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Around the artistic scene of 10th Street. A pioneer creative cluster in New York City / Acerca de la escena artística de la Calle 10. Un clúster creativo pionero en la Ciudad de Nueva York

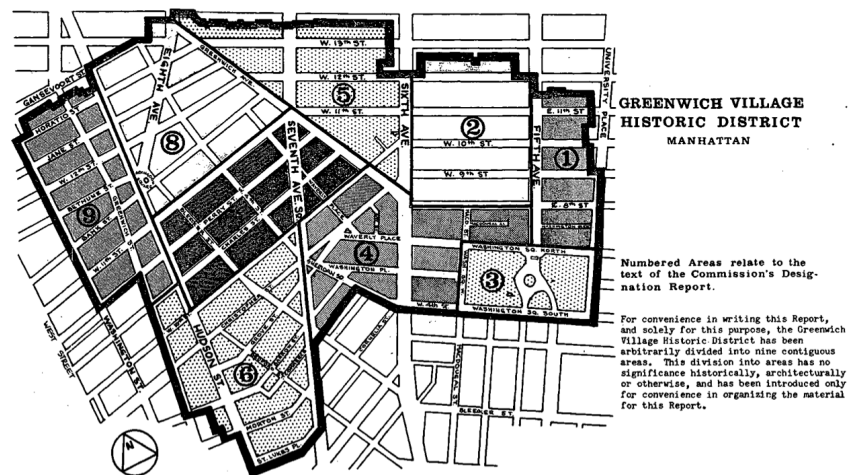
Since the beginning of the fifties, 10th Street concentrated an artistic activity unprecedented in the history of the paradigmatic City of New York. A significant number of artists and their diverse ways of production were hosted in the buildings of this urban artery. While the Greenwich Village bohemia or the Coenties Slip's artists pioneered a sporadic and spontaneous relationship with the city, this synergistic model of multiple and connected art spaces along this axis could be identified as a first creative cluster, inspiring later important phenomena such as the colonization of the South of Houston Street at the hands of the artistic counterculture. The 10th Street artists' activity would range from singular spaces and projects, such as the *Tenth Street Studio Building*, to the first structures of artistic cooperatives, *Tenth Street Co-ops*. While showing the groundbreaking relationship between this city and its art, this article particularly investigates the architectural and cultural scene of 10th Street, which would ultimately influence the 1960s' popular urban model of the artistic district. Moreover, the revelation of its history is intended to build the antecedents of certain contemporary intervention practices and theories that rely on culture as a way of city improvement.

Desde el comienzo de la década de los 50, la Calle 10 concentró desde el inicio una actividad artística sin precedentes en la historia de la paradigmática ciudad de Nueva York. Un número significativo de artistas y sus diversas formas de producción encontraron acomodo en los edificios de esta arteria urbana. Mientras que la bohemia de Greenwich Village o los artistas de Coenties Slip fueron pioneros en una relación esporádica y espontánea con la ciudad, este modelo sinérgico de espacios de arte múltiples y conectados a lo largo de este eje podría identificarse como un primer cluster creativo, inspirando fenómenos posteriores de reconocido alcance como la colonización del South of Houston Street a manos de la contracultura artística. La actividad de los artistas de la Calle 10 abarcaría desde espacios y proyectos singulares, como el edificio *Tenth Street Studio*, hasta las primeras estructuras de cooperativas artísticas, *Tenth Street Co-ops*. Al mismo tiempo que se muestra la innovadora relación entre esta ciudad y su arte, este artículo investiga particularmente la escena arquitectónica y cultural de la calle 10, que en última instancia influiría en el popular modelo urbano del distrito artístico de los años sesenta. Además, la revelación de su historia pretende construir los antecedentes de ciertas prácticas y teorías de intervención contemporánea que se basan en la cultura como una forma de mejora de la ciudad.

10th Street Scene, 10th Street Co-ops, New York City, art and city, creative cluster ///
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Fig. 01. Map from Greenwich Village Historic District Designation Report, New York, Volume 1, 1969.



There were important creative nodes in New York Downtown that preceded the popular 1960s artistic scene. Those were the cases of The Village in the war and postwar period, and precisely Coenties Slip and Tenth Street since the 1950s. Coenties Slip was the first example of artists reusing an industrial area for studios. An small but prolific group of Pop Art artists and minimalists, which included James Rosenquist, Robert Indiana, Jack Youngerman, Lenore Tawney, Fred Mitchell, Charles Hinman, Ann Wilson, Agnes Martin or Ellsworth Kelly, discovered in this strip of publishing and printing industries a suitable space for living and working.¹ With a stronger sense of community, a number of unique environments for a collaborative management and exhibition of the artistic work had found a place on the strip of 10th Street. Both, the creative potential of the industrial sites and the cooperative work would melt in the case of SoHo, and would have an impact in the organization system of New York cultural and urban life. While SoHo has been largely addressed in academic research, as well as its architectural value, this research explores the precedent case of Tenth Street, its singularities and its Co-ops.

Starting on the western edge of Greenwich Village, the 10th street scene connected with the exceptionality of this place, which was first officially valued in 1969 when Mayor John V. Lindsay presented the *Historic District Designation Report* (fig. 01). This document confirmed

1. Stratton, J. *Pioneering in the Urban Wilderness*. New York: Urizen books, 1977.

Fig. 02. Art Fair, MacDougal Alley, Greenwich Village, New York, 1930. Photograph by Victor Volnar. Collection of the Museum of the City of New York. Ref. 2011.34.2185 <http://collections.mcny.org/Collection/Art%20Fair,%20MacDougal%20Alley,%20Greenwich%20Village,%20New%20York.-2F3HRG2Z4L2.html>



the authenticity of the Village and its architectural and social values: “Greenwich Village is one of the oldest sections of Manhattan which was laid out for development in the years following the American Revolution. Today, it contains the greatest concentration of early New York residential architecture to be found anywhere within the five Boroughs of the City. (...) It is the only good-sized residential area which has remained largely intact and where the architecture reflects the continuum of a community.”² The brick and brownstone buildings in Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, French Second Empire, Neo-Grec and Queen Anne styles provided the backdrop for playwrights, poets, novelists, dancers, painters and sculptors. Greenwich Village was the base of the *Provincetown Players*, famous for its “Off Broadway” shows. The father of American theater, William Dunlap (1766-1839) lived there, as did poet Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) when he wrote *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and *The Raven*. *New York Times* founder Henry Jarvis Raymond and writer Mark Twain were also residents. “Among the American impressionists, Ernest Lawson and Robert Henri both lived in The Village, as did William Glackens, one of the early proponents of *The Ashcan School* (...) Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney’s connection with The Village [was] particularly well known, largely because of her establishment of the Whitney Museum, originally located on West Eighth Street.”³ Although art activity in the Village was sporadic and isolated in the very beginning, the presence of exceptional saloons, taverns and cafeterias contributed to the creation of early community life in the area (fig. 02). Ann Charlotte Lynch (Botta) established one of the notable literary salons of the time in 1845 at 116 Waverly Place, and others like Evert Augustus Duyckinck and Charlie Pfaff followed suit opening establishments at 20 Clinton Place and 653 Broadway respectively. Romany Marie’s Café, originally located at 133

2 The following information is extracted from “Architectural and Cultural History” in *Greenwich Village Historic District Designation Report*, Volume I. New York, 1969. p.11. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/downloads/pdf/reports/GV.pdf> [accessed March 20, 2013].

3 “Architectural and Cultural History” in *Greenwich Village Historic District Designation Report*. p. 23.

Fig. 03. The 1858 10th Street Studios Building, 51 West 10th Street. November 10, 1938. Photograph by Berenice Abbott. Collection of the Museum of the City of New York. Ref. 49.282.80
<http://collections.mcny.org/Collection/Studios:%2051%20West%2010th%20Street-2F3XC582J9ED.html>



Washington Place, was one of the epicenters for bohemianism in the first half of the twentieth century.⁴

One of the first creative spaces in the city, the *Tenth Street Studio Building* (1857-1956), was also on this artistic street, at number 51 (fig. 03). The building was described as “the first modern multistoried structure entirely devoted to the commercial and functional needs of artists. With no antecedents in America or Europe, it became an architectural prototype for the profession. Artists from across the country congregated within its walls to work, talk, teach, exhibit, and sell their creations.”⁵ Architect Richard Morris Hunt was commissioned by the Johnston family – John Taylor Johnston was the first president of the *Metropolitan Museum of Art* – to design a building solely to serve the artists’ needs. It was a small 30-meter-wide 3-story brick building in the Romanesque Revival style with 25 studios surrounding a domed gallery above the central communal space. The building would host several painters from the *Hudson River School*, as well as numerous academics, since Hunt also established the first architectural school in the country, where some of the most influential architects of the generation trained. Sculptors Augustus Saint-Gaudens, who best represented the American Renaissance, and A. Sterling Calder, father of acclaimed kinetic artist Alexander Calder, both worked there. The *Tenth Street Studio Building* remained in operation until 1956 when, as it was recurrent in this city, the building was demolished to make room for a new residential complex.⁶

4. See Schulman, R. *Romany Marie, The Queen of Greenwich Village*. Louisville: Butler Books, 2006.

5. Traditional Fine Arts Organization, “New York’s Famed Tenth Street Studio Building. A Fascinating Chapter in the Developing National Art Scene.” *Resource Library Magazine*, 2007. About the exhibition at the Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts, New York, August 21 - November 16, 1997. At: <http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/4aa/4aa62.htm> [accessed May 18, 2014].

6. See “New York’s Famed Tenth Street Studio Building”, *Resource Library Magazine*, 2007.

Performing arts expert Sally Banes built a “narrative map” of Greenwich Village, where she outlined the variety of theaters and experimental centers in the area in the 1960s: “If in 1963 you stood in front of the Judson Church, on West Fourth Street at Thomson Street, facing Washington Square Park, on your right you would see New York University stretching along west Fourth Street and northward up Washington Square East. At 15 West Fourth Street, the Square East Theater might be showing Roberts Blossom’s film-theater-dance piece, *Blossoms*, and improvisational comedy by the Second City troupe. The ANNA Theater, also on Washington Square, was being built as the temporary home of Lincoln Center Repertory Theater and scheduled to open in January 1964. Directly ahead of you, across the park, would be the shops, movie theaters, and restaurants that drew Villagers and tourists alike a stroll along Eighth Street, from Sixth Avenue past University Place, at all hours. If you walked down Eighth Street and turned left on University Place, you would reach the Cedar Tavern, a gathering place for artists and writers since the Abstract Expressionists frequented it in the Fifties, (...) on Third Avenue, you would find the East Tenth Street Galleries, the stronghold of the second generation of Abstract Expressionists.”⁷ Banes’s narration gave a clear picture of the streets where the numerous studios and theaters could be found. James Waring, Aileen Passloff and Yvonne Rainer had a studio in St. Mark’s Place, while the *Living Theater* and the *Merce Cunningham Dance Company* occupied a building uptown in The Village. *Off-* and *Off-Off Broadway* were also located in St. Mark’s and along Bleecker Street.

Greenwich Village would be the backdrop against which the new types of art behavior were established. The spirit from *Black Mountain College*, with its most important representatives, choreographer Merce Cunningham, composer John Cage and painter Robert Rauschenberg, flourished in this urban location. These artists’ constant questioning of what was established and their model of interdisciplinary innovation would influence all artistic realms.⁸ Thus, Rauschenberg would say: “The creative process somehow has to include adjusting realistically to the situation. I felt very rich being able to pick up Con Edison lumber from the street for combines and stretchers, taking advantage of whatever the day would lay out for me to use in my work –so much so that I am sometimes embarrassed that I seem to live on New York as if she were an unpaid maid-servant.”⁹ These artists reacted to Abstract Expressionism by connecting to the city life. Also in the words of Rauschenberg: “I felt an excitement at being in a city where you have on one lot a forty-story building and right next to it, you have a little shack. There is this constant irrational

7. Banes, Sally. “Another Space” in *Greenwich Village 1963: Avant-Garde, Performance and the Effervescent Body*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993. p. 20.

8. See Robert S. Mattison’s introduction for the catalogue *Black Mountain Collage and its Legacy*. New York: Loretta Howard Gallery, 2011. For the exhibition *Black Mountain Collage and its Legacy* curated by Robert S. Mattison and Loretta Howard from September 15 to October 29, 2011 at Loretta Howard Gallery.

9. Rauschenberg, Robert. “Artist Speaks (Interview with Dorothy Gees Seckler), Art and Materialism in the Beat Generation.” in *Artists, Critics, Context: Readings in and around American Art since 1945*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc., Ed. Paul F. Fabozzi, 2002. P. 69. Originally published in *Art in America* (May-June, 1966).

Fig. 04. The 10th Street artists group, a loose confederation of abstract expressionist artists, displaying some of their works on street outside artist Milton Resnick's studio, 1956. Photograph by James Burke. The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images.

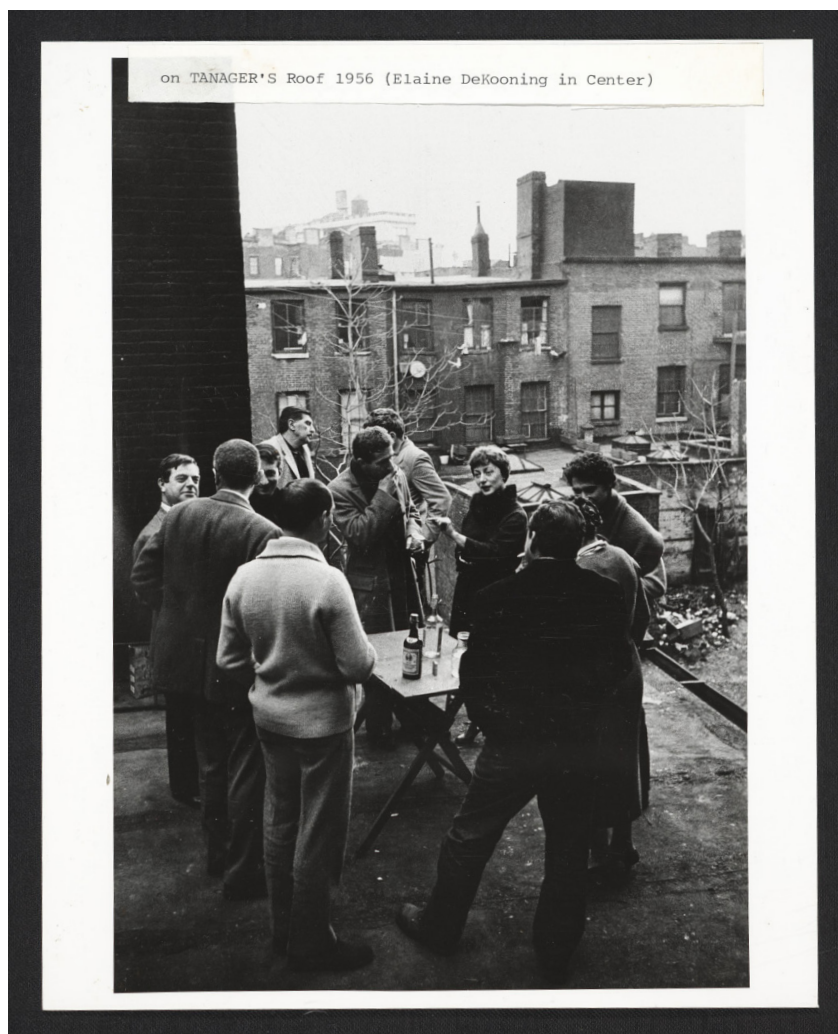


juxtaposition of things that one doesn't find in the countryside." He chose to appropriate images and objects from everyday life, whereas Cage used unconventional instruments, and Cunningham incorporated uncertainty and ordinary gestures into his dances. Allan Kaprow and Robert Whitman, the promoters of environmental art, also would be set a new stage for art where there would be no boundaries between art and life.¹⁰

A number of second-generation Abstract Expressionists also formed cooperatives and independent galleries in the basements of regular residential buildings around 10th Street and adjacent to Greenwich Village (fig. 04). These were conceived in reaction to the conservative practices of the galleries on Madison Avenue and 57th Street, in which the selection of the artistic production to be exhibited was in the hands of the market. In this alternative scenario, a group of artists collaborated instead to be in control of the gallery's narrative according to their interests. The ranks of artists involved in their activity included renowned abstract expressionist Willem de Kooning, whose studio was at number 88, and Kaprow,

10. In his essay "The legacy of Jackson Pollock" (*Art News*, 1958) Kaprow noticed the possibility of art extending beyond the limits of the canvas, an idea he experimented with throughout his career, starting with his notorious work *18 Happenings in Six Parts* (1959).

Fig. 05. Gathering on the roof of the Tanager Gallery, 1956. Ignored photographer. Joellen Bard's, Ruth Fortel's, and Helen Thomas' exhibition records of "Tenth Street Days: the Co-ops of the 50s," 1953-1977. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/gathering-roof-tanager-gallery-12274>



who was working in one of these spaces, Hansa Gallery, right before pioneering the “happening” at Reuben Gallery. Thus, the *10th Street Co-ops* emerged between Third and Fourth Avenue, like another important piece of this particular artistic strip of the late 1950s and early 1960s (fig. 05).¹¹ The group ran numerous galleries: March Gallery (1952-1960), Tanager Gallery (1952-1962), Hansa Gallery (1952-1959), Brata Gallery (1956-mid 60s), James Gallery (1954-1962), Phoenix Gallery (1958-present), Camino Gallery (1956-1963), and Area Gallery (1958-1965).

250 avant-garde artists worked in the galleries, as well as in their individual workspaces. Alice Baber, one of the founders of the *March Gallery* (1957-1960), at 95 East 10th Street, would describe the spontaneous origins of these cooperatives: “I went to Cedar Bar one evening in the spring of

11. Bard, Joellen et al., Dore Ashton, Bruno Palmer-Poroner, Lawrence Alloway, Therese Schwartz, Helen Thomas, *Tenth Street Days: The Co-ops of the 50s/ The Galleries: Tanager, Hansa, James, Camino, March, Brata, Phoenix, Area: an Artist-initiated Exhibition, Works from 1952 – 1962*. New York: Education, Art & Service Inc., 1977. Catalog of the exhibition *Tenth Street Days: The Co-ops of the 50s* organized by Joellen Bard, Ruth Fortel and Helen Thomas in co-operation with the Association of Artist-Run Galleries and Pleiades Gallery, at Amos Eno Gallery, 14 Sculptors Gallery, Noho Galley, Pleiades Galley, and Ward-Nasse Gallery, December 20, 1977-January 7, 1978.

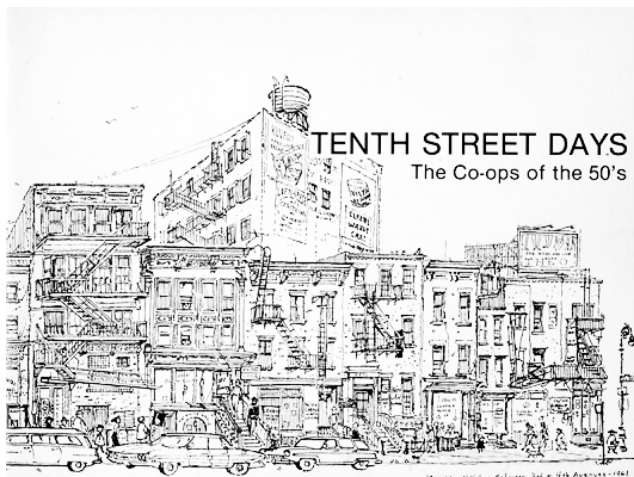
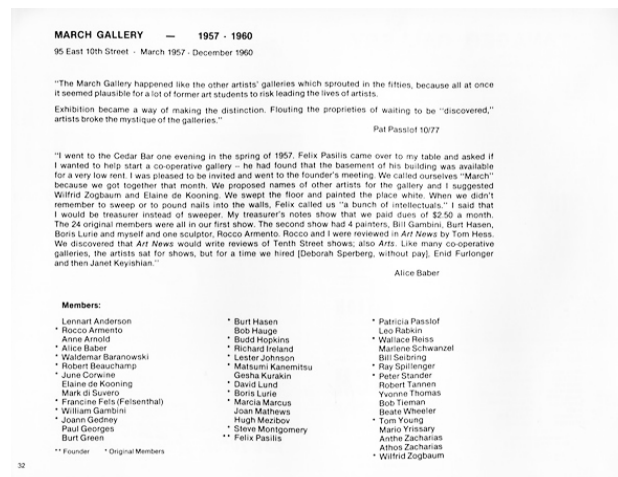


Fig. 06. Catalog of the exhibition Tenth Street Days: The Co-ops of the 50s, 1978. Ignored.



1957. Felix Pasilis came over to my table and asked if I wanted to help start a co-operative gallery –he had found that the basement of his building was available for a very low rent. I was pleased to be invited and went to the founder’s meeting. We called ourselves *March* because we got together that month. We proposed names of other artists for the gallery and I suggested Wilfrid Zogbaum and Elaine de Kooning. We swept the floor and painted the place white. (...) My treasurer’s notes show we paid dues of \$2.50 a month. The 24 original members were all in our first show.”¹² The diversity of the art shown in *Tenth Street Co-ops* would advance the diversity of procedures in the new art of the following decades (fig. 06).

Influential art critic Irving Sandler, a member of this community through his involvement with the *Tanager Gallery* (fig. 07), noted “Sculptors Ronald Bladen and George Sugarman, who were members of the Brata Gallery, and Mark di Suvero, who showed at the March Gallery, were just as intent on achieving clarity as Katz, Pearlstein, Dodd and Held. They reacted against welded constructions in which the torch was used like a brush, yielding bubbled, pitted and fretted surfaces –the sculptural counterparts of painterly paintings. (...) Mark di Suvero preferred to use unaltered ready-mades rather than rubbishy detritus frequently found in the fifties construction sculpture. (...) However, many of Mark di Suvero’s works incorporate a kinetic complex that introduces an element of freedom into the otherwise fixed structure.”¹³ Sandler explained how di Suvero used materials like construction beams or wooden elements from the streets, working within the “as found” logic that architects Alison and Peter Smithson were addressing in Britain at the time.

Also in reaction to Abstract Expressionism was the appearance of Pop Art in this period, boosted by important figures including Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist or Claes Oldenburg, who also expressed a strong attachment to the architecture and urban life of Downtown Manhattan. The relationship of these artists with everyday

12. Baber, Alice. “March Gallery 1957-1960,” in *Tenth Street Days: The Co-ops of the 50s*. p. 32.

13. Sandler, Irving. *Out of Tenth Street into the 60s*. New York: Loretta Howard Gallery, 2014. Exhibition catalog. September 4-October 11, 2014, Loretta Howard Gallery, New York.

Fig. 07. Irving Sandler and Lois Dodd in Tanager Gallery, 1956. Ignored photographer. Joellen Bard's, Ruth Fortel's, and Helen Thomas' exhibition records of "Tenth Street Days: the Co-ops of the 50s," 1953-1977. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/irving-sandler-and-lois-dodd-tanager-gallery-8139>



life was established in different ways. While Rauschenberg was working with “found” materials from the streets, Pop artists were dealing with mass culture symbols.¹⁴ Warhol had an important presence in the Village, also frequenting the street life of 10th Street.¹⁵ By 1962, he had opened his acclaimed *Silver Factory* at 231 East 47th in Midtown Manhattan. Originally the Peoples Cold Storage and Warehouse, this five-story building with 30,5-by-6-meter floors was transformed into a desirable new art product, a landmark that was to be highly influential in artists’ conception of personal space in the following decades. Although the figure of Andy Warhol falls outside this study, it is important to mention his great influence among the artists of this period. When he identified and added character to an existing space for his “factories,” he advanced the next generation artists’ intention to create their own landmarks, their own fictions within the urban context – although, this need for significance and self-determination developed differently in the alternative art spaces of the coming 1970s. Writer and researcher on Contemporary Art Estrella de Diego specifically referenced the evocative and scenic power of Warhol’s Factory: “Se trata de un verdadero decorado hollywoodiense desde el cual dirigía las escenas y a los actores, muy numerosas por otra parte. Allí ocurría todo –se hacían las serigrafías, las fiestas, las sesiones de fotos, se filmaban películas...-. (...) La Factory es una operación complejísima que recoge parte de las propias ambivalencias

14. *Off The Wall. A Portrait of Robert Rauschenberg* by Calvin Tomkins, based on *The New Yorker* articles published on the subject over a forty-year period (until 2005), presents the parallel stories of Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist and Andy Warhol and their encounters with art dealer Leo Castelli and his assistant Ivan Karp. The articles reveal that they were developing similar work using everyday objects and commercial symbols. Tomkins, Calvin. “Hot and Cold Heroes” in *Off The Wall. A Portrait of Robert Rauschenberg*. New York: Picador Reading Group Guides, 2005. p. 157-169. First ed. (New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1980).

15. Robert Heide, “Andy Warhol In Greenwich Village,” *West View News, The Voice of the West Village* (September 2012). <http://westviewnews.org/2012/09/andy-warhol-in-greenwich-village/> [accessed Jun 30, 2015].

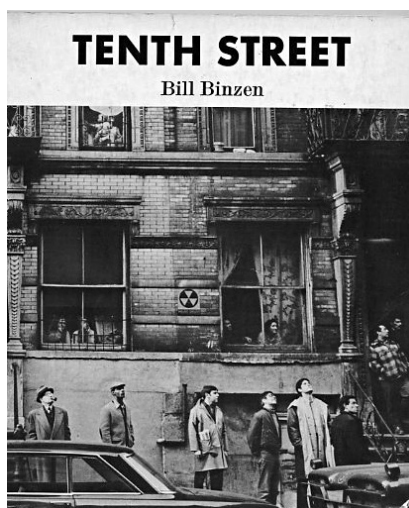
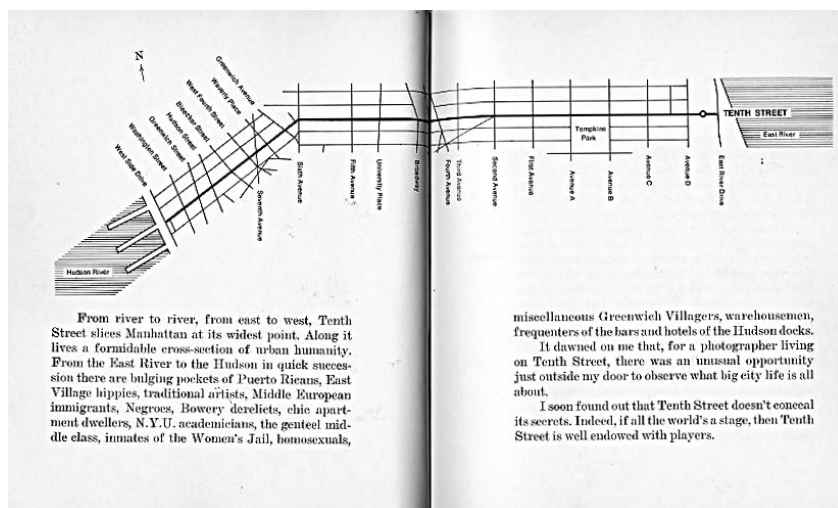


Fig. 08. Publication by Photographer Bill Binzen on Tenth Street. New York: Paragraphic/Grossman Publishers, 1968. Ignored.



de Warhol y acaba por ser el único territorio habitable en este principio de era, el lugar mágico donde se combinan mundos apartados en esencia y en el cual se asigna a cada uno el papel que deberá representar y el tiempo durante el cual deberá representarlo.”¹⁶ In the same period, the predecessor of Pop Art, Robert Rauschenberg, lived illegally in a commercial space at 809 Broadway, on the edge of Greenwich Village, with a freight elevator opening directly into his loft.¹⁷ He later moved to a 30,5-by-9-meter space located at 381 Lafayette Street, a mixed space made up of a tenement which had formerly been an orphanage, half of a nave of what seemed like an old church, and multi-level outdoor parking. These artists appreciated the mix and richness of urban contexts.

As the years went on, the cultural epicenter shifted closer to the right side of Tenth Street, closer to the East Village where, according to art critic Harold Rosenberg, artists could find more neutral settings, moving away from the old bohemia and getting closer to the new avant-garde scenario. The *Tenth Street* scene was located between the 3rd and 4th Avenue. The generation of Willem de Kooning preferred a more unbiased setting in which to create their works than that of Greenwich Village. In his essay *Tenth Street: A Geography of Modern Art*, Rosenberg wrote about that change with respect to the 1950s: “everything on 10th Street is one of a kind: a liquor store with a large *wino* clientele; up a flight of iron steps, a foreign-language club restaurant; up another flight, a hotel-workers’ employment agency; in a basement, a poolroom... the modernism of 10th Street has passed beyond the dogma of *aesthetic space*, as its ethnic openness has transcended the bellicose verbal internationalism of the thirties. Its studios and its canvases have room for the given and for the haphazard.”¹⁸ Photographer Bill Binzen shot this street from the far East Side to the far West during the 60s, revealing this great human and cultural diversity (fig. 08).¹⁹

16. Diego, Estrella. “La nostalgia de Warhol. Autorretratos,” in *Tristísimo Warhol. Cadillacs, piscinas y otros síndromes modernos*. Madrid: Ediciones Siruela, 1999. p. 119-121.

17. Tomkins, Calvin. *Off the Wall: A Portrait of Robert Rauschenberg*. p. 193.

18. Rosenberg, Harold. *Tenth Street: A Geography of Modern Art*, *Art News Annual*, 1959. Text published in *The Tenth Street Galleries* at Artstory.org. At <http://www.theartstory.org/gallery-10thstreet.htm>

19. Binzen, Bill, *Tenth Street*. New York: Paragraphic/Grossman Publishers, 1968.

Fig. 09. Artists of Park Place Gallery, 1967 or 1968 / unidentified photographer. Park Place, The Gallery of Art Research, Inc., and Paula Cooper Gallery records, 1961-2006. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/artists-park-place-gallery-7919>



The use of alternative space for the artistic creation, the democratic management of the artistic message, the collaborative work or the sense of community, were some of the aspects related to the Tenth Street Co-ops that the artistic counterculture would develop in the following decades. Artists who belonged to those galleries moved on towards new projects that were to have a large impact in the city. This is clearly exemplified in the case of Mark di Suvero who, in 1959, from Tenth Street moved to Front Street near the Fulton Fish Market on South Street, closer to other artist node of the 1950s, the Coenties Group, and from there to Park Place in downtown Manhattan (fig. 09).

The influential Park Place Gallery (1962-1967) was first located on the top floor of a five-story loft building at 79 Park Place. As art historian Linda Dalrymple Henderson would describe it: “(Dean) Fleming had found the building at 79 Park Place, which was slated for demolition and offered entire floors for thirty dollars a month. Valledor, Myers, and Melcher followed Fleming to the building when they arrived in the city. The group cleaned up the abandoned top floor to create a space where they and their friends could share their work and play the free jazz they pursued for hours at a time.”²⁰ Park Place was originally founded by 9 artists, Peter Forakis, Dean Fleming, Tamara Melcher, Forrest Myers, Leo Valledor, Ed Ruda, Anthony Magar, Robert Grosvenor and Mark di Suvero, who shared the same philosophy that in the Tenth Street Co-ops creating a new kind of gallery structure in which “artists, not the dealer, make the decisions.” By 1964, the lease was up and they had to find a new place. Their new location at 542 West Broadway was “an expansive

20. Henderson, Linda Dalrymple. “The Park Place Gallery and its Artists,” *Archives of American Art Journal*, 51, 1-2. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 2012. P. 5-6.
http://www.aaa.si.edu/files/publications/vol51_1-2-archives-of-american-art-journal.pdf [accessed September 209, 2014].

Fig. 10. Installation of Mark di Suvero and David Novros at the Park Place Gallery, Jan. 23 - Feb. 24, 1966. Photograph by John D. Schiff. Park Place, The Gallery of Art Research, Inc., and Paula Cooper Gallery records, 1961-2006. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/installation-mark-di-suvero-and-david-novros-park-place-gallery-7912>



ground-floor space in which they could exhibit their large, urban-scale works and stage performances.”²¹

Inaugurated in 1965, *Park Place: The Gallery of Art Research, Inc.* would cause the model of New York gallery to evolve so that it bore greater resemblance to the art spaces that later emerged in SoHo or Chelsea (fig. 10). “Hiring first John Gibson and then Paula Cooper as their director, the artists created what they thought of as a Center for New Art, where they could showcase all types of experimental expression, share ideas, play jazz, and express their social and political concerns.”²² Park Place Gallery was an open space where they would invite other artists, interacting with them. Leo Valledor invited Robert Smithson and Sol LeWitt to a Park Place show in October-November 1966. The art works were innovative, experimental and spatial creations. Di Suvero’s *The A Train* (1965–1967), where the artist used waste materials from urban contexts, perfectly embodies the gallery’s engagement with city and dwellers.

Some funding problems and the reluctance of di Suvero and other members to enter the commercial art circuits led to the closure of Park Place Gallery in 1967. A year later, Paula Cooper would open the first gallery of what would later be called SoHo, commissioning Sol LeWitt’s first wall drawing, and featuring works by Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, or Donald Judd. Many artists from Park Place, including di Suvero, worked with Cooper in her new gallery. In fact, it was her experience with the Park Place Group which influenced the new concept of gallery that she promoted in SoHo where artists could feel greater freedom to perform and experiment.²³

21. Henderson, “The Park Place Gallery and its Artists.” p. 6.

22. Henderson, “The Park Place Gallery and its Artists.” p. 6.

23. See Carrascal, Maria.F. “The shared use of the cityscape. Revisiting the extraordinary case of SoHo.” *Telón de fondo. Revista de Crítica y Teoría Teatral*. 24. Buenos Aires: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras (UBA), 2016. p. 227-255.

The way of working cooperatively tested in 10th Street would also have another version at the hands of SoHo artist and architect George Maciunas, who would come up with the idea of the *Fluxhouse Cooperatives* (1965-1968). It was a system through which artists could have access to large industrial spaces in this area. Established in groups, artists could have affordable rents and the chance of transforming (and dividing) these lofts. Practices as such, together with that community spirit boosted from the 1950s, would allow the artistic invasion of SoHo and its distinction as artistic district.²⁴

This research about 10th Street shows the beginning of the tight relationship that would be forged between the alternative art and the existing urban spaces, a phenomenon that would be extended towards other areas of New York City. This strip would be the fertile ground from which new urban concepts – “artistic built heritage”, “cultural industry”, “community-based intervention”, or the just mentioned “artistic urban district” – were going to be devised and evolved, mainly between the 1960s and the 1970s.

24. See Hudson, J R. *The Unanticipated City. Loft Conversion in Lower Manhattan*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987.

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