

Art Market Report: What's really going on in New York's gallery scene?

Gallerists are turning to pop-ups, collaborations, and shorter leases to navigate a changing art market

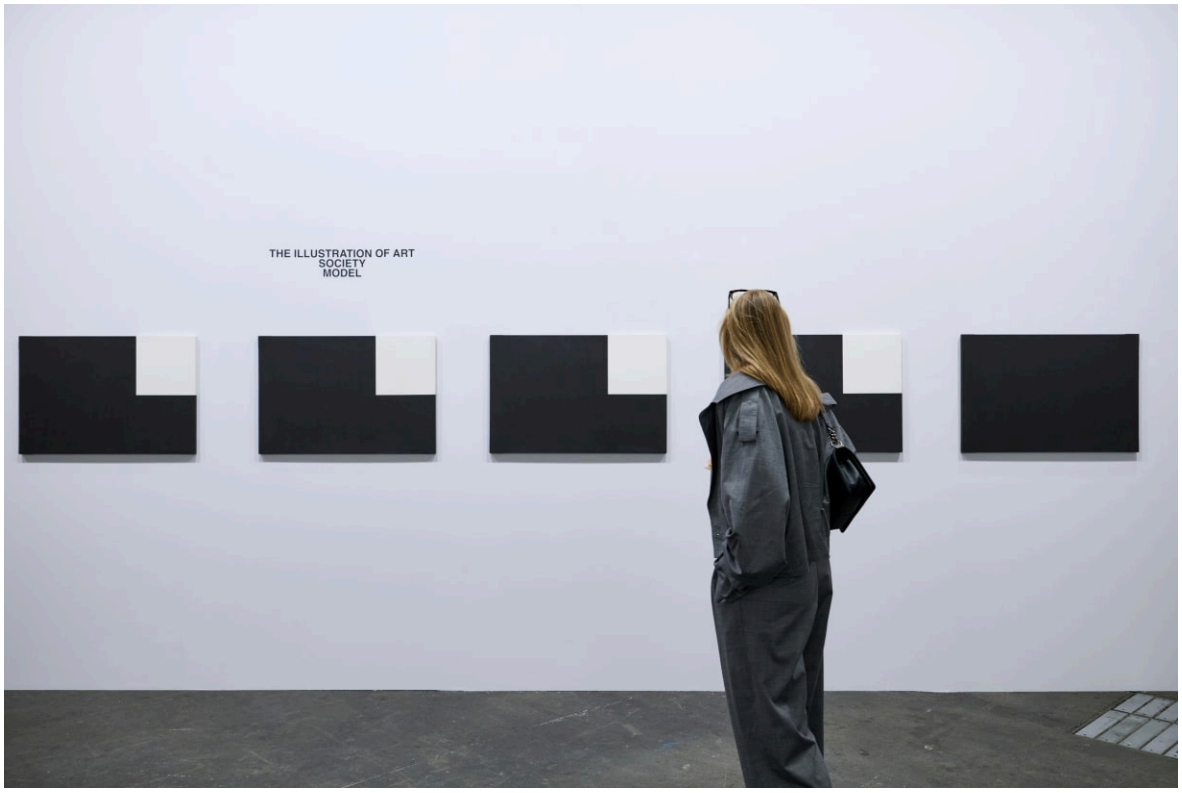
By Eileen Kinsella | Sep 18, 2026 | 4 min read

The autumn gallery season in New York – the art world's version of back-to-school – is off to a lively start. On two warm weekday evenings in early September, the streets of Tribeca and Chelsea were crowded with collectors, artists, and art-world regulars ahead of a succession of fairs that will bring thousands more to the city later this month.

But beneath the bustle, something more fundamental is changing. New York's galleries are becoming increasingly nimble in how they occupy the city: sharing premises, joining forces on exhibitions and art fairs, and turning to temporary spaces to test new locations and audiences – and keep overheads down.

New York is particularly prone to pop-ups. According to the newly launched Storefront Pop-Up Index, New York is the leading US city for these types of spaces. What is more, galleries are among the biggest occupiers of pop-ups. Globally, art and galleries account for 15% of demand for temporary spaces, second only to fashion, according to the index.

Artists, too, are taking advantage of disused spaces. In June, 51 artists took over an abandoned dollar store in the Hudson Valley hamlet of Esopus, hosting a summer exhibition in the 850 m^2 building.



Antonio Dias, The Illustration of Art series, 1971–1974, presented in the Unlimited sector of Art Basel in Basel 2026 by Nara Roesler, Gio Marconi, and Gomide&Co.

Brick-and-mortar still matters

That is not to say that permanent brick-and-mortar spaces do not matter. For Daniel Roesler, Partner and Senior Director of Brazilian gallery Nara Roesler, maintaining a New York space is not negotiable. The gallery is marking its 10th anniversary in the city this year, having moved from an office in the Flower District to the Upper East Side and then to a purpose-built space in West Chelsea, even as the pandemic was at its height.

'You really need to have a permanent presence in New York,' Roesler says. 'Most of the collectors that we meet at fairs around the world are either based in New York or go through New York at some point of the year, so we have to meet them there.'

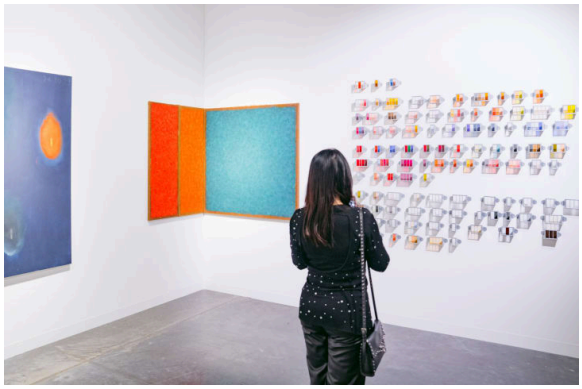
The moves he has made have paid off: 'The business increased and improved a lot from the Upper East Side to Chelsea,' Roesler says. 'We almost doubled our business and have been having more stable growth.'

More important, he says, is what the New York presence has done for his artists – Brazilians shown by the gallery have gained greater visibility and become part of a wider conversation in the city.

Art Basel Miami Beach Director Bridget Finn observes shifts among dealers who are under pressure but not necessarily leaving the city. 'With the challenges we've seen over the past couple of years, particularly the costs of overheads and a lot of the scaling that we saw galleries take on post-pandemic, I've been impressed at how so many dealers are thinking about how to stay flexible and limber,' she says.



Bridget Finn, Director of Art Basel Miami Beach. Photo by James Jackman for Art Basel.



View of Nara Roesler's booth at Art Basel Miami Beach 2024.

Collaboration is king

Collaborative ways of working are gaining traction across New York. At the end of 2024, Deanna Evans of Deanna Evans Projects accepted an invitation from Jayne Drost Johnson, the founder of JDJ, to share JDJ's nearby premises at 370 Broadway. Chozick Family Art Gallery has since joined them. Rather than dividing the space, the three galleries rotate exhibitions, each mounting four shows a year.

The arrangement required plenty of discussion and planning, but Evans says it has created something more valuable than a reduction in rent. 'We've become such a great resource and support system for each other,' she says. 'Running a gallery is such a unique thing. It's nice to have two other owners side by side.' The arrangement has also freed Evans to pursue collaborations elsewhere, including a show with Halsey McKay in the Hamptons.

Lindsay Jarvis, formerly of Sadie Coles HQ and greengrassi, who has run a gallery on the Bowery for the past year, has now formally joined forces with Max Werner, son of veteran dealers Mary Boone and Michael Werner. Their new operation, Jarvis & Werner, is emblematic of a broader enthusiasm for collaboration.

'We feel that the new gallery operation is very much in line with broader tendencies of collaboration in the current art market and a quite healthy post-downturn market,' Jarvis says.



View of Martina Cox's solo show "Heart Eyes" solo show. Courtesy Jarvis & Werner, New York. Photograph by T. Whitney Cox.

Openings outweigh closures

These kinds of shifts have been largely obscured by the attention paid to gallery closures. 'A closure makes a headline, but an adaptation doesn't usually get that same attention in the media,' says Kinsey Robb, Executive Director of the Art Dealers Association of America. 'What we are seeing is less a disappearance of the gallery model and more like a fairly significant restructuring of the gallery model.'

That distinction matters. 'All of us take the news of gallery closures seriously,' Robb says. 'I'm just always a little bit cautious about treating every closure as evidence of the same underlying problem.'

There are figures to support that caution. In *The Art Basel and UBS Art Market Report 2026*, economist Clare McAndrew noted that although there had been 'many headlines about the wave of closures in 2024 and 2025,' the wider gallery ecosystem appeared healthy, with openings continuing to outpace closures.

The numbers are striking. In 2024, the report recorded 36 gallery openings against 25 closures in New York. In 2025, there were again 36 openings, but only 20 closures.



View of the exhibition "Interstitial" at Deanna Evans Projects. Photograph by Nicki Ishmael.

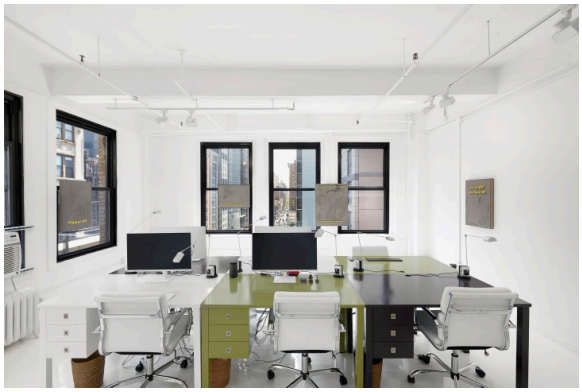
The question of art fairs is more complicated. For smaller galleries, fairs can be expensive. But they can also provide exposure that is difficult to replicate, particularly for a young business trying to establish itself internationally.

Alec Smyth, founder of Mariposa gallery in New York's Flower District, found himself facing precisely that calculation this year. The gallery has been accepted into Art Basel Paris's Emergence sector for solo presentations by young and emerging artists, with Art Basel Miami Beach to follow in December.

Smyth, formerly of David Zwirner, ran a series of nomadic pop-ups before establishing the small New York space, where he shares the premises with his partner, an interior designer, helping to contain the cost of rent. He regards visibility as an investment. 'As a small gallery just starting out, you need to put yourself in the spotlight for people to pay attention,' he says.



View of Lewis Stein's exhibition "Surveillance" presented in 2026 by Mariposa. Photograph by Izzy Leung. Courtesy of Mariposa.



View of Philipp Timischl's exhibition "A bébé painting (so smol)" presented in 2026 by Mariposa. Photograph by Phoebe dHeurle. Courtesy of Mariposa.

A more disciplined future

At the other end of the spectrum, more established dealers have seen this cycle before. Mary Sabbatino, Vice President and Partner at Galerie Lelong, is skeptical both of the industry's doom-laden narrative and of any premature declaration of recovery. 'Art galleries are such individual and idiosyncratic businesses, and they're driven by the vision of the founder,' she says. 'That directs how nimble and collaborative you can be.'

Her strategy through weaker markets has been relatively consistent: share costs where possible, particularly at fairs or around major events involving artists, and avoid expanding beyond your means during bull markets. 'You get through a slow market via what you did in the good times, and I've been very careful not to overextend,' she says.



View of Galerie Lelong's booth at Art Basel Hong Kong 2026.

For Robb, that may be the most significant change now taking place. 'We're possibly moving from an era that rewarded expansion into one that is hopefully going to reward discipline,' she says. 'Galleries are looking much more carefully at where they deploy their capital, what fairs they're going to participate in, how much inventory they want to carry, where their clients are, and what produces a return.'

'I don't see that as a total contraction,' she adds. 'That is a market – and industry – that is becoming more rigorous.'

Credits and captions

Eileen Kinsella is a New York City based arts and culture journalist who specializes in art market coverage and related issues. She contributes to *Art & Objects, Cultured,* and *The Art Newspaper.*

Caption for header video: New York City, 2023. Video by Rob Kulisek for Art Basel.

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