

St Nicholas of Myra

East Village Tots

Checker Courier

The Father's Heart Ministries

Pink Olive inc

Enchantments

Pork Pie Hatters

Baseball Field

Free Public Baths of the City of New York - East 11th Street Baths (Historical)

New York City Relationship Coaching

Rue St Denis

Sustainable NYC + Cafe

Tompkins Square Library

Gnocco

PDT

E 10th St

E 10th St

Basketball Court

Sushi Lounge

New York Gospel Ministries

Odessa

First Runner Dog Park

Tompkins Square Park

East Village Community Coalition

Yuca Bar

Avenue A

Avenue B

International Student Hospice

SUFFER

Jo Laurie Design

E 7th St

Black Market

E 7th St

Church of St Brigid - St Emeric

De Colores Community Yard Garden

E 6th St

Buenos Aires

E 7th St

St Brigid School

E 8th St

Sixth Street Pilates

East Commun

# The Lower East Side is *Not For Sale*



Martin Wong

---

Saturday, March 8 @ 2 PM  
North-East Corner of  
Avenue A and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets

---

Greg Sholette  
*sponsored by eFlux*

Gregory Sholette takes you on a trip back to the mean streets of 1980s Lower East Side by visiting sites where the activist art collective Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D: 1980-1988) staged a series of ephemeral projects against the gentrification of the neighborhood when they invented a series of imaginary art galleries including The Leona Helmsley, Discount Salon, and Guggenheim Downtown that were in reality a string of boarded-up buildings covered with posters decrying real estate speculators and the "East Village" art scene.





THE QUALITY  
OF LIFE IN

CALIDAD  
DE VIDA EN



December, 1980 -- January, 1981

Vol. III No. 6

Free in the neighborhood, Mail Subscription \$9



**MERRY  
CHRISTMAS**





FINAL

DAILY NEWS  
NEW YORK'S FAVORITE NEWSPAPER

15¢

10¢ (10¢)

New York, N.Y., 10022, Thursday, October 30, 1975

Phone: (212) 877-1000

# FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD

*Vows He'll Veto Any Bail-Out*



President Ford gives his message in Washington. (AP Wirephoto)

**Abe, Carey  
Rip Stand**

**Stocks Skid,  
Dow Down 12**

*Three pages of stories  
begin on page 2; full text  
of Ford's speech on page 12*

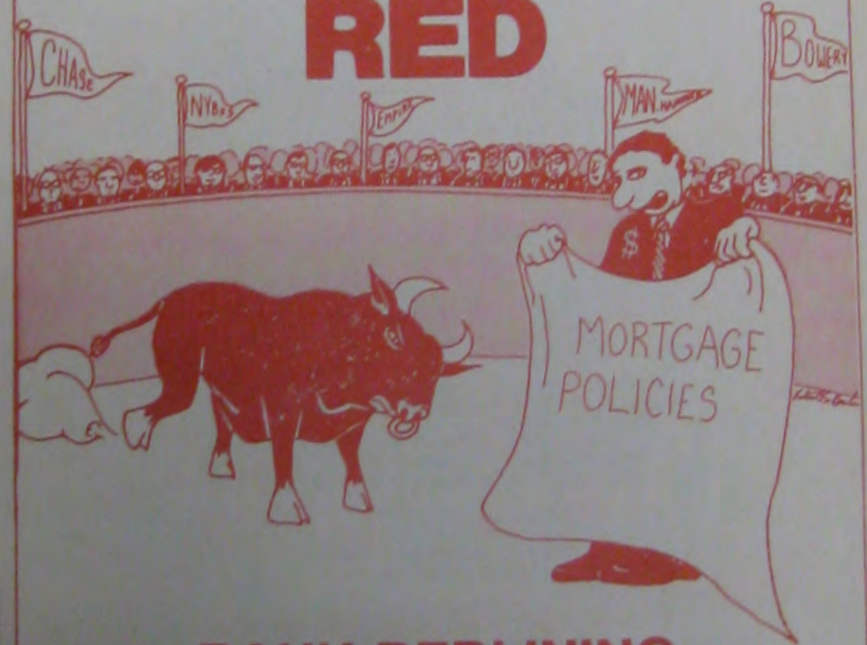
October 30th, 1975.





**A NYPIRG REPORT**

# SEEING RED



## BANK REDLINING IN CENTRAL HARLEM

**NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP, INC.**  
Offices: Albany, Binghamton, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Long Island, Manhattan, New Paltz, Queens, Staten Island, Syracuse

# magazine

October 23, 1983

New York Sunday News

Also:  
Marathon Kooks



**THE  
HOTTEST PIECE  
OF REAL ESTATE  
IN TOWN**  
The Lower East Side  
Battles the Gentry





1979: Ronald Reagan on campaign trail in the South Bronx with John Fekner street stencil on abandoned building behind him.

# Koch's Government of the Rich, by the Rich, for the Rich

By Joe Conason with Martin Rosenblatt

Political contributions, unlike the commercials they underwrite, never get much air time. The financial reports filed last month by the major gubernatorial candidates were thought worthy of 60 seconds total by local TV news editors, and have received scarcely more detailed attention from the daily papers. It must have seemed like an easy story: Curran had little money, while Lehrman had millions; Cuomo got union money, while Koch got far more from real estate and Wall Street firms.

Yet the lengthy list of Koch donors merits much closer examination, as do the Koch filings from the 1977 and 1981 mayoral races. For, as the *Voice* has already documented, City Hall has not only slanted its policies to benefit the businesses which funded the mayor's campaigns, but has made numerous decisions which were profitable to individual contributors as well.

This pattern of government-for-rent seems likely to pervade the Koch administration if it moves to Albany next year. The big real estate contributors have already learned how useful their man could be as governor—he helped them kill the state's transit-dedicated capital gains tax on real estate last April.

Records of the Board of Elections and a wide variety of real estate records and publications show that Koch's two mayoral campaigns received a total of \$445,501.46 between 1977 and 1981 from companies and persons connected to the

problems with the tax, defects which could have been amended later. But City Hall was determined to kill the gains tax, not improve it. Koch's minions first succeeded in weakening the tax, during negotiations with legislative leaders, by postponing its effective date from July 1 to October 1, 1981—thus giving realtors and brokers three months to complete big deals without paying up. Predictably, the grace period saw a frantic rush of major property sales in midtown and downtown.

The *Times* Sunday real estate section

Tenzer (who sold an East Side building in July 1981 and gave Koch \$600 for his mayoral campaign) all joined the Koch for Governor finance committee. Helmsley is represented on the committee by Helmsley-Spear vice president Irving Schneider, and Chemical Bank is there in the person of Donald C. Platten, who also co-chaired Koch's big-ticket dinner dance a few months ago.

Incidentally, there was one other notable seller of property who got off without paying the capital gains tax last sum-

in passing—less onerous increases in the mortgage recording and property transfer taxes as a revenue substitute. With the capital gains tax repeal, the industry and the mayor effectively killed any possibility that government could share in the increased values that its services, especially transit, create.

At least 13 Koch contributors sold buildings during the six months that the capital gains tax was in effect. They benefited most directly from the repeal, since their payments—if indeed they ever did pay—have been returned to them courtesy of City Hall. Helmsley, Bankers Trust, and Macklowe are in this category, along with Benenson Capital (\$3700 to Koch's mayoral campaign), the Milstein Group (\$5000), Maurice Paprin (\$5500), and Metropolitan Life Insurance (\$6000).

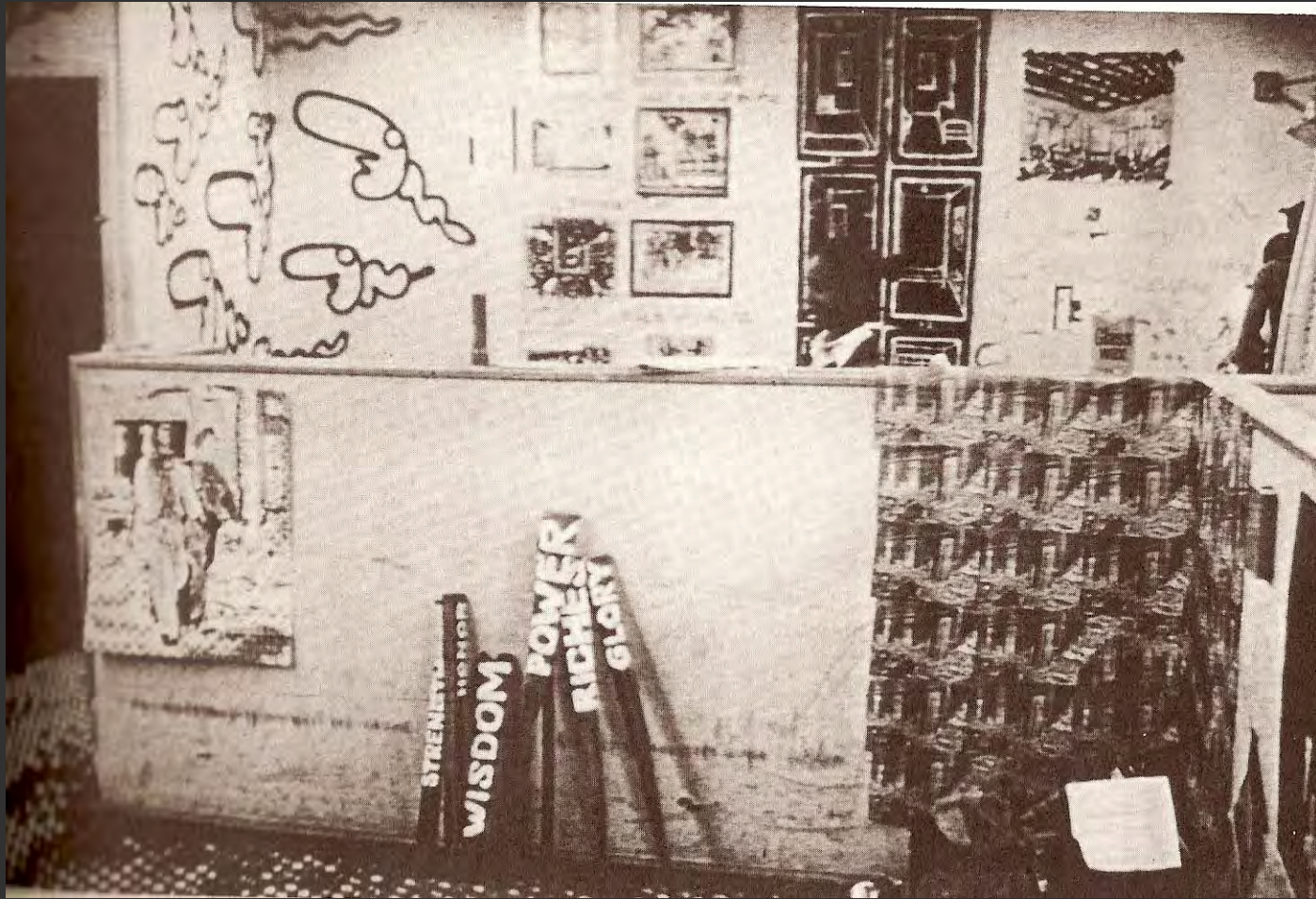
The repeal bill reached the governor's desk in April. Lieutenant Governor Mario Cuomo, who by then had launched his candidacy against Koch for governor, urged incumbent Hugh Carey to veto such "blatant special interest legislation." Cuomo pointed out that American Express







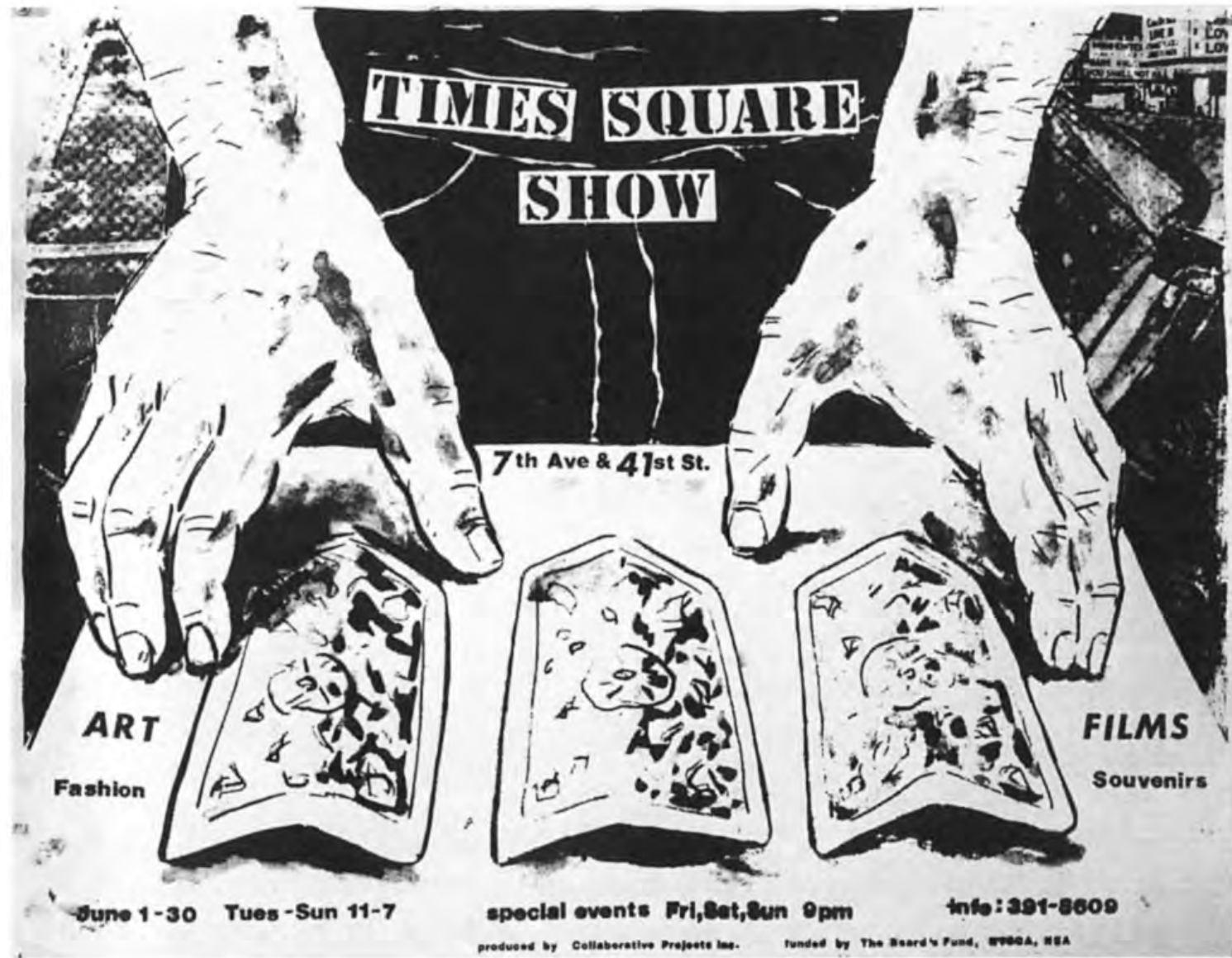




The Real Estate Show Jan 1980







Jane Dickson and Charlie Ahearn, poster for the *Times Square Show*, 1980. Courtesy of Jane Dickson and Charlie Ahearn.

# 1st ISSUE POLITICAL ART DOCUMENTATION /DISTRIBUTION

February 1981

## PAD: Waking Up In NYC

**PAD** (Political Art Documentation/Distribution) is an artists' resource and networking organization coming out of and into New York City. *Our main goal is to provide artists with an organized relationship to society*; one way we are doing this is by building a collection of documentation of international socially-concerned art. **PAD** defines "social concern" in the broadest sense, as any work that deals with issues—ranging from sexism and racism to ecological damage or other forms of human oppression. We document all kinds of work from movement posters to the most personal of individual statements. Art comes from art as well as from life. Knowing this makes us want to learn more about the production, distribution and impact of socially-concerned art works in the context of our culture and society. Historically, politicized or social-change artists have been denied mainstream coverage and our interaction has been limited. We have to know what we are doing. In New York. In the US. In Canada and Latin America. In Europe. In Asia and Africa. **The development of an effective oppositional culture depends on communication.**

## UN CERTAIN ART ANGLAIS!



A Certain English Art, (Postcard) Rasheed Araeen, 1979

**PAD** celebrated its first birthday with a Valentine's evening of entertainment and discussion around a slide show of political art (followed by dancing, but not in the streets—yet). We began in February 1980 as an amorphous group of artworkers dimly aware of a mutual need to organize around issues, but without much notion of how to do it. We met at Printed Matter once a month and agreed to start collecting documentation so we would have a physical core from which to reach out. For a while we looked at each other's work, discussed it, and thought about a social club and various possibilities for cultural activism. Then in late Spring we were offered a room in a former high school on the Lower East Side under the aegis of Seven Loaves—an umbrella group for community arts organizations. Suddenly we existed physically. We *had* to be in the world, and that led to the present structuring, still in process.

We have three kinds of meetings now: 1) The relatively flexible core or work group of 15-20 people gets together on three Sunday afternoons a month at the Seven Loaves space (when not too cold). Here we deal with: soliciting and handling of the archive materials; how to connect with other cultural organizations in NYC with similar purposes so there's no overlapping and duplication of work. (For instance, we are working with Cityarts Workshop, which has an impressive resource center on the community mural movement, and with Karin di Gia of Gallery 345, who has a collection of original political art.) We are also beginning to connect with and inform each other about the political events and struggles taking place in the city, understanding the ways these relate to national and international situations. Finally, we are thinking about collectively created issue-oriented exhibitions in public spaces, such as windows, subways, libraries, etc.

2) The open meetings with which we began. They take place on the second Sunday of every month at 8 PM at Printed Matter (7 Lispenard St., NYC 10013; 925-0325). Here reports are made from the work group and a brief visual or verbal presentation is given by a **PAD** member or guest as a sort of laboratory to stimulate discussion, education, consciousness raising and activism.

3) We are just beginning a series of public events centered around specific social issues seen in their historical perspectives, focusing on how they were opposed or supported by the socially concerned art of the time; for instance in May, a day on militarism in the "cold war" era, the Vietnam era and today, discussed by people from WRL (the War Resisters League), CARD (Committee Against Registration for the Draft) and artists who have done work with anti-militaristic content. We want to understand how the dialectic between oppositional art and society changes and takes different forms at different moments. These public afternoons will be publicized, and will lead up to an Autumn conference, at which we hope to bring together a wide coalition of cultural groups and artists. (For more information on events, see the "Calendar" section of **PAD**.)

**PAD's** theory is going to develop out of real experience instead of from the idealized and romanticized notion of a





Political Art Documentation & Distribution (PAD/D), 1980 - 1988.

⊗ contact people

Community ORGANIZATIONS  
CONTACTED FOR P&D DISPLACEMENT

## • DISPLACEMENT EXHIBIT •

⊗ Sign up under the category you'd like to work on: NAME

### • INDIVIDUAL WORKS COMMITTEE:

Meet with artists and groups to receive their work.

(performance, street art, objects) ~~John~~ Randy W  
HERB PERR 255-9192 ~~John~~ Randy W  
906-2994 (John)

### • VIDEO/SLIDESHOW COMMITTEE:

⊗ Sets up program for such work in ElBohio. Dan Ochro

Lina Newhan

### • PARK EVENT:

Sets up program of park event. Holly Zox 533-0746 (I'd like  
I can't coordinate anything because my time is very limited)

Joshua 201 653 7653 Solo music

### • CATALOG COMMITTEE:

Works on catalog of the show with photos, text, lists of  
practical information. ~~John~~ Christopher, Irving W







# PEOPLE'S REALITY



In August of 1982, the tenants of 60 Ave. B went on rent strike because of bad conditions. The landlord retaliated by hiring a known junkie as the superintendent. Subsequent landlords--there have been 4 in the last two years all related in some way to the original landlord--have refused to rent to Hispanics, Blacks or older Whites. Of a once predominantly Hispanic building, only 6 Hispanic families remain.

Hardly incidental to the landlord's history of abuse and neglect is the fact that the building's book value has risen from 335,000 to 387,000 in the last 3 years. Already, 2 of the ground floor apts. are being offered as co-ops.


**60 Ave. B**

An excerpt from a simulated "real estate" office window at Printed Matter, 7 Lispiard St. through Sept. 1.

**Not For Sale** A continuing project against displacement Sponsored by PAD/D



## NOT FOR SALE




ART EXHIBITS at EL BOHIO and ABC NO RIO May 21 - June 18th  
Art work by over 50 artists and a collective project by "Not for Sale" artists focusing on Lower East Side and artists' role in gentrification  
El Bohio, 605 East 9th St.; ABC No Rio, 156 Hivington St.

PARK EVENTS at THOMPKIN SQUARE PARK 1:30 - 4:30 PM  
Music, Theater, and Speakers

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS  
Lower East Side Cabaret and Video: June 11, 12, 17, 18th  
WOW Cafe, 11th St. betw. 1st and 2nd  
Limbo Lounge, 10th St. betw. A & B

VIDEO/SLIDE/FILM PROGRAMS ON GENTRIFICATION  
Video/slides/film: May 26th & June 7th 7:30 PM  
Millennium, 66 East 4th St.

STREET ART  
Metal Street Installations  
on 5 buildings between ABC No Rio & El Bohio  
"Life is an Investment Also"  
639 East 11th St. betw. C & D  
"Real Estate"  
Random locations in Lower East Side & Tribeca  
"Monument to the Homeless & Displaced"  
1st St. and 1st Ave. (by F train)  
Street Stencils by "Not for Sale" artists  
Random locations on Lower East Side  
Real Estate Banners  
Betw. ABC No Rio and El Bohio  
"Confessions"  
Storefront for Art and Arch.  
51 Prince St.

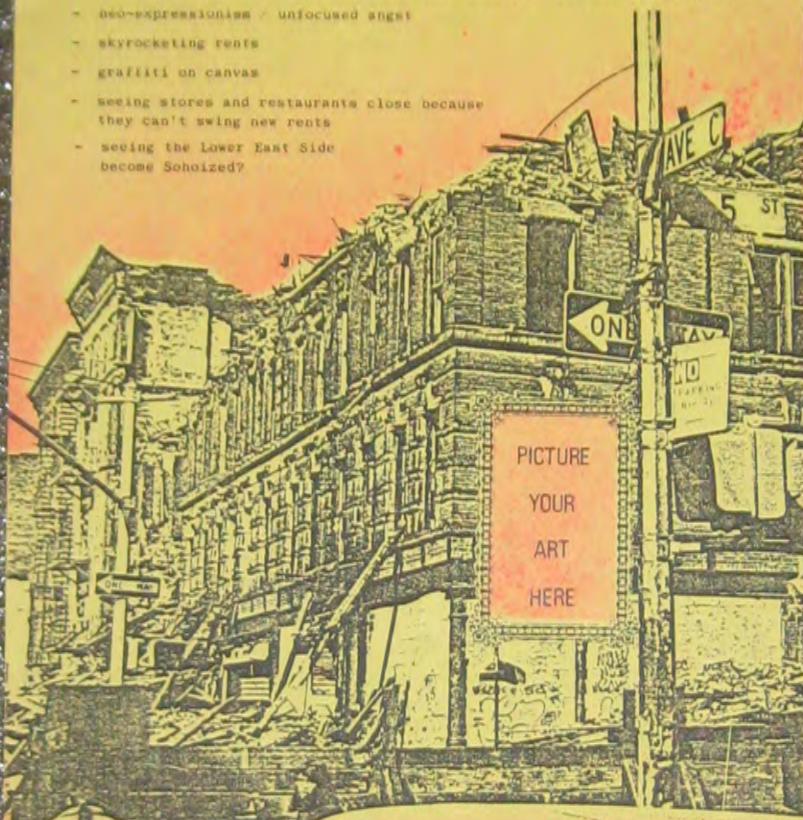


PAD/D's first Not For Sale art project at El Bohio, 1983



ARE YOU SICK OF:

- hearing art market hype about Lower East Side art, artists and galleries
- neo-expressionism / unfocused angst
- skyrocketing rents
- graffiti on canvas
- seeing stores and restaurants close because they can't swing new rents
- seeing the Lower East Side become Schoized?



THEN WE WANT YOUR ART

We are requesting proposals for an outdoor exhibit this spring. Work should be pro-neighborhood and deal with the issues of gentrification and displacement or be a critique of the Lower East Side art scene. All art must be easily affixed to an outdoor wall (e.g. wheatpaste). Work should not exceed 30" x 40". Artwork will not be returned. Several prime locations on the Lower East Side will be maintained until mid-June. Multiples of work are invited.

Deadline for proposals: March 17, include phone number on all proposals for quick processing.  
Deadline for receipt of work: April 13-15.

Send to: **Not For Sale**  
c/o PADD, 339 Lafayette St.,  
New York, N.Y. 10012  
(212)420-8196





A Publication of Political Art Documentation/Distribution

# UPFRONT

Number 6-7 Summer 1983 \$2

## LOWER EAST SIDE: PORTAL TO AMERICA



- INSIDE**
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| <b>6</b>  | <b>STREET: AN IMAGE BRAWL</b>                         | <b>23</b> | <b>TURNING POINTS IN THE LIVES OF ART ACTIVISTS</b>             |
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## GALLERY VIEW

# Pioneering in New Territories

Continued from Page 27

Kenny Scharf, and Mark Tansey.

The slickest — and the oldest — of the new East Village spaces is the Fun Gallery, at 254 East 10th Street, opened in 1981 by Bill Stelling and Paul Astor, an actress in underground films. Fun specializes in graffiti artists, among them such famous scribblers as Leonard Hilton (Futura 2000) and Frederick Brathwaite (Freddy Fab 5). But its stable is eclectic enough to include the painter Kenny Scharf, one of its earliest finds, whose raucous comic strip art — managing to combine humor with apocalyptic references to nuclear holocaust — was a sensation last month at the Tony Shafrazi Gallery in SoHo. Along with the graffitiists, Mr. Scharf's work and that of Kieley Jenkins, a sculptor whose small tableaux make funny, telling comments on life in New York and Middle America, can be seen in the gallery's current group show.

"I feel we're injecting a little humor into the art scene," says Mr. Stelling. And Miss Astor adds, "Our artists are coming from a different, ghetto culture, and they are also influenced by politics; they comment more on society. Their work has a new kind of beauty."

A much more staid is Gracie Mansion, around the corner at 337 East 10th Street, whose storefront window faces Tompkins Square Park. After a stint of showing art in the bathroom of her tenement floor-through, its ebullient proprietor brought the gallery down to ground level a year ago, in collaboration with another painter, Sur Rodney Sur. Now Gracie Mansion's diverse "stable" ranges from the veteran artist Carmen Cicero, around since the '50's, to such young talents as Rhonda Zwillinger, an assemblagist of glittering celebrity portraits, and Paula Coltery, whose small images of persons and animals are built up of painted wax on canvas (a show of her work opens June 28).

into the rock music scene. A lot of the bands in the 70's were former art school students disillusioned with the art world," he says. "But the success of 'new figuration' art has given young people new confidence to be artists. Once again, they're getting respect from the general public." The gallery is currently showing the work of Michael Byron, a young sculptor of Expressionist talents who makes painted wax candles in the shape of fantastical demons and beasts, then burns them ceremonially.

The East Village's few not-for-profit arenas include Painting Space 122, run by a board of 17 artists in a reclaimed schoolhouse on First Avenue at 9th Street, and El Bohio, part of a Hispanic community center at 805 East 9th Street — also in a reclaimed schoolhouse — managed by a community organization called CHARAS. Both have closed their seasons with shows political in nature: "Newspace" at P.S. 122, curated by Robert Costa, is a rather weak array of work commenting on news media; and "Not for Sale: A Project Against Gentrification," was an elaborate sociopolitical roundup — produced by

---

**Some East Village talents have already made it to shows in SoHo or uptown.**

---

Political Art Documentation/Distribution — of work by artists protesting neighborhood upgrading that sacri-





# ART FEVER

BY DINITIA SMITH

THE PASSION AND  
FRENZY OF  
THE ULTIMATE  
RICH MAN'S SPORT

**T**HE NIGHT BEFORE BEAL-REBETS, MILLIONAIRE Gerald Guterman was in bed on Rockefeller's Floor of a Young Girl Wearing a Gold-Trimmed Chiffon last December. He was so nervous he couldn't sleep.

It wasn't the thought of spending money that worried Guterman. Just three months before, he had paid half a million dollars to film the Queen Elizabeth 2 for the bar and his mistakes of his three oldest children. When his youngest son, eight-year-old Jeremy, became fascinated with ancient Egypt after visiting the museum at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Guterman took the boy to a dealer on 57th Street and bought him an Egyptian ring from the first century A.D. Guterman has Jeremy wear the ring—through "toys in the house." The house is a Woodchester estate, with its own gallery of seventeenth-century Dutch masters.

Guterman made most of his money by converting residential buildings to co-ops or condominiums, and then selling the units. He's been especially successful in selling scrupled apartments, though his aggressive marketing



140 MILLION SET.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY P. LAFONT



liberately set at the wrong time, nine pots ("He buys a lot of things from Conran's," says Barbara, an art adviser and interior-design consultant), and four lava lamps, all set on a bright-red block that Steinbach didn't even paint himself. There is Peter Halley's *Burned Out Cell With Conduit*—"Neo-Geo out of Warhol," says Eugene—done in Day-Glo violet and Rol Latex. There is a Koons,

"He never looks at the pad. He gives the exact momentum of the car, forwards and backwards, which is lovely."

**M**ichael Schwartz, the son of collectors, started making purchases as a teenager "for under \$500."

WITH A DUNHAM AND A SALLE.

Like many collectors, the Schwartzes raised their child on art. Michael Schwartz, now 28 and an options trader, grew up surrounded by the Dines and the Stellas, and as a teenager he began making purchases "for under \$500," says Michael. To-







Louis Armstrong with *Slaves*, 1984. Photo Philip Thomas.



Peter Nagy (left) and Lisa Becker of *Native Moon*. Photo Eric Aron.



Ann Dickson in her *Times Square* stall. Photo Peter Belloni.



Harvey Chermant (right) with dealer Pat Moore and her husband, Will and Fran, in front of Chermant's *Masters of Craft*. Marlene Gallery's "Hot (Part 4)" summer '83. Photo Howard Goodale.



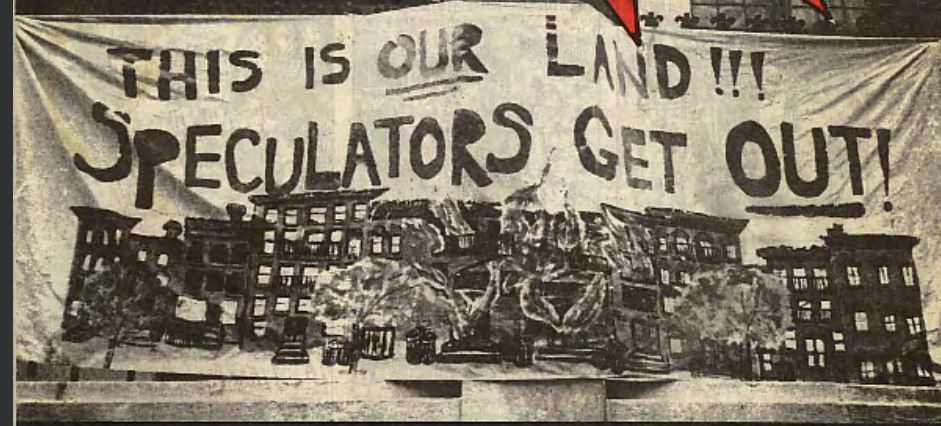
Robbie C and Aida. Photo © Peter Belloni, 1983.



Rhonda Zwilling (right) and Gracie Maccini with program booklet designed by Zwilling. Photo Eric Aron.

# CITY LIMITS

JUNE-JULY 1984 \$2.00



## A PLAN TO SAVE THE LOWER EAST SIDE

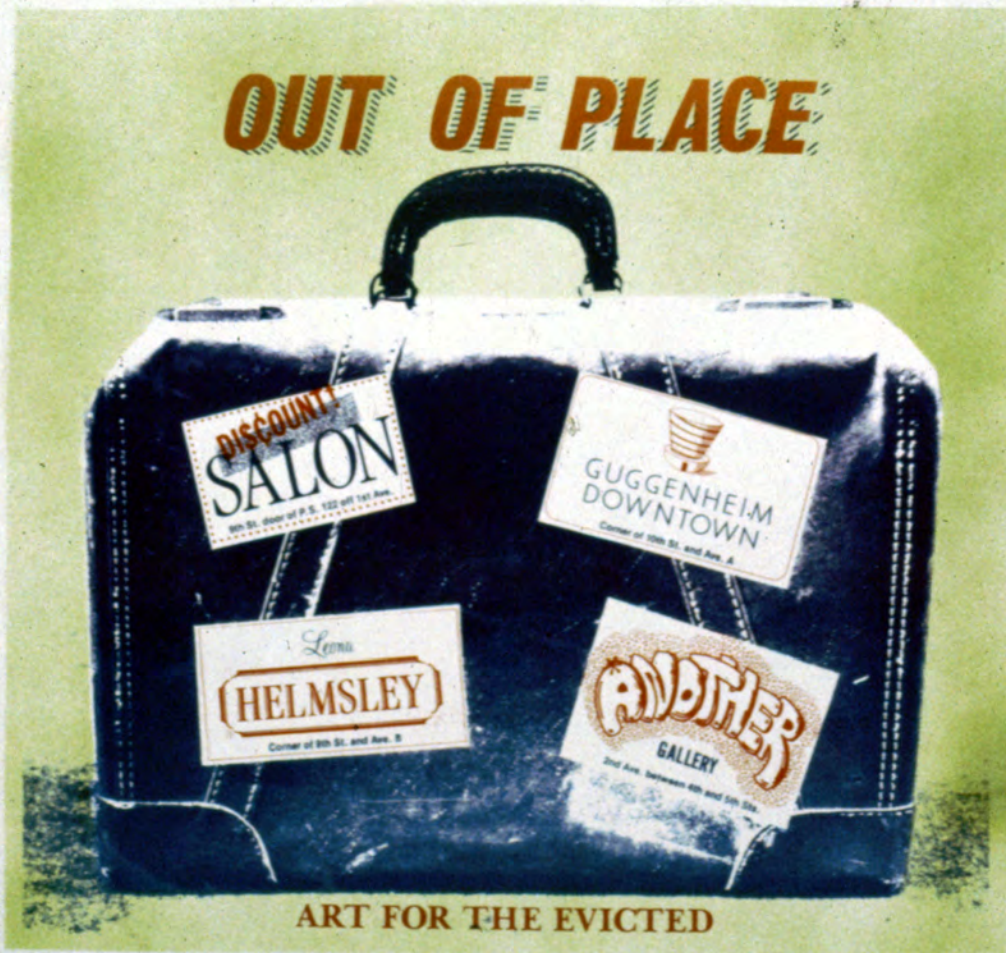
THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS





Julian Schnabel

# OUT OF PLACE



## ART FOR THE EVICTED

4 new temporary galleries open on the Lower East Side from  
April 28th to mid-June, 1984

OPENING: Saturday, April 28th, 2-6 P.M. at the Guggenheim  
Downtown, corner of 10th St. and Ave. A. (Rain date, April 29th)



Organized by Not For Sale — PAED's project against displacement.  
Public Art Documentation Distribution 131 Avenue C, New York, N.Y. 10002

Printed at the Lower East Side Printshop









Johnny Winter  
special guests  
Roy Buchanan  
Buddy Guy  
& Jr. Wells  
May 4th, RFM  
Beacon Theater

Johnny Winter  
special guests  
Roy Buchanan  
Buddy Guy  
& Jr. Wells  
May 4th, RFM  
Beacon Theater

ACCEPT  
HEADLINING AT  
THE RITZ, MAY 3RD

Johnny Winter  
special guests  
Roy Buchanan  
Buddy Guy  
& Jr. Wells  
May 4th, RFM  
Beacon Theater

Johnny Winter  
special guests  
Roy Buchanan  
Buddy Guy  
& Jr. Wells  
May 4th, RFM  
Beacon Theater

OUT OF PLACE  
STAY  
STAY  
STAY  
STAY

Wives and lovers, come and go...  
An apartment in Fort...  
RENT CONTROL

Wives and lovers, come and go...  
An apartment in Fort...  
RENT CONTROL

MAY 1st  
INTERNATIONAL  
WORKERS DAY  
Take history into  
our hands!

THE CLIX  
MAY 21 22 23 24 25

IVIVA LA FORMACION DEL  
MOVIMIENTO REVOLUCIONARIO INTERNACIONALISTA.

THE FORMATION OF THE  
REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT!

MAY 1st  
INTERNATIONAL  
WORKERS DAY  
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13Y



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(treaties non-negotiable)



*Nancy Sellman*





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*If a landlord owns ALL the buildings  
on a block, the rent is Doubled on  
Unrenovated Units in those buildings.*





  
 © restaurant  
 c  
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### Ukrainian Menu

Appetizers

Stouchnick (fried pig's knuckles)	\$2.95
Mashed Mushrooms	\$2.95
Cold Potato (potatoes)	\$1.95
Mushroom Sauce or Sour Cream	\$2.95

Soups

Borscht (red soup)	\$2.95
Vegetable	\$2.95
Chicken Noodle	\$2.95
Cup of Soup	\$1.95

Entrées

Pot Roast in mushroom sauce	\$6.95
Roast Veal in mushroom sauce	\$6.95
Pork Chop	\$4.95
Veal Corned Beef	\$4.95
Chicken Corned Beef	\$4.95
Veal Chopsteak	\$4.95
Roasted Beef with horseradish sauce	\$4.95
Duck (when available)	\$4.95
Compliment from kitchen available	\$2.95
Fish of Day (fried or broiled) (if available)	\$4.95

Beverages

Coke	\$1.95
Soft Drink	\$1.95
Tea	\$1.95
Milk	\$1.95
Coke, 7-Up, Ginger Ale, Tea	\$1.95

### Italian Menu

Pizzas

Delishious Special	\$4.95
Pepperoni	\$4.95
Mushrooms	\$4.95
Onions	\$4.95
Peppers	\$4.95
Meat Sausage	\$4.95
Meatballs	\$4.95
Broccoli	\$4.95
Extra Toppings	\$1.00

Sprints

Roast Chicken Caprese	\$4.95
Lasagna - Tomato Sauce	\$4.95
Mashed Meat or Cheese Sausage	\$4.95
Roast Meat or Cheese Sausage	\$4.95
2. Roast or Sausage	\$4.95
3. San Francisco & Pepperoni	\$4.95

Spaghetti

Spaghetti	\$4.95
Spaghetti	\$4.95
Spaghetti	\$4.95
Spaghetti	\$4.95
Spaghetti	\$4.95

Entrées

Small Antipasto	\$4.95
Small Sandwich	\$4.95
Small Pasta	\$4.95
Small Salad	\$4.95
Small Drink	\$4.95

Desserts

Chocolate Cake	\$2.95
Apple Pie	\$2.95
Vanilla Ice Cream	\$2.95

Greenaway's  
 Four Films on Four  
 American Composers  
 Sat. April 21 & Sun. April 22

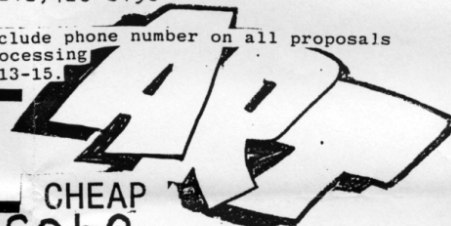
our Films on Four  
 American Composers  
 Sat. April 21 & Sun. April 22

ment or be a critique of the Lower East Side art scene. All art must be easily affixed to an outdoor wall (e.g. wheatpaste). Work should not exceed 30" x 40". Artwork will not be returned. Several prime locations on the Lower East Side will be maintained until mid-June. Multiples of work are invited. Send to: PADD

339 Lafayette Street (212) 420-8196  
New York, N.Y. 10012

Deadline for proposals: March 17, include phone number on all proposals for quick processing  
Deadline for receipt of work: April 13-15.

# REAL ESTATE



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**The Lower East Side Is Still NOT FOR SALE**

Documentation/Political Art Distribution

**93 D 2201**—Men's handsome and serviceable House Coat or Smoking Jacket of good quality Wool and cotton Cheviot. The reverse of the material striped in harmonizing colors is used for the collar, cuffs and pocket trimming and all edges are finished with cord. Fastens with cord frog ornaments.  
COLORS: navy blue, brown or grey. SIZES: 34 to 48 inches chest measure.  
OUR PRICE, \$5.89  
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In ordering from this page please give first and second choice of color.

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**93 D 2168**—Framing silk, postcard gift, warm blanket of wool-mix and acetate. Harmonizing color fastens with cord frog ornaments. Cheviot in heavy line of material with all-color cord trimmings. In heavy line of material with all-color cord trimmings. Postage 42 extra. **\$9.98**

**35 0 000 Genuine Beacom Blanket \$8.65**

**93 D 2163**—Wool-Mix House Blanket \$4.69

**25 0 000 Gene Law Blanket \$5.00**

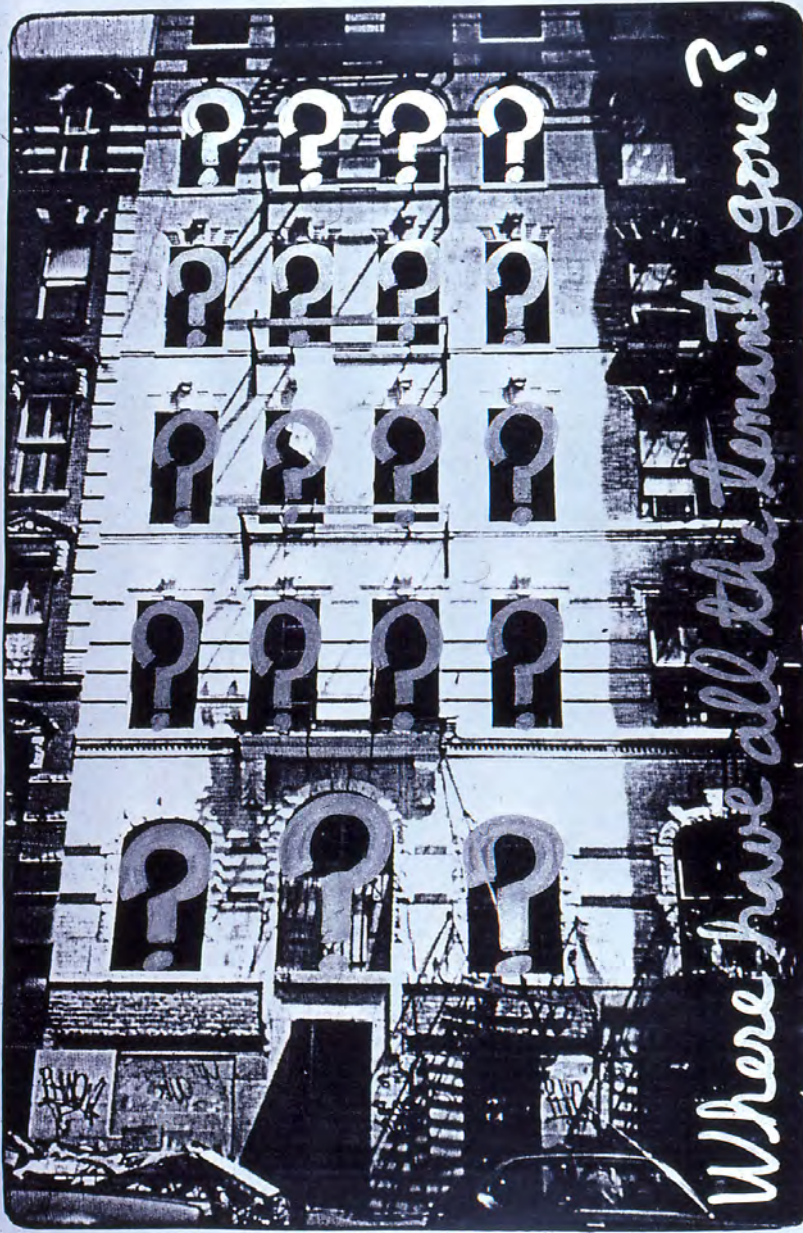
**93 D 2163**—Wool-Mix House Blanket \$4.69





PERR / WEXLER '84

Displace: To move people from their homes by violence or

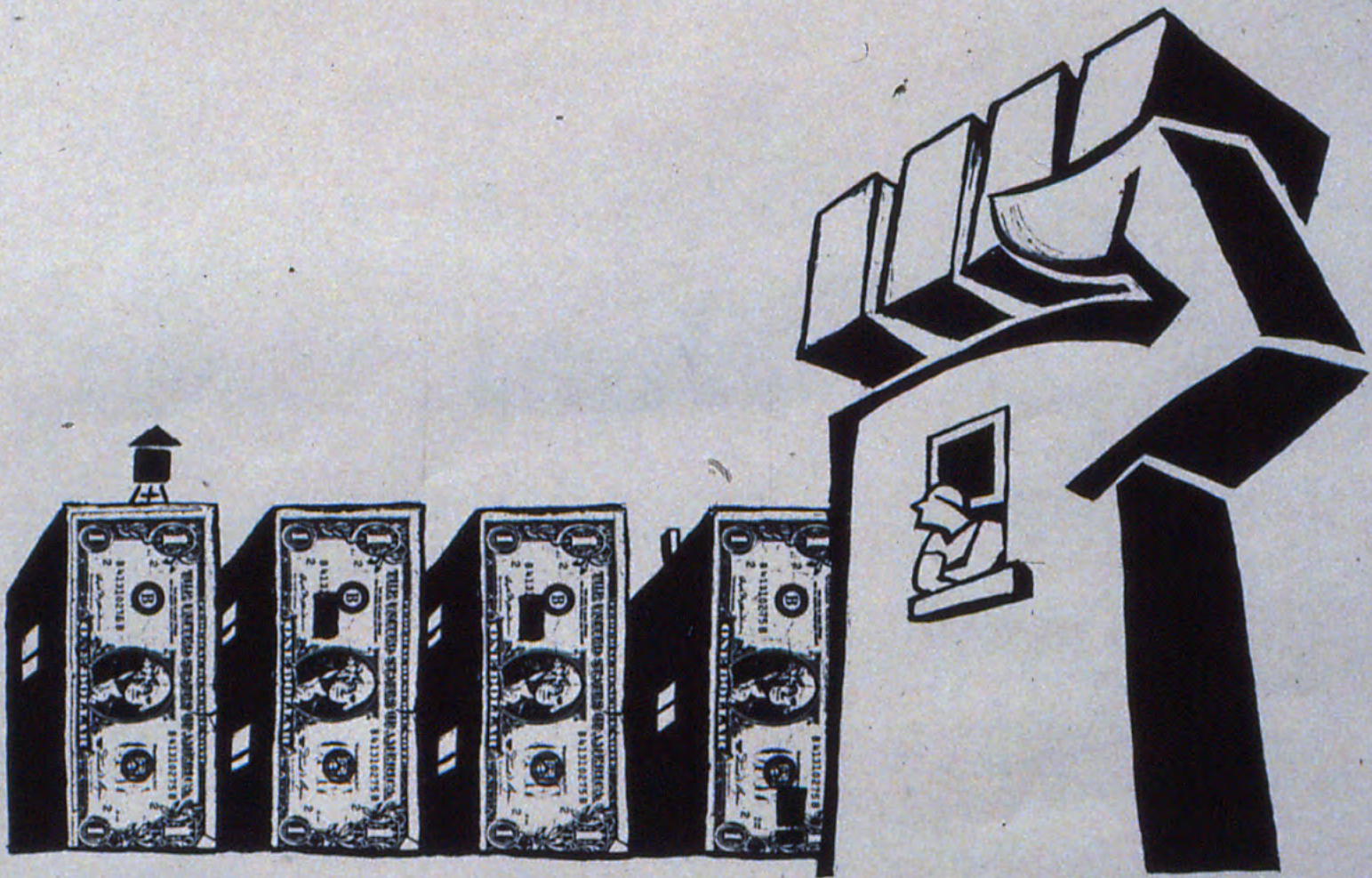


PERR / WEXLER '84

*Where have all the tenants gone?*

Displace: To move people from their homes by violence or deceit.  
-- WEBSTER





Seth





SETH TOBOCMAN

**TRUTH IS CONCRETE !**





# IN MEMORIUM

TO THOSE FELLED BY ENVIRONMENTAL/ECONOMIC POLLUTION



**BELTED KINGFISHER**  
(*Ceryle alcyon*)  
Found in New York City alive but with legs paralyzed. Died August 25, 1983 of suspected poisoning by environmental pollutants.



**ORCHIDIA RESTAURANT**  
After 37 years at 2nd Avenue and 9th Street, landlord Sydney Wiesner, in defiance of community opposition, raised rent from \$950/month to \$5,000/month. The Orchidia, despite protest, closed April 11, 1984.

EVICTED  
in Lower East Side Area  
P.M. in the Corporation  
N.Y. State April 1984

STEVEN GRAHAM  
presents

PLACE

EVICTED







Boutique



**STOP GENTRIFICATION**

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Harley Hotel	123 West 42nd Street New York, N.Y. 10018	(212) 555-1234
Harley Hotel	123 West 42nd Street New York, N.Y. 10018	(212) 555-1234
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**HARLEY HOTELS**  
"We're going to be your favorite hotels."

*HANDS OFF THE LOW-COST SIDE!*

**"I think hangers should come out of the closet without a struggle. Why should you?"**



**HARLEY of New York. A great hotel doesn't have to be expensive.**

**"I can't get dressed without a full-length mirror. Can you?"**



**HARLEY of New York. A great hotel doesn't have to be expensive.**

**"I couldn't get along without a magnifying mirror. Why should you?"**



**HARLEY of New York. A great hotel doesn't have to be expensive.**

**"I never get up to change channels. Why should you?"**



**HARLEY of New York. A great hotel doesn't have to be expensive.**

**"I run my hotels the way I run my home."**



**HARLEY HOTELS**

Hotel	Address	Phone
Harley Hotel	123 West 42nd Street New York, N.Y. 10018	(212) 555-1234
Harley Hotel	123 West 42nd Street New York, N.Y. 10018	(212) 555-1234
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**HARLEY HOTELS**  
"We're going to be your favorite hotels."

*HANDS OFF THE LOW-COST SIDE!*

**"I wouldn't drink from a plastic glass. Why should you?"**



**HARLEY of New York. A great hotel doesn't have to be expensive.**

**"I wouldn't lose sleep over the wrong pillow. Why should you?"**



**HARLEY of New York. A great hotel doesn't have to be expensive.**

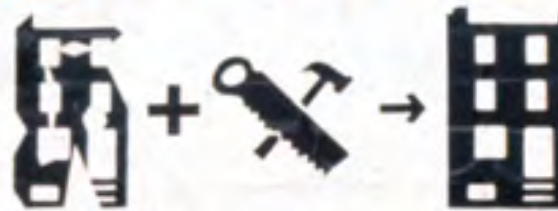
**Step up to the Plate!**  
**Throughout the World!**

- \* Develop the Struggle of the Masses Against As a Mighty Force for Revolution!
- \* Support the Peoples War in Peru and All the Oppressed Peoples Against Imperialism and
- \* Solidarity with All Imprisoned Political
- \* Break the Chains, Unleash the Fury of Wo





*¿Como evitar que otros ocupen nuestro barrio?  
/Reconstruye tú los edificios!*



**HOW TO STOP GENTRIFICATION:  
REBUILD FOR YOURSELVES!**



... y mezmily komornego.

שלוש האחד אינם  
באחדותם כלום  
קיים באדינונג ← קיים ד

**JARUTAN**  
WE DON'T WANT INDIANS  
JUST THEIR NAMES  
MASCOTS  
MACHINES  
CITIES  
PRODUCTS  
BUILDINGS  
**LIVING PEOPLE**

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JUST THEIR NAMES  
MASCOTS  
MACHINES  
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PRODUCTS  
BUILDINGS  
**LIVING PEOPLE**

**JARUTAN**  
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JUST THEIR NAMES  
MASCOTS  
MACHINES  
CITIES  
PRODUCTS  
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**BRANDS SALON**  
**HELMSTLEY**  
**CHERRY**  
**ART FOR THE EVICTED**  
A new temporary gallery opens on the Lower East Side from  
April 28th to mid-June, 2004  
OPENING Saturday, April 28th, 2-4 P.M. in the Guggenheim  
Downstairs, corner of 10th St. and Ave. A. (Rain date, April 29th)  
Supported by the New York State Office of Cultural Affairs  
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**IN MEMORIUM**  
FOR THOSE FELL BY ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDOUS POLLUTION



**TITLE DEED**  
**SECOND AVE.**

RENT \$250.

With 1 Wine Bar	\$300.
With 2 Boutiques	675.
With 3 Gourmet Shops	950.
With 4 Galleries	1100.
With CO-OPS	\$1400.

If a landlord owns All the buildings on a block, the rent is divided on Unconventional Units in these buildings.

How to stop gentrification  
REBUILD FOR YOURSELVES!



**OUT OF PLACE**



**THE Grand DESIGN FOR LIVING**

**WELCOME TO THE LOWER EAST SIDE**  
LANDLORDS BEWARE  
NO SERVICES → NO RENT!

Stoneman & Cohen's  
2nd Floor  
2nd Floor → 2nd Floor  
2nd Floor → 2nd Floor

SEE CURRENT IN THE "ARTIST" BENCH!

Wanna Well, Don't Care, Well, No, Just  
Change Your Mind  
Nema Oblige → No Placemore, Bannings

לפי תנאים שונים  
לפי תנאים שונים

ANOTHER GALLERY

**AFRICA** **AFRICA** **AFRICA** **AFRICA** **CITY OPERA** **CITY OPERA** **EDITH AND MARCEL** **EDITH AND MARCEL**





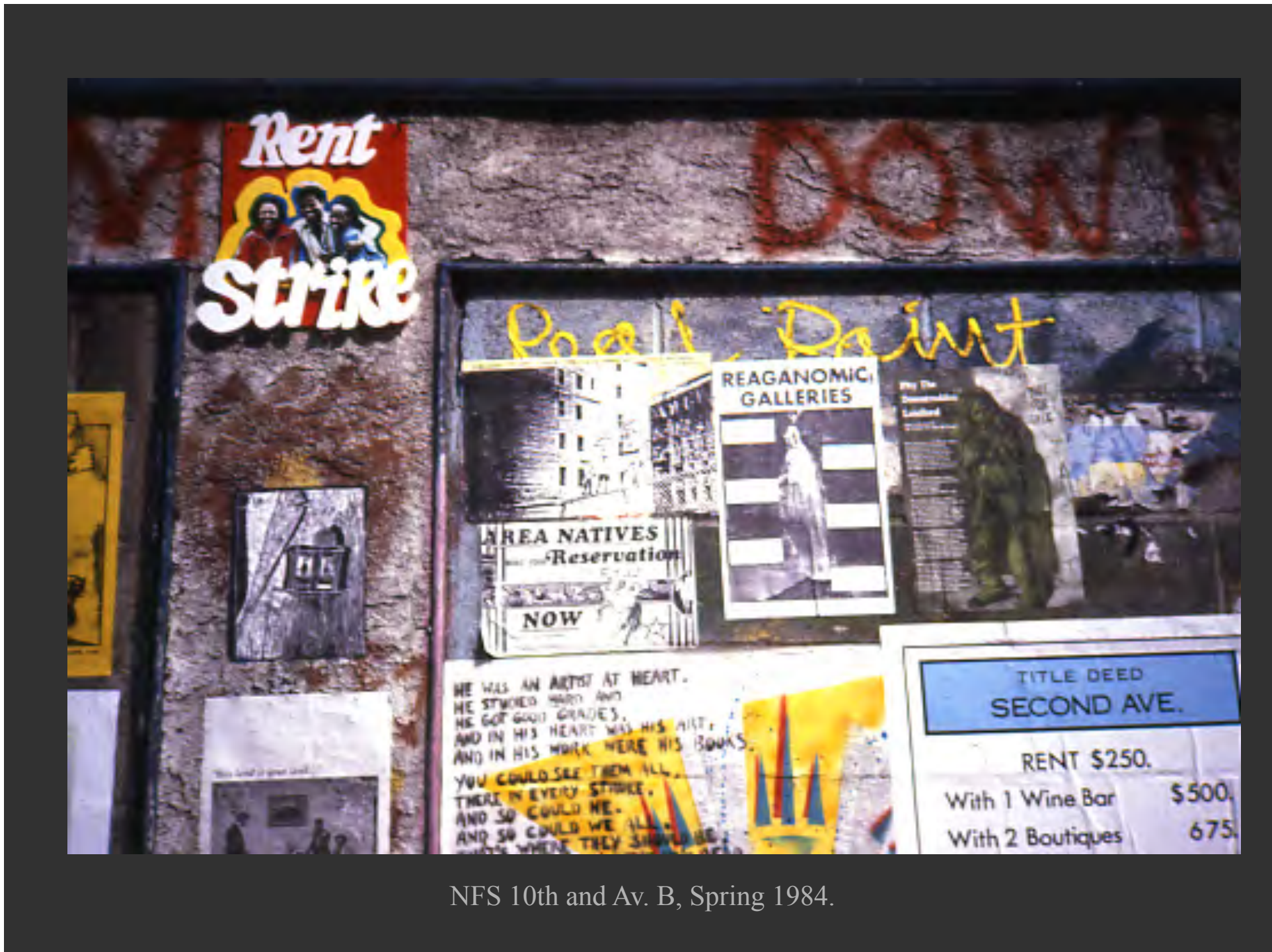












NFS 10th and Av. B, Spring 1984.



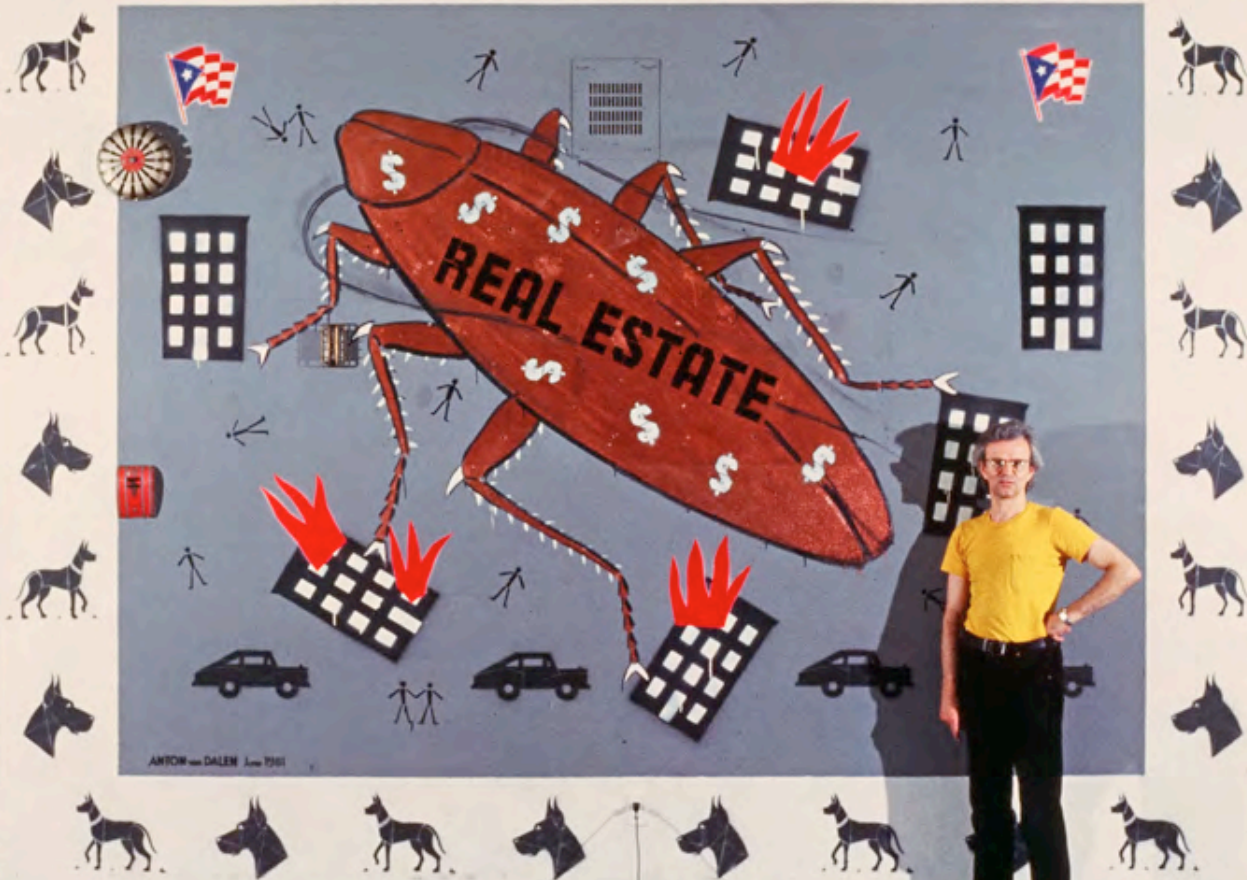








# LOWER EAST SIDE: PORTAL TO AMERICA







## East Village '84

# Commentary: The Problem with Puerilism

The history of modernism can be read (and recently it has been) as a series of unequal exchanges between the culture industry and the various urban subcultures which come into existence on the margins of, and resist assimilation into, controlled social life—(exchanges mediated by the avant-garde). The recent establishment of a culture-industry outpost in Manhattan's East Village—a neighborhood of multiple racial and ethnic, deviant and delinquent subcultures—is the latest episode in that history. An attempt magically to resolve a classic overproduction crisis (overproduction by artists, overproduction of artists), this modern expansion of the market is also a textbook case in modern cultural economy; as such, it can be analyzed differently than it has been in the preceding pages.

What has been constructed in the East Village is a simulacrum of the social formation from which the modernist avant-garde first emerged: I am referring, of course, to *la bohème*, the milieu in which exchange between high and low sectors of the cultural economy takes place. By the mid-19th century, the progressive marginalization of the artistic profession, and the erosion of artists' social and financial standing which this marginalization frequently entailed, had resulted in loose, shifting alliances between artists and other social groups—the resisters, streetwalkers and street crisscrossers, etc., who appear in the poetry of Baudelaire, the paintings of Courbet, Manet, Daubigny, etc. From the very beginning, however, the avant-garde's relation to subcultural types was ambivalent; hence, its celebrated *insouffrance*—Baudelaire's recommendation that beggars wear gloves—which allowed contradictory attitudes to coexist side by side.

Avant-garde *insouffrance* was not, of course, reserved for the underclasses, but was often turned on the bourgeoisie as well; in either case, what it expresses is the avant-

TITLE DEED  
SECOND AVE.

RENT \$250.

With 1 Wine Bar \$500.

With 2 Boutiques 675.

With 3 Gourmet Shops 950.

With 4 Galleries 1100.

With CO-OPS \$1400.

If a landlord owns All the buildings  
on a block, the rent is Doubled on  
Unrenovated Units in those buildings.

garde's intermediary position between the two. As Stuart Hall, who has written extensively on the politics of subcultural formations, observes, "The bohemian subculture of the avant-garde that has arisen from time to time in the modern city, is both distinct from its 'parent' culture (the urban culture of the middle class intelligentsia) and yet also a part of it (sharing with it a modernizing outlook, standards of education, a privileged relation vis-à-vis productive labour, and so on)."<sup>1</sup> The fact that avant-garde artists had only partially withdrawn from the middle-class elite—which also constitutes the primary, if not the only, audience for avant-garde production—placed them in a contradictory position; but this position also equipped them for the economic function they would eventually be called upon to perform—that of broker between the culture industry and subcultures.

Subcultures demonstrate an extraordinary ability to improvise, out of the materials of consumer culture, ad hoc cultural forms which function as markers of both

(group) identity and (cultural) difference. (Hall: Subcultures "adopt and adapt material objects—goods and possessions—and reorganize them into distinctive 'styles' which express the collectivity of their being-as-a-group.") Grounded in concrete social practices, these "styles" offer an alternative to the sterility of museum culture, and have periodically been appropriated as such by the avant-garde. Here is an (extremely condensed) description of this process:

Improved [subcultural] forms are usually first made suitable by the artisan-level entrepreneurs who bring up and around any active subculture. Through their efforts, a wider circle of consumers gains access to an shifting subcultural post, but in a more detached and shallow form as the elements of the original style are removed from the context of subtle ritual which had first informed them. At this point, it appears to the large fashion and entertainment concerns as a promising trend. Components of an already diluted stylistic complex are selected out, adapted to the demands of mass manufacture, and pushed to the last jobs and bargain counter.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, thanks to the "pioneering" efforts of the avant-garde, difference first becomes an object of consumption.

Within the last few years in New York we have witnessed a series of isolated attempts to begin this process again: the reconstituted of SoHo around established high-art traditions has propelled young, sometimes radical artists out to new marginal locations—the South Bronx, an abandoned massage parlor just south of Times Square—where they have regrouped with new subcultural recruits. The recent centralization of this tendency in the East Village provides it with both a geographic and, more importantly, an economic base, a network of artist-run commercial galleries established specifically for the marketing of subcultural productions (graffiti, caricature and other vernacular expressions) or putric imitations of them. (The youth of the new avant-garde, rather, "infant-garde" indicates that Youth itself has become an important subcultural category.) The prevalence of subcultural models in contemporary "avant-garde" production—both the "new" British sculpture and the French *figuration libre*, to cite but two examples, are entirely dependent upon them—suggests that this is a global, rather than local, phenomenon; but it also documents the importance subcultural appropriation in the maintenance of a global cultural economy.

If we regard the East Village art "scene" as an economic, rather than esthetic, development, we can account for the one characteristic of that "scene" which seems to contradict more conventional notions of avant-garde activity. I am referring to the surrender, by the East Village artist-entrepreneurs, to the means-end rationality of the marketplace: "Paintings are doorways to collector's [sic] homes," one East

Village painter proclaims in a recent interview, no doubt hoping his candor will be mistaken for cynicism. Despite attempts to fabricate a genealogy for the artist-run galleries of the East Village in the alternative-space movement of the '70s, what has been constructed in the East Village is not an alternative to, but a miniature replica of, the contemporary art market—a kind of Junior Achievement for young culture-industrialists.

Even this aspect of the "scene" is familiar: it repeats Warhol's open acknowledgment of the marketability of an allying avant-garde pose—a pose created, moreover, through affiliation with a variety of deviant and delinquent subcultural types. (Recently, an East Village artist staged a simulacrum of the Factory—itsself a simulated Bohemia—thereby confessing Warhol's precedence.) Whether ironic or not, Warhol's acquiescence to the logic of the culture industry—his transformation of the studio into a Factory, his adoption of the techniques of serialized production, etc.—stands as a pivotal moment in the history of the avant-garde, the point at which its function in the mechanisms of cultural economy first became visible. (Without Warhol, the above analysis of the avant-garde would not have been possible.) By denouncing the avant-garde's pretense to autonomy, Warhol has left subsequent "avant-garde" two alternatives: either they openly acknowledge their economic role—the alternative pursued by the East Village "avant-garde"—or they actively work to dislodge an entrenched, institutionalized avant-garde production model.

If Warhol exposed the implication of the avant-garde in cultural economy in general, the East Village demonstrates the implication of that economy in broader social and political processes. For



this expansion of the market also participates in the ongoing "Manhattanization" of New York—the uprooting and displacement, by a coalition of city politicians (headed by the Mayor) and real-estate speculators, of the city's subcultural populations, and their replacement with a young, upwardly mobile professional class. Artists are not, of course, responsible for "suburbanization"; they are often its victims, as the closing of any number of East Village galleries, felled out of the area by rising rents they helped to inflate, will sooner or later demonstrate. Artists can, however, work within the community to call attention to, and mobilize resistance against, the political and economic interests which East Village art serves (as the artists affiliated with PADDO, who are responsible for the illustrations accompanying this text, have done).

The East Village is not only a local phenomenon, but also a global symptom. Exhibitions of East Village art have been mounted as far afield as Amsterdam; its reception in the European and, now, the American art press has been ecstatic. As all too familiar reactions to the increasing homogenization, standardization, rigidification of contemporary social life, this reception is yet another manifestation of what Jacques Attali describes as our "massive search for lost differences within a logic from which difference itself has been excluded."<sup>3</sup> Searching for lost difference has become the primary activity of the contemporary avant-garde. But as it works out and develops more and more resistant areas of social life for mass-cultural consumption, the avant-garde only intensifies the condition it attempts to alleviate. The appropriation of the forms whereby subcultures resist assimilation is part of, rather than an antidote to, the general leveling of real sexual, regional and cultural differences and their replacement with the culture industry's artificial, mass-produced, generic signifiers for "Difference"—in the present instance, the empty diversity and puerilities of the East Village "avant-garde."<sup>4</sup>

—Craig Owens

**AREA NATIVES**  
MAKE YOUR **Reservation**

**NOW**  
(includes non-vegetable)

PADD (Political Art Documentation/Disruption) Project against Displacement: Posters by Jay Green & Dennis Thomas (opposite), Jerry Kravitz (above right), Nancy Sullivan (below), all 1984.

1. See Thomas Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts," in Barthes, Guillot and Solkin, eds., *Modernism and Modernity*, Halifax, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983, pp. 213-64. Although I would agree with Crow's tendency to treat the modernist avant-garde as a resistant subculture, the following treatment of culture-industry-subcultural relations is indebted to his.

2. Hall and Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Art*, London, 1976, p. 13. Also cited in Crow, p. 239.

3. Crow, p. 232. For a more complex analysis of these mechanisms, Crow's entire section VIII (pp. 211-53) should be consulted.

4. Jacques Attali, "Introduction to Bravin," *Discordance* 7 (Spring/Summer 1983), 3.

# ARTFORUM

OCTOBER 1999 \$7.00

I N T E R N A T I O N A L



**THE EAST VILLAGE**  
**1979-1989**  
THE RISE AND FALL OF  
AN ART SCENE



FLOATED GALLERY  
24 HAVE ACCESS / RIVER VIEW  
TWO PEOPLE ASSESS / THIS  
CORRELATED SCULPTURE OF  
SCULPTED FRAGR 4 DAYS AFTER  
I BODY WITH FORM HERE / SHOW  
TIMES & STAGED REPERICLY  
WTSB HOME REQUESTED &  
-AFOOD - NO MORE ABOUT  
DEALERS TO MISS ASS TO







# REAGANOMIC GALLERIES

supply-side theory:  
give money to the  
"movers and shakers"  
and it will trickle  
down to the rest of  
society

1981 tax bill passed;  
huge tax breaks to  
the rich and the  
corporations

art as good investment;  
art as glorification  
of the individual or  
corporation

1982 - facilitating  
excess demand, first  
commercial galleries  
on the Lower East Side  
open

media latches onto new  
art-world development  
pronouncing it a  
"scene" and a "style"

some young art stars  
profit handsomely;  
community's poor  
residents continue to  
dehydrate

© 1984 by Edward Eisenberg



AFTER A SUCCESSFUL COLONIZATION



THE MOTHER SHIP LANDS

Offset Poster, Janet Koenig, 1986







Derailed silk-screened poster for PAD/D's anti-gentrification exhibition *Not For Sale*, 1984. (The guerilla art gallery "Discount Salon" is on the upper left side.)

***Pure repetition, were it to change neither thing nor sign, carries with it an unlimited power of perversion and subversion.***

Ellipsis, Jacques Derrida <sup>1</sup>

## **Snip, Snip...Bang, Bang: Political Art, Reloaded**

Gregory Sholette

*The starkly rendered silhouette of a hydra-headed, real-estate speculator is glued obliquely to the red brick wall on the corner of First Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Several feet away a wheat-paste flyer announces "Reaganomic Galleries," spleenishly linking so-called trickle down economics —that first, rudimentary attempt at neo-liberal spin — with the ersatz Bohemianism of the East Village art scene.*

It was the spring of 1984. The wall belonged to PS122, a former public school turned not-for-profit venue best known for showcasing the emerging genre of performance art. Unbeknownst to its staff, PS122's facade was transformed overnight into the *Discount Salon*, one of four "guerilla art" galleries christened with Krylon spray paint monikers that lampooned the flood of commercial dealers opening shop across The Lower East Side. The other three pseudo-galleries included *The Leona Helmsley Gallery* at the base off the then, derelict Christa Dora Building, *Another Gallery* at 5<sup>th</sup> and Second Avenue, and most prophetically the *Guggenheim Downtown* at the northwest corner of Tompkins Square Park. In reality, these "galleries" were a quartet of scruffy, graffiti-covered walls, temporarily commandeered by a group of interventionist artists seeking to provoke a public debate about gentrification and the political economy of the 1980s art world. *Not For Sale: A Project Against Displacement* (NFS), had grown out of a Marxist-oriented reading group associated with Political Art Documentation and Distribution, or PAD/D, a NYC collective active between 1980 and 1986. NFS officially opened in April at the *Guggenheim Downtown*. Passersby were greeted with an patchwork of wheat-pasted posters extolling squatted buildings, denouncing the free market policies of Mayor Koch, and above all seeking to raise the consciousness of young artists who were unwittingly, or simply indifferently, contributing to the destabilization of the most culturally diverse, working class neighborhood in Manhattan.

<sup>1</sup> "Ellipsis," from the book *Writing and Difference* by Jacques Derrida, (University of Chicago Press, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, London and Henley: 1978), p 297.



PAD/D's "Discount Salon," outside PS122, 1984. Silk-Screened poster by Michael Corris and Mary Garvin.

A mere four years later the Museum of Modern Art opened a comprehensive exhibition of post-war graphic art organized by curator Deborah Wye, *Committed To Print* contained hundreds of politically-engaged works on paper, many of which were first produced as public interventions including PAD/D's anti-gentrification project, *Not For Sale*. It had taken less than half a decade in other words for this activist work to be collected, cataloged, and displayed within one of the most powerful, cultural institutions on earth. In point of fact, the MoMA library was in the process of procuring PAD/D's archive documenting several decades of art activism at the time of the show. It was a timely acquisition that coincided with a broader, art world sea-change in which an increasing number of artists were experimenting with political subject matter, even with social activism. By 1988, however, PAD/D was already disbanded, the New Left that once inspired it was in shambles, and the gentrification juggernaut was sweeping across The Lower East Side, as well as Hell's Kitchen where the legendary *Times Square Show* was staged in 1980. PS 122 remained intact, but like all not-for-profits it would soon face unprecedented financial challenges thanks to the comprehensive privatization of state functions taking place in Washington.<sup>2</sup>

What can be said about the art activism of the 1980s is that it tugged at mainstream art discourse, eventually stretching it some like warm taffy so that by the end of the decade the art world grudgingly admitted culture had a basis in social experience.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the initial response was to approach "political art," a label no one who took cultural politics seriously found useful, as if it were a novelty. As if socially-engaged art had not been made throughout the century, even during the abstract expressionist years. Eventually, museums bagged and tagged a limited number of socially critical artworks. It was, however, a selective assimilation that favored politically ambiguous work over the directly interventionist. Meanwhile, those collectives that had been instrumental in forcing-open the question of art and politics—PAD/D, Group Material, the Art Workers Coalition, Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, The Guerilla Art Action Group, Paper Tiger, SPARC, Carnival Knowledge—were unceremoniously submerged, partially or wholly, beneath the waves of normative art history. The record of their activities now exists within a shadow archive brimming with other examples of anonymous histories, collectivist production, and unrecognized modes of creativity. It is the gravitational pull of the hidden archive that concerns us here.

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<sup>2</sup> The restoration of laissez-faire economic values was accompanied by blistering condemnations directed at certain artists, a phenomenon the art world reduced to a war over cultural values, an interpretation that political conservatives were only too happy to propagate.

<sup>3</sup> Or course modernism's formalist firewall was breached on several fronts simultaneously. Clement Greenberg's theoretical franchise was usurped by Feminist, Marxist, and Post-Structuralist thinkers, while many younger artists gravitated towards a gritty punk aesthetic that, together with the new wave of politicized collectivism, abandoned post-war conventions, including those of the established Left.



Theorist Giorgio Agamben describes the archive as,

The mass of the non-semantic inscribed in every meaningful discourse as a function of enunciation; it is the dark margin encircling and limiting every concrete act of speech.<sup>4</sup>

The invisible presence of this ghostly periphery is what makes it possible to even ask the question posed by the artwurl.org editors: “should activist practices be exhibited in art institutions at all?” Which inexorably raises more questions. Smart questions, that bend back against institutional norms to ask: “Is there even such a thing as “activist curating”? Is it possible to create,

An “active” exhibition space – one that is capable of working in sync with these [interventionist] projects and explicit in its attempt to affect a larger social fabric?

The phantom archive’s *off-stage* presence not only opens up this investigation, but its elliptical return also constitutes, paradoxically, the very ground from which to imagine a radical transformation of institutional power. By way of repetition something is undone.

Repeated, the same line is no longer exactly the same, the ring no longer has exactly the same center, *the origin has played*.<sup>5</sup>

Undoubtedly, the center is *in play* today. Again.

It starts like this. The return of a real, repressed not because its content was necessarily so traumatic, but because it directs our attention towards an ellipsis within the historical record where none is supposed to be. The gatekeepers of the artistic canon eye the detour with trepidation.<sup>6</sup> We however, recognize that interventionist art, politically motivated art, collectivized art is more than just another artistic genre, that its genealogy is more than a collection of curious anomalies useful for sprucing up the same old art historical canon. The phantom archive encircles mainstream institutions, invisibly altering them not unlike the way cosmic dark matter prods the path of planets, stars and galaxies. Often handed-down directly from activist to activist, interventionist to interventionist, this counter-history reveals attempt after attempt to re-imagine, and re-socialize, the entire practice of art from the bottom up. Consider the following illustrations.

In the late 1920s and 1930s the John Reed Clubs (JRC) were cultural centers that belonged to a parallel network of working class institutions that also included cooperative apartments, socialist cafeterias, sports teams and holiday camps. Along with art exhibitions, the JRC’s organized educational programs, film screenings, theater and poetry performances. Tirelessly debating the political function of art, some of which was published in the pages of the journal *New Masses*, the clubs also provided material support for striking workers. (Imagine a contemporary art institution actively supporting the recent NYC transit strike!)

Several artists’ collectives in the mid-1960s sought to transform or redirect institutional power by adopting the tactics of labor and civil rights activists within the art world. The Art Workers Coalition (AWC), together with the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition, Guerilla Art Action Group, and the Ad Hoc Women’s Committee walked picket lines, disrupted board meetings, protested censorship, proposed that artists go on strike, and agitated for minority representation inside the halls of major, New York City museums. According to Lucy Lippard one group of art-activists inspired by AWC even developed plans to pressure major museum’s into lending out their collection to local, community-based exhibition spaces.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz. The Witness and the Archive*, p 144.

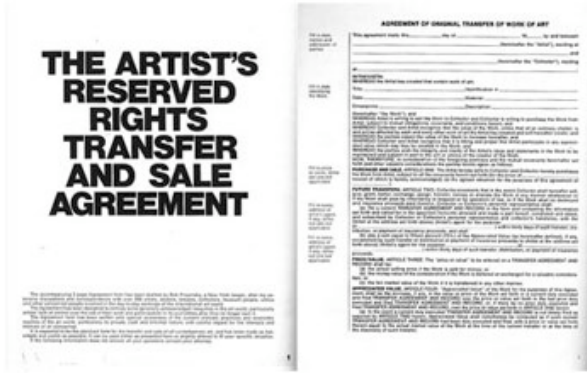
<sup>5</sup> Derrida, Op cit.

<sup>6</sup> In this sense the reified, re-creation of the 1966 "Peace Tower" for the 2006 Whitney Biennial is exactly the type of repetition we will be seeing more and more of over the next few years as the art world attempts to reign-in the potentially destabilizing energy of interventionist creativity taking place outside its parameters. (It worth noting that like so many Hollywood remakes the 2006 *Peace Tower* casts the senior Mark di Suvero from the original production together with younger co-star Rirkrit Tiravanija, buff and beefy with plenty of art market muscle.)

<sup>7</sup> Ludy R. Lippard “Biting the Hand: Artists and Museums in New York since 1969,” in *Alternative Art New York: 1965-1985*, edited by Julie Ault (University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp 79-120.



Art Workers Coalition at the Guggenheim Museum protesting cancellation of Hans Haacke's exhibition in 1971



AWC inspired "fair trade" contract for living artists, circa 1969.

In the late 1970s a group of "Nuyorican" activists known collectively as Charas seized an abandoned school building on the east side of Tompkins Square Park and turned it into a local cultural center known as *El Boho*. Inspired by this action a group of Anglo artists broke and entered a city-owned building several blocks south on Delancey Street where they set up a make-shift exhibition entitled the Real Estate Show. Out of this intervention emerged ABC No Rio, an alternative, cultural institution that has been a home to graffiti artists, comic book collectives, punk bands, political activists and community residents for the past twenty-five years.



Sarah Safford of Carnival Knowledge tap dances safe sex tips for teens, 1981.

All throughout the 1980s artists sought to create autonomous institutional structures. The artists' collective Group Material called upon the art world to democratize its institutional practices, while the feminist art collective Carnival Knowledge used the vernacular of circus sideshows to stage spectacular, public projects promoting sexual and reproductive freedom. PAD/D even tried to construct an alternative, progressive art network resembling those of the 1930s. By the middle of the decade interventionist campaigns were launched against art world bigotry by the newly founded Guerilla Girls, and the group Gran Fury unleashed a range of interventions, performances, street graphics, and media tactics demanding government action against the AIDS epidemic.



During the following decade, one collective in particular focused its work on the phantom archive itself. In 1992, 1994, and 1998 REPOhistory installed temporary street signs informing passersby about the little-known history of working class, minority, feminist, and gay New Yorkers. The group's revisionist mapping projects took place well outside the parameters of the art world, simultaneously challenging the privatization of urban space while blurring the boundaries between public art, historic preservation, and political activism

And in the past few years a series of urban, interventionist projects informally labeled Department of Space and Land Reclamation (DSLRL) have invited urban gardeners, snake-charmers, pie-throwers, monkey-wrenchers, and artists to temporarily appropriate public spaces in Chicago (2001), San Francisco (2003), and Los Angeles (2004). Notably, DSLRL's institutional structures exit only as long as needed, which is as long as it takes to organize and document any given campaign.



Makeshift institutions, radical art clubs, direct political action, labor strikes and even snake-charmers and pie-throwers? Artists who organize and organizers who make art, alternative spaces that are transformed into mock art galleries, curators and artists working together collectively, or who happily serve as conduits for moving material support to activists, unions, and interventionists situated on the far periphery of the art world? It does seem that the only feature these phenomenon share besides a mutual "outsider" status is a cavernous indeterminacy that goes well beyond the interdisciplinary frolic of contemporary gallery art. Theorist Stephen Wright describes the interventionist as an ontological secret agent who is forced to don multiple identities: artist/activist, theorist/practitioner, participant/viewer, organizer/organized.<sup>8</sup> No doubt the interventionist curator will find such ontological prevarication indispensable. No doubt this same existential incertitude will also return to haunt them and their careers.

Standing before the increasingly delimited horizon of global capital I can think of nothing for a curatorial practice or an institutional venue to do, no matter how theoretically astute or politically committed they may be, that will *effectively* intervene within the broader social sphere. Nothing that is, except perhaps to sacrifice the one commodity still valued by enterprise culture: occupational identity. For despite postmodern promises of authorial annihilation and declarations of radical hybridization, art world success still rests squarely upon the certifiable display of accumulated cultural capital. Just think of the way the Curriculum Vitae, with its titles and offices and exhibition venues, or the way one's reliable *signature*, serve as letters of transit. Instruments of authenticity that provide, or deny, passage throughout the system's checkpoints, from informal introductions at openings, to job applications, to publication opportunities. Under such circumstances in other words, who would choose to build an art career upon the shoals of ontological incertitude? Who would take a chance their papers would be found out of order or worse, to be counterfeit? Except perhaps the double agent?

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<sup>8</sup> Stephen Wright, unpublished paper presented at the Townhouse Gallery, Cairo Egypt, December 13, 2005.



NFS poster on the streets of New York's Lower East Side, 1984.

**notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> "Ellipsis," from the book Writing and Difference by Jacques Derrida, (University of Chicago Press, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, London and Henley: 1978), p 297.
- <sup>2</sup> The restoration of laissez-faire economic values was accompanied by blistering condemnations directed at certain artists, a phenomenon the art world reduced to a war over cultural values, an interpretation that political conservatives were only too happy to propagate.
- <sup>3</sup> Of course modernism's formalist firewall was breached on several fronts simultaneously. Clement Greenberg's theoretical franchise was usurped by Feminist, Marxist, and Post-Structuralist thinkers, while many younger artists gravitated towards a gritty punk aesthetic that, together with the new wave of politicized collectivism, abandoned post-war conventions, including those of the established Left.
- <sup>4</sup> Giorgio Agamben, Remnants of Auschwitz. The Witness and the Archive, p 144.
- <sup>5</sup> Derrida, Op cit.
- <sup>6</sup> Ludy R. Lippard "Biting the Hand: Artists and Museums in New York since 1969," in Alternative Art New York: 1965-1985, edited by Julie Ault (University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp 79-120.
- <sup>7</sup> Stephen Wright, unpublished paper presented at the Townhouse Gallery, Cairo Egypt, December 13, 2005.

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