



# **The Downtown Book: The New York Art Scene 1974-1984**

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Downtown is more than just a location, it's an attitude--and in the 1970s and '80s, that attitude forever changed the face of America. This book charts the intricate web of influences that shaped the generation of experimental and outsider artists working in Downtown New York during the crucial decade from 1974 to 1984. Published in conjunction with the first major exhibition of downtown art (organized by New York University's Grey Art Gallery and Fales Library), *The Downtown Book* brings the Downtown art scene to life, exploring everything from Punk rock to performance art.

The book probes trends that arose in the 1970s and solidified New York's reputation as arbiter of the postmodern American avant-garde. By 1974, the hippie euphoria of the previous decade, with its optimism, free love, and paeans to personal fulfillment, was over. In its place emerged a new kind of experimentation--in art, sex, drugs, and rock and roll. The seven essays featured here examine from different perspectives how Downtown artists constantly pushed the limits of both traditional media and the art world. Art critic Carlo McCormick addresses the energy, power, drugs, and nonstop erotic motion that propelled the scene. Music historian Bernard Gendron explores how minimalism, loft jazz, and Punk all occupied the same Downtown spaces. RoseLee Goldberg, the noted scholar and critic of performance art, looks back at ten years of its ascendancy Downtown. English professor Robert Siegle casts a critical eye on the literature of the Downtown scene. Librarian and archivist Marvin J. Taylor surveys Downtown as both geography and metaphor, and grapples with the question of how best to organize and preserve materials that often challenge the very notion of the archive. The book also includes seminal essays on the critical theories underlying Downtown art, by Brian Wallis; and on Downtown film, by Matthew Yokobosky.

The essays are intercut with personal reminiscences by such renowned pioneers of the Downtown scene as Eric Bogosian, Richard Hell, Lydia Lunch, Ann Magnuson, Michael Musto, and Martha Wilson. More than 150 striking photographs feature Downtown denizens and galleries; works by Cindy Sherman, Keith Haring, and many other artists; and hotspots such as CBGBs and Club 57. Hip and provocative, *The Downtown Book* provides a rare glimpse into the cauldron of the New York artistic counterculture--and the colorful characters who inhabited it.

## EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

Grey Art Gallery and the Fales Library

New York University  
January 10 - April 1, 2006

The Andy Warhol Museum

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Mid-May to September 4, 2006

Austin Museum of Art

Austin, Texas

November 11, 2006 - January 28, 2007 (tentative dates)

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