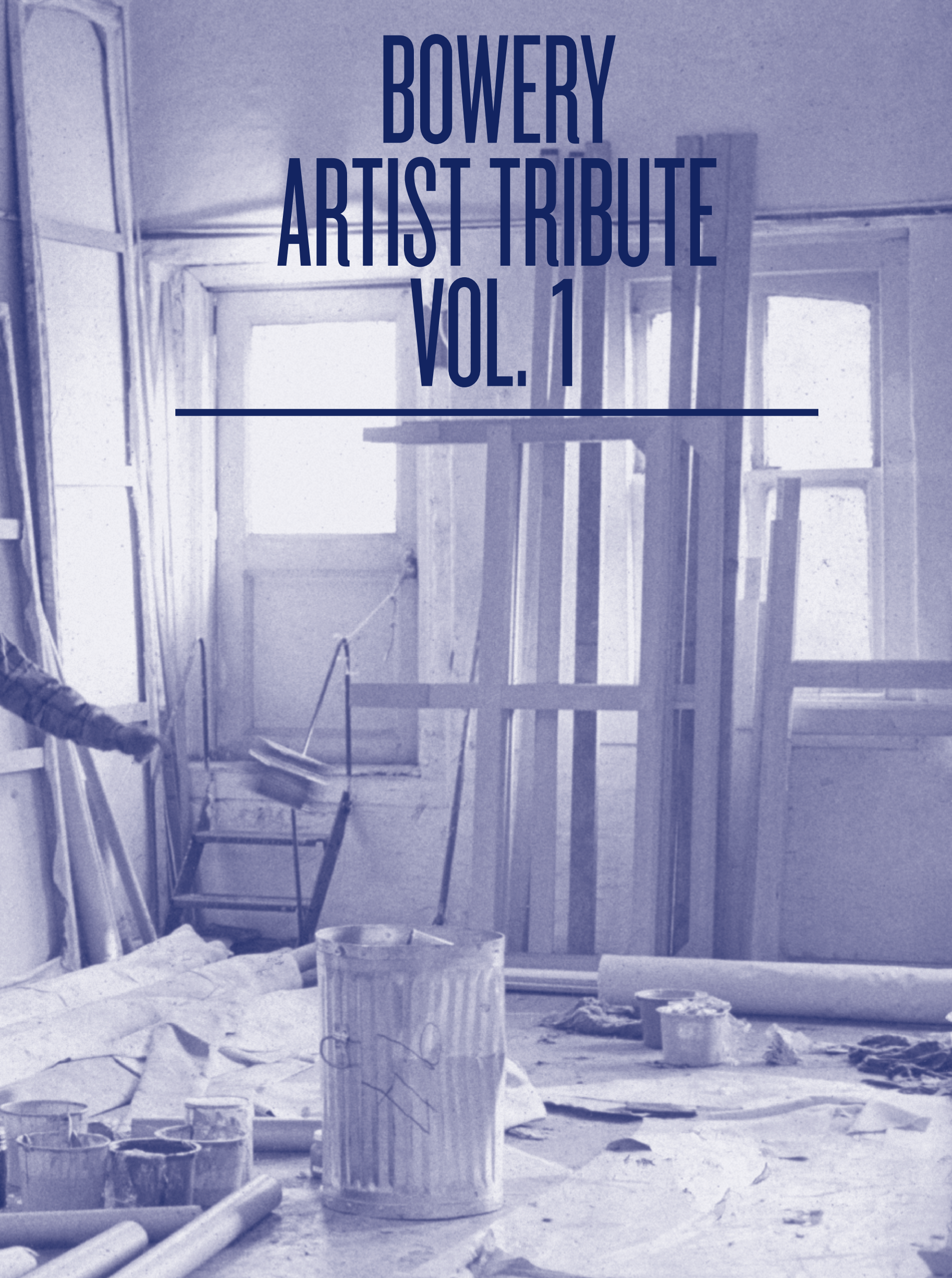


# BOWERY ARTIST TRIBUTE VOL. 1

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# BOWERY ARTIST TRIBUTE VOL. 1

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Bowery façade photos  
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The Bowery Artist Tribute is an  
ongoing project. The New Museum  
welcomes additional information  
about artists who have lived or  
worked on the Bowery. Please  
refer to the back cover for  
more information.



The Bowery, which started its life as a cow path over 400 years ago, began its long descent downward in the nineteenth century when it was a street filled with popular theaters, burlesque joints, and vaudeville shows. The erection of the 3rd Avenue El in 1878 hastened the Bowery’s decline into a dark, noisy, and unpleasant street with shadier characters and establishments lingering in the shadows beneath the train tracks.

A turnaround in the Bowery’s fortunes came in the 1950s, when the elevated tracks were taken down, restoring the Bowery to a wide and light-filled boulevard. As might be predicted, artists were among the first to rediscover its potential. They appreciated the murky zone of the Bowery—including its decay and neglect. While a heavy residue of the past remained—homeless shelters, men’s homes, cheap hotels, and bars—there were also loft spaces with ample square footage and plenty of light. By 1965, more than 100 artists were living on the Bowery including Sol Lewitt, Eva Hesse, Roy Lichtenstein, Brice Marden, Robert Frank, Hettie Jones, and John Oppen. These were not only painters and sculptors, but photographers, poets, musicians, and filmmakers.

Artists are frequently the first to pioneer under-recognized or neglected areas of the city. Artists are the first wave; a sure precedent to gentrification. Cultural institutions and commercial establishments follow... And so this is the way it has gone on the Bowery in its renaissance. As a relatively new establishment on the Bowery, the New Museum felt it was important to recognize not only the history of the storied boulevard, but also the role that artists have played in the formation of this history and the evolution of the surrounding neighborhoods.

**CAPTIONS**  
1—Tom Wesselmann in his studio at 231 Bowery. The building had no buzzer, and the artist kept a front door key on a fishing pole, which he lowered down to visitors so they could let themselves in. Courtesy the Estate of Tom Wesselmann



The **Bowery Artist Tribute**, an initiative of the Education and Public Programs staff of the New Museum, records and preserves this history, chronicling the artists who have lived and worked on or near the Bowery over the past fifty years. It is a Web site, an archive, a series of public programs, and a presentation in our Resource Center that continues to grow as we record more oral histories and more and more information and material comes to light.

We are indebted to **American Express** for funding the research, development, and presentation of this archive, and to **David and Hermine Heller** for providing endowment funds for its future. We are also grateful to a number of individuals who have been instrumental in the research and coordination of these efforts over the past two years, especially Eungie Joo, Irving Sandler, Ethan Swan, NYU fellows Matthew Israel and Jovana Stokic, Travis Chamberlain, and Rya Conrad-Bradshaw. Finally, we owe many thanks to the artists, relatives, and friends who have shared their studios, photographs and memories of the Bowery.

**Lisa Phillips, Toby Devan Lewis** Director

4—1978 letter from the Department of Cultural Affairs certifying James (Jimmy) Wright as an artist, a necessary step in establishing a live/work loft in New York City. Courtesy Jimmy Wright



Department of Cultural Affairs  
City of New York  
830 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10021  
212 360 8125

# BOWERY ARTIST TRIBUTE VOL. 1

## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

## ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Henry Geldzahler  
Commissioner

### The Bowery Timeline

- 1653 Dutch found New Amsterdam. Peter Stuyvesant settles his residence bouwerij (17th-century Dutch for “farm”) along Native American path, which develops into Bowery Lane.
- 1654 New Amsterdam becomes New York.
- 1655 First Bowery tavern founded.
- 1798 Park Theater opens at the southernmost point of the Bowery, New York’s most elegant street.
- 1826 Great Bowery Theater opens, initiating the Bowery’s short reign as New York’s main theater district.

To Whom It May Concern:

(name) James Wright

(professional name) \_\_\_\_\_

(address) 119 Bowery Street

New York, N.Y. 10002

Has been certified as an artist by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs solely for the purpose of eligibility to occupy a legal living-working loft in the MI-5A and MI-5B Districts or any legal AIR loft where the zoning permits.

This certification is effective:

from May 1978 to May 1981

Sincerely,

*Henry Geldzahler*

Henry Geldzahler  
Commissioner  
Department of Cultural Affairs

Henry Geldzahler  
Commissioner



Working in such diverse fields as performance, video art, architecture, and poetry, Vito Acconci (b. 1940) has helped redefine the role of the viewer and increase the range of strategies that inform creative artistic production. Acconci began

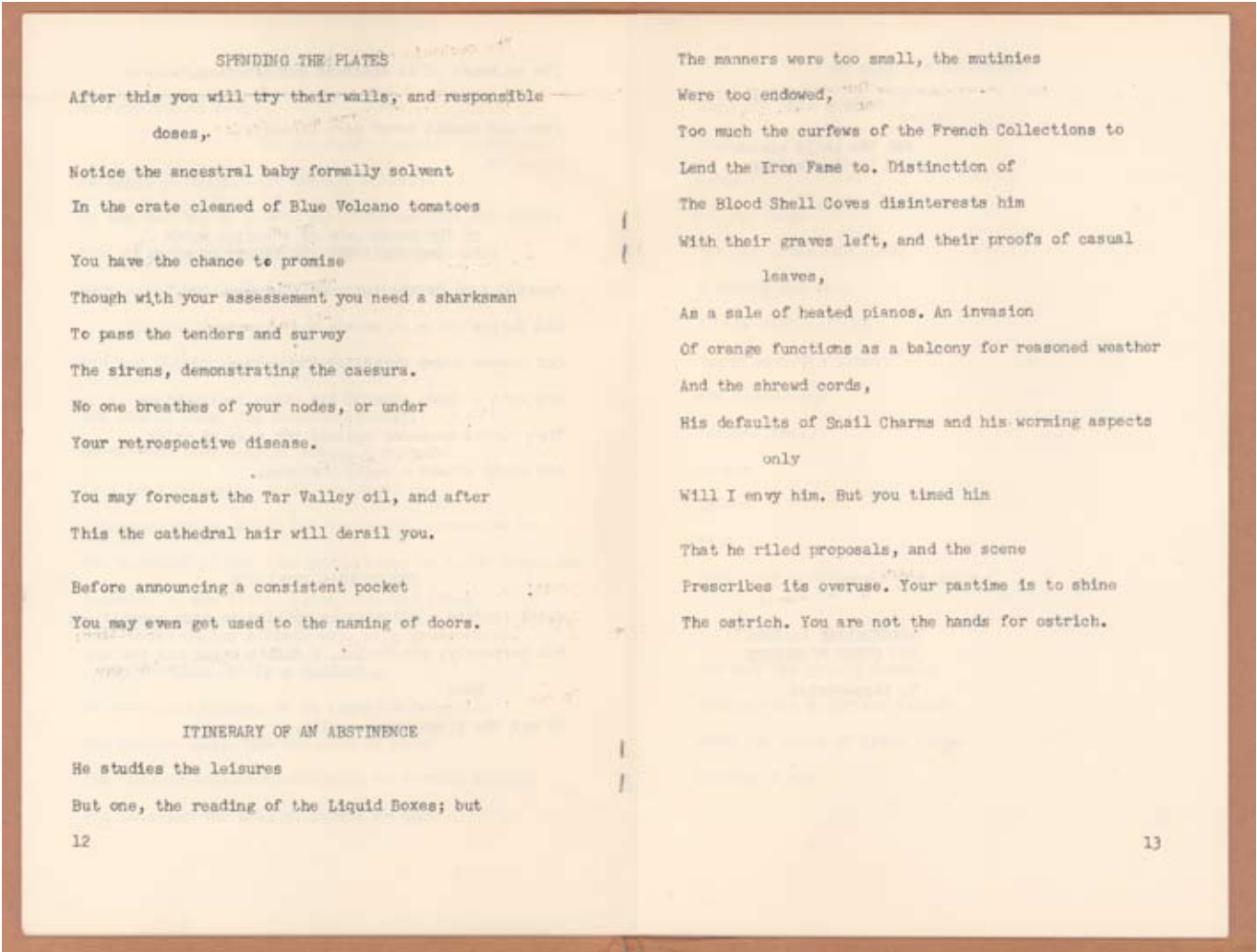


his career in the 1960s as a writer, first in fiction at the Iowa Writer's Workshop, then turning to poetry after his return to New York in 1964. Alongside Bernadette Mayer, Acconci produced the literary magazine *Q to 9*, which ran for six issues between 1967 and 1969, and included contributions from poets, musicians, and visual artists. In the 1970s, Acconci executed a series of installations that radically shifted the role of the gallery visitor from spectator to participant. His

we moved into a loft. It was \$60 a month. The Bowery was obviously different then. My memory tells me it was a mix of lighting stores and flop-house hotels, cheap bars, and people walking very, very slowly. People whose whole day seemed to be going from Spring and Bowery to Prince and Bowery. But they had nothing much else to do. I remember once when Terry Fox came to New York, he was very fascinated about how very slowly people moved and walked.

to be nostalgic about this. The Bowery never felt that dangerous to me. It just felt, not exactly sad, but at least semi-hopeless. Semi-hopeless, but at the same time there was such a notion of change.

# VITO ACCONCI



2-3

performances were at the forefront of the Conceptual art movement that removed the object from art and replaced it with interaction. In the 1980s, he founded Acconci Studio, a group of architects who design projects for public spaces, treating architecture as an occasion for activity.

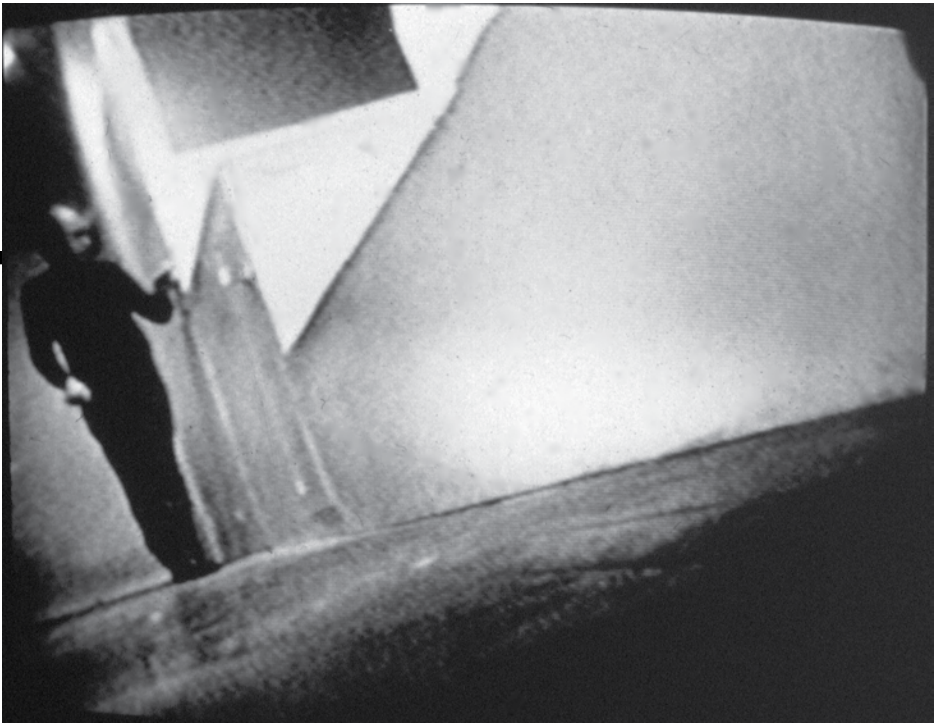
Excerpt from the Bowery Artist Tribute interview August 17, 2007 available at [boweryartisttribute.org](http://boweryartisttribute.org)

When I came back to New York in 1964, I still thought of myself as a writer. I had a very large loft on the Bowery; it was this amazingly cavernous space. I was married to someone who thought of herself as a painter, which was the reason

This was a time when a lot of New York poets got jobs with *ARTnews*. We would write reviews for like \$4 a review. I wrote some reviews then. I would hope I got twelve each month, so I could make at least \$50. But at that time, rent was very cheap. At that time, you could get a lot of spaces for \$60 a month, I remember it had some problems. I don't think there was heat; it was very, very dark. But that didn't seem so bad then...

[The Bowery] seemed to be transient, not a place that people stay. For me that felt very invigorating. Transient was what I always thought New York was. I probably have a particular fear of home and safety, so the notion of transient feels very healthy. You don't have

**CAPTIONS**  
1—Vito Acconci interviewed at Acconci Studio, August 17, 2007  
2, 3—Vito Acconci, *Double Bubble*, 1966, pages 12-13. *Double Bubble* was Acconci's first poetry chapbook, issued during his time at 217 Bowery. Courtesy Vito Acconci  
4,5,6—Vito Acconci, *The Red Tapes*, 1976-77, video still, dimensions variable. Shot in the artist's loft at 131 Chrystie Street. Courtesy Vito Acconci  
7—Vito Acconci, *My Word*, 1974, Super 8 film still, dimensions variable. Filmed in the artist's loft at 131 Chrystie Street. Courtesy Vito Acconci



4



5



6



7

The Bowery Timeline  
1830s Bowery Boy myth of tough, streetwise youth develops. The Bowery becomes battleground between nativist gangs and new European immigrants, further chasing away middle- and upper-class residents. To cater to newly immigrant local populations and workers, the Bowery Theater replaces its program of Greek theater and opera with melodramas and sideshows, and lowers ticket prices.

1833 James Allaire builds Manhattan's first tenement building on Water Street.

1836 Bowery Savings Bank moves into iconic building at 130 Bowery.





The agile sculpture of Lynda Benglis (b. 1941) exists at a unique intersection between artistic practice and feminist discourse. By employing a wide range of materials, including wax, latex, polyurethane foam, and metal, Benglis has undertaken an examination of materiality and form, a practice that both mirrors and critiques the societal examination of the female body. Upon her arrival in New York in the 1960s, Benglis set her work in opposition to the overtly masculine discipline of Minimalism with her process-oriented, sculptural work. At the same time, she began creating videos that expanded her exploration of female sexuality and identity, with humor, self-examination, and aggression. Since the 1960s, Benglis has shown nationally and internationally,



including solo exhibitions in India and New Zealand, and her work is included in many public collections, including the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis; the Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art in Sapporo, Japan; and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

**Excerpt from the Bowery Artist Tribute interview October 11, 2007 available at boweryartisttribute.org**

I had very close friends, Mike Goldberg and Lynn Umlauf, [who] lived in this building, and I acquired this room when I found out that a friend of [Mike's] was moving out. He lived here and worked here and in Washington, where he was Jackie Kennedy's best friend. He was a fellow that would come in at night in a tuxedo and then go back out in leather to the West Side: a great guy who had artistic aspirations. So I got his space. I've lived here for over thirty years. It's one of my favorite places, because [of] different people who have lived here. William Burroughs was here.

When I would go up and down the hallway he would hug one side of the hallway and I would hug the other because we were equally afraid of one another. He was shy and I was shy. Burroughs is now



gone, but John Giorno is here. John was always here, and Mike was always here before I was here. It's kind of, in a way, like a dormitory. John has had the Buddhist meetings here. We would all use the same bathroom, at one point—it was his private bathroom upstairs. So you can imagine living here and having to go upstairs to take a shower,

and maybe you had a toilet outside in the hall. It was very much an informal situation. It was only until we bought this space, maybe ten years ago, that we put in a functional kind of bathroom here. It was very informal, and very creative. It still is, Mike still paints next door, Lynn has her studio, John paints here. I did a lot of work here. I did a lot of gold leafing here, and I was sleeping with all this plaster, sleeping with all this gold leaf, in this same bed. This same pull-out bed I've had since I got here. Nothing's changed. I've just gathered more furniture.

# LYNDA BENGLIS



## CAPTIONS

1—Lynda Benglis with gold-leaf sculpture in her studio at 222 Bowery, 1981. Courtesy Lynda Benglis

2—Lynda Benglis interviewed in her studio at 222 Bowery, October 11, 2007

3—Lynda Benglis with a fan from her Peacock series in her studio at 222 Bowery, 1979. Courtesy Lynda Benglis

4—Lynda Benglis, *Contraband*, 1969, poured latex, 405 by 109 in (1,028.7 x 276.9 cm). Courtesy Lynda Benglis

5—Lynda Benglis with torso pieces in her studio at 222 Bowery, 1974. Courtesy Lynda Benglis

6—Doorway to Lynda Benglis Studio, 2007

7—Lynda Benglis, *Chimera*, 1988, cast bronze fountain, 55 by 96 by 52 in (139.7 x 243.8 x 132.1 cm). Courtesy Lynda Benglis



- The Bowery Timeline
- 1843 The Virginia Minstrels perform the first all-blackface program to sold-out crowd at the Bowery Amphitheatre at 37-39 Bowery.
- 1845 City Council spends \$116,000 to build Union Square, named for the union of Bowery, Broadway, and 14th Street.
- 1847 Astor Place Theater is built to present Italian opera, currently in vogue. New York's theater district begins to move uptown.
- 1848 The Bowery between Union Square and Cooper Square is renamed 4th Avenue.
- 1852 National Theater at 104 Bowery hosts the first stage production of Uncle Tom's Cabin.
- 1858 Chinese-American tobacconist Ah Ken sets up the first downtown Chinese-owned business on Park Row.



**TOM DOYLE**  
**GRAND STREET OFF BOWERY (1958–1959)**  
**134 BOWERY (1963–1967)**  
**135 BOWERY (1963–1970)**  
**189 BOWERY (1970–1976)**



minutes.” They were like doormen. I would give them a quarter. I knew them all, and they were all nice guys. A lot of them were old soldiers and they didn’t have a home, and they were on pensions, and they would drink a bit when they could get it. But they weren’t bad guys. I never had any problem with anybody. The only

time when you could have trouble would be around the first of the month, what’s called “Mother’s



2

Tom Doyle (b. 1928) moved from his native Ohio to New York in 1957, where he became a key figure in the first generation of Abstract Expressionist sculptors. Combining his childhood experience in a black-smith’s shop, his studies with Roy Lichtenstein at Ohio State University, and an admiration for the monumental structure and emotional intensity of Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock, Doyle developed a unique sculptural vocabulary.

In 1961, Doyle met and married Eva Hesse, and the couple began a four-year partnership in which their individual practices and interests informed each other’s work. In 1964, the couple embarked on a fifteen-month residency in Germany, where Doyle moved away from stone sculpture, instead working in assemblage, casting, and steel. As his mediums expanded, he remained focused on the tactility of his work and preserving each sculpture’s handmade origin.

Doyle’s work has been exhibited internationally. In 1994, Doyle was awarded a lifetime achievement award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He lives and works in Western Connecticut with his wife Jane, also an artist. They recently opened a joint exhibition at La Motta Fine Art in Hartford.

Excerpt from the Bowery Artist Tribute interview May 8, 2008 available at boweryartisttribute.org

Everybody always talks about how dangerous the Bowery was. The Bowery was never dangerous. I never had any one mess with me, no one. One time, a bum threw a bottle and it went in front of me and my girlfriend, and he apologized, “Oh, I’m sorry, sorry.” At 189, Jane would go to Little Italy to shop, and these guys would be sitting on the door-stop, and they would say, “Your wife went out, she’ll be back in twenty

Day,” when the guys got paid, they got their checks. And then hawks would come in, and then rob them if they were drunk on the streets. They were called hawks, you know, gangsters.



3

David Weinrib, the sculptor, he used to have these parties. One time we had this great party, it was a communal dinner. We’d have soup in one place, and then we’d walk to the next studio, and we’d have appetizers. And we’d just move from one studio to another, and each person would make a dish. The night we had it was a blizzard and it was so fantastic. We could walk through the streets, it was like living in the country. There was nothing on the streets. There was no traffic. Every street and every avenue was white. It was marvelous.

- CAPTIONS**  
1—Tom Doyle, 2008. Courtesy Tom Doyle  
2—Tom Doyle interviewed at the New Museum, May 8, 2008  
3—Tom Doyle, *Innishkeen*, 2003, sassafras, oak and cherry, 76 by 101 by 130 in (193 x 256.5 x 330.2 cm). Courtesy Tom Doyle  
4—Tom Doyle, *Ballysheen*, 1991, bronze from wood, 10 by 15 by 20 in (25.4 x 38.1 x 50.8 cm). Courtesy Tom Doyle  
5—Tom Doyle, *Lunesa*, 2006, oak and cherry, 132 by 108 by 228 in (335.3 x 274.3 x 579.1 cm). Courtesy Tom Doyle

# TOM DOYLE

## The Bowery Timeline

- 1864 Stephen Foster, known as the “father of American music” and songwriter of “Oh! Susanna” and “Camptown Races,” dies in a Bowery flophouse at age 37.
- 1870s Stock Market crash, economic depression follows. Hundreds of retail shops close on the Bowery, replaced by cheap saloons, shooting galleries, and dance halls.
- 1870 The Slide, New York’s first gay bar opens at 157 Bleecker Street.



4



5



The career of Amos Poe (b. 1950) is inextricably linked with the birth of American punk, the No Wave movement, and the downtown New York art scene. In 1975, he co-directed Blank Generation: The Birth of Punk with Ivan Kral, producing the first document of the burgeoning New York punk/new wave scene, with performances by Blondie, Patti Smith, the Talking Heads, and more. His 1978 film, The Foreigner defined the no wave genre though its celebration of B-movie textures, avant-garde tactics, and the auteurism of the French New Wave.

Throughout this era, Poe acted as director of TV Party, a public



access television show hosted by Glenn O'Brien and Chris Stein (of Blondie) that featured appearances and contributions from a variety of downtown artists, musicians, and performers, including Fab Five Freddy, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and David Walter McDermott.

He recently completed Empire II, an homage to the 1964 Andy Warhol film Empire.

**Excerpt from the Bowery Artist Tribute interview May 12, 2008 available at boweryartisttribute.org**

I guess I've lived along the edges of the Bowery since 1972, when I first came to New York. It's been a major artery just where I've been. Plus CBGBs. I spent a lot of time there.

Everything was cheap in the '70s; New York was a wasteland. My first apartment was \$60 a month, and then I went up to \$92. Then I had this huge loft, about 5,000 square feet, and that was really expensive: \$140 a month.



I think the energy was that we were living extremely in the moment. We weren't really looking back, except for some artistic inspirations, and we all had a very bohemian sensibility. I think we were aware of the

from one place to the other. It was like the drumbeat in the jungle. The basic day or night (twenty-four-hour period) was: you got up late, you went out to like Binibon or one of the other inexpensive places where you could get breakfast for like €89. And then, did whatever you had to do, and then sometime, by like seven or eight, you knew where you had to be that night. And when you went there, whatever place that was supposed to be, the other 400 people that were in that scene were also there. It might've been a phone call, it might've been just passing someone on the street. It just went like that.

I mean it was what it was. I certainly don't look back about it romantically. Well, maybe I do. But I don't look about it nostalgically, and I'm not one of those people who say "Oh it was so great then and so terrible now." Definitely I don't look back on it with nostalgia and I don't think it was great. We just survived, we did what we did.



**CAPTIONS**  
1—Amos Poe interviewed at the New Museum, May 12, 2008  
2—Top: Eric Mitchell and Amos Poe (right) on the set of The Foreigner, final day of filming, 1978. Bottom: Amos Poe, film still from The Foreigner (1978). Courtesy Amos Poe  
3—Amos Poe, 1977. Courtesy Amos Poe

# AMOS POE

bleak situation around us, the economic situation of the city. The city's infrastructure was a mess. The city was basically bankrupt for a few years. We were aware of that on some level, but at the same time it was like a playground of ideas.

I still can't quite figure out how it happened, but on any given night, all the people would go

SUNDAY NEWS, OCTOBER 15, 1967

## Influx of Artists Is Changing Gray, Sad Face of the Bowery

By HUGH WYATT

The notoriously turned-off Bowery, despite its repeated failures at reform in the past, is finally getting turned on.

It's now witnessing an influx of painters from the East Village and settling into what might be called Phase One of a trend introduced by the French Impressionist painters in the waning years of the 19th century in Paris' Montmartre district.

"The trend," says Joseph Overstreet, a four-year resident of 186 Bowery, "is one of struggle and survival."

Lives in a Loft . Overstreet, a slender 6-footer with a mandarin mustache and long curly disheveled hair who lives with his wife and 2-year-old son in a huge loft, explained:

"Imagine a primitive but conscientious painter, completely untouched by tradition, who couldn't care less about the tricks of the trade, and you will see part of the new Bowery. They are interested only in getting the profoundest meaning out of a painting."

He continued: "I cannot speak for anybody but myself. I do know, however, that the majority of the better painters from the East Side (East Village) are moving in here every day."

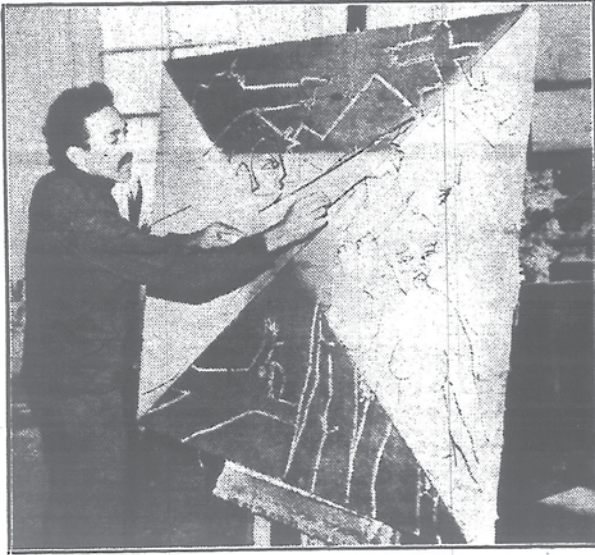
Walt Disney Training Overstreet, 33, got his only academic training at the Walt Disney Studios in California. Schools, he says, have been unable to teach his "feeling," of which only experience can give.

"As far as the scene is concerned here, I don't see it as a new Montmartre, but certain overtones suggest that it is possible," the avant-garde painter went on.

"Historically, artists have managed to create and produce more in deprived areas because the area isn't as pretentious as the so-called good communities," he said.

"Some of them moved here because of economic survival, but that's not why I'm here. I'm here because I identify with the Bowery," Overstreet added.

Part of the Decay First, he indicated that the



NEWS photo by Charles Ruppmann  
Joseph Overstreet paints "The Spirits" in his studio at 186 Bowery.

painters who lived in Montmartre were to some degree a part of its decay, despair and deterioration. They had a personal involvement which gave them a stimulant to remain under such wretched conditions. And secondly, he explained how he identifies with these conditions:

"For me, the picture of limp legs poking from out of a Bowery doorway, the beaten, the battered and the desperate derelict searching for a dime depicts what my life has been about," said Overstreet, who remembers being on relief in Mississippi when he was a youngster.

His paintings support his claims. He has a gigantic painting of the traditional Aunt Jemima colorfully shooting down space ships with pan cakes from a tommy gun. Another shows a baby falling from a fire escape.

A Similar Move This somewhat sudden move of the artists to the Bowery is similar to the move several years ago of painters from Greenwich Village to the East Village, because Greenwich Village had become a

tourist attraction and was not conducive to esthetic creativity, many painters felt.

After finding refuge in the East Village and after several years there, many complain that they are now caught up in the same situation.

Judging from the new faces on the Bowery, this is their latest refuge. Instead of the typical derelict walking the Bowery streets, bearded and long haired Bohemians like Overstreet are seen.

Improving Conditions While some deplore the hippies' appearance, others argue that since the artists arrived in the East Village, even with their eccentricities, they have started changing destitute local conditions by providing the community with art and curio shops which attract tourists.

When the new population shift is complete, maybe the artists will not have given the world another Montmartre, but they are almost certain to have painted a new, more attractive face on the old Bowery.

## Japanese Pop Star Pays Us a Visit

By LISA CRONIN

"Skoshi," the Japanese word for "a little," is a big word in crooner Kyu Sakamoto's vocabulary, but he doesn't use it to discuss his career.

Kyu, who is best known in America for the song "Sukiyaki," which sold a million copies and netted him a golden record, was in New York last week as the youth representative for Expo '70, the 1970 World exposition to be held in Osaka.

His English is limited, but he crosses the language barrier with a warm smile, a humble manner and an interpreter who believes that "where there's a will there's

"Don't Understand"

He refused comment on the flower people saying, "I just don't understand." He added that he didn't like drugs.

"He won't even take medicine when he has a cold," his interpreter, Ranko Iwamoto, explained.

Kyu said that Elvis Presley and the Beatles have been the biggest influences on Japanese popular music.

"They're still very popular," he explained, "but the Japanese trend in our music is increasing." Kyu said he plans to take the new controversial Beatles' record, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Band" home as a souvenir.

He's A Dropout The Tokyo-born balladeer is a



NEWS photo by Fred Morgan  
Kyu Sakamoto

## Twin Golden Anniversary

Two Bronx couples who were married in a double ceremony 50 years ago at Our Lady of Pity Church in the Bronx, will celebrate their golden wedding anniversaries together this evening. Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Vinci of 1450 Arnow Ave., at Mr. and Mrs. Santo Pulverer, 2120 Randall Ave., will toast each other at a reception in the Gun Hill Manor, 1920 E. 61st Hill Rd.

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- The Bowery Timeline
- 1875 Samuel F. O'Reilly invents the electric tattoo machine and opens a shop at 11 Chatham Square.
- 1876 George B. Bunnell opens the New American Museum at 103 Bowery; P.T. Barnum is a silent partner.
- 1878 Elevated train opens at the Bowery's third-story level, darkening the street, showering pedestrians with debris, and chasing middle-class patrons and businesses to Broadway and parallel avenues.
- 1878-1879 Electric lights installed on the Bowery.
- 1879 The Bowery Mission opens at 36 Bowery. Responding to the growing immigrant population, the Bowery Theater, now renamed the Thalia, offers German and Yiddish theater and Italian and Chinese vaudeville.
- 1892 The Bowery is the target of a popular song by Charles M. Hoyt: "The Bowery, the Bowery! They say such things and they do such things On the Bowery, the Bowery! I'll never go there any more!"
- 1893-1898 Worst depression in U.S. history. Over half the saloons and pawnshops south of 14th Street are located on the Bowery.
- 1900s 25,000 men lodge nightly on the Bowery in flophouses and SROs (single room occupancy buildings).
- 1903 Williamsburg Bridge opens.
- 1909 Manhattan Bridge opens. The Bowery Mission moves to 227-229 Bowery, where it remains today.
- 1919 18th Amendment prohibits the sale and consumption of alcohol, forcing many establishments on the Bowery to close.
- CAPTION**  
Hugh Wyatt's 1967 New York Daily News article, "Influx of Artists Is Changing Gray, Sad Face of the Bowery." © New York Daily News, L.P. used with permission





Inka Essenhight (b. 1969) emerged in the 1990s as a painter of energetic, intricate, and superbly proficient works. Balancing a vast range of influences—Arabic miniatures, cartoons, Art Nouveau—her paintings effect a perfectly credible yet exotic world. Barrooms, malls, subway platforms, and other banal locations are populated with green-skinned creatures and twisted-limb grotesques, revealing their strange underbellies. Whimsical as often as sinister, the fluidly deformed characters of Essenhight’s paintings coyly reveal an understanding of the world that inspired them. As Essenhight explained, “I think about them as being about America: fake, fun, pop, violent, but also quite attractive.”

Recently, Essenhight has begun a process of transforming her subject matter. Having always made paintings “about the world that I live in,” Essenhight explains, “now I’m making a conscious effort to paint the world that I want to live in.”

Since her first solo exhibition at the Albright Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo in 1999, Essenhight has exhibited widely across the United States and Europe. Her work has been featured in several defining group exhibitions including “Greater New York: New Art in New York Now” (2000) at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York; “Hybrids” (2001) at the Tate Liverpool; and the touring exhibition “My Reality: Contemporary Art and the Culture of Japanese Animation” (2001).

Excerpt from the Bowery Artist Tribute interview September 30, 2007 available at boweryartisttribute.org

We’re in an old schoolhouse building—an old P.S.1 building on the corner of Rivington and Suffolk—where I’ve been since ‘94 and where there’s now probably anywhere

between fifty and 100 artists in the building. The attraction [of the Bowery] was to be in Manhattan. People were already moving to DUMBO and to Williamsburg, and that was when Williamsburg first became really huge, between 1991–95, was when it really exploded as the new artist’s place



to be. I always wanted to be in Manhattan; I had this dream of being able to walk anywhere and walk down the street and just run into people—and I always run into people I know as I walk down the streets of Manhattan. I guess this is not interesting though. It seemed easier just in terms of trying make a career in the art world. The whole idea was if you could invite someone back to your studio the thinking was it was actually easier to get them to come to a place that was actually close as opposed to Williamsburg or DUMBO.

It was a rough neighborhood when we first moved here, when you walked down the street you got a lot of offers, this corner was really known for heroin.



In 1995, Giuliani really decided to crack down, and clean up the Lower East Side. And there were daily busts, and before you know it, there are nicer places to get lunch.

I’ve been here for like fifteen years and I kind of take it for granted. And one thing that I might take for granted is that it’s not a white hue. It’s not a clean white box that I have a studio in that’s going to be like the galleries that I show in. A lot of times when I’m making a painting, I don’t like to make something that big, something that gigantic. I want it to be much more human scale, even if it doesn’t fit into the New York art world with the gigantic spaces. I’ve always been thankful that I didn’t

have such a generic space to make my paintings in. The aesthetic of the clean white box is a kind of recent thing, and it doesn’t have to be that way, and I’m glad I don’t have to be in a cold white box either. If I go, one thing that I would like for this space is that at least I would be able to give it to another artist, as opposed to having it turn into another condo.

I really believe that art needs a certain amount of cheap living for people to have some play in their work, so it’s not all this boring professionalism and people can take

# INKA ESSENHIGH



CAPTIONS  
1—Inka Essenhight. Courtesy Inka Essenhight  
2—Inka Essenhight interviewed at her studio, September 30, 2007  
3—Inka Essenhight, *Power Party*, 2003, oil on canvas, 76 by 80 in (193 x 203.2 cm). Courtesy Inka Essenhight  
4—Interior of Inka Essenhight’s studio. Photo: Joe Fig  
5—Interior of Inka Essenhight’s studio. Photo: Joe Fig

- The Bowery Timeline
- 1920s The Bowery’s reputation for squalor, unemployment, and its large population of alcoholics lead it to be referred to as New York City’s “Skid Row.”
- 1940s Restaurant equipment stores open on the Bowery. The term “Bowery Bums” emerges to describe the alcoholics and homeless people inhabiting and frequenting the area.
- 1941 Fernand Léger moves into 222 Bowery.
- 1954 Sol LeWitt establishes his studio at Hester and Bowery.
- 1955 Elevated train on the Bowery is torn down, returning daylight to the street.
- 1957 The Five Spot opens at 5 Cooper Square, host to Billie Holiday, Thelonious Monk, and John Coltrane, among others. Mark Rothko establishes residence and studio at 222 Bowery.
- 1960s Cy Twombly resides at 356 Bowery.
- 1962 Amiri Baraka and Hettie Jones move into 27 Cooper Square
- 1963 Eva Hesse moves to 134 Bowery with her husband Tom Doyle.



The devilish, supremely vivid work of Scott Ewalt (b. 1965) has appeared on record covers, in the galleries Deitch Projects and Feature Inc., and in public institutions. His striking imagery conjures up both the power of mythological figures and the naughtiness of burlesque. Working exclusively in a digital format since 1987, Ewalt has collaborated with a remarkable variety of artists, including Kembra Pfahler, Matthew Barney,



and Genesis P-Orridge. In 2000, he redesigned the constellation figures for the Rose Center for Earth and Space at the Museum of Natural History in New York City, and in 2001 illustrated a book on adult-era Times

Square with singer/writer Marc Almond. As a DJ, Ewalt has a unique identity, playing striptease music for both downtown dance crowds and for the legends of the Burlesque Hall of Fame.

Excerpt from the Bowery Artist Tribute interview January 29, 2008 available at boweryartisttribute.org

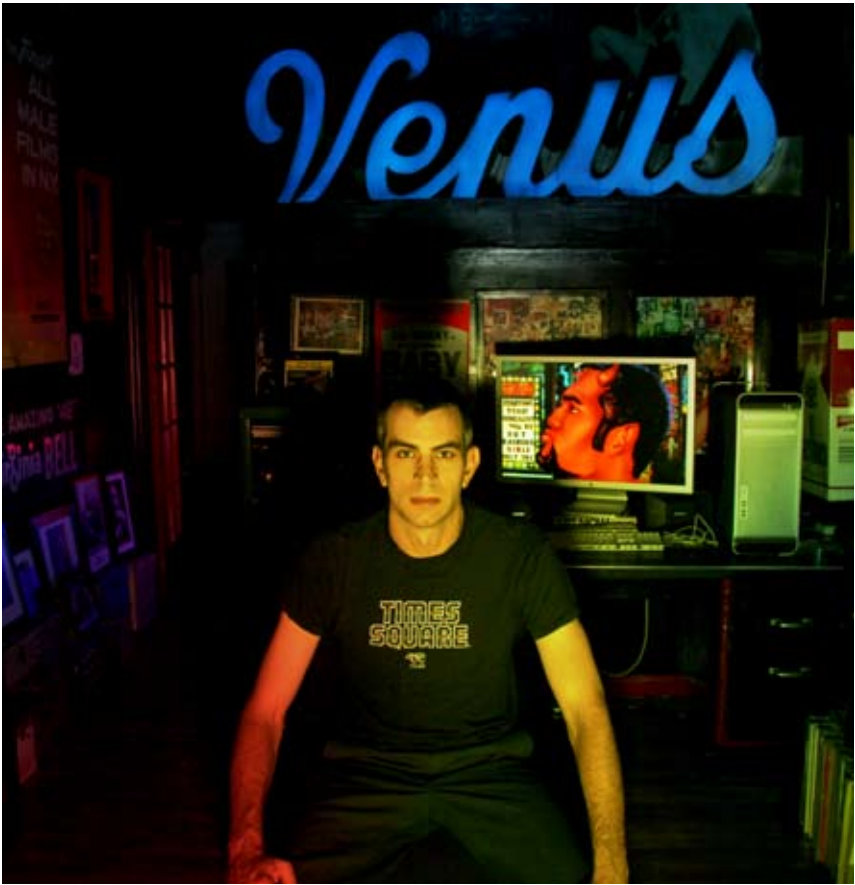
I moved here in 1994. I'd always wanted to live here because I had read about it, and like most people of my generation, I had grown up with Andy Warhol's POPism and reading the Beat poets and stuff like that. I had always wanted to live here, and I got the opportunity under the worst circumstances. My best friend moved into this apartment, and the first day that she moved here she

I didn't even know anything about the geography, it just seemed like every book I read as a teenager that really made an impression, the [author] lived on the Bowery. And so before I even knew where it was, I had this fixation in my mind that

I was going to move to New York and live on the Bowery and have a loft and be an artist. When I first moved in a lot of those people from the books were still here. One of the first days I moved in, I was sitting on the fire escape and I looked down and it was John Giorno and he was talking to Uta Hagen, and I just thought, "Wow this is really the cosmopolitan place I wanted to be." And I had already lived [in New York] eleven years by then, but the Bowery was really where I wanted to end up.

then closed in when they built the Avalon Chrystie building, that was kind of the end of the old-time Bowery. They tore down the original Suicide Bar, which was across the street, and it was disappointing because all of a sudden parking was an issue, and we had SUVs everywhere.

[The Bowery] was very inspiring to me on a daily level. I tried to take pictures of all the buildings and document all the old-time stuff before it got torn down. And at the same time it was during the Giuliani regime, and so he was taking a lot of the older neighborhoods and converting them to more viable real estate. I found it frustrating, but I think my therapy was to document it and to save as many things as I could that I appreciated.



died of a mysterious illness. One of those terrible New York stories.

For me the most wonderful thing was that Lenny Kaye from the Patti Smith Group lived next door. I grew up in an environment that had a '60s revival scene and the kind of holy bible of the '60s revival scene was this album called Nuggets that he compiled, and so I knew who he was since I was like fourteen years old. And it just so happened that about the time that I moved in our phone lines got crossed, and so it was kind of this magic moment when I would pick up the phone and Patti Smith and Lenny Kaye would be having a conversation on the phone together.

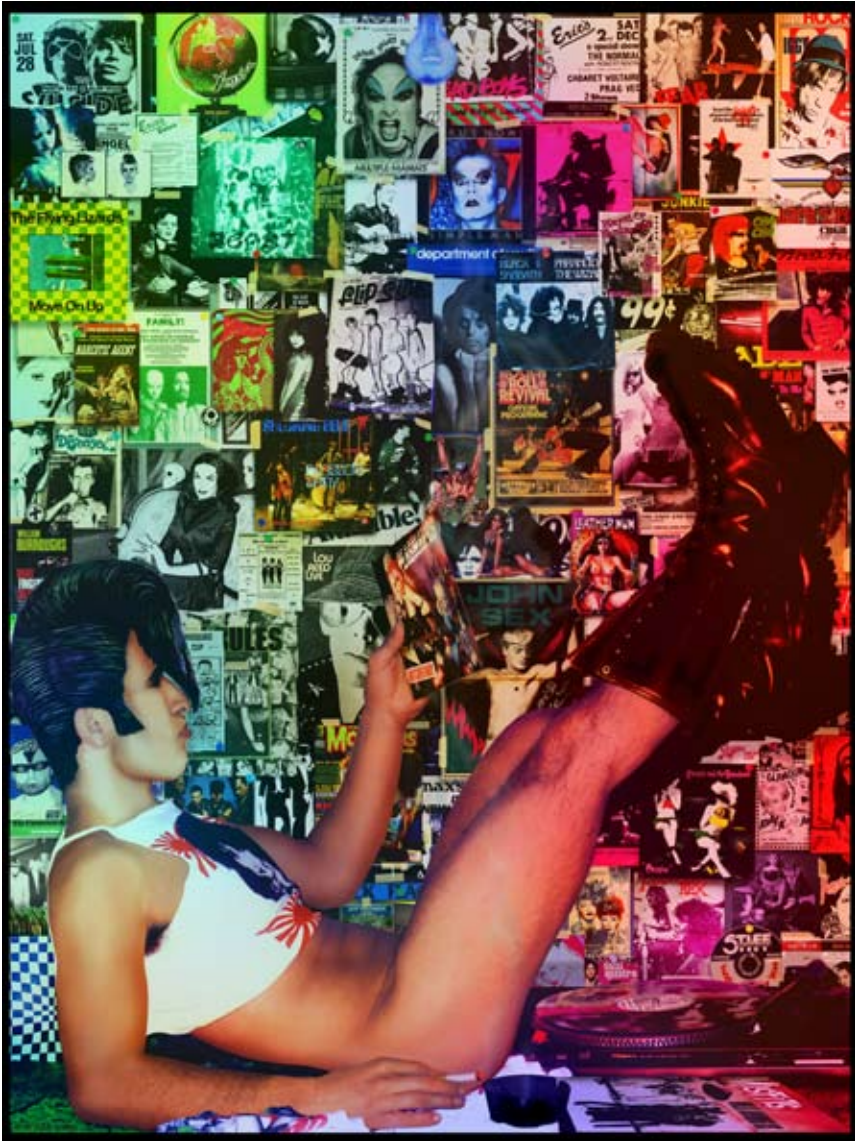
Even when I moved in here in the '90s, it was kind of the people in the Mission and the artists who were left over, and so anyone that wasn't kind of destitute was actually someone I was dying to meet. And one of the first people I approached on the street was Gerard Malanga from Andy Warhol's Factory and a member of the Velvet Underground and stuff. It just seemed like every couple of days there'd be someone who I had read about and idolized. And so it was really kind of magical.

Kind of all the gentrification closed in and this was kind of the last three or four square blocks. And it really just surrounded us and

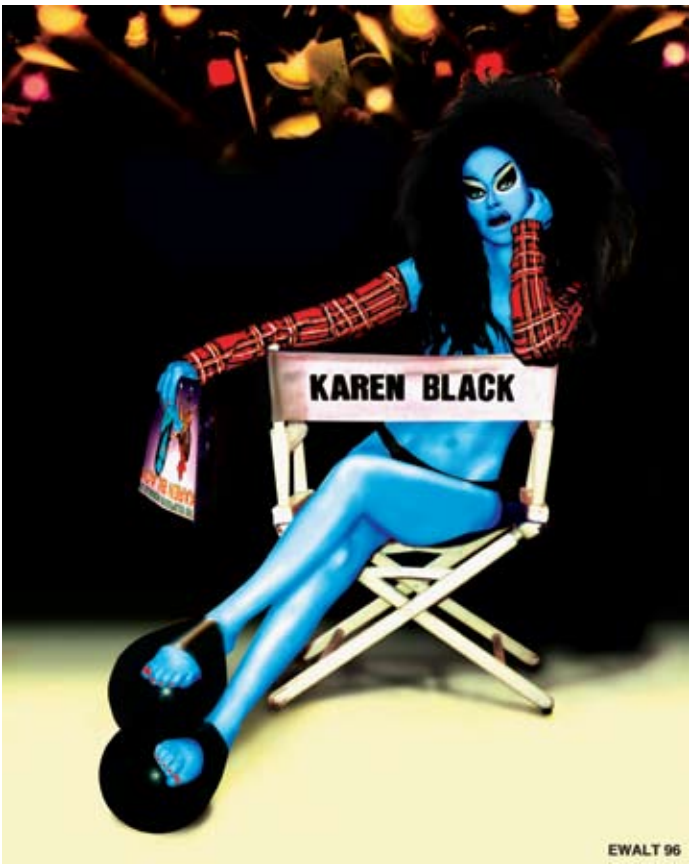
# SCOTT EWALT



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## CAPTIONS

1—Scott Ewalt interviewed at his Bowery studio, January 29, 2008

2—Scott Ewalt, 2008. Photo: Jeff Gardner

3—Scott Ewalt, *Exotic World*, 2006, digital print, 24 by 36 in (61 x 91.4 cm). Courtesy Scott Ewalt

4—Scott Ewalt, *Some Women Are More Alive Than Others*, 1996, digital print, 18 by 24 in (45.7 x 61 cm). Courtesy Scott Ewalt

5—Scott Ewalt, *True Love Part I*, 2006, digital print, 36 by 48 in (91.4 x 121.9 cm). Courtesy Scott Ewalt

6—Scott Ewalt, *True Love Part 2*, 2006, digital print, 36 by 48 in (91.4 x 121.9 cm). Courtesy Scott Ewalt

## The Bowery Timeline

1965 New York Times article "The Bowery: Arty and Avant-Garde" (January 2, 1965) claims over 100 artists live on the Bowery for the cheap lofts, large studio spaces, and natural light. Vito Acconci moves to 217 Bowery; Roy Lichtenstein moves to 190 Bowery.

1966 John Giorno moves to 222 Bowery and establishes the Dial-a-Poem offices in the building.

1967 Elizabeth Murray moves to 27 Cooper Square.

1968 Al Loving moves to the Bowery; Adrian Piper moves to Hester and Bowery.

1972 A famous drag club, 82 Club, opens at 82 East 4th Street, just off the Bowery. Robert Mapplethorpe moves to 24 Bond Street.

1973 Hilly Kristal opens CBGB OMFUG at 315 Bowery. Green Guerillas establish the Liz Christy Community Garden at Bowery and Houston, one of the first community gardens in the U.S.



Wyn Loving

Wyn Loving (1937–1992, born Riser) was part of a generation that challenged the United States to live up to its promise of equality and justice.



She acted as the anchor of a very lively community of artists and political activists, and gave her energy to such groundbreaking projects as Learning to Read Through the Arts (based at the Guggenheim Museum) and the Ninth Avenue International Fair.

Upon receiving her MFA from the University of Michigan, Wyn Riser began teaching at Eastern Michigan State University in 1966, alongside artist Al Loving. When their friendship developed into a serious relationship, Al Loving, an African American, was fired from the college, and Riser publicly resigned in protest.

After the couple’s subsequent relocation to New York, Wyn Loving’s paintings moved to the nonobjective large works that draped and tumbled out of their frames, marked by overall patterns of controlled color. As this practice led to meticulous paintings of natural objects, Loving also

worked in design, creating Olympic posters in collaboration with Andy Warhol, and designing books, including *I Need More* by Iggy Pop and Ann Wehrer. In the 1970s, Loving moved to Newfoundland where she developed the Bonne Bay Craft Cooperative, which worked to revive traditional crafts and invigorate local communities, continuing her life’s work of creative cultural activism.

Al Loving

The forty-year career of Al Loving (1935–2005) explored a variety of abstract modes—geometric complexity, collage, Abstract Expressionism—always demonstrating a significant, personal presence. His artistic pursuit through materiality and technique took on an almost-sacred quality, as Loving once stated, “I believe that art represents needs that have not been met.”

In the 1960s, Loving worked with massive geometric forms, precise, angular shapes painted in color. It was these works that brought him the attention of the Whitney Museum of American Art, who gave Loving a solo show in 1969. This breakthrough exhibition offered a variety of opportunities to Loving in galleries nationally and internationally. During this time Loving also undertook a number of public commissions, including pieces for the Metropolitan Transit Authority in New York City, Wayne State University, and the Sacramento Convention Center.

By the close of the 1970s, Loving began looking for ways to break from his geometric work, and began working in collage. Following a 1985 trip to participate in the Havana Biennial, Loving abandoned the brush completely and began working exclusively with the spiral as an icon, which he defined as “a symbol

of continuity and cultural fusion.” Loving’s work is included in the permanent collections of the Detroit Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Empire State Plaza Collection, and many other public and private collections.

Alicia Loving-Cortes

Alicia Loving-Cortes is the daughter of Wyn and Al Loving. She moved to the Bowery at the age of eight, along with her sister Anne, who was four years old. Today, Loving-Cortes still lives in New York where she works in sound for independent feature films.

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**Excerpt from the Bowery Artist Tribute interview January 14, 2008 available at boweryartisttribute.org**  
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I arrived in New York in 1968. My family moved from Michigan and they moved here because they wanted to be a part of the art world. We ended up on the Bowery, which was pretty spectacular having come from Ann Arbor, with a backyard and places to ride your bike. We moved into 262 Bowery, into a 4,000-square-foot



# ALICIA LOVING-CORTES

## AL LOVING

## WYN LOVING

loft. It was really pretty scary for the first bit of time because it was just a completely different world. We ended up on the Bowery because there was great space, but also because it was affordable. It was kind of like a new frontier. But my parents made it really wonderful for us, a huge open space with white walls. They hung up swing sets in the house and ladders, and we were allowed to ride our bikes through the house. I was about eight years old at that time, and that was my entry into the Bowery.

The reason that my parents ended up leaving Michigan is that Al was fired from Eastern Michigan University for having a relationship with my mother and my mother resigned as a result. At that time, for me, kids weren’t allowed over at my house because of Al. People weren’t allowed to come and play. We were living near Detroit, and it was a very charged time, during the era of the Detroit

**CAPTIONS**  
**1—Wyn Loving, 1970. Courtesy Anne and Alicia Loving**

**2—Al Loving at the opening of his solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1969. Courtesy Anne and Alicia Loving**

**3—Alicia Loving-Cortes interviewed at her home, January 14, 2008**

**4—Wyn and Al Loving’s studio at 262 Bowery. Their daughters, Alicia and Ann, sit atop an “elephant” sculpture the children made out of the leftover tape Al Loving used in the production of his paintings. Courtesy Anne and Alicia Loving**

**5—Al Loving, *Time Trip Part 2 #10*, 2003, rag paper collage with acrylic paint medium on gator-board backing. Collection of Mara Kearny Loving**

**6—Wyn Loving, *The Last Summer*, 1972, acrylic and pencil on paper, 26 by 40 in (66 x 101.6 cm). Courtesy Anne and Alicia Loving**

**7—Alicia Loving and Kellie Jones at 262 Bowery. Courtesy Anne and Alicia Loving**



riots. Moving here was amazing for all of us, because the level of acceptance was so much more.

The first day of school there were kids of every nationality, and there were kids with divorced parents, and kids of every ethnic background. To come here for all of us was really wonderful.

We were allowed out, we walked everywhere. We went to school on our own. We would walk across the street, and would take the 3rd Avenue bus up. Actually that’s where I first met Kellie Jones, the downtown

community school. Elizabeth Murray was our art teacher there.

It was just a different time in New York.

Tour buses used to come down and go slowly down the Bowery because they wanted to look and see. My sister and I used to pull up our shirts and show off our stomachs and do all kinds of crazy things, because we just thought it was so weird. Why would they want to come and look at these poor guys?

Yeah, there was a certain amount of adventure about living down there at that particular time. For me, I continue to like to live in that certain way.



The Bowery Timeline

- 1974 Talking Heads move into a loft at 195 Chrystie; William Burroughs moves into 222 Bowery, which he renames “The Bunker.”
- 1979 Callahan v. Carey, filed by six homeless men, results in a consent decree requiring New York City to provide clean and safe shelter for all homeless men in the city. Cases of severe hypothermia and death among the homeless drop dramatically after the decree. Great Gildersleeves opens at 331 Bowery; in its four-year existence, the club hosts Black Flag, Public Image Ltd., Elvis Costello, and Sonic Youth.



The following is an excerpt from Adrian Piper's tribute to Sol LeWitt written upon his death in April of 2007.

---  
Rosalind Krauss wrote a long, unenthusiastic review of [Sol's] groundbreaking show, [46 Variations on Three Different Kinds of Cubes] in Artforum. I didn't have the nerve to just call him up and console him; I knew who he was, but we'd never met. But I did write him a letter of consolation about how much I'd liked the show and how important I thought it was. I suggested that he ignore the review. He wrote back, thanking me and remarking that he didn't mind if

Both Virgos, both lovers of Bach and Beckett, we bonded right away, while bickering about whether or not Bach's choral works (Sol's preference) were superior to his orchestral works (my preference at the time). Actually I didn't know Bach's choral works that well—I owe my love of them to Sol; but felt pleased that he pulled no punches in defending them and promised to reconsider The Art of Fugue, if I would reread the works of Beckett I'd failed to fully appreciate, which were most of them. Sol was not as verbose as I'm making him sound. He was shy, and sparing with words, which he used plainly and to great effect. He asked for nothing



I the review was negative, as long as it was lengthy. He also enclosed two working drawings from the series, and suggested that we meet at the Bykert Gallery and go for a beer. We both arrived around the same time. Apparently he'd been expecting a man, because when I walked up to him, he did a double take and asked, "You're Adrian Piper?" I assured him that I was, and we went for our beer.

but my friendship, and I asked for nothing but his. Actually that is not true. I became a complete pest after he got me a loft in his building at 117 Hester Street. He and his partner, Mary Peacock (and later Mimi Wheeler), enjoyed having friends over, so I became a frequent guest at his dinners, which also included Bob Ryman, Lucy Lippard, Carl Andre and

Rosemary Castoro, Bob and Sylvia Mangold, Bob Smithson and Nancy Holt, Mel Bochner and Dorothea Rockburne, Hans Haacke, Don Judd, Hanne Darboven, Joseph Kosuth and Christine Koslov, Dan Graham and Lee Lozano, Jan Dibbets, Larry and Susan Wiener, Doug Huebler, John Weber, Virginia Dwan, Konrad Fischer, Kaspar König,



# ADRIAN PIPER

Nicholas Logsdail, and others. Sol and I had quickly realized that we were almost exactly twenty years apart in age, so he held several joint birthday dinners in his loft during the years we both lived at Hester Street. I was a bad cook, but sometimes helped with the dishes. I also borrowed all of his books by Beckett and all of his

Bach recordings, and watched so many old movies on his TV that in desperation he bought me one for my twentieth birthday, and brought a chair upstairs for me to sit in so I could watch it. I also fed his cat, Puss, while he was away, and executed some of his drawings. In return for being a pest and feeding his cat, and without my knowledge, he chatted up my work to all of his friends in the art world. I have no idea how many doors he opened for me. But I received invitations to show my work in all of the

Conceptual art exhibitions that were then taking place in Europe, and unsolicited visits from gallerists, critics, and curators from all over the world who knew him. Sometimes he would have such a person to lunch or dinner downstairs, and urge them to drop upstairs to see my work while they were there. In large part I owe my easy admission into the art world, and my early success, to him.

From "Sol, 1928–2007," April 18, 2007.  
adrianpiper.com/art/sol.shtml



**CAPTIONS**  
1—Adrian Piper in her studio at 117 Hester Street, 1969. Courtesy Adrian Piper  
2—Interior of Adrian Piper's studio at 117 Hester Street, 1969. Courtesy Adrian Piper  
3—Interior of Adrian Piper's studio at 117 Hester Street. Polaroid photos: Adrian Piper



The Bowery Timeline  
1980s Drug abuse on the Bowery reaches epidemic; 41 percent of all drug arrests between Houston and 14th Streets give the 3rd Street Shelter (at Bowery) as their address.  
1980 Filmmaker Jim Jarmusch moves to the Bowery.  
1982 New York's Chinatown surpasses San Francisco's Chinatown as largest community of Chinese immigrants in the Western hemisphere. Keith Haring paints his first major outdoor project, a mural over an abandoned handball court, at the corner of Houston Street and the Bowery.  
1983 Jean-Michel Basquiat rents studio and living space from Andy Warhol at 57 Great Jones Street.  
1993 Al's Bar, the last of the Bowery dive bars, shuts down after fifty years of operation.





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**CAPTIONS**  
1—Keith Haring, Houston Street Mural, 1982. Photo: Tseng Kwong Chi, © 1982 Muna Tseng Dance Projects, Inc., New York. Keith Haring artwork © Estate of Keith Haring

2—Empty bottle of benzine found between the walls of Scott Ewalt's Bowery loft. Courtesy Scott Ewalt

3—Jean-Michael Basquiat, show poster for Gray and DNA at CBGB, March 22, 1980. At the time of the concert, Gray's members were Basquiat, Wayne Clifford, Shannon Dawson, Michael Holman, and Nick Taylor. Courtesy Nick Taylor

4—Sign for Cap Makers business at 306 Bowery, date unknown. Courtesy Scott Ewalt

5—Artist in Residence sign at 190 Bowery, 2008. Photo: Ethan Swan

6—Curt Hoppe in his studio at 98 Bowery, with his painting Bettie and the Ramones at CBGBs, 1978. Photo: Miller/Ringma

7—Poster announcing Bowery Gallery's first show, 1969. Courtesy Barbara Grossman



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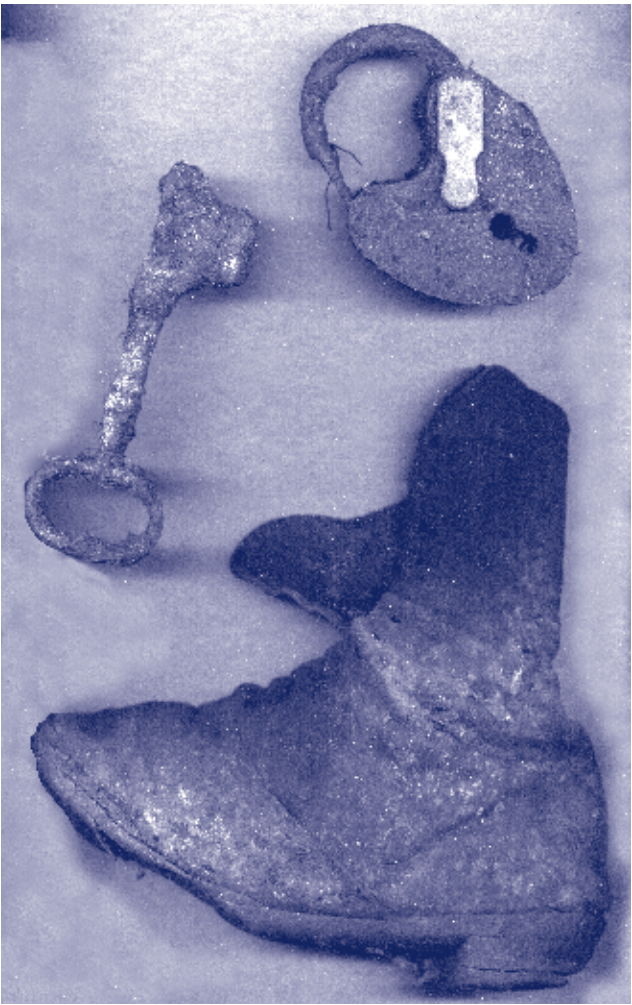
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**The Bowery Timeline**  
1997 Bowery Ballroom opens its doors as a music venue in a former shoe store at Bowery and Delancey.  
2002 Bob Holman establishes the Bowery Poetry Club at 308 Bowery. Common Ground Community, a nonprofit housing organization, purchases the Andres Hotel at 197 Bowery to continue providing flophouse-type residence to current Bowery hotel tenants.  
2004 After a six-year battle with the city, Kate Millett is relocated from her loft at 295 Bowery. The building is demolished to clear space for Avalon Bowery Place, a 600+ unit luxury apartment complex. Millett had resided at 295 Bowery since 1973.  
2006 CBGB closes its doors with a performance by Patti Smith.  
2007 The Bowery Hotel opens at 335 Bowery. Avalon Bowery Place, Whole Foods, and the YMCA open at Houston and Bowery. New Museum opens at 235 Bowery.



**The Bowery Artist Tribute  
is an ongoing project.**

**The New Museum welcomes  
additional information about artists  
who have lived or worked on the  
Bowery, past and present.**

**Please return the form below to the  
New Museum: 235 Bowery, New York,  
NY, 10002 USA**

**or by email  
[boweryartisttribute@newmuseum.org](mailto:boweryartisttribute@newmuseum.org)**

**ARTIST'S NAME**

**ARTIST'S ADDRESS ON/NEAR  
THE BOWERY**

**DATES THAT THE ARTIST  
OCCUPIED THIS ADDRESS**

**ARTIST'S (OR ESTATE) CONTACT  
PHONE**

**EMAIL**

**ADDRESS**

**YOUR CONTACT  
(IF DIFFERENT THAN ARTIST)  
PHONE**

**EMAIL**

**ADDRESS**



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