



THE GALLERY IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE ARTIST-RUN SPACE



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Amélie du Chalard, daughter of an artist, with her own sizeable collection of art financed by her banking career, has recently become one of Paris' most unconventional gallerists. Whilst working in finance, she would recommend colleagues and friends names of artists, inviting them to see the work in her art-filled apartment in Paris' 7th arrondissement, a pastime that has become her full-time career.

Riding on the growing influence of online sales platforms, du Chalard opened her website Zeuxis in March 2015, before taking the initiative to open up her home as a showroom, realizing that before dropping more than €500 on art, most people need to see it up close.

What is interesting is that du Chalard is reaching a clientele that galleries have largely pushed away. A monied clientele that doesn't appreciate the froideur of a white cube gallery with a mute, scowling assistant. And for the artists? They walk away with 70% of the sale price, a vast improvement on the 50/50 split that dominates among most private galleries.

Du Chalard's Zeuxis is just one example of a growing trend of art-world figures refuting the traditional gallery model. People are starting to wonder why they need a fixed space, when rent in global art hubs is excessive, and only a handful of people turn up to openings. When Jennifer Abessira opened her exhibition "La Tangente" at the Impossible Project polaroid store in Paris last month, the turnout to the opening night was easily triple what you would see at any other commercial gallery in the area.

the area.

“La Tangente” was produced by Laura Schwartz, a Tel-Aviv based art dealer who operates without a fixed space, producing exhibitions in pharmacies and photography stores. “I think we have a resourcefulness being from Tel Aviv,” says Schwartz, “there is less stigma about abandoning the white cube.” It is also a context that sheds the pretensions of a classic commercial gallery reaching out to larger audiences.

Yet the transition to buying art out of context has not yet been fully realized, and art world tradition runs deep. Schwartz compares it to buying an iPhone, “when you buy your iPhone, you can either go to the Apple store, or you can go to Barbès,” — Barbès being Paris’ northern neighbourhood where on every street corner, vendors proffer cheap cigarettes and mobile phones from the insides of their jackets — “well we’re Barbès,” laughs Schwartz.



Cohen & Schwartz Gallery presents: La Tangente by Jennifer Abessira -hosted by Impossible Project
Paris

Photo: Camille Zerhat

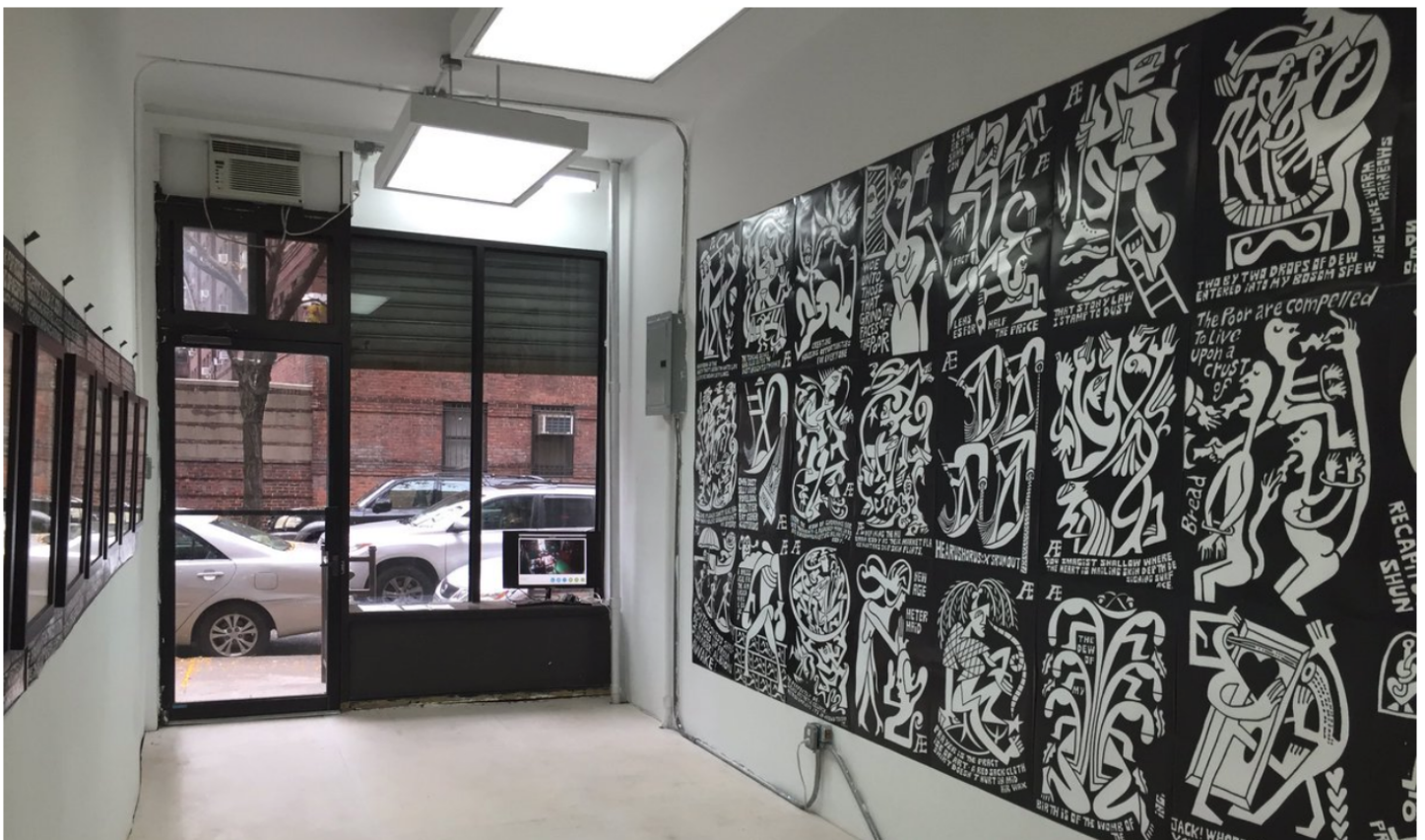
But even those within the system are becoming jaded. This week **Tracy Williams** announced the closure of her New York gallery in order to “move away from the gallery model.” After 12 years of

activity, she will look to “identify alternative and unusual spaces for exhibitions and events . . . forging links between the visual arts and other disciplines, such as literature, music, and fashion,” whilst continuing to represent artists and keeping links with collectors.

And it is not just the galleries who are trying to break the mould. Whilst the United States has a tradition of artist-run spaces dating back to the 1950s, in recent years there has been a resurgence of such structures circumventing the system of commercial galleries and state institutions. More and more frequently they are met with great critical acclaim as their non-commercial objectives allow for a greater freedom of expression than private galleries who are obliged to produce bankable exhibitions.

Between 2009 and 2011 The Woodmill, a non-profit gallery, housed over 100 artists and filmmakers rent-free in a disused council building in Bermondsey, south London. Now in an abandoned doctor’s surgery, The Woodmill is in constant flux, free to evolve: having gained registered charity status, the project has now sustained itself for six years.

Essex Flowers in New York, run by nine artists — [Justin Berry](#), Phillip Birch, Patrick Brennan, [Amanda Friedman](#), [Heather Guertin](#), [Tatiana Kronberg](#), Kendra Patrick, [Joshua Smith](#), and [Lizzie Wright](#) — who show their own work as well as that of other artists, opened in 2013 and in May expanded to make room for their ever-growing activity. Without the commercial pressures instigated by an overarching dealer, the space has been lauded for producing some of the most progressive shows in New York recent years.





Æthelred Eldridge — Essex Flowers

These alternatives aren't without their own issues however: most artist led spaces face a lot of the same problems that private galleries have to deal with on top of having to fund themselves. "I enquired for a space in Birmingham, they asked for £350,000 a year — it was an unoccupied shop. Two years later it is still unoccupied but they won't lower the rent, knowing that at some point someone will be interested," explains independant curator and editor of Square Magazine Christophe Dillinger. "Any space that could be considered as an exhibition venue is usually turned over to profit making ventures like shops."

But even with the difficulties that independent curators and artists face, the next generation of art-world figures are itching to move forward from working within an outmoded system. It is largely a thankless pursuit for those starting out in the art world, but luckily there are people out there passionate enough to innovate.

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