

building bloc | With all the heavy foot traffic in Chelsea these days, it's more essential than ever for dealers to have storefront spaces. But the area's skyrocketing real estate prices can put that option out of reach for many. That's why a group of young contemporary galleries—Clementine, John Connelly Presents, Derek Eller, Foxy Production, Oliver Kamm/5BE, Sheri Pasquarella and Wallspace—have joined forces to open side-by-side spaces in a single building this month at 615–627 West 27th Street.

Pasquarella and Connelly, two founders of the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA), formed the idea about a year ago, when they discovered 11,000 square feet of ground-floor space in an old

terminal warehouse. The landlord was looking to connect the building to the art world, so the pair sought out fellow NADA members to go in on the deal. "We approached dealers who complement one another," says Pasquarella, who is setting up her own arts consultancy and launching a secondary-market curatorial



project, Crown Private Art, with Connelly.

"There was a concern that it would be mall-like, but everyone's space has a very unique feel," says Abby Messitte, co-owner of Clementine. The 10-year-old gallery, which aims to give artists their first New York shows, is opening with a sound installation by Houston collaborative Otabenga Jones & Associates, from January 12 through February 4.

Wallspace debuts its new space with sculptures, collages and video art by Kirsten Stoltmann, through February 11. "The arrangement reflects a community feeling," says co-owner Jane Hait. "The building is on a cobblestone street on the edge of the water, so it has this special vibe."

The group is attempting



A group of NADA dealers in front of their gallery building in Chelsea. Left: *Naturist*, by Kirsten Stoltmann, at Wallspace

to break the Chelsea mold with its unique setup and a distinctly youthful energy. As Kamm, whose stable of artists includes videomaker Jen DeNike and installation artist Justin Lowe, says, "It creates a centralized place for the best galleries that deal with emerging art."

DANIELLE O'STEEN