



**SoHo So Long**

Interviews with gallerists, critics, and collectors  
conducted by ART CLUB2000, July 1996

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Transcripts of Interviews with Gallerists, Critics, and  
Collectors Re: Art Galleries Relocating from SoHo to Chelsea.  
Conducted by AC2K, July 1996.

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Jan Avgikos, critic  
Stefano Basilico, gallerist  
Laura Cottingham, critic  
Douglas Crimp, critic  
Josh Decter, critic/curator  
Colin de Land, gallerist  
Jessica Fredericks and Andy Freiser, gallerists  
Jose Freire, gallerist  
Barbara Gladstone, gallerist  
Jay Gorney, gallerist  
Carol Greene, gallerist  
Tom Healy, gallerist  
Pat Hearn, gallerist  
Marvin Kosmin, collector  
Donald Kuspit, critic  
Matthew Marks, gallerist  
James Meyer, critic  
Barbara and Howard Morse, collectors  
Friedrich Petzel, gallerist  
Rob Pruitt and Tom Borgese, gallerists  
David Rimanelli, critic  
Walter Robinson, critic  
Andrea Rosen, gallerist  
Ileana Sonnabend, gallerist  
Lisa Spellman, gallerist



Anonymous

The city as we know it, as we knew it, is disappearing around us day by day. The end of 22nd street as a place for public sex, and it's "rebirth" as a gallery block, is no cause for rejoice. As the city becomes unrecognizable to us, will we, in turn, become unrecognizable to ourselves?









An anonymous art critic

AC2K: So, have you noticed all these art galleries moving to Chelsea?

A: Yeah, I mean, before I noticed that there were a lot of art galleries moving to Chelsea, There was a whole movement of other things going to Chelsea. The whole homosexual community moved to Chelsea, basically. The upscale, middle class homosexual world moved to Chelsea. Then I noticed that a lot of rich artists started buying properties in Chelsea, and then the galleries started to follow. It's a pattern, these movements of luxury capital always have to do with gentrifying certain areas of Manhattan. You know, the East Village a few years ago, after SoHo had been gentrified, people moved to the East Village and started taking over brownstones, and places for galleries.

AC2K: Do you think galleries moving to Chelsea is better than galleries moving to the East Village? Is it less problematic in terms of people being displaced from the neighborhood?

A: Well, it probably won't have as direct an impact on low income people like people who were displaced in the East Village. But eventually, the gentrification of Chelsea is part of a lot of the gentrification of Manhattan, which will eventually be used to support getting rid of rent stabilization and rent control. So in the end it will displace a lot of people.

AC2K: Do you have any predictions for Chelsea, do you think it's going to change?

A: How the area itself is going to change?

AC2K: Yeah.

A: Well, probably the vice industry in the area will be forced out. Um, the streets will be policed better. People that have studios there that always had studios there, people that have lofts there, will probably have their rents go up. And then the businesses will follow, the boutiques will follow. If people are going to that area to look at art, then they'll probably also want to look at a shirt.

AC2K: Were you surprised when you first heard that galleries were moving to Chelsea?

A: No.

AC2K: What did you think?

A: I guess, my first thought was people are so fucking bored they'll do anything.

AC2K: How do you think SoHo is going to change?

A: Maybe they'll mall it. Maybe they'll just make all of SoHo into a mall. I mean, I like Chelsea better than SoHo.



AC2K: For going to art galleries?

A: Yeah, for walking around, you know, it's closer to the river.







Jan Avgikos, critic

AC2K: What do you think of the shift to Chelsea?

JA: I think it's a good thing. Do you want me to elaborate? I think it's a good thing, It's like a little party in another part of town. That's what I think. I think it will be just fine.

AC2K: You're excited?

JA: No, actually, facetiousness aside, yeah, I am, because maybe it's all psychological, but you know, it's like every couple of years you have to replenish your wardrobe, get new shoes, and you want to have a different look or whatever. I feel that the feel of that neighborhood is essentially different than SoHo. It creates some semblance of an alternative or an expansion. Certainly there's new energy. We all have a curiosity of what that's going to feel like to have all those galleries in that place, and we speculate that there's somewhat of a carnivalistic atmosphere that's developed in SoHo. I was actually thinking about this on the way over here, and, not that I'm out to make enemies for myself, but the SoHo art festival sucks such big ones. It seems as though that's a kind of uninteresting banal characterization of the arts in SoHo. Yeah, OK, fine, let's have a kind of shift. I do recall when we had the East Village as an alternative to SoHo, or some kind of diversity in the art world. And I think that that kind of reflected a lot of the style in the '70s. What's going to emerge in Chelsea will of course reflect something of what art in the '90s is going to be about. And so I'm anticipating that it is going to be more subdued. There has been some discussion in the air that the people who come to these galleries will be really serious, whatever that means, so it's like an adult environment. That's what seems to be happening over there.

AC2K: Do you enjoy going to Chelsea?

JA: Well, it's a little bit of a jaunt to get up there, it's not nearly as convenient as coming here. That's definitely part of the equation, that we have to expand our activities above 14th Street. I'll do it, besides they have really good thrift stores in that area. (laughs)

AC2K: How is Chelsea different than SoHo?

JA: Well, I think there is a certain reflection of Soho in the Chelsea situation because once again, there is a little bit of a tinge of frontier to it. In fact, I don't know if this is really the way it is or not, but at least there is some mythology about the place in terms of taking this neighborhood and quote unquote cleaning it up a bit and getting into buildings that perhaps didn't have much commercial use going for them. There is a sense of pioneering of an area, I guess we can talk about it in terms of real estate, because that was the paradigm that SoHo was; that it was not a particularly well developed area and of course the artists came in and gentrification followed. The situation in Chelsea had some of those characteristics, but then, on the other hand, it seems that it's pretty damn gentrified already. Which again might be part of tonality of the '90s that will characterize that location. And whether Chelsea takes hold remains to





be seen, because who would have thought that the East Village would evaporate as an art scene in 1980 or so. So, I don't know about that, but one of the things that I associate with the development of an arts area in Chelsea are a number of new galleries that are opening, and you know, the more the merrier.

AC2K: What do you think SoHo will be like in the future?

JA: Well, I think that the outdoor shopping mall is sort of the model that I have in my head for that. Caswell and Massey is really the thing that brought it down for me, it's the exact kind of store that they have in the Lennox Mall in Atlanta and shopping centers all over the country. So, you know, I think it's really developing that uninteresting dimension to it. It's part of this change that we've all seen happen so dramatically in the last year and a half with the franchises moving in. That quality of the shopping mall is kind of extended in a lot of the types of crowds that come to SoHo and what they're here for and so on and so forth. So in a way, art's become sort of invisible here in relation to these more boisterous places. But I still think that it's not upscale enough, it's not fashionable enough, you know? There's some kind of resistance that we all have to that kind of merchandise, and on the other hand, I think that effort that have been created within the art community are every bit as gross as the franchises that are coming in. Though, I don't know what kind of heading this comes under for me; if it's just the sign of the times or if it's some kind of collapse that's not only precipitated by external forces, but also internally as well. And an odd kind of matching seems to be going on. I'm not being critical of these galleries, but the hype that's been created and institutionalized here in the last couple of year, with respect to art in SoHo, I don't think that it really makes anything happen but more of this deterioration if the climate that we all tend to be fond of...







Stefano Basilico, gallerist

AC2K: How long have you been in SoHo?

SB: Since 1979.

AC2K: Really?

SB: I started working at Dean and Deluca in 1979, and then I started working at Leo Castelli in 1971. I worked at Leo's for three years, and then I went to work for Mary Boone for a year, and then worked with Ileana for nine. And then I opened my gallery.

AC2K: When did you open your gallery?

SB: I opened it in May of 1993, although until November 94, it didn't have a permanent location, although all the locations were specifically in SoHo.

AC2K: Will you move to Chelsea?

SB: Not in the immediate future. If ever.

AC2K: Why not?

SB: Well for now, if and when Chelsea ever develops into an area with specific, whatever, identity, as a place to go and look at art, and it has a large amount of people going there, then I would consider it as perfectly viable. I don't think it has that yet. And as a young gallery, I need as much, how can I say, I need all the help I can get. I want all the happy accidents that can happen because you happen to be in SoHo.

AC2K: What do you think of Chelsea?

SB: I think that it is very nice. I don't have any great thoughts about Chelsea.

AC2K: What do you think SoHo is going to be like in the future?

SB: I don't know, because it's clearly become more, I don't want to say commercial, just more full, more sort of to a maximum kind of capacity. But, that's also the way that it seemed to feel in 1989, before there was a crash, and then you couldn't give the real estate away in SoHo. So I have really no idea what's going to happen five years from now. At the moment it seems to be on a kind of upswing, but if I knew that, I'd know a lot more.

AC2K: What do you think about this area, this block?

SB: I like this area, and I like this block a lot. To a degree, it's not an accident that I have my gallery here. As much control as I can have in this situation, I'd much rather be there than on Prince Street, or on Spring Street. And the reason why is that it's a bit rawer here and there's a little less traffic. And I think that's sort of nice. I like looking out my window and seeing graffiti, as opposed to looking out my window and looking at the Miu Miu shop, not that I have anything against the Miu Miu shop, but I guess it's just somewhat nostalgic. It's the SoHo that I know and have known for a longer time.









Francesco Bonami, critic

AC2K: What do you think of the shift from SoHo to Chelsea?

FB: SoHo to Chelsea. It belongs to the American tradition of nomadic people. You move from one place to another trying to find the right one, to settle down. It's an endless process. Chelsea is like California. You end up there. There's nowhere else to go.

AC2K: Do you enjoy going to Chelsea?

FB: I do.

AC2K: How do you think Chelsea is different from SoHo?

FB: People are investing, they're buying real estate there. In SoHo most of the people rent. That, I think, is quite a big thing. It makes a difference, people making a long term investment. It's like California; they arrive there and that's basically where they want to stay.

AC2K: What do you think that SoHo is going to be like in the future, five or ten years from now?

FB: Five or ten years from now? I don't know, it's hard to say. It will be different. It will be more like a shopping mall, I think. There will be some art galleries, but not as many as now. I think people will eventually move somewhere else. I think that in the beginning SoHo was attracting a people and that the passer-by, the audience, it was the flow of the audience that made the place different because really people were going there not particularly to see art and they were seeing art. I think that eventually it was bad because people started to go inside the art galleries like they were inside all the shops, and they were not looking at anything really. It made the thing much more useless. I think that moving to Chelsea is also a way to bring back people that are more aware, a consciousness about doing art. If it goes there they have to go there to make a choice, and basically I think that is what contemporary art is about; making a choice. I am pro-choice.







Leo Castelli, gallerist

AC2K: When did you first come to SoHo?

LC: I couldn't give you an exact date. It was a long time ago. SoHo hardly existed at that time. Well there were no galleries around there. No art activity. Then I think Ileana Sonnabend and I were about the first ones to establish a gallery here in this building and then the other ones followed suit. Mary Boone of course a very important addition, she has now left. At the time it was very important to have her around. So this whole area, then, developed quite rapidly into an art...

AC2K: When you first came, there wasn't really anything?

LC: When I first came here, there was nothing, nothing here. I remember that the only place where you could go and have lunch while you were preparing your space and everything was a little restaurant, a bar which still exists called Fanelli. There was nothing else. So that's where we had to go to have lunch. Unless we bought some sandwiches. So there was really absolutely nothing here when we first arrived.

AC2K: Do you like it better here now?

LC: Well, I like it very much here. I feel very much at home. There are lots of galleries around us you know. Although there is now some movement away from SoHo to Chelsea. I don't know for what reason, well, one of the important reasons probably is just that rents are less expensive in Chelsea. Better spaces are available there so that's why some of the galleries, like Paula Cooper have emigrated to Chelsea. Whether Chelsea will become an important center, as important as SoHo has been or may still be we don't know. It doesn't seem to be as well located as SoHo, in a direct line from uptown and downtown. But I wish them luck as far as I'm concerned. I'll just stay here. (laughs)

AC2K: Was that a similar characteristic of SoHo, at the time that you moved here, bigger, spaces and lower rent?

LC: There was really nothing. But it seemed to me and to some other people such as Ileana Sonnabend, Mary Boone and the others, that it was a good location. Actually we didn't hesitate very much about our decision so, that's how SoHo happened. Now it's questioned. As far as I'm concerned I certainly won't go away.

AC2K: Have you been to Chelsea?

LC: Well (Laughs) I've been there, yes. Occasionally. I like the area, it's a nice area. But I feel it's just a little bit out of the way. But then that's just a matter of habit. Why one would think it's a little bit out of the way there here than there, I don't know, but that's the feeling that one has. Probably quite arbitrary.

AC2K: The subway...



LC: Yes, there are better communications with SoHo than with Chelsea. There is no question about that.

AC2K: Had you thought of another space for your gallery when you first opened, like 57th Street?

LC: I opened my first gallery on 77th Street just for a very simple reason. I had a space there, an apartment which I changed into a gallery. So it was there and then there were a few galleries that opened in that area and there were galleries also, and there still are, on 57th Street. So 77th Street was not too far away from an important center which was 57th Street. Anyway it seemed to be convenient and I didn't give the matter much thought I just decided to open the gallery and hope for the best. And it worked very well.

AC2K: Why do you think galleries moved to Chelsea?

LC: It's a nice area but, I guess they'll probably be quite successful. As far as I'm concerned, I repeat, I don't feel like moving. Unless everybody closes. I don't think that they will.

Colin de Land: I feel the same way. I'm down on Wooster and Grand Street.

LC: What?

Colin de Land: My gallery is on Wooster and Grand. And I also..

LC: You don't feel like moving.

Colin de Land: No.

LC: Let's hold out. You and me (laughter)

Colin de Land: Good, good.





Laura Cottingham, critic

AC2K: What do you think of the shift to Chelsea?

LC: What do I think. Hmmm, do I get anymore guidance on that question? What do you mean what do I think?

AC2K: Well, like, do you enjoy going there?

LC: Hmmm. Do I enjoy going there? Well, from a purely geographical perspective, it's a bit more out of my path, right? I live in the East Village, and the East Village to SoHo is a nice 15 minute walk, it's an easy distance. I've used that traffic pattern now for 15 years, so Chelsea's a bit more of a stretch. On the other hand, I do have friends that live in Chelsea, so it's not that I never go there.

AC2K: So you go often?

LC: Still not as much as I go to SoHo, no.

AC2K: Do you like the idea of gallerists leaving Soho and moving to Chelsea, and starting a new neighborhood for art?

LC: I think that for most of them, they felt like they really didn't have a choice. All of the gallerists that I'm familiar with that moved to Chelsea, did so because it has cheaper rent. Basically because of the way that Soho has been developed as a shopping district, progressively over the past fifteen years and especially in the last five, and because of the decrease in the art market over the last five years. I know that with one dealer in particular, one of the few dealers who owns a building in Soho, it was cheaper for her to rent her ground floor out to a retail business and rent space in Chelsea. She could keep a gallery going there than she could stay and keep a gallery going in her own building. So from what I understand it, for most of them it was an economic thing. I think that one of the things that is different about Chelsea than Soho or even the East Village scene that cropped up in the eighties, is that it isn't coming out of an artist community. And I think that that's a down side. But if there was an arts community coming out of an artist's community, it would have to be coming out of Williamsburg. I think that the struggle to try and get collectors and regular art viewers to come to Williamsburg would be more difficult than it would be to encourage an audience to come to Chelsea. The way that SoHo first became related to art, to visual culture, was through artists living in those large spaces, the classic loft. That's how SoHo evolved, not only into an artistic center, but into a commercial center, and a gallery center, and now a museum center. The first people who were there, in terms of visual culture, were art makers. Chelsea doesn't have that history at all. Chelsea is more the dealers going to a different location and setting up as a retail site. That's a big difference. I think that for most of the dealers really didn't have a choice, I think this is the only way that they felt they could survive in terms of providing space in which they could show art, and also to meet the overhead of the cost of space in Manhattan. I don't want to be too harsh on the dealers, but it doesn't come with the same kind of aesthetic history that SoHo does in terms of it's relation to visual culture. SoHo



developed over such a long period. On the other hand, given the development of Soho over the past fifteen years in terms of real estate I don't think that people who are even more familiar with SoHo than I am, i.e. the people from the generation from which SoHo developed who have been living or going to SoHo since the late '60s and '70s, I don't think that any of them are surprised that the dealers eventually got kicked out. Because first the artists got kicked out, It got too expensive for the artists to live there, so in many ways, it was only a matter of time before it got too expensive for dealers. At the same time it's sad that SoHo was pushed, on the other hand, SoHo isn't really finished as an art viewers paradise either, I mean there are still hundreds of galleries in SoHo.

AC2K: What do you think Soho is going to be like in five years?

LC: That's a good question. I don't know, I'm a really bad person to make predictions. I didn't think that Chelsea was going to take off as much as it's taken off. I mean three or four years ago when talk of Chelsea first happened, I didn't think that so many people were going to move to Chelsea. On the other hand, it is important to remember that not everyone has moved to Chelsea. SoHo still has not only a sizable number of galleries, but also a lot of gallerists who are actively part of the international dialogue on contemporary art. It's not just left with a lot of jewelry shops. What will it look like in five years, I don't know, I think it depends on how much economic support for contemporary art continues coming into New York City in general. I don't think that Soho is going to shift Chelsea. I think that if dealers in SoHo are really serious in keeping SoHo vital, in terms of a visual arts commercial center, that they should rally together and put together a salary for Simon Watson so that Simon can be elected mayor of SoHo, and continue his work on behalf of SoHo as a community. I would suggest that each dealer in Soho start paying Simon say, \$50 a month.

AC2K: Perfect.



Douglas Crimp, critic

AC2K: What do you think of the movement of art galleries from SoHo to Chelsea?

DC: I'm not sure I think much about it at all. I guess it's partly a question of cheaper space, which makes perfect sense. It makes going to galleries a little more complicated because now there are three parts of town where there are galleries if one wants to really follow everything that's going on. I have a sense of Chelsea as a neighborhood that's basically a gay neighborhood and particularly that part of Chelsea where the galleries are moving to. For many, many years, as long as I've been in New York; since the late '60s, there have been gay bars over there, that will probably be threatened by the kind of gentrification that will follow galleries moving there. That doesn't particularly make me happy. I feel like there's a tradition of spaces that have been left over in New York, unused spaces that gay men have occupied now for decades and there are increasingly fewer of those kinds of spaces left in New York. It just feels like this is going to be the end of this one, so that doesn't make me very happy.

AC2K: Do you enjoy going to Chelsea for the art galleries?

DC: I like the spaces in those galleries. They're nicer spaces in some ways, because they're bigger. In some ways it's not the most convenient neighborhood to go to, because it's so far west. I don't go to galleries as often as I once did, because I'm not really as actively involved in art criticism as I once was. It's something that's a kind of hit or miss thing for me, so it doesn't really make that much difference to me. I don't enjoy going to SoHo galleries, so I can say that in some ways it's better because I can't stand the crowds in SoHo. I don't particularly like being in a kind of upper-end shopping district in any case, and that's what SoHo is now.

AC2K: How is Chelsea different from SoHo?

DC: Chelsea is very primarily a residential neighborhood, part of Chelsea isn't, but if I go to Chelsea I go there because I have friends who live there, because I go to restaurants in Chelsea and because it's a gay neighborhood. I am in Chelsea more than I am in SoHo just as a matter of course of my own life, so I suppose going over to the galleries there is just part of something I might be doing on a Saturday or whatever. It's not a neighborhood where artists live, for one thing. I was in New York when galleries first moved to SoHo and of course SoHo was a very, very different kind of neighborhood and it was a sort of art community neighborhood. Such a thing is no longer possible, because of real estate values, so I think the primary difference in a way is that the movement of galleries to Chelsea does not really follow, in any sense, the community of artists. If they were to do that they'd have to go to Williamsburg.

AC2K: What do you think SoHo's going to be like in the future, say in five years?



DC: Probably more of the same, I suppose. I doubt seriously that the entire commercial art scene is going to leave SoHo within five years, but I think it will be more and more a place where people buy expensive goods and go to expensive restaurants and so on. It's no longer an art community in any case, it's a commercial world that includes art galleries. It's probably, in some ways, more like 57th street was in the '60s. There certainly are artists living in SoHo, but proportionately not so many. It doesn't feel to me like a community now. It feels like a place to shop and maybe to look at art. In the sense that it's a commercial area it will be presumably more commercial. I can't imagine any of that will change. I'm sure a lot of people who go to SoHo now go to buy clothes more than to look at art.





Josh Decter, critic

AC2K: Josh, as a critic, what do you think of the shift to Chelsea?

JD: I do not want to be identified as a critic anymore, I will put it this way, I am the best artist in the world from now on and you can quote me on that.

AC2K: Do you think that is a stupid question?

JD: I love stupid questions.

AC2K: Do you think that phrasing is stupid, the shift to Chelsea?

JD: Yes, but stupid phrasing is quite rewarding. I suppose that given the fact that I've been in Los Angeles for two months gives me some degree of perspective on this so-called issue of migration from SoHo to Chelsea. But to be honest with you, when I was in New York...

AC2K: ...you couldn't give a shit, you know it's all bullshit.

JD: To be brutally honest about it, to be blunt, I hadn't given it much thought while I was in L.A. teaching here. And when I return to New York in September I suppose I'll only give it a thought when I have to go up there and see exhibitions. There are galleries that are up there, other than the ones I've already been to see such as Pat and Matthew Marks. Unless I'm mistaken, all of SoHo has not decided to move up to Chelsea while I've been away. I don't have a set response, and if I did you'd probably have heard it already. I don't really think about it. I don't really think about much these days, so you can chalk it up to my lack of thought. Honestly, I don't think about it.

AC2K: How is it in L.A.?

JD: It's very nice out here actually, and this is for the record, I would actually suggest that instead of you guys or whoever is moving to Chelsea, move out to L.A. so that when I come out here every Summer to teach, I'll have something more to do. It would be more interesting if the galleries moved out here.

AC2K: Do you enjoy going to Chelsea to look at art?

JD: Again, to be blunt, I'm waiting for the day when I hear that Agnes moves up there, or Comme des Garçons, because that would be adequate enticement for me to be in that area. Because, as you know, I'm such a fashion slave and I've such a nose for fashion that I follow the boutiques. I would suggest that 303 and Metro Pictures, Pat or Matthew, or Colin, if he's planning to move up there, discuss the possibilities with Comme des Garçons or Agnes B., Betsey Johnson or Armani. If they installed boutiques up there, that would get a lot more people up there including myself.

AC2K: You don't go to Chelsea as often as SoHo?

JD: I see as many Pat shows as I possibly can given my very hectic schedule.



Of course, now that I'm not in New York I haven't seen her Summer shows. And in terms of Matthew... Matthew Marks, I generally try and avoid that gallery as much as possible, wherever it might be, whether on the Upper East Side, or Chelsea. Even if it were downstairs in my building I probably would want to avoid it so that's not much of an issue for me.

AC2K: What would you say is the difference between SoHo and Chelsea?

JD: At this point I probably enjoy going to Chelsea more than I enjoy going to SoHo. I find SoHo to be, particularly on the weekends or toward the end of the week, a rather untenable, odious experience. It's overcrowded. It reminds me of Easthampton on July 4th weekend and I can't think of anything more odious than that. As someone who's grown up in New York, Chelsea has always been somewhere that, as an area, has been rather empty of human activity, and certainly empty of cultural activity in terms of commercial sites for art, and that's been quite refreshing. I'm a little bit concerned that the more galleries that move up there, the more it will become SoHoized, if you will. The SoHoization of Chelsea is not something that I'm looking forward to very much. Honestly, I don't think it's a very interesting subject, because I think that the scene in Chelsea is what is already happening, that the galleries will increasingly move in, the real estate characteristics will start to shift, and the loft prices will start to escalate. There will be boutiques moving in, and more restaurants, and I'm not sure how wonderful and glorious all that kind of development is. Particularly because I'm not a real estate investor so I stand to gain nothing from that kind of development.

AC2K: Do you have any more predictions for Chelsea?

JD: Chelsea until now has escaped the wrath of art galleries. Now, for better or worse, it is subject to the new territorial economy of creeping art gallery syndrome, for which there has not been a cure yet, although research continues and there was recently a conference about it in Canada somewhere. Hopefully it will be addressed critically, and there will be some kind of antidote for it. I'm waiting for the day when C.A.G.S. affects perhaps the Upper West Side of Manhattan, to see how that affects people. People taking the 1 or 9 train uptown to see galleries. I think that the galleries moving up to Chelsea is a symptom of an increasingly overcrowded city, a city overcrowded with every possible social, cultural phenomenon. What made Chelsea relatively special was that it was a post-industrial area with some nice residential streets nearby, and that's all there was. I guess there was some degree of subcultural clubland there, and maybe some prostitution, and that was about it. Now there's the coming of the cultural carnival, and do we celebrate that or mourn that, I'm not really sure.







Colin de Land, gallerist

AC2K: Okay, so, you first had a gallery in the East Village, right?

CDL: Yes.

AC2K: And how long was your gallery there?

CDL: Uh, I don't know, ah, from around 1983 or '84 to 1988.

AC2K: And then you decided to move to SoHo?

CDL: That's correct.

AC2K: Why did you decide to move there?

CDL: It was one of the last galleries in the East Village at that time. Less and less people were coming to see shows and things like that, so it seemed like it was necessary to relocate in order for, ah, more or less, just sort of, it was becoming increasingly like operating in a vacuum. You know, less and less people were coming to see the shows, I needed to move to a place where more people could see the shows.

AC2K: And since then, you've been in SoHo, since then, just in one place?

CDL: No, I was at 40 Wooster Street and then I moved to 22 Wooster Street.

AC2K: So you've been in SoHo, for like almost, what, about eight years?

CDL: That's correct.

AC2K: And since you've been in SoHo, how has it changed? Have you seen...

CDL: ...more restaurants, more development in the lower end of it. I don't know, I guess more upscale boutiques. But then it always had that, I don't know, I guess, other than that, it doesn't, whatever.

AC2K: What did you think when you first heard that art galleries were moving to Chelsea?

CDL: Ah, I didn't think much about it.

AC2K: Have you considered...

CDL: ...I thought, you know, that it figured.

AC2K: Have you yourself considered moving to Chelsea?

CDL: I try to keep abreast of real estate, but, I don't have any particular thoughts either way. Well, anyway, I don't have any thoughts about moving, no. Or nothing particular that way.

AC2K: Why do you think galleries decided to move there, why do you think they decided to leave SoHo?





CDL: Ah, they wanted to be closer to the river.

AC2K: Do you think that SoHo is going to change now that, how do, what do you think this neighborhood's going to be like in a few years? Do you think it's going to change from what it's like now?

CDL: Yes.

AC2K: What are your predictions?

CDL: It's going to get better.

AC2K: And do you think Chelsea is going to change now that art galleries are moving there?

CDL: No. But I want to amend something talking about the real estate issue. You know, talking about Chelsea, SoHo, whatever, you just sort of have to be where, at least you know people are coming to see shows. I mean, if it gets to the point where people stop coming to see the shows, because there's so little activity in the area, then you have to do whatever you have to do. The fact of the matter is, it seems to me that at least part of my job is to keep myself apprised of real estate, not being wealthy in general, not having any money, you have to keep in tune with economics. In this particular case, if there's some sort of art community, or some sort of activity that's sustaining life, in terms of work being seen someplace else where the real estate is less, naturally you can't be, unless you're in a position to do so, you can't ignore the fact that if their rents are significantly less, and if the supporting activity around art galleries and art shows is sufficient to sustain that kind of life, then nobody, certainly, is interested in just throwing money away. I would make an effort to keep aware of real estate prices in other areas where there were signs of sustainable life, or whatever. I had done so in Chelsea, where the awareness of space for six dollars a square foot kind of, well, it was something that attracted me. But within three weeks of my investigating that, it had gone up to fifteen dollars a square foot, which isn't competitive with what I'm paying now, so it makes no sense.







Jessica Fredericks and Andy Freiser, gallerists

AC2K: So, Jessica and Andy, you guys live here in the gallery, how long have you been here?

AF: We've been open for four and a half months.

JF: March 23rd, we opened.

AF: We've been working in this space for probably about seven or eight months.

JF: Doing construction. We excavated about three feet all around from the floor, and we increased the ceiling height.

AC2K: Wow.

JF: We moved the staircase, the door.

AF: Yeah, the door was on the other side under the old staircase.

AC2K: With shovels, you dug out the floor?

JF: We didn't physically do the digging, but yeah, they did it just with wheelbarrows.

AF: The building was gutted, the floor was all cracked.

AC2K: So the ceiling was like 8 feet?

JF: Yeah, it would've been great for drawings or small paintings, that's it.

AC2K: So what's it like living on this block? You're like the only people living on this block, pretty much, right?

JF: Yeah, there's an apartment building across the street, short of that, that's it. It's great. First of all, when we walk home at night we walk down 22nd, it's the most beautiful block in the city. But it's terrific here because it's really quiet.

AF: We're the only people who get to use an Exxon station as a deli, that's really cool.

AC2K: Do you like that new Subway there? Is that good for you?

JF: We haven't eaten there, I don't think we will.

AC2K: It's pretty good, Subway, because the bread is fresh.

AF: I always had a problem eating at the Exxon station, before they put in the Subway they had their little cooking section with homemade foods. But it's like an Exxon station.



AC2K: The Dia employees are all up in that place, they eat there. I just saw the Subway for the first time the other day.

JF: We often run into Pat Hearn and other people there, early in the morning, you know, getting coffee.

AC2K: Why did you decide to open your gallery in Chelsea? Did you look at other neighborhoods?

AF: We looked at a lot of real estate in SoHo.

JF: We had one place, on the second floor that we had been considering.

AF: And there was this one place on Mercer Street, it was like four floors up, really low ceilings and really awful. For a new gallery, if you move to SoHo there's lots of galleries and you seem to get lost, but if you move here, you immediately become more recognizable than if you move into some enormous building in SoHo with 30 other galleries.

AC2K: Were you surprised when you heard that all these other galleries were moving up here?

AF: Really pleasantly surprised.

JF: Yeah.

AF: We sort of heard rumors that Paula Cooper and Barbara Gladstone..

JF: When we signed our lease we knew we were gambling, we thought Chelsea was going to take off, and we were really fortunate because we were living nearby at the time and we came by a lot to see if there was anybody around, and the block, I mean there was serious traffic. Every gallery had an important person in it.

AF: There was a gallery that opened around the same time as us and we were really surprised when they put out their first card and it said their name and "the old so-and-so space." That's exactly what we didn't want.

AC2K: Where do you keep your clothes?

JF: This is the rack, behind the other rack on the other side. We pared down, we're really minimal here.

AF: Our friends love us, they got a lot of our stuff.

AC2K: You worked in SoHo?

JF: For about three years.

AC2K: Working for Jose Freire.

JF: Yes.

AC2K: Is there anything you miss about SoHo?





JF: I don't miss SoHo at all, because it's so close and I'm there all the time. It's not really an issue of missing it. SoHo is always going to exist as a strong place to see art, no doubt. I just don't think Chelsea was meant to replace that. I think it's just sort of a separate thing. What I'm finding the difference is that in terms of traffic the number of people that stopped into Jose's gallery was far greater than the number that stop in here, but the quality is equal if not better on this end. Because it's a destination, people make it a point to get here. What you don't have is hundreds of strangers walking in.

AF: If somebody takes a taxi up here, they're going to go to all five galleries. If they go to one place in SoHo, there are so many galleries that they might not go next door.

JF: Exactly. I was late getting here yesterday, and I called Pat's, and spoke to Leslie and said, "Did I miss anyone important?"

AC2K: So you've been getting along with other galleries on this block?

JF: There's a real sense of camaraderie or community, or...

AF: We do a lot together, planning openings.

JF: They've been very welcoming.

AF: Plus, what we really wanted was one of those Joseph Beuys trees.

AC2K: How do you think the neighborhood is going to change now that all these galleries are moving here?

JF: I think the traffic will pick up because Paula Cooper has her following and Barbara Gladstone, Metro, Lisa Spellman. People who may not have made it to Chelsea before.

AF: The professionals seem to all have made it here. The curators, the writers, they're all here.

JF: Students are used to going to those galleries, so they will probably make it here.

AF: You know Chelsea, there really were only three galleries here, Carol hadn't moved in. I always liked visiting Gavin's gallery, and AC projects, and this was much more like that. There was a time when everybody said Chelsea completely died.

AC2K: When was that?

JF: It was the wintertime.

AF: They said, "Nothing's happening, nothing's happening there."







Jose Freire, gallerist

AC2K: Your first art gallery was in SoHo?

JF: No, my first gallery was on Avenue B and 10th Street. 155 Avenue B, I was there for 18 months, I was there for a year and a half on a month-to-month lease, and Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, the photographer, was my landlord.

AC2K: What year was that?

JF: I opened February 11th, 1987. So I did a half a season, which was from February to the end of July, and then I did a full season, which was from September to June, and at that point a lot of the East Village galleries had gone under, or they'd closed and moved out of the neighborhood, and I remember thinking that if Pat Hearn and P.P.O.W. stayed, because they had the biggest spaces, they had the big, glamorous spaces in the East Village, that if they stayed, stuff was going to be okay, but then I heard that they were looking for spaces, so I started to look, in SoHo, everybody had to move, and I had no money, and I'd had a gallery for a year and a half, and I felt that I needed a big space and it didn't matter where it was. So I went around with Mera Rubell, and she showed me spaces, she showed me a space in the Guggenheim building, and they wanted too much money, and she showed me the bakery building, which was the 130 Prince building, which was being renovated, basically she showed me rubble. They wanted too much money for it, like, they were asking \$22 a square foot, in the summer of 1988. Then the real estate people showed me this loft space on Mercer Street, it was 21 Mercer Street, between Grand and Canal, and I think they wanted \$2800 a month for it, and it was 3200 square feet, it was just a couple hundred dollars more than what I was paying in the East Village for like 900 square feet, it was really expensive in the East Village, because they kept raising my rent like every other month. I saw this space, it was really big, and I thought, I can move in here, I can definitely have a show up in September and I don't have to do much work to it but paint it. So I took it. It was cheap enough for me to pay, and it was cheap enough for me to get it open. At that time, Ronald Feldman was at 31 Mercer, where he still is. There were no art galleries below Broome Street, none. It was sort of out of the way, Mercer got really clogged up with traffic from the tunnel, a lot of the artists really balked, but after maybe one year, on the second floor, almost at Canal Street, with no galleries down there, by the second summer, galleries were moving there, like Pat Hearn had moved between Broome and Grand, so the move was starting, to creep down to Canal Street. But it was because of the fact that I did shows consistently that got a great deal of immediate press, meaning things that are on the newsstand before the show closes, like the Voice and the Times, that it became a regular place. And I really think that it was accessible to artists, because it was on the way to Pearl Paint. I got a lot of traffic there, and I was there for four and a half years. At the end of the four years a lot of people were below Broome Street. There still wasn't anyone though on the streets that run North-South, between Grand and Canal, nobody had jumped that street, although Fawbush was on Grand Street. I thought that my gallery needed to move ahead in the world, with the careers of the artists whose careers were moving ahead in the world, and I moved to the 130 Prince Street building. I started to look for space, Christine Burgin's space was available, and I signed the lease, and I moved. I had one



show that closed there and a show that opened there the next day, there was like no lost time at all. I was there for two and a half years, before it had basically cost me so much money that I had been completely run into the ground and I owed a bloody fortune. So I moved temporarily in order to go out of business, to the 580 Broadway building, because they didn't ask me for credit checks, they didn't ask me for security deposits, it was basically like checking into a room in a hotel. It took me a month in there to realize that I could actually do shows in there. The purpose of 580 Broadway was for me to go out of business, it was for me to raise enough money to pay as many bills as I possibly could, then to file bankruptcy, and to get out of the art world, that was the purpose of that little room. But things happened in that little room. The audience that I still really respected, in other words, the few people who came to my gallery where I actually care what they think, the few people that all got along, were the people that I had actually been doing shows for; when I put up a show, I think about 10 people, the rest of the public, I don't think about, or I wouldn't be giving the artists shows, if I thought about too many people. They still came, and they still did things, and during that course of time, I worked with younger artists, it was the first time I had ever worked with artists who are younger than I am. Before, on 130 Prince Street, and straight through the history of the gallery, I worked with artists who were, on average, 10 years older than I am. Now on the average every artists I show is 5 to 10 years younger than I am, and I really enjoyed working with them. I liked working with new people again, and I came to some sort of personal realization that what I like to do, is go into an artists' studio that has never had a solo show, decide to give them a solo show, and to make that show fly. After that, I start to lose interest. By the second or third show, definitely by the third, I am bored to tears working with them.

AC2K: So you were in SoHo for almost like, 7 years.

JF: Four and a half, plus two and a half, plus one. Seven and a half.

AC2K: How did SoHo change while you were there?

JF: I used to live in Tribeca, right below Canal Street, and I remember going out to get hair dye, in the middle of the night, to dye my hair, and I would have to go down from Walker Street, to Bleecker Street, to get hair dye, there were no delicatessens, the only one was DeRomas, it was on West Broadway, and they closed at midnight, I remember walking through desolation, which is what Tribeca was, through desolation, which is what SoHo was, to get to Greenwich Village, which was the first place that was open 24 hours. During the course of the time in SoHo, as SoHo changed, as the inevitable happened and all of these quote unquote evil stores moved in, like Banana Republic, I became more and more blinded, so I didn't even see it happen, by the time I left 130 Prince Street, I wouldn't see stores, I wouldn't see people, I would just go straight there. So I didn't see it happening even though I knew it was happening, but I didn't think there was anything wrong with it.

AC2K: Were you surprised when you first heard that galleries were moving to Chelsea?

JF: I was not surprised, because the first person I heard was moving there





was Pat Hearn. And Pat Hearn had always struck me as an iconoclast, as someone who had always done things her own way and not other people's ways and it did not surprise me that she was moving over there. I thought it was really interesting she was moving, that she was moving over there by Dia, and I spent five weeks, as a result of Pat Hearn moving to Chelsea, I went to Europe for five weeks, to sort of just draw out the map of every single art city. London, Berlin, Amsterdam, Cologne, just to draw out the locations of their art galleries. And I came back to New York with this sort of half-baked theory that the only thing that will make the art world work is if it was completely decentralized. So decided to take it upon myself to decentralize the art world. My whole theory was that if Pat moves to Chelsea, and Pat can attract some people, they will continue to drop like flies in SoHo, because they can't afford to be there, right? Then some galleries at the upper level will go uptown, where they belong anyway, right? And it's up to somebody to make another space, where galleries are going to be, and then the whole thing will fall apart, and then people will have to go to a really good gallery across the street from P.S.1 in Long Island City, and they will have to go to a gallery in Harlem, and they will have to go to a gallery in Murray Hill, they will be forced to go all over the city to find their art. Which is what exists in every other city in the world, if you want to look at all the art in all the good galleries, you have to break your ass to get to all of them, it actually takes time. New York is unique in terms of the fact that they're all clustered together. So the deal is, you have to have the lowest rent possible, and that's all there is that I'm interested in is like, really cheap rent. So I looked for where there are the most commercial spaces available for the least money, and I came up with Times Square. I found 20 spaces that galleries could move into, immediately. I found cement floors, 20-foot ceilings, and I found these 5,000 square-foot spaces, pretty much for between 3 and 5 thousand dollars a month. They were on second floors above porno theaters, because nobody would rent the second floor above a porno theater for any kind of business. So I found a space on 8th Avenue between 47th and 48th street, and I wanted, more than anything in the world, to move into this space, and I thought, this is a real re-creation of the East Village, this. You've got: sleazy, drug-ridden milieu, you've got the attraction of the porn industry, which I think is the most successful visual industry in America, you've got walking distance from the Museum of Modern Art, just like they talk about walking distance to Dia here, you've got the Paramount and the Royalton, which are hotels that a lot of art folk stay in, restaurants, all mass transportation goes there, easy to get a taxi any time of day or night. It's much better than Chelsea. So I found my space, and I thought, I'm not going to do the stupid thing of cheerleading other galleries, I'm just going to do it by myself. I got a deal that I really liked on the space, and then I made the fatal mistake, which was to sit down with my artists and tell them that I was going to move my gallery to like, the porn district on 8th Avenue. I was a big mistake, I should have gotten up and done it. This building was basically like the 130 Prince building, with a porno theater on the ground floor. Six galleries could have moved into this building, no problem. So I missed out on Chelsea for a whole year because I was spending all my time in Times Square, running around with brokers looking at spaces there. But it didn't happen, the great move to Times Square. I really wanted to work in that neighborhood.

AC2K: And that's when you decided to move to Chelsea?



JF: No, that's when I had to move out of 130 Prince Street, into that little room on Broadway and I decided I had to go out of business. It was only while I was there that I decided that if I really looked in Chelsea that it might be possible to find something that was a deal. Maybe Pat Hearn did not get the last deal that was here. The only person that shocked me in terms of going over here, was Annina Nosei.

AC2K: Why do you think that galleries decided to move out of SoHo?

JF: I think that the art world would rather die than do anything to change. I think they were forced out, plain and simple. I think they decided that the thing they should be spending their money on was not rent. And if the rents were very, very low, it would allow you to have a gallery that would continue to grow, as opposed to galleries that continue, despite public appearances to the contrary, to contract. Where they show, no change in the venue, no change in the artists, the show would go from four weeks to five weeks to six, seven, then you have galleries running eight week shows. Now if a gallery is running eight week shows, they have decided they are not going to show. There's no reason to go around if the shows are up for so long, and you have people walking around like they are half dead. Having a gallery that can continue to expand, continue to reinvent itself, I mean, you can't do that if you only show four artists a year that sell the most work. When are you going to have invention, new things happening at the gallery?

AC2K: Why do you think the galleries moved to this neighborhood?

JF: Structurally, there are not spaces in this neighborhood that are SoHo spaces. The buildings were built in a different period, the way the columns go through the buildings, the ceiling height decreases if it's a multiple story building. I think it had to do with that there was one art thing over here, and you can't decide to move next to the Whitney, because you can't afford it, or the Museum of Modern Art, you can't afford it, it was just to ground themselves with that one institution. I would think it is very plausible for a number of spaces to ground themselves with P.S.1, but unfortunately, P.S.1 does not get the kind of traffic that institutions in Manhattan get.

AC2K: What are you going to miss about SoHo?

JF: Well, I could say poverty, but I'm not going to miss that. Or shopping at Comme Des Garçons, but I can get that at Barney's over here, and the Angelica movie center, I think, is one of the worst movie theaters in Manhattan. So the answer, what I'm going to miss about SoHo? Absolutely nothing.

AC2K: And you're excited about this neighborhood as a place to work?

JF: I'm excited about, in this neighborhood, I can have an idea, In SoHo, you can't have an idea, an idea is too bloody expensive to have. You can't experiment, you can't decide to run a huge risk, because you're already running a huge risk if you're being conservative. If I put up a show in my gallery by an artist who had a waiting list, there was a possibility that if I did that show, and it sold out, it would lose money. Even something



conservative was a total and complete risk. So here maybe I can figure out again what a risk is and then take it, because I can afford to take it.

AC2K: Do you have any predictions for this neighborhood?

JF: Yeah, the gentrification will take place, because it's the one thing that artists and art galleries are good for, is gentrification, they serve that process really, really well. Here are people who are willing to take a space, refine it, maintain it on a monthly basis, and maintain it empty, for most of the time. I mean, we are renting space in order to not use it. That's what a gallery does. And I think that people that go to galleries are, in general, higher income people, more educated people, and they'll come to this neighborhood, and maybe perceive something in it. I mean, I don't think there is anything charming about this neighborhood at all. I don't find it charming, I don't find it attractive, I don't like walking down the streets here, but I never found SoHo attractive or charming either. The ceiling heights above the second floor are lower here than in SoHo, which means that, not now, that somebody like me, with no money, can get a great deal on a very big ground floor space, but at some point, when I'm being thrown out in exchange for the first Comme Des Garcons, and then secondly the Banana Republic, right, at the point where that gentrification happens, and I don't think it's going to happen as quickly as it happened in SoHo, nor as thoroughly as in SoHo, because there is no public transportation over here, for the tourists to come out, there just isn't, but at that point, when the galleries have to start situating themselves above the ground floor, there are slim pickings, nine foot ceilings. I like the fact that I have Carol Greene across the street. If I didn't have her across the street, I don't know if I would've taken this space.

AC2K: But there are going to be other galleries on this block.

JF: Oh, yes, there may be five galleries on this block by September.

AC2K: You're not worried about having foot traffic then.

JF: Well, compared to 130 Prince Street, I think the decrease in foot traffic is going to be extreme, and I'm really happy about it. Because maybe it gives me time to work. Because if the entire art world were to find me again, and everybody from 130 Prince Street were to show up and come in here, I would be a less happy man. I don't want all those people from 130 Prince Street to come in here. I would like some people who never went to 130 Prince Street to come in here. I don't know how we get them. I mean, this art dealer from Boston, Barbara Krakow, said something to me that has made a huge racket in my head, that the potential market for art in America should be anyone who has the money to buy a house. And that is not the market that we're reaching. I mean, I know dealers in Europe who sell work to train conductors and postmen, and we don't do that here. If it's the job of the museum to reach these people, it's the job of the museum to bring in the new artists, new collectors, they are publicly funded institutions, and it's their job to make art known to the public. That's why there are education departments at museums, because that is part of why they are given government money it is not a commercial gallery's job to increase the audience, but since I don't see the audience increasing, then I have to get access to the one thing that I can get access to, and try to get people in



here. And that's the media. I do think that there is something that the art world has to offer other industries, but other industries have to give us money in return. So it's like, trying to figure out how the hell that happens. Like how do you get the film industry to be interested in art, and I don't mean just like 20 high-level television and movie producers who buy art at Pace.

AC2K: You said earlier that you weren't surprised when you heard that Pat was moving here. Were you surprised when you heard that other galleries were moving here?

JF: I'm not surprised that Paula Cooper is moving here, because galleries are either in decline or in ascendancy, and you could not have mentioned to me less than three months ago, any gallery that is in ascendancy that is moving here. Paula Cooper is not a gallery that is in ascendancy, I don't think anybody perceives it so.

AC2K: So you think it's a sign of decline, a gallery moving to Chelsea?

JF: I think so, and I really think I could be wrong. I mean, they could also like something about what their lives were like when they had to struggle to get people in to see their shows. I liked having to struggle to get people into the shows, it made me a vibrant person. At a certain point I had to do nothing, nothing to get them to come in and see my shows.

AC2K: But now there's going to be a lot of galleries up here.

JF: Well, who is here?

AC2K: Um, Pat Hearn, Paul Morris, Jessica Fredericks, someone upstairs from her.

JF: The lady who owns the building, her landlady.

AC2K: I don't know, Carol Greene, those galleries moving into 24th Street, Matthew Marks, Metro, Paula Cooper, Barbara Gladstone...

JF: Who else?

AC2K: Um, Lisa Spellman, I guess that's all I know.

JF: There's a new gallery on 20th Street, run by some guy named Paul Judelson, and looking in this neighborhood right now and making offers on spaces, are Max Protech, his former director Xavier, John Weber, Lisa Spellman, Jack Hanley, and other people who I'm not supposed to say are looking at space, because they don't want their landlords to know that they are looking at space. I mean Jay Gorney will open in the fall and he will not have 303 Gallery catty-corner, and Barbara Gladstone across the street. I don't think the effects of that are going to be particularly good. For me SoHo right now is Colin, Stefano, Jeffrey Deitch, Andrea Rosen, Tanya Bonakdar, Lühring Augustine, Magda, Tony Shafrazi. That's not that many galleries. And in the little group of galleries that I think are really really great, as of the fall four of those galleries will be here, and three of them will be in SoHo, one of them is actively looking over here,





and one of them has looked over here with like a toying sort of thing, and the other one is like, ignoring it. I sincerely hope that everyone does fine. There are new galleries opening in SoHo, and there are new galleries that have never existed before that are opening in Chelsea this fall. I think that's a good sign, I wouldn't have thought a year ago that there were still people stupid enough to open art galleries, but they still exist, which is a good thing. But if you used to count how many shows there would be in the fall that would be like, huge debut shows by big artists, and now the art world can get it up to produce one star, twice a year, and that's sad. Because that's the business that we're in, the starmaking business. And if every single artist I work with now leaves me as a result of my crappy foot traffic, I wish them the best.

AC2K: But you decided to move here instead of Times Square.

JF: I couldn't move to Times Square because Disney signed the deal six months later, and all of those spaces, you can't rent a space up there. The porno theaters have been closed and the building is up for sale and it's like seven or eight million dollars.



Barbara Gladstone, gallerist

AC2K: When did your gallery open in SoHo?

BG: 1983.

AC2K: Was that your first gallery?

BG: No, I had a gallery for a year and a half on 57th Street, and then I opened on Wooster street in '83, and then came here in '85.

A2K: When you were on 57th Street, why did you decide to move to SoHo?

BG: For a number of reasons. I felt that the real life of art was downtown, not uptown, I mean, the art that I was interested in. I also found it physically inconvenient. I did not like being in a big building where I had to go up in an elevator and everyone else had to go up in an elevator, I felt it wasn't a real neighborhood, and I felt that art isn't a business in the sense that other things are a business, and that it should be different to go to an art gallery than to go to your accountant's office. It all felt the same to me, and I just felt that it wasn't the atmosphere that I wanted to spend my life in, nor have art seen in. I wanted to be very much on the street, where you could drop in casually, where you could see the life of the street, and where you could be a part of it. Where it was just a normal thing to walk through a door and be in a gallery. And I also felt that getting the trucks uptown to deliver the art was a problem. You couldn't park between four and seven, we were always having problems accepting deliveries. It was hard to get photographers to come uptown, many things bothered me, and I wanted to rectify them. And I wanted a different kind of space, as I said, so I moved.

AC2K: You liked being in SoHo?

BG: Yeah, I loved it.

AC2K: Over the time that you were there, has it changed a lot?

BG: It has changed a lot. I think it's become almost completely a retail neighborhood. When I was here in the early '80s and certainly for the people who were here in the '70s, it was illegal to do business in most of the storefront spaces in SoHo. They were all zoned differently, you know, for the light industry, and there were very few storefronts you could work out of. Now it seems that you can work out of all of them. So all of these little businesses that exist now, weren't really possible except in a couple of places, like West Broadway and Prince Street. But the side streets, Wooster, Greene, they just were not available for that kind of thing.

AC2K: So it's like it's gotten too easy?

BG: Well I don't know if it's gotten too easy, it's just gotten more accessible, and it's accessible to a different kind of situation. And I think that there's a historical tradition, for the art world to be pioneers, and to go into a place that is somewhat desolate because they can get bigger places for less money, just as we came to SoHo because the artists came to SoHo, and



the artists came to SoHo because there were these big, however illegal, there were these larger spaces that they could work in and make large paintings, and the dealers came here because the artists were here. So there was a natural development and growth, I think, so first the galleries were there, and then pretty soon there's a restaurant because all the people who came to see art then get hungry, and there's a logical audience for a restaurant, so you have a restaurant, and then somebody notices that these people are pretty good-looking, and pretty interesting, and they could use a shoe shop too. So it's just a natural growth, and it's fine, except that at a certain point, I think that we have to look for the next place where it's desolate again and where we can establish ourselves in a quiet neighborhood without anything else, and you know, the rest of the world will eventually come there.

AC2K: So you will be moving your gallery to Chelsea.

BG: Yes.

AC2K: What do you think it's going to be like there?

BG: I have no idea. (laughs) Quieter, I think. But that's okay. Because I think that, I've traveled a lot in Europe, there are very few places in Europe where you have the density that you have here. Somehow, I've seen every exhibition when I go to a city. Somehow I get from one place to another even if it takes 10 minutes to get there, it's fine, you know, and if you're not willing to take the 10 minutes to look then maybe you don't want to see it that much.

AC2K: What do you think is going to happen to SoHo?

BG: Oh, I think SoHo will remain. I think SoHo is comparable to the Left Bank in Paris. For years that had a high concentration of galleries, and then at a certain point it didn't anymore, and the Left Bank galleries started to move to Bastille, and to the Marais, and to places like that, which are now more chic, and more interesting, with boutiques and everything else. I think art always can move around, and I think we always need to move around because when a neighborhood gets incredibly expensive, which is perfect for a retail business, it's not perfect anymore for us, because we have different kinds of businesses. I think it's just a kind of Darwinian thing.

AC2K: When you go to work in Chelsea, do you expect to miss anything about SoHo?

BG: Yeah, restaurants. (laughs) Food, I think we'll miss the food.

AC2K: There's no place to eat up there.

BG: Not really. Well, there's a couple of restaurants, but there's no little Olive's, there's no Jerry's, you know, there's no casual stuff, so I think probably, that'll be the hard part for a couple of years maybe.



Jay Gorney, gallerist

AC2K: How long has your gallery been in SoHo?

JG: In SoHo, for roughly about 9 years, we opened in 1987.

AC2K: It's been in the same location there?

JG: Yeah.

AC2K: Did you move to SoHo from someplace else?

JG: Yes, from the East Village, the gallery opened on East 10th Street in 1985.

AC2K: Why did you decide to move to SoHo from the East Village?

JG: Well, at that point, it was very clear. I mean, first of all, my space in the East Village was very very small, and that was also a point when it was prohibitively expensive, proportionally. It was a moment when the East Village was really, for the most part, breaking up, and the galleries were either closing or the dealers who wanted to continue to grow and support their artists were moving at that point to SoHo.

AC2K: So, you've been in SoHo now for almost 10 years?

JG: That is correct.

AC2K: Has SoHo changed a lot since you've been there?

JG: I don't know, yeah, it seems more trafficy, and undoubtedly there are more shops and boutiques. But SoHo has always been that kind of a high traffic area. I mean maybe it's a little denser, I don't know.

AC2K: Were you surprised when you first heard that art galleries were moving to Chelsea?

JG: I remember thinking it was an interesting idea. I think these things, these kinds of shifts, are inevitable.

AC2K: You've had people approach you, and ask you to look at spaces up there.

JG: Incessantly.

AC2K: Have you gone up and looked at them?

JG: I did originally. For the most part I like my space very much, and we negotiated a favorable lease a year ago. So at this point it's really a moot point. I like the space and I've got a favorable lease. I think when I'm a little further along with this lease I'll consider it.

AC2K: Why do you think that people decided to move to Chelsea?





JG: Well I think some people have decided to move to Chelsea, and some people are in SoHo? You see, in a way, I will say one thing, I think this is such a non-issue anyway. I think this is just an issue of geography. Some galleries are in SoHo, some galleries are in Chelsea. I don't really understand why it's really of so much interest or important or worthy of this much discussion.

AC2K: Well, it seems like it's all people want to talk about.

JG: It's all very boring people want to talk about. I mean, I think that it'd be much more interesting to talk about art ideology or people's programs. I mean where galleries are located isn't that infinitely fascinating of a topic, is it?

AC2K: Mmmmmmm, well, no.

JG: For me, you know. Galleries used to be in SoHo or on 57th Street. Now they'll be in SoHo, 57th Street or in Chelsea. I think it's of interest in terms of cultural shifts and patterns, and certainly people are interested in real estate. I think though, that it's just not that interesting of a topic. Up to this point there have been very few galleries in Chelsea and I've not actually visited the Chelsea galleries that often, just because I work at a gallery all week and it's the last thing I want to do on a Sunday. I think next season there are excellent important galleries moving to Chelsea and it will undoubtedly become a stop for everybody.

AC2K: Do you have any predictions for SoHo, do you think it's going to change?

JG: I have no predictions.

AC2K: Do you have any predictions for Chelsea?

JG: I have no predictions. No, I do have a prediction. Undoubtedly Chelsea will be more heavily trafficked and more people will visit the galleries in Chelsea as more galleries are there. If galleries like Barbara Gladstone and Metro Pictures are in Chelsea, people are going to go, it's that simple. On the other hand you know, Jeffrey Deitch is opening a big new space in SoHo, I'm sure you know that. I think there are going to be galleries in two locations, again, we're just talking about geography. Not anything as interesting as ideology. Obviously the galleries that are moving want to get as much publicity as possible out of it, otherwise, it's just about where you're located.







Carol Greene, gallerist

AC2K: When did the gallery open?

CG: The gallery opened on Oct. 12, 1995.

AC2K: This is your first gallery?

CG: Yes.

AC2K: This is also the first gallery in this building, on this block?

CG: It's also the first gallery off of 22nd Street. That's important because I feel it makes it more like a neighborhood not just a block. For a while it was just a block, 22nd Street. Now we are stretching it out to 26th Street and that makes it more of a neighborhood.

AC2K: And there's going to be like 10 galleries on this block?

CG: No, Jose Freire is moving to 527 on this street, and he's opening on Oct. 19th and then there's a gallery negotiating for a space right next door to mine, but I can't say who it is. They're also working on the ground floor here.

AC2K: So, do you like it here?

CG: I love it.

AC2K: This building is interesting. It's like an art building.

CG: This building has a unique character and beautiful spaces. I'd always wanted to open an art gallery so I just started looking for a space, so that was the first step, to just get a space. For me, Chelsea was so obvious. It was the new arts area, and it just seemed like a logical place for a young gallery to start because there were only six people there as opposed to two hundred, so I established an identity right away. Personally, I love this neighborhood. I love the character of it, I love its industrial qualities, I love the metaphor of being on the edge, and I also feel connected historically to this notion of opening a neighborhood. So if you look at it, like you said, the East Village, SoHo, the new art scenes always emerge in a marginal or underdeveloped neighborhood, so for me, that was cool. When I was looking around, I looked at, I don't know, about twenty buildings. I just went around building by building. I started on 29th Street and went down to 19th Street and when I looked at this building and I saw all these artists on the directory like Peter Halley etcetera, I figured curators know this building, collectors know this building, because there's major artists here. So that was really attractive to me, that it would be a place that people in the art world, in the know, would already be familiar with it.

AC2K: What do you think is going to happen in this neighborhood? Do you think there are going to be a lot more galleries on this street, or do you think there are going to be restaurants opening on this street, or retail shops, have you heard any rumors?



CG: Well, yes. I think that the neighborhood will develop to some extent, but you've got this peculiar situation. I mean it's really penned in, by the river, and by the projects, and those are two things that just aren't going to change. I don't think it can happen in the same way as somewhere like SoHo, that has all this central transportation and accessibility. It's not quite like that. But you know, there is a restaurant being planned for this building.

AC2K: Oh?

CG: Yeah. On the top floor, with windows all the way around. It's totally cool. I also think other galleries are definitely going to move here, to this building and to this block. You've got the Helmsley Spear Building and a lot of people are looking at that, yes, it's definitely going to turn. But I don't think you're going to get the same kind of commercial retail spaces like furniture stores, and clothing stores just because I don't think you'll have the same kind of foot traffic.

AC2K: Do people complain a lot to you about it being hard to get here?

CG: Yes, they do.

AC2K: When people comment to you about your location, does it seem like they're making mostly positive comments, that there's lots of light over here, or something, or are they making negative comments?

CG: Well, when people haven't been to the space, they always make negative comments, and when they get here, they think it's incredible. So, people are skeptical until they experience it and then they think it's the right situation because it's so beautiful. There's great light, space, and it's a great environment to experience art.

AC2K: So you don't have any regrets about opening a gallery here?

CG: No! It's been amazingly successful. I get to be a pioneer.

AC2K: So you worked at John Good in SoHo, is there anything that you miss about SoHo?

CG: God, I can't believe that I don't have an answer to that. (laughs) It just seems so much easier here, like all the things I needed to do in SoHo are actually much easier here, the bank is across the street. It's less crowded. I never have to wait in line to get anything done, so it's really easy. No, the only thing I miss is that I can't walk to work. So now, I have to take the subway and when you're doing installations late at night, getting food is a big hassle. That is a pain. The accessibility of just the deli at night.

AC2K: There's no 24 hour deli?

CG: No, except the Exxon station, but that's kind of sketchy.

AC2K: But now there's a Subway there.





CG: I know. (laughs)

AC2K: I wonder if the Subway opened because of the new art neighborhood or if that was going to happen anyway.

CG: I think that was going to happen. There's a lot of taxi cabs in that Exxon station.

AC2K: Right.

CG: I'm not exactly eating at Subway.

AC2K: Well, the Dia employees I think, are going to be all up in that, I predict.

CG: Is the food any good?

AC2K: Subway is actually like, alright.

CG: They have fresh turkey meat?

AC2K: It's the bread. The thing is they get their bread like half cooked and frozen, and then they finish cooking it in the store so it's a very fresh bread sort of taste, and that's their angle. It's way better than Blimpie.

CG: Cool.

AC2K: I'm going to eat there all the time.

CG: I'll try it on your recommendation.

AC2K: How long did you work in SoHo?

CG: Seven years.

AC2K: Wow. You really don't miss it at all?

CG: No, not at all. The only thing I miss is my photo lab. And we don't have a Federal Express in the neighborhood either, but they pick up, so...

AC2K: Did SoHo change a lot in the years you worked there?

CG: Oh my god, yes. There was not one single jeans store on Broadway that I can remember. When I first started working for John Good, Broadway had just started blossoming as a new street for galleries. Over the course of time that I worked there, all these jeans stores started opening. It has gotten a bit of a honky tonk character, sort of like Canal Street. It's not quite as honky tonk, but I do miss the Blimpie that was there. They had the best iced coffee. You know that bar that's on the corner there, that cafe, where it's all glass, and everybody's...

AC2K: Oh, Cafe Bari.

CG: Yeah.



AC2K: It's like two dollars for a cup of coffee there.

CG: I mean it's funny though, I think somebody once said that they don't go to SoHo to look at art anymore, they go to shop. And every time I'm in SoHo, I'm shopping. (laughs) But I definitely still go to see art there. I have a different schedule, I'm Wednesday through Sunday, so on Tuesday I go to SoHo and I see every show, and that's great for me. I get to see all the shows. And I love that, looking at art.

AC2K: Right. Why did you come to Chelsea?

CG: Well, I liked the whole idea of the metaphor of the neighborhood. I've always wanted to open a gallery and show some of the most important artists of my generation, that is, work that would be categorized as experimental or avant-garde. So here you are in this neighborhood. It's a bit edgy. Just the politics and the social situation, what goes on here, like the prostitution at night, things like that. I thought of the whole metaphor of being in an environment that was a bit on the margins or the edge, but also mirrored conceptually the kind of work that I show, which would be pushing the edge.

AC2K: So you were maybe the fourth gallery to open here? Matthew Marks, and then Paul...

CG: And Pat, and the Lannon Gallery was open at the time, too.

AC2K: That's the one where Annina Nosei...

CG: is now, yeah.

AC2K: So you heard that Paul and Pat were going to move here, and that's when you decided that your gallery should be over here?

CG: Yes.

AC2K: It wasn't really a sure thing that this was going to be an art neighborhood when you decided to do it?

CG: No. When I first started looking, they hadn't really opened their spaces. They were working on them.

AC2K: Were you worried that this was going to be too far from 22nd Street?

CG: I figured, I had made a decision that I was going to stake a claim in the neighborhood. I didn't believe it was going to be just about a street, I figured it had to be about Chelsea as a neighborhood. Also what happened was the people on 22nd Street became really savvy about the real estate situation and I thought the streets further up, the landlords would be much less aware...

AC2K: But the landlord here definitely knows what's going on.

CG: Yes, he does and he has a great building. But I was the first person here, so, the first person always has a deal.

AC2K: Cool.







Tom Healy, gallerist

AC2K: How long has your gallery been in Chelsea?

TH: We opened February 3rd of 1995, so a year and a half.

AC2K: Since you've been in Chelsea, how has the neighborhood changed?

TH: Well, there were 4 galleries here at the time when we opened. Matthew had opened just before us and Pat and Paul and I opened the same night, and then there was a gallery right above us that has gone out of business. So there was 4, and by this fall, there's going to be 12.

AC2K: Just on that block?

TH: Well, no, that includes blocks north and south. But in this part of Chelsea, between 10th and 11th Avenues, there'll be 12 galleries by late fall. So that's just an exciting change, and a really rapid growth that I don't think we predicted.

AC2K: Was there a time that you were nervous, I mean I guess you had to hope that other galleries would move out there.

TH: Well we really felt that 3 important galleries with emerging or younger art, or established art, and Dia, would be enough of a critical mass. Paul and I believed in a suburban mall model, where Dia and Matthew Marks would be the anchor stores, the big department stores, and we could be the little boutiques selling psychedelic posters in the middle of the stores, you know, and your business is people come to get to Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom's and then they see your store on the way between one and the other. And that actually worked for us. For example, Matthew had a Richard Serra sculpture show up at the same time we had George Stoll. Richard's was this big metal work, sculpture for a million dollars, and George's were these delicate light wax things that you could get for \$500. So to use an expression that Paul uses often is, a collector saying, well that's cheap, just throw it on the truck along with everything else. And to some extent, I mean it's a little tongue in cheek, but to some extent it's true. We have certainly benefited by Dia's presence and Matthew's, to get important collectors into the gallery. So we had a strong sense that having four galleries and Dia would be enough to sustain it. We were actually pleasantly surprised at how much business that generated, and if that's been the case, I just am really looking forward to what new attention that many more galleries will bring.

AC2K: Has your foot traffic or collector traffic been increasing since you've been here, or do you expect it to like increase?

TH: It has, actually. The most important factor for us is being open on Sundays. We get the most baby strollers, and even collectors come on Sundays, the day that they can't go to most SoHo galleries or uptown galleries. So it's created a great alternative day. Unfortunately, there are some galleries, particularly some major SoHo galleries that are moving here, that are hesitant about being open on Sundays.

AC2K: Oh, you're kidding.





TH: So we've got to prevail on them that that's part of the character of the place, and what makes it worth coming.

AC2K: Well I thought that the collectors who made their trips to SoHo on Saturday, would come to Chelsea on Sunday.

TH: That does happen, but a number of SoHo dealers who are coming to Chelsea are reluctant to keep those hours because it takes away their weekend.

AC2K: So as far as this history of the thing, did Paul know that Matthew was opening a gallery there?

TH: Yes, we knew that. Paul and I became partners in the Spring of '94, and that was when Matthew started looking at buildings over here. He and Paul are very close friends, and in fact they looked around at buildings together and once Matthew had bought his building, Paul got very convinced that he should find a space here.

AC2K: So was there ever any discussion of another neighborhood?

TH: Yes, we looked high and low, and we looked in lower SoHo in fact, where Colin is, people are moving in that area, and it was very attractive to us. But we wanted a bigger gallery, bigger than a lot of those spaces would have allowed. And Paul's friendship with Matthew was a compelling reason. And even in lower SoHo, the rents that we were able to get here were so much cheaper, for a much larger space, that it behooved us to make the change. And the risks seemed much lighter.

AC2K: Were you surprised when you started hearing the rumors and the confirmations that there were so many galleries moving up there?

TH: I'm surprised that it's happening so quickly, very pleasantly surprised. It didn't surprise me that there would be a major shift away from SoHo, but I didn't expect that it would concentrate in Chelsea the way it has. I thought it might be a more diffused move to other areas, and so I didn't expect there to be this kind of triangle of galleries with 57th and Madison, SoHo, and Chelsea emerging as an alternative location. But we're happy it has.

AC2K: Are there stores or restaurants opening?

TH: I've heard lots of different rumors. Supposedly Dean and DeLuca is coming. And I heard that Bole, which is closed in Tribeca, is moving onto our block. We are actually talking about expanding our gallery and having a cafe and bookstore becoming neighbors of ours. An extension onto 21st Street.

AC2K: Wow.

TH: We're in preliminary discussions about that, it's still not a done deal.

AC2K: So you're glad you moved to Chelsea, and it's all worked out.



TH: Oh, we're thrilled to be here. I'm still always surprised when I go to SoHo at how many people I see, how much one misses just running into artists, and collectors, and dealers on the street. That's clearly not the case here yet. People make an effort to come here.

AC2K: It's like an excursion.

TH: Right, so one doesn't just run into them, and that feeling, well, I never had a gallery in SoHo so I can't say that is a feeling I miss, but I would certainly welcome the growth out here so that there is a bit more of a community. We just go through the bathroom that we share with Pat and have a cup of coffee with her, and that's our community, for now.

AC2K: Cool.

TH: So I look forward to that.







Pat Hearn, gallerist

AC2K: How long was your gallery in SoHo?

PH: I moved there in the Fall of '88 and I was there until the Summer of '94.

AC2K: In the time that you were there, how did SoHo change? Did the neighborhood that you were in change?

PH: Well, it did change, considerably in fact, from the time that I opened at 39 Wooster in 1988. Until then Ronald Feldman and Brooke Alexander were the only galleries south of Broome. American Fine Arts also opened at the same time, at 40 Wooster. By the time I moved, in the summer of '94, there were probably 35 to 40 galleries in the area south of Broome.

AC2K: Did you like being in SoHo?

PH: Yeah, I loved being there. I also loved being in the East Village. I've liked every location that I've been in.

AC2K: When did you decide to move out of SoHo?

PH: Well, I realized that I was not going to renew my lease on 39 Wooster. I had some pretty dreadful building and landlord problems that I was not interested in having in my life any longer, financially or emotionally. I began in 1993 to look at other spaces in SoHo. However, I was also trying, really trying, to think about relocating entirely--to another neighborhood. I'd been in this business for thirteen years and quite frankly I really needed a change. But I just could not come up with another location that would make sense, without being... I just didn't want to be a pioneer in a new location. Anyway, I negotiated a space on Mercer Street, but was not feeling great about it--it felt too familiar. I was about to sign the lease when Paul Morris saved me. Paul was running a sort of home gallery out of his apartment at 10 Downing, and he called me with this brilliant idea. I think it was March or it could have been April '94. Anyway, it was a Sunday evening and the snow was about three feet and getting deeper. He asked me if I had already signed for the Mercer Street space and I told him that we, the lawyers, etc. had an appointment on Tuesday to sign. I guess that he knew I had reservations about signing. He then asked me if I would ever consider moving to Chelsea. At first it sounded like "would you ever consider moving to L.I.C." I didn't think of Dia as being in Chelsea--it was farther west than Chelsea. I thought, "why would I move to Chelsea? Like where would I go?--8th Avenue?" And he said "Well, you know, on the block that Dia is on." As soon as he said that, I thought of how open and empty it feels when I go to Dia--it didn't matter if it was Chelsea or what the neighborhood was called--it sounded right! There was something there already, a major contemporary art museum. Certainly anybody that is looking at contemporary art would go to this location anyway.

AC2K: So you and Paul looked for spaces together?

PH: Yeah, we looked together. In fact, the following morning I





called my lawyer to cancel my lease signing and went to Chelsea with Paul to start looking. We didn't work with a broker, we just walked up and down the blocks of 21st, 22nd, and 23rd streets between 10th and 11th avenues and walked into a building asking if they had any available space. We found this space at 530 West 22nd Street shortly thereafter. It took some time for the existing business to move out, to negotiate and move in, etc. In November '94 we signed our leases and in February '95 we each had our opening exhibitions.

AC2K: When you and Paul were talking about moving over there, were you sorry, did you have any idea that it was going to become a big art neighborhood?

PH: Of course I had absolutely no idea that other people were going to move here. Although, I was certainly encouraged to hear, I think it was in May, that Matthew Marks was also trying to close on a space on the block. At that time, I did contact a number of my close colleagues with whom I'd had "real estate" conversations with during the previous season, who also expressed concern or discontent with their leases, etc. A number of them came to look at Chelsea and actually a couple of them will be opening in the fall. It's not that I was trying to conspire to a mass exodus or anything like that. It's just that I was excited and felt such a relief to be in a large space with a very affordable rent.

AC2K: Your collectors, critics, people you wanted to come to your gallery, started coming right away? There wasn't a...

PH: No, there wasn't. Well, certainly a lot more people passed through the gallery when I was on Wooster than do now. But I suppose that is just the kind of decision one has to make. It is quite clear to me that the kind of focus that having a public space on West 22nd Street allows me is very different from the kind of focus having a public space on Wooster Street allowed me. It's a matter of choice and I know how I wish to spend my time. In general, I don't give one priority the other. This is just what I need in my life and what works best for me in my life generally works best for the gallery. And in fact once you've come to Chelsea a couple of times you realize that it is quite easy to get to. I travel all over the city to go to various events, concerts, restaurants, visit friends, galleries, etc. Manhattan is not such a big place. There are simply three locations to go to if you are looking at contemporary art in the city.

AC2K: Now that you see the neighborhood changing a little bit, with more art galleries moving there, do you have any predictions for what else is going to happen around there? Do you think the neighborhood's going to change very much from what it's like now?

PH: I don't really think it's going to change that much. It seems as though galleries might open here during the next few years. I also hear about some restaurants or cafes opening, but whatever, I will believe it when I see it. Who knows?

AC2K: I wanted to ask you, because Paul Morris is out of town and I couldn't interview him, did he ever say anything to you about where he got the idea to move there, or when he started looking around for a place to open his gallery, that, you know...



PH: What motivated him to come here?

AC2K: Yeah.

PH: No, he actually never elaborated on that. But I would assume that Dia was the attraction. Maybe he also knew before I did about Matthew. I think also for Paul to move from exhibitions in his living room to 2500 sq. feet next door to Dia was a pretty vertical move.

AC2K: Your space used to be a taxi garage, right?

PH: It was a taxi garage.

AC2K: Do you know what they're doing across the street in that big building?

PH: It's going to be a commercial and residential building, I think mostly residential upstairs and commercial on the ground floor.

AC2K: So that might be some galleries?

PH: Maybe, yeah

AC2K: Are you glad that you moved to Chelsea?

PH: Yeah, Yeah, I love being here. It's very nice. I wanted a change and I got that.

AC2K: Is there anything, now that you've been there for a little while, that you really miss about SoHo?

PH: I guess that the thing that I miss the most is just being able to stop in and visit my colleagues and see other exhibitions. That's the only thing that I miss about it.





American Fine Arts has closed,  
but will reopen on July 25th  
with a brand new exhibition by  
AC2K (the artist formerly known  
as ART CLUB 2000)

AMERICAN  
FINE ARTS  
CO.

Open for  
Deliveries and  
Appointments.  
Please Come in,  
Door and Gate  
are Unlocked.  
We're in the  
Back.

22



Marvin Kosmin, collector

AC2K: What did you think when you first heard about galleries moving to Chelsea?

MK: Well we heard about it through the underground for a long time it was bubbling. There was talk about it. A lot of our friends were moving so we knew that it was a reality. I had mixed feelings about it. I remember a few years ago we went to Paris, we got a map from Bob Nickas to tell us how to get around to the gallery. It was really difficult seeing things because you had to take a cab from one place to the next place and it was very fragmented. I'm afraid that might happen here in Chelsea. That in a time when the art market hasn't really come out of the '90s yet, that it's going to be difficult for people to decide where to go. Now you have three places. You have 57th street and uptown, you've got Chelsea, and you've got SoHo. One of the things that Chelsea has going for it is the fact that it's open on Sunday. The problem is that I find it's difficult to get to. We live on East 58th Street and it's harder to get to Chelsea than it is to get down here. Until the area develops... you have to go to a gallery and know exactly what you're really going to do.

AC2K: Do you go there on Sunday?

MK: We don't now because we usually go away on the weekends but before that I would say we went down twice a month.

AC2K: Do you go to SoHo every week?

MK: Every week. I think it's sort of like SoHo is now home. But you know that could change also with Chelsea as it develops more, they have more things to do, more restaurants... I understand that Dean and DeLuca and somebody else is going up there...

AC2K: When there were galleries in the East Village did you go there on Sundays?

MK: That was in the '80s. We went to the East Village on Saturday and Sunday. SoHo came later and a lot of galleries moved, but it wasn't that big of a change geographically.

AC2K: So when you do go to Chelsea how do you find it? Do you like going there?

MK: Now it's going to mean that we're going to like it more because more of our friend's artists are going to be there. I still don't feel as comfortable in the area as I do in SoHo. I don't know why that is. Maybe because it's new and I'm more introverted than I am outgoing.

AC2K: So you're not particularly excited or happy about Chelsea as a new art neighborhood?

MK: I'm not angry. A lot of people... the artists started pushing us in both directions. Some of them that are still down here say that Chelsea is like a newcomer, like somebody that's invading their terrain. You know, I don't think of it that way, I think that we'll probably end up by going to both





places. Sunday Chelsea, but SoHo is really, at least in the foreseeable future... We'll come by the American Fine Arts every week, at the end of the day no matter what we can come here and it's very comfortable down in SoHo. I don't feel it's comfortable yet in Chelsea, but again, as more of our friends move up there it'll become that.

AC2K: Do you think SoHo's going to change after the galleries move out?

MK: Well if the real estate market changes the way it looks like it is, there's a lot of designers moving in, boutiques and so forth, it'll have to change. I can't see how many of the galleries are going to be able to sustain in this market unless there's a tremendous turn around in the economy.

AC2K: You've been visiting galleries in SoHo for quite some time now, have you seen SoHo change a lot since you started visiting galleries here?

MK: It's interesting. I was telling Alice the other day that the last time we were here, we were walking up Wooster street to come to the gallery, and I just looked up at the lofts, and I said, you know, we've been coming up here all these years and we don't even know what's going on. I mean, there maybe things up there that we would be really interested in, but we never investigated it. You know we never looked at the furniture shops until we bought the house and started looking at... We didn't even realize that Knoll was right here. It's just incredible that there's so much going on here, that you don't really know about. I'm sure the people that come to the furniture shops don't even know they're available. It's a different attack to where they're going, a different approach.

AC2K: So you do other stuff in SoHo, you eat here, you shop for clothes here too?

MK: Yeah, I shop at a place on Spring and Wooster. It's interesting, there's a salesman there named Colin.

AC2K: Do you think that Chelsea will change a lot, now that there's galleries moving up there?

MK: I think it will have to. I think that simply because galleries have bought the property, it sort of ensures the fact that they'll be there. And if they're there, I think that a lot of places will open there.

AC2K: Do you have a feeling about how other art collectors feel about the move to Chelsea?

MK: I don't really have much time to talk to other collectors, but the thing that I have heard is that when I mention a gallery that's down there, they don't know it. Like Carol Greene is on 26th Street, and even though it's only four blocks away from Matthew Marks and other galleries, Pat Hearn, they didn't even know where it was. Maybe it's just taking the elevator up to the eighth floor, sort of restricts it to the people that know about the gallery and want to go there, or read about a show. But I think that will change also, as the shows get written up. I think we'll find galleries there that we didn't even know exist. I think all things change even though they stay the same.



Donald Kuspit, critic

DK: Hello, OK, there you are. Should I start talking?

AC2K: Well, I had a few questions, but you can say whatever you like.

DK: Alright, well very simply, what I think it's all about is being mysterious and inaccessible, being remote. It's harder to get to Chelsea than Soho, and I think that there is a feeling among dealers that Soho has been sort of junked up by its success, by the kind of boutiques, furniture stores etcetera, and they don't want to be associated with that. They don't want to think of galleries as kind of glorified boutiques, so they're all moving there. It also probably sort of has to do with some kind of real estate situation, I understand. It's gotten very expensive to rent in SoHo, and I suspect that it's less expensive in Chelsea. Chelsea is also relatively built up, and so they don't have to worry about these sort of stores moving in. It's all kind of residential, with some restaurants or places of that sort. They're moving basically to the margins, right? To the margin of Manhattan, towards the river. I think that's part of it, although I think that there's probably an economic dimension. 23rd Street towards the pier there, I think has become sort of a sports area? And so I think that there is that dimension of that association of something that is also successful, so it's got that kind of ambiguity to it. You can ask me any other questions, that's basically all I have to say.

AC2K: Yeah, that's pretty much the answer to the first question which is sort of 'what do you think of the shift to Chelsea?' And then, I guess, the next question is: do you enjoy going to Chelsea?

DK: Well, I live in Chelsea and so it's easier for me to go there and actually, I do like the streets a little better. They seem a little more private at least at this stage, less cluttered with shops and people, although I'm sure that will change relatively soon. But you know, the area around the Dia Foundation, and some of that area are not business streets, I'd say, in the way that West Broadway is.

AC2K: What do you think SoHo is going to be like in the future, like say, in the next five to ten years?

DK: I don't know, I think that there are galleries there, and I think that many will stay, and it may become like the upper part of Madison Avenue, where there is a mix of galleries and stores etcetera. It may go into a decline if the galleries pull out. In a sense, the galleries have done their job, they've helped gentrify the area, and that's one of the things that art does, that's one of its side effects. It may go back to a residential area, there are many artists that live there, etcetera. I can't imagine though, that the businesses will leave. Although there is such turn over in New York, and the city is always reinventing itself. Different areas are reinventing themselves, so I find it hard to say, but 5 years in New York is a long time in terms of a change.



Matthew Marks, gallerist

AC2K: How long have you had an art gallery?

MM: I opened in 1990.

AC2K: And when did you open a gallery in Chelsea?

MM: The fall of '94.

AC2K: So you were sort of the first gallery to move over there. How did you get the idea to open a gallery on that block?

MM: It's really simple. I had an idea in mind of the gallery I wanted. I wanted a ground floor space, big, no basement, that could have sculpture. I called a SoHo real estate agent and asked if there was anything around like that. They got all excited, they said "Sure, we'll fax you a list of everything that's available." And I looked at all the addresses and I know the stuff pretty well, and I didn't like anything enough to really go look at it. I kind of wandered around a bit in SoHo. I basically thought, well, what spaces do I really like? And I really like Dia. I thought Dia has really beautiful spaces. So I was at some Christmas party in December '93, and I ran into Charlie Wright who was the head of Dia at the time and I said that I was thinking about looking for a bigger space, and did he know of anything around where he was, and he said yes, actually he did - that there was a really great space down the street from him, and he would want it for Dia but they had just bought this big building across the street. And I said did he know, could he tell me how I could get a look at it, he said sure, just call so and so tomorrow. So I did, and I went down and looked at it, and I just walked in and I thought this is absolutely perfect. I don't know, I knew right away it was totally fine. Exactly what I was looking for and then that was basically it. I called the owner up and you know it takes forever and ever with negotiations. I first saw it in December '93 and I decided to take it in December '93.

AC2K: What did the building used to be?

MM: It's a garage. I think the guy had a shipping company and had a big building on 21st Street and used this garage on 22nd Street to store his trucks and was moving the whole thing to New Jersey. So, they were available. To be honest, I didn't think very much of the whole Chelsea versus SoHo thing. It didn't seem like such a big deal to me. I figured that... remember it was a second space for me, I was always going to keep uptown. I really thought of it as an exhibition space. And I thought I would like to do three shows a year and keep them up for a long time, have the same hours as Dia. Which was very much like Dia's thing, they have a limited number of shows and they keep them up for a long time. I asked a couple of artists and everyone seemed to think it was really nice and everyone who saw the space really liked it. There were a few people who were like "oh are people going to come?" But then you realize that everyone goes to Dia, so it was never really a big deal for me. And in the back of my mind I thought, well my experience is that very few people, very rarely in the art world does anyone have a unique idea, so I just figured that eventually somebody else was going to want a big space and they were going to do the same thing. They were going to call up the real agents in SoHo and say I



want a big space, they were going to realize that there weren't any nice spaces left, there wasn't anything that would really fit the bill like this, and they would end up doing a similar kind of thing, so I figured, you know, some day I wouldn't be the only one there.

AC2K: So you weren't surprised when you heard that other galleries were going to move over there?

MM: Well I'll tell you, I was incredibly surprised and still am that it's all happened so fast. I thought, well, within five years I bet someone else will have moved. And you know it was not even within five years, it was like before I had even finished construction. When I was under construction people had already started looking around. And Pat and Paul and then I think it was Paula Cooper happened shortly after. All these rumours started happening within the first year, which was amazing. And you know, I obviously couldn't predict such a thing like that. I had no idea that it was all going to happen so fast and that someone like you would be asking questions about it and it's only two and a half years or something.

AC2K: How do you think Chelsea's going to change now that so many galleries are moving over here?

MM: Here's the thing, I have no idea how it's going to change but I figure that it just will, there are going to be more people over there. It's pretty empty over there now, but who knows how it's going to change, and how long it will take.

AC2K: What's the difference between SoHo and Chelsea?

MM: Chelsea doesn't have the nice cast-iron buildings that SoHo has, it has these more, I think, even more industrial spaces more garages, the streets are wider, the buildings a little lower, it's a totally different physical nature from SoHo. It's over by the water, so it's going to be different no matter what. But in what exact ways, I don't know.

AC2K: Why did you decide to open a second space in Chelsea?

MM: I opened a second space because the first space turned out to be so happy and successful on all different levels, so quickly, and I realized that going uptown and downtown was very difficult for me, and I'd always seen the uptown gallery as the main gallery, and the 22nd Street gallery as an exhibition space, and I realized that I'd really like to be a lot closer to the exhibition space. But I liked the way it was so well that I didn't want to rebuild it and make room for offices and storage and stuff, I wanted to keep it the way it was. So, basically, Barbara Gladstone said to me last summer that she was really looking at things, and she was having difficulty finding a building that worked for a single gallery. A lot of the nice things were really too big. And I said, you know, it's very loose, it's not like you think everything through, and so I said, "Oh, I'd love to go look at some things with you." I'd always thought in the back of my head that someday Chelsea will really be happening, and I can just be down there, but I had a couple more years on my lease in uptown, and I wasn't really worried about it, but I realized it's all happening so fast, faster than you think, and I thought, I'm going to be really stupid, and by the time I decide to move down





there lots of the nice places will be gone and everything will cost a lot of money, stuff like that. So the thing is, if you have an idea, you should act on it. So I said to Barbara that I'd be happy to go look at spaces with her. So I looked at one, and it didn't divide up that nicely. The next week the real estate agent wanted to show us something else, and I walked right in and once again I said, oh, this is really fantastic, Barbara, this is so gorgeous. And what happens is, you get really excited, because it's this fantastic thing, and you imagine how nice it could be as a gallery, and there's tons of room, and so I said I'd definitely love to do this. And then we measured it and realized it's enough for three galleries, and we started again the endless negotiation, that goes on forever, and we asked Metro to join us, and that's how it all happened.

AC2K: So then in the fall you're moving your office and you'll be working in Chelsea on a day-to-day basis?

MM: Yes

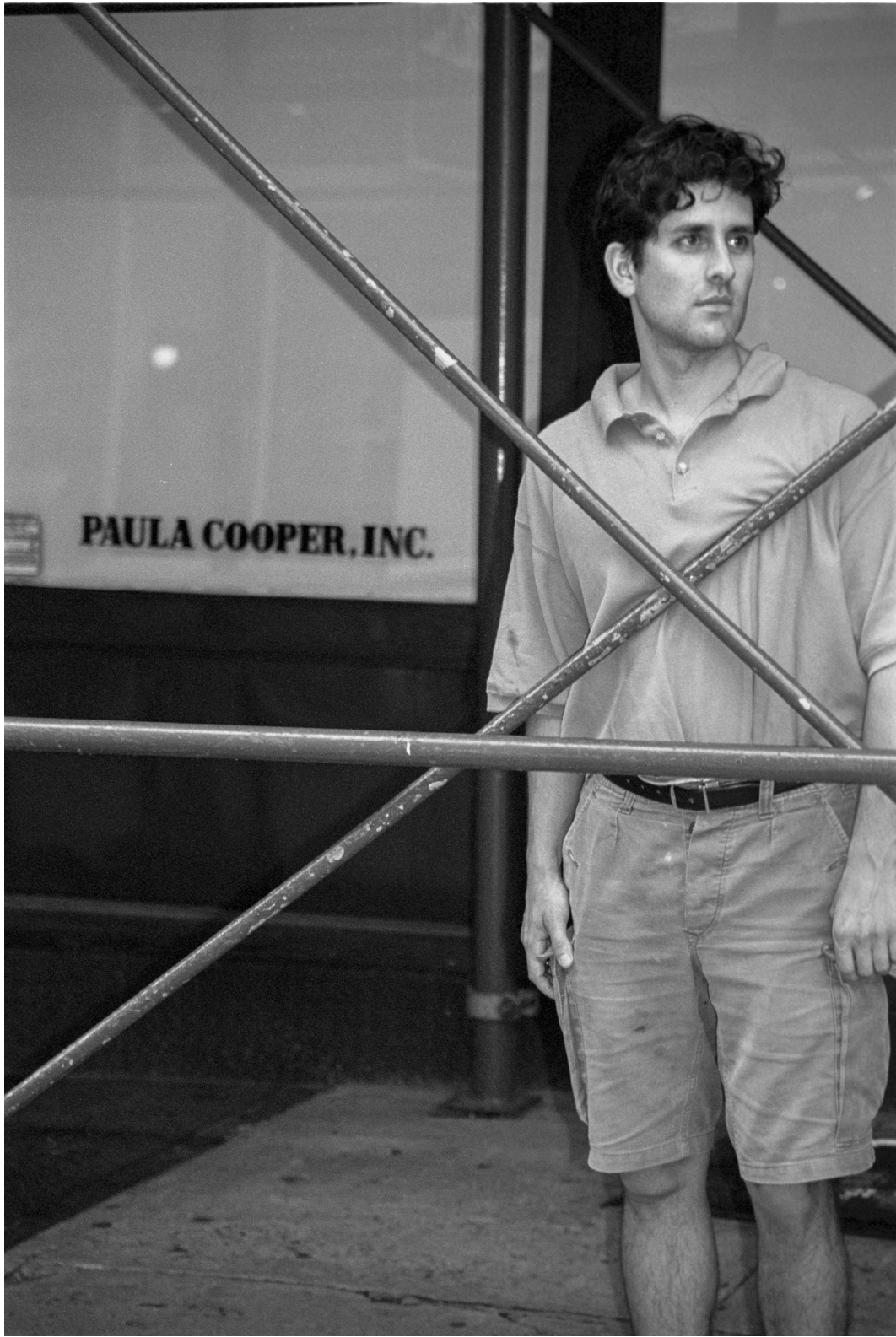
AC2K: What do you think that will be like?

MM: Oh, you know, I can't wait. It'll be really nice. Uptown, this is like a former townhouse or something, these spaces are small, and we're all kind of cramped here. The exhibition space here is really nice for works on paper, photographs, things like that, or small shows, paintings. But you can really only have a handful of them at a time. And there's no room to store things, there's lots of problems. So that will be really nice, and it will be really nice to be next to 22nd Street, to the space there, and I live downtown, it will be nice not to have to commute.

AC2K: Is there anything you think you're going to miss about working uptown? Are you worried about finding a place to eat?

MM: No, I shouldn't eat that much anyway.







James Meyer, critic

AC2K: What do you think of the shift to Chelsea?

JM: I just see it as the latest in a series of movements of the art world in New York through the past century. In the '40s, it was Greenwich Village and that dated back to the teens, then there was the shift to the East Village in the '50s, and in the late '60s, galleries started moving to SoHo. Then there was a return to the East Village in the '80s, followed by another return to SoHo. And now to Chelsea. I see Paula Cooper's departure particularly, as emblematic of SoHo's end. She was SoHo's original pioneer. I don't see this exodus as a bad thing; it's as something normal, a process whereby artists and galleries just move because the prior place has taken on material and symbolic implications which they don't like. In moving to another place there is this kind of hope that a new kind of identity for art, and those involved in art can be put out there. That's what is happening now. The question is, what will be the nature of this change.

AC2K: Do you enjoy going to Chelsea?

JM: No, not particularly, but people probably didn't enjoy going to SoHo in the late '70s. SoHo seemed like a pretty funny place to go to look at art. Just a lot of factories and a couple of old bars like Fanellis. Chelsea is similarly empty of things to do. I don't particularly enjoy it but if that's where the art is, that's where I'll go.

AC2K: How is Chelsea different from SoHo?

JM: I think that's pretty complicated. First of all, it's architecturally and industrially a very different place. The architecture can't compare to SoHo's. And it's not part of the uptown/downtown axis which produced the city's growth; it's so far west. For so long New York operated on a kind of conceptual "uptown/downtown" dyad, implying oppositions like "upper class/lower class," "bourgeoisie/bohemia," etcetera. SoHo became no longer downtown, it became in a sense "uptown" with its blue chip galleries. Yet Chelsea is neither uptown or downtown, it's an ancillary place, off the beaten track. That's kind of interesting.

AC2K: What will SoHo be like in ten years?

JM: It will continue to become even more of a boutique urban shopping mall. The process will continue unabated and galleries will increasingly be crowded out. The residual interest is the fact that some galleries still remain: Colin's, Friedrich Petzel's, Stefano Basilico's, David Zwirner's, Deitch's. This lower SoHo district will be the last outpost of the SoHo that we knew from the '70s; and there are good galleries showing interesting work. So it will remain to be seen how they survive and whether the art they show will continue to be of interest. I think part of the reason for them holding out is the zoning of SoHo. Upper SoHo was zoned for retail commerce, for boutiques, and lower SoHo was zoned to remain industrial, so it still has that kind of gritty quality of "Olde SoHo." It seems not coincidental that those galleries that have collected down there still have the "Olde SoHo" feeling.



Barbara and Howard Morse, collectors

AC2K: What do you think of the shift to Chelsea?

BSM: Definitely an upshift!

HLM: Does that mean a shift into high gear?

BSM: Are you talking about cars or mountain bikes?

HLM: Mountain bikes, of course.

BSM: Well a high gear on a mountain bike would mean the small sprocket ring in front and the large in back – but that would be a down-shift.

HLM: So it's a shift into lower gear.

BSM: Whatever you say.

AC2K: Do you enjoy going there?

HLM: On bikes it's great.

BSM: Mountain or touring?

HLM: Touring, of course.

BSM: Why?

HLM: The roads are paved.

BSM: I like to go off-road.

HLM: The park ends at CPS.

BSM: You can find a green way.

HLM: Everything with you is mapping.

BSM: A plan of action.

AC2K: How is Chelsea different from SoHo?

BSM: No hills.

HLM: No cobblestones.

BSM: It's adjacent to a waterway.

HLM: You can park.

BSM: Your bike or your car?

HLM: Your kayak.









Friedrich Petzel, gallerist

AC2K: Your first job in SoHo was at Metro Pictures?

FP: No, at Thea Westreich, she was on Broadway when I started, but only for like three weeks and then she moved her operation to 114 Greene Street. I stayed there for a year, and then Metro hired me.

AC2K: You had a gallery for a little while on Broadway.

FP: In September '93, I opened on Broadway next to the New Museum on that side of the top floor. I shared a loft with Joseph Kosuth, and actually also continued to work with Metro. So for seven months there was kind of an overlap. I continued that stuff on Broadway, and then we moved over here in November of '94.

AC2K: So your whole gallerist career has been in SoHo pretty much?

FP: Yeah, here and in Europe.

AC2K: When did you first start working at Thea Westreich?

FP: I think January of '91, for a year.

AC2K: In the time that you've worked in SoHo, how has it changed?

FP: I wasn't here in the '80s that much, so I can't really tell. I remember back in the '70s when SoHo was like completely deserted at night. For example, there was one bar on Canal Street and West Broadway on the corner, really low key, everything was low key. And in the '80s I didn't spend much time here, so I don't really remember. In the '90s when I came there was this huge kind of recession, so again there was not much going on in SoHo that I found very interesting. There were plenty of galleries around.

AC2K: When you decided to move from Broadway to down here, it wasn't very clear that this was going to be an art neighborhood?

FP: Obviously, Colin de Land was here already, that was one good thing to be close to. And then also David Zwirner and the others did open on Greene Street. So I thought, well, this is a good opportunity and I could afford the rents here, so Stefano found the place, and we divided it up in two. I wanted a ground floor gallery anyway, so I had to move, I would've had to have moved anyway. This was a wonderful option.

AC2K: Did you consider any other neighborhoods before you moved here?

FP: No I didn't. Chelsea was not in the discussion yet. Not really, not that I remember at least. And East Village, Meat Market, any of those places...

AC2K: It was Stefano's idea to move to this block?

FP: One of his artists actually had a studio in this place. And then it was a restaurant, and we looked at it, and it seemed perfect for him but it was too big, so we decided okay.



AC2K: What kind of restaurant was it?

FP: A kind of Kosher Japanese restaurant. It was really run down. In the beginning I could not imagine that it was ever going to happen.

AC2K: Since you've moved here, how long has it been?

FP: Close to two years now.

AC2K: How has this neighborhood changed? Has there been more traffic?

FP: I think there was a lot of traffic even before we moved here because Pat and Colin were here, and Wooster Gardens. I remember there were openings at Pat Hearn's and Colin's, and there were huge, I mean enormous amounts of people out there, especially when it was warm. So I can't really tell you, maybe a few more collectors, people from out of town come down here more often than it used to be, but there was a lot of stuff going on here.

AC2K: How do you find south SoHo as a place to work?

FP: I find it lovely. It almost reminds me of Europe because it's rather kind of relaxed. All the restaurants are in the neighborhood. You can go to Lucky Strike for a quick bite or whatever. And on Canal Street you have all the supply stores. I hate running around, so it's very easy for us to get some light bulbs or anything you want. It's a very pleasant neighborhood because you save a lot of time. In Chelsea, for example, if you work in Chelsea, you would have to have a pickup truck. For a light bulb you have to drive a few miles.

AC2K: Do you have any predictions for this neighborhood?

FP: With the hotel being built across West Broadway, it'll bring more tourists. The restaurants will be more crowded. The sewage problems will rise. But I can't tell you if that will really change the neighborhood. It certainly will not do anything for us in terms of selling art because those are not the kind of people who are going to buy art. It's going to be more crowded, I guess. But on the other hand there are more galleries moving into this neighborhood too, so I don't know. But I'm not opposed to the idea of being in a commercial neighborhood. I think it's kind of a hypocritical statement, to be in a non-commercial or whatever, a difficult to reach type of neighborhood. I don't agree with that.

AC2K: So you haven't considered moving to Chelsea?

FP: Oh, I've considered it, yeah sure. Because I got good offers. I mean, people really tried to woo us over there.

AC2K: You had somebody who was showing you spaces there?

FP: They called us up, and made us great promises. There's some kind of Chelsea development group or whatever, and they tried really hard to bring business over to Chelsea. Sure I went there and I also looked at my former bosses' new gallery space on 24th Street. I know there are a lot of places available at good rents but I don't want to be that remote. I just want to



be more approachable because I show more younger artists and that means that we have two or three different audiences; people who buy art, but also the students, the critics – the whole spectrum. Which is less important to Metro Pictures. Everybody knows about Cindy Sherman, Barbara Gladstone's artists, Richard Prince and so on and so on.

AC2K: You want to be in this neighborhood because of the public?

FP: Because of the public. I don't mind the public, I find it very hypocritical this whole discussion. I love the public, that's why I have a public gallery, you know, because of this public. I want as many people to come here, obviously they don't always ask the most interesting questions, but yeah, sure.

AC2K: Are you saying that if Chelsea became as heavily trafficked a neighborhood of art that you would consider moving there?

FP: Yeah, you see, I'm not nostalgic about anything. If SoHo doesn't work, I'd be, boom, the first one out of here. I'm not nostalgic in that respect to a site. I'm certainly not devoted to a particular neighborhood. I could care less. It works now for the artists I think really well. And if I have the slightest feeling that it doesn't anymore I'd be the first one out of here. So it's not so much for me as for the neighborhood as to create a certain forum for people to look at art, and as soon as that doesn't do the trick anymore, out.

AC2K: Does it have anything to do with the number of galleries or the kind of galleries?

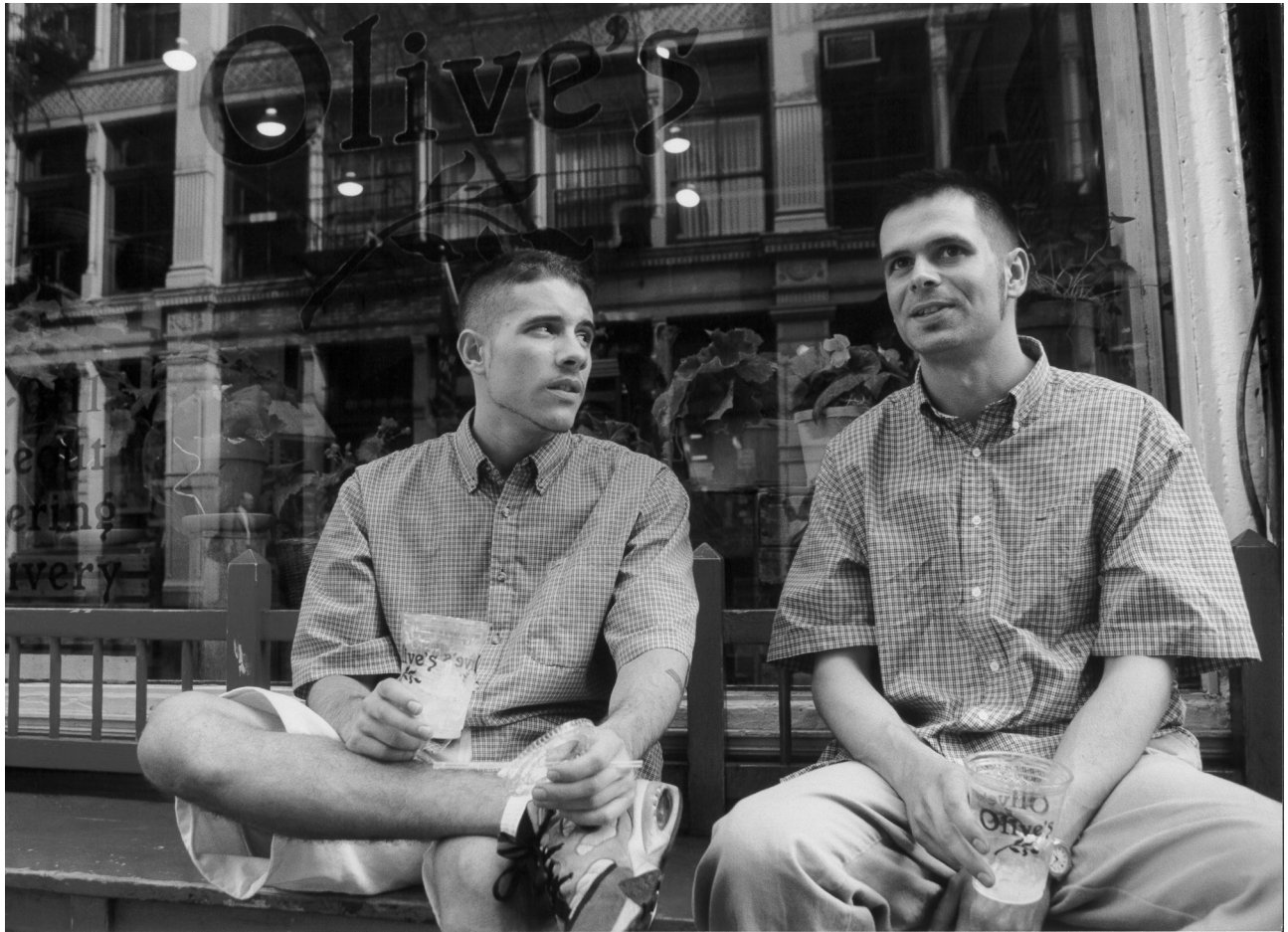
FP: The kind and the number both. First of all, I think there is more, I hate to talk in this kind of stereotypical term, but the cutting edge, the upcoming younger artists that show here. If my clients want to take more time to look at what the next generation is doing they should come here, they will not necessarily find the same material in Chelsea, with one or two exceptions as usual. Also I believe that a movement like this is not a trickle-down type of thing. The situation over there is going to be seven, eight, blue-chip galleries are there but it's not a young, youth movement that really develops that neighborhood. I will find this far more interesting when a group of really young art dealers move to the meat market all by themselves. That would interest me even more. But right now we don't have to because we have it all here. Do you see what I'm saying, this trickle-down idea. We have like five or six very successful, very blue-chip galleries, and then we are little satellites, we have to circulate around them. I don't think that is the wise way to do these things, instead of on our terms. Right now I don't see the urgency... this constant discussion about money always, I mean it's ridiculous. Our rents are quite good here.

AC2K: This neighborhood is comparable to what you were offered in Chelsea?

FP: A little more space for the same money but also you have to develop the whole thing. So to talk someone into Chelsea because they save money, this is also not correct. Because honestly the rents are not that much more affordable or cheap compared to what we spend here.









Rob Pruitt and Tom Borgese, gallerists

AC2K: So, you guys both worked in SoHo, at art galleries?

TB: Yeah, and I also worked at Anna Sui. And at 303 Gallery.

RP: And I worked at Sonnabend, and Anna Sui, with Tom.

AC2K: And you liked working in SoHo?

RP: Oh yeah, it was good.

TB: I liked it a lot, it was like a little neighborhood.

RP: Well I love shopping, so when I worked at Sonnabend I would use my lunch breaks to just shop. I wouldn't even eat anything really, maybe coffee. But then it was like an hour of Comme Des Garcons, Rizzoli, Ad Hoc, Think Big.

TB: I liked being able to go around to different stores and galleries all the time and visiting my friends.

RP: And developing crushes on all the different counter boys, like at Olive's and Jonathan Moore.

AC2K: So now that you guys don't work in SoHo anymore, is there anything that you miss about it?

TB: Olive's, definitely, not just because of what Rob just said, but I really think that they have the best food. The Market Salad, the grain. I was never bored with their food.

RP: I have gone through a little SoHo shopping withdrawal, I mean, even though I don't own any Patagonia, I loved going there a couple of times a week.

TB: Right, and like, what's in the window at Miu Miu.

RP: Right.

AC2K: Were you surprised when you heard that art galleries were moving to Chelsea?

RP: Not really. I think being so entrenched, I started hearing about it gradually like a year and a half ago.

TB: Well it was weird, because, when I first moved to New York and I walked through that neighborhood, I would always think that that's where I wanted to move if I was able to. It's just such a likable area, all the trees, quiet..

RP: Dia

AC2K: Why do you think the art galleries decided to move out of SoHo?

TB: Well, you know, I guess because of this mall-like



quality on the weekends and stuff, so many people weren't really coming to look at art anymore.

RP: I almost think it's kind of an artificial construct, just to get people into art again.

TB: Yeah.

RP: Like break off the past and start fresh. And maybe it doesn't have that much to do with SoHo real estate costs, shops moving in, blah blah blah, it's just like a whole fresh start kind of.

TB: Yeah. I think it's exciting.

RP: Oh I do too, it's my favorite kind of thing. I love change. And divorces.

AC2K: Why do you think they chose Chelsea to move to?

TB: Dia.

RP: Dia, and then because, you know, it's a pretty vacant neighborhood. And what else? I mean, where else? You wouldn't move to other boroughs, like Brooklyn.

TB: It's slightly isolated, you know, the way SoHo used to be.

RP: Plus people aren't ready for like, a cyber-art community yet, it's still such a social thing.

AC2K: So you guys are partners, you're going to open up an art gallery together, it's going to be your first art gallery.

TB: Right.

AC2K: And you're going to start it in Chelsea?

TB: Mm, Uh-huh.

AC2K: Why did you choose Chelsea for your art gallery?

AC2K: Was the move to Chelsea one of the reasons you decided to open a gallery even?

RP: Sure.

TB: I think so, yeah, just because of the whole thing Rob was just talking about, the whole excitement of something new, I mean...

RP: It's a good way for us to fit in, like, in the Fall of '96 it's all going to be new, and there we'll be, amidst the newness, you know. Like the first day of school after summer vacation.

TB: Right.



AC2K: It would be harder to open a new gallery in SoHo?

RP: Less glamorous.

TB: Yeah, I mean, when you're new, you don't want to be venturing into something where you feel like people are leaving or that it's changing.

AC2K: So you never thought of any other neighborhoods for you gallery.

TB: No, we were thinking it would be cool to have a gallery a little bit further East, of all the new galleries, then it would be kind of like, being closer to other things.

AC2K: The subway?

TB: Coffee shops.

RP: Coffee shops.

AC2K: Are you worried about finding a place to eat over here?

TB: The eating thing, I'm really worried about, I don't know what's around here.

RP: Voids get filled, and there isn't a place now, but I'm sure that there will be. Even in a small way, to start with, at Anna Sui, a couple of sandwich boys would stop by every day with this basket of homemade sandwiches to sell.

TB: We should suggest to them that they move to Chelsea.

RB: Right, exactly, and that one boy was really cute, too.

TB: Yeah.

AC2K: What do you think will happen to SoHo now that galleries are moving out?

TB: I think it'll be almost unnoticeable because...

RP: It's sort of becoming a full-fledged shopping district.

TB: Right.

RP: But I haven't really done my homework because I don't even know if like, Sonnabend or Castelli are staying.

AC2K: They are.

RP: I guess with the Guggenheim SoHo and American Fine Arts staying, and Sonnabend and Castelli...

TB: The change won't be that perceptible.





RP: I guess you could force some kind of issue, like maybe consider all those that stay old school or something, that would be funny.

AC2K: How do you think Chelsea will change, now that art galleries are moving there?

TB: Well, like we were saying, just more commerce in general.

RP: I think more people will start riding bicycles.

TB: Yeah, that would be nice, real French.

RP: That's one of the first plans I have, that I would get a bicycle, because it's such a long trek over there. I know when I worked for my friend Susan's fashion show last spring, I allowed myself a half hour, but I wound up being 20 minutes late.

TB: That's what's nice about it, you do have to go past all these residential blocks.

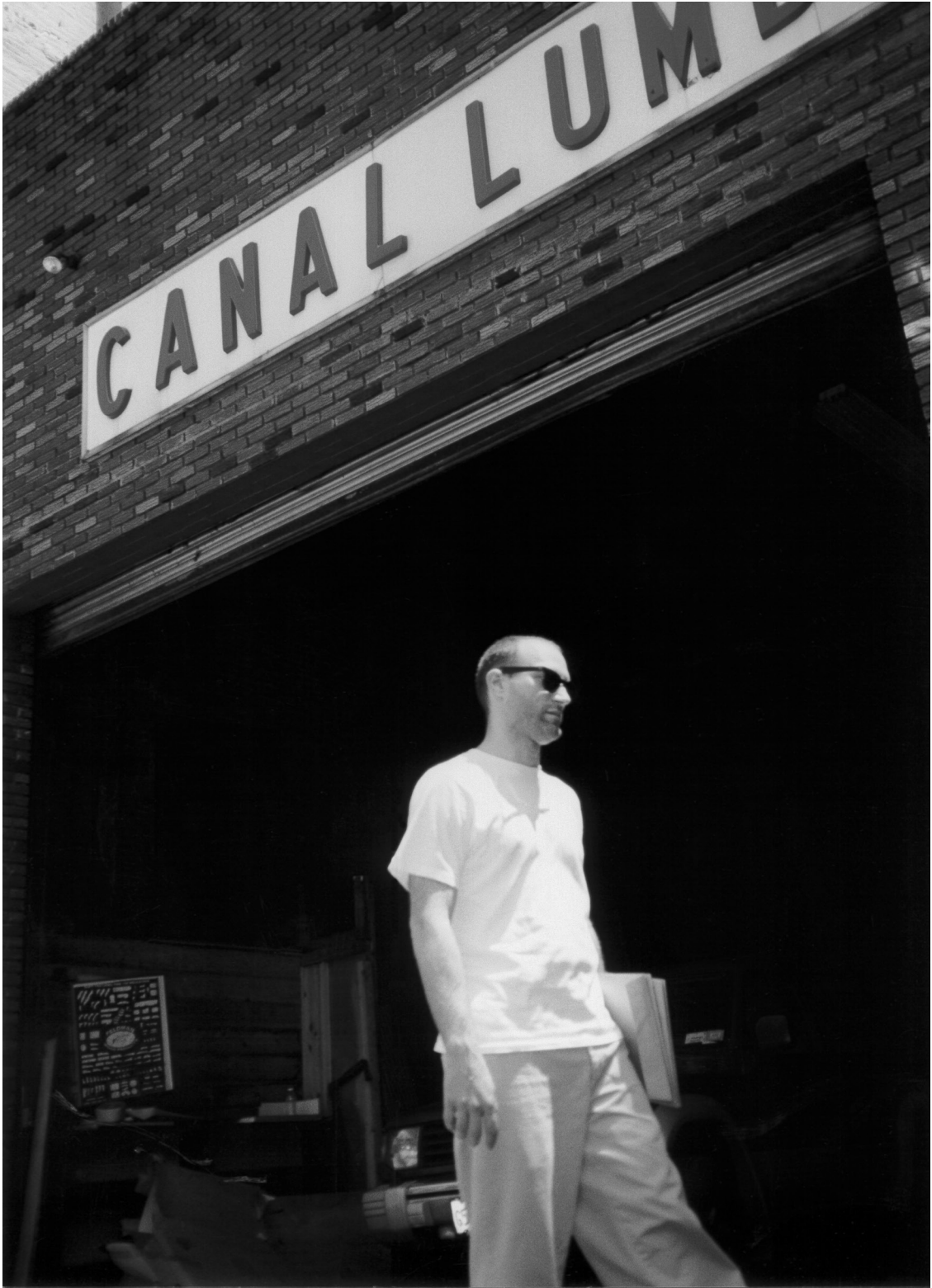
RP: Maybe the move to Chelsea will help form a closer relationship between the galleries, planning things for the same evenings. Just because drawing people to the neighborhood won't be as easy as it was in SoHo.

TB: Yeah, that's a nice idea.

AC2K: Are you concerned about that, about the traffic in the gallery?

TB: No, we're pretty confident that we'll be able to attract an exciting crowd.







David Gerard Rimanelli, critic

AC2K: What do you say to people when they ask you "What do you think of the shift to Chelsea?"

DGR: Well, I've shifted to Chelsea myself. I live on 13th Street near 8th Avenue, so I love it. I get to go and see these shows, and it's like less work for me because I have this other job. I like, write the art listings, some of them at least for "The New Yorker." So certain days I like to narrow things down, so I don't have to work too hard. So I just want to, say, walk down Greene Street. Now I can just walk down 22nd Street. I love it, I'm all for it.

AC2K: What is your regular job?

DGR: I don't have a regular job. That's the tragedy of my life. This is as close to a real job that I have, "The New Yorker," because they give me a monthly stipend. So I always refer to that as my job.

AC2K: So you enjoy going there?

DGR: I hate Chelsea. I think it's just like an avatar of moral psychological or aesthetic spiritual degradation. The defile of 8th Avenue, I find defiles me. But as I'm, you know, various nomadic, you know, blow up dirigibles of humanity pass by me in various indecorous outfits. But it is convenient. So that's how I feel about Chelsea. I loathe it, but I don't mind it. There are, like, six galleries there now.

AC2K: That's the best thing about it in your mind?

DGR: That's the only thing about it, certainly the Big Cup is not a feature. But maybe it should be, maybe I should just embrace everything I revile, and just become like this other thing. I'd probably be happier.

AC2K: Chelsea Girl...

DGR: Exactly. I'd probably be so much happier. But instead, I have to be "resistant" in some way and be this other unassimilatable thing, and hence, unhappy.

AC2K: How is it different from SoHo?

DGR: Well, in the ways that everyone says, like shopping opportunities are very different. There's no Comme des Garcons, although there is Camouflage, and various other purveyors of scanty underwear, scanty male oriented underwear. Otherwise, you know, there's Pottery Barn, there's William Sonoma, all those stores. And I guess, you know, it's more residential. Everyone lives there, all those homosexuals live there. Me. I live there. I want to inscribe myself in this narrative. SoHo used to be fine during the week, I thought like a few years ago, and then it just became a drag on the weekend, then it seemed like it became a drag everyday. 'Cause there were like all these Yentas from the suburbs, just like 'aaah...caw...caw...shop...shop...'But that's what everyone says. I guess I'm in the same boat as Mary Boone on that score. And how else is it different?... I don't know... I



guess lower SoHo is like still OK. I can take like the #1 train and get off at Canal Street, and see like all the galleries that I want to see here like this gallery and whatever, a few others. So that's how I would distinguish it, not much of a distinction from what other people say.

AC2K: Would you distinguish the art?

DGR: The mother ship of Chelsea is, of course, Matthew Marks, and that's very like you know, blue chip. And the younger artists that they show there, with a few exceptions, I think are kind of wan to me. I think they show a lot of uninteresting work. They show a lot of work that isn't that interesting but is certifiably blue chip, you know like solid gold. I have to make like obeisance to them because they've, like, given money to me in the past. I love that.

AC2K: What do you think SoHo is going to be like in like five years, ten years?

DGR: Oh, I don't know, I just don't know. (laughs)

AC2K: Will you come here in the future?

DGR: Yeah, maybe. Maybe it will be really different. Maybe it'll be fun clubs, but I'll be too old to go to clubs. I'm already too old to go to a club. I'm like a mocha, I'm a man of a certain age, you know. That's what I fear most in life, is being of a certain age and having people like a decade younger than me pointing fingers at me and laugh. (laughs) Because that's what I used to do so gleefully. I don't know if I'll have to go to SoHo. I never thought I'd go to the Upper East Side, and now, on a few occasions like once a month I'll have to go to the Upper East Side. I love it. It's like going out of town. I like going to the galleries there, it's fun.

AC2K: That's really all the questions, do you have anything that you've been dying to get off your chest about SoHo or Chelsea?

DGR: No, I have no feelings really. I just tromped those up for your benefit. (laughs)









Walter Robinson, critic

AC2K: So you just came up with "WeChe"? It just popped into your head?

WR: Oh yeah, it was a no-brainer. I was writing a story when the first gallerists were moving over there, Matthew Marks, and Pat, and Dia were over there... and what was her name?

AC2K: Annina Nosei?

WR: No the woman that was in the space before her.

AC2K: Oh, I can't remember.

WR: So I was just writing a little report for "Art in America" and it was a no-brainer, SoHo, We-Che: West Chelsea. People were calling it West Chelsea, not just Chelsea. And then it got picked up right away by somebody at the "Times," the style section, a big article on the apartment complex over there on 23rd Street. I forgot what it's called. And as a little side bar, they did a thing on what's in a name, who named We-Che, and they tracked it all back to me and I think they quoted Brian McNally saying I was stupid for coming up with a dumb name and stuff like this.

AC2K: But it's the best thing that anyone's come up with.

WR: I kind of like it, We-Che, but it dropped out. It's kind of dropped out of sight. People just call it Chelsea now. For a moment I had a chance to go down in New York Guide books. I might try to re-popularize it.

AC2K: I like it.

WR: Because Chelsea is something different. Chelsea is that area around 8th Avenue, sort of in the 20s where all the photographers live and people have lofts. That's Chelsea. We-Che would be way over there by the highway, where there's cobblestone streets and stuff. Taxi garages.

AC2K: So why do you think galleries moved to Chelsea?

WR: God, I don't know. SoHo was too crowded? I don't know. It seems crazy. I don't understand how anything works in the art world. It's been 20 years of trying to figure it out. I still don't know. The same reason that people buy Julian Schnabel paintings I guess.

AC2K: Now that they're there, what do you think of the neighborhood?

WR: Oh, it's really good. I went over there one time. I went over there on a Sunday once, you know, it's nice and quiet. There's nobody in any of the galleries. You can go to Dia, there's never anybody there. I went over there with my wife on a Sunday, and there was Jerry Saltz and Roberta Smith looking around.

AC2K: Sunday's the special day.

WR: Right, it was inherited from the East Village.



AC2K: Oh, really? I didn't...

WR: The East Village had its own day. It was Sunday, closed on Monday and Tuesday. But it's fantastic. That whole Street.

AC2K: Yeah, there's lots of light.

WR: And Annina Nosei, she's hardly even got a sign, the place is practically hidden. I don't know what in the world she's thinking. But I guess you don't need it. You don't need the public. There's something intellectual for you; the Chelsea galleries show that you don't need the public, all you need are art collectors.

Isn't that what Pat says?

AC2K: I don't know... So you enjoy going there?

WR: Yeah.

AC2K: In the course of your job, you have to go to Chelsea to visit galleries sometimes, and you have to go to SoHo once in a while.

WR: Yeah.

AC2K: So how is it different for you making a trip to SoHo?

WR: Well, Chelsea is a lot easier because you go there, and it's one little day trip. It's very convenient. SoHo is a sprawling mass of places and no matter how hard you work, you're going to miss important shows. It's much more of a tourist kind of thing. Going to Chelsea, it's much more of a trip. You go there, you have lunch, you know, you have to plan on it. It's not something you can drop. It's not casual, it's a definite visit. It's the sort of thing that one does with one's wife. Like going to a play, or out to dinner, or going to a museum. Now, with the new galleries moving over there, it'll be too crowded to do them all in one day. Maybe not, I guess you could do them all in one day.

AC2K: What do you think it's going to be like in like five years, ten years? Do you have any predictions for Chelsea?

WR: More restaurants, I don't know. It's amusing to think of. It'll be 2001. Maybe there'll be aliens. (laughter)









Andrea Rosen, gallerist

AC2K: How long has your gallery been in SoHo?

AR: I've been open six and a half years.

AC2K: And is this your first gallery?

AR: It's my first gallery.

AC2K: And it's always been in the same place?

AR: Yeah.

AC2K: How has SoHo changed since you've worked here?

AR: When I opened in January of 1990, it was already pretty developed sort of. And in fact, I don't see that it's really changed all that much. The Guggenheim moving downtown. And in the course of the first couple of years that I've lived here, moved here, or opened, it certainly was this moment when a lot of people were moving downtown, and galleries. And the Guggenheim opening was sort of a legitimization that this was... What happened was that SoHo became the only art neighborhood, whereas before there was always this split between 57th Street and SoHo. And even though galleries remained in other places it pretty much seemed that the art world had become united in SoHo, and there wasn't this kind of split any more. That was the biggest change. And certainly it's become more active in terms of street traffic, and I think that that happened because there was a sort of central focus of the art world. It became less intimidating or easier to think about, including gallery going as part of a social activity. And of course lots of people come not to look at galleries, but I do think that the people came because of the art world and then the rest of the stories came afterwards because...

AC2K: So during the time that you've been here you've seen more and more people visiting your gallery?

AR: It's also really interesting when foreigners are here. People who have galleries in other countries come here and they're amazed by the street traffic and they really kind of think that we're so lucky to have the street traffic that we do.

AC2K: Did you move into this building right when it was first converted to a gallery space?

AR: Yeah.

AC2K: Did you look any place else?

AR: Yeah I did, but I was really excited to be able to be in this building. It was kind of crucial for me to be in a very high profile space, location. Because I think it's really important to allow young artists the opportunity to be in a non-environment, an environment with as few limitations as possible so that there's really much more freedom in terms of what



they can do within that environment. That's pretty crucial. That's pretty exciting.

AC2K: So, since the fall of '94 people have been moving to Chelsea, were you surprised when you first heard that people were moving up there?

AR: I wasn't surprised at first at all. I think that when people first moved there, there were real legitimate reasons for moving there, because Morris Healy and Pat Hearn and Matthew Marks each had a very specific reason for moving there. Quality of space for a really good price and in most cases there was a dissatisfaction with the spaces they were in, they were looking for viable alternatives. And I thought that all the spaces that are there so far are really beautiful spaces and serve them well, so it wasn't surprising to me at all. Before Pat moved into that space she was actually looking at another building that I did go to look at to see what it was like, what the space was like. It was certainly a time when it wasn't getting any easier financially and the rents were certainly high here and were sustaining themselves, so it seemed interesting to at least go and see what the spaces were like.

AC2K: So you've been up to Chelsea and looked at some spaces?

AR: Only that very first time, and I guess that was in the Fall of '94, when Pat was looking.

AC2K: And since then have you given any thought, or have you been approached by any people who have spaces that they want you to move into?

AR: I've certainly been approached by people. (laughs) And you certainly can't help but give it thought because it seems to be so prevalent, but my thoughts don't lean towards moving there.

AC2K: Why do you want to stay in SoHo?

AR: For me it's a few reasons. One is that, first of all I love my space, and I think it would be pretty irreplaceable, and to make a space of this caliber I don't think I can really afford to put in the kind of initial investment that I was naïve enough to do the first time. (laughs) That's one real reason, but I'm not sure that would ever keep me from moving if I really wanted to move, if it meant everything to me, if it felt like it was essential to move I would certainly find a way to do that. The second reason is that, at this moment in time, when there's a kind of a level of development in the gallery, I think it would be, on a personal level, really counter-productive to move at this point, and put my energy into re-establishing the structure, physically moving, doing all the things that come with moving. I feel like finally there's a certain level of equilibrium in the gallery, and I'd much rather take that moment to develop what I do in the gallery and develop a kind of momentum and freedom to grow within the gallery than worrying about the structure of the gallery. And then thirdly, for me it's quite political as well. I feel extremely strongly that one of my roles as a gallerist is to be accessible to two distinct audiences. And that's the art world audience, which is the elite audience, elite in the most optimistic sense of the word, elite in that it creates a very specific possibility. And then I also think that my job is also distinctly to be accessible to a public at large. I know for me, that there



was a lot of talk at the beginning of the '80s when I opened about what our role was and how do you continue to be a gallery, and how does it continue to be relevant to show art, and how do you move the art world into the public sphere more and for me I think it's... Perhaps I have an advantage not being at a ground level space in that I don't get every single piece of street traffic, but I think the idea that there's a general public that comes here and that the gallery or artwork acts as a sort of exemplary gesture of subjectivity I think is incredibly important. And I think the crowds do come here not for just the shopping, they come because of the cache of the art world and whether or not they actually even look at art or not is almost insignificant because it's about the idea of that kind of freedom of possibility. And I think it's incredibly important. So for me, it's essentially important to be accessible to the public.

AC2K: What do you think SoHo's going to be like in the future, in five years?

AR: I don't know. Certainly I imagine that in a couple of years, maybe less, but probably in a couple of years, let's say realistically, that I'm probably going to have to move into a larger space anyway. Hopefully within a couple of years I'll have moved on to be able to actually do that in a way I'd like to and then it'll be interesting to see... For that last reason, you know if Chelsea became absolutely the center of the art world and the public, I would certainly think it was essential to be there. Not only for the audience, but obviously for my artists, which has always been an essential part of my interest, to afford the artists every opportunity. So I'm not going to hold down SoHo because I happen to believe in it's potential right now. And there seem to be a lot of young galleries moving to SoHo now as well... I don't know what's going to happen to it. I'm not sure if it's going to change that much. It's interesting to see how quickly neighborhoods develop. It will be interesting to see if Chelsea becomes as populated as quickly, or probably more quickly, I think that neighborhoods seem to develop much more quickly than they used to. It took a long time, I lived in SoHo twelve years ago, and in truth, it took a long time for people to move in here. And I think this idea of a purposely developed neighborhood like Chelsea will probably develop very, very quickly, it will develop a similar kind of street traffic. It might actually be divided between SoHo and Chelsea, in terms of, it might actually cut down on the street traffic of SoHo, and they might become equally popularized.

AC2K: Do you feel a little disappointed that galleries have moved out of SoHo?

AR: Personally, yeah. I would say yes in some way. What I'm most disappointed about I'd say is the hype around the move, and that doesn't have to do with any particular person, or anyone actually moving. It's the sort of machine that people love, the hype. And I'm disappointed that people are always so susceptible to that kind of talk; where they're so eager to find anything that's new that instead of what's new within the context of the gallery, they're just as interested in the outer structure. I think that very few people actually moved for that reason, I think most people moved for very personal, practical reasons. And each one, if you look at it on an individual basis, distinctly personal and appropriate for each of those people. But, I'm really disappointed that people are so perpetually entranced by hype. And am I disappointed to lose really valuable neighbors? Yeah. I mean, I like that we are all together. I like that



there's a sense of community and that there's a community without necessarily having to talk all the time, it's a kind of common ground. I'm probably more disappointed about some people leaving than other people.









Ileana Sonnabend, art gallerist in SoHo

AC2K: How long have you been in SoHo?

IS: In SoHo? Twenty-five years.

AC2K: What was SoHo like then?

IS: Well, you know, when we came here it was just warehouses and trucking, and there was only one place where you could have coffee, and that was Fanelli's. I think the very first gallery was Paula Cooper, she was already here, and I was thinking of, Ivan Karp was thinking of opening-

AC2K: O.K. Harris

IS: -and I think he opened, actually, a little before us. We were uptown in very small quarters and so was Leo, and at that time everybody was thinking very big, so we wanted to have space enough to accommodate the works. Furthermore, it was quite cheap, so we bought this house... Leo... you probably know the history of this house.

AC2K: A little bit.

IS: So we're in this space, and I don't consider leaving it. (laughs)

AC2K: SoHo is where it's at.

IS: I think so. We've been happy here, so there's no reason for us to leave. Maybe galleries that have moved have moved because the rents went up, but we own our space, so it can't go up. (laughs) One of the things that I enjoy very much in SoHo is the Saturday afternoons; the fact that we don't have to wait for people to come and see our exhibitions. You know, I was for twenty years in Paris, and it was very difficult, because we had collectors, we had some museums, we had critics, but we didn't have what we call the public. That is the young people, curious people. Really, people they were not interested in art at that time in Paris. Someone feels very isolated. When we came here, and people were interested in what we were doing it was so wonderful.

AC2K: Do you remember your first show here?

IS: The first show was Gilbert and George. I must say it was a terrific success, people were queuing up and they were coming from the street, you know. They performed their "Singing Sculpture" and so from the street you heard the singing and you didn't know what it was.

AC2K: So, SoHo's changed a lot since you opened your gallery here?

IS: Yes, it has become lively, full of shops and bars and restaurants.

AC2K: But for you that's good, because it brings in more of the public to see the shows?



IS: Yes, I think that's a great advantage that SoHo is so lively and that so many people come here and so many people are interested.

AC2K: When we ask people about Chelsea something that's been said is that the public doesn't go to Chelsea and that the art galleries don't need the public.

IS: I know, I think that's a little elitist and I think that if you talk with them a little more they'll tell you that they had offers for their spaces that they couldn't refuse- that they found the space cheaper, so it's economic really.

AC2K: The same reason that people move to SoHo in the first place: more space.

IS: Yes, and they want bigger spaces which you can get there, but they'll tell you all kinds of things.

AC2K: Do you have any predictions of SoHo? Do you think it's going to change from what it's like today?

IS: Well, I'm not a prophet.

AC2K: But in general you like what SoHo is today?

IS: Yes, yes I do, and I don't think that there is anything lost that there are boutiques that opened here. It means more people, more liveliness. To an artist the public is very important.









Lisa Spellman, gallerist

AC2K: When did you open your first gallery?

LS: 1984

AC2K: And then when did you first move to SoHo?

LS: '88

AC2K: Why did you decide to move to SoHo?

LS: Well, we tried to stay in the East Village, but it just wasn't possible, after the riots. The only galleries that were left at that point were American Fine Arts, Pat Hearn, and myself. Everybody else had already left. But I moved to the East Village at the tail end of that era, the galleries had already moved to SoHo.

AC2K: Were you surprised when you heard that galleries were moving to Chelsea?

LS: Initially, I was surprised. It was curious that this neighborhood was selected. I would've maybe preferred the meat district, but I can see now that I'm here, that it would be hard to have galleries here.

AC2K: Because of the smells?

LS: I can see where most of the meat packing is not going to leave the neighborhood for a long time, which is a good thing.

AC2K: What do you think is going to happen to SoHo?

LS: Well, obviously south of Spring Street will be very strong.

AC2K: What do you think it's going to be like in Chelsea?

LS: I think Chelsea is wonderful. One of the reasons that we wanted to move is that for the long run, it just seems like a place that has much more potential for the gallery and the artists. And because it's a focused point of destination. It was just obviously becoming a little distracting in SoHo.

AC2K: All the retail activity?

LS: Yeah, and I thought in the beginning it was a really healthy...especially '91, '92 when post-production, and recording studios, and fashion started setting up offices, I thought it was a really healthy thing. But there's a problem of imbalance at this point. I mean, I think they won. So I think at this point now, it's not good for the galleries because the streets are congested and there's no possibility of ever thinking about what you just saw. It's sort of like a theme park, you just don't have a moment to absorb anything that you've seen in the galleries. If you can even make it into the galleries, if you can even see them anymore through the retail static. And then for us there were a lot of personal gallery reasons for moving, because we were really interested in a ground floor space and that was only viable



in Chelsea.

AC2K: You had that in the East Village?

LS: Yes.

AC2K: So now that you've been out of SoHo for a little while, is there anything about it that you miss, or is there anything you expect to miss while you're in Chelsea?

LS: I can't really answer that question right now, because we're not really in Chelsea, we're sort of functioning in an office capacity. You know, the artists come by, but we don't really have the same contact with the public, so I can't really measure it yet. I still go to SoHo, to do the things I want to do, so then SoHo becomes a point of destination for me. And experientially I like the move a lot. The thing I really like about Chelsea is the spaciousness, the ability to just stop and think, which I didn't really feel was possible in SoHo anymore.

AC2K: And you're going to have more space in Chelsea?

LS: Yeah, we'll have a much bigger ground floor space, with a basement and lots of skylights. It'll be great. And also I think it's more natural and necessary that galleries have a ten year transitory evaluation period. We rely so much on the physicality of our space and it needs to change from time to time. I know for us it's always been a really satisfying and necessary re-assessment... But of course in the end it's about real estate. Galleries fill up an area and then...

AC2K: They're forced out.

LS: Yeah. However, I think it's a good process. I start to feel a little restless after a while.



SoHo So Long  
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