



THE
Art Economist

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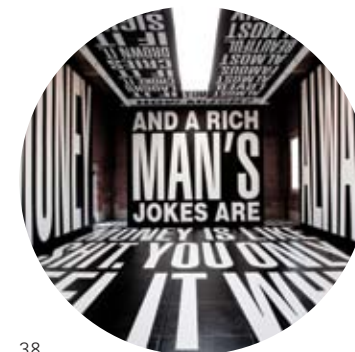


Sterling Ruby, Monument Stalagmite/Survival Horror, 2011

PVC pipe, foam, urethane, wood, spray paint and formica, 216 x 63 x 36 in. (548.6 x 91.4 cm),
© Sterling Ruby, Courtesy Sprüth Magers Berlin London. +49 030 2 88 84 03 0



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This page from top: **Peter Beard, Elui with World-Record Cow Elephant Tusk, 47 lbs., Marsabit Forest, Kenya (detail), 1962**, Color photograph with watercolor and tempera paint, 49 x 40 in. (124.5 x 101.6 cm), see p.17. **Barbara Kruger, Money Makes Money (room wrap), 2011**, Digital print on vinyl, Dimensions variable, Photo: Joshua White/JWPictures, Courtesy,L&M Arts. see p.40. **Invaderoma (detail)** by Invader, DRAGO, 2010, Courtesy of DRAGO. see p.50.



Sweet Toof, *Frontline*, 2011, Oil on canvas, 24 x 20 in. (61 x 50.8 cm), Courtesy of Dark Horse.

Bushwick or Bust!

BY HOWARD HURST AND DEBORAH BROWN

In 2010, photographer, Danny Goldfield, photographed a child from every nation living in New York City. Nowhere is this diversity exemplified more than in Brooklyn. Hop across the river from Manhattan, and you will find that New York's "hippest" borough is also perhaps its most complex. There is no one Brooklyn style; instead, there is plenty of space for those who want to establish their own communities, traditions, landmarks and lifestyles. Underlying this shifting social geography are the rapidly moving tectonic plates of real-estate price; in the 1980s, rents began to rise as the East Village and Lower East Side gained in popularity.

In the late '90s, artists began to migrate east to Bushwick from Williamsburg, following the path of the L train—the subway line that had led them out of Manhattan's East Village to Brooklyn in the first place. Bushwick had been physically and economically devastated since July 1977, when New York City's infamous blackout destroyed large swaths of its commercial district in an arson and

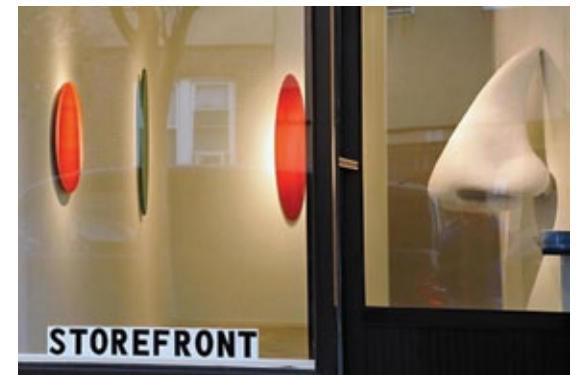
looting spree that left the community in ruins for decades. Bushwick was left to rot. Twenty years later, artists began to settle in the neighborhood, lured by cheap rents and the empty industrial spaces. At first, they clustered around the Morgan stop on the L, where landlords of defunct factories were only too happy to lease space in their vacant buildings to artists. Now, artists are spread densely throughout Bushwick and neighboring Ridgewood, Queens.

In Bushwick, artists found a laissez-faire atmosphere where they could live and work cheaply, unmolested by New York City regulations. They opened performance venues like the Bushwick Starr and Grace Exhibition Space, and galleries like STOREFRONT, Pocket Utopia, English Kills, Centotto, Norte Maar and Famous Accountants. Since 2007, Bushwick Open Studios' organizers have galvanized the neighborhood's artists by creating a community-wide event where everyone could play. Word spread that there was an activist spirit in Bushwick, where DIY was king. More people came to

live and tourists dropped by to visit as conditions improved, crime fell and the community became identified as an artists' area. With the desire to be engrossed in and engaged with the up-and-coming as well as the established art world, The Art Economist chose a Bushwick all-purpose building to house its design headquarters. And, long time Chelsea gallery heavy hitter, Lühring Augustine, has announced that it is opening a 12,000 square-foot project and storage space in the neighborhood, on Knickerbocker Avenue. The space, which is slated to open on November 5, will be the first expansion to Bushwick by a blue-chip Manhattan gallery. The gallery's senior director, Natalia Sacasa, also is a Bushwick resident. And, museums feel the same way: "Bushwick is very much front and center these days in the visual arts, along with the better known borough art enclaves such as Williamsburg or Dumbo," says Brooklyn Museum director, Arnold Lehman. "Indeed, the first two artists in our exciting Brooklyn emerging artists' series this year, entitled *Raw/Cooked*—and sponsored by Bloomberg—have their studios in Bushwick. They are Kristof Wickman and Lan Tuazon. Nothing could be more current than that!!!"

Richard Timperio founded Sideshow Gallery in 1999 in Williamsburg, showing a mix of neighborhood artists and underrepresented painters, such as Larry Poons, Dan Christensen and Thornton Willis. "Williamsburg was a place for cheap rent and space, and was removed from everything else," Timperio recounts. "It was a place for working artists, but it had no outlets." Secret Project Robot, founded in 1998, answered this need and is one of several not-for-profit galleries that continue to show the work of neighborhood artists. The space often hosts performance art, concerts and art exhibitions in seamless combination, relying on collaboration and community spirit to power the engines of its organization. Born in response to the needs of this area, these galleries have become an essential part of the neighborhood. Though known for an anti-commercial, DIY aesthetic, the Williamsburg arts community has realized a number of success stories. Artist, Joe Amrhein, started Pierogi Gallery in 1994. Like the neighborhood, the gallery is now a force with which to be reckoned. Amrhein is a constant presence at The Armory Show, and represents the estate of Mark Lombardi from his space on North 9th Street in the heart of Williamsburg.

In 2005, following the re-zoning of the Brooklyn waterfront, several large real estate companies moved into Williamsburg and began to develop the area, refitting the old neighborhood factories into luxury apartments. As condominiums began to pop up like wild mushrooms in a forest, another generation of artists had to face the decision to either move out or put up. Just southeast of Williamsburg is Bushwick, which has become an increasingly important part of the New York art scene. The site of an infamous race riot and rampant fire in 1975, the neighborhood was again ravaged by poverty, crime and the crack epidemics in the 1990s. Attracted by low rents, ample space and easy subway access to Manhattan, community activists and artists flocked to the neighborhood, transforming it dramatically in the last ten years. It is not unusual to find mid-career artists sharing studio space with younger artists just emerging onto the scene. There is a vein of seriously minded abstraction in the work of local artists like Chuck Webster and Paul Wackers. The fastidious draftsman, Butt Johnson, and collage artist, Mark Wagner, typify a dedication to craft and determination that is common to many of the artists working here. Punk and folk bands play late into the night, and music and the visual arts often intermingle. The irreverent, psychedelic and whimsical are popular themes. This kind



From Top: Bushwick Art Park Block party with Factory Fresh and the All City App. Lühring Augustine Bushwick, 25 Knickerbocker Avenue, Courtesy of Rexrode Chirigos Architects and Lühring Augustine, New York. STOREFRONT installation of Justen Ladda's exhibition, *Seven Mirrors and a Nose*. Factory Fresh Courtyard, by Ema, August 2009, Courtesy of Factory Fresh.

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Andrew Ohanesian, *Blind Spot*, 2007, Construction and housing materials, 25 x 40 x 13 ft. (7.6 x 12.2 x 4 m), Courtesy of the artist and English Kills Art Gallery.

of work is exemplified by artists like Hisham Akira Bharoocha, Kelie Bowman, Maya Hayuk and Taylor Mckimens. The alternative vibe may encourage a certain modicum of artistic eccentricity, but the tone is nothing if not focused.

Functioning as a creative runoff valve, Bushwick has a number of experimental galleries and alternative spaces, often artist-run and interdisciplinary in nature. English Kills is Bushwick's oldest gallery, in operation since 2007. Started by a former Mary Boone staffer, Chris Harding runs his operation as the antithesis of his former employer's. The gallery occupies a huge space on the ground floor of a former textile factory, entered through a scruffy yard that functions as an extension of Harding's "man cave" establishment. During gallery hours (weekends only for Bushwick galleries), Harding can be found with his Shih Tzu, Frankie, hanging with artist friends, who congregate afternoons to share a beer and conversation. Harding presides over a minimally renovated space, showing enormous artworks such as Andrew Ohanesian's installation of a torn-down house, entirely reassembled in the gallery with its original façade, rooms and furnishings.

At Paul D'Agostino's apartment gallery, Centotto, the gallerist is a PhD professor of Italian literature at Brooklyn College, a poet and an artist, who directs a linguistically-driven exhibition program in the living room of his loft. The artists invited to show at the gallery often are directed to read a book chosen by D'Agostino and then respond to it, which leads to collaborations with the text and each other's work.

STOREFRONT was started by artist, Deborah Brown, who has had a studio in Bushwick since 2006, and Jason Andrew, an arts activist and curator of the Jack Tworkov Foundation, to show the work of Bushwick artists and others in a mix that upends traditional hierarchies. Well-known and unknown artists are exhibited side by side in the 450 square foot storefront space that retains the awning of its previous tenant, PM Taxes. Sandwiched between a barbershop and a liquor store, the gallery has mounted an ambitious program of shows during its two-year existence and garnered reviews from all the major art press, including *The New York Times*. This summer, Bushwick art luminaries, William Powhida and Jules de Balincourt, curated shows for the gallery.

Factory Fresh Gallery was founded in 2008 by Ali Ha and Ad Deville, who first ran Orchard Street Art Gallery on the Lower East

Side of Manhattan. For Ali the decision was simple: "For us, it was a natural progression to move to Brooklyn, as the scene of the Lower East Side had greatly changed. I do sometimes have to send black cars to fetch die-hard Manhattanites who have never been to Brooklyn, but once they arrive, they usually are glad to have made the trip." In association with its gallery program, Factory Fresh also runs Bushwick Art Park, a block-long rotating mural project. Works by Sweet Toof, ROA and other internationally renowned street artists look resplendent in the dusty surroundings.

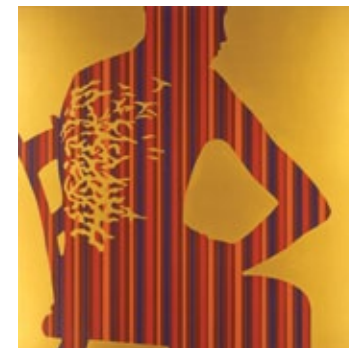
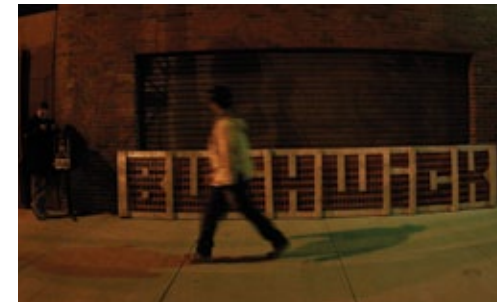
Famous Accountants, which straddles the border of Bushwick and neighboring Ridgewood, Queens, is a basement level space in a brownstone once owned by trans-gender artist and former Throbbing Gristle band member, Genesis Breyer P-Orridge. The gallery, run by artists, Kevin Regan and Ellen Letcher, has exhibited some of the neighborhood's most adventurous work, ranging from Matthew Miller's hyper-realistic oil self-portraits to Meg Hitchcock's installation of verses from the Koran, clipped one tiny letter at a time and pasted to scroll around the walls and floors of the gallery.

Bushwick is fast becoming the center of the newest wave of not-for-profit and alternative art spaces. Perhaps it is telling that after twenty-five years, the influential not-for-profit Momenta Art has moved from its long time Williamsburg gallery on Bedford Avenue to a larger space in Bushwick; specifically at 56 Bogart Street, which is also home to NURTUREart, Interstate Projects and Salon Gallery, creating an unofficial epicenter. The International Studio and Curatorial Program is just blocks away, and hosts a renowned residency and curatorial program. ISCP moved to its new space in the old Sackett & Wilhelms Lithography building in 2008; the organization has taken advantage of the massive 18,000 square foot building to drastically increase the size and scope of its programming.

The neighborhood also has become a nexus for a number of innovative exhibition projects. Joshua Abelow's ART BLOG ART BLOG is a digital scrapbook, collaging the work of emerging artists and established masters alongside his own. He makes use of donated space to host temporary shows reflective of his online experiment. The results speak to the power of a supportive community. This summer, Ross Bleckner donated his studio space to the project, allowing a young generation of artists the opportunity to show in Chelsea. Apartment Show is another program that curates exhibitions of young and emerging artists in donated apartment spaces. Both artists in their own right, Joshua Smith and Denise Kupferschmidt run the project from their website, where anyone can volunteer to host a one night exhibition with the click of a button.

Bushwick artists have taken hold of the neighborhood and embraced its gritty charm, starting a love affair with the place that continues even as the community changes and gentrifies. For those who are happiest visiting and talking to artists, who cannot resist the temptation of seeing art where it is made, Bushwick and Williamsburg should prove irresistible. The quiet industrial atmosphere resonates with the bohemian echo of the neighborhood's original blue collar roots, and once again its factories are filled with hardworking men and women. □

HOWARD HURST IS AN INDEPENDENT CURATOR AND WRITER IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK. HE IS THE ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE ART BLOG ARTCARDS REVIEW.



Clockwise from top left: **Bushwick sign** by Skewville, Bushwick Art Park, October 2010. **Jules de Balincourt, *United We Stood*, 2005**, Oil and acrylic on panel, 16 x 20 in. (41 x 51 cm), Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94. **El Celso, *Infinity & Stikman, Amaze*, October 2008**, Courtesy of Factory Fresh. **Andrew Hurst, *Marriage Material*, 2001**, Courtesy of the artist and English Kills Art Gallery. **Rico Gatson, *Nape of the Neck, Small of the Back*, 2006**, Latex paint on plywood, 48 x 48 in. (122 x 122 cm), Photo by Hermann Feldhaus, Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York. **Iván Navarro, *Surrender (Flatiron)*, 2011**, Neon, mirror, one way mirror, wood, paint and electric energy, 23 x 46 x 6 in. (58.4 x 116.8 x 15.2 cm), Photo by Christopher Burke Studio, Courtesy of the artist and Paul Kasmin Gallery.

THE BUSHWICK SCENE

GALLERIES AND NON-PROFITS:

3RD WARD
CINDERS
CENTOTTO
ENGLISH KILLS
FACTORY FRESH
FAMOUS ACCOUNTANTS
JOURNAL GALLERY
LUHRING AUGUSTINE (AS OF 11/5)
MOMENTA ART
NORTE MAAR
NURTUREART
REGINA REX
POCKET UTOPIA
SECRET PROJECT ROBOT
STOREFRONT

ARTISTS:

JOE AMRHEIN
JULES DE BALINCOURT[†]
HISHAM AKIRA BHAROOCHA
BEN BLATT
KELIE BOWMAN
DEBORAH BROWN
RAUL DENIEVES
PETER DOBILL
DAVID ELLIS[°]
RICO GATSON
LUIS GISPERT
BEN GODWARD
HALSEY HATHAWAY
MAYA HAYUK
ADAM HELMS
MEG HITCHCOCK

ANDREW HURST
BUTT JOHNSON
FABIENNE LASSERRE
ELLEN LETCHER
AMY LINCOLN
EDDIE MARTINEZ
BJOERN MEYER-EBRECHT
TAYLOR MCKIMENS
CAMERON MICHEL
MATTHEW MILLER
IVÁN NAVARRO
ANDREW OHANESIAN
JOHN O'CONNOR
JOSÉ PARLÁ*
ANDREW PIEDILATO
WILLIAM POWHIDA*

KEVIN REGAN
ROA
URSULA VON RYDINGSVARD
JOSHUA SMITH
ANDREW SCHOULTZ
TOD SEELIE
FRED TOMASELLI[†]
SWEET TOOF
LAN TUAZON
JOSETTE URSO
PAUL WACKERS
MARK WAGNER
RYAN WALLACE
CHUCK WEBSTER
KRISTOF WICKMAN
LETHA WILSON

[°] Featured as an "Artist To Watch" in Issue 4

* Featured as an "Artist To Watch" in Issue 6

[†] An artist from the "Top 300 List"