



A Shift in the New York Landscape

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By **Robert Ayers**

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NEW YORK— There's an old adage about this city: "New York never changes, but the neighborhoods move around." Well, the first half of that claim may be questionable these days, but as far as art galleries are concerned, the next few months are certainly going to see quite a bit of moving around, much of it an apparently motivated by the same things that draw New Yorkers into new neighborhoods—namely, better deals, proximity to peers, and more exposure to the city's scarce natural light.

A good deal of the migration follows the **New Museum of Contemporary Art's** decision to build its remarkable new home at 235 Bowery, just below Houston. Though New Museum director **Lisa Phillips** told me that the Bowery struck her as a "dead zone" when she and the board first considered it—it's not quite SoHo, not quite Nolita, not quite the Lower East Side—the museum's arrival means that it's anything but dead now. Perhaps the only surprise is how quickly the commercial galleries have followed: Dozens have popped up or relocated within the neighborhood in the past year or so—including **James Fuentes LLC**, **Reena Spaulings**, **Rivington Arms**, **Salon 94 Freemans**, **Smith-Stewart**, **Sunday**, and **Thierry Goldberg Projects**—and at least a couple new ones will be in business in the area by the time the New Museum opens its doors Dec. 1, such as **Eleven Rivington** and **Rental**. The irrepressible **Stefan Stoyanov** has moved his **Luxe Gallery** from 57th Street (a location he told me more than once he found frustrating) to 53 Stanton Street, just a couple of blocks east of the museum, where he opens his first show Sept. 6, and **Lehmann Maupin** is expanding into a newly restored building a block from the New Museum at 201 Chrystie Street, but will maintain its 26th Street headquarters.

When I spoke to **David Maupin** about his new space, he played down the New Museum connection. He admitted that the proximity "is great for us," but emphasized instead the district's "different feeling" compared to Chelsea and the chance it offers to develop a gallery with "different kinds of exhibition opportunities" for his artists. He also conceded that these opportunities are "significantly cheaper" than another space in Chelsea would be. At 5,800 square feet, the Chrystie Street Lehmann Maupin will be about the same size as the 26th Street space, but it will be split into several different levels, with ceilings up to 26 feet high. A lot of the building's vintage fixtures will be retained and restored and—most significant of all, as far as Maupin and his partner, **Rachel Lehmann**, are concerned—the space will be full of natural light, which they see as a departure from the Chelsea norm. Surprisingly, the new gallery means neither huge growth for the organization—Maupin anticipates adding only about four new staff to the existing fifteen or so—nor taking on more artists (though Maupin stresses that they are "always looking to work with new artists" anyway). The first exhibit in the new space will be an installation of **Do-Ho Suh's** monumental sculpture *Reflection* that will coincide with his November show in the Chelsea gallery.

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We'll Always Have Chelsea

Whenever galleries open up elsewhere in the city, however, it seems at least as many move west of Tenth Avenue. One of the biggest openings this fall will come with the rebirth of **Marlborough Chelsea** on the first and second floors of the Chelsea Arts Tower at 525 West 25th Street. Many people think of that particular stretch of 25th Street as one of Chelsea's premiere locations, and Marlborough's arrival (opposite **Pace-Wildenstein** and next door to **Cheim & Read**) will do nothing to damage that reputation. I visited the new space while it was being outfitted, and it is quite lovely, complete with retractable temporary walls and a small sculpture terrace on the second floor. Somewhat ironically, given David Maupin's comments about Chelsea spaces, this new space too will be full of natural light. Marlborough director **Janis Cecil** insists that the glass frontage won't be frosted or otherwise obscured, lending Chelsea passersby that all-too-rare experience, a view directly into the gallery. Designed by **Richard Gluckman**, the new space runs to 10,000 square feet, and though Marlborough has been taking on new artists like **Will Ryman** and **L.C. Armstrong** in anticipation of the gallery's opening, Cecil told me that they weren't planning any strict segregation between their 57th Street and Chelsea spaces. Witness their first pairing: veteran **Tom Otterness** on the ground floor and new recruit **Steven Charles** on the second, both opening Oct. 4.

Elsewhere in Chelsea, experience an event that many of us thought we'd never see: SoHo stalwart **Nancy Hoffman**—she's been there since December 1972, she reminded me—has finally flown her downtown coop and is opening up at 520 West 27th Street. She'll be on the first and second floors of another new building, an 11-story "commercial condominium" designed by Chelsea-based architects **FLAnk**. Hoffman agrees the move marks the end of an era for her gallery, but told me that she's been contemplating it for five years. "The time has come," she says, citing the "critical mass" of galleries in Chelsea as opposed to SoHo. It comes as something of a surprise, but apparently Saturdays can be very quiet in her West Broadway space. The ongoing construction work on 27th Street means that she can't put an exact date on her move, though she has the "romantic notion" that it might happen for the gallery's 35th anniversary in

December. Whenever it happens, the new **Nancy Hoffman Gallery** will be another striking location: She promises a "more exciting" space than other Chelsea galleries, the white-cube norm of which she calls "over-architected." She has 30 feet of street frontage, 22-foot ceilings, and—you guessed it—plenty of natural light, this time from extensive clerestory windows. And she too will have a sculpture garden.

Hoffman calls the move the beginning of a "new adventure." What is inevitable is that her departure from West Broadway, taken in tandem with new arrivals half a mile or so east of there, will undoubtedly precipitate further moves in, around, and out of the neighborhood that is SoHo.

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