



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Residents, businesses serve the needy for the holidays

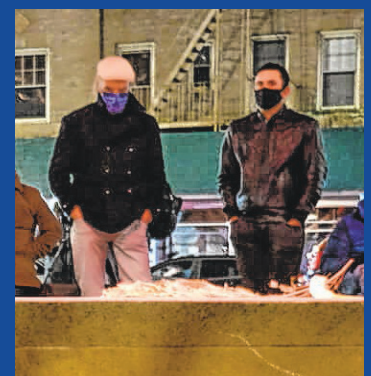
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PHOTO BY TEQUILA MINSKY

Le Souk owner Marcus Andrews, thrilled that the community dinner tradition of Le Souk continues, adapted to the times.

Vintage eye in E. Village

Page 10



Marking World AIDS Day at vigil

Page 4



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East Village gets community fridge to feed the hungry

BY DEAN MOSES

The East Village Neighbors Facebook group and Sarita's Mac and Cheese restaurant have united to create a community fridge where anyone can help themselves to free food and drink.

A notice attached to the side of the fridge reads: "This fridge belongs to you and so does the food inside."

The general consensus of the outreach project located on East 12th Street and First Avenue is responsibility and trust. Responsibility to aid a Lower East Side ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, and trust in residents to help keep the pantry restocked for those in need.

Food insecurity has become a massive issue for countless New York neighborhoods over the past several months, as lines for free food distributions extend block after block and wait times last several hours.



PHOTO BY DEAN MOSES

Food insecurity has run rampant throughout New York City, and members of the East Village Neighbors are attempting to alleviate the struggle by frequently refilling the refrigerator.

In an effort to alleviate the hardship individuals are facing — especially during the winter months — both a community fridge and a storage cabinet have been erected directly outside Sarita's Mac and Cheese restaurant.

Here, people can both take what they need and leave what they don't. But the burden of filling the fridge does not fall on residents alone — Sarita's Mac and Cheese, SNAP, and volunteers from East Village Neighbors also

regularly restock the shelves and drawers.

"We put in eight plates of mac and cheese everyday in the morning and evening. A lot of people come here and give us donations, too... that's awesome. Everybody is helping each other. A lot of people come and buy something and then put it there," Andy Perelta, a cashier for Sarita's Mac and Cheese told amNewYork Metro.

In addition to resupplying, members of East Village Neighbors have scheduled shifts through which they clean and disinfect the area, helping to reduce the risk of transmitting the coronavirus.

On Giving Tuesday, Dec. 1, it was Dana Seag's turn to both sanitize and replenish the bare fridge with sealed meals and fruit and vegetables, including apples, oranges, and even red peppers, during which time a local athlete also arrived to drop off some donations.

"I am a runner, and they give out free Gatorade at the races, so I had this stockpile of Gatorade and I saw this was here. I thought why not donate, it is nice to see the community come together," said Angela Daniele.

No good deed goes by without some controversy, however.

Some locals have expressed concerns through the East Village Neighbors Facebook page that homeless individuals have been stocking up on bags of food only for them to then head to a local weekend flea market on East 14th street along First Avenue, where they attempt to sell the goods.

This is distressing for residents since the market outside Immaculate Conception Church has been reported as a hotbed of crime and drug use where sellers peddle junk in order to feed their addiction.

Diane Hatz, the founder of the East Village Neighbors group and the community refrigerator, responded to these claims by stating in a Facebook post, "Even if it is happening, I don't see that there's anything we can do — except wish the person well and hope they find the peace and security they're looking for."

BY TEQUILA MINSKY

There was no way a pandemic was going to stop Le Souk restaurant owner Marcus Andrews from continuing a tradition of giving back on Thanksgiving in Greenwich Village.

"I would be very upset if we couldn't do this," said Andrews, who every Thanksgiving provides two sit-down dinner seatings gratis for mostly seniors in his LaGuardia Place restaurant.

Le Souk began this tradition as a way for those without family nearby to enjoy a good holiday meal in the company of others.

Marcus persuaded his collaborating partner, the Bleecker Area Merchants' and Residents' Association (BAMRA), which initially cancelled this year's festivity because of COVID-19, to plan for the dinner. This year it would be different.

"I'll take care of the details," he told them, knowing how to adapt to the times.

And so, on their 10th year, challenged by the pandemic, Le Souk

Greenwich Village Thanksgiving tradition continues with take-out dinners

carried on with this Greenwich Village Thanksgiving tradition, serving home-cooked, take-out dinners with all the trimmings at no charge to the community.

Volunteers working with Visiting Neighbors, another partner in this annual dinner, arrived mid-afternoon Thursday to pick up 75 meals to home deliver. Neighborhood seniors, informed by word-of-mouth and Greenwich House communications, arrived in the late afternoon.

The freshly prepared take-away dinners including turkey, sweet potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, an orange, and of course pumpkin pie, and one protective mask, were ready to go.

A handful of volunteers worked the morning shift, helping with food preparation and plating. Another shift arrived later for more assembly and distribution.

Out front, upper Manhattan



PHOTO BY TEQUILA MINSKY

City Councilman Mark Levine and District Leader Chris Marte assisted.

City Councilman Mark Levine joined his friend State Committeeman of the 65th Assembly District Chris Marte to distribute the food. Both are candidates in next year's city election—Levine's running for borough president, and Marte is seeking the 1st City Council District seat.

Decades of experience cooking for large numbers including these annual meals prepares Ray Cline of BAMRA, the chief chef. He happily joined the effort when restaurant general manager Sam Jacob approached him, "We don't want this holiday to go by without our traditional dinner."

Cline underscores how Le Souk is proud to be able to give back to the community in this way.

Le Souk picked up the bill for the food, which included 26 turkeys, roasted in their oven; BAMRA paid for the trimmings and last minute run-outs, such as 120 more pounds of sweet potatoes. Marte bought 25 pumpkin pies and 15 boxes of cookies at Trader Joe's.

"I started cooking days before," Cline says, explaining that the 20-22 pound turkeys take 3 1/2 hours to roast. "Sliced after they cool, the meat is kept in the restaurant's walk in fridge."

The day before Thanksgiving, local police distributed 50 assembled meals to homeless New Yorkers. On Thanksgiving, Marte took 50 meals to seniors living in housing on the Lower East Side while owner Marcus dropped off whole turkeys with trimmings to the 6th and 9th Precincts.

Recognizing World AIDS Day, sound installation at NYC Memorial all December

BY TEQUILA MINSKY

An experiential sound installation runs nightly at 7 p.m. during the month of December at the New York City AIDS Memorial, Greenwich Avenue and West 12th Street, in Greenwich Village.

Hear Me: Voices of the Epidemic is an original, sound-based installation in recognition of World AIDS Day, Dec. 1. The approximately 45-minute long soundtrack is composed of historical texts, poetry, speeches, music, and more that capture the history of the epidemic.

Examples include a powerful speech by Vito Russo (1946-90), a song composed by Michael Callen (1955-93), historic recordings of an ACT UP-led protest made by artist David Wojnarowicz (1954-92), and poems by Melvin Dixon (1950-92) and Kia LaBeija, who was born in 1990 at St. Vincent's Hospital, on whose former site the Memorial sits today.

Hear Meis preceded during the day beginning at 10 a.m., by a recording featuring the names of over 2,000 New Yorkers, representing a fraction of the 100,000+ lost to AIDS, and read by What Would an HIV Doula Do?, a group of activists, caregivers,



PHOTO BY TEQUILA MINSKY

On Dec. 1 World AIDS Day, Villagers gathered to listen to testimonies, poems, and historical texts that capture the history of the AIDS epidemic.

friends, long-term survivors of HIV/AIDS, and people living with HIV today.

All visitors are asked to wear a mask or face covering, maintain a 6-foot distance between each person not in the same household, and respect all other city-regulated social distancing protocols.

"In times of uncertainty, people look to the past for guidance," says New York City AIDS Memorial Executive Director Dave Harper.

"Since our dedication on World AIDS Day in 2016, it has been the goal of the New York City AIDS Memorial to create a living and breathing tribute to the 100,000 New Yorkers lost to AIDS, and to the activists and caretakers who led the fight to end AIDS. This installation will connect the power of this place to the voices of the past, allowing visitors to learn and engage within our sacred space."

Educational and cultural initiatives help

push forward the Memorial's mission of remembrance and creating public awareness.

Harper adds, "We look forward to welcoming the public to the Memorial during a time when cultural projects have been limited by this ongoing pandemic."

"During this time, I think a lot of us are trying to figure out how to be together," observes the creative consultant for Hear Me, Theodore (ted) Kerr.

"Every night, for a month, Hear Me is an open invitation for people to social distance together, a place to reflect on the past, gather in the present, and imagine and work towards a better future."

He emphasizes how the use of AIDS history and voices from movements in this sound installation, and the Memorial becomes a place for community.

Hear Meis supported by a new, online six-episode conversation series called A Time to Listen, featuring a wide breadth of thought leaders, artists, and activists sharing current experiences and knowledge of AIDS history connected to New York City and beyond through a discussion of media, including speeches, songs, poems, plays, and oral histories. For more information and a full list of participants: www.nycaidsmemorial.org/a-time-to-listen or www.atimetolisten.org

Greenwich Village photo exhibit supports memory of fallen health care workers

BY TEQUILA MINSKY

Windows at 9 West 8th St. in Greenwich Village have taken on the role of gallery walls to exhibit all sorts of interpretations of New York City — augmented images, abstracts, documentary photography, personal, urban scenes, black and white and in color.

This whole exhibition supports The Hero Art Project, a way of commemorating health care workers—more than 1,000, in all — lost to COVID-19.

A myriad of ways to visually express this great city are hung in 16 frames, projecting five to ten digital images in an on-going loop through the large storefront windows.

This unique New York centric show opened late October and, because it was received so well, continues until Dec. 20. Hours



FILE PHOTO

The scavenger hunt asks people to look for elements in the imagery and pay attention to the artist.

are on Fridays from 5 to 7 p.m.; Saturdays from 4 to 6 p.m.; and Sundays from 3 to 5 p.m.

"Twilight is a great time to view the photographs," says curator and project organizer Susannah Perlman.

Accompanying the images of New York is a scavenger hunt — a

chance to search for clues, win prizes and get unique gifts.

Perlman, director of ARTHOUSE.NYC gallery, is concerned about grief and remembrance.

"There are front-line health care workers who gave the ultimate sacrifice of their lives while working

to save the lives of others," Perlman said. "And, frequently, in these isolating and challenging times there hasn't been a place for memorials and proper recognition of those we've lost."

The Hero Art Project pairs members of ARTHOUSE.NYC's artistic community with family members of doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers who died from COVID-19.

Families select the artist and art style that represents the spirit of their loved one. The artists create multi-media portraits of these medical heroes to celebrate their lives, sacrifices and legacies.

Thirty portraits were created in the first round of commemorations. Ten families came to an October outdoor event, the works projected on a wall at The Big Screen Plaza, West 29th Street and 6th Avenue in Chelsea, behind the Kimpton Hotel.

Nikki Friedman, whose father Dr. Arthur Friedman died from COVID in April, recognizes the important of this sort of recognition and was so moved that her father had been included in this portrait commemoration.

"It was more powerful than anticipated," says Perlman. "Families were very emotional, touched by the fact that we remembered and honored their loved ones."

The Hero's Project is reaching out to more families and matching them with artists from the ARTHOUSE.NYC community. Its next exhibition will be at The Big Screen Plaza in April 2021 during World Healthcare Workers Week.

Donations during the 8th Street exhibition help support this project.

ARTHOUSE.NYC creates a home for emerging artists and professionals, giving them a vehicle to exhibit their work digitally. Originally, the gallery occupied space on Sullivan Street, then Washington Street, and, prior to the pandemic shutdown, White Street. Now it's based on West 8th Street.

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Suspects sought for Lower East Side shooting



A recent shooting scene. PHOTO BY TODD MAISEL

BY TODD MAISEL

The NYPD released photos Monday night of the suspected gunman sought for a Nov. 27 shooting on the Lower East Side.

At 11:43 p.m. that night in front of 280 Henry St., an unidentified gunman stepped out of the passenger seat of a light color Nissan Altima and fired a handgun multiple times, hitting a 32-year-old man in his left ankle. The driver of the Nissan fled and the assailant ran away.

The wounded man was driven by private vehicle to NewYork-Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital in stable condition.

The pictures provided by the NYPD Monday show the alleged assailant inside of 70 Pitt St. after the incident.

Anyone with information regarding the suspect's whereabouts can call Crime Stoppers at 800-577-TIPS (for Spanish, dial 888-57-PISTA). You can also submit tips online at nypdcrimestoppers.com, or on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls and messages are kept confidential.

Tough thief knocks 88-year-old woman to ground in Yorkville for her handbag: cops

BY ROBERT POZARYCKI

Cops need the public's help in finding the miscreant who knocked an 88-year-old woman to the ground and broke her shoulder while stealing her handbag in Manhattan on Thanksgiving Day.

The NYPD released on Nov. 28 video footage of the suspect behind the Nov. 26 mugging, which occurred at about 1:05 p.m. in the rear of 1725 York Ave. in Yorkville.

Law enforcement sources said the victim was walking down the street when the thief approached her and grabbed her purse, which was valued at about \$115, from her hands. That caused the woman to fall to the ground.

The suspect then fled on foot westbound along East 89th Street.

The incident was later reported to the 19th Precinct. Paramedics brought the woman to Cornell Medical Center in stable condition with a broken left shoulder.

Police describe the suspect as a man between 20 and 30 years of age. He's shown on camera wearing a cream-colored jacket, a white surgical mask, ripped blue jeans and black-and-white sneakers while

carrying a cream-colored bag with the Target logo over his right shoulder.

Anyone with information regarding the suspect's whereabouts can call Crime Stoppers at 800-577-TIPS (for Spanish, dial 888-57-PISTA). You can also submit tips online at nypdcrimestoppers.com, or on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls and messages are kept confidential.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NYPD
The suspect behind a purse snatching of an 88-year-old woman in Yorkville on Thanksgiving Day 2020.

Police officer hurt in drunk driver crash inside Washington Square Park

BY TODD MAISEL

A police officer was injured early Sunday morning when an out-of-control vehicle, operated by an alleged drunk driver, drove through Washington Square Park under the arch off Fifth Avenue, knocking over two concrete bollards and striking a patrol car, police reported.

The crash occurred at 1:21 a.m. on Nov. 29, when the 25-year-old driver of a blue Nissan Maxima, drove straight through into Washington Square Park traveling south on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. The vehicle struck two concrete posts designed to stop vehicles from entering the park, sending the concrete flying



PHOTO BY TODD MAISEL

An alleged drunk driver entered Washington Square Park early this morning where the vehicle struck a parked police patrol car under the famed arch, injuring the officer.

at least 50 feet, smashing into a concrete seating area.

The vehicle continued under the Washington Square Arch, striking a 6th Precinct SmartCar,

and back injuries and was rushed to Bellevue Hospital in stable condition. Numerous people in the park came to his aid and also detained the alleged drunk driver.

Law enforcement sources said the driver was not hurt in the crash, as his air bags deployed and saved him from serious injury.

Highway police were on the scene during the early morning investigating the crash.

Police later identified the driver as Jeremy Molina, 25, of 206th Street in Bayside Hills, Queens. He was charged with reckless endangerment, criminal mischief, driving while intoxicated, possession of marijuana, and refusal to take a breathalyzer test.

Residents stood and stared at the crash scene, with Molina's

vehicle still sitting at the base of the arch.

"I can't believe he was able to his those concrete bollards and still go any further," said Elizabeth Shine, a resident of the West Village. "This kind of thing happened many years ago and people were killed. That's why they installed those concrete barriers."

On April 24, 1992, an elderly driver lost control of his vehicle on Washington Square East, drove into the park where he killed four pedestrians and injured dozens before coming to a stop. The Parks Department then installed bollards and concrete barriers to prevent such a crash from causing so much carnage in the future.

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A plea from NYC's struggling restaurant industry



PHOTO BY TODD MAISEL

Philippe Massoud, the owner of Ilili Restaurant at 236 Fifth Avenue worries that the eatery will not survive if they cannot have indoor dining when the cooler weather hits. Many restaurants feel the same way. Their large, well ventilated interior makes no difference to government officials.

BY ANDREW RIGIE

Our city's hospitality industry has been financially devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 130,000 New Yorkers previously employed in eateries, cafes, bars, and nightclubs remain out of work and thousands of beloved small businesses have been forced to permanently close.

As restaurants and nightlife establishments have been uniquely and severely impacted over the last eight months, so have New York City's working-class and immigrant communities that are essential to this industry's workforce.

In 2018, more than 60 percent of New York City restaurant workers were immigrants. Right now, New York's unemployment rate is 13% and 15% for Hispanics, numbers which will rise if indoor and outdoor dining get shut down and 100,000 more industry jobs are directly threatened.

From a statistical standpoint, these figures are grim, and in reality, they represent something undoubtedly worse. Forcing workers into abject poverty will have an indelible imprint on their physical and mental wellness and will carry disastrous consequences for the economic and social fabric of New York City.

The failure of the federal government to enact the RESTAURANTS ACT and Save Our Stages Act, which would provide financial relief to our city's struggling restaurants and nightlife venues to help them pay rent, payroll, vendors and other expenses makes it more incumbent than ever for our local government to step-up.

There's so much at stake for the future of our city's hospitality industry, and to counteract the financial toll of the pandemic we are pleading with the Mayor and City Council to enact the following policies to help ensure the survival of these businesses and critical jobs during this challenging time.

For one, with some 88% of restaurants and

nightlife establishments unable to pay October rent, the New York City hospitality industry urgently needs financial support in the form of cash grants and rent relief. The City should convert the sales tax collected by these businesses into cash grants, as well as immediately reduce property tax payments and create incentives for landlords to give tenants concessions on rent and flexibility to renegotiate leases.

Secondly, constantly evolving edicts and requirements from all levels of government make it nearly impossible for business owners to keep pace. They are often provided limited time to prepare for the changes, some of which can be costly, and they are then hit with the threat of violations and fines for non-compliance. The City must provide as much advanced notice as possible for any changes to requirements, and fines should only be levied as a last resort. The City has begun to do this, it's working, and this policy must continue.

Finally, it is critical that government do everything possible to protect the health and safety of all restaurant workers and customers in a proactive way. The overwhelming majority of restaurants have gone above and beyond protecting the health and safety of everyone who enters their doors, but the cost can be onerous. Safety should not be cost-prohibitive. It's essential that the City continue to provide PPE to restaurants and bars at no charge and should coordinate free COVID-19 testing for industry employees.

The fact of the matter is that New York City will not recover economically or socially unless our restaurants and bars are at the core of our recovery. The policies we've recommended – the same ones we recommended at this week's Small Business Committee Hearing in the City Council – will be critical to saving small businesses, protecting jobs, and preparing our communities to come back stronger in the future.

Andrew Rigie is the Executive Director of the NYC Hospitality Alliance.

It's not enough

With the election finally behind them and the tweeter-in-chief heading for the exits, Congressional Republicans finally got around Tuesday toward helping Democrats pass a new COVID-19 economic relief package.

The \$908 billion plan from a bipartisan coalition of Senators and Congress members aims to boost the Payroll Protection Programs for restaurants, bars and other businesses hardest hit by the pandemic, as well as provide much needed relief to cash-strapped states and the struggling airline industry. It also includes a four-month, \$300-a-week unemployment insurance supplement.

Massive as a \$908 billion bill may sound, it's not nearly enough to address the crisis at hand. Nevertheless, both houses of Congress must pass it, and the president must sign it into law, before Christmas — no strings attached.

This package must be considered only as a down payment on further relief to come early next year, after President-elect Biden takes office. And we don't want to hear a word from Congressional Republicans about austerity; everyone knows they had no problem spending taxpayer money like drunken sailors during the Trump administration, piling another \$5 trillion onto the national debt they pretend to care about.

America needs a robust COVID-19 economic package that does the following:

1. Completely absolves the individual states for related expenses incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation is no different than a natural disaster befalling one state or region. We Americans are obligated to help each other out.

2. Provides another round of cash stimulus to the American people that can be recirculated into the economy. Rising costs, stagnant wages and joblessness have taken their toll on America's working families. They need help.

3. Rescues the restaurants, bars and entertainment venues long-shuttered by the pandemic. Tens of thousands of workers have been impacted; they need help to get through this winter and spring to reach the post-pandemic era.

4. Rescues the MTA and other public transit systems that have fallen into abysses of debt. Don't let the commuter pay for this at the turnstiles, or transit workers with their jobs.

5. Rescues tenants from the threat of eviction, and small landlords and property owners from the threat of foreclosure. Give financial institutions greater ability to renegotiate and refinance loans. Let's not add another person to the homeless or bankruptcy rolls.

Achieving these five goals will go a long way toward coming out of this pandemic stronger as a nation. We owe it to ourselves to do it.



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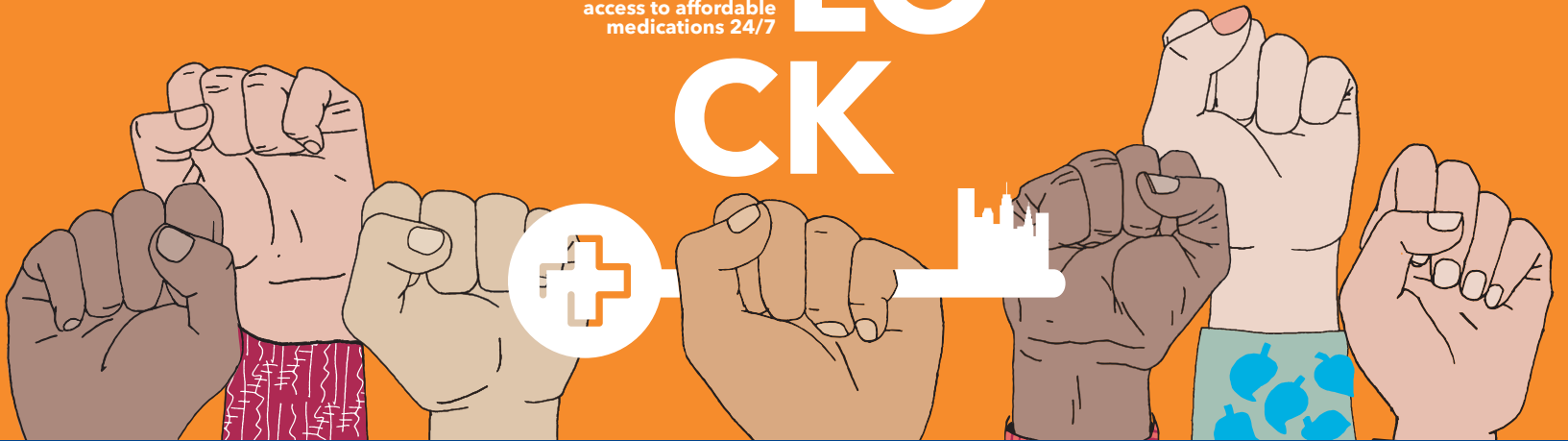
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Legendary Village photographer's latest book on vintage images gets modern boost

BY BOB KRASNER

Long time East Village photographer Godlis has a new book out and he credits this collection of street photography, "Godlis Streets," to an unforeseen collaboration.

His first monograph, "History is Made at Night," is a survey of his late 1970s images taken inside and outside of the legendary CBGB's that became reality as a result of an extremely popular Kickstarter campaign.

This time around, Instagram was the catalyst.

"I was feeling depressed in the spring of 2019," he explains. "I started going through my street photos and posting them on Instagram."

After getting a surprise endorsement from noted street photographer Clay Benskin, Godlis suddenly had a whole new group of followers who were interested in his street work, which covers the years 1974 to 1990.

He began interacting with his new audience, asking for their opinions.

"The reactions surprised me," he says. "They influenced how I saw the work. The cover of the book wasn't initially one of my favorites, but it got a wild reaction."

Another thing that he didn't see coming was a message from Reel Art Press.

"We'll be very upset if you don't do a street pic book with us!" Godlis recalls them saying. "When a publisher comes to you, it's remarkable," he adds.

He began to intensely organize and date everything, getting feedback along the way from the Instagram community.

"The editing process was a collaboration with my followers," he notes, "and it came at a time when I needed something to do."

The process continued to move forward until he hit a roadblock in the form of a pandemic.

"Tony Nourmand from Reel Art had planned to come to New York to help finalize the book but that was no longer possible," Godlis relates. "Thank God for

Godlis looked to some of his inspirations – the Diane Arbus monograph and Robert Frank's classic "The Americans" to choose the number of pics that would go in and then went on to do the sequencing, which took about two months and kept him busy during the lockdown. The images came from a short period in Boston and then from his formative years in NYC.



Top: Veselka Couple, East Village, 1982 by Godlis

Zoom!"

After a short and, luckily, mild bout with COVID-19, Godlis began determining the size, shape and content of the book electronically with Nourmand, who is based in England.

"I left Boston after I was robbed there," he recalls, laughing. "I thought it would be safer in New York. ... I never understood why I wasn't taking pictures in Boston like the ones I saw being done in New York. When I got



PHOTO BY BOB KRASNER

Godlis photographed next to what's left of the recently closed Gem Spa, on St. Marks Place.

here I realized it was because I wasn't taking pictures of New Yorkers."

After shooting CBGB's at night for a few years, he concentrated more on daytime imagery. His confidence in his work was boosted with a thumbs up from an undisputed master of the craft.

Godlis presented 60 of his photos to Garry Winogrand during a seminar, who whittled them down to two and growled, "These shots make it."

"I went on a tear after that – I was much more sure of myself," he recalls. "I shot like crazy."

The results are in this book. With a sense of composition and a sense of humor, he managed to capture a period of time as if he were a visitor from the future, freezing moments that represent what it meant to live back then – memorializing porn theaters, street preachers and omnipresent cigarette ads as if he knew they would all be gone by the time the book was published.

At one point though, Godlis hit what he calls "a mid-life photo crisis." He had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and interest in his type of art was waning.

"Why do I keep shooting?" he asked his therapist. After bemoaning his situation, the therapist summed it up for him.

"So," they said, "you're telling

me that you no longer want to go into a dark room, with a lot of negatives, and you're having trouble processing?"

"Luckily," he says, "digital came along."

If you see him on the street today, there's a camera around his neck, although he no longer puts film into the rangefinder Leica that he used to produce these images — that's been replaced with a digital Fujifilm X-E3.

And he has no problem with the fact that everyone and their granny is out there taking pictures.

"I think that there is the stuff that everyone does and the stuff that a few people do," he states. "I persisted because I love it and I think I have something different from everyone else."

Two heads nodding in agreement are the esteemed author Luc Sante and the celebrated musician/photographer Chris Stein, who wrote the forward and afterword, respectively, for the book.

"Lots of people are good at lots of things," Godlis muses. "The only thing I'm good at is photography."

Godlis can be followed on Instagram @godlis, investigated at godlis.com and signed copies of "Godlis Streets" are intermittently available at rizzolibookstore.com.

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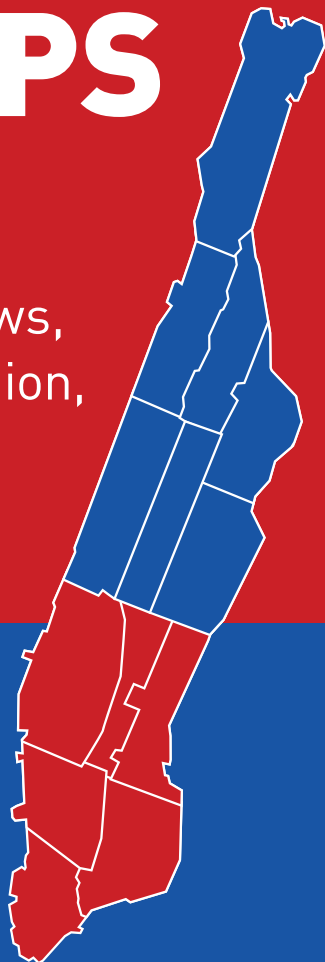
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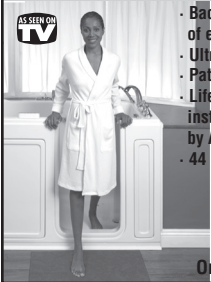
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"Point of Action" designer, architect Nina Cooke John.

'23 Days of Flatiron' launches in the District

BY EMILY DAVENPORT

A Manhattan business improvement district gave a sneak peek into their annual holiday cheer program while unveiling a new art installation.

The Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership BID recently previewed its ninth annual "23 Days of Flatiron Cheer" season, as well as unveiled a new art installation at Flatiron Public Plazas. The installation, entitled "Point of Action," was designed by Studio Cooke John.

Each year, the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership BID launches their "23 Days of Flatiron Cheer" to help spread the holiday spirit while supporting the neighborhood's businesses.

"In this challenging year, 23 Days of Flatiron Cheer gives New Yorkers opportunities to experience the best of Flatiron and NoMad, while supporting neighborhood businesses that have been struggling to stay afloat during the pandemic," said James Mettham, Executive Director of the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership. "In addition to participating in our online programming, we encourage New Yorkers to come see the dynamic Point of Action-Installation, enjoy our Open Streets, and explore our 400-plus restaurants, stores, and cultural venues that are offering safe, socially-distanced experiences this holiday season."

The "23 Days of Flatiron Cheer" began on Dec. 1 and continues through Dec. 25. During this time, the program will offer digital giveaways, gift guides, deals, and more, to support local Flatiron and NoMad retailers and restaurants.

With support from Presenting Sponsor

Meringoff Properties and Supporting Sponsor 212 Fifth Avenue, this year's "23 Days of Flatiron Cheer" will include holiday district deals, Flatiron gift guides, digital giveaways and ways to donate to help those in need this holiday season. There will also be links to holiday meal kits as well as a Virtual Flatiron Holiday Tour, which will take place over Zoom on Dec. 17.

A full roster of "23 Days of Flatiron Cheer" programming and offerings can be found at flatirondistrict.nyc/holiday2020.

Meanwhile, Point of Action will remain on display through Jan. 1, 2021 at the Flatiron Public Plazason Broadway, Fifth Avenue, and 23rd Street. The installation encourages New Yorkers to contemplate the experience of seeing one another at a distance and moving forward together during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The larger footprint of Point of Action allows for more socially distanced engagement. However, the installation's concentric circles ripple out from each spot, eventually connecting with other circles, and thus other viewers, across the Plazas.

"We are at a threshold during this pandemic. Now that our eyes have been opened to realities that have been with us all along, how do we move forward? My hope is that Point of Action makes people think about how we connect to the people we see every day so that we can move forward together,"

said Nina Cooke John, Founder and Principal of Studio Cooke John.

The installation is permitted through NYC DOT Art and is open to the public daily, weather permitting. The Partnership is encouraging visitors to use #PointofAction on Twitter and Instagram to share images of the installation.



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