

Sporn, Stephanie. "The Campus, a Collaboration Between Six New York Galleries, Is the Hudson Valley's Latest Art Destination," *Vogue*, 5 July 2024.

VOGUE

The Campus, a Collaboration Between Six New York Galleries, Is the Hudson Valley's Latest Art Destination

BY STEPHANIE SPORN

July 5, 2024



School may be out for summer, but art class is in full swing at The Campus, upstate New York's new cultural haven. Situated just outside of Hudson in a school left vacant since the 1990s, the project represents an unprecedented collaboration between six New York galleries: Bortolami, James Cohan, Kaufmann Repetto, Anton Kern, Andrew Kreps, and Kurimanzutto. On June 29, over 2,000 people celebrated the opening of The Campus's inaugural exhibition, organized by independent curator Timo Kappeller, which is on view through October 27. Yet with 78,000 square feet of exhibition space, there was still plenty of room for the works of 80-plus artists—including Cecily Brown, Yinka Shonibare, and Jenny Holzer—to breathe.

Kreps discovered that the old school, built in 1951, was available nearly three years ago, as the COVID pandemic was sending creatives upstate in droves. Charmed by its mid-century bones and nostalgic setting, he and his fellow gallerists banded together to acquire it, recognizing a ripe opportunity.

"The collegial spirit that is alive between the Tribeca galleries spurred us to believe in a project like The Campus," says Stefania Bortolami, adding that the participating entities are "always in dialogue." The Italian-born dealer's gallery, as well as Andrew Kreps and Kaufmann Repetto, already share a space, 55 Walker, and regularly present exhibitions together. "This shared social fabric made it so that when the opportunity arose to acquire a defunct school, we already had the tools to move forward in collaboration."

"There is definitely something going on in the art world which is allowing for a type of collaboration that you wouldn't have seen 10 years ago," says Kappeller, whom Kreps tapped to curate the project. By pooling their resources to enable a no-ticket-required experience, the gallerists hope to collectively amplify their scale and outreach. As for his curation, Kappeller tells *Vogue* that the team "let the building drive the exhibition." "Very early on we realized that the building is so great, and so many of the original details are still in place," he says,

referring to the linoleum floors and walls painted in quirky butter yellows and avocado greens. "It became clear that we're not going to change this into a white-cube gallery space."

Instead, the team embraced the unconventional setting: from the gym to the locker rooms to the science lab, no space was off limits for reactivation. As a result, the show spans 40 rooms (all indicated with classroom-plaque-inspired signage) also spilling into the outdoors. Many works "respond to the psychology of the school," says Kappeller; inevitably, "everybody who walks into this building has memories of their own school years." Others draw on the building's architecture through site-specific murals and installations. (Among the most immersive is Chicago artist Barbara Kasten's and Milan-based artist and Memphis Group co-founder Nathalie du Pasquier's kaleidoscopic installation occupying a former principal's office.) There's also emphasis on artists outside of the six galleries' rosters who are local to the Hudson Valley. These include sculptor Rachel Harrison and ceramicist and painter Francesca DiMattio, Harrison's former student who has a studio nearby.

The Campus has something of a choose-your-own-adventure layout, though upon entry, one of the first spaces visitors will encounter is its largest. In this gym-slash-auditorium, bleachers and basketball hoops (for which Texas-based artist Trenton Doyle Hancock painted the backboards and basketballs, the latter of which will soon be for sale in The Campus's gift shop) set the scene. In the center of the room is British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare's 2021 sculpture *Moving Up*, with three globe-headed figures ascending a staircase; it recalls the Great Migration, when Black Americans fled the South in search of a better life. Suspended above the stage is Los Angeles-based artist Andrea Bowers's monumental neon sculpture *Climate Change is Real (Global Climate Action Summit, San Francisco)*, from 2018, along with numerous examples of her hanging chairs made of recycled materials.

Several artists made use of objects that immediately connote academia. As The Campus's first site-specific commission, Russian-born, Hudson Valley-based artist Sanya Kantarovsky created two pastels, spanning 12 and 14 feet, respectively, on one room's existing blackboards. "Sanya is a very prolific and sought-after artist, but he's never done anything like this before," says Kappeller of the dreamy, Surrealist-tinged works, which simultaneously invite the outdoor surroundings in (overgrown tennis court included).

In a different room, two mixed-media works by Bay Area artist Raymond Saunders also incorporate chalk on blackboard-like surfaces. They are in dialogue with Jenny Holzer's early 1980s *Survival* works, hand-painted on kraft paper, another material ubiquitous across school walls. Though they bear her signature "Truisms," these paper pieces, which the artist has never before shown publicly, offer a grittier contrast to her LED works currently spiraling around the Guggenheim's rotunda.

Photography is well represented throughout The Campus, too, whether it's American image maker Roe Ethridge's *Football for Telfar* (2018) or Mexican photographer Miguel Calderón's *Secundaria* composites of students donning uniforms and sunglasses on class picture day. Up-and-coming talent is also given ample space through a partnership with NXTHVN's Cohort 05 Studio and curatorial fellows. Founded by artists Titus Kaphar and Jason Price, NXTHVN's annual fellowship supports and mentors underrepresented artists and curators. The dynamic works on view from their program range from a mixed-media triptych-like composition by Adrian Armstrong to Eric Hart Jr.'s high-gloss "busssdown" portraits and Alex Puz's kinetic canvases. (All three are American artists.)

The show continues outside with sculptures by New York-based artist Maren Hassinger, French artist Daniel Buren, and others, set amidst former and revived sporting grounds, where visitors can ride swings, climb a jungle gym, or shoot hoops with more Hancock-painted basketballs. Legendary American choreographer William Forsythe has additionally created a participatory land art piece with printed instructions for a dance challenge.

As for The Campus's future, Kappeller looks forward to continually activating the space with a variety of programming, including, he hopes, talks with artists who actually attended the school, and can shed light on its history. The gallerists, too, are optimistic. "We certainly believe that the sum of us is greater than our parts," says Bortolami. Francesca Kaufmann of Kaufmann Repetto doubles down on that sentiment. "Together we feel stronger: at the same time more competitive and more confident," she says, citing the success of collaborative models abroad, including ITALICS, an Italian consortium of more than 70 contemporary, modern, and ancient art galleries. When it comes to setting an example for multi-gallery projects and adaptive reuse, it's safe to say The Campus has passed the art world's test with flying colors.