



These 15 Galleries Are Putting New Cities on the Art World's Map



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The majority of the art world's infrastructure—from galleries and museums to public funding to art criticism and press—is concentrated in a handful of major urban centers including New York, London, Berlin, and Hong Kong. However, this hasn't deterred an increasing number of tenacious gallerists from opening art spaces well beyond the comforts of established art-world hubs, and taking big financial risks in the process. For many, the remote locations have been the impetus.

Their goal: to expose local artists to an international set of collectors and curators, and likewise to bring the international art community into their emerging, at times far-flung, art scenes. For the below 15 galleries, hailing from San Juan to Cluj and Accra to Bangalore, the risks have paid off. And they are galvanizing their surrounding creative communities and turning the art world's attention to their hometowns in the process.

Gallery 1957

LOCATION: ACCRA, GHANA

ESTABLISHED: 2016

FOUNDER: MARWAN ZAKHEM





Marwan Zakhem, 2016. Courtesy of Nii Odzenma and Gallery 1957, Accra.



Gallery 1957 opened its Gold-Coast doors on March 6, 2016—Ghana’s Independence Day—with an exhibition by young artist Serge Attukwei Clottey. Setting the stage for the gallery’s community-focused program, the show included 50 people from Clottey’s collective, GoLokal, who poured into Accra’s streets as part of a corresponding performance. “I set up the gallery to support the younger generation of artists that are currently breaking through,” explains 1957’s founder Marwan Zakhem, a collector of West African art turned gallerist. “And to provide them the platform to showcase their talent to an international audience without having to leave the country.”

According to Zakhem, Ghana's established collector base is still "very nascent" in comparison to major art-world capitals, and the country receives very little funding for visual arts. Zakhem hopes that this may change in the future as the country's government "begins to realize the worth of cultural tourism and the growth of the creative economy." Zakhem hopes his gallery will help spur this shift by exposing Ghana's emerging artists, from Clottey to Ibrahim Mahama to Zohra Opoku, to potential collectors arising from what he describes as "one of Africa's fastest-growing economies." Simultaneously, he also hopes to raise the international profile of local artists by participating in fairs like 1:54 in London and ART X Lagos in Nigeria.

Laveronica arte contemporanea

LOCATION: MODICA, SICILY

ESTABLISHED: 2007

FOUNDER: CORRADO GUGLIOTTA; PARTNER: SVEVA D'ANTONIO



Sveva D'Antonio, partner, and Corrado Gugliotta, founder. Photo by Francesco D'Amore, courtesy of Laveronica Arte

You'll find Laveronica tucked into a narrow cobblestone alleyway in Modica, an ancient city on Sicily's southern coast. There, Modica native Corrado Gugliotta has developed a daringly experimental and overtly political program, for which he's gained a worldwide reputation. But making his mark on the international art map was a slow process, as he'll readily admit: "In the past, if you said that your gallery was based in Sicily, you had to convince people that, even in a small town, it's possible to show politically engaged artists with credibility and coherence."

Since opening his space in 2007, Gugliotta has held strong to his mission to promote timely, politically and socially engaged art. And he's done so by bringing both local and international artists and curators into his Modica space (housed in a vaulted stone building built in 1800), and simultaneously advocating for artists from international fair booths. This year will mark at least two milestones for the gallery: Adelita Husni-Bey, an artist whose career Laveronica launched in 2007 when she was just 22 years old, will represent Italy at the 2017 Venice Biennale; and the gallery will unveil its first Armory Show booth with Italian performance and installation artist Marinella Senatore.

GALLERYYSKE

LOCATION: BANGALORE, INDIA

ESTABLISHED: 2003

FOUNDER: SUNITHA KUMAR EMMART





Courtesy of GALLERYYSKE.

From a leafy side street in the center of Bangalore in southern India, GALLERYYSKE has helped launched the careers of a cohort of local artists, from Astha Butail to Avinash Veeraraghavan. “Bangalore is an ideal place to cut out the noise and focus on developing a program,” explains the gallery’s founder, Sunitha Kumar Emmart. “One can also take more risks, as the economics of working out of a major art center can be stressful,” she continues. Indeed, the gallery has hosted some of its 16 artists’ most ambitious projects.

Kumar Emmart opened the gallery in 2003 and continues to helm one of the few internationally recognized contemporary art spaces in the city. To further its reach, the gallery participates in all three Art Basel fairs: in Basel, Miami Beach, and Hong Kong. But Kumar Emmart says being outside of a major art-world capital has distinct advantages: “When collectors come to visit us, we have all their attention and time—they aren’t distracted.”

Green Gallery

LOCATION: MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

ESTABLISHED: 2009

FOUNDERS: JOHN RIEPENHOFF AND JAKE PALMERT





Photo by Darren Hauck, courtesy of Green Gallery.

Despite having extensive ties in art-world centers like New York and L.A., artists John Riepenhoff and Jake Palmert decided to open a gallery in their Midwestern hometown. “There’s an abnormally high number of idea-driven artists per capita here, which has made starting and operating an idea-driven gallery fun and sustainable,” explains Riepenhoff. Indeed, the duo’s boundary-pushing program has showcased experimental projects by Milwaukee artists from within their community like David Robbins, Paul Cowan, and Evan Gruzis, in addition to those who live further afield, including Michelle Grabner, Kaspar Müller, and Jeanette Mundt. The wider art world has taken notice.

Riepenhoff admits that operating a gallery out of Milwaukee might require more travel to visit non-local artists and to promote the gallery’s program through fairs than would be the case if they had a space in a major art-world center. But the pluses far outweigh the minuses: “We get to grow with the scene in Milwaukee, so we have ownership and influence on moving things forward.” He says that while they stay squarely within the art-world conversation in terms of developments in art practice, they also “see value and opportunity outside of the centers—and that’s a nice lens to look at the world through.”

Madragoa

LOCATION: LISBON, PORTUGAL

ESTABLISHED: 2016

FOUNDERS: GONÇALO JESUS AND MATTEO CONSONNI



Gonçalo Jesus (left) and Matteo Consonni (right) in front of Madragoa. Photo by Bruno Lopes, courtesy of Madragoa.



Behind a blue-and-white-tile facade just several blocks from the sea, Gonçalo Jesus and Matteo Consonni opened Madragoa (named for the historic Lisbon neighborhood in

which the gallery is situated) in April 2016. The space joined several young, cutting-edge galleries that have ignited the city's burgeoning contemporary art scene in recent years. But Madragoa's international program immediately stood out, and began attracting the Lisbon creative community as well as artists and curators hailing from beyond Portugal's borders.

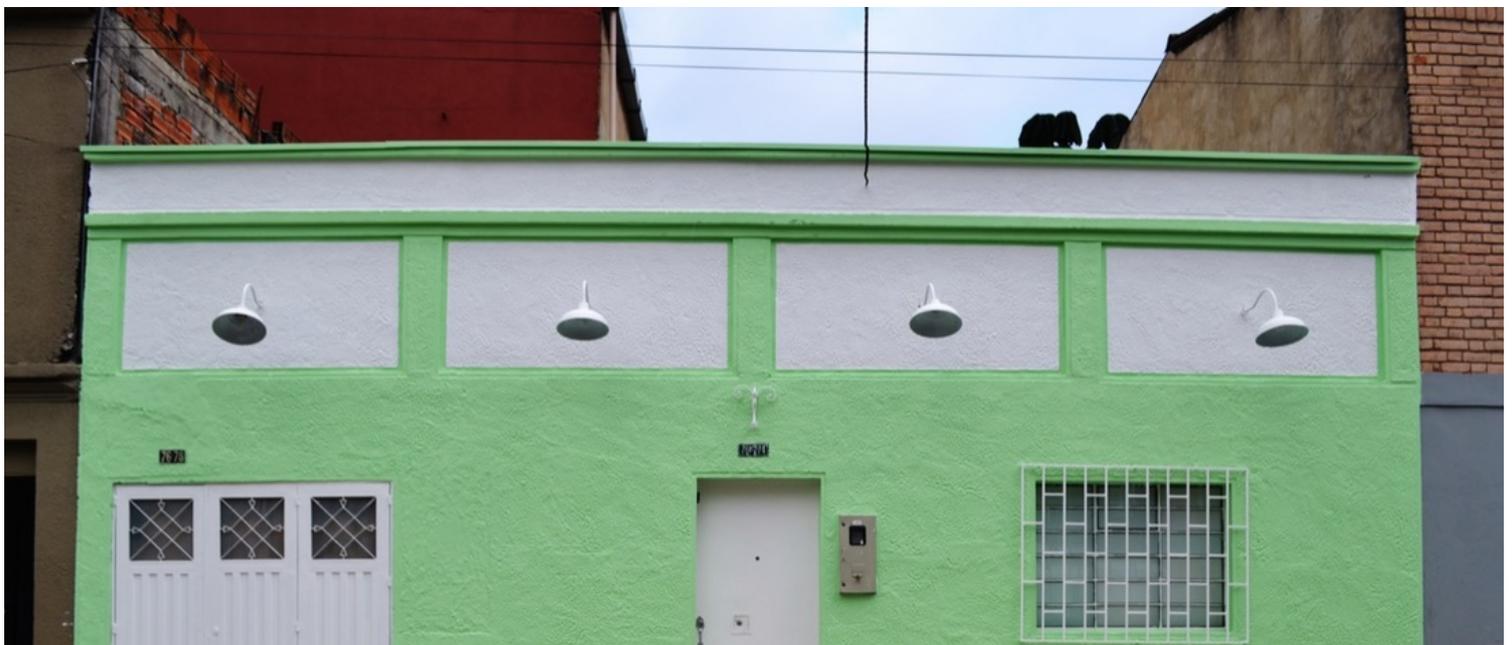
"In general, being 'outside' can weirdly enough offer more visibility to a quality program," Consonni explains of the growing international visibility of their gallery. Currently, he notes, the art world is expressing a great amount of interest in Lisbon in particular. Other factors, too, are leaning in Madragoa's favor. For one, Lisbon is still affordable compared to other art centers across Europe. "We don't have to give much to our landlord, so we can reinvest that money in possibilities for the artists and travel," Consonni continues. This has allowed several of their international artists, like Turin-based Renato Leotta and London-based Joanna Piotrowska, extended stays in Lisbon while preparing for their shows. It has also made shelling out booth fees—at fairs like the curatorially-driven Artissima—much easier to swallow.

Instituto de Visión

LOCATION: BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

ESTABLISHED: 2014

FOUNDERS: BEATRIZ LÓPEZ, KAREN ABREU, OMAIRA ALVARADO, AND MARÍA WILLS





Courtesy of Instituto de Visión.



Instituto de Visión opened the doors of its colorful facade in 2014. “We realized that our local art scene needed a new strategy and a fresh approach to culture,” write the gallery’s founders. Their first show, a two-person presentation with artists Alicia Barney and Ana María Millán, accomplished two of the gallery’s three goals: to resurface the work of historical Colombian artists and launch the careers of a younger generation of creatives. But their third objective proved more difficult to realize from the gallery’s Bogotá perch. “Our greatest challenge is to make the international art world aware of the local talent and amazing tradition of art in our country,” they admit.

But by staying true to their vision, and gaining entry into several international fairs from arteBA to LISTE to Frieze New York (where they took home the 2016 Stand Prize), they’ve begun to make good on its mission in full. The gallery has done so while exploring ambitious, experimental projects—and providing a gathering space for the local creative community in the process. “Being outside of the major art-world capitals gives us the opportunity and freedom to work outside the sometimes rigid parameters and conventions of power centers,” they acknowledge. “Moreover, it gives us the chance to significantly contribute to our society.”

Plan B

LOCATION: CLUJ, ROMANIA

ESTABLISHED: 2005

FOUNDERS: MIHAI POP AND ADRIAN GHENIE



Mihai Pop. Photo by Catalin Georgescu, courtesy of Plan B, Cluj.



In 2005, a few years after Mihai Pop and Adrian Ghenie graduated from art school, they became aware that the Romanian art scene needed a “Plan B.” Public funds supporting art spaces were scant, so they decided to take matters into their own hands. “There was hardly an alternative in Romania in 2005, and we were functioning on a ‘let’s do it’ paradigm,” explains Pop of their initial inspiration to open the gallery. “If we had operated based on a

market study, we would have never started anything in Cluj at that time. However, we saw the potential of the art scene.” After the gallery opened, they realized their instincts had been spot on.

The gallery quickly became the nexus of Romania’s contemporary art scene, bringing together artists, curators, and academics who’d emerged from Cluj’s cohort of universities. But this wasn’t enough to support their creative community financially. “Cluj does not offer the premises for an international career, because of the still limited resources and quite conservative mindset,” he says. So they began to advocate for their artists outside of Romania, too.

A turning point, as Pop recalls, came in 2007 after Plan B debuted the gallery’s program at New York’s Armory Show, and the *New York Times* featured the gallery in its coverage of the fair. “Due to that publication we suddenly faced a very high demand for that work,” he says. Plan B also opened a second gallery in Berlin in 2008, in order to more consistently advocate for Romanian artists in an art-world capital. “Cluj continues to be our base,” Pop explains, “but the to and fro between the two spaces has triggered the resources vital for the gallery.”

Temnikova & Kasela

LOCATION: TALLINN, ESTONIA

ESTABLISHED: 2010

FOUNDERS: OLGA TEMNIKOVA AND INDREK KASELA





Courtesy of Temnikova & Kasela.

Olga Temnikova and Indrek Kasela opened their gallery behind the bright yellow door of a domineering Stalinist building in Tallinn’s city center in 2010. At the time, infrastructure for contemporary art was minimal. “There was no other gallery working internationally, and several artists with amazing CVs and bodies of work lacking international representation,” says Temnikova.

Since opening, the gallery has brought more recognition—and increased financial support—to its primarily Estonian artists. This hasn’t come without its challenges. According to Temnikova, the local art media is very conservative and is attached to certain institutions and established art centers. In addition, she describes “a particular post-Soviet gap” in the city’s education system. “There are no curator-writers so far, only those educated abroad.”

In order for the gallery to support their artists while Estonian critics and potential collectors catch up (luckily, Estonia’s economy is healthy and growing), the duo have taken their program to international art fairs—like Artissima, where the gallery won the Guido Carbone prize in 2012. Simultaneously, the gallerists have taken additional steps to increase contemporary art awareness at home: They established the nonprofit Estonian Contemporary Art Development Center, with a goal to educate emerging gallerists and artists in Estonia and to increase international exchange.

Nova Contemporary

LOCATION: BANGKOK, THAILAND

ESTABLISHED: 2016



Courtesy of Nova Contemporary.

After a decade living between London and New York, and with degrees in art history and art business and a gig at the Met under her belt, Sutima Sucharitakul decided to head back to her native Thailand. “I felt it was time for me to use the knowledge and experiences I’ve gained over 10 years abroad and apply it to my home city, Bangkok,” she explains. There, she saw a dearth in support for young artists—galleries and collectors were scarce—but also a growing number of Bangkok’s youth interested in art and culture. That’s when she decided to open a gallery, with the aim to cultivate the local art scene.

In less than a year’s time, Sucharitakul has begun to make headway towards realizing this goal. But she admits there’s still a lot of work to be done. While “Bangkok has a very rich cultural history and naturally cultivated talented artists, few ever ‘make it’ internationally,” she says, citing the city’s lack of both public and private support. To counter, she hopes to create awareness around the art emerging from Bangkok by engaging both curious locals

and the international art community. This month, she's showing New York-based artist Brendan Lynch, whose Instagram account announced Nova Contemporary's presence to many in his community of U.S.-based artists and curators. She also plans to invite international curators to conceive shows for the gallery's program.

What Pipeline

LOCATION: DETROIT, MICHIGAN, U.S.

ESTABLISHED: 2013

FOUNDERS: ALIVIA ZIVICH AND DANIEL SPERRY



Courtesy of What Pipeline.

What Pipeline caught the international art world's attention in 2015 with a show-stopping booth at NADA Miami Beach, featuring a massive inflatable globe by the artist duo Puppies Puppies. But it had already been galvanizing the emerging art community in Detroit for two years, from a small converted glass shop in the Midwestern city's Mexicantown neighborhood. "What Pipeline was created to present what we wanted to see in Detroit," explains gallery co-founder Alivia Zivich, who, like her partner Daniel Sperry, is an artist originally from Michigan. As former neighbors in an apartment building in southwest Detroit, they'd often complain about the the city's then-struggling contemporary art scene, so they opened What Pipeline in response.

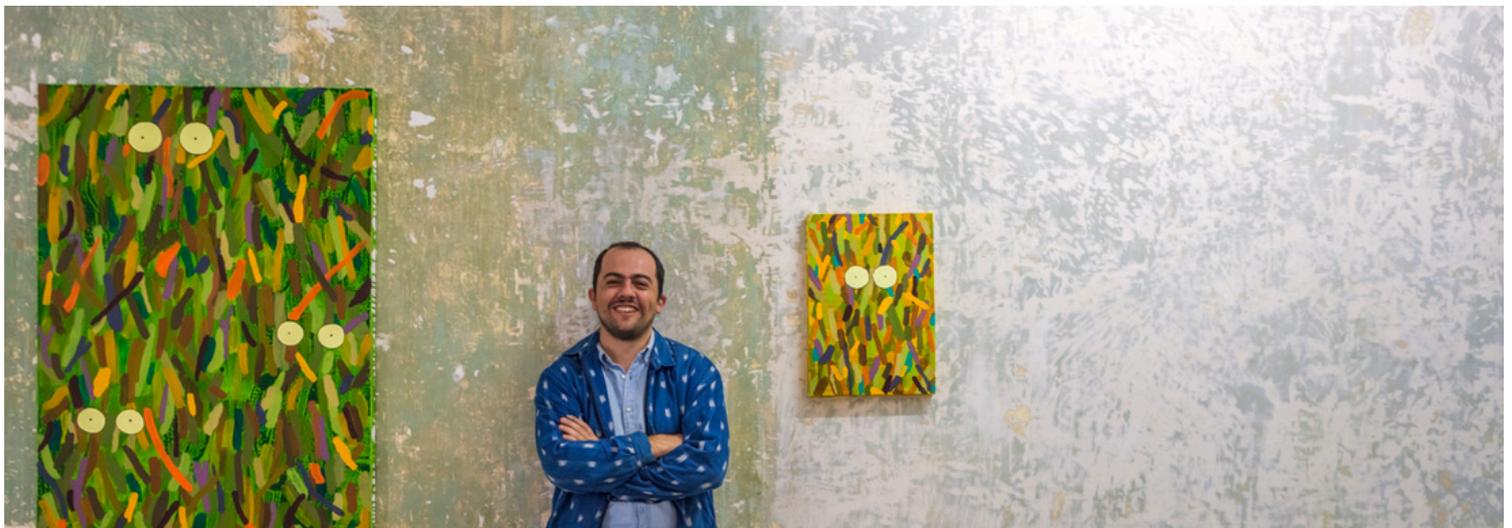
As Zivich explains, the low overhead that Detroit offers helped them get their program off the ground, and "the pleasure of presenting an atypical perspective" has sustained it. But she also admits that the lack of foot traffic the gallery receives compared to a space in a major art-world center needs to be made up for by alternate means of exposure. "Being in Detroit during a time everyone was interested in Detroit has helped," she says. She also acknowledges What Pipeline's booth at NADA New York in 2014 and its receipt of the fair's Artadia / NADA award as important springboards for the gallery and recognition of their artists and the Detroit art scene at large.

Proyectos Ultravioleta

LOCATION: GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA

ESTABLISHED: 2009

FOUNDERS: STEFAN BENCHOAM, BYRON MÁRMOL, JUAN BRENNER, AND RODRIGO FERNÁNDEZ





Stefan Benchoam. Photo by Alan Benchoam, courtesy of Proyectos Ultravioleta.



When Stefan Benchoam began curating exhibitions and organizing events under the title Proyectos Ultravioleta, he didn't know that the project would turn into a gallery. "We were responding to our local context and interested in opening a space where we could experience the type of art that we were into—whether in the form of an exhibition, a workshop, a performance, a lecture, a concert, a meal, or anything else in between," he explains. But he and his co-founders came to realize that there was also need for financial support amongst Guatemala City's artists, and they were soon operating a commercial space.

Building institutional support and a collector base was a slow process. "Locally, the toughest part is creating an economy to sustain a project like this," Benchoam admits. He also realized, however, that Guatemala City's lack of an established art scene could also work to the gallery's advantage. "Because there is hardly any infrastructure for the arts, there are no expectations to succeed. And that can be incredibly liberating as it gives plenty of room to experiment and take risks that you wouldn't elsewhere," he continues. When the gallery began to build enough capital to promote its program at international art fairs (like Frieze London and Zona MACO), the group took their experimental approach with them, attracting seasoned international collectors with vibrant booths that

mix Guatemalan and international, young and old artists alike.

The Breeder

LOCATION: ATHENS, GREECE

ESTABLISHED: 2002

FOUNDERS: GEORGE VAMVAKIDIS AND STATHIS PANAGOULIS



Angelo Plessas, *Extropic Optimisms*, 2015, neon installation at the façade of The Breeder, Athens. Courtesy of The Breeder, Athens.

In 2002, George Vamvakidis and Stathis Panagoulis began fielding requests from local artists to transform their art magazine, *The Breeder*, into a gallery. The artists “were in need of representation,” write the founders, and so they decided to answer the call. Since then, The Breeder has become an essential stomping ground for artists, both local and international, who land in Athens. The duo’s biggest challenge? “Everybody always talks about discovering new art, but they all look at the same places. To be able to divert this attention to our direction is the biggest challenge,” Vamvakidis and Panagoulis write. “This keeps us focused, despite the fact that it means double or even four times the effort

that a gallery in one of those major art centers expend.”

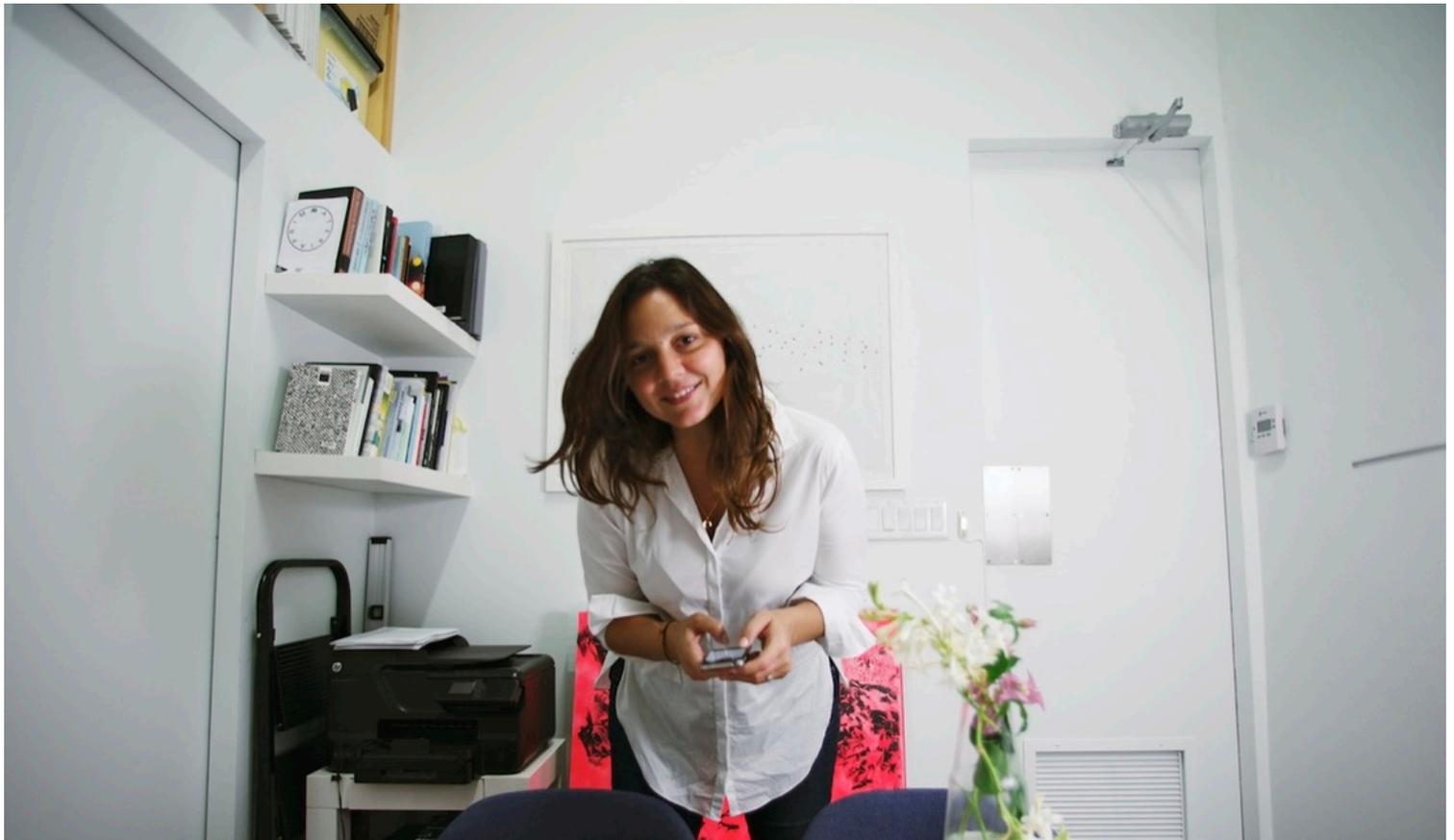
Recently, Greece’s economic crisis has also posed a challenge, but one that has likewise offered new opportunities for the now-seasoned gallery. Given the wide network of support the two have built over the years, through engaging with art fairs and the international art community, they’ve been able to weather the financial fluctuations as other galleries in the country have not. “The landscape in Athens has changed dramatically during the years of the crisis, and the majority of young contemporary art galleries have closed their doors,” the founders explain. “However, more and more artists from all over Europe and the USA are setting up studios in the city, adding to a newfound optimism about the contemporary art scene of Athens”—one that The Breeder is eager to continue to support.

Galería Agustina Ferreyra

LOCATION: SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

ESTABLISHED: 2013

FOUNDER: AGUSTINA FERREYRA





Courtesy of Galería Agustina Ferreyra.



Agustina Ferreyra originally moved to San Juan from Mexico City for love, but it wasn't until years later that she opened her eponymous gallery. At the time, there were very few galleries in Puerto Rico's capital exhibiting contemporary art, so she was somewhat of a lone wolf. "I guess it's easier to get attention when there isn't so much competition," she recalls, though the gallerist ultimately believes "having a healthy diverse scene is fundamental to everybody's success." Since then, Ferreyra has pioneered Puerto Rico's burgeoning contemporary art scene by bringing together contemporary artists from both the island and abroad. The gallery's inaugural show, "Dreaming is a Form of Planning," showed Puerto Rican painter Julio Suárez alongside on-the-rise international artists, like American photographer Michele Abeles and Thai installation artist Pratchaya Phinthong.

Other emerging galleries, like Embajada and El Lobi, have followed Ferreyra's example and opened shop in San Juan. But it hasn't been easy drawing the international art community to their beachside city. "It's been a challenge getting people from outside of Puerto Rico to get involved with my program without ever setting foot in the gallery," Ferreyra explains. Her participation in an international assortment of art fairs, however, has been integral to growing her network. Ferrera is now a veteran of LISTE, Paris Internationale, and NADA Miami Beach, and is currently in the throes of organizing a solo presentation of Puerto Rican artist Cristina Tufiño's work for NADA New York.

LambdaLambdaLambda

LOCATION: PRISHTINA, KOSOVO

ESTABLISHED: 2015

FOUNDERS: ISABELLA RITTER AND KATHARINA SCHENDL



Photo by Georg Petermichl, courtesy of LambdaLambdaLambda.

In 2015, Isabella Ritter and Katharina Schendl opened LambdaLambdaLambda on a winding side street of Kosovo’s capital city, Prishtina. It was and remains the city’s first and only international commercial contemporary art space. To some, Prishtina might have seemed a surprising landing pad for the two Viennese curators. But Kosovo’s reputation of political turmoil (a byproduct of many years of civil unrest during the country’s bid for independence in the late 1990s and 2000s) and its art scene’s lack of international visibility didn’t deter Ritter and Schendl. “We fell in love with the youth, vibrancy, and people of the city,” write the founders. “We also found very interesting artists in Prishtina that weren’t present in the international art-landscape. We wanted to change that.”

LambdaLambdaLambda's first show mingled the work of Nadja Athanassowa and Flaka Haliti; several months later, Haliti represented Kosovo in the 56th Venice Biennale. The presentation served as a springboard for the artist but also for the gallery, bolstering its mission to put more Kosovar artists on the international map. But a Biennale inclusion alone can't fuel a gallery's growth, so Ritter and Schendl have worked hard to promote their program beyond Kosovo, through emerging art fairs and across their network of international curators, galleries, and artists. Ritter and Schendl are approaching their bid for exposure with a fair amount of creative problem-solving, too. This month, they've swapped spaces with Galeria Dawid Radziszewski in Warsaw in order to promote their program with the city's emerging art community and collector base.

Galería Habana

LOCATION: HAVANA, CUBA

ESTABLISHED: 1962

Three years after Fidel Castro assumed power in Cuba, in 1962, Galería Habana opened with the goal to “promote Cuban art from the island as well as Havana, where the majority of the country's artists are based,” explains Clarisa Crive Duani, the gallery's director. In its early days, as one of the capital city's few commercial art galleries, the gallery secured relationships and mounted shows with a group of Cuba's seminal modern painters and sculptors, from Wifredo Lam to René Portocarrero to Mariano Rodríguez to Amelia Peláez. These partnerships, as Crive Duani explains, set the tone for the gallery's program.

Galería Habana's growth has been challenged by one main obstacle: “We don't have a national market that can sustain the art we show,” says Crive Duani, referencing the countrywide poverty incited by Cuba's communist government. To circumvent the issue, Galería Habana promotes its artists through art fairs (like The Armory Show, Art Brussels, and ARTBO) and relationships with international galleries and museums (like Ludwig Museum, Koblenz; Galerie Ernst Hilger, Vienna; and Galería La Cometa, Bogotá). Over time, the scarcity of galleries in Cuba, caused by the lack of national support, also became one of Galería Habana's advantages, cementing it as the hub for the city's contemporary art scene.