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Catching up with Harlem Insider - artist Lerone Wilson!



Q&A with Leanne Stella of Art IN FLUX Harlem



Harlem Insider DJ Stormin Norman

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CHASHAMA BIDS FAREWELL FOR NOW

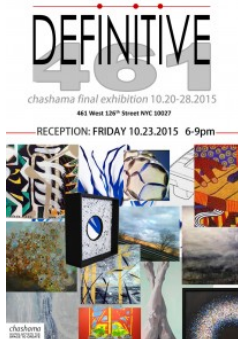
November 7, 2015 | Art, Culture & Entertainment | 0



On Saturday, October 31st, when all of New York was abuzz with Halloween fun and fright, the last of **chashama 461 Studio & Gallery** artists were emptying their contents into U-Haul trucks, donation bins and dumpsters. The building, located at **461 West 126th Street** in Harlem's factory district, is now closed after eight years of service to working artists and the Harlem arts community at-large.

At any given time, *chashama* - which in Persian means "to have vision" - operates between 15-25 work and exhibition spaces for artists throughout the five boroughs. The not-for-profit does this by forging relationships with property owners that allows them to offer unused real estate to local artists for both the creation and presentation of work. Artists enter into these arrangements with an understanding that the deal is temporary. But, even temporary space for an artist in New York City, can be career and life changing. *chashama* maintains access to spaces anywhere from a few months to a few years, so the fact that their primary Harlem building, 461, was operative for a whopping eight years is a milestone to be celebrated - for the organization as well as the benefiting artists.

And, celebrate is exactly what they did.



In a culminating exhibition and reception, *chashama 461* artists, alumni and staff came together to share one final event as an artistic unit. The exhibit - **DEFINITIVE 461** - showcased the works of the location's fourteen diverse artists; each bringing their own specific backgrounds, information, styles and media from their studio easels to the gallery floor. Friday October 28th, the reception evening, yielded heartfelt memories shared by **Anita Durst**, the organization's Artistic Director (aka *chashama Mama*) along with words from some of the artists and alumni. Although, many of the artists were still scrambling to settle into

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UPCOMING EVENTS







NOV 5 Thu
(<http://morningsider.com/calendar/action-oneday/exact-date-5-11-2015/>)

7:30 pm DEAD AND BREATHING @ Dr. Barbara Ann Teer's NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE
(http://morningsider.com/ai1ec_event/dead-and-breathing/?instance_id=736)

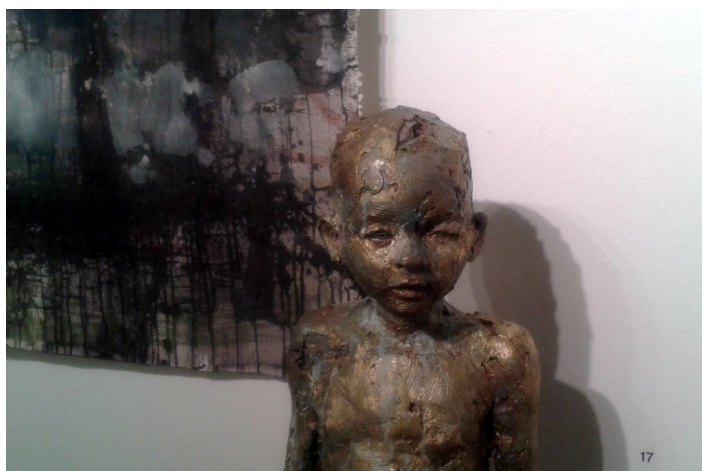
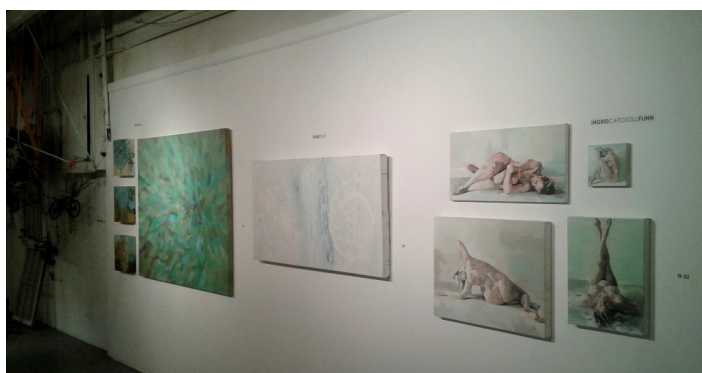
NOV 10 Tue
(<http://morningsider.com/calendar/action-oneday/exact-date-10-11-2015/>)

7:00 pm Book Signing: I AM MAN ENOUGH @ Harlem Haberdashery
(http://morningsider.com/ai1ec_event/book-signing-i-am-man-enough/?instance_id=740)

7:00 pm Latin Jazz Harlem Style @ Lenox Sapphire
(http://morningsider.com/ai1ec_event/latin-jazz-harlem-style/)

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Harvest Festival Marks Fall in Harlem
- 
Sugar Hill Children's Museum to Open with Neighborhood Stoop Party
- 
Bunz - A Total Restaurant Remix
- 
CCNY Exhibit Highlights Broadway Housing and Harlem's Latino Communities

new digs, all of them expressed how grateful they were to have been a part of this vital artistic family. There were tears of sadness as well as tears of laughter but, most of all, there was a prevailing sense of how powerful this space had been, evidenced by the work on the walls as well as the spirit in the room.



chashama 461 felt very permanent, however, to the Harlem community and to many of its long-time artist residents. At its height, the 45,000 square foot space housed 32 artist work spaces, and countless exhibitions and events had been hosted in its ground-floor gallery. As the news of its closing continues to spread, a low-grade shock-wave travels through a neighborhood that was largely unaware, or has perhaps forgotten, that this was essentially a pop-up space. The ensuing redevelopment of the West Harlem edge, replete with Columbia sprawl and amplified by the relatively recent shutterings of other community arts venues, further drives home the dire and increasing need for affordable artist work, live, and exhibition space in Harlem. The

[instance_id=688](#)

NOV 13
Fri
(http://morningsider.com/calendar/action-oneday/exact_date-13-11-2015/)

7:30 pm
JAZZMOBILE: Keep The Music Playing @ MIST Harlem
(http://morningsider.com/ai1ec_event/jazzmobile-keep-the-music-playing/?instance_id=739)

NOV 15
Sun
(http://morningsider.com/calendar/action-oneday/exact_date-15-11-2015/)

12:00 pm Target FREE SUNDAYS @ Studio Museum in Harlem
(http://morningsider.com/ai1ec_event/target-free-sundays/?instance_id=702)

NOV 17
Tue
(http://morningsider.com/calendar/action-oneday/exact_date-17-11-2015/)

5:30 pm Three and a Half Acres Happy Hou... @ 67 Orange
(http://morningsider.com/ai1ec_event/three-and-a-half-acres-happy-hour-event/?instance_id=745)

7:00 pm Latin Jazz Harlem Style @ Lenox Sapphire
(http://morningsider.com/ai1ec_event/latin-jazz-harlem-style/?instance_id=689)

NOV 20
Fri
(http://morningsider.com/calendar/action-oneday/exact_date-20-11-2015/)

11:00 am CCNY Langston Hughes Festival & ... @ Marian Anderson Theatre at Aaron Davis Hall, City College
(http://morningsider.com/ai1ec_event/ccny-langston-hughes-festival-awards-ceremony/?instance_id=744)

NOV 22
Sun
(http://morningsider.com/calendar/action-oneday/exact_date-22-11-2015/)

12:00 pm Target FREE SUNDAYS @ Studio Museum in Harlem
(http://morningsider.com/ai1ec_event/target-free-sundays/?instance_id=703)

closing of 461, at this sensitive juncture, reads like a final nail in the coffin for Harlem artists in need of a place to be.

And, what becomes of the 461 artists?

Interior and installation artist, **Christopher Trujillo**, is without a studio for the first time in his nearly twenty year career. Having had studios in Brooklyn and in Chelsea, he recounts how moving from one space to another was once realizable, but now seems an impossible feat. **Lisa Ingram** landed a work studio in Red Hook, Brooklyn; she is one of the lucky ones, despite her new daily commute from Uptown. At the reception, **Aleathia Brown** shared a positive take on having to move the breadth of her studio back into her Bronx apartment; she compared it to an adult child moving back home, only stronger and wiser for having been somewhere. **Richard Wager** also made the best of losing his studio by removing his living room couch to create the space he will need at home for art-making. **Tomo Mori**, a 461 artists for only seven months and one of its newest members, understood when she moved in that her time might be brief. Despite having been on a wait-list for four years before moving in, she departs simply thankful for the level of productivity the studio provided her. **Gina Fuentes Walker** and **Ingrid Capozzoli Flinn** are hoping to find a studio together. Other exiting artists are carving out space at home, not unlike Brown and Wager; a few of them have given up large format work they now have nowhere to house.

In the best of all worlds, *chashama* reemerges in Harlem with a newer and even greater studio opportunity for artists. Having harnessed over one million square feet of space for New York City artists since its inception, if anyone can make this near-impossible dream a reality, we know *chashama* can.



Images: 1. chashama artists bearing witness to the building (Photo: Patricia Espinosa) 2. Exhibition invitation 3. Curator leaving farewell message for artists on exhibition wall, with installation by Christopher Trujillo and works by Tomo Mori and Michael Kelly Williams (Photos: Paula Coleman) 4. Exhibition wall featuring Lisa Ingram, Diane Davis and Ingrid Capozzoli Flinn 5. Detail of exhibited works by Elizabeth Allison 6. chashama artists gather on closing night (Photo courtesy of Christopher Trujillo)

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NOV
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2015/)

**7:00 pm Latin Jazz
Harlem Style @ Lenox
Sapphire**
(http://morningsider.co
m/ai1ec_event/latin-
jazz-harlem-style/?
instance_id=690)

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