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case with most of us), that's your relationship to the market. Regardless, the market is now so all permeating and encompassing that it's not possible to evaluate it effectively. For now, the market is generating competition, as is its wont, and that is resulting in more art—as well as more of everything else. Needless to say, a strong market doesn't mean—as die-hard capitalists would like us to believe—that there's more good art.

The one thing this boom has definitely brought about is a storm of finger-pointing. Everyone accuses everyone else of “being about the market.” London accuses New York of “being about the market.” New York thinks London is the center of market madness. Berlin scoffs at London and New York; New York and London scoff at Berlin; Los Angeles scoffs at everyone. Dealers blame auctions for the market; auction houses blame collectors; magazines blame one another; and a tiny but increasing number of artists clean up. A lot of people are making money; or a few people are making a lot more money. Either way, no one seems happy. Now, almost every time I chat with a dealer in his or her gallery—often in the middle of a sell-out show, with prices usually above \$30,000 and all the works taken—the dealer bemoans how “bad the market is for art.” Then, he or she pines for the “good old days.” I have to remain neutral with dealers but I want to say, “It's easy for you to moan about how bad the market is; you're making money from it; the market is keeping you in business.”

Meanwhile, collectors who dash from gallery to gallery spending who knows how much money will suddenly stop you and say, “Remember how good it was before all this market craziness?” With no neutrality at stake I now start

squawking, “I'd like to get a piece of this craziness rather than just being driven crazy by it.” On top of all that, the good old days were never that good anyway. The biggest difference between then and now is that in the '80s a tiny handful of artists, mainly men, cashed in. The '90s changed that by allowing a lot more women into the boy's club. Now, there's simply more of everything, although the numbers of women are lagging behind again and the going is really rough if you're black. Because of its homogeneity, this boom will be a legacy none of us will want to look back on.

Right now, there are only questions, and no answers. Is the artworld of greater interest to those outside it because art has gotten more interesting or because it's a hot investment opportunity? Does the market create a competitive atmosphere that drives artists to produce better work or does it foster empty product? No one knows. We don't have a way to talk about the market. There is no new philosophy to help us address the problem of the way the market is affecting the production and presentation of art. There simply are no decent alternatives right now. Establishing a new, relevant theory of the market (and not just rehashing Marxian critique for the umpteenth time) might make the market a much more volatile thing than we think, something worth delving into in new ways. (Orchard, on the Lower East Side, as well as a number of other outlets, is making stabs at creating for-profit models that co-opt the market before—we hope—the market corrupts their honorable ideals.) For now, the best thing about this boom is that more artists have a momentary chance to make money off their art without having to work a soul-crushing full-time job.



THE ARTWORLD'S BROADWAY DANNY ROSE

No one in the artworld thinks that he or she is in this only for the money. Nearly every person in the artworld would probably say the market is secondary to what he or she does. It's just that it's more secondary to some than to others.

Take Mitchell Algus, the Broadway Danny Rose of the artworld. In the midst of the biggest art boom ever, Algus mounts small, scrappy, extremely focused, provocative exhibitions of artists time and the market have forgotten. Think of all those painters and sculptors whom you've vaguely heard of or remember seeing in the issues of old art magazines circa 1969–1979—people whose work was prescient, accomplished, and even important but who somehow managed to either slip through the cracks or otherwise lacked that certain social something that allows some artists to reach the next level. These are the folks that Algus shows. A couple of months ago he did a wonderful kooky show titled *The Filipino Roots of Minimalism*, featuring the work of two artists I had never heard of, Leo Villedor and Mario Yrisarry.

One has to wonder if a larger, more “successful” gallery would ever have mounted such a show, exhibiting the

work of people from a third-world country that has not yet found a strong collector base, unlike other “hot” countries that seem to spawn countless shows, such as China or Russia, and lately other countries in Eastern Europe whose economies are strengthening as they join the EU. Maybe the reason is simply that wealthy countries have the resources to support more artists. Or do we only get to see art from countries that, due to various socioeconomic trends, have found a foothold in the contemporary art gallery network?

In Algus's case, I think he's doing this because he's got a scholar's eye for the overlooked, loves this work, and he thinks it deserves attention. (By the way, some museum somewhere should dedicate a small gallery for Algus to curate. It would be an amazing history lesson.) To support this labor of love, which he has operated in various locations since 1992 (he is currently ensconced in a wee second-floor warren in the middle of Chelsea), Algus—who not only has a sweet eye for contemporary art too, but a Ph.D. in physical geography—teaches science at Long Island City High School in Queens. Algus isn't good because he keeps a distance from market trends. Still, the market is lucky to have him. And so is everyone else.

INSTALLATION VIEW
OF POLKE-BERNSTEIN-
AMBER, MICHAEL WERNER
GALLERY, NEW YORK, 2006
FOREGROUND: 16TH-18TH
CENTURY AMBER OBJECTS
BACKGROUND: SIGMAR
POLKE
COURTESY MICHAEL WERNER
GALLERY, NEW YORK AND COLOGNE