



PIER 34

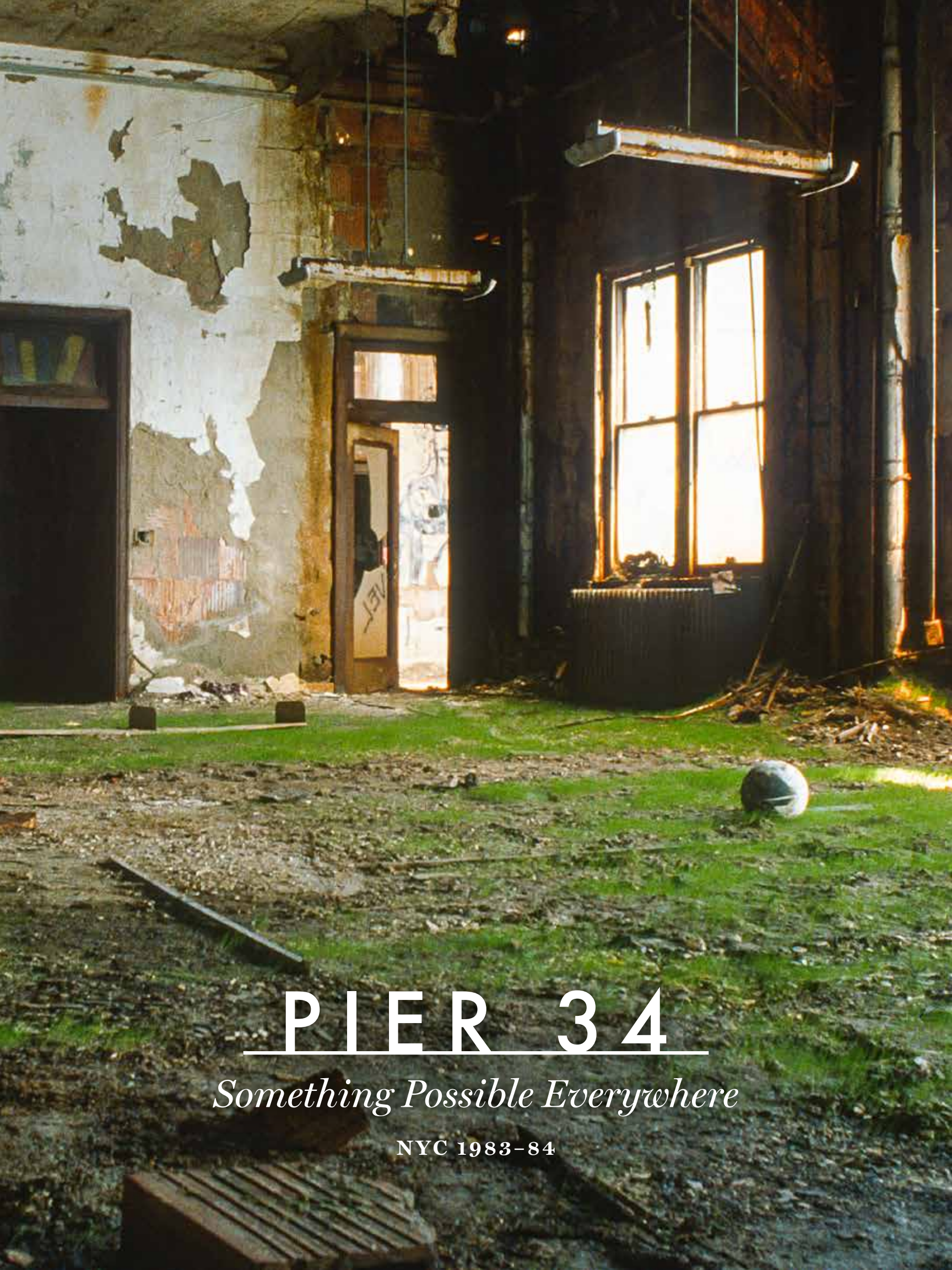
Something Possible Everywhere

NYC 1983-84

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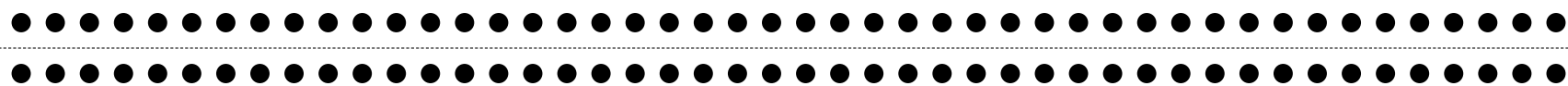
NO SMOKING

PIER 34

Something Possible Everywhere

NYC 1983-84

Jane Bauman
Mike Bidlo
Paolo Buggiani
Keith Davis
Steve Doughton
John Fekner
David Finn
Jean Foos
Luis Frangella
Valeriy Gerlovin
Judy Glantzman
Peter Hujar
Alain Jacquet
Kim Jones
Rob Jones



September 30–November 20

Opening reception: September 29, 7–9pm

Curated by Jonathan Weinberg

Featuring photographs by Andreas Sterzing

Organized by the Hunter College Art Galleries

205

HUDSON GALLERY

205 Hudson Street

New York, New York

Hours: Wednesday–Sunday, 1–6pm

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The City University of New York

Stephen Lack
Marisela La Grave
Liz-N-Val
Bill Mutter
Michael Ottersen
Rick Prol
Dirk Rowntree
Russell Sharon
Kiki Smith
Huck Snyder
Andreas Sterzing
Betty Tompkins
Peter White
David Wojnarowicz
Teres Wylder
Rhonda Zwillinger





Andreas Sterzing, *Pier 34 & Pier 32, View from Hudson River, 1983*

FOREWORD

This exhibition catalogue celebrates the moment, thirty-three years ago, when a group of artists trespassed on a city-owned building on Pier 34 and turned it into an illicit museum and incubator for new art. It is particularly fitting that the 205 Hudson Gallery hosts this show given its proximity to where the terminal building once stood, just four blocks from 205 Hudson Street. One of the great pleasures of this exhibition is the way it reconnects us to the waterfront, particularly through the lens of Andreas Sterzing's cinematic photographs. As Mike Bidlo and David Wojnarowicz suggest, there is a deep connection between the flow of the Hudson River—the unceasing traffic under and across it—and the constant flux of creation that is so central to art-making in this city.

Something Possible Everywhere: Pier 34 NYC, 1983–84 owes its success to the dedication and hard work of numerous individuals and institutions. First and foremost, we thank all of the artists who worked at Pier 34 and are the inspiration for this exhibition. We are tremendously grateful to the exhibition curator, Jonathan Weinberg, for his passion and dedication to this important and underexamined aspect of the early 1980s downtown art scene; and to photographer Andreas Sterzing, whose collaboration has been instrumental in the creation of this exhibition and catalogue. Thank you to the numerous artists who contributed recollections for the catalogue and to those who contributed on other artists' behalf. The outpouring of enthusiasm by so many involved with Pier 34 is beyond touching.

This exhibition would not have been made possible without the generous support provided by Carol and Arthur Goldberg, Joan and Charles Lazarus, Dorothy Lichtenstein, and an anonymous donor. Furthermore, we could not have realized the show without the collaboration of its many generous lenders: Allan Bealy and Sheila Keenan of *Benzene Magazine*; Hal Bromm Gallery and Hal Bromm, Sam Kogon, Alex Markwith, and Don Meris; Light and Toby Buggiani; Julie Davis; Delaware Art Museum and Margaret Winslow, Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art; Asher Edelman and Edelman Arts; Eric Javits; Kim E. Jones; Hebe Joy; and the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art; P.P.O.W. Gallery and Wendy Olsoff and Anneliis Beadnell; Tom Rauffenbart; Beatricia Sagar; and Anders Wahlstedt Fine Art.

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals whose energy and commitment have been integral to the achievement and success of this exhibition: Howard Singerman, Phyllis and Joseph Caroff Chair of the Department of Art and Art History and Executive Director; Joachim Pissarro, Bershad Professor and Director; Jocelyn Spaar, Curatorial Assistant; Jenn Bratovich, Gallery Assistant; Phi Nguyen, Preparator; and our Joan Lazarus Exhibition Fellows Mikey Estes and Susan Breyer. The catalogue owes its thoughtful design to Tim Laun and Natalie Wedeking, with timely editorial support from Amelia Kutschbach. We also express our gratitude to Hunter President Jennifer J. Raab, Provost Dr. Lon Kaufman, and Dean Andrew J. Polsky for their ongoing support of the Hunter College Art Galleries.

—Sarah Watson, Chief Curator; Annie Wischmeyer, Associate Curator



Andreas Sterzing, *David and Mike at the Pier*, 1983

INTRODUCTION

THE PIER 34 EXPERIMENT

JONATHAN WEINBERG

In one of Andreas Sterzing's most beautiful photographs of Pier 34, Mike Bidlo and David Wojnarowicz sprawl out on the grass that has mysteriously grown inside the waterfront building. Bidlo and Wojnarowicz's pose recalls the relaxed posture of the male figures in Édouard Manet's *Le Dejeuner sur l'Herbe*. Wojnarowicz sexily lolls back as Bidlo speaks to him; both are oblivious to the endless stream of traffic of the Holland Tunnel, running just beneath the pier, and the thousands of commuters pouring into the Financial District to the south. Painted behind them on the wall is an enormous head outlined in black. Their friend, Luis Frangella, had likely only just finished it, but it fuses so perfectly with the cracked and stained plaster, it seems ancient, like a fresco in Pompeii. Indeed, the dilapidated state of the building, with its rusted institutional light fixtures dangling from the ceiling, broken glass dividers, and crumbling floors, suggests that some sort of Pompeian disaster has recently occurred, emptying the space of its dockworkers and all their ceaseless activity. But, if so, Bidlo and Wojnarowicz are oblivious to it, as they relax in this strange urban pastoral.

In 1932, when the enormous building on Pier 34 first took its place in the network of shipping terminals around Manhattan, part of what was then the largest port in the world, Bidlo and Wojnarowicz's lazy posture amid the ruins of the waterfront would be unthinkable. It is just as incongruous today given the wealthy neighborhood's transformation into fashionable promenades and million-dollar condos, not to mention the presence of heightened security at the entrances of the Holland Tunnel to guard against terrorist attacks. How did such a monumental structure, at such a key location—straddling the Tunnel's air-shaft towers—come to be abandoned, and how did it become an epicenter for art-making in the 1980s?

Something Possible Everywhere: Pier 34 NYC, 1983–84 revisits this extraordinary place and time when Wojnarowicz, Bidlo, and many of their friends effectively seized a city-owned pier and filled it with art. Sterzing's remarkable photographs, along with related images by Peter Hujar, Marisela La Grave, and Dirk Rowntree, document how these artists turned the Ward Line shipping terminal at the foot of Canal Street into

a series of makeshift art galleries and studios. Accompanying these photographs are paintings and sculptures, made by the many artists who worked on the pier. Sadly almost all of the art made in this unique locale no longer exists—Jean Foos managed to salvage a window-shade bracket that jutted out from Wojnarowicz's *Krazy Kat* mural; David Finn drew some figure studies on city-government stationery he found on-site. The presence of contemporaneous work in the exhibition makes tangible the physicality of the waterfront art and its larger aesthetic context.

The artists who worked on Pier 34 crossed generations, from established figures like Alain Jacquet and Ruth Kligman to emerging artists like Steven Doughton and Rhonda Zwillinger; they worked in a variety of media and styles, from the performance art of Kim Jones and Paolo Buggiani to the expressionism of Judy Glantzman and Stephen Lack. This diversity, combined with the site-specificity of works by artists like John Fekner and Teres Wudler, challenges the stereotypes of the 1980s art scene as a conservative turn toward easel painting that was driven by the market. Indeed the chief instigators of the Pier 34 experiment, Wojnarowicz and his cohort, Bidlo, self-consciously saw the site as anticommercial. As rumors spread in the spring of 1983 of what was happening on the waterfront, the two artists released a statement to friends in the press that explained their ethos of resisting the gallery system and creating an opportunity for anyone “to explore any image in any material on any surface they chose. It was something no gallery would tolerate.” Above all they claimed that Pier 34 forged a community: “People who lived

in this city for years said it was the first time they experienced fulfillment in terms of contact with the art scene and strangers.”¹

In their statement Bidlo and Wojnarowicz speak of Pier 34 almost as a curated exhibition that happened over a matter of months. Yet Wojnarowicz actually “discovered” the Ward Line terminal at Pier 34 in 1981 and began to paint animals and cartoon characters on its walls and on those of Pier 28 further south.² The name Ward Line, which was emblazoned on the facade of the terminal building at the time, refers to the Ward Line New York and Cuba Mail Steamship Company. The enterprise, best known for its boats that went back and forth to Cuba before World War II, went out of business in the 1950s, but the building name stuck. In 1932 the government built the enormous structure, with its waiting rooms, offices, and vast hangarlike loading area at the back, which they originally leased to the Clyde-Mallory Steamship Line and later to the Ward Line.³ By the 1960s the advent of air transportation and container shipping, which demanded acres of space, rendered Pier 34 and most of Manhattan's other port facilities obsolete. New York City's near-bankruptcy in the 1970s, along with the protracted controversy over the future of the Westway highway project, meant that there were no funds to renovate or demolish the waterfront structures as they fell into disrepair and eventual ruin. Yet in a city where space was and continues to be at a premium, these enormous buildings lured artists. The Pier 34 experiment followed a long line of artist projects and installations created on the piers below Fourteenth Street, including Willoughby Sharp's Pier 18 (1971),

Vito Acconci's *Pier 17 Projects* (1971), Robert Whitman's *Architecture* (1972), Gordon Matta-Clark's *Day's End* (1975), and Tava's Murals on Pier 46 (1978–80).⁴

Wojnarowicz definitely knew some of the ways in which other artists had used the piers when he began to make work on Pier 34. For example, in his memoir he wrote about Tava's murals of colossal male nudes as a foil to the gay men having sex on Pier 46.⁵ Similar to the Ward Line terminal in layout, period, and ruined state, Pier 46 was dubbed one of the “sex piers” because gay men cruised in its abandoned interior. In the late '70s the pier became something of a second home for Wojnarowicz: he sprayed-painted an image of a heroin addict on one of its walls and used the work as the backdrop for one of his most memorable *Rimbaud in New York* photographs.

As it turns out, Wojnarowicz's connection to the waterfront predates even the 1970s. One of his earliest and happiest memories was going to the docks to see his father, a crew member of the colossal *S.S. United States* cruise liner.⁶ In those days the West Side of Manhattan below Fifty-Seventh Street was still lined with cruise ships and freighters. Wojnarowicz's awareness of the enormous economic and global displacements, the resulting decline of the port of Manhattan, and his father's ill-fated career, always tinged his relationship to the waterfront ruins. Wojnarowicz found in those buildings not only the possibility of sexual freedom and a utopic artistic community, but also a symbol of the failures of capitalism and its cycles of excess and disintegration; he prophesized about the entirety of the human-

built environment: “Soon all this will be picturesque ruins.”⁷

Years later, in 1978, when Wojnarowicz was just beginning to think about becoming a visual artist, the photographer Arthur Tress took him on a romantic night sojourn to the abandoned Pennsylvania Railroad yards and piers along the Hudson, where Tress had posed many of his most homoerotic images. Tress had, in effect, used the rail yards as his studio, just as Wojnarowicz would later use the downtown piers. In his journal, Wojnarowicz wrote that he felt as if Tress and he were escaping the city streets to some distant land: “It was more like early river explorers we were trekking in the vast wastelands that no one had ever set foot in.”⁸ Like Tom Sawyer and Jim rafting down the Mississippi, Wojnarowicz and Tress left civilization behind for some strange limitless adventure.

This feeling of being transported to an in-between place—neither land, nor water, and outside time, beyond the reach of societal control—is a key aspect of the later Pier 34 experience. Bidlo and Wojnarowicz mused on Pier 34, “Drift of water. Drift of thought. Drift of wind,” stating that they chose the site because “it straddled a tunnel that was a route for things arriving and departing from the city.”⁹ Beyond the sensation of freedom was the generosity in the act of initiation, the way one artist shared a major source of inspiration with another, short-circuiting the hypercompetitive nature of the art market. Wojnarowicz not only repeated that initiation by bringing in friends like Kiki Smith, Jane Bauman, and Bidlo and urging them to use the pier for their art, but also by starting a chain of communication—



Dirk Rowntree, *David Wojnarowicz at Pier 34, NYC, 1983*

Foos told Michael Ottersen, Glantzman heard about the site from Frangella.

Wojnarowicz, however, typically oscillated between wanting to be alone and reaching out for companionship and community. Unlike the “sex piers” uptown, Pier 34 was largely empty and thus the perfect location for him to seek solitude and experiment with painting on large surfaces, but its vastness must have been intimidating and its emptiness lonely. Why not share his discovery with some carefully chosen friends? These sensitive artists could appreciate the potential of the waterfront and teach Wojnarowicz, who had only just begun to paint, new techniques and ways to activate such large spaces.

Smith was one of the first artists that Wojnarowicz brought to the pier. In one small room she painted small circles on the floor that, for a brief moment each day, aligned with the light streaming through the windows. Smith’s use of light relates to Matta-Clark’s pier piece, *Day’s End*, which he created farther uptown at Pier 52 near Gansevoort Street. Like the Pier 34 artists, Matta-Clark ignored no-trespassing signs and took over a city-owned building where he and his cohorts made enormous cuts in the walls and floors, using the path of the sun as an expressive element. John Fekner’s phrase “4 GORDON 2 U,” which he stenciled on the outside of the Pier 34 building, connected explicitly to *Day’s End* and acted as a memorial to Matta-Clark, who had died of cancer five years before. Smith remembers that, during these first visits to Piers 28 and 34, she and Wojnarowicz found piles of drawings made by patients from

a psychiatric ward, which the artists then used for a collaborative print. The connection they forged between those who had been marginalized by mental illness and the artists’ location on the waterfront on the outskirts of the city is key for so many of the works that were made on Pier 34.

Much of the pier art was purposely shocking, testing the boundaries of acceptable behavior and representing life on the edge. Valeriy Gerlovin created a huge painting of a face with syringes for the eyes, evoking not only drug addiction, but also the possibility of ecstatic hallucinations—the artist as outcast and seer. Keith Davis—who introduced several artists to the pier and whose wild parties were legendary—painted a huge cock and balls on the wall, connecting to Foos’s tornadolike abstraction, as if it were some kind of ejaculation of creativity. Such a phallic image might seem puerile, but when placed in the context of Wojnarowicz’s image of the Japanese author Yukio Mishima masturbating or Frangella’s male nudes, a queer aesthetic emerges that refuses to contain homoerotic desire.

A constant among the memories of those times was the importance of working within a community of artists who spanned generations and nationalities. In particular, many of the artists evoked their friendship with and respect for the Argentinian, Frangella, who was one of the first painters to work on the pier. Frangella and Bauman, a stencil artist, often worked alongside Wojnarowicz, and all three influenced each other’s work. Bauman remembers: “The three of us would go down to the pier and sometimes we’d work on each other’s

pieces, but in a playful way. . . . David was so comfortable in that milieu, so relaxed. Serious but childlike. Not ‘childish’ but ‘childlike.’”¹⁰

Bauman’s distinction between “childish” and “childlike” is key for much of the art of Pier 34. Sterzing photographed Jacquet sucking his thumb in front of one of his pictures of a baby’s pacifier. Likewise Sterzing photographed Glantzman proudly blowing a gigantic gum bubble. And Huck Snyder’s images of babies, painted on the walls of a restroom, directly reference the notion that the inspired artist sees the world like a child, as if for the first time. Bauman insists, however, that the childlike and the serious are not opposites. In acting like kids, these artists were knowingly mocking the pretensions of the art world, going so far as to hang an art critic in effigy in an anonymous art installation.

Fittingly Wojnarowicz’s favorite work of art on the pier was childlike in its grace and simplicity, but simultaneously sophisticated in its references to Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* and Hans Haacke’s *Grass Grows*. He reminisces:

I would buy grass seed . . . and throw this grass seed all over. All the disintegrated plaster that had fallen out of the ceiling and all the airborne particles of earth and stuff would actually let this grass grow in the confines of the building, so it would be like an actual meadow inside several rooms that were just so beautiful. . . . Those are some of the gestures that I loved the most and got the least attention because they were the most anonymous—you couldn’t sign a blade of grass that says Wojnarowicz.¹¹

international in scope. Germans, Swedes, Canadians, French, English, Americans, and more working side by side. All work is anonymous.” Sterzing himself was German-born, and several of his colored photographs of the pier were first published in *Stern* magazine in 1984.¹³

By June 1983 there were so many artists working and competing for territory in the increasingly crowded pier that wall images were getting painted over. Publicity followed when the art critic Richard Goldstein wrote the first sustained appraisal of the scene for the *Village Voice*, accompanied by Hujar’s stunning photographs of Wojnarowicz’s and Frangella’s murals and David Finn’s garbage-bag figures. Goldstein wrote that a visitor “wandering onto the pier . . . might imagine himself stumbling upon the museum of a civilization long ago forgotten—or one that had forgotten about art.” Yet the critic’s enthusiasm was tempered by the foreboding that any “stylistic innovation is consumed and corrupted in the time between *Voice* deadlines. It took about that long for fashion photographers to discover the pier, and soon it was being used as a background for bathing suit ads.”¹⁴ He also reported that the Anonymous Artists Alliance (a group unrelated to either Wojnarowicz or Bidlo) distributed leaflets inviting the art world to a wine-and-cheese opening at Pier 34; unfortunately, the police showed up as well. Sterzing was there to photograph the strange sight of the officers taking into custody one of Bill Downer’s sculptural figures, as if they were arresting it. The police shut down the pier, but soon artists cut their way back in, and it continued to be used until its demolition a year later.

Sterzing’s photograph of Bidlo and Wojnarowicz that began this essay commemorates this growing of the grass, along with the two artists’ friendship, which intensified through their work at the pier. Unlike many of the other artists, Bidlo was not interested in making work in situ, but rather using the Ward Line terminal as a new setting for his “Not Pollock” drip paintings, questioning issues of originality and modernism. Suddenly the type of Modernist picture that hung in the Museum of Modern Art’s pristine white galleries was stretched onto a wall already covered with drips and stains. The effect questioned aesthetic hierarchies and recalled the anarchic quality of Pollock’s technique and the elemental desire to mark one’s territory.

Together, and separately, Wojnarowicz and Bidlo invited other friends to share the space. Cynthia Carr, Wojnarowicz’s biographer, writes, “David must have known that the art-for-art’s-sake purity of the project could be lost, but maybe he didn’t. He had such an idealistic view of other artists. At least he did then.”¹² Inevitably word spread and artists with no connection to Wojnarowicz and Bidlo, or their friends, moved in. For example, the sculptor, Rob Jones, placed life-size shrouded figures made of translucent latex and fiberglass throughout the building. According to his dealer, Leonard Pierson, these works, which were also positioned on canopies in the Meatpacking District, alluded to death and the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic. Elsewhere on the pier you could see works by the German painter Reiner Fetting, the Swiss installation artist Wydler, or the Italian performance artist Buggiani. Bidlo and Wojnarowicz wrote: “The place is now

The Pier 34 experiment did not last very long—for Wojnarowicz a couple of years, for others far less time. Ottersen admits that he was there at most twice, but that was enough time to paint the memorable image of a naked figure cowering under a table in a fetal position, seemingly avoiding impending Armageddon. Bill Mutter did his picture of a body builder and Betty Tompkins created her mural of a leopard, each in only one day. Yet, no matter how much time the artists spent on the waterfront, a repeated theme in their recollections is the richness and joy of the shared experience. Perhaps that is why this exhibition feels like a reunion in its attempt to recreate a transformative moment among a community of artists; but it is also a memorial. Keith Davis, Luis Frangella, Rob Jones, Peter Hujar, Huck Snyder, and David Wojnarowicz would all be with us to celebrate and remember, but for the HIV/AIDS epidemic that stole their lives. With sadness, Bauman recalls that Snyder jokingly saying to her, “we’re all going to be famous,” adding portentously, “I hope it’s not going to be after we all die.”¹⁵

In one of Sterzing’s final images of Pier 34, a spectacular picture of the demolition of the facade, you can still see Wojnarowicz’s cow mural peeking through the rubble. The photograph inevitably fills the viewer with a sense of dread of what is to come. Yet all need to remember that Wojnarowicz lived on for almost a decade after the building was demolished. Even as we mourn the passing of so many artists before their time, we must be careful not to see in Pier 34 a metaphor for the HIV/AIDS crisis, which continues to this day. Above all we need to resist the reductive and homophobic narratives of the 1980s

that see the disease as some sort of retribution for the supposed excesses of freedom and experimentation that were so central to the Pier 34 phenomenon and the larger queer waterfront scene.

In the end, the power of Wojnarowicz and Bidlo's informal manifesto lies not in the way it explains or celebrates the Pier 34 experience, as something with a beginning and an end, but rather in its encouragement to repeat the experiment. Unsanctioned by the authorities and lacking funding by any foundation, museum, or university, much of the art of Pier 34 was made anonymously and without any intention of sales or gallery exhibition. To look through Sterzing's and his fellow photographers' remarkable

images—many of which stand on their own as independent works of art—and to read through the recollections of the artists is to sense the exhilaration of a past moment of freedom along the waterfront. Wojnarowicz and Bidlo insisted, however, there was and is no reason it could not happen somewhere else in the future:

And this is just a start for all of us. We are all responsible for what it currently is and what it will become. This is something possible anywhere there are abandoned buildings. This is something possible everywhere.¹⁶



Andreas Sterzing, *David Finn Working at the Pier 34*, 1983

Much of this essay is based on conversations that I have had over the years with the various pier artists, especially Andreas Sterzing. Although I spent much time on the piers below Fourteenth Street and made art about them, I do not remember ever going onto Pier 34. And yet, the artists that worked there have been so generous with their memories of the site and enthusiasm for this exhibition, I feel almost as if I experienced the place firsthand. I thank them all. Also, I thank the Hunter College Art Galleries staff, especially Susan Breyer, Mikey Estes, Tim Laun, Joachim Pissarro, Jocelyn Spaar, Sarah Watson, and Annie Wischmeyer for all their support and guidance. —JW

We invite artists and the general public to share with us their experiences of Pier 34 at: pier34exhibit@gmail.com

1. Mike Bidlo and David Wojnarowicz, "Statement," David Wojnarowicz Papers at the Fales Library and Special Collections, New York University. The text was published in *Benzene* (Fall–Winter 1983–84), unpag.
2. See Cynthia Carr, *Fire in the Belly: The Life and Times of David Wojnarowicz* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012) p. 194.
3. See War Department, Corps of Engineers, *The Port of New York; Part 2: Piers, Wharves, and Docks* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1932), p. 334, and War Department, Corps of Engineers, *Port and Terminal Facilities at the Port of New York; Part 2: Piers, Wharves, and Docks* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1942), p. 12.
4. With Darren Jones I curated a 2012 exhibition on the uses of the piers by artists and a then-emerging queer subculture for the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York. See "The Piers: Art and Sex along the New York Waterfront," <http://www.leslielohman.org/exhibitions/2012/the-piers-2.html>.
5. Wojnarowicz, "Losing the Form in Darkness," in *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration* (New York: Vintage, 1991), p. 22.
6. Sylvère Lotringer, *David Wojnarowicz: A Definitive History of Five or Six Years on the Lower East Side*, edited by Giancarlo Ambrosino, Justin Cavin, Hedi El Kholi, and Chris Kraus, with interviews by Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006), p. 159.
7. Wojnarowicz, "In the Shadow of the American Dream: Soon All This Will Be Picturesque Ruins," in *Close to the Knives*, p. 24.
8. Wojnarowicz, *Journals*, May 11, 1978, David Wojnarowicz Papers.
9. Bidlo and Wojnarowicz, "Statement."
10. Carr, *Fire in the Belly*, p. 204.
11. Wojnarowicz, *Tongues of Flame*, edited by Barry Blinderman (Normal, Ill.: University Galleries, Illinois State University), pp. 54–56.
12. Carr, *Fire in the Belly*, p. 224.
13. See also Andreas Sterzing's essay in this volume.
14. Richard Goldstein, "Post-Graffiti: The Pier Group Makes Its Mark," *Village Voice* 28, no. 25 (June 21, 1983).
15. Sterzing told me of this conversation.
16. Bidlo and Wojnarowicz, "Statement."

The place this statement concerns itself with will have very little relation to the statement. It is open to interpretation. But with this statement of purpose we can declare ourselves free of some of the cynical interpretations awaiting us. In the fall of 1982 we felt we needed to do something. We had several possibilities. One of them was to start off a show that would allow anyone the chance to explore any image in any material on any surface they chose. This is something no gallery would tolerate, nor be large enough to accommodate. It would be a show that by its very nature could not be considered a show. What we are weary of is the tendency of artists in building a show to be more interested in division and selection rather than anything resembling a sense of community. Community: communication. Communication: word of mouth. Drift of water. Drift of thought. Drift of wind. We chose the warehouse to start in by the fact that it straddled a



Andreas Sterzing, Mike Bidlo and David Wojnarowicz with *Their Work*, 1983

tunnel that was a route for things arriving and departing from the city. We told a handful of people to start. They in turn were told to tell others. The sense of working in a free atmosphere made some people feel unsettled. They continued to ask permission to work here or there; at this time or that time. Eventually they stopped asking and began doing. This affected everyone positively. People who lived in this city for years said it was the first time they experienced fulfillment in terms of contact with the art scene and strangers. People shared supplies, energy, thoughts. Given the surfaces to work with—crumbling walls of plaster, earth floors, metal walkways and hundreds of window panes—the work came out in rampages of raw energy.

Some of us bring in materials to work with. Some work exclusively in found materials.

People are affected by light, by wind, by the subtle deterioration of the surroundings, by the movement of strangers through broken doorways, by the shift of the sky and water from blue to grey in evening, by elements of risk and danger, by suddenly discovering work where hours before there was none. As generations of word of mouth spread the scene became more crowded. Some people reacted territorially, work got painted over. Visitors and artists made off with some of the work. Frictions took place. Everyone had to in some way learn to give up the desire for possession. Possession of territory, of walls, of materials, of approach to creative impulse of personal taste or directions for the place. It had become a simultaneous process of building up and tearing down.

The place is now international in scope. Germans, Swedes, Canadians, French, English, Americans and more working side by side. All work is anonymous.

Diverse styles of work exist side by side: chance collaborations. Work that is at times homoerotic, abstract, expressionistic, sculptural, conceptual, raw, studied, dull, astounding, surreal, hot.

The floors of the rooms were seeded with grass and flowers, creating small fields to rise through the dust of plaster and between the objects of installations.

There is no rent, no electricity, no running water, no dealers, no sales, no curatorial interferences. There is 24 hour access, enthusiasm, deep sudden impulse and some sense of possibility for dreaming.

In recent weeks the police are cracking down: arresting people, confiscating work, sealing and re-sealing the entranceways. A body was found of a person who had been shot and stabbed. Work continues. Will continue. Rapid changes in the environment. New people arrive everyday. Word continues to spread. People from all the boroughs. Word spreading about a show that can't be considered a show. That can't be reviewed as a show except by those determined to create limits for it. And this is just a start for all of us. We are all responsible for what it currently is and what it will become. This is something possible anywhere there are abandoned buildings. This is something possible everywhere.



PIER MEMORIES

The following are a selection of recollections by and about some of the artists who worked at Pier 34. This exhibition is just the beginning. We know that many more artists left their mark on Pier 34 over several years, and we intend to continue our research into its history and effects. Unless otherwise captioned, all the photographs are by Andreas Sterzing.

—Jonathan Weinberg and Andreas Sterzing

JANE BAUMAN

I was walking down Avenue A near East Second Street and ran into my friends David Wojnarowicz and Luis Frangella. They were both really excited and David told me “You HAVE TO come down to Pier 34 and paint—it’s incredible, it’s so cool and perfect for spray paint and stencils.” In 1981–83 David and I would run around together stenciling on the Lower East Side, but this was different and better! The next day Huck Snyder and I headed down in the early afternoon to meet them with a couple of garbage bags full of Krylon and Day-Glo paints, Huck gallantly helping me carry all this stuff.

I was astounded when I walked in. This really enormous, totally decrepit but grand space—a queer, punk palace with high ceilings and beautiful views of the Hudson River. There was something almost medieval about it; no electricity and early on the work was anonymous. Most of us East Village artists were living and making art in small, dumpy apartments with a view of a brick wall. Luis was totally engrossed painting these huge expressionistic figures, and David gave me the tour; his enthusiasm was enormous! It was early on and there was lots of “blank” space to work on. The first paintings I did were on glass windows looking out on the Hudson with stencils of the Statue of Liberty and I Ching symbols. I remember Andreas Sterzing taking beautiful pictures of them. I came back to paint again and again, and before long the whole place was becoming a beehive of artists and artwork. Some well-documented weird stuff happened: the dumped dead body, artists painting over other people’s work with macho posturing, and the like. But the transformation of that broken down place / palace was magical and so speaks to the power of art and artists.



MIKE BIDLO

In the early '80s David Wojnarowicz and I were in a lot of shows together, and we each had studios at MoMA PS1 and the Clocktower. We were talking about the scene and the need for artists to show in alternative venues. It was a revolutionary time. We went down to the pier at the end of Canal Street and saw that it was the perfect solution, so we sent out an open call to anyone to bring their materials and work in the Ward Line pier building. The spaces were monumental, Piranesi-like, with forty- to fifty-foot ceilings, and the sunsets were staggering. While working there you really felt the architecture and history of the space, now demolished. The "Pier Show" was a phenomenon that lasted about a year; we were creating an alternative to the art system, and hundreds of artists were engaged in making that reality "by any means necessary."



PAOLO BUGGIANI

Since the late '60s, numerous abandoned piers wasted away on the banks of the Hudson River. Over time, these structures were stripped of anything of value and left as relics of past maritime activity. The silence of those immense spaces was broken only by the creaking of rusty sheet metal and crumbling roofs that yielded to the winds.

Inside the buildings, fires set by vandals and the strains brought on by the elements created a greasy paste of ash. Filing cabinets reeked of putrid mold, and hundreds of charred logbooks rotted in pools of muddy water. The empty black corridors and devastated rooms evoked catastrophe, especially when juxtaposed with the verdant lawn carpeting a large living room.

During that period, when friends, artists, and critics came to visit me from Europe, Pier 34 was usually the last stop on the tour of trendy museums and galleries . . . and it was invariably met with awe and wonder inspired by the original and exhilarating freedom of expression, a freedom of expression which tore down commercial falsehoods.



KEITH DAVIS

as remembered by Julie Davis and Jean Foos

Keith Davis died of HIV/AIDS in 1987. According to Foos, during the Pier 34 years Keith had recently moved into a raw loft on the Lower East Side. It was a kind of salon and factory for artists, and he decorated it with art and found objects. He hauled many souvenirs back from Pier 34, including beautifully discolored square bathroom tiles, which he used to cover the surface of his kitchen island.

Keith's sister, Julie, remembers his early years in Oregon: "We would spend hours in the car driving around hunting for materials for his various works. Our Mom right in there with him trying to figure it out."

Foos also remembers: "Keith and I collaborated on a wall painting at the pier. We prepared the walls of one room, easily flaking off the industrial green paint with 2 x 4 boards, and revealing smooth white plaster. Keith went exploring for a time, while I got started painting, then he came back and appended a giant penis to my swirling abstract tornado."



STEVEN DOUGHTON

In June 1983 I visited New York City for the first time. I was unable to connect with the person I was supposed to stay with, so I called the number of Keith Davis, who was a friend of a friend. Keith offered to put me up in his loft on Suffolk Street for the week; there I met David Wojnarowicz. The two of them, along with Andreas Sterzing and Mike Bidlo, took me to Pier 34. We entered one room, and I recognized the Wojnarowicz cow head from an art magazine. Seeing the piece in that decrepit building inspired me to drop out of art school and move to New York. Within months I was living on East Eleventh Street and Avenue C.



JOHN FEKNER

Growing up on the concrete playgrounds and asphalt streets of Queens in the late '50s, my interests included exploration and discovery via trespassing. Not yet ten years old, I was climbing over chain link fences at the Sunnyside (railroad) Yard and, later with my teenage friends, riding bikes in the restricted zones of LaGuardia Airport.

When I began using stencils in my twenties, the work existed not as “art,” but as visual messages to the public. I focused on unused properties: closed factories and abandoned buildings in neglected communities that deserved better social services. One of early stencils, “Decay,” was not a negative message; it was a positive attempt to create awareness about one’s role in contributing toward change for the betterment of society.

The political fiscal failure of New York City in the '70s and its subsequent decline into disrepair and squalor became a seedbed for both criminal activities and experimental forays in the streets. Artists and musicians, performers and photographers seized on the moral decay of New York politicians and created incendiary social and critical art at an uncertain moment in time.

My three works at Pier 34 were an attempt to reflect both the inherent silent spirit during the day and the raucous unbridled energy present at night. Working within its cavernous raw space, I referenced the history of the derelict waterfront with two tributes to Gordon Matta-Clark and his “anarchitecture” *Day’s End* project (1975) at Pier 52. My third project *Health and Beauty Aids (On the Mezzanine)* served as a signpost warning about the growing and impending danger of the HIV/AIDS epidemic for the New York arts community.



DAVID FINN

Pier 34 as a location to make art was totally underground in 1982 and 1983. In March 1983 I had newly arrived in New York City and was working on an installation of figures, made from street trash, in an abandoned building in the South Bronx. I had no money and no place to work—so I was eager to find places where I could make the installations of figures I wanted to. It was at Fashion Moda that I heard David Wojnarowicz talking about the pier, and when I went there I was impressed by its ruin and scale. Entire layers of history lay abandoned there—maritime lives, gay liaisons—left as broken windows and peeling paint. I found some police department stationery and used it to make drawings; I met other artists and started making figures there that I placed on the steps in the lobby.

The spontaneous energy of the artists' work there was unforgettable and yet it remained a secret known to few. Working in the ruins of a great city with cast-off materials had a huge impact on my work and that of many others who became part of the East Village scene.



JEAN FOOS

I remember it was early spring and, as we entered a large atrium, melting snow from the roof dripped down onto a stairway and formed a waterfall. I was wearing engineer boots and waded through many puddles and climbed over piles of rubble and boxes of papers to find the right space to paint. It was exciting to paint on such a large scale—and thrilling to be working in a secret hideaway in plain sight of the metropolis.



LUIS FRANGELLA

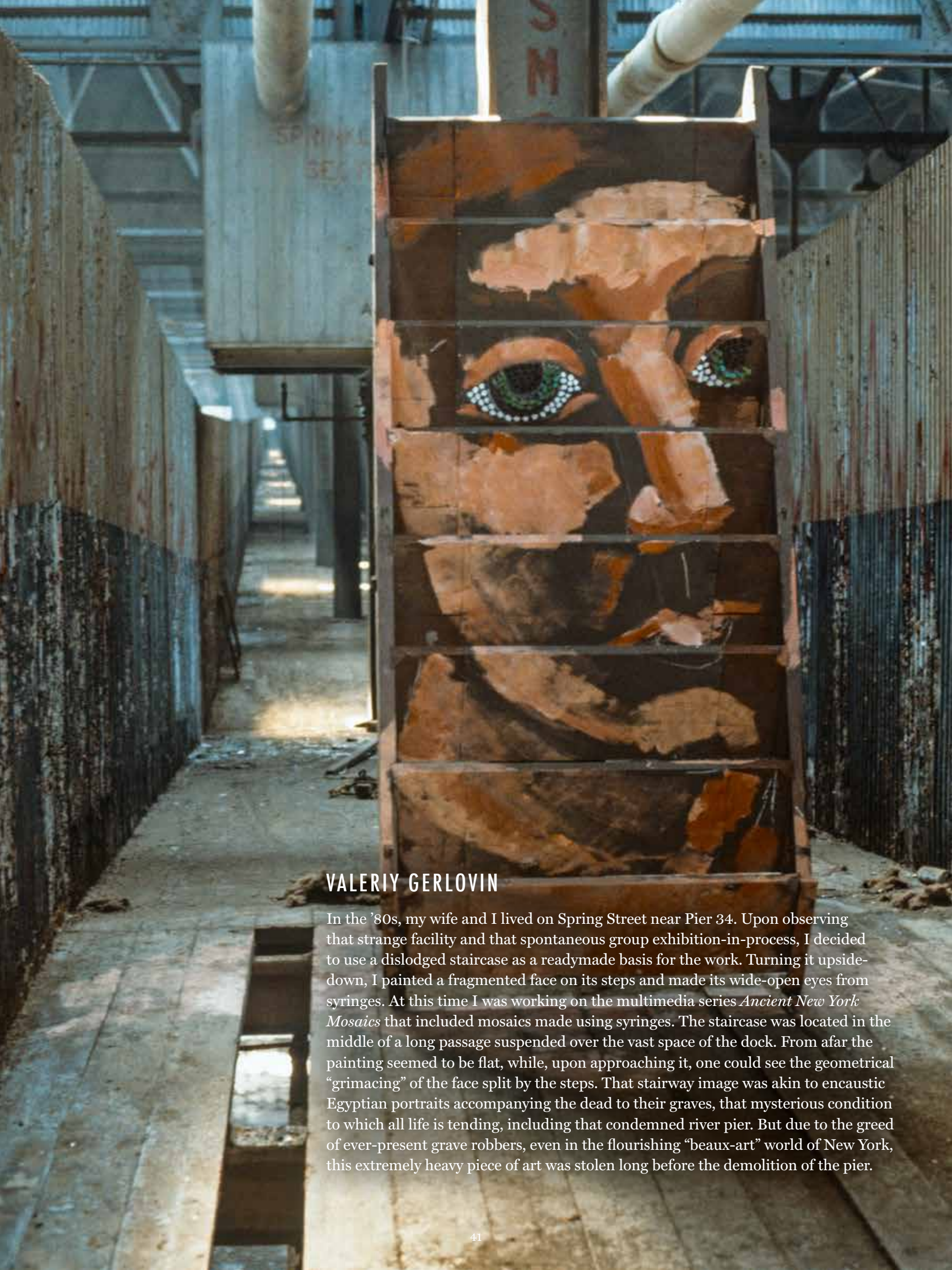
as remembered by Hal Bromm

Luis Frangella and Russell Sharon shared several floors in a now-demolished nineteenth-century loft building on Elk Street. Well over thirty years ago, I visited their studios just as the East Village art scene was hitting its stride. Luis had studied architecture in Buenos Aires, later attending MIT. His sense of space, proportion, and light were all highly developed and keenly refined. The loft radiated energy, with each artist playing off the other. It was a fitting introduction to the work that I would soon experience at Pier 34.

Luis was keenly interested in how spaces could be enriched and altered through art. He and many others, including his friend David Wojnarowicz, were artists who ignored boundaries, whose work ventured well beyond the limits of canvas or paper in the studio. Clubs, stage sets, or abandoned piers were their *métier*. Pier 34 was a perfect space for them, free of limits or boundaries.

Equally at ease with painting and sculpture, Frangella alternated between refined delicacy and robust muscularity. David, a self-taught genius, focused on the found and overlooked. The juxtaposition of their work was invigorating, and, at the vast pier, that synergy became magical. David's show at my space included collaborations with Kiki Smith and Mike Bidlo in the free-wheeling, shared style that flourished at the pier.

In his 1984 East Village exhibition, Luis featured expressionistic paintings on old car doors that embodied the rough-edged East Village tenor, echoing his love of unorthodox materials. His major exhibition at my Tribeca gallery featured fourteen-foot-high naked torsos painted directly on the walls, reminiscent of his extraordinary Hudson River pier paintings and legendary performance sets for the Limbo Lounge and Mudd Club.



VALERIY GERLOVIN

In the '80s, my wife and I lived on Spring Street near Pier 34. Upon observing that strange facility and that spontaneous group exhibition-in-process, I decided to use a dislodged staircase as a readymade basis for the work. Turning it upside-down, I painted a fragmented face on its steps and made its wide-open eyes from syringes. At this time I was working on the multimedia series *Ancient New York Mosaics* that included mosaics made using syringes. The staircase was located in the middle of a long passage suspended over the vast space of the dock. From afar the painting seemed to be flat, while, upon approaching it, one could see the geometrical “grimacing” of the face split by the steps. That stairway image was akin to encaustic Egyptian portraits accompanying the dead to their graves, that mysterious condition to which all life is tending, including that condemned river pier. But due to the greed of ever-present grave robbers, even in the flourishing “beaux-art” world of New York, this extremely heavy piece of art was stolen long before the demolition of the pier.



JUDY GLANTZMAN

I was included in a show at Hal Bromm Gallery called “Climbing: The East Village” in 1984. I met Luis Frangella and Mike Bidlo at Hal Bromm’s. They told me about the pier. Everyone was invited to claim a wall or a room and paint there. As I remember it, I brought my dog, Bunny, the first time I visited the pier. I am pretty sure I went with the artists Liz-N-Val.

I distinctly remember climbing through a hole in a fence at the pier on Spring Street and the Hudson River. It was dark inside. I was excited and scared. My eyes adjusted, and I saw many figures made of garbage bags seated on the stairs. At first they seemed real. It was scary and exhilarating.

I remember the stairs as majestic and in decay. We went up the stairs. There were these extraordinary small dolls in the niches along the hallways. Unfortunately they were eventually all taken, which was unusual. I saw Rhonda Zwillinger wheat-pasting a replica of a Marilyn Monroe pinup calendar photo across a giant wall in a big

room. Ruth Kligman had a light-blue wall painting. There was a large and open area where I believe the ships must have docked. Luis Frangella painted the most beautiful classical figures that must have been twenty feet high. David Wojnarowicz, who became a dear friend of mine, had painted an enormous cow skull. The ceiling was half decayed and was open to the sky. Baby grass was growing on the floor. Ledgers with old-fashioned cursive notes were strewn around. There was a simultaneous feeling of time standing still and of death and rebirth. The baby grass was so beautiful in the midst of decay.

The room I chose was approximately fifteen feet square. I brought a broom and attached a paintbrush to one end. With enamel house paint, I painted two figures standing next to one another. The work was German Expressionistic, loose and simplified. Everyone was working away.

I met a group of artists at the pier that became my community for the next three years. I was so lucky to be a part of the pier.



KIM JONES

I heard about artists doing work at Pier 34 from Mike Bidlo. We both had studios at MoMA PS1. It was a quiet place, cool during a hot summer. I went there several times during the day and drew rats with long legs and numbers on the walls of several rooms. It became very popular with art lovers. The police tried to close it down, arresting a few people. Art lovers kept coming. Finally, the City of New York destroyed the pier.



ROB JONES

as remembered by Leonard Perlson

My first encounter with Rob Jones's work was with his translucent sculptures flanking Pier 34's stone entrance. Reminiscent of the statues of Victorian mausoleums, on the threshold between land and water, they represented the passage between life and death.

Viewing the redesigned Pier 34 today it's hard to visualize the ramshackle, run-down pier of the late '70s and early '80s, once so bustling with global trade (see George Bellows's *Men of the Docks* of 1912, National Gallery, London). At the time of the Pier 34 exhibition, Jones's installation seemed a particularly apt introduction to the site and to the work of these renegade artists who sometimes constructed under the cover of darkness.

What excited me was how his installation complemented Creative Time's "Art on the Beach" (1978–85), downstream from Pier 34. This prompted me to seek out the elusive Jones and commission the pediment grouping attached to the steel canopy of my gallery, near the river.

Jones's subsequent death from "the Plague" of the '80s gives particular resonance to his appropriation of the medieval image of the shroud.



Marisela La Grave, *David Wojnarowicz's Mural, Pier 34*, 1983

MARISELA LA GRAVE

Thirty-three years ago, during the early summer of 1983, I was on assignment to produce a site-specific photographic essay in color. All I knew was that the site had to be by the Hudson River. It took weeks of cycling up and down the long and disrupted waterfront before I saw the sign: “No Trespassing.”

From the front of the building and through a series of painted-over broken windows, I could see the torso of a dark figure in a superhuman shape painted on a wall reaching to the ceiling. At that moment I thought . . . proceed to trespassing.

The large-scale structure of Pier 34 appeared imprisoned behind the long, steel Port Authority of New York and New Jersey fence.

Magnificent and nautically industrial, its long wood-and-steel deck jutted out into the Hudson River. It was rusted, blue, illegal, and right off Canal Street.

I climbed over the fence and jumped on board the pier. I knew that I was onto something unique, an adventure, kind of dangerous for a young girl in the New York of that time. I always carried a tripod on me.

I found myself spending over a year photographing the interiors and exteriors of this extraordinary underground gay subculture site.

If there was one place that represented the city's psyche in the pre-AIDs early '80s it was Pier 34.



STEPHEN LACK

The whole idea was great; thank you Mike Bidlo and David Wojnarowicz! The piers were well-known from earlier times, the '70s, as a mixture of complicit danger and “recreation,” and the idea of layering them with art was in keeping with everything that led up to it: nothing faked or gratuitous, just an extension of drugs, sex, art, and politics meeting in a crumbling building. My fave memory was meeting Rhonda Zwillinger at the end of Spring Street. I had two big cartons of art supplies in a taxi, and she was waiting there with a shopping cart full of glitter and Marilyn Monroe posters. I had no agenda; once I started I knew that the wall was rotting, the plaster falling off, and I knew that I would incorporate it into the piece. I told David I was doing “programmed deterioration.” He loved that idea.

Later I heard that there was a dead body found on the site. The cops had questioned the artist who had made the great torsos out of garbage bags because those sculptures freaked them out. Glad they did not bother with me. I did a few sex drawings with black spray on my way out in the corridors, maybe twelve-foot line drawings. Lots of freedom. . . . And within a short time it was the backdrop of *Vogue* fashion shoots and, a short time after that, . . . it was gone.



LIZ-N-VAL

As we recall, Pier 34 was a large cavernous space reminiscent of Roman catacombs. Working there, we experienced a mixture of solidarity and competition. There was an artist who graffitied all the walls, including the work of other artists. We found a giant tarpaulin cloth and painted our stick figures on it. After a while, it disappeared and eventually ended up at MoMA PS1, covered with other artists' work. Pier 34 was a milestone for the art community, and we thoroughly enjoyed being part of the experience.



BILL MUTTER

In the '80s, we artists were up for anything. Clubs (that I'm sure were run by vampires) were bustling, and we were often invited to paint the walls, for free, of course. Still we felt respected for being invited to, please, glorify a wall. So, when we heard about the abandoned Pier 34, off we went.

What I remember most about Pier 34 was the danger of the place, the enormous scale and fear. Huge chunks of concrete were hanging from rebar some thirty feet above our heads. Betty Tompkins and I had never seen so much inviting wall space. I loved the fact that I could create a painting larger than any I had ever done. And since we wanted to get the hell out of there, Betty and I put up our work in only a few hours.



MICHAEL OTTERSEN

I am sorry that I don't have more to offer in the way of reminiscence concerning the murals in the piers.

Long ago and far away, I was told by a friend of mine, Jean Foos, that other friends of ours were doing wall works at the piers and that we should contribute.

The piers seemed to go on forever and were romantic and creepy, like a film set and fever dream by Jean Genet.

I was a bit intimidated by the potential, in terms of space and atmosphere, the dirty water flowing outside of the broken glass windows, and the dim gray-blue light inside.

The place was littered with used syringes and condoms, and the postpunk sex-and-drugs vibe was loud and rude.

I didn't feel that I had much more to offer to add to the mix; it was such a strong space, and I didn't want to be a decorator.

But then I decided that, since I was there and had some brushes and paint, might as well jump in and stain the silence.

We all knew the place was doomed for demolition sooner or later.

I went there once, possibly twice, in total.



RICK PROL

I was told by my girlfriend Caren Scarpulla: “There’s a thing happening at Pier 34, Rick—artists doing work there. You should check it out.” So I went there right away, and I was really impressed by it all. The pier itself was what I loved in every way about derelict structures, and Manhattan at that time had lots of them. There was the added allure that it was on the waterfront off Canal Street, and it was desolate and beautiful in the way that such frontiers of abandoned territories in an urban jungle can be. It’s where one finds a lot of creativity, like weeds growing up through the cracks. It was free and open (though dangerous and “off-limits”), and it resonated powerfully as the place to go and do some fun stuff. That’s what I saw upon my first arrival there, not that that was all new to me having grown up in New York City on West Eleventh Street and Sixth Avenue. I spent my whole youth going to the waterfront, where many of my friends lived: in Westbeth, for example, the artist haven, and all over the West Village. I quickly went to work painting on those amazing walls and searching for cool objects that I collected for my installation shows. “City of Fire” was one such show at the East Seventh Street Gallery. Many of the found objects I had collected there came directly from Pier 34.



...and in the same way, with a craft, looking up the grades in her engineer boots. Static Arabia in her radio. Looks like she's sweating ashore again tonight.

DIRK ROWNTREE

Early one cold spring morning on Saint Marks Place, David Wojnarowicz shows up at our apartment. He's in his faded blue jeans and brown leather bomber jacket. He was simultaneously excited and subdued. He had probably been up all night. Something big was up, and he wanted us to be involved.

On the way over to Pier 34 David explained that he and Mike Bidlo were getting the word out to East Village artists to get their skinny asses down to this pier and do art that had nothing to do with galleries. We could do anything.

Crawling under a loose patch of chain link fence, the first couple hundred artists that made it in had their choice of an office space, a spot in the common areas, or a piece of the huge loading area. There was plenty of space for anybody, and they could do anything.



RUSSELL SHARON

David Wojnarowicz stopped by Duane Street one morning to ask me and my partner, Luis Frangella, if we would accompany him to Pier 34, where artists would be working. It would be a marathon. Everyone would pick a space and make their art. We grabbed our supplies and walked to the pier, crawled through a hole next to the locked door. The space was huge, the color of dust. Chunks of wall and ceiling plaster covered the floor, a long abandoned ruin, silent, without energy. We selected our walls and began to paint. Within several hours, a dozen more artists appeared. The magic had begun. Now the energy was fresh, intense, exciting. A rebirth was in progress. It was as if the god, Genius, suddenly appeared and filled the space with inspiration. By sundown the pier was alive and full of life, color, ideas, and energy. The fresh, honest contemporary art contrasted with the comatose grandeur of the dilapidated building, giving it a sublime radiance, a living spirit.



Andreas Sterzing, *David Wojnarowicz's Mural of a Gagging Cow*, 1983

KIKI SMITH

I went to the “Speed Trials” at White Columns, New York, to see Y Pants, and it was the first time I saw Sonic Youth. David Wojnarowicz and I somehow knew of one another, and we purposely introduced ourselves. He invited me to visit the pier the next day. We met at the end of Spring Street and went over in the daytime. I first recall, upon entering, seeing David Finn’s sculptures. David took me upstairs to the room he had made with photographs of a figure wearing an Antonin Artaud mask. I also remember another figurative image of someone dancing with a hatchet, or something like that. In any case, we decided to make a collaboration using images of rudimentary drawings of men and women that men had made during psychiatric tests at Bellevue hospital. We used them, along with Rorschach images, to make a series of silkscreened prints in various combinations of color and image. I also made a temporary piece on the second floor tracing the light that fell through the open holes in the roof. From that first time we met, David and I saw each other practically every day for several years, and his friendship was enormously valuable both personally and artistically.



HUCK SNYDER

as remembered by Beatrice Sagar

In 1983, I visited Pier 34 on the West Side of New York. David Wojnarowicz and Mike Bidlo had pioneered a random installation, paving a path of acknowledgment for East Village artists. They were arriving day-by-day to claim one of the walls, which were broken and water-stained, while shattered glass and stone littered the floors. The paintings on the walls made the decadent, decaying space alive with energy. I knew Huck Snyder and was familiar with his upside-down babies. The vibrancy of his colors—red, greens, purple—made the aching silent screams of the babies even more poignant but demanding. They seemed to echo the frustration of all the participating artists as they raised their voices wanting to be heard.



BETTY TOMPKINS

It was scary and dangerous to walk into that enormous abandoned building. Yet Bill Mutter and I went in with the thrill of being outlaws. And I felt an odd sense of community with the other artists. That was very exciting. I was excited, too, by how my piece turned out.

Bill and I worked very near each other because of the danger of the place and got out of there as fast as we could. There was an opening, as I remember. We did not go, and I think that the cops shut it down.

When the building was demolished, several of the paintings would temporarily reappear as their walls became visible. I was hoping to see mine, but I never did.



PETER WHITE

New York City Pier 34, 1983: exciting, vital, grungy, edgy, sometimes dangerous.

Artists were creating exciting new work; anything was possible.

The city was hopping, and an energy filled the air, feeding ambition.

Entering this cavernous, foreboding, and sometimes flooded space was another world, an underworld of crumbling walls and paintings, out of sight to all but those who ventured in, lured by motivation, the need to make their mark, or by curiosity.

Here, out of decay, friendships were made and sealed in paint.

Everyone knew everyone, and a real feeling of belonging and community prevailed.

These were good times; we had talent, ambition, determination, and youth, but hiding to pick off many among us was a silent and brutal sniper called AIDS.

In special memory.



TERES WYDLER

During the initial time that Teres Wydler experienced in New York City in 1983—which she regards to a great extent as a time of new beginnings far away from Europe—she starts to design plans and sketches for a new *Worldegg*.

These plans, first of all, resulted from her study of the Pelasgian creation myth; the metaphor of heaven and earth was, however, also influenced by Joseph Beuys's mystical point of view. Pier 34 gives her an excellent, inspiring location to develop *Plans for Worldegg*, 1983, as a multimedia environment with China ink on telex rolls, interacting with wind, rain, pigeons, seagulls, puddles, and tottering oak pilasters.



RHONDA ZWILLINGER

In 1983, Pier 34 was a gothic pustule. Wrecking ball in its near future. The word went out for a lawless art activity. There was no thought to the marketplace, art as ephemeral, no competition, just camaraderie. . . . New faces became fast friends. Schleppling my shopping cart filled with art necessities, I drifted in and out of dark and scary rooms until a lit room appeared where I plastered Marilyn posters on peeling walls—old becomes new becomes old.



Photographer Unknown, Andreas Sterzing on Pier 34, 1983

THE PIER

ANDREAS STERZING

In Spring 1983, a few months after I arrived in New York from Germany as a young photographer, by coincidence, two people told me on the same day about an abandoned pier building on the Hudson River where artists were working. I was looking for a story and this sounded intriguing.

Pier 34, or “the Pier” as we called it, instantly charmed me with its serene, otherworldly atmosphere and its majestic dereliction: the disintegrating grandeur of a glorious past, a vast dilapidated and rotting space reaching out into the fast-moving river. It was like entering a different world with the sound of water and wind drifting in through broken windows and holes in the floor, mingled with the continuous hum of traffic from the nearby Westside Highway.

Walking up a grand marble staircase with chunks of its walls missing, I heard voices and laughter upstairs. In a large open space with a huge arched window facing east towards Canal Street, I found a group of artists working on a long wall. Rhonda Zwillinger was there embellishing her Marilyn Monroe posters, Stephen Lack and Peter White worked on murals, and

Ruth Kligman had finished a fragile Madonna-like fresco.

They told me about the galleries in the East Village where they showed their work. I took pictures of them and walked around some more. Farther along the wall were large faces, looking a bit like Easter Island sculptures, and above them, a long piece like a Jackson Pollock drip painting. In another room was a huge cow’s head with its tongue sticking out, and in a room at the other end were three more Pollock-like pieces and a detailed painted cartoon with a flying pterodactyl. My new friends told me this was work by David Wojnarowicz and Mike Bidlo, the two artists who had started the Pier 34 project and had told their friends about it, inviting and encouraging them to go and work there.

Stepping out into the gigantic hangarlike space with many gates and windows facing the river on both sides, light streaming in through cracks and holes in the roof, I found it was quieter the farther I went, wind, water, and the occasional Circle Line boat the only sounds.

I had stumbled upon a unique New York story. I wanted to work for magazines, and this could be the way in for me.



Andreas Sterzing, *Alain Jacquet at the Pier, 1983*

Over the following weeks I returned to Pier 34 many times to explore and photograph. Each time I found new areas in this labyrinthine building that had been magically transformed by art into a surreal museum, strangely both beautiful and ugly. Work was painted on or stuck to walls, and sculptures were made from found materials. I met David Finn, who built his life-size human-like figures at the Pier this way, displaying a group of them on the grand staircase, lounging near the entrance as though they were having a conversation, inviting people to explore or scaring them from going farther. Luis Frangella had painted a beautiful Roman head in one room, and I photographed him in another

conventional spaces such as galleries or clubs, as the East Village art scene began to heat up.

I took my pictures to Germany, where all the big magazines wanted them, and *Stern* bought them right away. They planned to publish a feature story with eight double-spread photos, but, just as it was scheduled to run in October, the U.S. invaded Grenada, and the story was canceled. It was not until early 1984 that it was published, but on a smaller scale. By then all of us had moved on. The East Village art scene was in full swing; I was friends with many of the artists I had met at the pier and continued to photograph them while working on other stories.

But my photos of the building and the artists who worked there—the story of this remarkable place in time—kick-started my career as a magazine photographer, leading to my subsequent work for German magazines in the U.S.

Over the next ten years many of the artists who had worked at Pier 34 died during the HIV/AIDS crisis. Keith Davis, Luis Frangella, Richard Hoffman, Peter Hujar, Huck Snyder, and David Wojnarowicz are just a few of a whole generation of creative minds silenced before they had reached their full potential. The world would be a different and maybe better place today if they were still with us.

This exhibition celebrates the people of Pier 34 and their art. This was a time of freedom, relatively cheap New York rents, great idealism, chaos, creativity, and a strong feeling of community. The building was dangerous and falling apart, grass growing inside, snow drifting in, fascinating and creepy. The pier sprang to life like a flower out of the rubble of consumer society,

room whose walls he had covered floor-to-ceiling with male and female torsos. I also photographed Judy Glantzman who, like Luis, painted some of her murals with a brush attached to a stick.

I met Jean Foes and Keith Davis, who had collaborated on an intricate piece, just as Keith was putting more red paint on the tip of one of his cock paintings. Alain Jacquet, armed with cans of spray paint, showed me his pacifier pieces, one of them sprayed in white on an outside wall of the building's front elevation. With many other artists, meetings were often fleeting encounters and impromptu portrait sessions, and, even if I wrote down names and details of the people I met and photographed, afterwards I sometimes failed to remember or identify my pictures.

In June 1983 there was an opening with lots of people at Pier 34 and the Port Authority Police got wind of the event. They kicked everybody out, arrested a few people and took away a sculpture of a squatting figure by Bill Downer.

After this, the pier was closed off. Stenciled and spray painted "No Trespassing" signs appeared everywhere. Nevertheless, it was still easy to get into the building, and, with ever more artists coming in to work and with summer approaching, the magic was lost. The fragile life that had been breathed into the building was smothered and overwhelmed by the number of people working there. Art was being taken away, destroyed, or painted over.

David, Luis, and a few others had already moved on to another pier nearby, and most of the first wave of artists working at Pier 34 were again showing their work at more

and was transformed by human ingenuity and artistic intervention. This place was a playground for expressing oneself without limits or rules. For a brief while, until it became too popular, everyone there respected everyone else, in a blossoming of utopian creative anarchy. The building was demolished in 1984, leaving only a few pilings visible in the water at low tide, and was replaced by a stone marker and walkways leading to a ventilation tower for the Holland Tunnel. Those of us who were fortunate to have met, worked, and become friends at Pier 34 have never forgotten this unique and magical artistic experiment.



Andreas Sterzing, *Bill Downer Sculpture Being Arrested at an "Opening," June 1983*

Note about the slide show by Andreas Sterzing

For the Pier 34 exhibition I decided to present some of my work in a similar way to how it was first shown in nightclubs in New York City, as an analogue slide show on a loop, using carousel projectors. The original projection consisted of 140 slides in one carousel, but here I am using two projectors simultaneously, each showing 80 slides.

By a stroke of good luck, I discovered that Pierre Mohamed, a photography student at Falmouth University, where I teach, had been given a large can of bulk duplicating film ten years past its expiration dates. He was happy to let me use some of it to create the duplicate slides. The low contrast and muted colors of the slightly degraded film stock lend a vintage feel to the images, in keeping with the ephemerality and makeshift character of the Pier 34 project.



JONATHAN WEINBERG

Jonathan Weinberg, Ph.D., is an artist and art historian. Author of *Male Desire: The Homosexual in American Art* (2004), and *Ambition and Love in American Art* (2001), he teaches at the Yale School of Art and the Rhode Island School of Design. In 2010 the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York, hosted a retrospective of his paintings. He is curating “Art after Stonewall, 1969–89,” for the Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, in 2019, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. His paintings are in many public and private collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey. His installation, *49+ (for Orlando)*, was recently on view at Artspace in New Haven.

ANDREAS STERZING

German photographer Andreas Sterzing’s career began in 1983 with his images of Pier 34. Sterzing documented the East Village art scene for German, Swiss, and U.S. magazines, and his subsequent assignment work, for publications including *Der Spiegel* and *Stern*, has been published internationally. In 2004 he relocated to the United Kingdom, continuing to work on portraits and food and travel stories. Since 2008 Sterzing has taught at Falmouth University, Cornwall, where he is currently a Senior Lecturer in professional practice. His work is owned by various private collections and has been exhibited in New York and Europe.

ANNIE WISCHMEYER

Annie Wischmeyer is the Associate Curator of the Hunter College Art Galleries. Her work at Hunter has included the organization of

collaborated with the artist David Wojnarowicz on the film *Around Clown*. He has directed music videos for Aphex Twin, Stephen Malkmus and the Jicks, Marianne Nowotny, and The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black, and has shot music videos for Blonde Redhead, Pavement, Iggy Pop, and Alan Vega. *Buoy*, a feature film written and directed by Doughton, was released in 2012. Doughton lives in his hometown, Portland, Oregon, where he is currently at work on the feature film *Earthlings*, an adaptation of a short story by Jonathan Raymond.

JOHN FEKNER

John Fekner is an innovative multidisciplinary artist who, in the 1970s and 1980s, created hundreds of environmental and conceptual outdoor works—stenciled words, symbols, dates, and icons spray-painted in locations such as New York, Sweden, Canada, England, and Germany. A key figure in the Street Art movement, Fekner participated in urban art exhibitions such as Wooster Collective’s “11 Spring Street Project” (2006) and “Art in the Streets” at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2011). The concepts of memory, perception, and transformation have remained an integral component of Fekner’s creative explorations throughout his career. Combined with his love of poetry, the artist connects extremely personal material with a need to express and communicate directly in the outdoor environment. Fekner lives in Queens, New York.

DAVID FINN

David Finn lived on the Lower East Side and created a number of installations in abandoned buildings and vacant lots. The work he did on Pier 34 continued as *Masked Figures*, which were shown widely in the U.S. and Europe. In

numerous exhibitions, publications, and events. Recently, along with Joachim Pissarro, she curated the exhibition *Buren, Mosset, Parmentier, Toroni*, the first-ever critical examination of the group.

JANE BAUMAN

Jane Bauman received a B.A. from Santa Clara University, California, in 1973 and an M.F.A. from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1980. She then moved to New York and became active in the East Village art movement. She was represented by the Civilian Warfare Gallery, New York, and exhibited her paintings extensively in the U.S. and Europe—including at the American Graffiti Gallery, Amsterdam; André Emmerich Gallery, New York and Zurich; and Anna Friebe Gallery, Cologne. Her art is in numerous collections including the Thomas Armann Foundation, Cooper Hewitt Museum of American Art, New York, and Musée de Cloître des Cordeliers, Paris. In 1987 Bauman moved to California where she is a professor and the chair of the Visual and Performing Art Department at Coastline Community College in Fountain Valley and continues to work as an artist. She now is represented by Jamie Brooks Fine Arts in Costa Mesa, California, where she has a solo exhibition in October 2016.

MIKE BIDLO

Michael (“Mike”) Bidlo is a conceptual artist, based in New York, whose works include painting, sculpture, drawing, performance, and other forms of what he calls “social sculpture.” Bidlo received a B.A. from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, an M.F.A. from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and

1994 Finn moved to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to teach at Wake Forest University, and there continues to make art that is primarily public and community-based. Finn’s latest project is working with students on “Big Tent,” a portable event tent that showcases art about identity and diversity in Winston-Salem.

JEAN FOOS

Jean Foos is a New York-based visual artist. Primarily an abstract painter, she is currently developing ceramic pieces that play with the grid structure and tactile qualities of her paintings. Foos also has a passion for design that archives and elevates the work of her fellow artists—poets, painters, photographers, and performers. In 2014 Ragged Sky Press published *Cannonball Lagoon*, a book of her postcard drawings made on gallery invitations. Her graphic work has recently appeared in *BOMB Magazine* and in the Brooklyn Museum’s “Agitprop!” exhibition.

LUIS FRANGELLA

Luis Frangella (1944–1990), a figurative post-modern painter and sculptor, was born in Buenos Aires. He earned a Master of Architecture degree at the Universidad de Buenos Aires in 1972 and began painting at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he worked as a Research Fellow for the Center for Advanced Visual Studies from 1973 to 1976. Frangella moved to New York in 1976 where he became a central figure of the East Village art scene, which was known for its masterful installations at clubs and galleries. The artist received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1982, becoming well known internationally through major exhibitions in New York, Buenos Aires, Barcelona, and Madrid. Luis Frangella died of HIV/AIDS on December 7, 1990.

an M.A. from the Teachers College at Columbia University, New York. Bidlo first became known for his participation in the 1980 “Times Square Show,” and has exhibited his work at the Leo Castelli Gallery and MoMA PSI, both in New York, among other locations. Bidlo has worked recently with concepts initiated by Piero Manzoni, and on November 4, 2015, signed over one hundred people as living sculptures, giving signed and stamped certificates based in exacting detail on those used by Manzoni in 1961.

HAL BROMM

Hal Bromm, one of the pioneers of Tribeca, was at the forefront of the adaptive reuse of historic buildings there. His early-1970s home was a former cheese warehouse, which he shared with other artists and musicians. In 1976 Bromm opened his eponymous contemporary art gallery, Tribeca’s first, on Franklin Street. The gallery’s early “new talent” shows introduced Rosemarie Castoro, Luis Frangella, Judy Glantzman, Keith Haring, Robert Longo, Russell Sharon, David Wojnarowicz, and many others. Bromm’s satellite gallery on Avenue A focused on the East Village scene, and “Climbing,” a major 1984 exhibition, introduced the neighborhood’s emerging depth of talent. Bromm’s career has also encompassed teaching, lecturing, and working with civic, planning, preservation, and arts organizations. Bromm and his gallery have been featured in *Ambiente*, *American Regional Rooms*, *GQ*, *House and Garden*, *Living with Art*, *New York Magazine*, the *New York Times*, and other publications.

VALERIY GERLOVIN AND RIMMA GERLOVINA

Valeriy Gerlovin and Rimma Gerlovina, founding members of the Conceptual movement in Soviet Russia, moved to the United States in 1980. Working together and separately, they have had many solo exhibitions, including at the Art Institute of Chicago and New Orleans Museum of Art, and have participated in many group projects at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna; Venice and Moscow biennials; and, currently, at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Their works have appeared on the covers of the *New York Times Magazine*, *Sciences*, *Zoom*, and in many books, such as *Art on the Edge and Over: Searching for Art’s Meaning in Contemporary Society, 1970s–1990s; Art since 1940; Foundation of Art and Design; Reflections in a Glass Eye: Works from the International Center of Photography Collection*; and *Understanding Art*. Their work is in numerous collections including the Art Institute of Chicago; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles; International Center of Photography, New York; Museum of Fine Art, Houston; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; and State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

JUDY GLANTZMAN

Judy Glantzman experiments with disparate materials and process painting within the media of collage, drawing, and sculpture to reflect her experiences and ideas. She graduated in 1978 with a B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, and began showing work in the East Village in the 1980s. Glantzman continues to exhibit widely, including recent solo shows at the Betty

PAOLO BUGGIANI

Paolo Buggiani is an Italian-born painter, sculptor, and performer. He moved to New York in 1962 and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1968 for his sculptures that used his own vacuum-forming system. During the following two decades Buggiani created *Ephemeral Sculpture in Motion*, *Fire* (a performance installation), *Paintings over Reality* (landscapes photographed through painted crystal), and *Wearable Art* (handpainted jumpsuits). In 1978 he began his *Mechanical Reptiles and Urban Mythology* series, placing his sculptures all over New York in public places; he soon became one of the leaders of the New York Street Art movement.

KEITH DAVIS

Keith Davis (1954–1987) grew up in the small farming town of Newberg, Oregon. He came to New York to study at the Pratt Institute and soon afterwards began his graphic design career at the Museum of Modern Art. During the ’80s Davis was active in the East Village art scene both as an artist and a graphic designer and took great joy in combining and contrasting high and low culture. Working with artists such as Nan Goldin, Peter Hujar, Hope Sandrow, and David Wojnarowicz, he often traded artwork for design. Cynthia Carr discusses Davis in her book, *Fire in the Belly*, and the Visual AIDS website showcases his erotic artwork.

STEVEN DOUGHTON

Steven Doughton is a writer and director from Portland, Oregon. He studied drawing and painting in college and, in 1983, moved to New York’s East Village, where he soon began making short films. In 1986 Doughton

Cunningham Gallery, New York; John Davis Gallery, Hudson, New York; and University Gallery at Illinois State University, Normal; and a thirty-year retrospective at the Dactyl Foundation for the Arts and Humanities, New York. She is a recipient of the Anonymous Is a Woman Award, John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, New York Foundation for the Arts’ award in painting, and Pollock-Krasner Foundation award. Previously represented by Civilian Warfare Gallery and Gracie Mansion, both in New York, Glantzman is now represented by the Betty Cunningham Gallery, New York, and currently lives and works in New York.

KIM JONES

Kim Jones is a multimedia and performance artist who was born in 1944 in San Bernardino, California. Jones lives and works in New York. His exhibition, “White Crow,” is on view until February 5, 2017, at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut.

ROB JONES

Robert (“Rob”) Michael Jones (1951–1989) received his B.F.A. in 1973 from the University of Delaware, Newark. Jones began exhibiting in school and did so more extensively after graduation, including 1973 solo presentations of his polyurethane and fiberglass sculptures at the university’s Smith Hall, the Haas Gallery of Art at Bloomsburg State College in Pennsylvania, and as part of the Delaware Art Museum’s “59th Annual Delaware Show” in Wilmington. In early 1975 Jones’s poured black polyurethane forms were the subject of a solo exhibition, “Rob Jones: Black Wilmington,” at the Delaware Art Museum. His exploration of this type of figurative sculpture and installed shrouds continued at Pier 34 in the summer and fall of 1983. As

part of Jones's first New York solo exhibition in May 1984, a group of fifteen figures were placed on the steel awning outside the Leonard Perlon Gallery in the Meatpacking District.

STEPHEN LACK

One of the seminal artists of the East Village Gracie Mansion gallery, Stephen Lack sources his subject matter from a vast swath of media input and personal experiences. Educated in Psychology at McGill University, Montreal, and earning an M.F.A. from the Universidad de Guanajuato, Mexico, Lack has continuously exhibited his films and paintings internationally. Two of his independent film projects, *Montreal Main* and *The Rubber Gun*, opened in New York in 1974 and 1977 as part of the New Directors Series at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Modern Art. He has a solo show of oil-stick drawings in fall 2016 at the Castor Gallery, New York. A retrospective of his work is scheduled for 2016–17 at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Indiana.

MARISELA LA GRAVE

Marisela La Grave is a New York-based artist whose work spans a broad range of media, including photography; video art installation; multidisciplinary, site-specific filmed performance art; soundtrack design; experimental scripts; and works on paper. She is the artistic director of Magnetic Laboratorium, a New York City- and Paris-centered media art group that she cofounded in 2001. La Grave's work has been presented and published internationally and is housed in private collections and museums around the world, such as the 98 Bowery Gallery, New York City; the Dance Theater

BEATRICIA SAGAR

Beatricia Sagar is an abstract painter influenced by Expressionism, Pop, graffiti, and collage. Her work reflects and resonates with the ever-changing cultural milieu of Manhattan, where she lived for many years, and trends in art, fashion, film, television, and literature. In 1998 Sagar relocated to South Beach for a residency at the South Florida Art Center. In 2013 and 2014, she produced "Pin Up Pop Up Poetry" in conjunction with the literary organization O, Miami, and, in 2015, she won a poetry slam at the New Hope Art Center in Pennsylvania. She currently lives and works in New York.

RUSSELL SHARON

Raised in Minnesota on a farm, Russell Sharon left the United States at age seventeen to attend the Universidad de las Américas in Mexico City. He studied in Boston for two years and then moved to New York in 1976. Sharon had his first one-person show at the Hal Bromm Gallery, New York, in 1984, followed by many U.S. and international exhibitions. After a 1990 show of his work at the Miami Art Museum, he moved to South Beach, Florida, where he had a residency at the ArtCenter / South Florida for ten years. Sharon now spends summers painting and sculpting on his farm in Minnesota and has had a "life [that] has been enchanted and delightful, except for most of the 1980s when I lost so many of my friends to the AIDS epidemic."

KIKI SMITH

Since the 1980s German-born artist Kiki Smith (b. 1954) has made multidisciplinary work relating to the human condition and natural world. Smith uses a broad variety of materials, continuously expanding and evolving a body of work that includes sculpture, printmak-

Workshop; Danspace Saint Marks Church, New York City; the Hamptons International Film Festival; Galerie Nikki Diana Marquardt, Paris; Museo Jacobo Borges, Caracas; the Paris Underground Film Festival; Scotiabank Nuit Blanche, Toronto; the Watermill Center, Water Mill, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City. The artist currently lives and works in Hudson, New York, and New York City.

LIZ-N-VAL

Together Liz-N-Val have developed a conceptual framework that they call "Abstractrealism," which is defined as "something out of nothing, magic transformations that to this day inform [their] work." According to Liz-N-Val, the highlights of their artistic experience are the biennials in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (2003), and Senegal (2004), "where artists were treated like royalty." There were also notable shows at L'Adresse: Musée de la Poste, Paris (1991), and in Spain, Italy, Slovenia, Finland, and Germany, but they "never considered [their] art-life as a career."

BILL MUTTER

William ("Bill") Mutter obtained his B.F.A. at Monmouth College, West Long Branch, New Jersey, and his M.F.A. from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. In the mid-1980s Mutter began working as a sculptor in ceramic, with subjects ranging from life-size works of fighting cowboys and children in Halloween costumes to dolls with animal faces. Numerous galleries and museums, ranging from 1980s Lower East Side galleries to the Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, have shown his work. Mutter has received awards

ing, photography, drawings, and textiles. She has been the subject of numerous exhibitions worldwide including over twenty-five solo museum exhibitions. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Smith has received many awards including the 2012 National Medal of Arts; 2010 Nelson A. Rockefeller Award from Purchase College School of the Arts; 2009 Edward MacDowell Medal, and the Skowhegan Medal for Sculpture in 2000. Smith is an adjunct professor at New York University and Columbia University and, since 1994, has been represented by Pace Gallery in New York.

HUCK SNYDER

Huck Snyder (1953–1993) was a visual artist and set designer who lived and worked in New York. His paintings and installations were exhibited internationally in Europe and Japan. Snyder made theater sets and installations, many for productions with collaborator John Kelly, that won him great acclaim, including the 1985 and 1991 New York Dance and Performance (Bessie) Awards and the 1988 Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Scenic Design. He was a 1987 American Theatre Wing Award nominee for sets and costumes in *Circus*, his own art performance production, and was nominated again in 1988 and 1991. He died of HIV/AIDS in 1993.

BETTY TOMPKINS

Betty Tompkins is best known for her photorealistic airbrush paintings of heterosexual intercourse, a subject she began depicting in 1969 and revisited some thirty years later. Tompkins's work was censored in Paris in 1973 and in Tokyo in 2006. She attended Philadelphia High School for Girls and later Syracuse University

from the New York Foundation for the Arts and the Warren Tanner Memorial Art Fund, among others. He lives and works in New York and Pleasant Mount, Pennsylvania.

MICHAEL OTTERSEN

Michael Ottersen's past figurative works and present geometric abstractions are linked by an obsession with archetypes, contradiction, and economy as well as an interest in the old-school formal aspects of picture-making. Indirect narration has always been a catalyst of his work, but now the storytelling is more layered and varied but submerged. Ottersen is represented by Season gallery, Seattle, and has been included in various group shows nationally and internationally. He currently lives in Seattle and teaches painting and drawing at several art schools in the Pacific Northwest.

LEONARD PERLSON

Leonard Perlson studied Art History at Hunter College and received his B.F.A. from the School of Visual Arts, both in New York. He graduated from New York University with an M.P.A. and worked as the Director of SVA Gallery in Tribeca from 1979 to 1980, before opening the Leonard Perlson Gallery. The gallery presented the first solo exhibitions of Andres Serrano (1986) and Hiro Takeshita (1984–87), and Robert Delford's "Brown Maps to Nevada" (1985–86). His most recent exhibition, titled "The Last Drop," features watercolors by Claudia Shneider. Perlson has also curated and administered several important private collections.

and Central Washington State College and is currently represented by P.P.O.W. Gallery in New York, Gavlak Gallery in Palm Beach and Los Angeles, and Galerie Rodolphe Janssen in Brussels. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou in Paris. Tompkins lives and works in New York and Pleasant Mount, Pennsylvania.

PETER WHITE

Peter White was born, educated, and started his career as painter, printmaker, and illustrator in the United Kingdom. He was taught by Ian Dury, with Quentin Crisp as a life-drawing model. White moved to New York in 1982 to serve as the First Resident European Fellow at the Parsons School of Design, part-time Lecturer at the School of Visual Arts, and Associate Professor at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. From 1982 to 2016 White painted, exhibited, sold, taught, and traveled. In 2016 he returned to Europe to live in southern Burgenland, Austria.

DAVID WOJNAROWICZ

David Wojnarowicz (1954–1992) was a painter, photographer, writer, filmmaker, performance artist, and activist, who was prominent in the New York art world of the 1980s. Part of the first wave of East Village artists, Wojnarowicz began showing his work in the early 1980s in now-legendary spaces such as Civilian Warfare, Club 57, Fashion Moda, Gracie Mansion, and the Limbo Lounge. He gained prominence through his inclusion in the 1985 Whitney Biennial and was soon showing in numerous museums and galleries throughout the United States, Europe, and Latin America. The author of five books, Wojnarowicz's artwork is in numerous private and public collections, including the

RICK PROL

Rick Prol was born and raised in New York, where he currently lives and works. He graduated from the Cooper Union in 1980 and, in 1982, began showing his work publicly as part of the East Village art movement. Prol conveys images of human folly and suffering using an aesthetic of art brut expressionism. The artist has curated many group exhibitions over the years and, in 2004, the "East Village A.S.U." group show in the East Village site formerly known as the B-Side Gallery. In 2012 Prol had a retrospective at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art in Peekskill, New York, and a solo show in 2015 at the Dorian Grey Gallery, New York.

DIRK ROWNTREE

Dirk Rowntree met David Wojnarowicz in 1976 during the production of a performance by Jim McLaughlin at the Glines theater in New York. Thereafter he showed artwork at the Broome Street Photo Gallery, New York; Center for Book Arts, New York; Milliken Gallery, Stockholm; Lucky Strike; and Gracie Mansion, New York. As a designer and typographer for leading publishers, Rowntree has received awards from the Society of Publication Designers and American Institute of Graphic Arts. He continues to collaborate with experimental writers and poets. Currently Rowntree is an adjunct lecturer at the City University of New York teaching graphic design and typography. Three of his portraits of Wojnarowicz will be published in the forthcoming Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, retrospective catalogue, *David Wojnarowicz: History Keeps Me Awake at Night*.

Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, both in New York. Wojnarowicz died of HIV/AIDS in 1992.

TERES WYDLER

Through her multimedia works, the Swiss-born artist Teres Wydler examines the interrelation of art and science. At the center of these works are points of contact between culture and nature as well as the provocative question: Does nature make use of man and his culture in order to further evolve? For over thirty years Wydler has shown in museums and galleries in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and Italy.

RHONDA ZWILLINGER

Rhonda Zwilling, born in 1950 in Brooklyn, New York, was deeply involved in the 1980s East Village art movement. During that period, Zwilling bedazzled baby grand pianos, miscellaneous furniture, and even entire rooms in her installations, some of which were exhibited at the New York venues of Creative Time, Gracie Mansion, and MoMA PS1. Due to an illness known as Multiple Chemical Sensitivities, Zwilling left New York in 1991 and relocated to Paulden, Arizona, where she currently lives. She has traveled all over the Southwest to record stories and photograph over 250 sufferers of her illness, resulting in her 1998 book *The Dispossessed: Living with Multiple Chemical Sensitivities*. The artist now creates tapestries, using crocheting techniques, glass beads, and precious gems, and is working towards a retrospective for the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, which is scheduled to open February 2017.



Above: Andreas Sterzing, *David and Mike working at the Pier ("Hearts + Minds")*, 1983

Following: Andreas Sterzing, *Pier 34 Demolition (Wojnarowicz's Gagging Cow and Richard Hambleton's Shadow Painting are visible)*, 1984

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