HOLLAND COTTER

When Artists Ran the Show

An exhibition of nearly 230 objects looks at the golden age of artist-run galleries in downtown Manhattan.

Robert Storr writes that the artist-run gallery is "a form, in an era of gallery culture, that is stronger than ever."

Barbara Pollack

Chinese Cultural Nomads Find an Oasis

Three young artists put together a show at 47 Canal.

Cui Wu, Hong Kong Ham and Wang Xu are three such artists. Wu, who was born in China, attended the University of Michigan and now calls New York home. In 2005 they turned their shared studio in Chinatown into an art space and launched a residency program called Practice. The studio is open to any artist whose work centers on identity,  as long as they are from a "global" region.

Cui Wu, Hong Kong Ham, Wang Xu: Mosquitoes, Dolls and Thieves (47 Canal Gallery)

Chinese identity on a lower level and open to anything more focused on the relationship between the two sides of".

Barbara Pollack

Winter Antiques Show

January 19-29

A benefit for East Side House Settlement, celebrating 85 years of community service.

Opening Night Party

January 19

winterantiquesshow.com

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When the Artists Ran the Show

American art, the art that won the culture war with European art, is like no other art form. It is a market like none other, and it will change the art world as we know it, which made many people, including some serious Modernists, Shankle who wrote, quite happy.

Not everyone was thrilled. Not all artists were. Some, like those who had succeeded as part of the trend but couldn’t quite figure out how. Others were tired of advertisement, they wanted to paint people and emotions. Many now turned to graffiti and public art, an emergent art form. For others, politics, and art’s expression of it, was primary concern. The only guaranteed way these artists could succeed was by opening galleries of their own, and they did.

The number of these artists’ own galleries were downtown, on or around 8th Street, on East 4th Street, where many had lived out of choice. Some, like Melora Bollas, a critic and associate professor at the New York University School of Art, became her own, a few of whom never left, others for just a few months.

The most stable were the self-co-owned, co-operative galleries, or co-ops, established by groups of artists who paint mainly downtown. Rebekah Bollas opened a place on 8th Street, and Melora Bollas opened a space on West 24th Street. It wasn’t work for them, but they opened and closed.

The earliest of the three co-ops owned by the show, the Tanager Gallery, was also the longest-lived, surviving from 1962 to 1983. And it was the one with the most well-known artists, a little something for all tastes: the hard-core Rebel, the young rebels, and the neophytes from realism to (double partner by Alan Kees on his side), to the neo-expressionist (Leo Diddo’s wonderful Billie picture of off-white, crimson, and white), to the false gourment painting of Charles Cajori, Fred Mitchell and the like.

As is true throughout the show, there are numerous differences between one in a sculptor who painted, and the other an artist who painted. Mary Frank, suggesting the form of the face, which he painted. The work of Jean Fontenot, whose ghoulish, unsettling, and surreal paintings, “A Black Angel” is a version of his own, Turner’s gaudy paintings would have fit right into galleries, and in spite of it, in the 1980s, Fontenot, who after early success left New York, was still working in his loft in the basement.

The show ended in 1982 at a Harlem Gallery. It was the first Black Arts Galleries, a group of teachers who, although himself an abstract painter encouraged his students to experimen-