

The New York Times

WEEKEND Arts FINE ARTS LEISURE

Galleries Being Galleries, but More So

There are several ways to un-pack the first New York Gallery Week, which will take place across the city in 50 art galleries, 5 alternative spaces and a park (the High Line) from Friday to Monday. Most obviously, this four-day “week” — with its coordinated solo exhibitions, special events and extended gallery hours — is a promotional ploy. But it’s also an impressive number of galleries doing what they usually do, only more intensely and overtly, in a legitimate effort to take back the spotlight too often hogged by art fairs and auctions. And it’s a somewhat off-putting assertion of hipness and exclusivity, what with only 50 of the city’s several hundred galleries invited to participate.

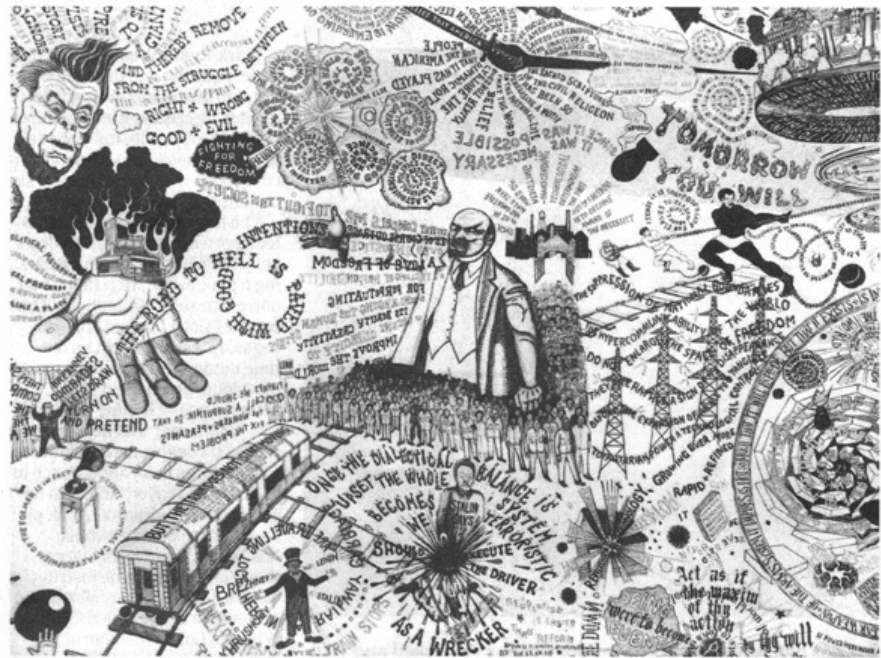
But, bottom line, just having so many galleries open on Sunday and Monday — many with intriguing talks and other events on offer — is a luxury that’s nothing to sniff at.

The idea for New York Gallery Week came to Casey Kaplan, the owner of an eponymous gallery on West 21st Street, about a year ago, during the post-bust doldrums. He felt a need to soften what he saw as the “icy veneer” of many art galleries (not least his own, one might point out) and a desire to emphasize the collegial rather than the competitive aspect of the gallery world.

“It seemed like time to put the focus back on artists and their exhibitions,” he said in a telephone interview on Monday, “and to emphasize the educational and curatorial ways that galleries function.”

Mr. Kaplan joined forces with David Zwirner, of the Zwirner gallery on West 19th Street, and they hashed out the details with a core group of other dealers. A few dozen more were invited to participate, and all who agreed were asked to schedule solo shows for the weekend and to try to organize — judging from the list — a related, appropriately elevating event.

But the distinguishing attraction is the array of special events, which are all free (though a few require reservations) and include performances, artist talks and interviews, panel discussions, book signings and film screenings. These are of interest in part because they involve so many people — art historians, critics, museum curators — who are not part of the for-profit art trade. A selection of events is below; the full list and other details are at newyorkgalleryweek.com or in brochures available at a partici-



Dominic McGill’s “Muqaddimah,” which he will discuss with Murat Cem Menguc, professor of Middle Eastern history at Seton Hall University, at noon on Saturday at the Derek Eller Gallery.

pating gallery. Of course, this particular gallery weekend, however rich and varied, is just one of roughly 52 a year in New York, all of which include worthwhile exhibitions at galleries both within and outside the designated 50. Shows opening at nonparticipating galleries on Saturday, for example, include “Roy Lichtenstein: Still Lives” at the Gagosian Gallery’s West 24th Street space and “David Salle: Some Pictures From the ‘80s,” next door at the Mary Boone Gallery.

Saturday

NOON, DEREK ELLER GALLERY Dominic McGill will discuss his latest bravura tangles of word and image inspired by politics and history with Murat Cem Menguc, professor of Middle Eastern history at Seton Hall University, a friend who helped him devise (and even draw) “Muqaddimah,” an especially beautiful two-sided circular panorama that provides a biting view of recent world history. 615 West 27th Street, Chelsea; (212) 206-6411.

2 P.M., DAVID NOLAN GALLERY Steve DiBenedetto, David Humphrey and Alexi Worth, smart, articulate painters all, will discuss the work of the venerable Jim Nutt on the occasion of an exhibi-

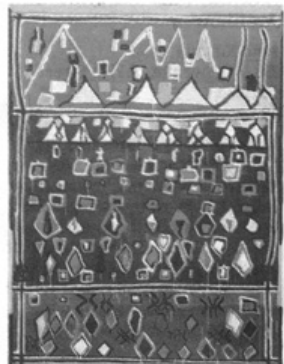
from 1975. 547 West 26th Street, Chelsea. No reservations required, but early arrival is recommended. Information: (212) 594-9478.

Sunday

12:30 P.M., FRIEDRICH PETZEL GALLERY The New York-based German painter Thomas Egger, whose work oscillates between abstraction and representation, will discuss his show with David Joselit, an art historian at

discuss her work with Bradford Young, the cinematographer who collaborated with her on a film installation in the show. The discussion will be moderated by Rashida Bumbury, the Kitchen’s associate curator. 512 West 19th Street, Chelsea; (212) 255-5793.

4-6 P.M., GAVIN BROWN’S ENTERPRISE Nearly tripling its exhibition space, the gallery has taken over the rest of its small building from Pat LaFrieda Meats, the storied purveyor of animal protein. Jonathan Horowitz will use much of the new space — including Mr. LaFrieda’s former meat lockers — to restage “Go Vegan,” an installation work that among much else documents animal slaughter and was originally shown at the Greene Naftali Gallery in 2002. Meanwhile, the wonderfully literal-minded Conceptualist Martin Creed will unveil a new video installation in a small portion of the new space. In addition, Mr. Creed, who has in the past filled galleries with balloons, has covered the floor of the old gallery with more than 100 eight-inch-wide planks of marble, each a different color and texture, running wall to wall. The result is a stunning, seemingly encyclopedic testament to nature’s beauty and variety. 620 Greenwich Street, at LeRoy Street, West Village; (212) 627-5258.



“Nomads and Tents in the Atlas Mountains” by Katherine Bernhardt, who discusses her work on Sunday at Canada.