Wesselmann was from Cincinnati, but I didn't know him there; he went to another high school.

BK: Were yours and Claes's the first shows there?⁵

JD: I think so.

BK: Were there other people involved?

JD: There were other people, like, I think Peter Forakis had something to do with it, or his wife then, Phyllis Yampolsky.⁶ Claes's friend Dick Tyler was an underground character somehow involved, and his wife (Dorothea Baer). And Wesselmann maybe a little bit, but it was mainly Claes and me sort of running the show.

JM: Do you remember what sort of people came?

JD: Downtown people, there was such a thing then. There was a kind of bohemia. You know, people our age and a little older. All you have to do is look at those Happening photographs, you see everybody who was there, it was all these stars. John Cage and all these people came, and Alan Solomon (Jewish Museum director), and painters came from downtown, and Ivan Karp came when he was still a viable force, Bellamy and those people, and other people came who were interested—people I never saw again. . . .

BK: How did you divide the space when you did *The House* and *The Street* (by Oldenburg)?

JD: Just in half.

BK: Could you describe something specific about it, or has it all been—

JD: Well, specifically about it was, that here was this mature artist, Claes, and me, who—I was this quivering mass of indecision, that is, I didn't know, I just made it (*The House*) out of my guts. I just made this thing out of my guts. Claes was this really refined person who had control of his hands. I had yet to harness my hands, as it were. So I made this very raw ragged thing out of crap that we found in the street, whereas he took it and used the material to get out an image. With me it was like an allover mass; it was like lunatics' art, indeed, in certain ways it was like a pure shot from my unconscious. So I felt slightly outnumbered in the face of all that great European cultural heritage that he brought to it. I sure learned a lot from him.

JM: In terms of using material?

JD: No, just in terms of draftsmanship and what you can do. I still consider him the only artist I'm interested in, so alive.

—December 20, 1990, New York

CLAES OLDENBURG: When I came to New York in '56 I needed a job, of course. So I went to the Cedar Bar . . . and I also went to Cooper Union because I lived nearby, and I got a job shelving books at Cooper Union in the library. It was fun to work there, and I always lived

close enough so I could walk to work. . . . I worked there for five years, until '60-'61.

While at Cooper, the head of the library, Gerda Muehsam, who liked my drawings, arranged a show in the art school library. . . . Tom Wesselmann and Marcus Ratliff were students there; they saw the drawings and asked me if I would like to have a show in the gallery they had started at the Judson Church with Jim Dine, Peter Forakis, and some others. So I said yes, and in May 1959 I had my first one-man show in New York at the Judson Gallery. I had been mostly painting and drawing figures from life, but for the show I decided to follow another line in my work, which was a much more fantastic, subjective direction. Most of the work was metaphoric, like one figure I developed from a coatrack. There were figurative things, but most of it was peculiar objects, of which a few survive.

I returned to New York after a summer spent running an art gallery in Lenox, Massachusetts, and found the Judson going strong. Dine was full of energy and Red Grooms had started his Delancey Street Museum. Work was violent and wonderful, embracing raw subjects characteristic of the city around us. All of the things that had been boiling in the '50s suddenly appeared.

In the beginning of 1960 I issued a program of events I called "Ray Gun Spex," which grew into a series of performances spread through the spaces of the Judson Church. Participants included Dine, Al Hansen, Dick Higgins, and Allan Kaprow. In my first performance, *Snapshots from the City*, I danced in torn rags with Pat Mucha (then Muschinski). A photo was published in *Time* magazine.⁷ In April Pat and I took a ferryboat to Staten Island to get married.

—April 21, 1992, New York

PATTY MUCHA (on performing in *Snapshots from the City*, February 29; March 1-2, 1960): Claes (Oldenburg) in dirty underwear, bandaged with fake gauze and wounds, was grunting and stumbling while I wore large triangular booties made from cardboard, long stuffed black lollipop hair, and a painted mask, as I chirped "yip-yip, yip-yip." . . . Meanwhile Lucas . . . flicked on and off a bright light in repeated pulses to suggest the staccato moods of the city.

—November 21, 1990, Vermont

MARTHA EDELHEIT: I met Claes with his first show at the Judson Gallery, the one downstairs. There were Happenings in the gym, but that was later. Before that, there was the one (Oldenburg) did jointly with Jimmy (Dine)—*The Street*—and Jim did *The House*. What I remember most vividly about it was they divided the Judson in half. Claes did all this stuff with black and white and burnt newspaper, and he was covered in newspapers and torn stuff and garbage, and he was like a street person. And Jim did *The Smiling*

Workman. The first Happening of Claes's was not a Happening; it was more of an environment at the Judson Gallery.

—March 22, 1990, New York

LUCAS SAMARAS (on Oldenburg's *Snapshots from the City*): I did the lights for him. Because that's what *Snapshots* was, there was this painted paper environment with him and Patty, sort of like rats, somewhat stationary but moving, and the lights would come on and you would catch them. It was pre-strobe; I was the strobe!

—December 1, 1990, New York

ALLAN KAPROW: Jim Dine contacted me, it seemed that he had seen or known about my work while he was going to college in Ohio. He was interested in what I was doing, and he came out to New Jersey to visit with his child and wife, and we had a very pleasant time. He invited me to come into New York to see his work, which I did the next weekend, and that's where I met Claes. Because Claes was a friend of Dine's. And I was knocked out by both of them, when they worked in that collaborative way. Jim, as he said pridefully, was working on the inside, the stomach, the female side of it, and Claes was working on the outside, the male side of it. It was environmental. I was invited to do something at the Judson, which they had been doing before me. Jim did his *Smiling Workman*, and Claes did his *Snapshots from the City*. (Kaprow presented *Coca Cola, Shirley Cannonball?* during "Ray Gun Spex," February 29–March 2, 1960.)

In *Snapshots from the City* Claes and Patty became part of the detritus. I remember the simple way the effect of the strobe light could be worked. Lucas was the one who did it.

He had a light bulb on the end of a cord, which was tightened and untightened as quick as his hand could do it. On and off like that, it had a perfectly clear stroboscopic effect, before strobes could be available to us. And that sense of the primitive, almost simple way that children have to create illusions was what impressed me about both Claes and Jim there. So then I was invited, along with many others, to do pieces there.

BILLY KLÜVER: There was a common feeling?

AK: I believe so. Then there came that very quick sense of discrimination, at least on some of our parts. We were either doing Happenings or not doing Happenings. It was vital. So the distinction between what I saw as a theatrical trend and that which was moving away from theater developed. I remember walking on a street one day and I ran into Claes and we had a really serious argument about this. You can ask him. He said, "I hear you don't think I'm doing Happenings?" I said, "No, but I like it anyway, I just think you're doing theater." And I told him that I thought it was a kind of Surrealist/Expressionist theater and it came out of a

certain history, which I appreciated very much. But I was interested in no history. Coming out of nothing, but creating something out of whole cloth, that would be totally different. And the first thing that would be characteristic of this was the distinction between those works for audiences and those works not for audiences. If you didn't have an audience, you didn't have a stage, you would be doing something different. That's what I called Happening, and why I chose (the term) Happenings so that it wouldn't be confused with any other art. I still thought of it as art.

—February 23, 1991, New York

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112 CHAMBERS STREET (1960–61)

SIMONE FORTI: I did that very early concert at Yoko Ono's (*Five Dance Constructions & Some Other Things*, May 1961) that La Monte (Young) and Jackson (Mac Low) had set up.

BILLY KLÜVER: How many performances were there?

SF: In that series, I don't know. I know Bob Morris made that diminishing corridor that was painted gray, and it had the sound of a heart beating, and you walked in and it got narrower and narrower. It was very beautiful. It scared me.

—April 20, 1991, New York

ROBERT MORRIS: It was good to be on Chambers Street because there were performances there that were very interesting. Jackson Mac Low gave readings, Henry Flynt gave lectures and played his violin, Simone (Forti) gave an incredible concert there, La Monte (Young) gave a concert, and I—that's where I built the *Passageway*. I don't know if you know about that piece? From (June 3–7) 1961. You come up to this—I think second or third floor—and you open this door, and there is this passageway that curves around for fifty feet, it gets narrower and narrower on a fifty-foot radius. You can't go to the end—well, depending on how big you are, you stop. There were little lightbulbs above it, and sound (a metronome up above). But it was all gray plywood that curved. And that was the piece. I sent out a flyer and I was hoping certain artists, people would come, and go in. Got lots of messages on the wall. "Fuck you." (Laughs) Yes, people took it as being rather hostile. But it was out of all that plywood that I took down that I made a lot of my first plywood pieces.

BILLY KLÜVER: Was it like a spiral?

RM: No, two fifty-foot arcs, slightly offset, so that they converge. That was the floor plan. About four feet wide at the beginning, just the width of the doorway. The walls began to converge as they curved into the loft. Your girth determined how far you could go into the work. But the end point was not visible even to the skinniest person.

Some great things happened (on Chambers Street). Simone did her *Five Dance Constructions & Some Other Things*, a revolutionary evening of dance. I was in one of her pieces (*From Instructions*). She told me, "Whatever happens in this thing, there is going to be you and another guy (Robert Huot). I want you to stay with your back against the wall; no matter what happens, that's where you are supposed to be." And she told Huot, "Your job is to tie Morris to the floor." (Two heavy screw eyes had been installed on the floor.) And she gave Huot a rope. Well, it was this total fight that happened and that generated the movement.

—July 27, 1991, upstate New York

ROBERT WHITMAN: They were all West Coast people. They were Anna Halprin's. You had Trish (Trisha Brown) and Simone (Forti) and Yvonne (Rainer), all the Anna Halprin's came east. Boy, she was certainly a seminal person.

La Monte (Young) and Terry (Riley), they all sort of gravitated and had (Halprin) as their focal point for a while. Simone, and I don't know who else. . . . I don't think there are many teachers that have that kind of record, that I know of. That really is amazing if you think about it, isn't it?

JULIE MARTIN: And they all arrived about this time?

RW: More or less. I met La Monte 1961-ish, somewhere around there. So that's probably when they were all there. That's probably when Yoko had the place down there on Chambers Street.

—February 12, 1990, upstate New York

MARCH GROUP (1960–62)

JEAN-JACQUES LEBEL: I experienced disgust and despair in the late '50s during the so-called Cold War. France was deep into its Algerian War quagmire. Under "socialist" prime minister Guy Mollet, the army practiced torture and demolition of entire Algerian towns by napalm bombs. In October 1961, several hundred peaceful Algerian demonstrators were drowned in the Seine, hands tied behind their backs, corpses floating downstream, murdered in plain daylight by Paris police.

Upon arriving in the United States in the autumn of 1961, I realized the situation there was no better: the Vietnam horror had begun under Kennedy, but was getting worse by the minute. The structural racism, the overpowering of what used to be "culture" (the arts, cinema, literature) by merchandizing, by the dogma of entertainment, and by "box office issues." Yet, in New York, I immediately connected with kindred rebels striving in pockets of dissent and resistance. The underground art scene was vibrant. In the March Gallery basement I met Sam Goodman, Stanley

Fisher, Boris Lurie, and their NO!art tribe. Their stuff completely contradicted and ridiculed trendy commodity-obsessed Pop Art. How? By showing genitals, by reinventing the politics of revolt, and by taking sociocultural transformative action.

I built *Mr. America, Bomb* in 1961 and exhibited it at the Hall of Issues. It was made from a dummy U.S. Air Force bomb I bought in an army surplus store on Canal Street and carried back to my studio on West Tenth Street in the subway with the help of Ted Joans, the Afro-American jazz poet (an old friend). We were stopped in the subway by a cop and had to show him it was only a fake bomb. I pasted a lot of He-Men (Mr. America) types and sports star images onto it, placed it on a coffinlike box lit by a phallic red lamp, with a slanted mirror incorporating the viewer's image in the coffin. It was definitely an anti-atomic statement, and the NO!art tribe loved it (so they said). This piece—which I have kept—has been shown in several museums in Europe since then.

Through the March Gallery, and also the Hall of Issues, I made contact with Allan Kaprow and Carolee Schneemann (lifelong friends to be), Claes Oldenburg, Lucas Samaras, Billy (Klüver), and others. I also reconnected with Judith Malina and Julian Beck and gave a reading at the Living Theatre, another underground stronghold, as well as with my Beat friends—Ginsberg, Orlovsky, Corso, Burroughs, that I was close to since the Paris Beat Hotel years—and I bumped into LeRoi Jones, Diane di Prima, de Kooning, and Kline at the Cedar Tavern. Powerful jazz music was alive in the Village and in Harlem clubs, Thelonious Monk's genius was in full swing, hard bop and budding free jazz made themselves heard. Bob Dylan and rock'n'folk were busy being born in Village bars. A premonitory Women's Strike for Peace (November 1, 1961), imagined by Dorothy Day and Judith Malina, froze in the below-zero winter temperature but later on morphed into the much-needed women's liberation movement.

In the spring, Duchamp played chess in Washington Square's southwest corner at the public tables. Oldenburg's *Store Days* Happenings on Avenue B were a delight to take part in. Teeny and Marcel Duchamp gave a dinner for my girlfriend Johanna Lawrenson and me, as well as Niki de Saint-Phalle and Tinguely. Another guest was Richard Huelsenbeck—the Berlin Dadaist—one of my heroes.

Those years in New York felt like paradise. Art was life, daily life was intense art. A worldwide upheaval was in the making, as it would be in Tokyo, Paris, Amsterdam, North Africa, or Asia, and New York seemed to be at the crossroads. It felt like a "magic moment" in which history, at long last, was beginning to come alive. '68 would be the generalization of that "magic moment" to a vast part of the youth population. Human history, of course, is but a roller coaster, and in these years it was at a high point. The inventiveness of the open, international, multilingual

underground art scene in the Village and around Washington Square was a major driving force. For once I felt I was in the right place at the right time. All that is gone now and nostalgia is a waste of energy, but the mere fact that the '60s occurred all over the place with such urgency puts the present downward spiral into long-range perspective.

—October 17, 1990, Paris, France

GREEN GALLERY (1960–65)

RICHARD BELLAMY: After Hansa I drifted and looked for a job for about a year, a year and a half. I worked for Martha Jackson for, I believe, a period of five or six weeks. I was looking for a job, and I guess since I was working at the Hansa Gallery, that's what I was looking for. Ivan was working with Leo at that time, of course. But at any rate, Ivan, I think, had met (Robert) Scull, who wanted to back a gallery, arranged breakfast in Chinatown, dim sum with me and Scull, and that's how the Green Gallery began.

JULIE MARTIN: Did Ivan ever say why he didn't want to start his own gallery?

RB: I don't think he had any idea that he wanted to do that, nor did I. I was just sort of looking for a job, then suddenly I couldn't get a job, so somebody said that he wanted to back a gallery. I just wanted a steady job.

BILLY KLÜVER: The Green Gallery was a great space.

RB: Yeah, it was, for that time. I was looking for places, and Fifty-seventh Street was the area, there was no Downtown. So I was looking at places that summer (1960), and that was the summer I met Mark (di Suvero), or I went to Mark's studio. Mark opened the door and said, "You can't come in, I'm working." I had heard about him through (Pat) Passlof. Shortly after that, Mark's accident occurred. And the space that I was looking for to rent would have to accommodate his sculptures, because I knew Mark was my first show. So that space was actually determined by Mark's sculptures. It was a lot of money, maybe \$1,500 a month. And there were other places I was looking at. But I knew that place would work for Mark's pieces. And Scull evidently went over to Mark's studio (Mark was in the hospital at this time) and approved. Approved, that is to say, "Yes, I guess you can spend \$1,500 for that space."

BK: Where did the Green Gallery's name come from?

RB: Scull would not sit still with some of the names that Ivan (Karp) and I came up with. One of Ivan's names was the O. K. Harris Gallery, one was the Big Tit Gallery, one was the Finger Lakes Gallery, and one was Oil and Steel. But at the last minute we had

to sign corporation papers and we said, "Let's make it simple." So I said, "Okay, call it the Green Gallery." One time I heard that green was a very difficult color to make a painting with.

People didn't begin to buy things until late '62 or '63, after the promotion of Pop Art by Sidney (Janis) and Leo (Castelli). George (Segal)'s work began to sell around '63, '64, Jim Rosenquist in '63 also. So the galleries' expenses were growing, and if there was not enough income to pay the month's bills, then Scull would buy enough to make up the deficit. And of course he would get a 40 percent discount. He kept the gallery going. But of course I was never an astute salesman, I didn't know anything about marketing. How do you get people to buy? Well, here I am; there's an art gallery; there are reviews; I knew the names of the collectors. . . .

I think (Emily) Tremaine bought Rosenquist, Oldenburgs, that was at the end. I was surprised to see these works selling.

—March 4, 1991, New York

CLAES OLDENBURG: By 1960 Bellamy had acquired the funding for a gallery from the collector Robert Scull and he set up the gallery. There were group shows, and I remember doing the poster for a group show at the end of '60.

At the end of the summer in 1961 I rented a store on East Second Street in which I executed as well as exhibited rough imitations of food and goods observed on the Lower East Side around me. Most of the early Store pieces were wall pieces for Martha Jackson (*Environments, Situations, Spaces*), and I worked there through the summer, and began to prepare what was to be *The Store* show, which opened December 1, 1961. In February 1962, I converted the rear half of the store into a theater space, where a series of ten new performances were presented, one each week through May, with Pat, myself, Lucas Samaras, and numerous other volunteers. The project was partly funded by a donation from the Green Gallery.

Bellamy also gave Pat and me the use of the Green Gallery space to prepare a show that opened later that year, in September—our first very own exhibition in the gallery. All the works, which included *Floor Burger, Floor Cake, and Floor Cone*, were made during the summer either in the gallery or in the Store.

We were criticized for moving uptown, but to us that was a move of importance—to spread the creative content that had taken shape in Lower Manhattan. Our final collaboration with the Green Gallery was a performance combining the works from our exhibition with events we called *Sports*, in October 1962, again with a basic cast of three—Patty and I, and Lucas Samaras, who had been so important to our performances. Then, in 1963, Pat and I moved to Los Angeles, making our first West Coast show at the Dwan Gallery.

—April 21, 1992, New York

BILLY KLÜVER: How did Claes get the idea to have you help?

PATTY MUCHA: In the course of constructing props for the Happenings, an invaluable tool—the portable Singer sewing machine—came into play. (I) made my own clothes—dresses, blouses, skirts, and an occasional suit or coat . . . I could also repair some of Claes's duds . . . but within two short years its role became inextricably joined with the making of his art. . . . When we visited the gallery for those preliminary meetings with Dick (Bellamy), we would take the Sixth Avenue subway up to Fifty-seventh Street and walk toward Fifth Avenue, past the posh stores . . . one of them had concave glass that allowed your eyes to focus gently on the interior space without any interference from the sun's glare; . . . inside, spot-lit and presented luxuriously, were the latest Porsche and Jaguar sports cars. . . . As someone who didn't know how to drive, I found these vehicles all the more exotic. But for Claes, what he saw was "form as size" that filled up a space. How to make his sculptures that large? This was the issue at hand.

BK: So you made the hamburger?

PM: Yes, I made the hamburger, all those early pieces.

JULIE MARTIN: Were there drawings and you would—

PM: No. We brought my Singer portable sewing machine up to the (Green Gallery), which now became our studio. I say *our* studio because at this juncture all the construction was accomplished by sewing. . . . Of course, first the pieces had to be cut. We started with the meat patty, as that was a simple round. Claes sketched a rough circle as he walked atop the canvas, drawing a line on the fabric with a pencil that he taped to a yard rule, which he held in his hand. His other hand held a string that was pinned at a central point in the material. The perimeter of the patty was irregularly drawn, nice and meaty. For the top of the bun, to make it puffy I sewed simple pie-shape pieces together to form the basic circle and attached a (second) circle, which became the underside of it, that was somewhat smaller than the top of the bun, but larger than the meat. The pickle, because of its slight size, was a snap to do. I simply topstitched around it, creating a flat edge. I installed large-toothed brass jacket zippers, hidden by a dressmaker's placket, on the undersides of each of the larger pieces to facilitate the stuffing that would take place later with cardboard boxes and big foam-rubber chunks. . . . The sewing itself was strenuous work. To sit on the floor, pulling the bulky mass of fabric through the throttle of the portable sewing machine, was almost physically impossible at times, and since I needed to be sure the seams would hold up . . . I chose to repeat that process twice for each seam. . . . After I sewed the sculptures, Claes helped stuff them and then he painted them. . . . The interpretation of the ice cream cone was less

successful. The scoop, where it joined to the cone, was not globular enough for my taste . . . it neither melted nor curved into the cone. The process of shirring, gathering, and tucking took over, but these techniques did not solve its basic architectural problem. . . .

But then (after 1962) he got to be rather good at making patterns. He would first draw them out on paper, then he'd make a small maquette, you know? On stiffer paper so he could work them around to see what they'd look like. And then he'd do these beautiful patterns on a harder paper, and then we did the muslin pieces. We always did the muslin pieces first and then the vinyl. If the muslin worked, then we'd do it in vinyl. So he was rather good.

—November 21, 1990, Vermont

MIMI GROSS: Patty (Mucha) contributed so much. Not just the physical work with Claes, she contributed to the spirit so strongly.

—February 24, 1991, New York

JACKIE FERRARA: When the Green Gallery opened (October 1960), Bob (Beauchamp) was by far the hottest painter. He was the one who was the most successful. He was the one the Modern (Museum of Modern Art) bought, he was the big deal. So eventually that started to turn, but it took a few years before it started to turn.

JULIE MARTIN: It was really the more hard-edged Pop Art that was the break, rather than the Happenings.

JF: Right. Then these other people started to come in, like Larry Poons, who came into the Green Gallery, that's what I was thinking. And then Lee Lozano. I don't know what ever happened to her.

—March 19, 1990, New York

GEORGE SEGAL: Bellamy, with Scull's backing, opens up the Green Gallery. Let's see if I can recite, if I can remember: Oldenburg, Wesselmann, di Suvero, Poons, Judd, Bob Morris, Yayoi Kusama (obsessive dot sculptress from Japan), Dan Flavin.

BILLY KLÜVER: Andy (Warhol)?

GS: Was Andy at the Green? I don't think so.

BK: He showed his dollar bills there.¹⁰

GS: He might have been in a group show. I don't think he was a member of Green. I think Samaras was in Green. . . . Don Judd invented his minimalist theory. The strange thing is we all respected each other. There was this enormous personal and temperamental difference between de Kooning and Rothko, we just took that for granted, and you do your stuff your way. Judd was using a power saw. He was painting wooden boxes bright red. Doing that simple counting, saying no parts, no proportions, just pure geometry, just one thing, nothing to do with environment, nothing

to do with the room you are in. I was exactly the opposite. I was stapling black tar paper on the whole gallery and I was lighting sculpture from the top. My abstract friends would sputter, "That's not sculpture, that's theater."

BK: Who would say that?

GS: Abstract painters. They gave me a hard time. Because all these rules were being broken. Everybody was willful, everybody was opinionated, and yet there were certain connections. I think Bellamy had a genius for sensing the connections between these people. I don't know whether it was a space sensibility, I don't know what it was. Everybody would go on despite the disagreements. It was no big deal. Okay, you want to do it that way, you do it. That was before any critics had started describing schools or making divisions. I think there was more leaking and crossover than is written about.

JULIE MARTIN: What pieces did you show at Green?

GS: I showed *The Gas Station* (1963), *Women Standing in a Bathtub* (1964), the *Bus Riders* (1962), *The Dry Cleaning Store* (1964) that Pontus (Hultén) got for Moderna Museet (Stockholm).

BK: The bicycle—was that one of the first plaster sculptures? (*Man on a Bicycle*, 1962)

GS: Yeah, yeah, I showed that one. I was still making paintings and I was still showing paintings.

JM: What kind of paintings were you making?

GS: They were terribly mixed up. They were figurative, they were abstract, they were drippy. I was battling an impulse to obey the rules and regulations of abstract painting, (yet) insisted on doing figuration. I was doing it and not liking what I did. I couldn't reconcile how to keep the canvas flat, how to make pure gesture, then an image of the real world. I didn't like what I did until I started making sculpture.

—February 16, 1990, New Jersey

LUCAS SAMARAS: Concerning the pickup of the Pop Art, I think (Robert) Scull was very instrumental, because he had a financial stake at the Green Gallery, so naturally he wanted the gallery to succeed, and a large chunk of the Pop artists were at the Green Gallery. So he functioned both as a gallery person as well as a promoter, because it was to his benefit for artists to wind up in collections. So he in a way was like a showcase. He would take the paintings, put them up in this nice, rich sort of environment, and then other well-to-do people could come and see how nice it looked and think how nice it would look in their house. And then he would invite the magazine writers and they would do stories about it. So I think he was absolutely fundamental to the creation, to the public acceptance. And of course the images were easily assimilable by the whole country.

JM: Yes, you didn't have to argue about abstract art.

LS: Yes. I think Scull was this poor boy who became wealthy, so he was in a way right up with the artists, because they were most of them poor who were coming up. So to have people against you was not a new thing. He was always swimming against the tide. So whether it was fancy rich collectors or fancy intellectual writers, it's the same thing: having an enemy is not necessarily bad. . . .

For two or three years, by magic, Dick Bellamy was the best dealer in town. He was the best poetic dealer, and he absolutely fulfilled whatever was given to him at the Green Gallery. It was a very important gallery. He didn't put his friends in it. He didn't have the need that because you are my buddy, I can show you. It was some higher thing. "Well, no, I don't think you are right for it," or something. . . . But Dick has to be thought of in terms of Dick and Scull together. You know, Oldenburg and Patty together and they produced this terrific thing? Well, there's Dick and Scull produced this gallery. Scull was this underground guy, he was the money. They were both a terrific combination.

—December 1, 1990, New York

Notes

1. Milton Resnick was included in a March 17–April 7, 1953, group exhibition at the Tanager. Leo Castelli also installed the *Ninth Street Show* in 1951.
2. Kaprow first exhibited at the Hansa in the December 8–25, 1952, group show, the second group show in the gallery's history. His first one-man show, mounted May 1–16, 1953, comprised paintings and drawings. For a discussion of his environment installations, see "Leaving Midtown: Hansa Gallery" in this volume.
3. Marcia Marcus had a solo show at Grooms's Delancey Street Museum in April 1960. She also organized the *Happening A Garden* at the Delancey Street Museum in January 1960.
4. The first Judson Gallery show ran February 13–March 7, 1959, and included Jim Dine, Marcus Ratliff, and Tom Wesselmann. In May 1959, Oldenburg first showed at the Judson Gallery in a solo exhibition, *Drawings, Sculpture, Poems*.
5. Dine and Oldenburg had a two-man show, November 13–December 3, 1959.
6. Phyllis Yampolsky was involved in the Judson Gallery, joining at the invitation of Bud Scott. She founded the Hall of Issues in 1960, also part of the Judson Memorial Church. Her husband, artist Peter Forakis, took part in the Hall of Issues, but not in the Judson Gallery. Forakis was a member of the Park Place Group.
7. "Up-Beats," *Time* 77, no. 11 (March 14, 1960): 80.
8. Anita Rubin was not married to Max Baker at the founding of the Reuben Gallery, and Baker was not part of the gallery's founding. Kaprow was the only person to suggest Baker helped with the gallery's finances.
9. Dine and Oldenburg closed their two-man show on December 3, 1959. It was followed by the group *X-mas Show*, which also included Dine, Oldenburg, and other artists. The *X-mas Show* ran December 4–31, 1959. Many thanks to Red Grooms for pointing out the continuity of Dine and Oldenburg's exhibitions through December.
10. The Warhol silkscreen *200 One Dollar Bills* (1962) was included in the group show at the Green Gallery, June 5–July 21, 1962.



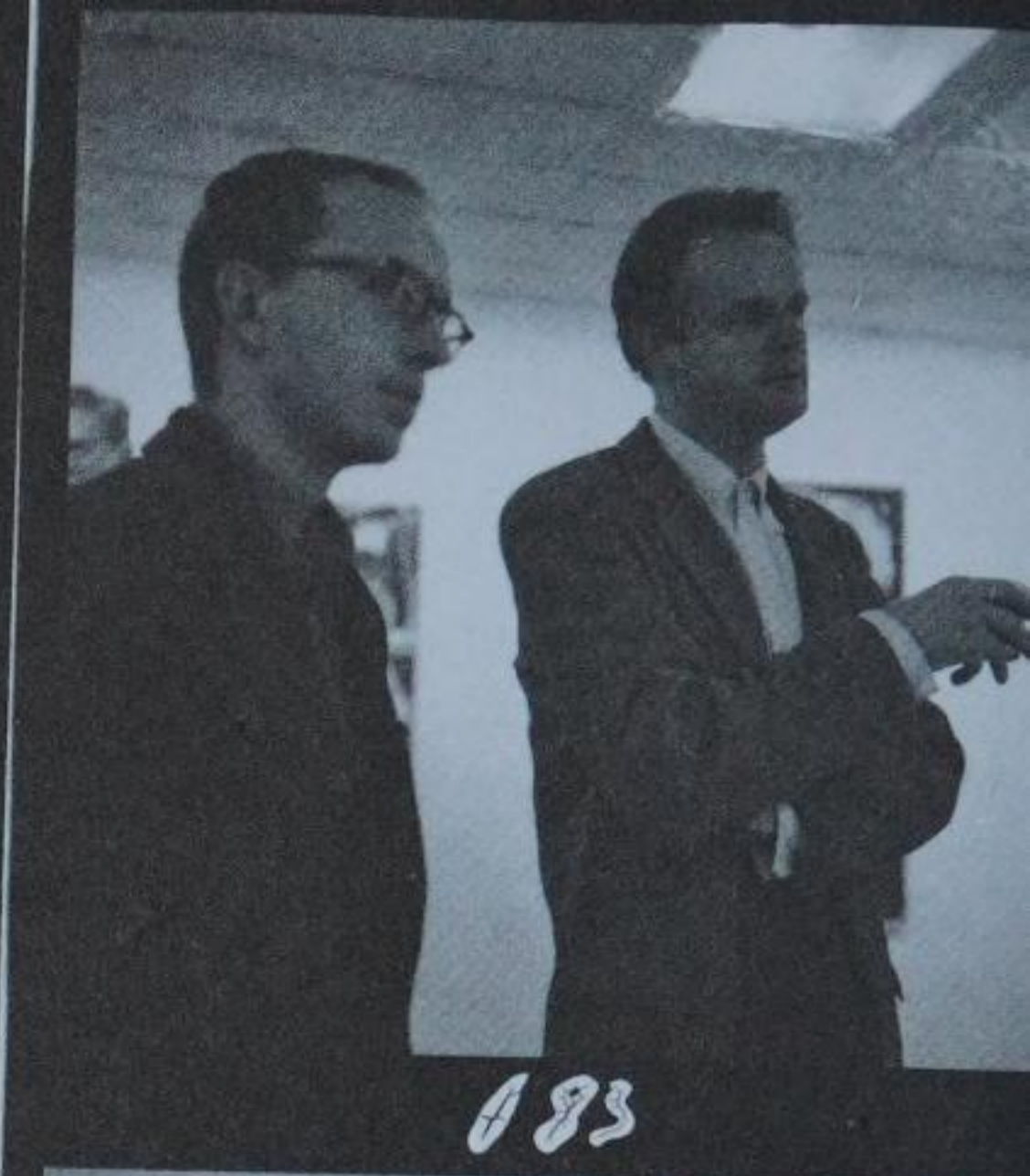
Jim Dine, Original collage for *Xmas Show* announcement, Judson Gallery, Judson Memorial Church, New York, December 4–31, 1959
 Ink, paint, pencil, and collage on watercolor paper on board, paper: 9 × 11³/₈ in. (22.8 × 28.8 cm); board: 11 × 14 in. (28 × 35.5 cm)
 Courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, New York



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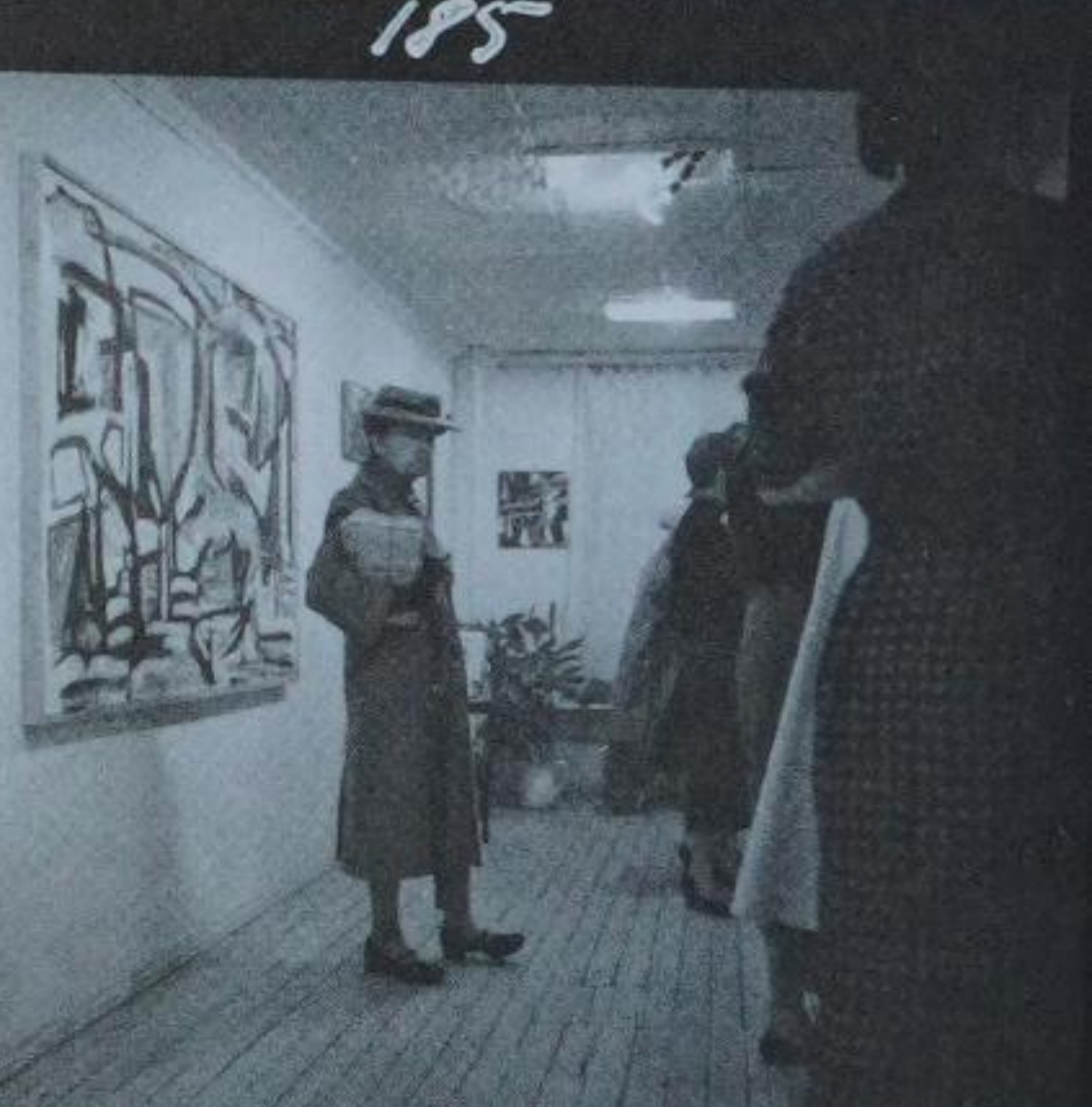


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Notes

PREFACE

1. Peter Selz, *New Images of Man* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959).
 2. Joellen Bard, *Tenth Street Days: The Co-ops of the 50's* (New York: Education, Art and Service, Inc., 1977).
 3. Irving Sandler, *A Sweeper-Up After Artists: A Memoir* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2003).
 4. Jed Perl, "The Painter and the City," in *New Art City: Manhattan at Mid-Century* (New York: Vintage, 2005), 17.
 5. Judith E. Stein, "Figuring Out the Fifties: Aspects of Figuration in New York, 1950–1964," in *The Figurative Fifties: New York Figurative Expression*, ed. Paul Schimmel and Judith E. Stein (New York: Rizzoli and Newport Beach, CA: Newport Harbor Art Museum, 1988), pp. 37–51.
 6. *Ibid.*, 37.
 7. Greenberg's canon includes de Kooning, Pollock, Rothko, Newman, Still, Louis, and Olitski. His *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* is still in print and includes no women or artists of color.
 8. Both wrote for Hilton Kramer and then, in 1961, for James R. Mellow, when the publication changed its title to *Arts Magazine*. "It may be hard to believe but Hilton Kramer was easy to work for," Judd wrote in an introduction to his collected writings, adding, "it's plain if you know him that James Mellow was easy to work for." See Donald Judd, introduction to *Donald Judd: Complete Writings, 1959–1975* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), vii.
 9. For an engaging introduction to the papers, see "The Dealer as Co-Conspirator: Selections from the Richard Bellamy Papers in The Museum of Modern Art Archives," <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2008/bellamy/> (accessed January 13, 2015).
 10. Not long after I began reading the Bellamy papers, I learned about Judith E. Stein's research for her biography on Bellamy, *Eye of the Sixties: The Life and Times of Richard Hu Bellamy*, to be published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 2016. Stein's support and generosity throughout this project were extraordinary, especially as my research path followed her own.
 11. Judith E. Stein, "Richard Bellamy: Interview with Billy Klüver and Julie Martin," *Art in America* 102, no. 10 (November 2014), 120, affirms my interpretation: "Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Bellamy's career was not his legendary eye but his disdain for art commerce."
 12. See Mildred L. Glimcher, *Happenings: New York, 1958–1963* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2012). Glimcher's generosity, and that of her assistants Ali Filippelli and Sarvia Jasso, cannot be overstated.
 13. Lawrence Alloway is widely credited with devising the term "Pop Art," and in 1963 he organized the exhibition *Six Painters and the Object* for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, where he was a curator. The six painters were Robert Rauschenberg, Jim Dine, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, and Andy Warhol. Not until 1965—when Donald Judd fired the opening salvo questioning Greenberg's commitment to discipline purity—did assemblage, painting, and 3-D artworks receive renewed scrutiny for their inherent perceptual wholeness, inspiring a new category. See Donald Judd, "Specific Objects," in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings*, 181–89. Essay first published in *Arts Yearbook* in 1965. Finally, for a cogent discussion on the relationship between assemblage and Pop Art, see Thomas Crow, "Living With Pop," in *The Rise of the Sixties* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 69–103.
 14. John R. Searle, "What is an Institution?" in *Institutional Critique and After*. Symposium of the Southern California Constortium of Art Schools, vol. 2 (Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2006), 21–51.
 15. *Ibid.*, 50.
 16. Aimee Walleston, "Wife and Muse: Claire Wesselmann on Tom Wesselmann," *Art in America* online, December 8, 2009, <http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/interviews/claire-wesselmann/>.
 17. Erik La Prade, "Interview with Mimi Gross," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery, 1960–1965, Twenty-Three Interviews* (New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 2009), 55.
 18. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Three Conversations in 1985: Claes Oldenburg, Andy Warhol, Robert Morris," *October* 70 (Autumn 1994), 35.
- ### 1. LEAVING MIDTOWN (pages 35–85)
1. Allan Kaprow, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, February 23, 1991, audio recording, Klüver Martin Archive, Berkeley Heights, NJ (hereafter cited as KMA).
 2. Twenty artists founded The Club, meeting initially in Ibram Lassaw's (1913–2003) loft before renting a space at 39 East Eighth Street. By 1952 the membership had swelled to over 100, and more than 50 non-members were receiving program notices: Sunday evenings were reserved for social gatherings; Wednesday evenings, for members' meetings; and Friday evenings, for lectures and discussions on aesthetic, cultural, and philosophical ideas, with an emphasis on abstraction. Founding members included Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Lassaw, Landes Lewitin (1892–1966), Conrad Marca-Relli, Philip Pavia, Ad Reinhardt, and Milton Resnick. Pavia, an abstract sculptor, also founded the magazine *It Is* (1957–65), a polemical extension of discussions at The Club. For an anecdotal history based on Pavia's journals, see Natalie Edgar, ed., *Club Without Walls: Selections from the Journals of Philip Pavia* (New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 2007), especially p. 58.
 3. Marca-Relli, Kline, and Ferren asked Leo Castelli, then an art adviser and one of the few non-artist Club members, to oversee the installation, and the designer Frederick Kiesler to devise an inexpensive build-out of the space. For an overview of the *Ninth Street Show* and its significance in exhibition history, see Bruce Altshuler, "Downtown," in *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 156–73, nn. 266–68.
 4. *Ibid.*, 171.

Opening of Miles Forst exhibition, Hansa Gallery, New York, 1954

Collection of Sophie Forst, New York

5. Joellen Bard, "Tenth Street Days: An Interview with Charles Cajori and Lois Dodd," *Arts Magazine* 52, no. 4 (December 1977), 99.
6. Rents were considerably cheaper on Third and Fourth Avenues between Tenth and Twelfth Streets, in what was then considered a border area to Greenwich Village. Artists and critics termed the area east of Third Avenue either Greenwich Village or the Lower East Side. In the later 1960s the area came to be called the East Village, a name invented by real estate companies.
7. The rent was \$40 per month. Bard, "An Interview with Charles Cajori and Lois Dodd," 163. Perle Fine lived in the building and told the Tanager group about the space. See Brian O'Doherty, "Death of a Gallery: After Ten Years, the Tanager Will Close," *New York Times* (April 1, 1962), 127.
8. For a brief period in the late 1950s Lester Johnson joined, and before the gallery closed Tom Wesselmann also became a member. For a full list of members and artists who had important exhibitions at the Tanager, see Joellen Bard, *Tenth Street Days: The Co-ops of the 50's* (New York: Education, Art and Service, Inc., 1977).
9. Sandler worked at the Tanager from 1956 to 1959. We learn more about the gallery's finances and the role of a gallery manager from the contract, dated October 1959, of his replacement, Enid Furlonger. She received \$40 per week plus a 10 percent commission on any work sold. Furlonger promoted the exhibition program, maintained picture files and artist biographies for each show, filed sales taxes, and distributed income to members and the gallery according to co-op rules, which in 1959 gave the Tanager 25 percent of the proceeds from all sales—15 percent toward gallery overhead and 10 percent to Enid. See Tanager Gallery records, 1952–79, Correspondence 1955–60, box 2, folder 9, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as AAA).
10. Inscribed in their statement of purpose was to "have contact with as many artists as possible" for the purpose of "show[ing] work of high caliber, mainly by artists who have shown but little and who have not found a berth in one of the established commercial art galleries, to bring them before the public, to give them an opportunity to have their work seen by other artists, galleries, museum people, thereby encouraging them, allowing them to see their art alongside that of others." See Tanager Gallery records, 1952–79, Historic Sketches and Ephemera, box 1, folder 1, AAA. In conducting regular studio visits, the Tanager prefigured the alternative, nonprofit gallery spaces, mainly in SoHo, of the late 1960s and especially the 1970s. Their statement of purpose also specified that they were "nonprofit" and "not a business," relying on members' dues, not sales, to cover expenses. The Tanager was in fact incorporated as a business primarily because tax laws governing charitable organizations were restrictive before the Tax Reform Act of 1969. See Joel R. Gardner, "Oral History and Philanthropy: Private Foundations," *Journal of American History* 79, no. 2 (September 1992), 601–5.
11. Bard, "An Interview with Charles Cajori and Lois Dodd," 99.
12. Tanager Gallery records, 1952–79, Historic Sketches and Ephemera, box 1, folder 1, AAA.
13. Dore Ashton, "About Art and Artists: Tanager Gallery, which Began in Barber Shop on Bowery, Marks 4th Birthday," *New York Times* (February 4, 1956).
14. Alex Katz, interview by Klüver and Martin, New York, February 25, 1990, audio recording, KMA.
15. Irving Sandler, *A Sweeper-Up After Artists: A Memoir* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 226.
16. Steinberg likened his struggle to define the second generation painters to T. S. Eliot's "East Coker" (1940), in which the poet describes his battles with language: "... And so each venture / Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate / With shabby equipment always deteriorating..." Leo Steinberg, introduction to *Artists of the New York School: Second Generation* (New York: Jewish Museum, 1957), 4–8.
17. Sandler, *A Sweeper-Up After Artists*, 226; and Philip Pearlstein, interview by the author, New York, April 16, 2013.
18. Letter to Frederick A. Praeger, dated January 16, 1958. Collection of Sidney Geist Estate and Eric Firestone Gallery, New York.
19. Sandler (*A Sweeper-Up After Artists*, 226) wrote, "Those in regular attendance were Charles Cajori, Lois Dodd, Sally Hazelet Drummond, Sidney Geist, Angelo Ippolito, Ben Isquith, Alex Katz, Philip Pearlstein, Raymond Rocklin, and myself as a note taker and tabulator." Other accounts are based on interviews conducted by the author with Pearlstein, Lois Dodd (New York, November 11, 2013), and Charles Cajori (New York, August 13, 2013).
20. Published from 1960 to 1962, *Scrap* had a broad readership in and beyond New York. Anita Ventura, an editor at *Arts*, was *Scrap's* co-publisher. The Archives of American Art in Washington, DC, preserves a full run; see <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/scrap-9715>.
21. Philip Pearlstein, "Tenth Street in the 1950s," PhilipPearlstein.com, <http://philippearlstein.com/tenth-street-in-the-1950s/> (accessed September 10, 2015).
22. Philip Pearlstein, interview by the author.
23. Pearlstein's idea of using Burckhardt's photograph of the gallery exterior was realized in a booklet published by the Tanager at the start of the 1959–60 season, now preserved in the collection of Lois Dodd, New York.
24. Letter from Tanager members, February 15, 1958. Collection of Lois Dodd, New York.
25. Ibid.
26. Sandler, *A Sweeper-Up After Artists*, 227. For Elaine de Kooning's alleged love affair with Hess, see Mark Stevens and Annalyn Swan, *De Kooning: An American Master* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004).
27. Rudi Blech wrote about jazz for the *New York Herald Tribune* and Selden Rodman published *Conversations with Artists* in 1957, which included an interview with de Kooning. Draft letter from Sidney Geist to Willem de Kooning, May 8 [1958], Collection of Sidney Geist Estate and Eric Firestone Gallery, New York.
28. Letters from Harold Rosenberg, February 20, 1958, and Thomas B. Hess, n.d. (c. February 1958), Both collection of Sidney Geist Estate and Eric Firestone Gallery, New York. For information on Rosenberg and Greenberg's disagreements, see Norman L. Kleeblatt, ed. *Action / Abstraction: Pollock, de Kooning, and American Art, 1940–1976* (New York: Jewish Museum and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
29. Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act," in *The New Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1966), 23, 25–26.

30. Only Goldwater's assessment of the New York School has been preserved, since he published his essay. In it, he alludes to modes of defining the New York School more broadly, pointing to its concern with the personal. "One of the principal characteristics of the New York School has been its great sensuous appeal," he begins. "With certain exceptions (of whom de Kooning is the most obvious) this is a lyric, not an epic, art," meaning an art of concentrated emotion, not of sweeping social dimensions—a concept that both Geist and Pearlstein would embrace. See: Robert Goldwater, "Reflections on the New York School," *Quadrum* 8 (1960), 20. It should also be noted that Parker Tyler's unpublished essay is in the Geist Estate.
31. Irving Sandler, untitled statement in *Tanager Gallery: Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture* (New York: n.p., 1959), n.p. It is important to note that, from 1972 to 1980, Sandler played a foundational role in fostering New York's nonprofit, artist-run galleries that would further diminish the critic's role as final cultural arbiter. He served as Artists Space's first board president, beginning in 1973, and remained active on the board until 1995, when he became an honorary board member. See "Trudie Grace and Irving Sandler interviewed by Joan Rosenbaum," in *5000 Artists Return to Artists Space: 25 Years*, ed. Claudia Gould and Valerie Smith (New York: Artists Space, 1998), 20–26.
32. Artists' statement, in *Tanager Gallery: Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture*, n.p.
33. In his article, Pearlstein presented *The Private Myth* as an independent project. It was only through interviews with Dodd, Pearlstein, and Sandler that I learned of the article's connection to the book and programming series. *Art News* editor Thomas B. Hess may not have been aware of this connection, either; further research on Hess and his editorial practices is needed. This omission could also indicate that, by 1961, the fracas over Elaine de Kooning had dissipated. See Philip Pearlstein, "The Private Myth," *Art News* 60, no. 5 (September 1961), 42–45, 61.
34. The gallery space was approximately 800 square feet. Pearlstein ("The Private Myth," 42) details 24 artworks on view, but the gallery's brochure lists 28 participating artists, while the checklist, which calls the exhibition *Private Myths*, only accounts for 22, including three (Robert "Bob" Beauchamp, Mary Frank, and Raymond Rocklin) whose names are not in the brochure. The 22 participants listed in the checklist were Pat Adams, Peter Agostini, Beauchamp, Louise Bourgeois, Charles Cajori, Sally Hazelet Drummond, Marisol Escobar, Jean Follett, Frank, Sidney Geist, Gloria Graves, John Hultberg, Al Jensen, Lester Johnson, Landes Lewitin, Renée Rubin Miller, George Ortman, Rocklin, Salvatore Sirugo, George Spaventa, Richard Stankiewicz, and Albert Terris (b. 1916). Missing are Pearlstein's contribution and eight other artists (Ad Reinhardt, Enrico Donati, Perle Fine, Balcomb Greene, William Kienbusch, Ibram Lassaw, Nicholas Marsicano, and Louise Nevelson). These omissions/substitutions may indicate that the checklist now in the collection of the Archives of American Art is a draft, a hunch further supported by the fact that it is not on letterhead and contains handwritten corrections. As for prices, the most expensive work, at \$1,400, was Stankiewicz's *Double Booger for a Little John*, and the least expensive, at \$85, was by Sal Sirugo. Except for Stankiewicz's, all the artworks were priced at \$1,000 and under. For both the brochure and checklist, see Tanager Gallery records, 1952–1979, Financial and Legal Records, box 1, folder 21, AAA.
35. Irving Sandler, interview by the author, New York, November 25, 2013.
36. Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," in *Art in America, 1945–1970*, ed. Jed Perl (New York: Library of America, 2014), 232. First published in *Art News* 51, no. 8 (December 1952).
37. Sidney Geist, as quoted in "The Private Myth," unpublished Tanager Gallery pamphlet (1961), Tanager Gallery records, 1952–79, Group Shows Circa 1952–62, box 1, folder 31, AAA.
38. Pearlstein, "The Private Myth," 42.
39. Leo Steinberg, "Month In Review," *Arts Magazine* 30, no. 9 (April 1956), 45.
40. Quoted in *ibid.*
41. Warhol and Pearlstein were friends, having met as art students at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, and when they first moved to New York in 1949 they lived together.
42. Carter Ratcliff, "Selfhood Paints a Self-Portrait," in *The Figurative Fifties: New York Figurative Expressionism*, ed. Judith E. Stein and Paul Schimmel (New York: Rizzoli and Newport Beach, CA: Newport Harbor Art Museum, 1988), 26.
43. Judith E. Stein, "Figuring Out the Fifties: Aspects of Figuration in New York, 1950–1964," in *ibid.*, 37.
44. Russell Bowman, *Philip Pearlstein: The Complete Paintings* (New York: Alpine Fine Arts, 1983), xi.
45. Al Jensen, quoted in "The Private Myth," unpublished Tanager Gallery pamphlet (1961), Tanager Gallery records, 1952–79, Group Shows Circa 1952–62, box 1, folder 31, AAA.
46. Julie Karabenick, "An Interview with Artist George Earl Ortman," *Geoform*, August 2010, <http://geoform.net/interviews/an-interview-with-artist-george-ortman/>.
47. Sally Hazelet, as quoted in "The Private Myth," AAA.
48. Pearlstein, "The Private Myth," 42.
49. Before the members settled on the name Hansa, Richard Stankiewicz suggested Dodeca, or "twelve" in Greek, to reflect the number of members they would need to keep the co-op affordable. But the members deemed Dodeca pretentious and hard to pronounce. Kaprow, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin. Also, the Richard Bellamy Papers note a "twelve-page typescript draft of the Hansa Gallery's mission statement, membership requirements, financial and organizational arrangement, and general rules. Includes numerous hand edits. The name 'Hansa Gallery' is nowhere indicated but the first page is marked 'Dodeca gallery' in pencil." The Hansa Gallery 1953–98, series II, box A, folder 6, Richard Bellamy Papers, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York (hereafter cited as RBP MoMA).
50. Matching the influence in the U.S. of Hofmann's pedagogical program was that of the Bauhaus, where the fine arts and design were merged. After the Nazis closed the school, first in Dessau (1932) and then in Berlin (1933), many core faculty and former students moved to the U.S. and found teaching positions, including Josef and Anni Albers (Black Mountain College, NC, and Yale University, New Haven, CT), László Moholy-Nagy (Institute of Design, Chicago, IL), Werner Drewes (Columbia University, New York), and Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer (Harvard University, Cambridge, MA), to name a few.

51. Hans Hofmann, statement written July 1931. Published in *Hans Hofmann* (San Francisco: California Palace of the Legion of Honor, 1931); reprinted in Cynthia Goodman, *Hans Hofmann* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1990), 163. See also Jennifer Sachs Samet, "Painterly Representation in New York 1945–1975" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2010), 19.
52. Hofmann spent a decade studying art in Paris (1904–14), where he was a classmate of Henri Matisse's at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. He absorbed the radical innovations then challenging academic art, in part by intimately studying the work of Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Robert and Sonia Delaunay, and Fernand Léger. At the onset of World War I he was forced to return to Germany, where he opened his first school, in Munich, in 1915, basing his pedagogy on his experiences in Paris. For a brief overview of Hofmann and his career as a teacher and an artist, see <http://www.hanshofmann.org> (accessed April 23, 2015).
53. Quoted in Dore Ashton, *The New York School: A Cultural Reckoning*, 2nd rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press and New York: Viking Press, 1973), 82–83.
54. Samet, "Painterly Representation in New York," 49.
55. Clement Greenberg, "Art," *The Nation* 160, no. 16 (April 21, 1945), 469.
56. Greenberg was first brought to Hofmann's critique sessions by Lee Krasner and thereafter visited every Friday. Noting the impact of Hofmann's one-man show at the Day Gallery at Art of This Century in 1944, Greenberg organized, in 1955, an exhibition of Hofmann's artwork for Bennington College, in Vermont. He wrote about Hofmann in 1958 and in 1961 published a monograph on the artist. Hofmann's definition of modernism influenced Greenberg's own thinking on the subject. See Ashton, *The New York School*, 79.
57. Miles Forst, interview by Julie Martin, New York, November 18, 1993, audio recording, KMA.
58. Ibid.
59. Interviews with Wolf Kahn, New York, January 10, 1991, and Allan Kaprow, New York, February 23, 1991, by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, audio recording, KMA. Kaprow and Kahn had met earlier, in the 1940s, at the High School of Music and Art, one of the new subject-themed high schools established by New York during Fiorello H. LaGuardia's mayoral administration. The exhibition organized by Kahn and Pasilis at 813 Broadway occurred just six months after the *Ninth Street Show*. In addition to Kahn and Pasilis, the exhibiting artists were Lester Johnson, John Grillo, Jan Müller, and Miles Forst. Although Kaprow recalled having taken part in the exhibition, Kahn believes that Kaprow joined the group later. According to the *Art Students League News*, the show "was visited by 300 artists and two art critics, Thomas B. Hess of *Art News* and Paul Brach of the *Arts Digest*. The show led to the founding of the best of the downtown cooperative galleries, the Hansa Gallery. 813 Broadway announced a new interest in figurative painting by a group which had drunk deep at the Pierean (*sic*) springs of abstract expressionism." That article was published in December 1961 and, according to Richard Bellamy, was authored by Lawrence Campbell, editor of the *Art Students League News*. It is reprinted at <http://www.felixpasilis.com/index.htm> (accessed December 23, 2013). For Bellamy's commentary and his disagreement with Campbell's categorization of the Hansa as "figurative," see "Oral History Interview with Richard Bellamy, 1963," by Richard Brown Baker, AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-richard-bellamy-12418>.
60. Wilson did not study with Hofmann; she received two degrees, a BA and an MFA, from the University of Iowa, and was Gruen's instructor when they met at the university sometime between 1946 and 1947. They were married in Iowa in 1948 before moving to New York. See John Gruen, *The Party's Over Now: Reminiscences of the Fifties—New York's Artists, Writers, Musicians, and their Friends*, 3rd rev. ed. (Wainscott, NY: Pushcart Press, 1989), 3–9, 17–18. See also "Oral History Interview with Richard Stankiewicz, 1963," by Richard Brown Baker, AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-richard-stankiewicz-12263>.
61. Two artists, Maurice Barr and Arnold Singer, were also members during the initial phase. While Singer went on to a distinguished career in lithography and was a professor of art at Cornell University, little is known of Maurice Barr, who dropped out before the gallery moved uptown. Singer knew Wolf Kahn's older brother, Peter, also an art professor at Cornell. Though Singer was not a student of Hofmann's, he did study with the painter Cameron Booth at the Art Students League. Booth was a student of Hofmann's in Munich and, according to another student of Booth's, Jean Follett, his lessons incorporated ideas gleaned from Hofmann. For information on Singer, see Victor Colby, Gregory Page, and Stanley Taft, "Arnold Singer, March 4, 1920–January 10, 2005," Cornell University eCommons, http://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/bitstream/1813/17934/2/Singer_Arnold_2005.pdf. Other artists who were at one time members of the Hansa for some period during its eight-year history include Edward Avedisian, Hedy Fuchs, Paul Georges, Dan Haugard, Andrew Martin, Dody Müller, Leatrice Rose (a sister-in-law of Clement Greenberg's), and Lilly Brody. See Bard, *Tenth Street Days*, 8.
62. The Hansa Gallery 1953–98, series II, box A, folder 6, RBP MoMA.
63. Alfred Leslie, interview by the author, June 6, 2012, New York.
64. The Hansa Gallery 1953–98, series II, box A, folder 6, RBP MoMA.
65. "I can also just insert this, since Hans Hofmann was the mentor of these artists they took care never to take advantage of that relationship with him. That is, never to ask him to show in group shows with them and other artists of Hofmann's generation who could be persuaded to do so. They wanted to begin on their own as it were." See "Oral History Interview with Richard Bellamy," AAA online.
66. A draft of the initial bylaws names Stankiewicz as chairman, Wilson as secretary, and Barbara Forst as treasurer. The bylaws also established the following standing committees: a Coordination Committee, composed of officers, to track work by all committees; a Rules and Procedure Committee, also composed of officers, to determine parliamentary procedures for meetings and operations; a Ways and Means Committee, run initially by Gruen, Miles Forst, and Pasilis, concerned with practical finance; and an Exhibition Committee, which managed the schedule, advertising, and all incidental tasks pertaining to the program. This committee was initially composed of Kaprow, Kahn, Müller, and Stankiewicz. See *The Hansa Gallery, 1953–98*, series II, box A, folder 6, RBP MoMA.
67. "Oral History Interview with Richard Stankiewicz," AAA online.
68. Annetta Applebaum Duveen (1924–2007) trained as a sculptor in the classical tradition, studying first at the University of Iowa and

- then at Columbia University with Oronzio Maldarelli. In 1942 she married Charles Duveen, Jr., a grandson of Sir Joseph Joel Duveen and a nephew of Lord Joseph Duveen, the well-known New York Old Master picture dealer, in 1942. Her divorce, in 1954, may have prompted her willingness to help the Hansa Gallery. She remained director until approximately summer 1955. See Julia Pearson, "Anneta Duveen, SFO . . . A Life-long Well of Joy," *Classic Franciscan*, Spring 2005, http://www.nafra-sfo.org/tau-usa/articles/spring05/classic_franciscan_spring05.pdf.
69. Allan Kaprow, letter to Richard Stankiewicz, n.d. (c. 1952), microfilm 3747, Richard Stankiewicz papers, AAA.
 70. Gruen, *The Party's Over Now*, 34.
 71. "Oral History Interview with Richard Stankiewicz," AAA online.
 72. Ibid.
 73. All of Müller's one-man shows were reviewed in either *Art News* or *Art Digest* (later *Arts*), and Thomas B. Hess included a profile of Müller in his essay "U.S. Painting: Some Recent Directions," *Art News Annual* 25 (1956), 199. Stankiewicz got the same reception from the press, and was profiled by both Sidney Geist in *Arts* (1953) and Fairfield Porter in *Art News* (1955). Additionally, starting in 1955, Stankiewicz's work was shown at Martha Jackson Gallery and annually at the Stable Gallery. He was also included in the Whitney Annual of 1956. Sweeney's *Younger American Painters* included Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Matta, and Robert Motherwell in addition to Follett and Forst, which indicates that "expressionistic" abstraction had not yet been codified as a movement. See James Johnson Sweeney, *Younger American Painters: A Selection* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1954), 14–15.
 74. The inaugural show at 210 Central Park South included Jacques Beckwith, Jean Follett, Miles Forst, Wolf Kahn, Fay Lansner, Andrew Martin, Jan Müller, Arnold Singer, Richard Stankiewicz, Myron Stout, and Jane Wilson. In the late 1960s, the brownstone was torn down and, in 1969, a luxury high-rise was erected. See <http://210centralparksouth.com/> (accessed April 24, 2015).
 75. Since other Tenth Street galleries occupied storefront spaces, the Hansa's loft was atypical. Not until Red Grooms's City Gallery opened, in 1958, did lofts come into more common use as galleries.
 76. Richard Bellamy remembered the rent on Central Park South as \$150, and estimated that it was \$60–75 a month downtown. See "Oral History Interview with Richard Bellamy," AAA online.
 77. Ibid.
 78. While Bellamy maintained that he fell into his career as an art dealer, visual art had played a major role in his early adulthood. He was romantically involved with a painter when he lived in Provincetown in the late 1940s/early 1950s, his closest friends were artists, and he regularly attended exhibitions. Regardless of their styles, he was loyal to artists whose work he believed in and ambivalent toward the capitalist aspects of the art market. The aesthetic ideas gleaned during his Hansa period informed Bellamy's approach at the Green Gallery during its first two seasons (1960–62). See "Oral History Interview with Richard Bellamy," AAA online.
 79. Richard Stankiewicz, letter to Allan Frumkin, October 19, 1955, microfilm 3747, Richard Stankiewicz papers, AAA.
 80. V(ernon) Y(oung), "Jane Wilson," *Arts* 31, no. 5 (February 1957), 62.
 81. See "Chronology," in *Jane Wilson: Horizons* (London: Merrell Publishers, 2009), 167. Another Hansa artist, Fay Lansner, cited 1957 as the start of a major fissure among members, with no-confidence votes resulting in the rejection of Jacques Beckwith and Milet Andrejevic. Lansner might not be correct because Beckwith was included in several group shows until the gallery closed in 1958, however. See Mirra Bank, ed., *Anonymous Was A Woman: A Celebration in Words and Images of Traditional American Art and the Women Who Made It* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 97–100.
 82. Miles Forst, interview by Julie Martin. Few of Bellamy's letters from the Hansa period survive in his papers, but his sensibility shines through in his correspondence for the Green Gallery. See *The Green Gallery, 1962–98*, series II, box B, RBP MoMA.
 83. Ivan Karp, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, February 7, 1990, audio recording, KMA.
 84. As stated in his interview with Julie Martin, "clubhouse" was Miles Forst's term for the Hansa under Bellamy's directorship.
 85. Ivan Karp, interview by Richard Brown Baker, New York, October 18, 1963. AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-ivan-c-karp-13094>. However, Karp and Bellamy sometimes overlapped since Bellamy lived in the gallery when he was between homes and without other work. Miles Forst, interview by Julie Martin.
 86. Apart from the Richard Bellamy Papers at MoMA, other Hansa Gallery sources derive from the private archives of artists and their descendants.
 87. Richter purchased six paintings and two pastels (not listed) by Müller for \$870 in January 1957; and his *Witches and Flowers* (1957) for \$100 and an untitled abstraction for \$25 in June 1957. See "Paintings Sold Season 1956–57," series III, box J, folder 3, RBP MoMA. In March 1958 Richter purchased five artworks by Follett, three of which may have been drawings, because they resurfaced in the 1990s at a Hansa Gallery tribute show organized by the Zabriskie Gallery, and Richter is listed as their lender in the brochure. In January 1959, he purchased three additional "paintings," or assemblages, and agreed to pay Follett on installment, \$50 per month. Karp and Bellamy allowed Follett to forgo the commission due to them because the Richter purchase was her first sale. See two letters from Jean Follett to Helen Follett, dated March 3 and March 8, 1958, and January 11, 1959, folders "March–April 1958" and "January–February 1959," Follett Family Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul (hereafter cited as FFP). Richter bought more work in February 1960, but Follett noted that he still owed her for his earlier purchases. Jean Follett, letter to Helen Follett, February 28, 1960, folder "January–February 1960," FFP. Finally, many artworks were sold from Richter's collection just before and after his death in 2006, but the author has not been able to pin down the current location of any of the works by Follett.
 88. The purchases break down as follows: Johnson: Stankiewicz, *Urchin in the Grass*, 1957, \$450; Wheeler: Müller, *Mood of Flowers*, 7 PM, 1956, \$70; Barr: Müller, *Equestrian with Two Figures*, 1956, \$125; Lee: Stankiewicz, *Mythological Story* (date not recorded), \$225; Jackson: Stankiewicz, *Figure*, 1956, \$100; Schapiro: Müller, *Study for Time*, #2, 1956, \$50; de Kooning: Wilson, untitled landscape drawing, 1957, \$25; Flavin: Brody, *Sunset*, 1957, \$50; Thomas: Müller, *Variation on Path Theme*, 1956, \$60, and Lansner, *Portrait*, 1957, \$75; Guest: Wilson,

- Robust Blossoms*, 1956, \$70; Baker: Stankiewicz, *Grass People 2*, 1956, \$250, and *Travels of the Pussycat King*, 1957, \$300, and Müller, *Hamlet*, 1956, \$450, and *Four Flowers for Breakfast*, n.d., \$50; Vogel: Stankiewicz, *Dowager*, 1956, \$150. See "Paintings Sold Season 1956–1957," series III, box J, folder 3, RBP MoMA.
89. Ibid. The dates given for Stankiewicz's *Kabuki Dancer* range from 1954 to 1958 depending on the source, and the sculpture may have gone through further changes in his studio. Stankiewicz dated the sculpture to spring 1956 on the Whitney Museum's acquisition questionnaire, however. Thanks to Christa Molinaro in the Whitney's registrar's office for her help with my research.
 90. See Irving Sandler, *The New York School: The Painters and Sculptors of the Fifties* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 36; and "Oral History Interview with Richard Bellamy," AAA online.
 91. The same reviewer was perplexed by Stankiewicz's sculptures, calling his work "torturous metal constructions," and by Follett's use of found objects in a bas-relief, which was deemed "a most repulsive object." S(tuart). P(reston)., "New Group Shows Begin Art Season: Two Near-Abstract Displays Are Shown in Galleries in Greenwich Village," *New York Times* (October 2, 1953), 19.
 92. Kahn, interview by Klüver and Martin; see also Wolf Kahn, "Hofmann's Mixed Messages," *Art in America* 78, no. 11 (November 1990), 189–216.
 93. Jean Follett, interview by Maurene S. (Emmie) Donadio, St. Paul, MN, January 7–8, 1987; and Miles Forst, interview by Julie Martin. I thank Dr. Donadio for sharing her audiotapes with me.
 94. Gruen organized a subscription series of Thursday-evening talks. Greenberg's, in January 1953, was followed by poet Horace Gregory ("The Whistler Legend") in February; Guggenheim director James Johnson Sweeney ("Sculpture-Architecture") in March; and French literary scholar Wallace Fowlie ("Proust and the Art of Painting") in April. The schedule was printed on a flyer that was shared with me by the collector Charles Gallup, St. Paul, MN.
 95. Thomas B. Hess, "Younger Artists and the Unforgiveable Crime," *Art News* 56, no. 2 (April 1957), 46.
 96. J(ohn) A(shbery), "Jan Müller," *Art News* 56, no. 9 (January 1958), 16–17.
 97. Later, at Müller's retrospective, Thomas Messer wrote in the exhibition brochure that the painting's style "comes into its own, fully and jubilantly ..." See Thomas M. Messer, "Jan Müller's Art," in *Jan Müller, 1922–1958* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1962), n.p.
 98. A(shbery), "Jan Müller," 16–17.
 99. More recently, scholars have paid greater attention to modern art's spiritual influences. In particular, see Ena Heller, *Reluctant Partners: Art and Religion in Dialogue* (New York: Gallery at the American Bible Society, 2004). For an alternative to the Judeo-Christian view, see Alexandra Munroe, *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2009).
 100. Müller's willingness to face reality head on, including "the rottenness of society," as he wrote in his notebook in 1956, was shaped in no small part by his childhood in the 1930s, when he and his family fled Nazi persecution and endured displacement and separation before arriving in New York in June 1941. See Messer, "Jan Müller's Art," n.p.; Marika Herskovic, ed., *American Abstract Expressionism of the 1950s: An Illustrated Survey* (Franklin Lakes, NJ: New York School Press, 2003), 172; and Dody Müller, "Jan Müller's Life," in *Jan Müller, 1922–1958*.
 101. Myron Stout, interview by Kathrine Maartens, Provincetown, MA, July 5, 1977, transcript, series III, box M, folder 22, RBP MoMA.
 102. Ibid.
 103. Stankiewicz and Follett shared a loft at 55 Bond Street from 1951 to March 1957. At some point in the mid-1950s, another Hansa member, Jacques Beckwith, moved into a space on the second floor that was taken over by Follett in 1956, as confirmed in letters to her mother, Helen, dated December 2, 1956, and March 16, 1957, box 9, folder "January–March 1957," FFP.
 104. Jean Follett, letter to Helen Follett, December 10, 1951, box 9, folder "October–December 1951," FFP. Additionally, Dubuffet wrote a letter testifying to Follett's artistic ingenuity, which Follett subsequently forwarded to dealer Betty Parsons in the hope of joining that gallery.
 105. The statement was handwritten by Follett on a Whitney Museum questionnaire sent out by the registrar in 1963, after the museum purchased her assemblage *Lady With the Open Door Stomach*, which Follett said was made in 1952.
 106. Sidney Geist, "Miracle in the Scrap Heap," *Art Digest* 28 (December 1, 1953), 10.
 107. Stankiewicz's papers at the AAA include an invitation to the *Ninth Street Show*, so it is likely he attended. Follett's thoughts on the *Fantastic Creatures* installation are enumerated in a letter to Helen Follett, January 6, 1953, box 9, folder "January–February 1953," FFP.
 108. Alex Potts, "Writing the Happening: The Aesthetics of Nonart," in *Allan Kaprow: A Life*, ed. Eva Meyer-Hermann, Andrew Perchuk, and Stephanie Rosenthal (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008), 23. For Kaprow's statement that Follett's work conveyed a "feeling of fetishes—though we sense their sophisticated origin," see Allan Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1966), 163.
 109. Kaprow presented collages and sculptures for the first time at the Hansa in February 1957. (He might have shown assemblage-collages earlier, in 1956, at the Ganymede Gallery). For a review of his Hansa "assemblage" show, see I(rving). S(andler)., "Allan Kaprow," *Art News* 55, no. 10 (February 1957), 10. Quote taken from Allan Kaprow's interview by Klüver and Martin.
 110. Allan Kaprow, "A Statement," in Michael Kirby, *Happenings: An Illustrated Anthology* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1965), 44–45.
 111. According to Kaprow, "George Brecht was the first one who actually went to the [Cage] class amongst our group. He had invited John [Cage] to stop off on one of John's mushroom weekends at George's house, for some reason he had read something or heard something of John's and he called him up at Stony Point and said, 'I would love to meet you,' and John said something about coming out to the New Jersey swamp areas to look for mushrooms. And, it was not too far from where George Brecht and I lived in New Brunswick at that time, and apparently the group stopped off and met with George, and they hit it off nicely and George decided to study music. [Brecht] had been a painter, as well as a regular working man in the Johnson & Johnson personal products division, which was located in New Brunswick." Allan Kaprow, interview by Klüver and Martin.

112. P[arker] T[ylor], "Allan Kaprow," *Art News* 57, no. 3 (May 1958), 14. He described the dimensions as "about three feet to a few inches wide, suspended from almost the ceiling to almost the floor or less," and "made of shower-curtains and other synthetic, as well as pure, fabrics, some transparent and splashed with paint in parody of decoration; tinfoil, crushed cellophane."
113. J[ames]. R. M[ellow], "Allan Kaprow," *Arts* 32, no. 8 (May 1958), 61.
114. Hansa Gallery file, Allan Kaprow Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.
115. Kaprow also remembered that both Karp and Bellamy became inured to the smell, a strategic flaw in charging them with continually refreshing the installation with essential oils. The odor ultimately seeped into the neighboring apartments, and Barbara Rose lodged a complaint. Allan Kaprow, interview by Klüver and Martin.
116. Allan Kaprow, "Notes on the Creation of a Total Art," unpublished brochure (November–December 1958), Hansa Gallery file, Allan Kaprow Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. In addition, Kaprow spoke in his interview by Klüver and Martin of seeing Rauschenberg's all-white paintings, which served as a screen for shadows and movement.
117. Hilton Kramer, "Month in Review," *Arts* 33, no. 4 (January 1959), 50.
118. Ibid. Kramer was not wrong in recognizing Dadaist themes. Kaprow himself noted his interest in Dada and Surrealist experiments: "(Robert) Motherwell's book on the Dada painters and poets was issued by Wittenborn (in 1951), and it sold out as far as I know. A very small number were printed, and I have one of the original copies of that. I heard about it and immediately went to the bookstore, the next time I was in New York, and got the copy. And not too long (after) that Sidney Janis had a show of the Dadas and Surrealists (April–May 1953), and for his announcement (designed by Marcel Duchamp), he bunched up a huge piece of tissue paper, which had been printed with text from Dada and the Surrealists. And it was all bunched together in a ball, about the size of a small grapefruit. And sent in the mail that way." Allan Kaprow, interview by Klüver and Martin.
119. "Oral History Interview with Richard Bellamy," AAA online.
120. As he stated in his interview with Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, February 16, 1990, audio recording, KMA, Segal studied in New York University's art education department, where his classmates included Larry Rivers and Alfred Leslie, both of whom Kaprow also knew. Around 1953, Kaprow introduced Segal to Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. Segal's father bought him the chicken farm when he was having a difficult time finding work as an art teacher. Additionally, in the early twentieth century, the Jewish Agricultural Society, based in New Jersey, solicited Jews living in squalid conditions in New York's Lower East Side, as well as those living abroad, to start chicken farming as a healthy alternative. Most of these farms—about 1,200 at the peak—were located near Toms River. According to the New Jersey Historical Society, "a family could buy a five-acre farm with a house and chicken coops. When the chicks matured five months later into hens, a farmer was in business. One chicken could bring in a \$2 profit a year, so 2,000 chickens would yield \$4,000 a year, a decent living in the early 1950's." See Joseph Berger, "Film Set on Jewish Farmers in New Jersey," *New York Times* (May 31, 1987), 44.
121. P[arker] T[ylor], "George Segal," *Art News* 55, no. 1 (March 1956), 58, noted Segal's "special *goût* (taste) for color and surface-texture."
122. George Segal, interview by Klüver and Martin.
123. Allan Kaprow, interview by Klüver and Martin. Recalling the outdoor events at Segal's farm, Kaprow stated: "They must have been at the earliest, 1956. One of the things that made them so attractive, is that up until that time, no one in New York traveled. And the idea of going out into the country was a great exciting idea. And that some of the art world lived out in the country and would be willing to open up their homes to an art world that didn't breathe fresh air. That was an extraordinary idea. We can't appreciate that now-a-days."
124. George Segal, interview by Klüver and Martin.
125. Robert Whitman, interview by Julie Martin and Melissa Rachleff, New York, July 7, 2011. Whitman also spoke of "leaving drawings and things on the floor to be walked on and changed by what happened around them."
126. Ibid. Whitman joked, "I always referred to myself as the 'slob-Lippold,'" a reference to the modernist sculptor Richard Lippold, who worked in a similar idiom.
127. F[airfield] P[orter], "Robert Whitman," *Art News* 57, no. 9 (January 1959), 18.
128. In a 1954 surgical operation, Müller had received one of the first pacemakers, and oral testimonies attest to its audible ticking, making his precarious health manifest to others, despite his seeming vigor. But a bout of rheumatic fever in the summer of 1957 left Müller in a weakened state, and he died during a dinner party at his loft on the Bowery. See Dody Müller, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, March 22, 1990, audio recording, KMA; and Dody Müller, "Jan Müller's Life," n.p.
129. Jean Follett, letter to Helen Follett, February 1, 1958, box 10, folder "January–February, 1958," FFP.
130. Stankiewicz's career was in its ascendancy. In addition to *Kabuki Dancer*, purchased by the Whitney, his work was featured in the 1958 Pittsburgh International and Venice Biennale and, in 1959, in the Museum of Modern Art's *Sixteen Americans*. He maintained close relationships with the collectors Lois Culver Orswell, Richard Brown Baker, and Charles H. Carpenter, Jr., and was profiled in *Time* and *Life*. George Segal replaced Stankiewicz as the chairman of the Hansa. See Emmie Donadio, *Miracle in the Scrap Heap: The Sculpture of Richard Stankiewicz* (Andover, MA: Addison Gallery of American Art; Seattle: University of Washington Press), 33–35; and George Segal, interview by Klüver and Martin.
131. Coates cited low rents as the impetus driving both artists and galleries downtown, but he did not investigate *why* artists were opening their own galleries. See Robert M. Coates, "Fission," *New Yorker* (December 21, 1957), 79.
132. According to Alexandra Munroe, after World War II, fine-art training in Japan encouraged integration of "Western notions of Modernism with Japanese forms of culture in order to achieve an international art of 'world relevance.'" See: Alexandra Munroe, "Circle: Modernism and Tradition," in *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 128.
133. "Oral History Interview with Nicholas Krushenick," by Paul Cummings, March 7–14, 1968, AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu>

- /collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-nicholas-krushenick-12159.
134. Both Held and Nicholas Krushenick had trained as carpenters after high school, and Krushenick had worked as a framer at MoMA just before founding the Brata. He also operated a trucking business out of his frame shop as well as an antique store in Greenwich Village, where he sold objects purchased at estate sales. The latter business was a great success, but Krushenick gave it up when his artwork began selling in the early 1960s. Ibid.
 135. The Krushenicks' parents were from Ukraine and spoke Russian. According to Nicholas, "My brother (John) made the name up. 'Brati' in Russian means 'brothers.' And since it was a cooperative gallery he thought it was a very appropriate name. And one of the things about making up a gallery name, it should be short and not complicated. So it served its purpose in that way." Ibid.
 136. "Oral History Interview with Al Held," by Paul Cummings, November 19, 1975, AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-al-held-12773>.
 137. Little is known about Earl Kerkam. After he died, in 1965, gallerist Virginia Zabriskie represented his estate, followed more recently by Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects.
 138. "Oral History Interview with Nicholas Krushenick," AAA online.
 139. Held later rejected this concept after showing a series of paintings that synthesized Mondrian and Pollock at the American-run Paris co-op Galerie Huit in 1952, saying, "after sitting in the gallery for three weeks, I couldn't paint another one of those paintings"; see "Al Held," in *Eight Begin: Artists' Memories of Starting Out*, ed. Ada Katz (New York: Libellum Books, 2014), 65.
 140. Munroe, "Circle: Modernism and Tradition," 127–28.
 141. Ibid. Conversations with artists Tadaaki Kuwayama and Rakuko Naito, both graduates of the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music (1956 and 1958 respectively), indicate that traditional Japanese painting techniques were still a major part of their art training; the integration of European modern art may have been more dominant in the early 1960s, or a segregated aspect of the fine arts curriculum.
 142. Held met Bladen when he lived for a brief time in San Francisco in 1955; "Oral History Interview with Al Held," AAA online.
 143. Clark confirmed that he and Sugarman were "very good friends in Paris. In fact, that's how I got in the Brata. . . . George Sugarman wrote (me), 'why don't you come, things are happening here.'" Clark shared a studio with Sal Romano, who also knew Held and Sugarman from Paris. Through Clark, Romano became a Brata member. Ed Clark, interview by the author, New York, March 31, 2014.
 144. The 1957 founding members were Takeshi Asada, Ronald Bladen, Ed Clark, William Creston, Berenice D'Vorzon, Joseph Feldman, Al Held, Robert "Boy" Kobayashi, Joseph Konzal, John Krushenick, Nicholas Krushenick, Nanae Momiyama, Jacob Arnold Rabinowitz, Sal Romano, Knute Stiles, George Sugarman, and Julius Tobias.
 145. Dore Ashton, "At a New Gallery, Group Show by 17 Painters and Sculptors Is Opening Display at the Brata," *New York Times* (October 31, 1957), 36.
 146. That Clark's membership was not confirmed until 1957 is emblematic of the broader discrimination in American society, even within the relatively liberal art community. Indeed, very few galleries, either artist-run or commercial, showed works by African American artists. Clark's work has, however, long been celebrated in France, and he is presently represented in New York by the Jack Tilton Gallery.
 147. Jeff Edwards, "The Long Sweep. A Conversation with Ed Clark about his 60-Plus Years in the Art World," *Art Pulse*, May 14, 2013, <http://artpulsemagazine.com/the-long-sweep-a-conversation-with-ed-clark-about-his-60-plus-years-in-the-art-world>.
 148. Ibid.
 149. Dore Ashton, "Mutual Assistance: Six Downtown Galleries Team on a Show of 400 Works by Americans," *New York Times* (December 11, 1957), 37.
 150. In 1962 Clark switched from paintbrushes to an industrial-sized broom and laid his canvases on the floor, literally pushing the paint across their surfaces. Effects of color, stroke, and scale are startling in the broom paintings, all the more so because Clark never loses compositional control and clarity.
 151. J(ames) M. S(chuyler), "Edward Clark," *Art News* 57, no. 1 (March 1958), 64.
 152. Dore Ashton, "Downtown Shows: Young Painters and Sculptors Exhibit," *New York Times* (March 20, 1958), 59.
 153. "Paintings by Nanae Momiyama," Brata Gallery press release, n.d. (c. April 1958), box 2, folder 4, Nanae Momiyama papers, AAA.
 154. R. W(arren) D(ash), "Nanae Momiyama," *Arts* 23, no. 8 (May 1958), 61.
 155. J(ames) M. S(chuyler), "Nanae Momiyama," *Art News* 57, no. 2 (April 1958), 54.
 156. "Abstraction," Talk of the Town: Notes and Comment, *New Yorker* (August 9, 1958), 16.
 157. Kobayashi did not maintain detailed records of his Brata career. I am grateful to curator Phyllis Stigliano, who is currently working on his biography, and to Kate Keller Kobayashi for locating his few surviving artworks from the 1950s. For more recent information on the artist, see http://www.phyllisstigliano.com/?Robert_Kobayashi (accessed June 13, 2015).
 158. The two artists mentioned were Takeshi Asada and Nicholas Krushenick; see J(ames) M. S(chuyler), "Three Man Show," *Art News* 56, no. 10 (February 1958), 54.
 159. "Only two of these downtowners (Asada and Nicholas) had their modernities available for reviewing." R. W(arren) D(ash), "Asada, Boy, Nicholas," *Arts* 32, no. 5 (February 1958), 61. In the 1950s critics often met with artists in their studios prior to their shows so that reviews could be published quickly. The installation was not considered germane to the work itself, an attitude that would undergo a radical shift beginning in the 1960s.
 160. A *New Yorker* profile on Kobayashi was prompted by the fire at MoMA on April 15, 1958. A gardener for the museum, Kobayashi found areas there to store his large paintings. During the rescue operation, two of his large canvases were recovered along with several in the museum's collection, among them works by the Pointillist master Georges Seurat. "Kobayashi lay down on his bed, and did not return to the Museum until Friday. 'I was afraid they would scold me,' he said. 'I'd never told them I kept my pictures there'"; see "Abstraction," *New Yorker*, 15.
 161. Ed Clark, interview by the author.
 162. Kenneth Van Sickle, interview by the author, New York, April 23, 2015.

163. Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Net: The Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, trans. Ralph McCarthy (London: Tate Publishing, 2011), 23.
164. Dore Ashton, "Tenth Street Views: Bustling Gallery Area Called a Mecca for Bargain Hunters," *New York Times* (October 23, 1959), 5.
165. Donald Judd, "Yayoi Kusama," in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings, 1959–1975* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 2. First published in *Art News* in 1959.
166. All quotes in this paragraph from S(idney) T(illim), "Yayoi Kusama," *Arts* 43, no. 1 (October 1959), 56. The fact that Tillim devoted so much space to the artist is significant; most reviews of the era were confined to short paragraphs.
167. Dore Ashton, "At a New Gallery," *New York Times* (October 31, 1957), 36.
168. H(elen) D(e)M(ott), "Romano," *Arts* 34, no. 9 (June 1960), 63.
169. I(rving) H. S(andler), "Sal Romano," *Art News* 59, no. 4 (summer 1960), 18.
170. Dore Ashton, "Downtown Shows," *New York Times* (May 23, 1958), p. 26.
171. J(ames) M. S(chuyler), "Ronald Bladen," *Art News* 59, no. 1 (March 1960), 16.
172. George Sugarman, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, March 23, 1990, audio recording, KMA. Sugarman defined the form variously as a farmhouse and as a family group; see "George Sugarman," in *Artists' Memories of Starting Out*, 108.
173. For a fuller discussion of Sugarman's concern with serial forms, see Holliday T. Day, *Shape of Space: The Sculpture of George Sugarman* (Omaha, NE: Joslyn Art Museum, 1981), 21–27.
174. George Sugarman, interview by Klüver and Martin.
175. Judd, "Specific Objects," in *Complete Writings, 1959–1975*, 184. First published in *Arts Yearbook* in 1965.
176. J(ames) M. S(chuyler), "Two Painters and One Sculptor," *Art News* 57, no. 1 (March 1958), 62.
177. R. W(arren) D(ash), "Three-Man," *Arts* 32, no. 8 (April 1958), 61.
178. Dore Ashton, "Art: Geometric Forms: Leon Smith and Robert Kabak Deal in Types of 'Cold' Painting," *New York Times* (February 12, 1960), p. 25.
179. "Oral History Interview with Al Held," AAA online.
180. Ibid. At this time, Held was living with the dancer and choreographer Yvonne Rainer, whose career intersected with those of Robert Morris and Simone Forti, both of whom were familiar with Cage's ideas. For an account of Held and Rainer's years together, see Yvonne Rainer, "New York in the Late 1950s," in *Feelings Are Facts: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 150–77.
181. "Oral History Interview with Al Held," AAA online.
182. "Oral History Interview with Nicholas Krushenick," AAA online.
183. Dore Ashton, "Downtown Dividend," *New York Times* (November 27, 1959), 37.
184. V(ivien) R(aynor), "Nicholas Krushenick," *Arts* 35, no. 1 (October 1960), 66.
185. J(ames) M. S(chuyler), "San Franciscans," *Art News* 56, no. 10 (February 1958), 55.
186. Edith Burckhardt described the Japanese artists' use of paper rather than canvas as a "daintier form of Action—Action in miniature." E(dith) B(urckhardt), "Japanese Art Association," *Art News* 57, no. 7 (November 1958), 18. See also Dore Ashton, "Japanese Show Here: Group Display on View at Brata Gallery," *New York Times* (November 18, 1958), 34. Ashton does not specify how many artists were included but does mention Mitsuyoshi Kageyama, Takako Ogawa, Sachio Shibata, Tsune Seino, and Hideki Tanizawa.
187. Edward Clark, "Brata Gallery," in *Tenth Street Days*, 43.
188. T(homas) B. H(ess), "Gutai," *Art News* 57, no. 7 (November 1958), 18.
189. "Oral History Interview with Nicholas Krushenick," AAA online.
190. Ibid.

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- "Oral History Interview with Nicholas Krushenick," by Paul Cummings, March 7–14, 1968, Archives of American Art online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-nicholas-krushenick-12159>.
- John Canaday, "Art Street of Strugglers: An Occasional Work of Skill Is Found in a Tour of Galleries Along Tenth Street," *New York Times* (December 4, 1961), 75; and John Canaday, "Good-by (sic) Forever: A Final Sad Farewell to Tenth Street," *New York Times* (May 19, 1963), X11. Canaday, chief art critic for the *New York Times* from 1959 through 1973, began his tenure with a polemic against American abstract art, "Happy New Year," published on September 6, 1959. In addition to betraying his overt dislike of most contemporary art, the article generated a letter of complaint, signed by forty-nine artists, scholars, and critics, that was published in the *Times* on September 29. For more information on Canaday, see the John Canaday Papers at Syracuse University Libraries, http://library.syr.edu/digital/guides/c/canaday_j.htm#d2e47.
- Automation and the increased mechanization of everyday life was discussed with the same anxiety accorded the rise of Communism. See Paul Tillich, "A Prefatory Note by Paul Tillich," *New Images of Man*, ed. Peter Selz (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959), 9–10, 11–15; and Peter Selz, introduction to *ibid.*
- Quoted in *ibid.*, 11, 14. See also Clement Greenberg, "American Type Painting," in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 208–29, especially 226–29. First published in *Partisan Review* XXII, no. 2 (Spring 1955).
- William C. Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961), 87. Seitz was no doubt influenced by the 1960 exhibition *New Forms—New Media in Painting and Sculpture* at the Martha Jackson Gallery, discussed later in this chapter.
- Ibid.*, 85, 74.
- Greenberg was especially dismissive of Dada and Surrealism and characterized the former as "novelty art," most forcefully in the documentary *The New York School* (1972). Directed and produced by Michael Blackwood; written by Barbara Rose.
- Barbaralee Diamonstein, "Jim Dine," in *Inside New York's Art World* (New York: Rizzoli, 1979), 97.
- For an overview of the slum clearance projects headed by Robert Moses and their impact on Oldenburg's work, see Joshua Shannon, "A Neo-Dada City: Oldenburg," in *The Disappearance of Objects: New York Art and the Rise of the Postmodern City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 9–48.
- Grooms initially lived in a small space on Sixth Avenue and Twenty-sixth Street but after a few months learned of the inexpensive and much larger loft space at 735 Sixth Avenue (which was demolished in late 1959 or 1960). Red Grooms, interview by Billy Klüver and

- Julie Martin, New York, January 10, 1991, audio recording, Klüver Martin Archive, Berkeley Heights, NJ (hereafter cited as KMA). Andersen and Falcone were important influences on Grooms. Andersen (a painter) and Falcone (a poet) opened the Sun Gallery at 393 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA, in 1955. They met Grooms, whom Falcone dubbed "Red," in the summer of 1957. Andersen was struck by Grooms's drawings, which she described as having the look of children's art, and Grooms was impressed by Andersen's aesthetic acuity. (She had studied with Peter Kahn, a former student of Hans Hofmann's.) Grooms had two solo exhibitions at the Sun, in 1958 and 1959, and performed there twice, the solo *A Play Called Fire* in August 1958 and the ensemble *Walking Man* in September 1959. Andersen made a documentary about the space, *The Sun Gallery Provincetown, 1955-59* (1981). Produced by Yvonne Andersen and Yellow Ball Workshop. Yvonne Andersen, interview by the author, Lexington, MA, October 13, 2013.
11. Jay Milder, telephone conversation with the author, May 29, 2015.
 12. Red Grooms, letter to Yvonne Andersen and Val (Dominic) Falcone, n.d. (c. October 1958). This letter and all other correspondence between Grooms, Andersen, and Falcone cited in these notes are unpublished and reside in Andersen's personal archives. They were shared with the author on October 13, 2013, in Lexington, MA.
 13. Weisselberg is presently best known as a cultural theorist and has gone by the name Mica Nava since marrying the experimental theater actor and director José Nava. However, because she was known during her career as an artist by her maiden name, and to preserve the contemporaneous historical account, I refer to her consistently throughout the text as Michaela Weisselberg. She is currently emeritus professor of cultural studies at the University of East London.
 14. Red Grooms, letter to Yvonne Andersen and Val (Dominic) Falcone, n.d. (fall 1958).
 15. At some point before January 1959, Johnson arranged to rent a portion of the loft for art classes, which would help with the \$45 monthly rent. The classes were not well attended, and Johnson gave up the space in spring 1959. Lester Johnson, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, Greenwich, CT, February 27, 1991, audio recording, KMA; and Red Grooms, letter to Yvonne Andersen and Dominic Falcone, n.d. (c. November 1958).
 16. Yvonne Andersen, interview by the author.
 17. Red Grooms, letter to Yvonne Andersen and Dominic Falcone, n.d. (c. November 25, 1958).
 18. Ibid.
 19. Meyer Levin, "Exhibit by Young Artists," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (January 18, 1959), D5.
 20. Judith E. Stein, "Red Grooms: The Early Years (1937-1960)," in *Red Grooms: A Retrospective* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1985), 29-38.
 21. Michaela Weisselberg, letter to Anna Van der Voort Weisselberg, December 4, 1958. None of the letters from Weisselberg to her mother cited in these notes is published; all are preserved in the personal collection of Mica Nava, whom I thank for sharing them with me. For more on Weisselberg's mother and extended family, see Mica Nava (Michaela Weisselberg), "A Love Song to Our Mongrel Selves," in *Visceral Cosmopolitanism: Gender, Culture and the Normalisation of Difference* (New York: Berg, 2007), 133-64, nn. 179-82.
 22. Michaela Weisselberg, letter to Anna Van der Voort Weisselberg, December 14, 1958.
 23. Red Grooms, letter to Yvonne Andersen and Val (Dominic) Falcone, n.d. (c. December 1958). Neither Falcone nor Andersen sent drawings.
 24. Michaela Weisselberg, letter to Anna Van der Voort Weisselberg, December 14, 1958.
 25. Mica Nava (Michaela Weisselberg), e-mail exchange with the author, June 2, 2015.
 26. Red Grooms, letter to Mildred Glimcher, n.d. (c. June 2010).
 27. Jay Milder, handwritten note to Mimi Gross, n.d. Courtesy Mimi Gross.
 28. Grooms specified the printing of fifty copies, though he also wrote, "whatever you think best," so the actual number is not certain. Grooms asked Andersen to include on the announcement a reproduction of his *Walking Man* drawing. Red Grooms, letter to Yvonne Andersen and Val (Dominic) Falcone, n.d. (c. December 1958).
 29. Jay Milder, interview by Julie Martin, New York, February 8, 1992, audio recording, KMA.
 30. Mica Nava (Michaela Weisselberg), e-mail exchange with the author, June 2, 2015.
 31. Leo Steinberg, introduction to *Artists of the New York School: Second Generation* (New York: Jewish Museum, 1957), 6.
 32. Emily Mason is the daughter of painter Alice Trumbull Mason, and, as noted, Gross is the daughter of sculptor Chaim Gross.
 33. The dates for the shows, all of which took place in 1959, were: Red Grooms and Jay Milder, February 6-22; Max Spoorri, February 22-March 19; Lester Johnson, March 20-April 10; Peter Passuntino, April 10-May 1; Michaela Weisselberg, May 1-13. Many thanks to Yvonne Andersen for helping piece together this exhibition history.
 34. All quotations by Michaela Weisselberg derive from her letters to Anna Van der Voort Weisselberg dated December 26, 1958, and February 9, March 6, March 30, and April 18, 1959.
 35. Suzanne Kiplinger, "Goofs and Bargains: Element of Accident," *Village Voice* (May 6, 1959), 11.
 36. In terms of chronology, Weisselberg returned to New York in the autumn of 1959, and continued to paint "but on a smaller scale and in the apartment I was living in." Weisselberg also got involved in off-Broadway theater. She noted, "I also directed (Frank) Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* with a predominantly teenage cast. In May of 1960 I left for Mexico where I stayed for nearly two years. I stopped painting after I married, so about 1964." Mica Nava, email exchange with the author, June 2, 2015.
 37. Quoted in Stein, "Red Grooms: The Early Years," 34.
 38. Ibid.
 39. Lawrence Alloway, "The Reuben Gallery: A Chronology," in *Topics in American Art Since 1945* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1975), 152.
 40. Alloway was a curator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, from 1962 to 1966. The idea for the exhibition *Eleven from the Reuben Gallery* came from the artist Rosalyn Drexler. See Lawrence Alloway, *Eleven from the Reuben Gallery* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1965); and "Lawrence Alloway," in *Dictionary*

of Art Historians, <http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/alloway1.htm> (accessed April 20, 2014).

41. Artists described their performance work in different terms. Dine called his "expressionist theater without words," while Whitman preferred "theater pieces." Grooms used "plays"; Oldenburg, "Ray Gun." Kaprow initially used the Cagean descriptor "event-actions" to explain his shift into performance. Robert Whitman, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, February 11, 1990, audio recording, KMA. On artist terminology for performance and theater, see Diamonstein, "Jim Dine," 98. Simone Forti and Robert Morris were married in 1955, and Forti's name therefore appears in the ephemera as Simone Morris. The two separated in late 1961/early 1962.
42. For instance, *New Forms—New Media: Junk Culture as Tradition*, organized by Steve Joy and Rolf Nelson of the Martha Jackson Gallery, opened, in two parts, in June and September 1960. *Environments—Situations—Spaces* followed in May 1961. Nearly all the Reuben Gallery artists were represented in the three shows.
43. Robert Whitman, interview by Klüver and Martin.
44. Solicitation letter signed by Horace Richter, September 8, 1959. The quoted phrase is Kaprow's distillation of his aesthetic goal. Thanks to Mildred Glimcher for sharing the original letter with me.
45. Grooms was particularly appealing to Kaprow because he had completed three performance events at the Sun Gallery in Provincetown, including *Walking Man*, which Kaprow, along with Whitman and Samaras, had traveled to see in the summer of 1959 when enlisting artists for the Reuben Gallery. Grooms, in his interview with Klüver and Martin, recalled: "I remember at the end of the summer which is August, near the holiday, that Allan Kaprow came, and Bob Whitman came, and I think maybe Lucas came, and maybe George (Segal) came. It was sort of like a conference there. And Allan was about to do *18 Happenings*; I knew he was going to do it. He told me, he talked about it." More recently Grooms affirmed the meeting, recalling the uncomfortable setting in his Sun Gallery basement studio, with its low ceiling, so the conversation was moved to a nearby parking lot on Commercial Street. Whitman (interview by Klüver and Martin) remembered the trip's goal as enlisting Grooms in the venture, "going up to Provincetown to see Red. And Lucas and I went up, and I think Allan was there and it's foggy in my mind, but we met Red and that was the meeting with Red." See also the untitled essay by Yvonne Andersen in *The Sun Gallery: An Exhibition at Provincetown Art Association and Museum* (Provincetown, MA: Provincetown Art Association and Museum, 1981), 19–23.
46. Renée Rubin Miller currently uses only her maiden name. Renée E. Rubin, interview by the author, New York, April 30, 2014. Thanks as well to Martha Edelheit for conveying the importance of Renée Rubin Miller's role in founding the Reuben Gallery, a fact under-represented in the literature. Martha Edelheit, Skype interview by the author, April 14, 2014.
47. Anita Rubin changed the spelling of her last name to Reuben in gallery correspondence, and the revised orthography has taken hold in art-historical accounts. During her marriage to Max Baker in the 1960s, she was known instead by his surname. She is referred to in this text by her maiden name, Anita Rubin, and in these notes as Anita Rubin Simons, her current married name.
48. Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock." *Art News* 57, no. 6 (October 1958), 24–26.
49. Anita Rubin Simons, telephone interview by the author, February 14, 2009. She told Mildred Glimcher in the fall of 2010 that Kaprow wanted "a big, open space to build this thing . . . [and] two months to build it. And so I said, well I have \$800 and I'll do this. Let me go and look for a space. . . . I went immediately to the Tenth Street galleries . . . and I couldn't find a space on the block, so I went around the corner and on Fourth Avenue, that's where I found the loft." Many thanks to Mildred Glimcher and Ali Filippelli for sharing the unpublished transcript of this interview with me. In an e-mail exchange with the author (May 23, 2014), Renée Rubin confirmed that the gallery was on the second floor (not the third, as noted in some accounts) and that the spelling of Reuben derived from the Old Testament.
50. An undated exhibition agreement signed by Kaprow specifies that artists were responsible for "all costs of advertising, printing, mailing, etc. incurred in the exhibition," as calculated by Anita Rubin Simons. Any sales of artwork would result in a one-third commission to the Reuben. No monthly fees were levied. Many thanks to Mildred Glimcher for sharing the original paperwork with me. All quotations from Anita Rubin Simons derive from her interview with Glimcher (see note 49 above).
51. For the most comprehensive account of the Reuben Gallery's second season, see Mildred L. Glimcher, *Happenings: New York, 1958–1963* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2012). The storefront was secured by Dine, who lived in the same building. Jim Dine, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, December 20, 1990, audio recording, KMA.
52. Robert Whitman, interview by Klüver and Martin.
53. *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* was performed at 8:30 p.m. on October 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, 1959. See Annette Leddy, "Chronology," in *Allan Kaprow: Art as Life*, ed. Eva Meyer-Hermann, Andrew Perchuk, and Stephanie Rosenthal (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008), 122. Kaprow confirmed that the circus was the inspiration for the piece in his interview with Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, February 23, 1991, audio recording, KMA.
54. The undated press release ("Kaprow Event to Open at the Reuben Gallery") stated, "Twice during the evening the auditors change seats, but the 'happenings' do not repeat." The audience averaged 50–70 people; some received personal invitations. *18 Happenings* was, at 60 minutes, long in comparison to other Happenings, which ranged between 5 and 30 minutes.
55. Meyer-Hermann et al., eds., *Allan Kaprow: Art as Life*, 120–21.
56. Glimcher, *Happenings: New York*, 49.
57. Allan Kaprow, interview by Klüver and Martin.
58. The painters scheduled to participate were Sam Francis (1923–1994), Red Grooms, Dick Higgins, Lester Johnson, Alfred Leslie, Jay Milder, George Segal, and Robert Thompson. See Leddy, "Chronology," in *Allan Kaprow: Art as Life*, 122. Kaprow told Klüver and Martin that Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg were also slated to perform.
59. Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," *Art News* 57, no. 6 (October 1958), 26.
60. Robert Whitman, interview by Klüver and Martin.
61. Grooms's budget for his most ambitious production, *The Burning Building* (December 1959), was \$16, so the "more than \$1,000" Kaprow

- spent on *18 Happenings* stuck with him; Red Grooms, interview by Klüver and Martin.
62. On May 28, 1959, Kaprow wrote to Dean Mason Gross, exasperated that multiple applications to the Rutgers University Research Council had been turned down. He next sought the university's support with an application to the Ford Foundation, which also amounted to nothing. Kaprow finally appealed directly to Gross: "I should like to put something in N.Y. next fall, which I've been preparing for some time now. For this I shall need \$2,000.00 with nothing expected in return. (It will be this way for the rest of my career, I'm certain.)" Allan Kaprow, letter to Mason Gross, May 28, 1959, in Geoffrey Hendricks, *Critical Mass: Happenings, Fluxus, Performance, Intermedia, and Rutgers University 1958–1972* (Amherst, MA: Mead Art Museum, and New Brunswick, NJ: Mason Gross Art Galleries, 2003), 8.
 63. Anita Rubin (Simons), Reuben-Kaprow Associates, letter to an unspecified recipient, n.d. (summer 1959); and Horace Richter, letter to an unspecified recipient, September 8, 1959. Thanks to Mildred Glimcher for sharing this correspondence with me.
 64. The *New Yorker* article was published two weeks after Kaprow completed the performance, so the publicity was ultimately unhelpful in securing an audience or funding. See "Advance Guard Department (or, Eighteen Happenings Along Fourth Avenue)," *New Yorker* (October 24, 1959), 103.
 65. Anita Rubin Simons's handwritten list of attendees and their contributions also notes that Kaprow's parents contributed \$50, and that in September 1959 Alfred Leslie requested that his \$10 contribution be returned. Other high-profile contributors included Meyer Schapiro, Earle Brown, Leo Castelli, Red Grooms, and Dan Flavin. See Glimcher, *Happenings: New York*, 50.
 66. See Leddy, "Chronology," in *Allan Kaprow: Art as Life*, 131.
 67. Ibid.
 68. Lucas Samaras, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, December 1, 1990, audio recording, KMA.
 69. The most complete analysis of *The Street* is Shannon, "A Neo-Dada City" (see note 9 above). See also Achim Hochdörfer, "Claes Oldenburg's Pop Expressionism," in *Claes Oldenburg: The Sixties* (New York: Prestel, 2012), 12–71, which uses Oldenburg's journal entries as a point of departure to discuss both *Street* installations.
 70. Claes Oldenburg, "Advance Description of the Reuben Gallery Show (1960)," in Achim Hochdörfer et al., eds., *Claes Oldenburg: Writing on the Side, 1956–1969* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013), 129; and Shannon, "A Neo-Dada City," 33.
 71. Oldenburg, "Advance Description of the Reuben Gallery Show," in *Claes Oldenburg: Writing on the Side*, 129.
 72. Allan Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments, and Happenings*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1965), 183.
 73. Like Kaprow and Brecht, Al Hansen was enrolled in Cage's composition course. Ray Johnson studied at Black Mountain College in the late 1940s, where he met Cage and Cunningham. And James Waring was an influential choreographer whose performances Kaprow would have been familiar with through his friendships with Cage and Cunningham.
 74. Alloway, "The Reuben Gallery," in *Topics in American Art*, 152.
 75. Apart from Kaprow, none of the other artists involved used the term "Happening" to describe their work. Whitman credits the term's popularity to Max Baker, Anita Rubin's then fiancé, following *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*: "Max was sensitive to the fact that people were calling wanting to know when they were going to do any more Happenings. So Max decided to promote the next series using that word. That's all I know. So I sort of blame it on Max and his understanding that that word had a certain advertising ability." Robert Whitman, interview by Julie Martin and Melissa Rachleff, New York, July 7, 2011.
 76. In interviews with Klüver and Martin, artists frequently cited the example of the Living Theater, spearheaded by Judith Malina and Julian Beck, as being distinctive from their form of performance.
 77. A(nita) V(entura), "Lucas Samaras," *Arts* 34, no. 3 (November 1959), 59, commended the artist's handling of color, while fellow artist Martha Edelheit recalled confronting him about the show: "I asked him why he was doing still lifes of flowers, it seemed to me a little retrograde. And he said what do you mean? It was all fireworks." Martha Edelheit, interview by Billy Klüver, New York, March 22, 1990, audio recording, KMA.
 78. R(ichard) H(ayes), "Robert Whitman," *Art News* 58, no. 8 (December 1959), 20.
 79. Robert Whitman, interview by Martin and Rachleff.
 80. A(nne) S(eele), "Red Grooms," *Art News* 58, no. 10 (February 1960), 18.
 81. Claes Oldenburg, interview by Klüver and Martin, New York, April 21, 1992, audio recording, KMA.
 82. Jim Dine, Clare Bell, and Germano Celant, "Walking Memory: A Conversation with Jim Dine," in *Jim Dine: Walking Memory, 1959–1969* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1999), 100.
 83. In her interview with Billy Klüver, Martha Edelheit confirmed the total absence of encouragement within an atmosphere she described as "a boy's club."
 84. See Rachel Middleman, "A Feminist Avant-Garde: Martha Edelheit's 'Erotic Art' in the 1960s," *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History* 83, no. 2 (2014), 4. Many thanks to Rachel Middleman for sharing her essay prior to its publication, as well as her research.
 85. Quoted in *ibid.*, 4–5.
 86. John Yau, "In Conversation: Rosalyn Drexler with John Yau," *Brooklyn Rail*, July 6, 2007, <http://brooklynrail.org/2007/07/art/rosalyn-drexler-with-john-yau>. Herb Brown, a colleague of Renée Rubin Miller's, showed in March of 1960, also at the invitation of Miller. Renée E. Rubin Miller, interview by the author.
 87. Drexler performed as Rosa Carlo, the Mexican Spitfire, on the professional wrestling circuit, inspiring a series of prints by Andy Warhol, *Album of a Mat Queen* (1962), and the artist's own novel *To Smithereens* (1972). She modeled for Segal's 1964 *Dry Cleaning Store*. About her role in Whitman's *E.G.*, Drexler recalled, "Whitman kept running at a wall, either he ran into it, or ran up it. And Pat (Mucha) and I were in these round, sort of pea-shaped costumes with cut-out body parts, and Lucas (Samaras) ripped them off. It was all about violence, ripping it off. And I was told to have no expression. That was a characteristic of Happenings, no expression. No acting, please!" Rosalyn Drexler, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New Jersey, June 18, 1993, audio recording, KMA.
 88. As recollected in her interview with Klüver and Martin.
 89. Martha Edelheit, interview by Billy Klüver.

90. The performers were Olga Adorno, Edgar Blakeney, Henry Geldzahler, Gloria Graves, Marilyn Jaffee, Carl Lehmann-Haupt, Chippy McClellan, Patty Mucha, Claes Oldenburg, Lucas Samaras, Clifford Smith, Judy Tersch, Claire Wesselmann, and Tom Wesselmann.
91. Richard Kostelanetz, "Claes Oldenburg," in *The Theatre of Mixed Means: An Introduction to Happenings, Kinetic Environments, and Other Mixed-Means Performances* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), 154.
92. Glimcher, *Happenings: New York*, 133–34.
93. To clarify, Dine, Oldenburg, and Kaprow all produced more than one performance, but they did so in the context of "varieties," or evenings of shorter projects featuring multiple artists.
94. Robert Whitman, interview by Rachleff and Martin.
95. Ibid.
96. Richard Kostelanetz, "Robert Whitman," in *The Theatre of Mixed Means: An Introduction to Happenings, Kinetic Environments, and Other Mixed-Means Performances* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), 226.
97. Simone Forti, *Handbook in Motion* (Charleston, VT: n.p., 1988), 39. My analysis follows on Meredith Morse, who did not interpret the piece in terms of gender but, rather, of structure, including the nexus of dance and visual art. See Meredith Morse, "Between Two Continents: Simone Forti's *See-Saw*," in *Simone Forti: Thinking with the Body*, ed. Sabine Breitwieser (Salzburg: Museum der Moderne, 2014), 37–44.
98. Glimcher, *Happenings: New York*, 130–31.
99. Allan Kaprow, interview by Klüver and Martin; and Kaprow, *Assemblages, Environments, and Happenings*, 183.
100. Stein, "Red Grooms: The Early Years," 35.
101. Red Grooms, "The City Gallery, The Delancey Street Museum, The Burning Building," in *Happenings: New York*, 62.
102. Sylvia Small, letter to Yvonne Andersen and Dominic Falcone, n.d. (c. January 1960). Many thanks to Yvonne Andersen for sharing this letter with me. In 1959 Bob Thompson "got a loft for \$100 per month. I thought he would go bankrupt," Grooms recalled. Thompson's loft was a gathering point, and his frequent guests included artists (Emilio Cruz, Benny Andrews), writers and poets (A. B. Spellman, Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones)), and jazz musicians (Sonny Rollins, Ornette Coleman, Charlie Haden). Grooms stored some of his art there in the spring of 1960, and when a fire broke out later that year, damage from the smoke destroyed Grooms's early work, and presumably some of Thompson's as well. Jay Milder's "gigantic and filthy" warehouse space on Monroe Street was equally lively. Thompson lived with him in 1958, as did the artist Christopher Lane and, for a short interval, Red Grooms. Red Grooms, interview by Klüver and Martin; and Jay Milder, interview by Julie Martin.
103. Elaine Plenda shared the letter with me in 2011. It was reprinted in an exhibition catalogue for which publication information is untraceable.
104. The review was generated by Thompson's one-man show at the Delancey Street Museum in February. See L[awrence] C[ampbell], "Bob Thompson," *Art News* 58, no. 10 (February 1960), 19.
105. Sylvia Small, letter to Yvonne Andersen and Dominic Falcone, n.d. (c. January 1960).
106. Red Grooms, letter to Val (Falcone), Yvonne (Andersen), and Leo (Falcone), n.d. (c. January 1960).
107. About Milder's figures in landscapes, the theme of his Delancey show, the critic from *Arts* noted, "However small, [figures] dominate the canvases and it is the idea of them, put down with all the urgency the painter can summon, that makes these works seem like emblems of some ancient state or banners of a contemporary defiance." See A[nita]V[entura], "Jay Milder," *Arts* 34, no. 4 (January 1960), 60. The Milder-Thompson show at the Zabriskie Gallery ran from May 23 to June 11, 1960. Lester Johnson had been one of the first artists to join the Zabriskie, in 1954, and he was likely the person who brought his peers to the gallery's attention. Virginia Zabriskie's first gallery was located on the second floor of 835 Madison Avenue, where it remained until 1966. For a history of the gallery, see <http://www.zabriskiegallery.com/about.php> (accessed April 2, 2014).
108. Jay Milder, interview by Julie Martin.
109. Emilio Cruz, letter to Harry Rand, n.d. (c. 1980). In the 1980s Emilio Cruz, Lester Johnson, and Jay Milder approached Smithsonian curator Harry Rand about a follow-up exhibition to his successful tribute to the Martha Jackson Gallery. The project never materialized. Many thanks to Patricia Cruz, who shared this illuminating letter with me in 2012.
110. Siegel interviewed Thompson in 1965 as part of her master's thesis research. After Thompson died in 1966, Siegel published the interview. See Jeanne Siegel, "Robert Thompson and the Old Masters," *Harvard Art Review* 4, no. 2 (winter 1967), 13.
111. H[elen] D[e]M[ott], "Marcia Marcus," *Arts Magazine* 34, no. 7 (April 1960), 64.
112. Marcus remembers being pregnant and hauling self-portraits uptown to show them to dealers she knew from Provincetown, thinking the favorable press she received after the Whitney show would generate interest: "I carried paintings to Grace Borgenicht, she never turned [around in her chair] to me." Instead, "her flunky looked at the paintings, and unwrapped them. After I left there, feeling thrilled, highly pregnant, I went to another gallery," and the dealer's response upon seeing a pregnant Marcus was to turn on his heels and leave. Marcia Marcus, interview by the author, New York, October 30, 2013.
113. Red Grooms, interview by Klüver and Martin.
114. "Gangster types" came to retrieve the card tables prior to Grooms's performance of *The Burning Building*, but he had so elaborately installed the tables into the set that the men gave up and left. Red Grooms, interview by Klüver and Martin.
115. Grooms, "The City Gallery, The Delancey Street Museum," in *Happenings: New York*, 62.
116. Stein, "Red Grooms: The Early Years," 34–35.
117. Anne Tabachnick, "Bob Thompson: His Life and Friendships, May 6, 1984," in *Artist and Influence 1985*, ed. Leo Hamalian and Judith Wilson (New York: Hatch-Billops Collection Inc., 1985), 138.
118. Grooms, "The City Gallery, The Delancey Street Museum," in *Happenings: New York*, 62.
119. Fred McDarrah's photographic history of Downtown artists includes a rare image of *A Garden* featuring Marcus, Thompson, and Grooms. See Fred W. McDarrah and Gloria S. McDarrah, *The Artist's World in Pictures, The New York School* (New York: Shapolsky Publishers, 1988), 184. In her own recollections, Marcus never mentions Richard Bellamy as having a role in the performance, but Grooms

- has claimed on several occasions (most recently in Glimcher, *Happenings: New York*, 63) that the set caught fire and that Bellamy either helped extinguish it or caught fire himself.
120. All quotes from Marcia Marcus derive from her interview with the author.
 121. Grooms told Klüver and Martin that he found the production “very feminine,” particularly the use of the gauze veil.
 122. Joan Herbst Schapiro, interview by the author, New York, April 28, 2015.
 123. Grooms, “The City Gallery, The Delancey Street Museum,” in *Happenings: New York*, 62–63.
 124. Claes Oldenburg, “Fear of New York, 1956–1958,” in *Claes Oldenburg: Writing on the Side*, 26.
 125. Allan Kaprow, “The Legacy of Jackson Pollock,” in *American Artists on Art: From 1940 to 1980*, ed. Ellen H. Johnson (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 58.
 126. Judson House was torn down in the late 1990s by the New York University School of Law to erect Furman Hall, where the church now keeps its offices and an auditorium. *Remembering Judson House*, ed. Elly Dickason and Jerry G. Dickason (New York: Judson Memorial House, 2000), available at <http://www.judson.org/JudsonHouse>.
 127. (Bernard Scott), “Prospectus for Utilization of THE JUDSON STUDIO,” series A, box 2, folder 6: Judson and the Arts—A Project of Judson Intern Bernard Scott, Judson Memorial Church Archive, Fales Library, New York University (hereafter cited as JMCA). For a more nuanced study of the church’s theology and the art program, see Robert E. Haywood, “Heretical Alliance: Claes Oldenburg and the Judson Memorial Church in the 1960s,” *Art History* 18, no. 2 (June 1995), 185–212.
 128. As quoted by Howard Moody. See “Scrapbook 1956–1960,” series D, box 70, folder 4: Scrapbooks and Yearbooks, 1956–1960, JMCA.
 129. Meyer Berger, “About New York: Ministers Use Camaraderie and Clubrooms to Salvage Teenage Mavericks in Village,” *New York Times* (January 6, 1956), 20.
 130. The exhibition also included Max Spoerri, whose solo exhibition at the City Gallery had occurred the month before. Two other artists, Gennaro Prozzo and Andrew Stasik, were also included; it is likely that Prozzo, who taught in parochial schools and made religious imagery out of found objects, became involved through Bud Scott.
 131. Marcus Ratliff, interview by the author, February 3, 2015, Hanover, NH; and Tom Wesselmann, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, January 21, 1991, audio recording, KMA.
 132. Claes Oldenburg, interview by Klüver and Martin.
 133. Claes Oldenburg, in *Remembering Judson House*, 292–93.
 134. Claes Oldenburg, “Notes,” in *Claes Oldenburg: Writing on the Side*, 87.
 135. Jim Dine, “Jim and Claes, 1960,” in *Happenings: New York*, 84.
 136. See series 4, box 16, folder 11: Judson Gallery—Meeting with Allan Kaprow, 11–2–59, JMCA. The committee members were Sue Harwig, Walter Herbert, Hjordis Anderson, Steve Andrey, Chuck Eaton, and Barbara Chapin.
 137. Bernard Scott, “The Church and the Frontier of the Arts” (March 1960), series A, box 2, folder 6: Judson and the Arts—A Project of Judson Intern Bernard Scott, JMCA.
 138. Spencer Klaw, “The Cultural Innovators,” *Fortune* 61, no. 2 (February 1960), 202.
 139. In his interview with Klüver and Martin, Oldenburg referenced Selz’s show: “Nineteen fifty-eight was a time of reaction in the art scene, at least so it seemed. People went back to the figure. I think as a result of that exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art,” he remarked. “The *Image of Man*?” queried Martin. “Whatever,” Oldenburg responded. No one could recall the precise name of the exhibition, *New Images of Man*.
 140. Notes on the proceedings of the panel discussion, including comments by all cited speakers, are preserved in series 4, box 16, folder 13: Judson Gallery—Panel on Human Image in Art, 12–2–59, JMCA.
 141. For an analysis on Oldenburg’s use of the title *Ray Gun*, see Achim Hochdörfer, “From Street to Store: Claes Oldenburg’s Pop Expressionism,” in *Claes Oldenburg: The Sixties*, 12–71.
 142. Press release for *Ray Gun*, series 4, box 16, folder 15: Judson Gallery Spring Calendar 1960, JMCA.
 143. Dine, Bell, and Celant, “Walking Memory,” in *Jim Dine: Walking Memory, 1959–1969*, 63.
 144. See Shannon, “A Neo-Dada City,” 10; and series 4, box 16, folder 15: Judson Gallery Spring Calendar 1960, JMCA.
 145. Shannon, “A Neo-Dada City,” 10.
 146. *Ibid.*, 24; and “Up-Beats,” *Time* 77, no. 11 (March 14, 1960), 80.
 147. Oldenburg was born in Sweden (though he grew up in the United States), and “spex” is Swedish for eyeglasses or “spectacles;” it is also a play on spectacle, as well as a quasi homonym for sex.
 148. Kostelanetz, “Claes Oldenburg,” in *The Theatre of Mixed Means*, 140.
 149. Glimcher, *Happenings: New York*, 44.
 150. The other performance-events were Al Hansen’s *Projections*, a situation/installation of simultaneously projected World War II newsreels, travelogues, and a film starring W. C. Fields; Allan Kaprow’s *Coca Cola, Shirley Cannonball?*, a theatrical prose poem read aloud in the Judson’s gymnasium that referenced the once-popular radio series *The Adventures of Sam Spade*; and Dick Higgins’s variety series *Edifices Cabarets Contributions*. Red Grooms was scheduled to take part but did not.
 151. “Up-Beats,” 80. The journalist Rosalind Constable advised Time Life Inc. on trends, circulated in an in-house newsletter for editors. It was widely believed that Constable was responsible for the review, even though the article was unsigned. She was close to Martha Jackson, and, anecdotally, artists believed it was through Constable that Jackson became amenable to performance and new art.
 152. Allan Kaprow, “Some Observations on Contemporary Art,” in *New Forms—New Media I* (New York: Martha Jackson Gallery, 1960), n.p.
 153. *Ibid.*
 154. Richard O. (“Dick”) Tyler was a master printer and woodcut artist whom Oldenburg had known since the mid-1950s. He was also the superintendent of 330 East Fourth Street, where Oldenburg lived. That he made his printshop available to local residents, in concert with his interest in subjective states of consciousness, was particularly influential for many artists downtown. For Tyler’s prescient exploration of hallucinatory states as an aid in artistic creation, see “Claes Oldenburg,” *Remembering Judson House*.
 155. Richard O. Tyler, exhibition invitation, series A, box 16, folder 18, JMCA.

156. See J. R. Goddard, "Tyler the Chapman: Art—From Pushcart into Judson Gallery," *Village Voice* (April 6, 1960), 1–2; and H(elen) D(e) M(ott), "Richard Tyler," *Arts Magazine* 34, no. 8 (May 1960), 67.
157. Kaprow, "Some Observations on Contemporary Art."
158. Theodore Tucker, "Art: Kaprow's Apple Shrine," *Village Voice* (January 12, 1961), 7.
159. V(alerie) P(etersen), "Allan Kaprow," *Art News* 59, no. 9 (January 1961), 12.
160. Suzanne Kiplinger, "Construction at Judson," *Village Voice* (February 16, 1961), 6.
161. J(ill) J(ohnston), "Martha Edelmet," *Art News* 60, no. 3 (May 1961), 64.
162. In an e-mail exchange with the author (May 15, 2014), the artist referred to "performing without hands or feet, or blind, or headless in a terrifying world."
163. Martha Edelmet, e-mail exchange with the author, November 11, 2014.
164. Dan Flavin, "'... in daylight or cool white' an autobiographical sketch," Brooklyn Museum Art School, December 18, 1964. Courtesy of the Dan Flavin Estate, New York. Special thanks to both Stephen Flavin and Rachel Selekman for sharing a copy of the unpublished transcript of the talk.
165. Ibid.
166. Susan Silas and Chrysanne Stathacos, "A Conversation with Alison Knowles," September 16, 2013, <http://www.mommybysilasandstathacos.com/2013/09/16/a-conversation-with-alison-knowles/>.
167. Claes Oldenburg, "Bulletin Board Notes from Ray Gun Show (1960)," in *Claes Oldenburg: Writing on the Side*, 126.
168. Bernard Scott, "The Church and the Frontier of the Arts."
169. Press release dated August 27, 1965, series 4, box 16, folder 48: Judson Gallery—Withdrawal of Judson's Space from Washington Square Show, JMCA.
3. SPACE AND TIME (pages 139–59)
1. The date most commonly given for the origin of Conceptual Art is 1966; see Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). However, Henry Flynt spoke of "concept art" as early as 1961; see Henry A. Flynt, Jr., "Essay: Concept Art," in *An Anthology of Chance Operations . . .*, ed. La Monte Young (Bronx, NY: L. Young and J. Mac Low, 1963). Reprinted online: <http://www.henryflynt.org/aesthetics/conart.html> (accessed July 25, 2015).
 2. Flynt, "Essay: Concept Art," in *An Anthology of Chance Operations*, n.p.
 3. Yoko Ono, "To the Wesleyan People," January 23, 1966, in *Yes Yoko Ono*, ed. Alexandra Munroe with Jon Hendricks (New York: Japan Society and Harry N. Abrams, 2000), 288.
 4. David Bourdon, "E = MC² à Go-Go," *Art News* 64, no. 9 (January 1966), 22.
 5. Organized by Kynaston McShine and Lucy Lippard, *Primary Structures* ran from April 27 to June 12, 1966.
 6. Francesca Wilmott, "1960–1962: Introduction," in *Yoko Ono: One Woman Show, 1960–1971*, ed. Klaus Biesenbach and Christophe Cherix (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2015), 43.
 7. According to Wilmott, Ono was led to the neighborhood through a friend, the sculptor and photographer Minoru Niizuma. See Wilmott, "1960–1962," 43. In going through the Nanae Momiyama papers at the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institution (hereafter cited as AAA), I encountered several photographs of her artwork taken by Minoru Niizuma. On the verso Niizuma affixed his stamp, which showed he lived near Chambers Street, at One Hudson Street.
 8. Yoko Ono via Jon Hendricks, e-mail exchange with the author, April 8, 2016. According to Alexandra Munroe, "Ono first met Cage at one of Suzuki's lectures in the mid-1950s." See Alexandra Munroe, "Spirit of YES: The Art and Life of Yoko Ono," in *Yes Yoko Ono*, 17. Elsewhere in the book, Ono is quoted as saying, "Toshi Ichiyanagi and I met Cage through [composer] Stefan Wolpe," and that they "attended one lecture [at the New School]—that's all"; see Edward M. Gomez, "Music of the Mind from the Voice of Raw Soul," in *Yes Yoko Ono*, 237, nn. 9, 12. Ichiyanagi, however, claimed to have enrolled in Cage's classes at the New School; see Mark Swed, "A Dean of Japanese Music Talks Boundaries, John Cage, and Life with Yoko Ono," *LA Times.com*, May 15, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-ca-cm-toshi-ichiyanagi-profile-20150517-column.html#page=1>.
 9. Information on La Monte Young derives from "An Interview with La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela," by Gabrielle Zuckerman, *American Mavericks*, American Public Broadcasting, July 2002, http://musicmavericks.publicradio.org/features/interview_young.html.
 10. Richard Kostelanetz, "La Monte Young," in *The Theatre of Mixed Means: An Introduction to Happenings, Kinetic Environments, and Other Mixed-Means Performances* (New York: Dial Press, Inc. 1968), 187, 195–96.
 11. La Monte Young, interview by Gabrielle Zuckerman.
 12. "La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela at the Dream House," interview by Frank J. Oteri, *New Music Box*, August 13–14, 2003, https://www.newmusicbox.org/assets/54/interview_young.pdf.
 13. Quoted in Nell Beram and Carolyn Boriss-Krimsky, *Yoko Ono: Collector of Skies* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2013), 38.
 14. For Ono's participation in other projects, see Jon Hendricks, "Yoko Ono and Fluxus," in *Yes Yoko Ono*, 39.
 15. Jonathan Cott, "Yoko Ono and Her Sixteen-Track Voice," *Rolling Stone* (March 18, 1971), 26.
 16. "At an important point, Yoko wanted to bring other composers in, so I quit," Young recalled. "I did not want to be responsible." La Monte Young, interview by Gabrielle Zuckerman.
 17. Munroe, "Spirit of YES: The Art and Life of Yoko Ono," 18.
 18. For more on La Monte Young and his relationship to Cage, see Jeremy Neal Grimshaw, "Getting Inside the Sound: The Works from 1959–1960," in *Draw a Straight Line and Follow It: The Music and Mysticism of La Monte Young* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 48–83; and Kostelanetz, "La Monte Young," in *The Theatre of Mixed Means*, 204.
 19. Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act," in *The New Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1966), 24–25.
 20. Kostelanetz, "La Monte Young," in *The Theatre of Mixed Means*, 202. Young performed *Mudai no. 1: For La Monte Young* at Ichiyanagi's concert on January 7 and 8, 1961.
 21. La Monte Young, "Compositions" in *An Anthology of Chance Operations*, n.p. The 1961 program and score does not include the instructions; see facsimile in *Yoko Ono: One Woman Show*, 53.
 22. Grimshaw, "Getting Inside the Sound," in *Draw a Straight Line and Follow It*, 67.

23. Forti and Morris were close to another Bay Area artist and musician, Walter De Maria, who also moved to New York during this period. De Maria knew Young and participated in Henry Flynt's loft concert on February 25–26, called "Music and Poetry." Most accounts of Morris's career and the nascent Fluxus movement include De Maria. For more, see James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).
24. "Anna Halprin: Audio Essay," *Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Podcasts*, <http://ybca.podbean.com/e/anna-halprin-audio-essay/> (accessed August 8, 2014).
25. Andrew Boynton, "No Mistakes: Simone Forti," *New Yorker.com*, November 14, 2012, <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/no-mistakes-simone-forti>. Halprin's concept of the workshop derived from the Bauhaus. Her husband, Lawrence Halprin, had studied architecture at Harvard with Walter Gropius, one of the founders of the Bauhaus in Germany, and the two were intrigued by the school's multi-disciplinary pedagogical approach. Interestingly, Mark di Suvero also cites the Bauhaus as his model for Park Place.
26. Robert Morris, interview by Klüver and Martin, New York, July 27, 1991, audio recording, Klüver Martin Archive, Berkeley Heights, NJ (hereafter cited as KMA). During this period, Morris was corresponding with John Cage in New York.
27. Terry Riley, "The Trinity of Eternal Music," in *Sound and Light: La Monte Young, Marian Zazeela*, ed. William Duckworth and Richard Fleming (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2010), 98.
28. Kostelanetz, "La Monte Young," in *The Theatre of Mixed Means*, 193.
29. Young also produced a concurrent concert series at the short-lived AG Gallery on Madison Avenue, directed by George Maciunas. For an excellent overview of Young and the artists involved in Fluxus, see Gerard Forde, "Plus or Minus 1961 – A Chronology 1959–1963," in *± 1961: Founding the Expanded Arts*, ed. Julia Robinson (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2013), 246–67.
30. All quotations in this paragraph from La Monte Young, interview by Gabrielle Zuckerman.
31. Wilmott, "1960–1962," in *Yoko Ono: One Woman Show*, 49. The program included *Accompaniment to La Monte's 2 Sounds and La Monte's "Two Sounds,"* *Censor, From Instructions, Hangers, Herding, Huddle, Platforms, See-Saw,* and *Slant Board*.
32. See Virginia B. Spivey, "The Minimal Presence of Simone Forti," *Women's Art Journal* 30, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2009), 11–18, esp. 12–13. Forti's Chambers Street and Reuben Gallery works were re-performed in 2004 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles as part of the exhibition *A Minimal Future? Art as Object, 1958–1968*. For the DVD, see *Simone Forti: An Evening of Dance Constructions* (2009), 88 min. Produced by Artpix Notebooks and Microcinema International.
33. Meredith Morse, "Between Two Continents: Simone Forti's *See Saw*," in *Simone Forti: Thinking with the Body*, ed. Sabine Breitwieser (Salzburg: Museum der Moderne, 2014), 43.
34. Soon after this series concluded, Forti and Morris split up. Forti married Robert Whitman, and until 1966 (when they separated) worked exclusively with him on his theater pieces. When asked if she participated with Judson Dancers at the Judson Church, Forti explained, "after I broke up with Bob Whitman, they were still a group but not at the Judson, and doing what they called Fall Gallery and Spring Gallery. And they invited me again, into those, and I did something with them. But the years of Judson, I didn't participate. So it's funny, because in a way I feel like I'm part of that family, aesthetically, and even in terms of when the aesthetics were drawn, then I am part of that family. But the years that happened at Judson and the whole development at that period of time, I wasn't part of it. I was on Bob's team and doing that (instead)." Simone Forti, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, April 20, 1991, audio recording, KMA.
35. Because Morris's works are conceptual, the more prosaic aspects of their physical construction have never been adequately addressed. However, he had worked as a surveyor and engineer during his years in the army and no doubt deployed this training in his art making. Robert Morris, interview by Klüver and Martin.
36. Maurice Berger, "Labyrinths: A Search for the Self," in *Labyrinths: Robert Morris, Minimalism and the 1960s* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 130–31.
37. Yvonne Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 197.
38. Joan Rothfuss, "Somewhere for the Dust to Cling: Yoko Ono's Paintings and Early Objects," in *Yes Yoko Ono*, 94.
39. Although little has been written on a shared sensibility between Morris and Ono, they were known to be friends. Morris even lived at 112 Chambers Street for a short while, during his separation from Forti. Robert Morris, interview by Klüver and Martin.
40. Alexandra Munroe, "Spirit of YES," in *Yes Yoko Ono*, 16.
41. Descriptions of the paintings come from Bruce Altshuler, "Instructions for a World of Stickiness: The Early Conceptual Work of Yoko Ono," in *Yes Yoko Ono*, 66; and the quote is from Hendricks, "Yoko Ono and Fluxus," in *ibid.*, 39. Hendricks also notes that Ono installed *Add Color Painting* (1961/1966), but I could not locate the instructions for this painting.
42. *Paintings and Drawings by Yoko Ono* opened at the AG Gallery on June 16, 1961, and remained on view for two weeks. George Maciunas's photographs documenting the exhibition are preserved in the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. In addition to the *Instruction Paintings*, Ono presented calligraphic works and other works on paper. See Reiko Tomii and Kevin Concannon, "Chronology: Exhibitions, Concerts, Events, Etc.," in *Yes Yoko Ono*, 308.
43. The reminiscences are Beate Sirota Gordon's, an expert in Japanese culture and, from the mid-1950s to 1991, head of the performing arts program at New York's Japan Society. The quotation derives from the manuscript of her unpublished memoir, "The Only Woman in the Room," in *Yes Yoko Ono*, 94.
44. Art historians have linked *Kitchen Piece* to the Gutai artists Shimamoto Shōzō, Shiraga Kazuo, and Murakami Saburō. See Rothfuss, "Somewhere for the Dust to Cling," 94.
45. La Monte Young, interview by Gabrielle Zuckerman.
46. Robert Morris, interview by Klüver and Martin; and Dean Fleming, telephone interview by the author, June 13, 2014. Fleming recalled that his studio with Morris was located at 9 Mission Street.
47. Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," parts 1 and 2, in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (Berkeley: University

- of California Press, 1995), 222–35. First published, in two parts, in *Artforum*, February and October 1966.
48. Linda Dalrymple Henderson, "Park Place: Its Art and History," in *Reimagining Space: The Park Place Gallery Group in 1960s New York* (Austin: Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas at Austin, 2008), 20.
 49. Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," part 1, in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, 226–28.
 50. Dean Fleming, interview by the author; and Mark Di Suvero, interview by the author, November 20, 2013, Long Island City, New York.
 51. In addition to Hedrick, the founders of the Six Gallery were artists Deborah Remington, Hayward King, and David Simpson and poets John Ryan and Jack Spicer. Today, the Six Gallery is best known as the venue for Allen Ginsberg's first reading of *Howl*, on October 7, 1955. For a comprehensive analysis of the Beat generation, see Lisa Phillips and Maurice Berger, eds., *Beat Culture and the New America, 1950–1965* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1995). See also "Oral History Interview with Wally Hedrick," June 10–24, 1974, AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-wally-hedrick-12869> (accessed June 16, 2014).
 52. For a detailed overview of the Park Place artists' initial years in New York, see Claudine Humblet, *The New American Abstraction*, vol. 3, 1950–1970 (Milan: Skira Editore S.p.A., 2007). Especially useful are the chapters "Peter Forakis," 1719–47, and "Tony Magar," 1781–1815.
 53. The loft was located at 10 Little West Twelfth Street, near Gansevoort Street. Forakis met Yampolsky in New York, not California.
 54. Dean Fleming, interview by the author.
 55. *Ibid.* Not all of the Park Place artists were involved in the jam sessions, nor were they equally passionate about jazz. Ruda introduced Melcher to Bob Dylan's music, and they shared a connection to folk and rock. Magar had wide-ranging musical taste: "Way back in the '60s I used to paint with music going all the time—Cage and Bartok—because it helped me with the choreography of what I was trying to say." See "Tony Magar: Needs, Greeds, Wants, and Ambitions (1982)," *Artlines Archive*, August 31, 2011, <http://artlinesarchive.blogspot.com/2011/08/tony-magar-needs-greeds-wants-and.html> (accessed June 21, 2014).
 56. Mark di Suvero, interview by the author.
 57. Dean Fleming, interview by the author.
 58. Richard Brown Baker, diary entry dated June 1961, 173–74, box 37, Richard Brown Baker Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven (hereafter cited as RBBP).
 59. Di Suvero's spine was crushed in an elevator accident. It was miraculous that he survived and also recovered partial mobility in his legs. See Barbara Rose, "On Mark Di Suvero: Sculpture Outside Walls," *Art Journal* 35, no. 2 (December 1975), 121.
 60. Dean Fleming, interview by the author.
 61. (David Bourdon), "Ruda, taped interview," November 14 (c. 1965), Park Place, The Gallery of Art Research, Inc. records and Paula Cooper Gallery records, 1961–2006, box 6, folder "Ed Ruda Statements," AAA. The author visited the archive in 2011; since then, the collection was processed. The box number and folder names may have changed.
 62. Bourdon, "E=MC² à Go-Go," 24.
 63. *Ibid.*, 25. Valledor spoke of "seeing space on the outer edges of your eye" in an interview now preserved in the AAA: (David Bourdon), "Valledor, taped interview," November 14 (c. 1965), Park Place, The Gallery of Art Research, Inc. records and Paula Cooper Gallery records, 1961–2006, box 3, folder "Valledor," AAA (see note 61 above on recent changes to these archives).
 64. Of course such gas and electrical siphoning was a violation of the New York City building code, let alone the landlord's allowance of a basement flood. For these reasons, the fire department frequently made unannounced visits to buildings where they suspected artists were living. See Rosalyn Bernstein and Shael Shapiro, *Illegal Living: 80 Wooster Street and the Evolution of SoHo* (Vilnius, Lithuania: Jonas Mekas Foundation, 2010).
 65. All quotations from Tamara Melcher derive from her telephone interview with the author, June 19, 2014.
 66. In 1962 it was rare for artist couples to treat cohabitant studio space equally; customarily, women had smaller workspaces. "In those days, at that time, I was all of 22, and I didn't think anything of that, that's how it was," Melcher said when asked about the arrangement. "Never did I, at least in that particular juncture in my life, did I say to myself, well, shouldn't we share this equally? I did not." Such unequal conditions prevailed until the 1970s, when the women's movement radically altered gender conventions.
 67. Dean Fleming, interview by the author.
 68. Di Suvero, whose sculptures were sold to major collectors through the Green Gallery, contributed \$25 a month between 1963 and 1964. Mark Di Suvero, interview by the author.
 69. Dean Fleming, interview by the author.
 70. Mark Di Suvero, interview by the author. Di Suvero's friend, artist Charles Ginnever concurs on this point of sharing proceeds from sales. In an e-mail to the author, Ginnever wrote, "When the Park Place Gallery was first conceived all profits from sales were to be shared equally regardless of whose work sold, and no artists were to be allowed to work with other dealers. Mark di Suvero was the exception to that rule, as Mark was the only artist selling his work at that time and would have been supporting everyone else. I may be wrong, but this was my understanding, so I refused to join the group. I did show my [sculpture] 'Dante's Rig' (1964) at the invitation of Peter Forakis for the last two weeks of his [79 Park Place Downtown Manhattan or Invitational Show] exhibition." Chuck Ginnever, e-mail exchange with the author, August 3, 2015.
 71. Edwin Ruda, "Park Place 1963–1967: Some Informal Notes in Retrospect," *Arts Magazine* 42, no. 2 (November 1967), 30.
 72. (David Bourdon), "Ruda, taped interview," AAA (see note 61 above on recent changes to these archives).
 73. Dean Fleming, interview by the author.
 74. Mark di Suvero, interview by the author. Not all the artists agreed with di Suvero's impression. In an e-mail exchange Forrest Myers conveyed that the group matured as an organization in their SoHo space, not at 79 Park Place. "My feelings are that Park Place didn't become a major influence in the Downtown scene until it moved to La Guardia Place." Forrest Myers, e-mail exchange with the author, June 24, 2015.
 75. (David Bourdon), "Valledor, taped interview," AAA (see note 61 above on recent changes to these archives).

76. Dean Fleming, "Essay," in *Dean Fleming* (n.p., 2014), 7–8. It was Fleming who read Ouspensky's book *Tertium Organum* (1911), and he was the catalyst in getting other Park Place artists deeply interested in the fourth dimension as a means to "undercut a viewer's confidence in Euclidean three dimensional space," a point Linda Dalrymple Henderson makes in the exhibition *Grids and Geography: Dean Fleming's Travels in North Africa and Greece, 1964* (Visual Arts Center, University of Texas at Austin, January 31–March 8, 2014). Many thanks to Linda Dalrymple Henderson for sharing the wall labels from the exhibition with me.
77. The author relied on multiple online tutorials to better understand the principles of the fourth dimension.
78. Tamara Melcher, interview by the author.
79. Humblet, "Peter Forakis," in *New American Abstraction*, 1728. Forakis also participated in group shows at the uptown David Anderson and Tibor de Nagy galleries during this period.
80. Henderson, "Park Place: Its Art and History," in *Reimagining Space: The Park Place Gallery Group in 1960s New York*, 25.
81. D(onald) J(udd), "79 Park Place," *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 5 (February 1964), 22.
82. *Ibid.*, 23.
83. Dean Fleming, interview by the author.
84. For a discussion of Lippard's review, see Henderson, "Park Place: Its Art and History," in *Reimagining Space: The Park Place Gallery Group*, 7.
85. Mark di Suvero, interview by the author.
86. All quotations come from Mark di Suvero, Donald Judd, Kynaston McShine, Robert Morris, and Barbara Rose, "The New Sculpture," unpublished symposium transcript, Jewish Museum, New York, May 2, 1966. Many thanks to Theresa S. Choi, curatorial assistant at Storm King Art Center, for sharing it with me.
- 4. POLITICS AS PRACTICE** (pages 161–91)
1. Norman Mailer, "Superman Comes to the Supermarket," *Esquire* 54, no. 5 (November 1960), 119–27. Reprinted at <http://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a3858/superman-supermarket/>.
 2. Felix Pasilis, who lived in a loft at 95 East Tenth Street, learned that his landlord would rent the basement space at very little cost. He had quit the Hansa Gallery in 1955, and though he had shows at uptown galleries, he no longer exhibited regularly. To start the co-op, Pasilis enlisted twenty-three artists, each paying the modest \$2.50 monthly dues. The members included Robert Beauchamp, Budd Hopkins, Lester Johnson, Marcia Marcus, Pat Passlof, Ray Spillenger, and Boris Lurie. For more background on the March Gallery, see Alice Barber's statement in Joellen Bard, *Tenth Street Days: The Co-ops of the 50's* (New York: Education, Art and Service, Inc., 1977), 32.
 3. Lurie was captured in Riga, Latvia, together with his mother, father, sister, and grandmother and sent to a series of camps, including Salaspils, Stutthof, and, ultimately, Buchenwald. Only he and his father survived. Because of Lurie's facility with languages (including Russian and German), he worked for U.S. counterintelligence agencies, and his father, a businessman, arranged for the visas that enabled their resettlement in New York. Lurie also had an older sister, who had made it to New York before the Nazi invasion. See Eva Fogelman, "Boris Lurie: Holocaust Survivor as Artist: From Mourning to Meaning," in *Boris Lurie: The 1940s* (New York: Boris Lurie Art Foundation, 2013), 1–13.
 4. Jack Micheline, "Eyes," in *NO!art: Pin-Ups, Excrement, Protest, Jew-Art*, ed. Boris Lurie and Seymour Krim (Berlin/Cologne: Edition Hundertmark, 1988), 48. Micheline's essay was originally published in 1971.
 5. See, for instance, J(ames) M. S(chuyler), "Three-man," *Art News* 57, no. 9 (January 1959), 11.
 6. Boris Lurie, "Les Lions," unpublished exhibition pamphlet (New York, 1960).
 7. S(idney) T(illim), "Boris Lurie," *Arts Magazine* 35, no. 3 (December 1960), 56.
 8. Rotmil's father was an art dealer in Strasbourg, and as the Nazis came to power, he moved his family first to Austria and then to Belgium. He was separated from his wife and children amid the chaos of the Nazi invasion of Belgium and sent to Auschwitz, where he died. Rotmil's mother and sister were killed when the French train they were on was attacked by saboteurs. Charles and his brother, Bernard, survived, and were evacuated to a children's hospital in Brittany. The two found their way to Dom Bruno Reynders, now famous for sheltering Jews, and spent the next four years hidden separately with a series of families across France. Charles Rotmil, interview by Melissa Rachleff and Bonnie Yochelson, Portland, ME, September 20, 2012.
 9. Lurie made the claim in a letter he sent to Seymour Krim, who was working on a tribute to Goodman following the latter's death, from cancer, in 1967. Boris Lurie, letter to Seymour Krim, November 20, 1969, Boris Lurie Art Foundation archives, Long Island City, NY (hereafter cited as BLAFA). For the Camino Gallery, see Bard, *Tenth Street Days*, 20–21; and "Oral History Interview with Nicholas Krushenick," by Paul Cummings, March 7–14, 1968, Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institution (hereafter cited as AAA) online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-nicholas-krushenick-12159>.
 10. Boris Lurie, letter to Seymour Krim, BLAFA.
 11. *Ibid.*
 12. Boris Lurie, "Letter to Mr. Hess (May 31, 1962)," in *NO!art*, 66.
 13. Sales were not frequent, but there was interest in showing their work between 1960 and 1964. The Italian dealer Arturo Schwarz reprised one of their March Gallery projects in September 1962 at his Milan gallery, and *Art News's* Thomas Hess wrote an appraisal of the work for a brochure. Schwarz also collected some of Lurie's artwork. In November, Schwarz traveled the exhibition to Galleria La Salita in Rome.
 14. Boris Lurie, letter to Seymour Krim, BLAFA.
 15. This account is a distillation of Lurie's correspondence with Krim and the reminiscences of Harriet Suzanne Long Wood, Goodman's girlfriend from 1960 until his death in 1967. See Harriet Suzanne Long Wood, "Memories of Sam Goodman," in *Sam Goodman: Realism and Abstraction, Paintings from 1945–1959* (New York: Boris Lurie Art Foundation, 2011), 3–4.
 16. Boris Lurie, "Stanley Fisher (1926–1980), Mysterious to the End," in *NO!art*, 100.
 17. Boris Lurie, letter to Gerald Gassiot-Talabot, November 14, 1971, BLAFA.

18. Boris Lurie, letter to Seymour Krim, BLAFA.
19. Quoted in Simon Taylor, "The NO!art Movement in New York, 1960–1964," unpublished essay, BLAFA.
20. Lurie titled his exhibition at Roland de Anelle *Adieu Amérique*, a reference to his plan to leave New York for either France or Israel. However, his collaboration with Goodman and Fisher altered those plans, and Lurie remained in New York until he died, in 2008. See *Boris Lurie: NO!art Man* (2003), 83 min. Directed by Amikam Goldman; produced by Main Street Films, Tel Aviv.
21. Stanley Fisher, "Involvement Show Statement," in *NO!art*, 37.
22. Lurie renamed *December to Lumumba . . . Is . . . Dead* after the Congolese liberation leader Patrice Lumumba was executed by the opposition leader Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, on January 17, 1961. Lurie reworked the collage to include the headline clipping "Lumumba" on the left and "is dead" on the right. Although the reference would have been oblique without the additional referents, December was the month Lumumba was captured by Mobutu's forces, and it is likely Lurie had considered the piece a tribute to him even before his death.
23. While on death row, Chessman wrote several best-selling books about his life in prison and the criminal proceedings against him. They inspired a campaign to save his life, but to no avail. See Alan Bisbort, *"When You Read This, They Will Have Killed Me": The Life and Redemption of Caryl Chessman, Whose Execution Shook America* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2006).
24. The collage also includes the name "Jeanne Jeanne" running from upper left to center. As of this writing, I have not uncovered the identity of Jeanne.
25. Estera Milman, *"NO!art" and the Aesthetics of Doom* (Evanston, IL: Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, 2001), 13.
26. In a mimeographed pamphlet (which was mailed to invitees as well as distributed at the exhibition), the group reprinted a review of the *Involvement Show* by Jack Kroll from the April 1961 issue of *Art News*. About Lurie's collages he observed, "[He] is serious and makes you read him closely." Kroll also detected in the *December* collage "a commemorative program for the Former Jews of Latvia," calling it a "pathetically poetic locution that makes its point with precisely the pointed wrenching movement that most of these works try for." Lurie's reworking of this particular collage (see note 22 above) and the images cited by Kroll were not visible to the author. See "Involvement Show," unpublished exhibition pamphlet, BLAFA.
27. Boris Lurie, "Involvement Show Statement," in *NO!art*, 39.
28. Hannah Arendt mentions this incident in her report for the *New Yorker*, published after the trial was concluded and Eichmann was executed. However, if Lurie was following the press coverage of the trial closely, he would have known about it. See Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 49.
29. Bourke-White's photograph did not appear in print until the December 26, 1960, special issue of *Life*, "25 Years of Life," and was perhaps included because of the renewed interest in Nazi-era atrocities after Eichmann's capture. Lurie might have clipped the Bourke-White image himself. See Ben Cosgrove, "Behind the Picture: The Liberation of Buchenwald, April 1945," *Life.com*, October 10, 2013, <http://life.time.com/history/buchenwald-photos-from-the-liberation-of-the-camp-april-1945/#1>.
30. Norman Kleeblatt, "The Nazi Occupation of the White Cube: Transgressive Images/Moral Ambiguity/Contemporary Art," in *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* (New York: Jewish Museum; New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 11.
31. Ibid.
32. The installation was captured by Ray Wisniewski in the ten-minute experimental film *Doomshow* (1964), available through the Film-Makers Cooperative in New York; see http://film-makerscoop.com/rentals-sales/search-results?fmc_author=803.
33. President John F. Kennedy, "Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Berlin Crisis, 25 July 1961," John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum Archives online, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKWHA-045.aspx>.
34. J[ill] J[ohnston], "Doom Show," *Art News* 60, no. 9 (January 1962), 12.
35. Brian O'Doherty, "Three Studies in Free Association, Works Range from Intimate to Brutal," *New York Times* (January 8, 1962), 26.
36. Stanley Fisher and Sam Goodman, "Doom Show Statement," in *NO!art*, 40–41.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp," in *Against Interpretation* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1966), 277. Interestingly, Sontag also identifies as camp "stag movies seen without lust," which is another way to frame Lurie's use of sex pictures.
40. Ibid., 278.
41. Boris Lurie, "Shit NO!," in *NO!art*, 60–61.
42. Stein recently recalled that the basement space on East Eighty-first Street was inexpensive, which was the likely rationale for its selection. Gertrude Stein, telephone conversation with the author, September 22, 2015. The *NO!Show* included (in addition to Lurie, Goodman, and Fisher) Rocco Armento, Esther Gilman, Gloria Graves, Allan Kaprow, Yayoi Kusama, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Michelle Stuart, and Richard Tyler. Lurie maintained a relationship with Stein for the rest of his life, and today Stein directs the Boris Lurie Art Foundation.
43. Dore Ashton, "East-West Idiom: Paintings by Inokuma at the Willard—Boris Lurie Displays His Work," *New York Times* (October 9, 1958), 48.
44. Michelle Stuart, "NO Is an Involvement," *Artforum* 2, no. 3 (September 1963), 36–37.
45. Ibid.
46. Dore Ashton, "Merde, Alors!," in *NO!art*, 54.
47. Tom Wolfe, "Interview: Sculpt and Local," in *NO!art*, 85.
48. (Phyllis Yampolsky), mock-up for an advertisement for the Hall of Issues, (c. 1961), series A, box 16, folder 30: Hall of Issues, Judson Memorial Church Archive, Fales Library, New York University (hereafter cited as JMCA).
49. Sidney Bernard, "For People Who Have Everything: Hall of Issues," *Rogue* (April 1963), press clipping, series A, box 16, folder 30: Hall of Issues, JMCA.
50. Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960). A prominent contemporary of Bell's, however, rejected this "slogan of complacency, circulating among the prematurely middle-aged,

- centered in the present, and in the rich Western societies"; see C. Wright Mills, "Letter to the New Left," *New Left Review*, no. 5 (September–October 1960), <https://www.marxists.org/subject/humanism/mills-c-wright/letter-new-left.htm>.
51. Among the dealers Yampolsky met uptown was André Emmerich, whose eponymous gallery represented Helen Frankenthaler and Jules Olitski. Emmerich visited her studio and said, "In a few years, come again." She never returned. Phyllis Yampolsky, *Remembering Judson House*, ed. Elly Dickason and Jerry G. Dickason (New York: Judson Memorial House, 2000), available at http://www.judson.org/images/Judson_House_61_Phyllis_Yampolsky.pdf.
 52. In 1963 Yampolsky would tell journalist Sidney Bernard that the origin of the Hall of Issues derived not from aesthetics, but from her frustration about the New York City Fire Department's frequent, unannounced inspections of lofts to root out people living there full time. See Bernard, "For People Who Have Everything," JMCA.
 53. Phyllis Yampolsky, letter to Howard Moody, July 27, 1961, series A, box 16, folder 10: Judson Gallery—Phyllis Yampolsky 10/23/1959, JMCA.
 54. Ibid.
 55. Meg Randall, untitled statement (July 1961), series A, box 16, folder 10: Judson Gallery—Phyllis Yampolsky 10/23/1959, JMCA. Randall moved to Mexico not long after her statement was drafted and did not help administer the Hall of Issues, though she might have mailed in submissions.
 56. Phyllis Yampolsky, "Against the Inevitable Decline of a Great Nation," series A, box 16, folder 10: Judson Gallery—Phyllis Yampolsky 10/23/1959, JMCA.
 57. "'Hall of Issues' Launched as Forum for Everyone," *Village Voice* (November 16, 1961), unattributed press clipping, series A, box 16, folder 30: Hall of Issues, JMCA.
 58. Nan Robertson, "A Hall of Issues Opens in 'Village': Variety of Opinions Shown in Art at Judson Church," *New York Times* (December 4, 1961), press clipping, series A, box 16, folder 30: Hall of Issues, JMCA.
 59. Ibid.
 60. Forakis is named on an exhibitor checklist dated January 7, 1962. Only two lists were found in the Judson archive, though it is likely that such lists were generated each week for administrative purposes. See "Exhibitors—January 7," series A, box 16, folder 30: Hall of Issues, JMCA.
 61. Other artist friends of Yampolsky's who exhibited included Tom Doyle, David Weinrib, Steve Durkee, and Tom Wesselmann. See "'Hall of Issues' Launched as Forum for Everyone," JMCA.
 62. Bernard, "For People Who Have Everything," JMCA.
 63. Robertson, "A Hall of Issues Opens in 'Village'," JMCA.
 64. "Protests Nailed to Wall as 'Hall of Issues' Opens," *Village Voice* (December 7, 1961), unattributed press clipping, series A, box 16, folder 30: Hall of Issues, JMCA.
 65. "Figures Behind the Hall of Issues, a New Forum of the Arts, Politics, Social Issues," *Village Voice* (November 30, 1961), unattributed press clipping, series A, box 16, folder 30: Hall of Issues, JMCA. Yampolsky had met Koch when she dated his roommate, sometime before she met Peter Forakis in 1960. Author interview with Phyllis Yampolsky, Brooklyn, NY, March 10, 2015.
 66. Edward I. Koch, letter to the Reverend Howard Moody, December 12, 1961, series A, box 16, folder 30: Hall of Issues, JMCA.
 67. Mary Perot Nichols, "Soviet Newsman Competes with Adding Machine Tape," *Village Voice* (May 24, 1962), press clipping, series A, box 16, folder 30: Hall of Issues, JMCA.
 68. Bernard, "For People Who Have Everything," JMCA.
 69. Isaiah Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953). Berlin divides Western writers and thinkers into two categories: hedgehogs, who see the world through a singular, defining concept, and foxes, whose world view is complex, encompassing broad experience where no single idea holds sway.
 70. Ibid.
 71. Nichols, "Soviet Newsman Competes with Adding Machine Tape," JMCA.
 72. Kalugin is now affiliated with the Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies in Falls Church, VA, and a board member of the International Spy Museum in Washington, DC.
 73. Nichols, "Soviet Newsman Competes with Adding Machine Tape," JMCA.
 74. Ibid. Yampolsky's father had defected from the Soviet army and fled to the U.S. When he returned to the USSR in 1962 to visit his family, he was detained by the Soviet secret police. Yampolsky pressed Kalugin because she wanted answers about her father's treatment in particular, and political harassment in general.
 75. All quotations from the church ministry in these paragraphs derive from "Minutes: Congregation Meeting, Judson Memorial Church, Sunday, February 4, 1962," series A, box 16, folder 30: Hall of Issues, JMCA.
 76. The photograph is credited to Steven Schapiro. See accretion 2009, series A, box 09.01, folder 29: Arts, General—Hall of Issues, Posters, JMCA.
 77. Howard Moody, letter to Phyllis Yampolsky, January 16, 1963, series A, box 16, folder 30: Hall of Issues, JMCA.
 78. Between 1975 and 1990 Yampolsky tried to revive the Hall of Issues, but apart from specific events, including milestone anniversaries, the Judson Memorial Church did not undertake a partnership. Yampolsky redirected her considerable organizational skills to her local community in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where she campaigned from 1980 through 2012 to reopen the public pool in McCarren Park. For Yampolsky's attempts to restart the Hall of Issues, see accretion 2009, series A, box 09.01, folder 38: Arts, General—Proposal to Revive Hall of Issues, Phyllis Yampolsky, 1976–1990, JMCA. For her more recent community activism, see "Meet a New Yorker for Parks: Phyllis Yampolsky," *New Yorkers For Parks*, July 4, 2012, <http://www.ny4p.org/partnerships/phyllisyampolsky>.
 79. Tambellini was born in Syracuse, NY, in 1930 to immigrant parents who were unhappily married. His Italian mother moved home to Lucca with her children before the start of World War II. Though the town held no strategic value, it experienced both Allied bombings and Nazi occupation. All through the war, Tambellini studied at the prestigious Art Institute of Lucca, and in 1946, because Tambellini was a U.S. citizen, his mother secured visas so that they could rejoin his father in Syracuse. Tambellini received a scholarship to study at Syracuse University, graduating cum laude in 1955, and received an MFA in sculpture from the University of Notre Dame in 1958. Aldo Tambellini, interview by the author, Salem, MA, November 17, 2013.

80. Aldo Tambellini, "A Syracuse Rebel in New York," in *A Film/Video History of the Lower East Side*, ed. Clayton Patterson, Paul Bartlett, and Urania Mylonas (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005), 41–56.
81. Tambellini's neighbor in Syracuse was studying physics at the university, where, Tambellini recalled, "they had built . . . a chamber where they had blocks, I think they were lead or something. . . . And there was also this special camera where . . . cosmic rays would get trapped in this box made out of lead. It was like a photograph. And I was very impressed by those images. They were very abstract. They were very strange but they were real things coming from space." Aldo Tambellini, telephone interview by the author, December 3, 2013.
82. Tambellini, "A Syracuse Rebel in New York," in *A Film/Video History of the Lower East Side*, 41–56.
83. In his now-formative study of electronic media, "The Medium Is the Message," McLuhan wrote: "By putting our physical bodies inside our extended nervous systems, by means of electric media, we set up a dynamic by which all previous technologies that are mere extensions of hands and feet and teeth and bodily heat controls—all such extensions of our bodies, including cities—will be translated into information systems." Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium Is the Message," in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet, 1966), 64.
84. Tambellini does not recall how he gained access to the East Sixth Street building or ran electric cords to the roof, but he does remember that the projection turned each slide into "a large painting," and his excitement with the process can be considered the beginning of his involvement with multimedia. Aldo Tambellini, "An Autobiography," in *Aldo Tambellini* (New York: Chelsea Art Museum and Boris Lurie Art Foundation, 2011), 59.
85. The slides were hand-painted with India ink, plastic paints, oil, and enamels. Later, Tambellini purchased glass slide mounts and painted directly onto the surface, generating more than 3,000 slides. The critic David Bourdon identified in Tambellini's solar and philosophical referents a similarity to Otto Piene, leader of Germany's Group ZERO, although the two artists would not meet until the following year. In the 1970s, on Piene's invitation, Tambellini became a fellow at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at M.I.T. See David Bourdon, "Group Center," *Village Voice* (January 14, 1965), 8, press clipping, personal archive of Aldo Tambellini and Anna Salamone, Salem, MA (hereafter cited as ATAS).
86. Aldo Tambellini, telephone interview by the author.
87. Aldo Tambellini, e-mail exchange with the author, October 2, 2013.
88. Don Ross, "Sculptor Hunts Junk for Fierce Forms: Sleeps with His Work—Fights Critics," *New York Herald Tribune* (November 9, 1961), press clipping, ATAS.
89. Ad Reinhardt, "Art as Art," in *Art in Theory, 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 822. First published in *Art International* in December 1962.
90. In interviews Tambellini called the organization Group Center, a name that also appears in published accounts. However, between 1963 and 1965 the group's name was consistently listed as "The Center" in all their printed materials.
91. Bourdon, "Group Center," ATAS.
92. Collaborating with churches appealed to Tambellini's sense of personal connection with the artistic and social legacy of the Catholic Church in Tuscany, where local parishes harbored members of the Resistance during the war. One of his childhood memories was learning of the Nazis' slaughter of priests, women, and children who had aided the Resistance in a town neighboring Lucca. Therefore, for Tambellini, churches were purveyors of culture and opponents of political oppression. Aldo Tambellini, telephone interview by the author.
93. Morea worked as an apprentice to Judith Malina and Julian Beck at the Living Theatre and met Tambellini at the latter's 1962 show at the Brata. The elder artist mentored Morea, whose first completed series of paintings (1964) approximated Tambellini's spheres while making unique references to machines. Ben Morea, interview by the author, New York, January 17, 2014. See also "Unseen 50 Years: Paintings by Ben Morea, 1964–65," *Boo Hooray*, <http://boo-hooray.com/exhibits/paintings-by-ben-morea> (accessed August 1, 2014).
94. "The Center," unpublished statement of purpose, n.d. (c. 1963), ATAS.
95. Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) was a major influence on Umbra. Until 1965 Baraka also lived on the Lower East Side, but, following the assassination of Malcolm X, moved to Harlem and founded the Black Arts Repertory Theatre. Umbra poets included Norman Pritchard, Calvin Hernton, Brenda Walcott, David Henderson, and Roland Snelling. The most famous poet to emerge from Umbra was Ishmael Reed. The group's platform balanced politics with art. The first issue of their journal clarified their purpose to reflect both "the experience of being Negro, especially in America, and 2) that quality of human awareness often termed 'social consciousness.'" They stressed, however, that "literary integrity and artistic excellence" was paramount to political rhetoric. See Daniel Kane, *All Poets Welcome: The Lower East Side Poetry Scene in the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 80.
96. *Ibid.*, 81.
97. Untitled page of notes, n.d. (c. 1963), ATAS.
98. Tambellini was probably thinking of SoHo, perhaps close to 154 Spring Street, where he moved in 1964. The term "SoHo" did not come into common use until the later 1960s.
99. Center artists provided a list of ways that participating churches could support artists, from buying their work to organizing Sunday collections to hiring them to teach art classes.
100. In the 1990s the discourse surrounding site-specificity extended to include temporary public-art projects, which led to the incorporation of community organizing and dialogue-based art methods. See Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
101. Suzanne Lacy, Mary Jane Jacob, and Arlene Goldberg were especially influential in changing the terms for community collaborations. Common to all is dialogue with the intended audience, a process that implicitly or explicitly shares authorship. The Center collaborated, but the collaboration was among practitioners, not with the public. See Suzanne Lacy, ed., *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995).
102. LENA was founded in 1955 by a consortium of social agencies, civic organizations, and local churches to target drug addiction, gangs,

- and juvenile delinquency. Their records are preserved in the Social Welfare History Archive, University of Minnesota Libraries, for which visit <http://special.lib.umn.edu/findaid/xml/sw0061.xml>.
103. Aldo Tambellini, telephone interview by the author.
 104. Unlike many churches in Manhattan, St. Mark's—built in 1799—is set back from the street, surrounded by a mini-park that wraps around the church, from East Tenth Street onto Second Avenue.
 105. Sally Hammond, "Downtown Artists Have A Coming Out," *New York Post* (June 12, 1963), 8.
 106. Aldo Tambellini, telephone interview by the author.
 107. The Exhibition Committee of The Center, letter to Raymond Dowden, head of design, The Cooper Union School of Art, New York, November 1, 1963, ATAS.
 108. As far as I can determine, a second outdoor sculpture show ran from February 14 to May 1, 1964. This project included nine artists, five of whom—Jackie Cassen, Jeriann Hilderlay, Eileen La Rue, Peter Martinez, and Don Snyder—would continue to collaborate with Tambellini through 1965.
 109. Ad Reinhardt, "The Next Revolution in Art (Art-as-Art Dogma, Part II)," *Art International* 8, no. 2 (March 1964), 57–58.
 110. Aldo Tambellini, telephone interview by the author. The Forsythe Street space was also Tambellini's studio.
 111. Aldo Tambellini, letter to Bill Haddad, March 13, 1964, ATAS.
 112. "The Center First Event," unpublished plan for a forum, n.d. (1965), ATAS.
 113. Tambellini remained a fellow at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies until 1984.
 114. Aldo Tambellini, "Ideas," Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC/Radio-Canada), 1967, digital recording, ATAS.
 115. Aldo Tambellini, e-mail exchange with the author.
 116. Tambellini, "An Autobiography," in *Aldo Tambellini*, 65.
 117. Amiri Baraka, "A New Reality Is Better Than a New Movie!," from *Transbluesency: The Selected Poems of Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones, 1961–1995* (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1995). The poem was originally published in *Kitabu Cha Jua* 1 (Summer 1975), 27.
 118. Kane, *All Poets Welcome*, 80.
 119. When using the designator "Negro," Malcolm X would preface it with "so-called," disavowing the term as racist, a form of epithet. He also called police brutality against black citizens "Gestapo tactics." For more, see *The Malcolm X Project at Columbia University*, Center for Contemporary Black History, Institute for Research in African American Studies, Columbia University, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ccbh/mxp/life.html> (accessed August 5, 2014).
 120. Romare Bearden, "Hale Woodruff Memorial," Romare Bearden papers, 1937–1982, box 3, folder 2: Writings by and about Bearden, AAA.
 121. The Harlem Arts Guild, supported in part by funds from the Federal Art Project, a subsidiary of the Works Progress Administration, offered art classes and open studio sessions programmed out of sculptor Augusta Savage's studio, located at 239 West 135th Street. See Gail Gelburd, "Romare Bearden in Black-and-White: The Photomontage Projections of 1964," in *Romare Bearden in Black-and-White: Photomontage Projections, 1964*, ed. Gail Gelburd and Thelma Golden (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1997), 17–18.
 122. Many of the founders involved in Spiral did attend the march, but did so independently, not as self-identified artists.
 123. Research still needs to be conducted on how the younger artists were invited to join Spiral. Each had different contacts among the older artists in the group. In terms of the membership ranks, Courtney Martin located a drawing by Bearden that lists fifteen artists involved with Spiral (listed here alphabetically): Charles Alston, Emma Amos, Romare Bearden, Calvin Douglass, Perry Ferguson, Reginald Gammon, Jr., Felrath Hines, Alvin Hollingsworth, Norman Lewis, William Majors, Richard Mayhew, Earl Miller, Merton D. Simpson, Hale Woodruff, and James Yeargans.
 124. Jeanne Siegel, "Why Spiral?," *Art News* 65, no. 5 (September 1966), 48–51, 67–68.
 125. Courtney J. Martin, "From the Center: The Spiral Group, 1963–1966," *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*, no. 29 (Fall 2011), 87. Martin demonstrates the absence of a singular group agenda and points out that the literature on the Spiral Group focuses on its merging art with the lived black experience. For a recent curatorial attempt to present a cohesive vision of the group, see *Spiral: Perspectives on an African American Art Collective*, Birmingham Museum of Art and Studio Museum in Harlem (2010–11), <http://www.studiomuseum.org/exhibition/spiral-perspectives-african-american-art-collective> (accessed June 28, 2015).
 126. The full exchange reads: Emma Amos: "We never let white folks in. . . . Why don't we let white folks in?" Hollingsworth: "We blackballed all the Colored folks too." Siegel, "Why Spiral?," 68.
 127. Woodruff was a family friend of Amos's, who grew up in Atlanta, and it was he who proposed her for membership. See Courtney J. Martin, "Emma Amos in Conversation with Courtney J. Martin," *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*, no. 30 (Spring 2012), 107.
 128. It should also be noted that between 1963 and 1966, the year of Thompson's death, he spent considerable time abroad. However, no evidence has surfaced to indicate that the Spiral Group considered him for membership or that Thompson would have agreed to join if asked. His circle included Amiri Baraka, the Umbra poets, and jazz musicians, many of whom would get involved in the Black Nationalist movement—one that the Spiral artists, especially the older members, rejected. See Leo Hamalian and Judith Wilson, eds., *Bob Thompson: His Life and Friendships* (New York: Hatch-Billops Collection), 1985.
 129. Siegel, "Why Spiral?" 49.
 130. *Ibid.*, 50. Norman Lewis was a member of The Club, possibly the only African American member. On Lewis's career in the context of American abstract painting, see Ann Eden Gibson, "The Anonymity of Abstraction," in *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 58–86, nn. 213–19. See also Norman Kleeblatt, *From the Margins: Lee Krasner, Norman Lewis, 1945–1952* (New York: Jewish Museum, 2014).
 131. Siegel, "Why Spiral?," 68.
 132. *Ibid.*, 50. Throughout his life, Yeargans depicted black subject matter in illustrations and drawings and, later, in paintings that blended abstract fields of color with signs and symbols of Africa or African Americans.
 133. "Oral History Interview with Charles Henry Alston," by Al Murray, October 19, 1968, AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-charles-henry-alston-11460>.
 134. "Oral History Interview with Romare Bearden," by Henri Ghent, June 29, 1968, AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections>

- /interviews/oral-history-interview-romare-bearden-1148. See also Gelburd, "Romare Bearden in Black-and-White," 20.
135. Paul Yeargans, interview by the author, August 10, 2014, Montreal. Paul Yeargans also shared photographs of his father's collage experiments, as well as the personal journal from which this quotation was taken.
 136. "Oral History Interview with Romare Bearden," AAA online.
 137. Ekstrom called them projections because "they were large heads and they seemed to project themselves right out to the viewer." Ibid.
 138. Kane, *All Poets Welcome*, 82.
 139. The victims were James Earl Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner. The Mississippi state authorities refused to prosecute, so the FBI took over. Although twenty-one perpetrators were found to be involved, only seven were convicted, serving relatively light sentences of three to ten years.
 140. Martin, "From the Center," 95. Another artist spurred to action by the murders was Nina Simone, who recorded her protest song "Mississippi Goddam" that year. See Claudia Roth Pierpont, "A Raised Voice: How Nina Simone Turned the Movement into Music," *New Yorker* 90, no. 23 (August 11 and 18, 2014), 46.
 141. The current scholarship on Spiral does not investigate the impact on the group of the 1964 Harlem riots.
 142. Martin, "From the Center," 95.
 143. Ibid., 96. We cannot know for certain if Lewis exhibited *Procession* in the Spiral exhibition, because only one installation view has ever been uncovered, and that photograph does not include work by the artist. However, *Procession*—which was probably submitted as an illustration by Lewis—is reproduced in Siegel, "Why Spiral?," 49.
 144. Paul Yeargans, interview by the author. See also two photographs in Siegel, "Why Spiral?," 48, 49, presumably taken in 1966, but it is difficult to discern whether the setting is the same as in the Yeargans photograph.
 145. Martin, "Emma Amos in Conversation", 110.
 146. Siegel, "Why Spiral?," 50.
 147. Ibid., 67.
 148. Martin, "From the Center," 93.
 149. For a transcript of the panel, see "The Black Artist in America: A Symposium," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 27, no. 5 (January 1969), 245–61; and for a critical overview of the exhibition, see Bridget R. Cooks, "Black Artists and Activism: Harlem on My Mind," *American Studies* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2007), 5–39.
 150. "This Week: Richard Mayhew," from "This Week in Northern California," televised by KQED (Northern California Public Broadcasting) on the occasion of *The Art of Richard Mayhew* exhibition at the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, December 2009, posted on Black Art Project blog, February 28, 2011, <http://blackartproject.blogspot.com/2011/02/richard-mayhew-artist-talk.html>. James Yeargans was particularly disenchanted by Mayhew's ambition, and criticized the artist for his careerism in a brief letter to Norman Lewis in 1965, as the group was breaking up. Many thanks to Paul Yeargans for sharing that letter with me.
 151. "Oral History Interview with Charles Henry Alston," AAA online.
 152. "Oral History Interview with Norman Lewis," by Henri Ghent, July 14, 1968, AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections>
 - /interviews/oral-history-interview-norman-lewis-11465.
 153. "Oral History Interview with Romare Bearden," AAA online.
 154. "Oral History Interview with Emma Amos," by Al Murray, October 3, 1968, AAA online. <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-emma-amos-11451>.
 155. Malcolm X, "Statement of Basic Aims and Objectives of the Organization of Afro-American Unity" (June 28, 1964), in *New Black Voices: An Anthology of Contemporary Afro-American Literature*, ed. Abraham Chapman (New York: Penguin, 1972), 563.
- ## 5. DEFINING DOWNTOWN (pages 193–227)
1. Sidney Geist, "A New Sculptor, Mark di Suvero," *Arts* 35, no. 3 (December 1960), 40.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Amy Goldin, "Requiem for a Gallery," *Arts Magazine* 40, no. 3 (January 3, 1966), 27. The article was written after the gallery's demise in 1965.
 4. Friedrich Nietzsche, "We Scholars," in *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Helen Zimmern (1906; Project Gutenberg, last updated February 4, 2013), <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4363/4363-h/4363-h.htm>.
 5. Quoted in Laura de Coppet and Alan W. Jones, "Richard Bellamy," in *The Art Dealers: The Powers Behind the Scene Tell How the Art World Works* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1984), 121.
 6. *Inventing Downtown* was researched and written before the publication of Judith E. Stein's *Eye of the Sixties: The Life and Times of Richard Hu Bellamy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016), which includes a comprehensive art-historical and critical account of the Green Gallery. Erik La Prade's *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery, 1960–1965* (New York: Midmarch Art Press, 2010) is a vital resource that includes a useful introduction to Bellamy's life and career but does not situate the artists or Bellamy's choices within the broader arena.
 7. Meyer claims, inaccurately, that "Bellamy wanted to develop an independent program" following the demise of the Hansa, and that he "asked the collector Robert Scull to underwrite the venture." See James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties*, 2nd rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 45. Meyer can be forgiven this error owing to the subterfuge surrounding the gallery's finances. Since Meyer's study was first published, in 2001, the Museum of Modern Art Archives acquired the Richard Bellamy Papers, which include several interviews in which Bellamy discusses how Scull approached him. See in particular "Proofs for Laura de Coppet and Alan W. Jones, 'Richard Bellamy,'" series II, box B, folder 33, Richard Bellamy Papers, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York (hereafter cited as RBP MoMA).
 8. Leo Castelli began showing works by Johns and Rauschenberg alongside those of abstract painters when he first opened his gallery, in February 1957, and he gave each an important one-man show in 1958 (at which Ethel and Robert Scull acquired works). Martha Jackson's *New Forms–New Media* exhibitions of 1960 included approximately seventy artists active in Happenings and artist-run ventures downtown. Sidney Janis's *New Realisms* paired French Nouveau Réalistes with American artists like Oldenburg, Lichtenstein, and Rosenquist. See Julia E. Robinson, "Before Attitudes Become Form—New Realisms: 1957–1962," in *New Realisms:*

- 1957–1962: *Object Strategies Between Readymade and Spectacle* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2010), 23–24.
9. "Proofs for de Coppet and Jones, 'Richard Bellamy,'" RBP MoMA.
 10. Erik La Prade, "Interview with Claes Oldenburg," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 61.
 11. At the time of Bellamy's visit to di Suvero's studio in the winter of 1959–60, the sculptor could not recall his having an actual gallery, claiming, "He was asking me to have a show in a non-existent gallery." Bellamy might have been working for Martha Jackson at that point, in a position he held for a short time. Di Suvero further recalls that when Bellamy visited him in the hospital, he asked di Suvero to be the opening show at the Green Gallery, a meeting that must have occurred after March 1960, when di Suvero was injured (see following note). Therefore, Bellamy must have begun conversations with Scull by that time. See Erik La Prade, "Interview with Mark di Suvero," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 39.
 12. Richard Bellamy, interview by Amy Newman, February 7, 1996, transcript, series II, box B, folder 31, RBP MoMA. Passlof met di Suvero when he joined the March Gallery in 1959. In March 1960, six months before his show at the Green Gallery, di Suvero crushed his spinal cord in an elevator accident, and he spent nearly two years in and out of the hospital. He did, however, attend his opening at the Green: "I was already in a wheelchair. I needed to have friends help me install the pieces, which I had already built. In the middle of the opening, I went across the street to see George McNeill's opening, and when I came back the elevator was broken and I was unable to see the end of my opening." See La Prade, "Interview with Mark di Suvero," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 39.
 13. Jean Follett, letter to Helen Follett, October 30, 1960, box 11, folder "October, 1960," Follett Family Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.
 14. Ethel Scull, plaintiff, direct testimony, June 1983. Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department, New York: 94 A.D.2d 29, 462 NYS2d 890, p. 587. Many thanks to Adam Murphy, legal assistant at Stillman, Friedman and Shechtman, P.C., who helped me locate this court transcript in 2011.
 15. Geist, "A New Sculptor, Mark di Suvero," 41.
 16. Donald Judd, "Mark di Suvero," in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings, 1959–1975* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 22.
 17. Ibid. See also Donald Judd, "Specific Objects," in *ibid.*, 181, 189.
 18. Mark di Suvero, *Dreambook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 15.
 19. Ibid., 12.
 20. Throughout the literature on Bellamy, references abound to his physical reactions to art. See in particular Erik La Prade, "Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy's Aesthetic Influence," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 20–21.
 21. The difference in palette may relate to the place where the paintings were made. During this period, Passlof and Resnick purchased a house (with studio space) in the country and frequently traveled back and forth to the city. See Eleanor Heartney, "Tightening the Net: The Paintings of Pat Passlof," in *Pat Passlof: Selections, 1948–2011* (Asheville, NC: Black Mountain College Museum and Art Center, 2011), 4.
 22. V(alerie) P(eterson), "Patricia Passlof," *Art News* 60, no. 1 (March 1961), 14; and D(onald) J(udd), "Pat Passlof," *Arts Magazine* 35, no. 6 (March 1961), 56.
 23. J(udd), "Pat Passlof," 56.
 24. Ellin ran his Los Angeles gallery from 1958 to 1963. See "Oral History Interview with Everett Ellin," by Liza Kirwin, April 27–28, AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-everett-ellin-12188>.
 25. Jacobs's career has yet to be fully reconstructed. She and Ellin divorced in the 1960s and, according to interviews with Ellin's sister, Joyce Ellin Orenstein, and with Renata Nunn, his longtime companion, Jacobs left Los Angeles for Kentucky, where she bred racehorses. She died sometime in the mid-1980s. In an e-mail exchange with the author (November 22, 2014), Judith E. Stein compared Jacobs with the Southern California artist Billy Al Bengston and with Robert Indiana in her use of symbols and new materials.
 26. V(ivien) R(aynor), "Joan Jacobs," *Arts Magazine* 36, no. 6 (March 1962), 52.
 27. Brian O'Doherty, "Exhibition of Rugs. Designs by Picasso, Miró and Léger—Young Americans' Works at Barnard," *New York Times* (January 23, 1962), 51. Neither O'Doherty nor Raynor saw in Jacobs's approach any relationship with Frank Stella's aluminum paintings from the same period or with the graphic iconography of her predecessors Jasper Johns or George Ortman.
 28. J(ack) K(roll), "Joan Jacobs," *Art News* 60, no. 9 (January 1962), 18.
 29. Erik La Prade, "Interview with Tadaaki Kuwayama," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 67–69.
 30. Ibid. For the Campbell review, see *Art News* 59, no. 9 (January 1961), 18.
 31. "Interview with Tadaaki Kuwayama," by Kosuke Fujitaka, February 16, 2012, *New York Art Beat*, <http://www.nyartbeat.com/nyablog/2012/02/interview-with-tadaaki-kuwayama/>.
 32. Donald Judd, "Tadaaki Kuwayama," in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings*, 28.
 33. Richard Bellamy asked Hazelet Drummond to join the Green Gallery in 1962, the year the Tanager Gallery was scheduled to close. Hazelet Drummond had belonged to the Tanager since 1954 and was actively involved in its management. Over a span of eight years, she was included in a number of group shows and had three solo shows at the Tanager, in 1954, 1957, and 1960. Many thanks to Tanager co-founder Lois Dodd, who in 2012 shared with me her handwritten list of all the exhibitions held at the Tanager.
 34. Erik La Prade, "Interview with Sally Hazelet Drummond," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 96.
 35. J(ill) J(ohnston), "Sally Hazelet Drummond," *Art News* 61, no. 2 (April 1962), 17.
 36. Brian O'Doherty, "3 Paintings Displays, Galleries Show Work by Randall Morgan, Edwin Koch and Sally H. Drummond," *New York Times* (March 16, 1962), 63.
 37. Judd, "Sally Hazelet Drummond," in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings*, 51.
 38. The Independent Group comprised artists Richard Hamilton, Nigel Henderson, Eduardo Paolozzi, and William Turnbull; architect/designers Alison Smithson, Peter Smithson, James Stirling, Colin St. John Wilson, and Edward Wright; and critics Lawrence Alloway,

- Reyner Banham, Toni del Renzio, and John McHale. Richard Smith told an interviewer, "I must say that I didn't like the art. I think the painting of my generation took off from other sources." See Anne Massey, "'This is Tomorrow' and Beyond," in Massey, *The Independent Group: Modernism and Mass Culture in Britain, 1945-1959* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1995), 105. Finally, it was Alloway who first used the term "Pop Art" to describe works derived from mass-market imagery. See Lawrence Alloway, "The Arts and the Mass Media," *Architectural Design* 28, no. 2 (February, 1958), 84-85.
39. Richard Feigen, Richard Bellamy, and Richard Smith, "A Conversation," in *Richard Smith: The Green Gallery Years, 1960-1963*, ed. Frances F. I. Beatty and Samuel Lorin Trower (New York: Richard L. Feigen and Co., 1992), 32. Many thanks to Erik La Prade, who lent me his copy of this brochure, which otherwise would have escaped my notice, and from which I quote here liberally.
 40. *Ibid.*, 31. Marco Livingstone credits Smith's encounter with the work of Jasper Johns, who also had a studio in Lower Manhattan, as equally pivotal to his New York work. See Marco Livingstone, "Essay," in *Richard Smith: The Green Gallery Years*, 13.
 41. Feigen, Bellamy, and Smith, "A Conversation," in *Richard Smith: The Green Gallery Years*, 47.
 42. *Ibid.*, 36.
 43. Richard Brown Baker, diary entry dated March 1961, p. 13, box 37, Richard Brown Baker Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven (hereafter cited as RBBP).
 44. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20.
 45. Baker ended up purchasing both *McCall's* and the smaller acrylic study *Pepsi* (1961) for \$1,500. Both paintings are now in the collection of his alma mater's museum, the Yale University Art Gallery. Geldzahler purchased a painting for \$650, but the Metropolitan Museum of Art does not have in its collection a work by Smith dating from 1960-61; most likely Geldzahler purchased it for himself. See *ibid.*; and "City Sales Tax Situation at the Green," series II, box B, folder 26, RBP MoMA.
 46. Feigen, Bellamy, and Smith, "A Conversation," in *Richard Smith: The Green Gallery Years*, 51.
 47. He described *McCall's* as "brackish" and failed to mention the luminosity observed by Bellamy and Baker. (Irving) H. Sandler, "Richard Smith," *Art News* 60, no. 2 (April 1961), 19.
 48. Gene R. Swenson, "The New American 'Sign Painters,'" *Art News* 61, no. 4 (September 1962), 44-47, 60-62. The article is reprinted in Jed Perl, ed., *Art in America, 1945-1970* (New York: Library of America, 2014), 658-65.
 49. Exhibited artists included Jim Dine at Martha Jackson, Robert Indiana and Andy Warhol at the Stable Gallery, and Roy Lichtenstein at Leo Castelli, all of whom had solo shows in 1961 or 1962.
 50. "Pop and Public," editorial, *Art News* 62, no. 7 (November 1963), 23.
 51. Mary Anne Staniszewski and James Rosenquist, "James Rosenquist," *Bomb* 21 (Fall 1987), 27.
 52. *Ibid.*, 29.
 53. Bruce Glaser, "Questions to Stella and Judd," in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock, 2nd rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 157.
 54. Gene R. Swenson, "What is Pop Art? Answers from 8 Painters, Part I," in *American Artists on Art: 1940-1980*, ed. Ellen H. Johnson (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 95. Originally published in *Art News* in November 1963.
 55. S(idney) T(illim), "James Rosenquist," *Arts Magazine* 36, no. 6 (March 1962), 46-47; and L(awrence) C(ampbell), "James Rosenquist," *Art News* 61, no. 1 (March 1962), 54.
 56. Swenson, "What is Pop Art?," 95.
 57. Swenson, "The New American 'Sign Painters,'" 662.
 58. S(idney) T(illim), "George Segal," *Arts* 35, no. 3 (December 1960), 54.
 59. Segal quoted in Brian O'Doherty, "A New Union of Art and Life," *New York Times* (March 22, 1964), 19.
 60. *Ibid.*
 61. D(onald) J(udd), "George Segal," *Arts Magazine* 36, no. 10 (September 1962), 55.
 62. Bellamy may have been referring to *Lovers on a Bed* (1962), exhibited at Segal's May 8-June 1962 solo show and again in the June 5-July 21, 1962, group show immediately following. *Art for Whose Sake* (1964), 25 min. Written by Gordon Hyatt; produced by Hyatt and the National Film Network, Lanham, MD.
 63. Erik La Prade, "Interview with Lucas Samaras," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 101.
 64. "Oral History Interview with Tom Wesselmann," by Irving Sandler, January 3-February 8, 1984, AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-tom-wesselmann-12439>.
 65. Swenson, "What is Pop Art?," in *American Artists on Art*, 94.
 66. Sam Hunter, *Tom Wesselmann* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994), 18.
 67. "Oral History Interview with Tom Wesselmann," AAA online.
 68. Brian O'Doherty, "'Pop' Show by Tom Wesselmann Is Revisited," *New York Times* (November 28, 1962), 36.
 69. Swenson, "What is Pop Art?," in *American Artists on Art*, 92.
 70. V(ivien) R(aynor), "Tom Wesselmann," *Arts* 37, no. 4 (January 1963), 45.
 71. Quoted in Swenson, "What is Pop Art?," in *American Artists on Art*, 94.
 72. There is some confusion regarding the opening date of Oldenburg's Green Gallery show, which has not been resolved. The poster lists Monday, October 24, but an undated typed list of Oldenburg's events and exhibitions in his personal archive notes the exhibition dates as Tuesday, September 18-October 13, 1962. Yayoi Kusama biographer Midori Yamamura found in that artist's calendar a note to attend Oldenburg's opening on September 18. Bellamy biographer Judith E. Stein noted that nearly all the Green Gallery exhibitions opened on Tuesday, not on Monday. E-mail exchanges with the author by Yamamura, Stein, and Alexandra Lane, manager at Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio, September 14-October 2, 2015.
 73. These were *Store Days*, first version (February 23-24) and second version (March 2-3); *Nekropolis*, first version (March 9-10) and second version (March 16-17); *Injun (NYC)*, first version (April 20-21) and second version (April 27-28); *Voyages*, first version (May 18-19) and second version (May 11-12); and *World's Fair*, first version (May 18-19) and second version (May 25-26). With regard to financing, Oldenburg recalled, "In those days you didn't get much, I think (Bellamy) offered to pay advertising, he fixed me up with J. Patrick Lannan, who gave me \$50." Claes Oldenburg, interview

- by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, April 21, 1992, audio recording, Klüver Martin Archive, Berkeley Heights, NJ (hereafter cited as KMA).
74. Ibid.
 75. Sidney Tillim, "Month in Review," *Arts Magazine* 37, no. 2 (November 1962), 37–38.
 76. S(idney) T(illim), "Claes Oldenburg," *Arts Magazine* 34, no. 9 (June 1960), 53.
 77. Tillim, "Month in Review," 37–38.
 78. In terms of critical authority, *Art News* and *Arts Magazine* did not remain on top through the 1960s. New magazines, especially *Artforum*, which first appeared in 1962, and revamped older publications such as *Studio International* and *Art in America* became contemporary art's most vital organs for rigorous theoretical debate by a new generation of critics.
 79. Judd, "Specific Objects," in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings*, 181, 189.
 80. Sales receipts, "Oldenburg," series II, box B, folder 14, RBP MoMA. Sam Green was the gallery assistant from 1963 to 1964, and he came to the Green Gallery with prior experience, which may explain why sales records are most complete during his tenure. Green replaced Jeannie Blake and in 1964–65 was succeeded by David Whitney.
 81. The process is best described in Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (Spring 1979), 30–44. The best account of the debates surrounding Minimalism, including the significance of Michael Fried's essay "Art and Objecthood," is found in James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties*.
 82. The chronology is confusing because the invitations do not always list the exhibition dates, and a published exhibition listing could not be located. My use of the title for the January–February 1963 show, *New Work: Part I*, derives from James Meyer's scholarship. See Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties*, 46–48.
 83. See "Space and Time" in this volume, especially pp. 146–59, for a fuller discussion of di Suvero's career after he left the Green Gallery, namely his involvement with the Park Place group. To help support Park Place, di Suvero arranged for Bellamy to sell his sculptures. In fact, the two maintained a personal and professional relationship that ended only at Bellamy's death in 1998.
 84. Yamamura suggests that it was Judd's advocacy that led to Kusama's inclusion in Green Gallery group exhibitions. Yamamura also makes the case that Oldenburg borrowed the idea for soft sculpture directly from Kusama's Accumulation Series, which was shown before Oldenburg's fall exhibition. Oldenburg's extensive experience with theatrical staging and costuming made him consummately suited to the creation of cloth sculpture, however. See Midori Yamamura, *Yayoi Kusama: Mirrored Years* (Dijon, France: Presses du réel and Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2008), 82–92. Kusama recalled that "the Green Gallery offered me a chance to hold a solo show in September of that same year (1962) but unfortunately I had to decline due to lack of money" (at the time, artists were expected to pay expenses toward their exhibitions). See Grady Turner, "Yayoi Kusama," in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz. 2nd rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 112–13. Originally published in *Bomb* 66 (Winter 1999), 62–69.
 85. In 1964 Bellamy began showing paintings by Neil Williams, a Navaho artist whose shaped canvases and vividly colored, geometric investigations were aligned with the Park Place artists Williams studied with at the California School of Fine Arts, where he was a classmate of Tamara Melcher and Forrest Myers. Before Williams's untimely death in 1988, he wrote a script based on his art-world experiences.
 86. See J(ill) J(ohnston), "New Works," *Art News* 62, no. 1 (March 1963), 50.
 87. Robert Morris, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, July 27, 1991, audio recording, KMA.
 88. J(ill) J(ohnston), "Robert Morris," *Art News* 62, no. 6 (October 1963), 14.
 89. J(ill) J(ohnston), "Reviews and Previews: New Names This Month," *Art News* 62, no. 6 (October 1963), 14–15.
 90. S(idney) T(illim), "Robert Morris," *Arts* 39, no. 10 (December 1963), 61.
 91. Donald Judd, "Robert Morris," in *Donald Judd: Collected Writings*, 165.
 92. Johnson paid \$300 for the sculpture, \$200 of which went to Judd. The Green Gallery kept \$100. See Sales Receipts, "Donald Judd," series II, box B, folder 10, RBP MoMA.
 93. James Meyer, "The Emergence of Judd and Morris," in *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties*, 56–57.
 94. John Coplans, "An Interview with Don Judd—'I am interested in static visual art and hate imitation of movement,'" *Artforum* 9, no. 10 (June 1971), 45.
 95. Sidney Tillim, "The New Avant-Garde," *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 5 (February 1964), 20.
 96. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (June 1967), 12–23. For additional commentary, see also Michael Fried, ed., *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 148–72.
 97. To be completely accurate, the first critic to object to Judd's work was John Canaday of the *New York Times*, who had already announced his utter disregard for contemporary art in his articles about Tenth Street. Reviewing Judd's show, he wrote in his customary exasperated style, "Not this time Green Gallery, not this time. This show is merely an excellent example of 'avant-garde' nonart that tries to achieve meaning by a pretentious lack of meaning." See Canaday, "Art: 'Images in Praise' in 3 Themes," *New York Times* (December 21, 1963), 19.
 98. Tillim, "The New Avant-Garde," 21.
 99. G(ene) R. S(wenson), "Donald Judd," *Art News* 62, no. 10 (February 1964), 20.
 100. Quoted in de Coppet and Jones, "Richard Bellamy," in *The Art Dealers: The Powers Behind the Scene*, 124.
 101. This sentiment reflects Bellamy's fascination with artists' private spaces. He eventually made this dream come true, not with Flavin but rather with Lucas Samaras.
 102. Dan Flavin, "'... in daylight or cool white,' an autobiographical sketch," unpublished transcript from a lecture presented at the Brooklyn Museum Art School, December 18, 1964. Thanks to Stephen Flavin and Rachel Selekman at the Dan Flavin Estate, New York, for sharing the transcript with me.
 103. James Meyer, "Enter Flavin; Eleven Artists," in *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties*, 100.
 104. Donald Judd, "Black, White and Gray," *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 6 (March 1964), 38.

105. Lucy R. Lippard, "New York Letter," *Art International* 9, no. 1 (February 1965), 37. First published in 1957, *Art International* remained an important forum for critical debate on Conceptual Art throughout the 1960s and 1970s.
106. Kim Levin, *Lucas Samaras* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975), 43, 51.
107. See La Prade, "Interview with Lucas Samaras," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 101.
108. Response to the show came quickly. Surprisingly, Jill Johnston, writing for *Art News*, discussed only the pastels, noting in particular their treatment of female figures—"women are badly made-up witches"—and determining that, in the artist's work overall, "hiding and finding are important." Since this review was published in December, she may have based her critique on a preview at which, perhaps, only the pastels were available for viewing. See J[ill] J[ohnston], "Lucas Samaras," *Art News* 60, no. 8 (December 1961), 14.
109. Levin, *Lucas Samaras*, 26.
110. Samaras grew up in Kastoria, a seaside town near Macedonia, and lived through both World War II and the Greek Civil War. He and his mother came to the United States in 1948, joining his father in West New York, NJ. See *ibid.*, 15.
111. Samaras was enrolled in Columbia University's graduate program in art history from 1959 to 1962, taking classes on Islamic art and Christian iconography, among other subjects. See *ibid.*, 243–44. The Museum of Modern Art purchased *Untitled* (1960–61), his contribution to *The Art of Assemblage*.
112. D[onald] J[udd], "Lucas Samaras," *Arts Magazine* 36, no. 5 (February 1962), 44.
113. Levin, *Lucas Samaras*, 33.
114. J[udd], "Lucas Samaras," 44.
115. Levin, *Lucas Samaras*, 41.
116. *Ibid.*, 45.
117. *Ibid.*, 57.
118. J[ohnston], "Lucas Samaras," 10.
119. Levin, *Lucas Samaras*, 57.
120. Grace Glueck, "An Eye Toward Sao Paulo," *New York Times* (March 7, 1965), X19.
121. La Prade, "Interview with Claes Oldenburg," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 63.
122. Arthur C. Danto, "Pop Art and Past Futures," in *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 128.
123. Nietzsche, "We Scholars," in *Beyond Good and Evil*.
124. Robert Scull, defendant, direct testimony, June 1983. Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department, New York: 94 A.D.2d 29, 462 NYS2d 890, 2286.
125. See Arjo Klamer, "The Lives of Cultural Goods," in *Sublime Economy: On the Intersection of Art and Economics*, ed. Jack Amariglio, Joseph W. Childers, and Stephen E. Cullenberg (New York: Routledge, 2010), 250–72.
126. "October 23, 1959, New York," box 19, book 10, p. 1594, RBBP.
127. Jane Kramer, "The Man Who Is Happening Now," *New Yorker* 42, no. 4 (November 26, 1966), 64.
128. See Olav Velthuis, "The Architecture of the Art Market," in *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 21–22.
129. The Sculls circumvented Castelli altogether and asked Johns directly to make a second version, which he ultimately did, in 1958, calling it *Double White Map*. He inscribed the painting "for Ethel." Ethel Scull, plaintiff, direct testimony, June 1983. Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department, New York: 94 A.D.2d 29, 462 NYS2d 890, p. 25.
130. Erik La Prade, "Interview with Alfred Leslie," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 29.
131. "Richard Bellamy," Galleys for Art Dealers, p. 55, series II, box B, folder 33, RBP MoMA. Ivan Karp concurred that it was Scull, not Bellamy, who wanted to open a gallery. See "Oral History Interview with Ivan C. Karp," by Paul Cummings, March 12, 1969, AAA online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-ivan-c-karp-11717>.
132. Robert Scull, defendant, direct testimony, June 1983. Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department, New York: 94 A.D.2d 29, 462 NYS2d 890, pp. 2342–43.
133. "Richard Bellamy," Galleys for Art Dealers, p. 55, series II, box B, folder 33, RBP MoMA.
134. Ethel Scull, plaintiff, direct testimony, June 1983. Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department, New York: 94 A.D.2d 29, 462 NYS2d 890, pp. 1146–47.
135. *Ibid.*, p. 1146.
136. Richard Bellamy, "di Suvero," n.d., series II, box B, folder 26, RBP MoMA.
137. "Richard Bellamy," Galleys for Art Dealers, p. 57, series II, box B, folder 33, RBP MoMA.
138. Bellamy relished Ethel Scull's ire over the disheveled state of both his person and of the gallery space. Finding his desk perennially covered in dust, she ordered him to obtain Pledge furniture polish. In two surviving memos to Marie Dickson (c. 1961), Bellamy claimed to have purchased no less than three cans of Pledge. Both the memos and the sales receipts are preserved in series II, box B, folder 26, RBP MoMA.
139. Richard Bellamy, "Petty Cash and Embezzlements," series II, box B, folder 26, RBP MoMA.
140. Bellamy, "di Suvero," RBP MoMA.
141. John Duka, "Back on Top with the Mom of Pop Art: Ethel Scull's Long Fight for the Family Fortune," *New York Magazine* 19, no. 23 (June 9, 1986), 64. In the article Ethel claims the apartment was rented for \$900 per month, not owned, as was generally assumed.
142. Mark di Suvero, untitled manuscript, series III, box N, folder 54, RBP MoMA.
143. Lucas Samaras, interview with Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, December 1, 1990, audio recording, KMA.
144. *Art for Whose Sake* (1964), 25 min. Written by Gordon Hyatt; produced by Hyatt and the National Film Network, Lanham, MD. The program aired in March 1964.
145. "I did not like being in the Green Gallery business because, as collectors, it did not give us a very good reputation. There was no way the art world would not find out," Ethel Scull told the court. On her rejection from MoMA's Junior Council, Ethel described a confrontation with member Jean Kitner in which she realized that her connection with the gallery had been exposed. Thereafter

Robert promised to divest, suggesting that Joseph H. Hirshhorn might step in as a possible replacement backer, thus indicating his sense of obligation toward the business and to Bellamy. Ethel Scull, plaintiff, direct testimony, June 1983. Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department, New York: 94 A.D.2d 29, 462 NYS2d 890, pp. 1148–52.

146. Goldin, "Requiem for a Gallery," 29.
147. George Segal, letter to Jean Follett, February 14, 1966. Charles Gallop Collection, St. Paul, MN. Among the beneficiaries of Bellamy's astute eye were Leo Castelli Gallery and the Sidney Janis Gallery, where most of the artists later found representation.
148. Richard Bellamy, "Scull Lawsuit," direct testimony, series II, box E, folder 4, RBP MoMA.
149. Richard Bellamy, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, March 4, 1991, audio recording, KMA.
150. For Bellamy's career intersection with di Suvero, see Judith E. Stein, "A Bond of Steel: di Suvero and Bellamy," *Art in America* 93, no. 10 (November 2005), 150–55.

AFTERWORD

1. David Bourdon, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, February 15, 1990, audio recording, Klüver Martin Archive, Berkeley Heights, NJ (hereafter cited as KMA).
2. See Eleanor Heartney, "Tightening the Net: The Paintings of Pat Passlof," in *Pat Passlof: Selections, 1948–2011* (Asheville, NC: Black Mountain College Museum and Art Center, 2011), 3.
3. Budd Hopkins, e-mail to Regina Stewart, New York Artists Equity Association, November 15, 2002. Many thanks to Grace Hopkins for sharing her father's e-mail correspondence to Stewart with me.

4. See, for instance, Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
5. Clement Greenberg, "'American-Type' Painting," in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 228.
6. Leo Steinberg, introduction to *Artists of the New York School: Second Generation* (New York: Jewish Museum, 1957), 7.
7. Donald Judd, "Specific Objects," in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings, 1959–1975* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 184.
8. Peter Schjeldahl, "Survival on 10th Street," *New York Times* (November 19, 1967), 155.
9. Ibid.
10. Lucas Samaras, interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, New York, December 1, 1990, audio recording, KMA.
11. Erik La Prade, "Interview with Alfred Leslie," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 33. This study does not investigate whether Bellamy's non-Western heritage (his mother was Chinese) might have been a factor in his openness to alternate forms and ideas.
12. "Oral History Interview with Robert Smithson," by Paul Cummings, July 14 and 19, 1972, Archives of American Art online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-robert-smithson-12013>.
13. Erik La Prade, "Interview with Lucas Samaras," in *Breaking Through: Richard Bellamy and the Green Gallery*, 104.
14. "The New Uses of the Human Image in Painting," December 2, 1959, transcript of a panel discussion, series A, box 16, folder 15, Judson Memorial Church Archive, Fales Library, New York University.

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Acknowledgments

The idea for *Inventing Downtown* developed during my research for a 2009 graduate course I taught at New York University. Titled “The Dematerialization of the Art Gallery,” it started with three women art dealers: Peggy Guggenheim and Betty Parsons, who founded galleries in the 1940s, and Virginia Dwan in the 1960s. Although I was familiar with the artist-run galleries that opened in the early 1950s on Tenth Street, as well as a host of concurrent difficult-to-classify artist-directed spaces, I was not then able to fully explore their significance. My curiosity about them, however, sparked a seven-year odyssey in which artists, spouses, friends, dealers, photographers, choreographers, and critics confirmed my intuition that New York’s Downtown scene was far more complex and fluid than is generally acknowledged. I gradually amassed enough material to propose an exhibition, which I conceived early on as a prequel to the Grey Art Gallery’s 2006 *Downtown Show*.

It is no exaggeration to state that this project simply could not have happened were it not for the generosity of all the artists involved. Capturing the dynamics of artist-run galleries was my core goal; this required me to reconstruct a very different New York art world than I had previously studied. Artists made the time to meet with me (many more than once), and I was welcomed by Emma Amos, Yvonne Andersen, Charles Cajori, Ed Clark, John Cohen, Jim Dine, Mark di Suvero, Lois Dodd, Rosalyn Drexler, Sherman Drexler, Martha Edelheit, Letty Lou Eisenhauer, Jackie Ferrara, Dean Fleming, Simone Forti, Mary Frank, Charles Ginnever, Red Grooms, Mimi Gross, Geoffrey Hendricks, Jasper Johns, Wolf Kahn, Tadaaki Kuwayama, Alfred Leslie, Danny Lyon, Marcia Marcus, Emily Mason, Tamara Melcher, Jay Milder, Ben Morea, Patty Mucha, Forrest Myers, Mica Nava, Claes Oldenburg, George Ortman, Peter Passuntino, Philip Pearlstein, George Nelson Preston, Marcus Ratliff, Sal Romano, Charles Rotmil, Renée E. Rubin, Lucas Samaras, Steven Schapiro, Carolee Schneemann, Joan Herbst Shapiro, Aldo Tambellini, Kenneth Van Sickle, Robert Whitman, Jane Wilson, and Phyllis Yampolsky.

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Lynn Gumpert has been director of the Grey Art Gallery, New York University's fine arts museum, since 1997. Among the more than 60 exhibitions she has overseen at the Grey are *Global/Local 1960–2015: Six Artists from Iran* (2016); *Tseng Kwong Chi: Performing for the Camera* (2015); *Toxic Beauty: The Art of Frank Moore* (2012); *The Poetics of Cloth: African Textiles / Recent Art* (2008); *The Downtown Show: The New York Art Scene, 1974–1984* (2006); *Mapping Sitting: On Portraiture and Photography, A Project by Walid Raad and Akram Zaatari* (2005); and *Between Word and Image: Modern Iranian Visual Culture* (2002). She previously worked as a writer, consultant, and independent curator, organizing shows in New York, Japan, and France. From 1980 to 1988 she was curator and senior curator at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. She authored the first major monograph on French artist Christian Boltanski (Flammarion, 1992) and has contributed essays to numerous publications.

Billy Klüver (1927–2004) emigrated to the United States from Sweden and joined Bell Telephone Laboratories as a research engineer in electrical engineering. In 1966 together with colleague Fred Waldhauer and artists Robert Rauschenberg and Robert Whitman, he cofounded Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), a nonprofit organization established to develop collaborations between artists and engineers. **Julie Martin** joined the

staff of E.A.T. in 1968, and currently acts as director of the organization; in addition she has worked with Robert Whitman on his recent video cell-phone performances *Local Report* (2005/2012) and his theater pieces *Passport* (2011) and *Swim* (2015). In 1989 Klüver and Martin co-authored *Kiki's Paris*, a history of the Montparnasse art community from 1880 to 1930. Following this, Klüver and Martin, between 1990 and 1992, interviewed more than 300 artists, art historians, critics, gallerists, and museum curators in the United States, Europe, and Japan, for a proposed book on art and artists from 1945 to 1965. Excerpts of these interviews are published in *Inventing Downtown* for the first time.

Melissa Rachleff is a clinical associate professor of art management in the Visual Arts Administration MA Program at New York University. From 1999–2007 she was a program officer at the New York State Council on the Arts. Previously she was an associate curator at Exit Art, a nonprofit alternative gallery, and worked as an independent curator. She has written on photography and arts administration for a variety of publications, including *Taking AIM: The Business of Being an Artist Today* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011) and *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces, 1960–2010* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012). From 2013–14, Rachleff was a fellow at New York University's Humanities Initiative.

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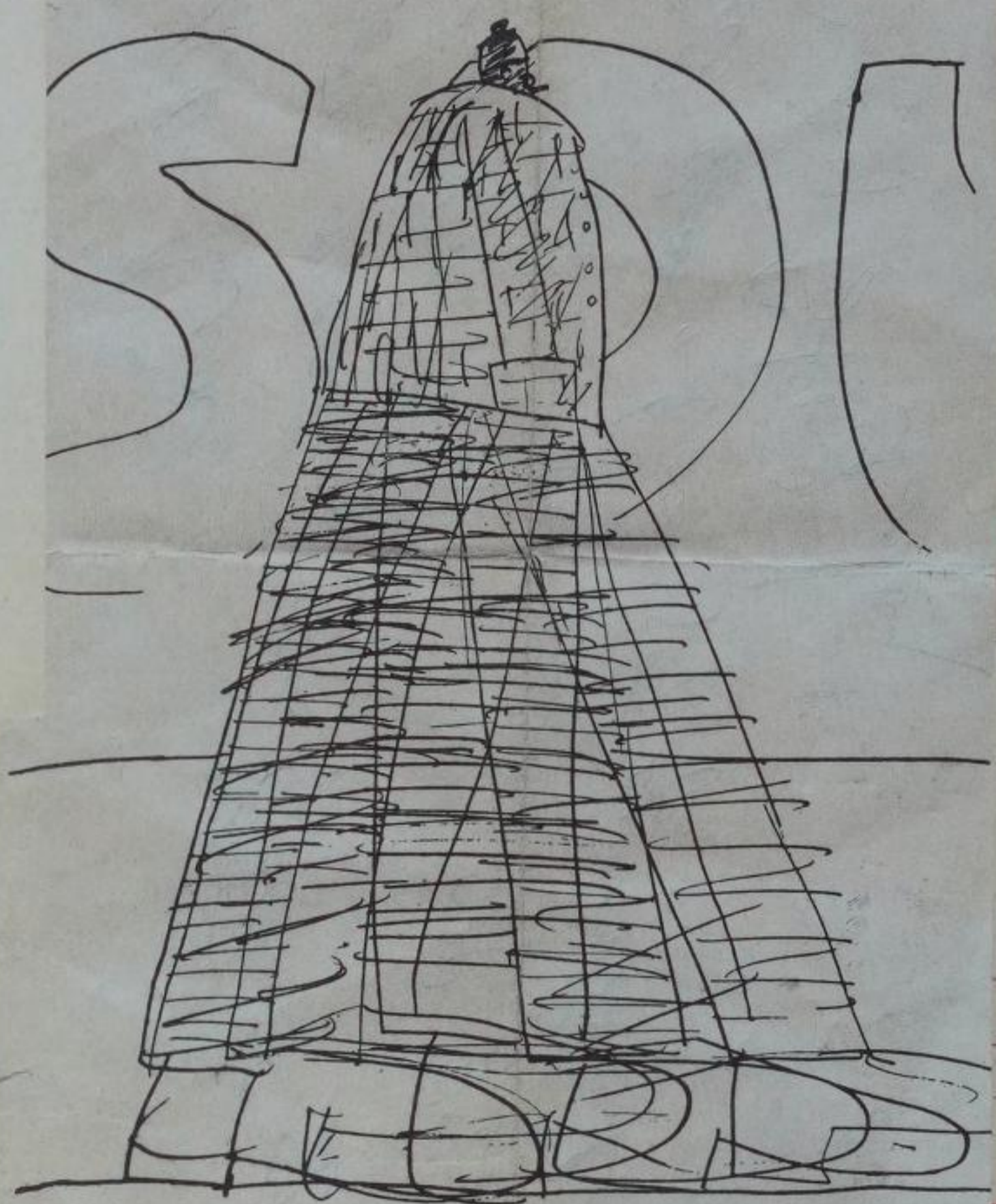
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from the early 1950s to the mid-1960s, showing how the area's multicultural spirit played a major role in shaping the artworks exhibited there. The book explores 14 key spaces in which styles such as Pop, Minimalism, and performance and installation art thrived. Excerpts from 33 revealing interviews with artists, critics, and dealers, conducted by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin, offer unique personal insight into the era's creative milieu. Taken together, the book's essays and interviews provide a distinctly new assessment of how downtown New York's fertile environment nurtured an innovative art scene.

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"A most companionable read, scholarly without ever being stuffy, *Inventing Downtown* is like one of the rare city gems that make NYC so magical. This glorious history runs the gamut from co-op artist-run galleries to studio exhibition spaces to ad hoc performance venues—all so visionary and adventurous that their commercial failures constitute a kind of creative ratification. 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."

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