



Inventing Downtown: Artist-Run Galleries in New York City, 1952-1965

Melissa Rachleff

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This enlightening and thought-provoking look at New York City's postwar art scene focuses on the galleries and the artists that helped transform American art. While the achievements of New York City's most renowned postwar artists—de Kooning, Pollock, Rothko, Franz Kline—have been studied in depth, a large cadre of lesser-known but influential artists came of age between 1952 and 1965. Also understudied are the early, experimental works by more well-known figures such as Mark di Suvero, Jim Dine, Dan Flavin, and Claes Oldenburg. Focusing on innovative artist-run galleries, this book invites readers to reevaluate the period—uncovering its diversity, creativity, and nuances, and tracing the spaces' influence during the decades that followed. *Inventing Downtown* charts the development of artist-run galleries in Lower Manhattan from the early 1950s to the mid-1960s, showing how the area's multicultural spirit played a major role in shaping the artworks exhibited there. The book explores 14 key spaces in which styles such as Pop, Minimalism, and performance and installation art thrived. Excerpts from 33 revealing interviews with artists, critics, and dealers, conducted by Billy Kluver and Julie Martin, offer unique personal insight into the era's creative milieu. Taken together, the book's essays and interviews provide a distinctly new assessment of how downtown New York's fertile environment nurtured an innovative art scene.

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