

VANITY FAIR

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Move Over, Chelsea: Tribeca Is New York's New Gallery Mecca

Chelsea has the megaliths of blue-chip art. But the 70 (!) shows open downtown show how Tribeca has become the best place to see art in the world's greatest art city.

BY NATE FREEMAN

It's time to proclaim a new preeminent gallery district in New York. It is finally, actually, all happening in Tribeca. Just this past Wednesday night, at least 70 major blue-chip gallery shows opened in or near the neighborhood—nearly all of them within a few blocks of one another. We've come a long way from the days when this area was called the Triangle Below Canal.

I was blown away by everything happening at Maxwell Graham, which just moved to the top floor of the building adjacent to Cortlandt Alley—one of the most sui generis edifices downtown, with a hand-cranked elevator and all sorts of secret entrances and exits. Graham's new space is generously proportioned, and the inaugural show features Michael E. Smith, the enigmatic poet-artist who sculpts with light and makes balletic, strange ready-mades from everyday objects. Smith is having a banner year, with a solo show at Graham and a survey at MASS MoCA, plus an exhibition at Waldo, Tobias Czudej's seasonal space in an out-there part of Maine. On Wednesday the place was packed—who needs painting when there's capital-C conceptual art?

