

Vacant Long Island City bank transformed into pool party hotspot



Jeff Bachner

A few weeks ago, it was just a vacant bank building and parking lot in Long Island City. But for the remaining weekends this summer, it will transform into [The Palms](#), a dance and swimming party, complete with Dumpster pools, fruity cocktails, food trucks and deejays.

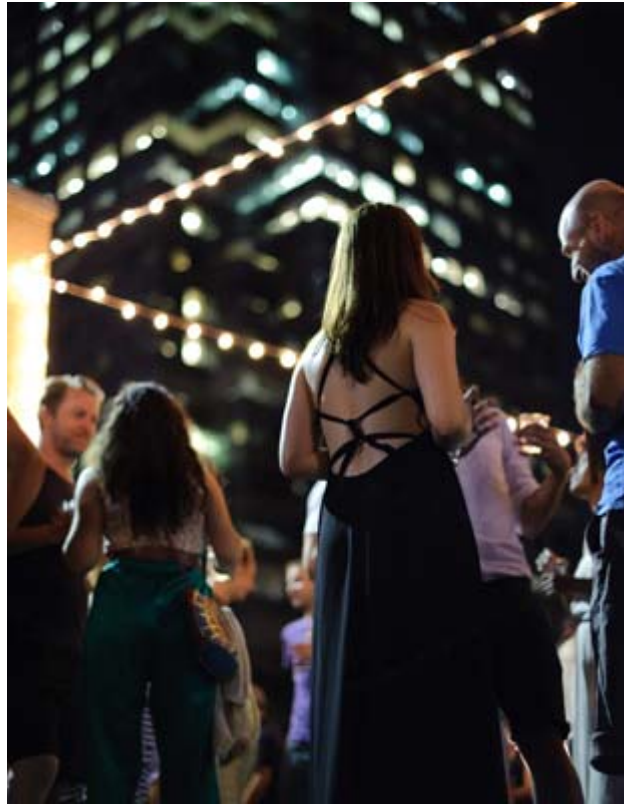
There are several creative groups that came together to forge the event, but the location was found by [Chashama](#), which takes vacant spaces and leases them to art hubs, sometimes for free and other times at subsidized rates.

Rockrose Development Corp. saw a Chashama project across the street from the Museum of Modern Art at the Donnell Library space, where they featured window installations from rotating artists, and contacted them about donating three spaces on a block of Jackson Avenue in Queens, said Kim Schnaubert, Chashama's development director. The lease goes until 2014, with a possible extension.

"We wanted to activate the area and get some life going in these empty buildings," said Patricia Dunphy, a senior vice president with Rockrose, which has a [31-story residential building](#) in the neighborhood. "There's a lot of folks living in Long Island City that are anxious to have things to do."

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On Friday night, The Palms held a test run. Organizers say they want to invoke Boca Raton resort pools of the 1940s, “just with more music, spectacle and hedonism.” The old bank had been spiffed up and looked like a hotel lobby, painted in yellow and white stripes and the long counter had bartenders behind it, serving up sangria, prosecco and cocktails. A booth sold towels, copies of literary magazine *The Believer* and retro supersoakers. Outside, Red Hook Lobster Pound sold lobster rolls and whoopee pies. It's the kind of scene where retro swimming caps and metallic American Apparel string bikinis both fit in.



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Sherrie Hui, Jamie Arendt, and Alana Tsui at The Palms in Long Island City (Jeff Bachner)

The Palms is a collaboration from [3rd Ward](#), a community-oriented arts initiative offering studio spaces, workshops and events; [Macro-Sea](#), the group behind the Dumpster pools in 2009 in

Gowanus; [TheDanger](#), which puts on parties in unique places; [Artists Wanted](#), which promotes emerging artists, with musical bookings by Meanred Productions and OkayAfrica / OkayPlayer, co-founded by The Roots' drummer Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson.

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(Jeff Bachner)

The Palms charges admission – an event this weekend was \$10 before 3 p.m. and \$20 after, but prices aren't set yet. The pool parties will run through Labor Day.

Schnaubert said Chashama is in talks for projects for the Long Island City spaces this fall and is open to hearing more ideas.

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By Gina Pace

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