

A chef's taste for minimalism, on the plate and in art.

BY TED LOGS



Bountiful art fair treasures from the dawn of time.

BY JANOR FARAGO

Fine Arts | Listings

Weekend Arts II

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ROBERTA SMITH
ART REVIEW

Stitching The Art Of War

Soldiers pieced together intricate quilts from scraps of uniforms.

THERE'S PLENTY of visual heat to be had in New York's galleries and museums this fall, but nowhere more than at the American Folk Art Museum. The radiance shines forth from the bold geometries in "War and Pinned: The Annette Gern Collection of Quilts From Military Fabrics." This revisiting exhibition features 29 sturdy, intricate wartime quilts from the Napoleonic and Crimean Wars and also the British colonies, made by soldiers, sailors or regimental tailors in Europe or India.

The "military fabrics" used here are scraps of soldiers' uniforms, that is, felts wool in strong, clear colors: predominantly red, black, cream and gold. The show initially resembles an array of extra-large game boards, and the checkerboard center in one quilt was indeed intended for playing chess, another pastime of enlisted men.

The exhibition reminds us that while war is never less than hell, some of its byproducts can be breathtaking and, in their soul-stirring beauty, the very antithesis of war. **CONTINUED ON PAGE C17**

War and Pinned: The Annette Gern Collection of Quilts From Military Fabrics
American Folk Art Museum



A regimental bed rag from India, circa 1905. Its creator's name is embroidered in the center.

Self-Help Meets Divine Intervention

Carl Lentz, the author of 'Own the Moment,' feels an urgency to talk.

By ELIZABETH A. HARRIS

It is a book about Twitter and Instagram, and about having a good cry with the professional basketball player Tyson Chandler. There is advice about relationships and parenting, and a lesson about not being ostentatious told through understated drug dealers. There is a chapter that explores how white people, like the author, should be able to say "black lives matter."

But the character who pops up the most in this book is God.

"Own the Moment" is a book by Carl Lentz, the lead pastor at churches in New York City and Monroeville, N.J., of Hillsong, an international megachurch that began nearly 30 years ago in Australia. With an engaging, casual voice and an easy humor, Mr. Lentz rides up to the idea of a self-help book rooted in Christianity, and then aims for something different. The approach is not unlike the way his church has taken its place in American evangelism, with a decidedly unusual flavor that might even appeal to those who recoil from a typical **CONTINUED ON PAGE C18**



Club 57, Museum Piece

A bar that was once home to an East Village art movement time-travels to MoMA.

By BRETT SOLOK

It hardly looked like hallowed cultural ground, let alone the heart of the 1960s East Village art scene. Even Kenny Scharf, who practically lived out of this spot, seemed unsure on a recent afternoon whether 57 St. Marks Place was truly the former location of Club 57, the basement bar that served as the knoche headquarters for a now-legendary art movement and its foremost art stars, the painters (and sometimes friendly rivals) Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring and Mr. Scharf. Starting at the sign of the building's current tenant — the St. Marks



Above, Kenny Scharf with a mural he painted; left, a poster for a club event.

Club 57: Film, Performance, and Art in the East Village, 1978-1983
Museum of Modern Art

Place Institute for Mental Health — Mr. Scharf, 55, finally cracked a smile. "This must be the right place, it sounds like the name of a great party we threw here once, he quipped.

Perhaps it's the all-glass balconies on its remodeled investment house across 13th street that were throwing off Mr. Scharf memories — just one clue that month rents have jumped far beyond the \$300 the average Club 57-geared would have paid for a neighborhood apartment in 1960 (at the equivalent of less than \$100). "I really feel for artists starting out today," Mr. **CONTINUED ON PAGE C18**

Club 57, Now a Museum Piece

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Scharf said, recalling his own arrival from California to attend the School of Visual Arts. "When I got to New York in 1978 you could work a couple of nights a week to pay your bills, and the rest of the time you were free. That's how cheap it was."

Yet the more distant that era becomes, the more of an iron grip it holds on the imagination of many of today's younger artists, nostalgic for a time they never experienced, even as they stew over the inequities of the modern-day art market it created.

This tension provides the backdrop for a new Museum of Modern Art exhibition, "Club 57: Film, Performance, and Art in the East Village, 1978-1982," focusing on the barely five-year existence of Club 57 and the close-knit coterie of artists who called it home. The curatorial mix doesn't stint on the headline names: paintings and a walk-in-Drop-Clo "Cosmic Closet" installation by Mr. Scharf, early drawings by both Basquiat and Haring (who served as Club 57's exhibitions manager), as well as videos of gleefully undressed performance art by Ann Magnuson, the venue's day-to-day manager and chief ringleader. But they also share space with works by a roster of lesser-known but still impressive talents: inventive portraiture by the brothers Adolfo and Oliver Sanchez, as well as by Stephen Tashjian; silk-screens by John Sex; photographs by Katherine Dumas, Joseph Sokolinski, Tsang Kwong Chi, and Aude Whyland; videos of the singer Klaus Nomi; kinetic films by Lisa Bassengardner; and perhaps most evocative of the period, the hand-designed and photocopied New York spirit, one in which the dominant aesthetics revolved around an austere minimalism and theory-laden conceptualism.

"No color, no representational figures, no fun at all," Mr. Scharf growled of the classroom ethos at the School of Visual Arts. "We were taught that art is supposed to be serious and something you suffer for. I was making plastic dressers over TV sets and laughing while I was doing it — the ultimate critique."

Neither his professors nor his fellow students were amused.

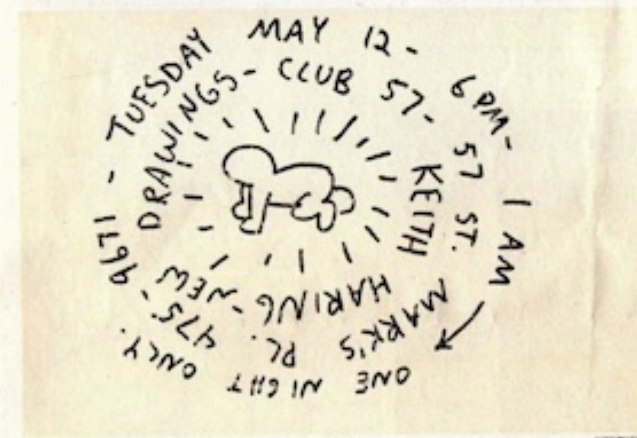
Searching for more like-minded, similarly alienated students, one day Mr. Scharf followed the sound of Devo playing on a boombox to a hallway outside an unused classroom. There he found Haring, furiously creating a riot of patterns on the walls and floor, "literally painting himself into a corner. 'Yes! This is who I imagined I'd become in New York!'" The two soon gravitated to Club 57 where Ms. Magnuson and a crew of kindred disaffected School of Visual Arts graduates were already holding court.

However, Club 57's origins had little to do with art. The Holy Cross Polish National Catholic Church had charged Stanley Strycki, who had arrived in the neighborhood from Poland in 1972, with raising additional parish revenue from their cavernous Greenway Park wedding hall, Irving Plaza, as well as from the church's barely used basement bar, which Mr. Strycki named the East Village Students Club. But Mr. Strycki quickly grew bored of catering to either the polite crowd or New York University students. Instead, he found himself drawn toward the punk and garage rock bands springing up nearby.

In February of 1978 he rechristened the bar as Club 57. The bar was largely empty basement bar as Club 57. Its pianist and disco D.J. were not, replaced by live concerts with the Fleshones, the Zan-



Above, Keney Scharf is one of the artists whose early work is featured in a Club 57 exhibition at MoMA. "When I got to New York in 1978 you could work a couple of nights a week to pay your bills, and the rest of the time you were free," he said. Right, Keith Haring performing at Club 57 in 1980; below, films advertising events at the club were often works of art themselves.



tees and the Mafia, as well as a revival of Sam Shepard's play "Cowboy Mouth." That November, Mr. Strycki fell in love with a series of "New Wave Videoville" revues held at Irving Plaza — each a mash-up of a Dada cabaret and a Little Rascals-style production. He invited the organizers — Ms. Magnuson, Susan Hansford and Tim Scully — to take over Club 57. By May of 1979, all three were programming events there on a regular basis.

"At any given time, the club was a dance hall, a screening room, a watering hole, a theater box, an art gallery or a self-styled 'let it all hang out' encounter space," Ann Magnuson writes in MoMA's "Club 57" exhibition catalog. "Sometimes it was all those things at once."

That interdisciplinary spirit had painters making music, musicians making sculptures, sculptors acting in plays, and actors losing their scripts in favor of improvised performances, or as Keith Haring called the evenings he organized, "Acts of Live Art."

Club 57: Film, Performance, and Art in the East Village, 1978-1982

Tuesday through April 1 at the Museum of Modern Art, 212-708-9747, modern.org.

Case in point: Ms. Thometz, a freshly arrived graduate of a high school in Minnesota, who began bartending at Club 57 — when she wasn't also stepping out madball to act in a play or perform in Punalama, an all-female D-member percussion ensemble.

"We were all about being very silly at Club 57," she said in a recent phone interview, which made for a purposely stark contrast with the similarly artist-heavy crowd at Tribeca's Mudd Club, "which was more about fashion, about being 'cool.' We were about wearing costumes and having theme parties." Indeed, her own "Boingo Voodoo" party ended with dead chickens being flung around, a raging bonfire in the middle of the club's floor, and her future husband Oliver Sanchez passing out on her turban as she was D.J.-ing, a novel twist on a menu-cue story.

Yet indoor fires and flying poultry were the least of the worries for a club that never had a liquor license. Letters from Mr.

57-A-GO-GO



CLUB 57 ST. MARKS

Strycki's archives show the Holy Cross parish's bishop, John Jakubik, tirelessly intervening on Club 57's behalf with a string of judges and government agencies. In 1980, when frustrated neighbors finally hired a lawyer to help shut down the club after repeated police summons for noise violations, Bishop Jakubik patiently informed him that "Club 57 is the youth circle of our church... Please try to understand that the East Village is not the best of areas and our parish hall is the only place where our youth can socialize under supervision."

Sleep-deprived neighbors on St. Mark's Place weren't the only ones fixating on Club 57. The art world was taking notice as well. New collectors began arriving, pumping money into a previously moribund market. With these came a burst of fresh galleries throughout the East Village — a handful in 1980, over a hundred by 1985. The downtown art world, centered on academia and small government grants, had previously seemed separated by a chasm from free-spirited buyers. No longer. As checkbooks opened and media attention skyrocketed, it suddenly looked as if artists could have it all. "I'll never forget what Jean-Michel said to me one night," Mr. Sanchez said, recalling a walk home from the club. "It's been so draw later. First I want to get famous. His work was already good, but he was so acute in his strategy. His plan was to charm his way into the right circles. And it absolutely worked!"

"There was this mad rush to do Scharf said. "It stopped being as I file became competitive with as he includes himself. "For the 1985 Biennial, Keith and Jean-Michel and I went. Which broke one of his solution was a pre-internet, dia campaign. "I started spray painting Barbara post-nuclear-mutant characters — like Wilma — with a snake body — all up and East Side, from the 59th Street to East Village. I had no idea who to do for the 1985 Whitney Biennial we used they would at least know as "Whether through ubiquity or gambit succeeded. In 1984, he bought a massive 10-by-10-foot-4 ing of his. In 1985, it tapped him sprawling installation for the Biennial victory was bitter-sweet. The six was in full bloom. "People who Mr. Scharf said. "One minute to beautiful 20-year-old, the next, see the look of death in their faces."

Tet AIDS was only one of the gutting the art world. In his 2012 "Life as Art," Mr. Strycki delves the wave of heroin flooding the East Side Club 57. Following Ann Magnuson's 1981 to focus on her and Mr. Strycki writes of having a string of staff members who ran finances into the ground as the drug addicts. "What did I access rides providing a shooting gallery personally betrayed and the closed Club 57 in early 1983."

Decades later, Basquiat, who drug overdose in 1988, continues auction recently with sales price paintings reaching nine figures work of Haring, who died of AIDS and Mr. Scharf has been shown same School of Visual Arts class once mocked. It's enough to make der if the original Club 57 gang in art establishment.

Mr. Scharf's eyes narrow at 60 tion, as he points out that MoMA exhibition isn't being held in one room's main gallery. Rather, beneath of the building near the ficked screening rooms. "We're the upstairs space," Mr. Scharf edly. "It feels very appropriate to the kids in the basement, back we're still in the basement."