



OPEN
FOR BUSINESS

TRIPLE BASE GALLERY

Hours: Thurs-Sun Noon - 5 pm

THIS WEEK

**ALISSA ANDERSON
SHASHANNA CHITTLE
SUZANNE HUSKY
SCOTT OLIVER
JESSE SCHLESINGER**



Zachary Royer Scholz

**Alternative to the Alternative:
The Changing Face of San Francisco's
Independent Art Spaces**

White Box. Triple Base Gallery. Photo by Alan Bamberger.



The 2005 exhibition *White Box* introduced Triple Base Gallery to the San Francisco art world.¹ The two-week show consisted of forty small artworks donated by artists from all over the country, each tailored to fit inside a 12"x12"x9" gift box.² The first arrivals to *White Box's* opening reception walked into a gallery that was almost completely bare. The empty walls bore hooks and small shelves, but no art. What did occupy the space were piles of neatly stacked, numbered white boxes. For \$25 show attendees could purchase a box and the unknown work it contained. Once sold, the boxes were opened and the enclosed work added to the exhibition. Gallery directors Dina Pugh and Joyce Grimm shuttled boxes to and from buyers, announced each unveiling over the growing din of the packed gallery, and carried every work to its pre-assigned space. In the crowded gallery, viewers convivially mingled with one another and peered at the works on display, laughing at the funny ones and pondering the more obtuse. The crowded reception quickly spilled out onto the sidewalk, and the revelry continued long after the opening was scheduled to end.

The show *White Box* was simultaneously an effective fundraiser and a dynamic exhibition. It achieved this double

effect by engaging commercialism critically. The act of purchasing produced the display and elegantly generated an incentive to buy. The show directly presented attendees with the condition that buying work was required and challenged them to hold up their end by purchasing a box. The nominal price of \$25 not only encouraged wide participation, but also offset the inherent uncertainty of buying blind. The removal of patrons' ability to decide between pieces, or even see artworks before purchasing, streamlined their decision to buy into a yes-or-no question that overlapped with their desire to see the show. Visitors who, despite these inducements, did not purchase a box were faced directly with the disengaged nature of their spectatorship. This kind of subtly parasitic viewing occurs whenever a gallery displays work for sale, but *White Box* made this dynamic explicit with spectators benefiting directly from the unveilings that purchasing patrons enabled.

The particular blend of commercialism, criticality, and community embodied by *White Box* has come to define Triple Base Gallery, which today supports an array of experimental projects, exhibitions, performances, and events consistently underpinned by an innovative entrepreneurial ethos. These diverse activities simultaneously benefit the local art community and provide a vibrant exhibition platform for local, emerging artists.³ Rather than being an anomaly, Triple Base Gallery is one of a growing number of San Francisco art spaces that support their noncommercial programming through commercial transactions.

Using market-based activities to support experimental programming is not a new phenomenon; however, the growing prevalence of its use and the new, integrated forms in which it manifests distinguish today's emerging enterprises from sale-

based activities of the past. This shift toward commercial strategies is occurring across the entire alternative arts sphere but most dramatically in newer art spaces. Without boards to answer to or large payrolls to support, these emerging spaces can more easily revamp themselves to suit today's funding climate. Older and larger alternative art organizations have long utilized tangential commercial activities like art auctions and ticket sales. Many of today's emerging venues employ similar strategies, but an increasing number are integrating commercial practices centrally into their exhibitions, products, events, and publications. These hybrid activities use commercial structures to critically confront the very market forces they employ.

Collectively, these activities support a micro-economy that depends on local involvement and fosters community as it generates "social capital."⁴ This low-level commerce not only provides financial support to the art spaces and artists involved, but also democratizes art purchasing, allowing a broader range of people to participate. These repeated transactions create an engaged community of participants that enables discursive exchange and makes these spaces ideal sites for social-practice work that employs what Nicolas Bourriaud terms "relational aesthetics."⁵ This interconnected web of activity holds the potential to generate self-sustaining art communities; however, it also has limitations—commercialism hazarding reductive commodification and market strictures that limit the range of supported media. Beyond its immediate impacts and potentials, the expanded use of commercial strategies calls into question the historical division between commercial and alternative arts activities, suggesting the need to redefine an increasingly intertwined and multivalent art terrain.

While the growing appropriation of commercial practices by independent art spaces is part of a broader cross-fertilization softening the boundaries between art, design, fashion, and other aspects of cultural production, the significant element precipitating this shift is the decrease in public and private arts funding. Over the past two decades public art funding has steadily declined.⁶ Since 1992 the National Endowment for the Arts has seen its budget cut by 34 percent. The effects of this reduction have been particularly potent because each \$1 of NEA funding generates \$7 dollars in matching grants, further donations, and earned revenue.⁷ As harmful as federal cutbacks have been, de-funding at the state level has been even more drastic. From 2002 to 2006 public funding for the arts in California was slashed by more than 94%. Today, California is last among the states in arts funding, spending just 14 cents per person each year on the arts compared to a national average of \$1.21.⁸

As public funding has dried up across the country and severely decreased in California, art spaces have increasingly come to depend on private funds.⁹ Unfortunately, corporate giving has plummeted, dropping 65 percent between 2000 and 2005.¹⁰ In addition, though the dollar amount of individual and foundation money going to the arts has remained constant, the “market share” that this money represents has been in decline for more than a decade. “In 1992, the arts received 8.4 percent of all charitable contributions. In 2005 [. . .] just 5.2 percent . . .”¹¹ The future of private giving looks particularly bleak because “the nonprofit arts sector has done little to capitalize on its present bridges to youth. To date there is no systematic approach to the challenge of generational succession in the areas of governance, membership, advocacy, or financial support.”¹²

Rectifying this situation requires that designated time, energy, and money be directed toward achieving longer-term, longevity-focused goals, which, when organizations are struggling just to remain open, is unlikely, if not impossible.

Young, independent art spaces, unable to support their desired activities through either public or private funding, increasingly turn to the market. Spaces that in the past would have supported their activities through grants or donations now sell things. The recent expansion of the internet has rapidly enhanced smaller spaces’ ability to enter the market. Email enables art spaces on shoestring budgets to carry on extensive press campaigns without needing to pay for postcards or other advertising; websites allow upstart spaces to display works online to broad—even international—audiences. Additionally, a variety of new online tools allow spaces to see who is opening their mailings and visiting their websites, helping them more effectively target their audience and clientele. Digital technologies have opened access to print-on-demand and other small-scale fabrication services that produce saleable sideline items. With a little effort and some internet know-how, upstart art spaces can construct web presences as impressive as the biggest commercial galleries.¹³

Except when specifically indicated otherwise, the artworks exhibited in alternative art spaces are implicitly for sale; however, many of today’s independent art spaces more explicitly sell and market the work that they exhibit. Like commercial galleries, these galleries make pricelists available and actively court buyers. They sell not only the works on display, but may also retain works from past shows or offer new works by artists that they have previously exhibited. A few spaces, like Ampersand



How Fast Your World is Changing (opposite top). Ampersand International Arts. Photo by Alan Bamberger. *Mini Market* (opposite bottom). Look Boutique/Silverman Gallery.



International Arts, even have rosters of artists that they “represent,” though usually not through exclusive relationships.¹⁴ Owner and director Bruno Mauro exhibits and sells represented artists’ work and simultaneously seeks opportunities for them to exhibit in other non-profit and commercial venues.¹⁵ Ampersand’s sensitive and experimental programming—focused more on contextualizing work and producing a unified effect than on positioning saleable objects—demonstrates that the gallery and Mauro are more concerned with fostering and promoting artists than using them to generate money.

In addition to selling artworks, many of today’s independent art spaces increasingly sell other items as well. For example, Park Life Store and Gallery supports the ten or more exhibitions that it hosts each year by selling all manner of art-goods and books out of its store.¹⁶ Park Life not only carries items like modern design objects, prints, paper goods, t-shirts, home wares, toys, magazines, DVDs, jewelry, and artist multiples, but also publishes a small number of artist monographs under the imprint Paper Museum Press.¹⁷ Silverman Gallery similarly supports its programming by selling artist multiples alongside jewelry, clothing, music, and books. To keep these sideline sales distinct from the gallery’s exhibitions, they are conducted out of the

adjoining Look boutique.¹⁸ Most of San Francisco's independent art spaces do not have designated retail areas like Park Life's store or Silverman's Look boutique; nevertheless, many sell sideline items like t-shirts, buttons, zines, and limited-edition prints.

Though increasingly popular, selling commercial sidelines to support noncommercial exhibition programs is not a new phenomenon. A markedly successful precursor from the early 1990s is Griff Williams' Gallery 16. Williams presciently recognized that grant-dependent models would prove untenable in the long-run and structured Gallery 16 to internally sustain its dynamic exhibition programming via contract printing work, editioned prints, and book projects produced in collaboration with the exhibited artists.¹⁹ Complementary arrangements, like the ones used by Gallery 16, have historically produced the bulk of independent spaces' commercial revenue and continue to make up most of the funds for today's spaces. However, recently, a number of new spaces have imbedded the act of purchasing directly into their exhibitions. These spaces, like Triple Base's show *White Box*, engage commercialism in their core programming, but from a critical perspective. Their activities exploit the financial power of the market and simultaneously question the ways its mechanisms construct and transmit value.

One enterprise that uses a particularly innovative brand of critically engaged commercialism is *The Thing Quarterly*. Started by Jonn Herschend and Will Rogan in 2007 as part of Southern Exposure's Free Enterprise Residency program, *The Thing* employs a peculiar exhibition strategy—a periodical that takes the form of an object. Each year, Herschend and Rogan invite four artists, writers, musicians, or filmmakers to create an everyday object that in some way incorporates text.²⁰ The object

Issue 1—Miranda July. *The Thing Quarterly*.



is then painstakingly reproduced, hand-wrapped, and mailed to the homes of subscribers who know only which artists are participating and remain in the dark as to what will be arriving in the mail. Despite requiring a minor leap of faith, *The Thing* has enjoyed steady success. As Jonn Herschend described it, “we started out in July of 2007 thinking that we might get fifty to a hundred subscribers at the most. But by September of 2007 we were topping 1,000. We couldn’t believe it. Now (a year and a half later and in a terrible economy) it seems that we have leveled out at around 600.”²¹ By sending objects to subscribers’ homes, *The Thing* creates a diffuse and iterative exhibition format. The unique context of each home activates the work differently. Often designed to be used, the objects insinuate themselves into the everyday lives of their owners. As they acquire more and more “Things,” longtime subscribers create distinct and evolving iterations of materially identical shows.

In combination, critically engaged commercial strategies, like *The Thing*, and more tangential revenue generation, like Park Life’s model, begin to suggest possible new ways forward. Collectively, the local sales of t-shirts, buttons, books, zines, prints, and artworks are combining into a groundswell. This globally-networked local activity has the potential to grow into a self-sustaining micro-economy that cycles, rather than co-opts, value. Using similar mechanisms, such a supportive network would offer an actual *alternative* to more exploitative national and international art distribution systems.

The significant difference between this growing collection of commercial activities and the larger art market is that the greater value developed by these interactions is social, not monetary. They generate social capital—the value possessed by a

network of connections. These spaces use money, but not simply to make more money. They use money to develop programming, produce artwork, support artists, and promote work that they genuinely feel is contributing something vital to artistic discourse. The products help fund these endeavors, but they also are of value to the community. Hanging, wearing, reading, or eating the affordable merchandise that they have purchased, supportive community members can take pride in their patronage. These supportive purchases, unlike donations, are conducted between equals and engender respect. These spaces’ patrons, even if they have only purchased a t-shirt, feel like full participants, not just vicarious viewers getting to peek at work that other, richer people will eventually buy. These reciprocal interactions become stronger and deeper as they are repeated, constructing a communal matrix.

Their strong communality makes these art spaces ideal sites for projects that employ “relational aesthetics.”²² Their invested audiences are well suited to interactive works that engage “the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.”²³ These venues serve relational work well because they are themselves a kind of social practice, building considered relationships through trust and respect. Such engaged and supportive communities are not exclusive or territorial entities, but shared networks that benefit from cooperation. Rather than competing, they seek to support each other’s success. Each space adds to the wellbeing of the others by augmenting the diversity, scope, and reach of the total community. The relationships of reciprocal exchange that these spaces engender, not only support things of value, but are themselves valuable. They comprise a suspended field of social capi-

tal that facilitates generative discourse and empowers the activities it contains.²⁴

Hallway Projects is a San Francisco art space that fosters this kind of collective, social capital. The brainchild of artist and curator Brion Nuda Rosch, Hallway Projects nurtures an engaged, supportive community through a multifaceted blend of integrated, critically engaged commercial practices. Originally named Hallway Bathroom Gallery, the venue began in 2005 as a series of exhibitions that Rosch hosted in the hallway and bathroom of his small apartment. Today, Hallway Projects continues to stage exhibitions and sell artworks, but the shows and their relaxed, day-long opening receptions are more about critically engaging art and unifying a diverse creative community than they are about generating revenue. This focus on community building is explicitly expressed in Hallway Projects' mission statement which highlights that the space "aims to foster an intimate network of artists, curators, writers, makers, participants and collectors on a local and international level through on-site and off-site exhibitions, internet platforms, and social happenings."²⁵ Two innovative elements in Rosch's evolving combination of exhibition models are the projects Blank Art Objects and the Portable Ice Cream Stand.

Blank Art Objects, now in its fourth issue, offers small works for sale anonymously. Manifesting as an online exhibition, each installment of Blank Art Objects consists of about a dozen artworks presented without any identifying information other than dimensions and the materials used. Every work is priced at \$100 and the identity of the maker is only revealed to the purchaser upon delivery. The works come from a roster of international artists, some famous and some unknown local tal-

Landscape. Hallway Projects. Photo by Alan Bamberger.



ents. Submitted artworks can be drawings, paintings, or collages, but cannot exceed 9" x 12" in size. Selected artists not only forfeit their identity, but also their known technique, process, or style, sometimes producing works well outside their typical oeuvre. Through its unique structure, Blank Art Objects generates revenue as it questions the market forces it exploits.

Though similar in some ways to fundraising events like *White Box* that anonymously sell works of varying value at set prices, Blank Art Objects is in other ways markedly different in that it positions itself as an exhibition in service of its own needs rather than those of another program. While the funds it generates help support other Hallway Projects programming, that is not its expressed purpose. As "a collection of small artworks free of artist identity,"²⁶ Blank Art Objects' structure, anonymity, and commercialism are not devices aimed toward the generation of funds, but considered aspects of an integrated exhibition approach. To the prospective buyer, it still offers the lure of a windfall purchase. To the non-buying viewer, the anonymous range of artists energizes their assessment of the equally positioned works, making them wonder which are by famous artists and which are not. For contributing artists, the anonymity provides equality—each work sells for the same amount, and each artist receives the same share. It also allows artists to produce works outside of their typical practice, which they might be hesitant to endorse more publicly.

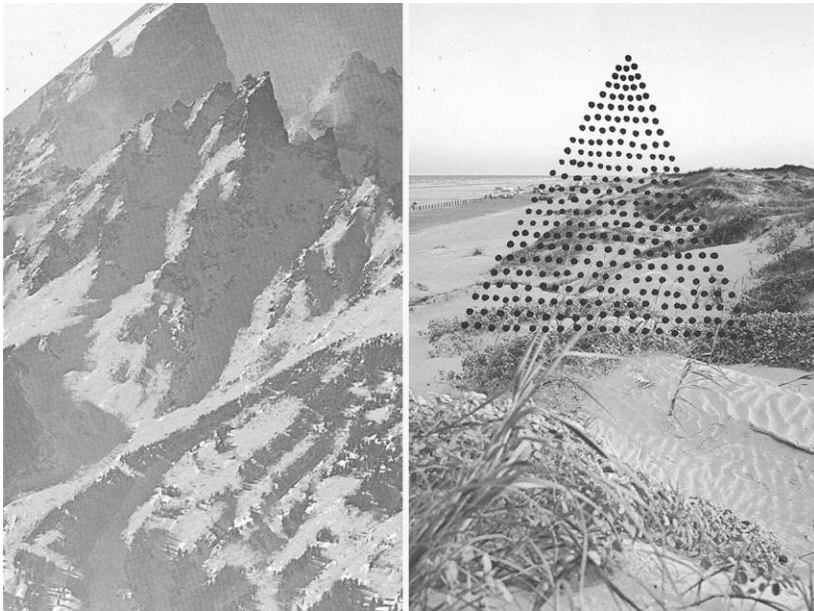
Further complicating the source of the Blank Art Objects is Rosch's habit of occasionally padding-out a given installment with works that he himself produces, or that are made by members of the public at a Blank Art Objects making event.²⁷ This makes each work's origin, and any work's market value, uncer-

tain. Magnified by the abstract digital presentation of each issue of Blank Art Objects, this uncertainty undermines all sites of value that are not the act of viewing the artwork. By destabilizing everything else, Rosch elegantly recasts the experience of looking as the only stable location of value.

Blank Art Objects brings together a diversity of makers, viewers, and purchasers within a structure that highlights the interactions that connect them. By altering the typical ways that viewers, purchasers, and makers are visible to each other, Blank Art Objects critically engages the structures through which art-value is transmitted, opening the potential to remake (or at least rethink) these pervasive dynamics.

Another multifaceted front through which Hallway Projects builds discursive community involvement and generates revenue is the Portable Ice Cream Stand. The stand is a nomadic ice cream-vending installation that provides art and ice cream with no determination of where one ends and the other begins. Each time the stand appears, the artists Rosch invites to participate remake it to incorporate their related artworks, installations, and performances. Sometimes an exhibition in its own right, the stand also operates at the periphery of other shows and art spaces and makes a miniature non-collaborative appearance at every Hallway Projects reception. When in operation, the stand, like a conventional ice cream vendor, sells its ice cream creations for two dollars a scoop and three dollars for specialty ice cream beverages. The stand's creations combine a range of flavors with unconventional ingredients, providing both the innocent enjoyment of ice cream as well as concoctions, such as coconut ice cream mojito floats, that are tailored to a more adult palate.²⁸ Augmented by the sale of its t-shirts, the

2 Blank Art Objects. Hallway Projects.



The Portable Ice Cream Stand (at Southern Exposure). Hallway Projects.



stand aims to support itself and helps to finance Hallway Projects' other fronts. Of its fiscal role, Rosch has said: "the portable ice cream stand represents for me that bake sale when your child's school needs to raise money for a basketball hoop."²⁹

Beyond revenue generation, the lure of ice cream draws a crowd that might not otherwise spend time in an art space, or at least as much time interacting with art. Rosch has said as much himself, commenting on his iteration of the stand at Southern Exposure that through "the common appreciation of ice cream I am hoping to diversify those who might come into an art space."³⁰ Additionally, eating ice cream adds an exuberant, child-like element of fun that breaks viewers from staid habits and situates them freshly and more receptively.

The Portable Ice Cream Stand not only blurs commerce and art, but authorship as well. The convoluted identity of the project is evidenced by the way the stand draws collaboratively on the energies of the various artists involved, but remains consistently steered by Rosch. Textual descriptions of the stand are equally divergent. The Hallway Projects website presents the stand as an offshoot of the gallery, and Rosch's active role is downplayed by describing the stand as "a nomadic food stand and social gathering assembled by visiting artists serving sweet refreshments at local functions, playgrounds, campsites, Laundromats, and book stores."³¹ This neutral—almost institutional—portrayal sits in tension with press coverage of the stand, which consistently describes the project explicitly as an artwork by Rosch.³²

In highlighting these conflicting portrayals, I am not suggesting that Rosch is representing the Portable Ice Cream Stand as something that it is not. Rather I would suggest it indicates that the stand is more complex than either description suggests.

Much like Blank Art Objects and Hallway Projects itself, the Portable Ice Cream Stand is simultaneously an artwork by Rosch, a curated venue showcasing the work of other artists, and a means for generating revenue. Rather than undermining each other, these seemingly contradictory functions recursively inform, complicate, and enrich one another. The Portable Ice Cream Stand and Hallway Projects' other activities, like Blank Art Objects, allow Rosch to partially fund his gallery's activities, but more importantly they build an invested community of participant-supporters that extend Hallway Projects discursive reach even as they enable its continued existence.

It is encouraging that in an increasingly difficult funding climate, spaces like Hallway Projects manage to support their experimental programming through commercial means that foster the growth of a supportive community. However, this increasing appropriation of market strategies by alternative spaces carries with it troubling potentials. Not only are there limitations to what the market can and will support, but the demands of the market hazard some rather negative side effects. Most significantly, establishing a market value requires defining what is of value, and the unitary stability of this definition impedes any fluid, cultural, or discursive value that an artwork might otherwise hold. This flattening of multifarious meaning impoverishes art and turns it into little more than a placeholder for an abstract monetary price.

Reliance on the market can limit art to what the market is willing to support. When public funding was at its peak during the 1970s and '80s, the resulting expansion of alternative art organizations enabled the growth of art forms like performance and installation art, even though they were difficult, if not

impossible, to sell. While alternative spaces currently support noncommercial programming, it is possible that as funding continues to wane and financial independence becomes even more necessary, art forms that cannot support themselves will be jettisoned in favor of ones that can. Even if existing non-commercial practices are supported, it is not clear whether the market will nurture new kinds of work that are challenging and difficult to commoditize. Without being able to first establish themselves through less commercial venues, such artistic practices will likely disappear.

This concern is somewhat mitigated by the fact that the market has managed to make money off even seemingly unsellable work through related objects and documents. Whether food encrusted plates from Rirkrit Tiravanija's cooking installations, or shreds of Yoko Ono's clothing from a performance of *Cut Piece*, art dealers can almost always find something to sell. The upside to this seemingly inexhaustible ability to commoditize is that it is unlikely that art production will regress entirely into easily sellable commodities even if all funding outside of the market disappears.

Although the commercial activities of today's independent spaces help fund their programming, they do not often provide adequate support. Sideline revenue generation, like that of the Park Life store, has proven more effective partly because it can be unabashedly commercial. Sideline commercial aspects of spaces like Gallery 16 are successful enough to employ full time staff members and cover related costs of gallery programming. Strategies that try to critically blend commercialism, like *The Thing Quarterly*, are less lucrative because their commercialism is correspondingly diluted. Even with the commercial revenue

they generate, spaces like Triple Base and Hallway Projects, only partially fund themselves, forcing their proprietors to work one or more other jobs to make up the difference.³³

Though an art landscape populated only by profit-focused galleries is sad to imagine, the increased use of commercial practices does not inherently take us in that direction. Many of the commercial strategies that alternative spaces employ remain tangential, with little opportunity to taint a space's core programming. Bookshops, boutiques, and flat-file programs are little different, and no more corrupting, than the non-art jobs that artists work to pay the bills, or the fundraising auctions that nonprofit spaces hold to support their programming. In fact, very much like artists' day jobs, they allow spaces to pursue ambitious activities that often hold no potential to generate revenue. However, also like artists' day jobs, pursuing these tangential activities can draw off energy and time that could otherwise go into programming.³⁴ Commercial strategies that are not clearly peripheral, like those of *The Thing Quarterly* or Hallway Projects, are more problematic than simply selling t-shirts. However, the ways in which today's alternative spaces integrate revenue-generation into their programming mitigates the potential harm. Events like Triple Base's *White Box* exert their commercialism from such a considered position that they avoid market corruption. If anything, *White Box*'s nuanced engagement of the market and the way financial patronage makes art available and visible within society, gives the show critical teeth.

The commercial activities of today's independent art spaces call into question the historical separation between commercial and alternative arts activities. Not only do the entrepreneurial activities of alternative spaces resemble those of commercial

galleries, but many commercial galleries today host exhibitions akin to those of alternative spaces. This growing overlap does not suggest that alternative spaces have sold-out or that commercial galleries are suddenly powered by altruism; rather, this blurring suggests that alternative and commercial spaces operate at different points along a continuum and not, as was previously believed, in opposition. This new integrated understanding focuses attention not on how an organization functions, but on what effect it achieves. Within such a results-based perspective, differing strategies produce informative striations rather than divisions.

The first step in devising new terminology for this integrated terrain is to leave behind the term “alternative.” While the ambiguity of “alternative” at one point provided an open space of possibility, it has since ossified into a bounded expectation—a definition that no longer fits the reality it labels. The term “alternative” should not be replaced or amended, but rather expanded into a growing and shifting amalgam of terms that, in combination, can describe the value of activities without closing down future potentials. Words like experimental, artist-run, social-profit, or community-based that have been used in prior eras, can all still prove useful in describing today’s diverse landscape of spaces. Rather than being definitive, such labels describe aspects that, in combination, can precisely, but never completely, indicate an organization’s direction. An artist-run, experimental art space overlaps an experimental, community arts space, which, in turn, overlaps an educational, community arts space, and so on. Such a Venn diagram-like system produces a zonal understanding capable of both apt description and limitless expansion. It can accurately describe the alterna-

tive and commercial art landscape of today and evolve to describe future developments.

The commercial activities of San Francisco’s independent art spaces carry risks, but are not inherently corrupting. Whether engaged as a sideline activity or integrated more centrally, these unexpected activities help financially squeezed organizations defray their operating costs and keep their doors open. Although more central commercial activity is problematic, for all the reasons discussed, the consciously critical, hybrid ways in which today’s spaces employ these strategies help offset their potential ill effects. Arising out of necessity, these innovative solutions are creating new and exciting exhibition formats that are rich with potential. Collectively these strategies accept the necessity of commerce, not simply to generate money, but to grow and disperse art amongst a discursively engaged network of supporters and participants. Rather than jeopardizing sites of artistic exploration, these strategic appropriations help ensure that San Francisco’s experimental art spaces will continue to flourish.

Notes

- 1 Triple Base Gallery was originally founded in 2003 by Clint Taniguchi and Oliver Halsman Rosenberg as a residence and studio for the two artists. In its original iteration, Triple Base operated in a fluid and communal manner with Taniguchi and Rosenberg opening up for portrait sessions, presenting performances to the neighborhood, and working collaboratively within the community through projects such as the Instant Drawing Machine. In 2005, interested in pursuing other projects, Rosenberg and Taniguchi invited four curators—Audrey Marrs, Dina Pugh, Joyce Grimm, and Nancy Meyer—to take over the space.
- 2 Participating artists: Becca Albee, Elyse Allen, Hanna Fushihara Aron, Andy Asp, Joseph Becker, Bert Bergen, Charles Beronio, Libby Black, Seth

- Childs, Chris Cobb, Brian Conley, Catherine Czacki, Robert De Saint Phalle, Chris Duncan, Tara Foley, Jim Gaylord, Allegra Gibson, Sean Horchy, Suzanne Husky, Robert Jordan, Melissa Kaseman, Helena Keeffe, Erin Kunkel, Isaac Lin, Mariko Marrs, Jessica Martin, Jesse Michaels, Sue Pak, Ted Purves and Susanne Cockrell, Leif Ritchey, Oliver Halsman Rosenberg, Tonya Solley Thornton, Barbara Schauwecker, Emily Sevier, Wei Weng, Virginia White, and Will Yackulic.
- 3 Triple Base, "Mission Statement," http://www.basebasebase.com/archive/gallery_info/000042.html.
 - 4 Social capital is a concept developed in sociology and extensively theorized by Pierre Bourdieu that ascribes value to systems of connections, asserting generally that social networks have value independent of other value that they facilitate.
 - 5 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Paris: Presses du Réel, 2002.
 - 6 This decrease was precipitated by the neoliberal movement that took root in California in the 1970s under Governor Ronald Regan and expanded nationally when he ascended to the presidency in 1980. During his presidency, Regan attacked the use of taxpayer money to support the arts and tried to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts entirely. While Regan's efforts in office failed, his cause was taken up by socially conservative members of congress who, in 1989, backed by the religious right, launched a morally-based attack on endowment funding. Using the sensational works of Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano as lightning rods, this conservative coalition progressively slashed federal funding for the arts and eventually affected even more extreme reductions in state art budgets.
 - 7 National Endowment for the Arts, "Issue Brief: National Endowment for the Arts," FY 2009 Interior Appropriations Bill, www.artsusa.org/get_involved/advocacy/aad/issue_briefs/2008/advocacy_issuebrief_001.asp#.
 - 8 In 2004 the California Arts Council's budget was cut to just \$1 million from the previous \$18 million, which was already drastically down from the \$32 million it was receiving in 2001. Since 2004, the California Arts Council has limped along on meager annual budgets that never surpass \$3 million. Mike Boehm, "Arts budget boost dies in committee." *Los Angeles Times*, February 02, 2008, Section E-6. In San Francisco, the detrimental loss of funding has been somewhat mitigated by the Grants for the Arts (GFTA) program, which distributes a 1.1% tax on hotel bills to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. In 2008, GFTA disbursed more than \$11 million to 231 different projects; however, less than \$500,000 went to organizations support-

- ing art produced in San Francisco. Grants for the Arts, "History and Purpose," www.sfgfta.org/grants_html/history.htm www.sfgfta.org.
- 9 As of 2006, the average non-profit arts organization received 43 percent of its funding from private donors. Americans for the Arts, "The Future of Private Sector Giving to the Arts," Final Report from National Arts Policy Roundtable, Sundance Preserve, Utah, October 26–28, 2006.
 - 10 Americans for the Arts, "The Future of Private Sector Giving to the Arts," Final Report from National Arts Policy Roundtable, Sundance Preserve, Utah, October 26–28, 2006, The changing paradigm of private sector arts funding.
 - 11 "... If the arts had simply maintained an 8.4 percent share of total giving in 2005, they would have received \$21.5 billion instead of \$13.51 billion—an 8.4 billion dollar difference." Americans for the Arts, "The Future of Private Sector Giving to the Arts," Final Report from National Arts Policy Roundtable, Sundance Preserve, Utah, October 26–28, 2006 summary of research findings.
 - 12 Barry Hessenius, "Executive Summary," *Involving youth in nonprofit arts organizations: a call to action*. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (April, 2007), http://philanthropywiki.org.au/index.php/Involving_Youth_in_Nonprofit_Arts_Organizations. Barry Hessenius, "The Arts & Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life," *Involving youth in nonprofit arts organizations: a call to action*. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (April, 2007), http://philanthropywiki.org.au/index.php/Involving_Youth_in_Nonprofit_Arts_Organizations.
 - 13 One element enabling this leveling is the virtual world of online exhibitions. Online exhibitions are projects and galleries of work that, rather than depicting a show that exists in the world, only exists online. Many large museums, libraries, and historical societies use online exhibits to extend or enhance their other programming. The online exhibition is a powerful tool for smaller spaces because it is not bound by financial or spatial limitations.
 - 14 Founded by Bruno Mauro in 1999, Ampersand operates jointly out of his homes in San Francisco and Paris.
 - 15 Ampersand International Arts, "Info," www.ampersandintlarts.com/info.html
 - 16 Park Life has been owned and operated by Jamie Alexander and Derek Song since 2006. Park Life, "About," www.parklifestore.com/about
 - 17 PMP titles to date include: monographs by artists Andrew Schoultz, Ian Johnson, and Brendan Monroe. www.paper-museum.net

- 18 Director and curator Jessica Silverman founded Silverman gallery in October of 2006. Look Boutique was launched two months later with the help of artist Joan Howard. Silverman Gallery, "About," www.silvermangallery.com/about/. Look Boutique, "About," http://look-boutique.com/index.php?main_page=page&id=1&chapter=0&zenid=e5b2744b82bf1cd2779019744209ae65 (December 2008)
- 19 Gallery 16, www.gallery16.com
- 20 *The Thing* has gone on to present the work of Miranda July, Anne Walsh, Kota Ezawa, Tucker Nichols, Trisha Donnelly, and Lucy Pullen. It is developing upcoming projects with Allora & Calzadilla, Jonathan Lethem, Trevor Paglen, Ryan Gander, and Starlee Kine. Jonn Herschend, co-editor of *THE THING*, Personal Interview, 14 August 2008. *THE THING*, "THE THING," <http://www.thethingquarterly.com>
- 21 Jonn Herschend, personal email correspondence, February 10th, 2009.
- 22 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Paris: Presses du Réel, 2002.
- 23 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Paris: Presses du Réel, 2002. P. 113.
- 24 This development parallels recent changes in the music industry where the power of major labels has been dramatically eroded as digital technologies have opened widespread access to recording, mastering, and distribution. Much like the local foods movement, these developments are putting the focus back on producers and simultaneously increasing the variety and freshness of products available. Allowing producers to be more visible puts them in greater control of their works' presentation, reception, and distribution, and lets them benefit more substantially from the value their efforts generate.
- 25 Hallway Projects, "Mission," <http://hallwaybathroomgallery.com/index.php?mission/>.
- 26 Hallway Projects, "Blank Art Objects," hallwaybathroomgallery.com/index.php?blank-art-objects/.
- 27 Southern Exposure, "First Resident Artist: Brion Nuda Rosch," soex.org/Exhibit/70.html,
- 28 When not physically in operation, the stand posts do-it-yourself ice cream recommendations on the Hallway Projects website. Suggested recipes have included: pumpkin ice cream over Belgium waffles, chocolate ice cream in hot cocoa, and chocolate raspberry ice cream over hot rhubarb pie. Hallway Projects, "The Portable Ice Cream Stand," <http://hallwaybathroomgallery.com/index.php?the-portable-ice-cream-stand>.
- 29 Judith Joffe-Block, "Artist at Work: Brion Nuda Rosch," Mission Local, September 20, 2008. <http://missionlocal.org/2008/09/artist-at-work-brion-nuda-rosch>.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Hallway Projects, "The Portable Ice Cream Stand," <http://hallwaybathroomgallery.com/index.php?the-portable-ice-cream-stand>. (November 2008)
- 32 Judith Joffe-Block, "Artist at Work: Brion Nuda Rosch," Mission Local, September 20, 2008. <http://missionlocal.org/2008/09/artist-at-work-brion-nuda-rosch>.
- 33 Today Triple Base has become successful enough to pay one director a full-time salary, but Joyce Grimm still has to work as a curator for the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery. *The Thing* mostly just covers costs and the small amount that it pays Herschend and Rogan does little more than augment what they earn at their other jobs. Hallway Projects financial situation is even more tenuous with most of the operating capital coming from Rosch's bartending job and his wife's school-teacher salary.
- 34 Sadly the choice for the proprietors of these spaces is not between time spent on revenue raising activities and time spent on programming, but between revenue raising activities, grant writing, other fundraising, or working some other job. Part of the shift of spaces toward trying to generate revenue is because it can take more time and work per dollar to acquire either public or private funding through more typical non-profit avenues.