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[News](#) | [Features](#) | [Reviews](#) | [Books](#) | [People](#) | [Horoscope](#)**Brooklyn Spice**

by Paul Laster



[Williamsburg Art Guide](#)  
Copyright Angela Wyman 2000

Some ten years ago, critic **Roberta Smith** surveyed the then-youthful Williamsburg art scene in the *New York Times*. None of the galleries she mentioned then -- **Brand Name Damages**, **Ledis-Flam**, **Minor Injury** -- are still around, but some of the "rough-and-tumble quality" she referred to still exists. Gallery architecture is predominantly funky, with only a few resembling the highly polished, well-lit spaces found in Chelsea.

One thing is clear: Williamsburg has grown into a densely populated artist neighborhood that's "artsy, cool, edgy, hip and bohemian." The neighborhood includes some 5,000 artists and 25 galleries, all competing for attention -- making it easy for collectors to find fresh faces at bargain prices. The biggest problem has been locating the galleries, but thanks to the Williamsburg Art Guide (WAG), put out by local artist **Angela Wyman**, doing the rounds is now an agreeable adventure.

A good place to start the tour (and pick up a copy of WAG) is at **Pierogi**, in the heart of Williamsburg at 177 N. 9th Street. The gallery began as Pierogi 2000 in the studio of artist **Joe Amrhein** in 1994. A little over a year ago, Joe and his wife Susan, the editor of Pierogi Press, moved their "Mom-and-Pop" operation next door to a larger space with additional room for the famous flat files that hold a stable of 500+ artists.

Los Angeles artist **Habib Kheradvar** brings a similar spirit of community interaction to Pierogi with "L.A. Art Court," a series of light projections portraying several West Coast art patrons. Habib, director of the alternative Post Gallery in Los Angeles, uses wire armatures and mesh fabric to display the projected images of **Clyde Beswick**, **Merry Norris**, **Alan Power**, **Lawrence Rickels** and **Michael Gold**. The mix of light and fabric produces a moiré pattern that adds an angelic aura to this group of art world players. For a mere \$7,000 you can add a collector to your collection (electricity not included).

At nearby **Eyewash** (143 N. 7th Street), Amrhein himself has a piece that uses light and language to address recent real-estate issues reflecting the burg's growing pains. His nine-part *Empty Shelves* consists of the singular words "For Sale Sold For Rent Rented For Sale Sold," hand-painted on glass shelves and mounted to the wall. An overhead light casts shadows of the words onto the gallery's wall, allowing us to read Amrhein's metaphoric tale of gentrification.

**Sante Scardillo** also conveys the writing on the wall in Eyewash's "Summer Reading" exhibition with his artist book *Lifestyle*. Scardillo alters magazine advertisements geared towards fashionistas and the young upwardly mobile. For example, he adds the words "Don't Worry This Will Not Last That Long" between a jubilant couple in an Eternity ad and "Ultimate Accessory" to a model mother in Romeo Gigli holding her naked child. At \$80, *Lifestyle* is proving popular with vacationers.

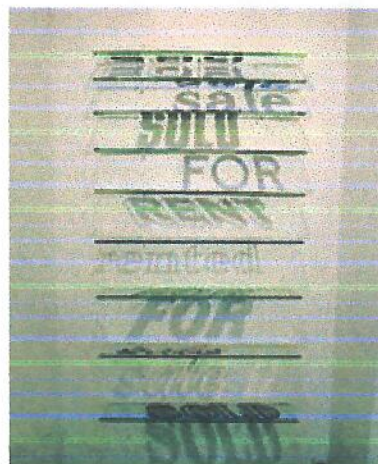
**Cary Leibowitz**, aka **Candyass** delivers his take on the stylish life like an old-time Borsch Belt comedian over at **Momenta Art** (72 Berry Street). A group of drawings done in black marker on torn graph paper declare "15 minutes of fame leaves 62 years of has-been-ness." Leibowitz also offers the *Liza Minelli for President* rain poncho, an item that's available in all six colors of the rainbow flag.

These works and others are part of a group exhibition guest-curated by artist **Leslie Brack** called "I Saw Stars." Brack contributes three colorful Pop paintings inspired by teen idols to an entertaining show that's packed with star power. **Larry Krone** has some primitive but sincere self-portraits of himself as a singing cowboy. They're painted on glass that's backed by aluminum foil -- a crude method that seems to fit his down-home folklore.

**Alyson Levy** raises her star a notch with photos of screwball sit-com scenes starring herself and **Janeane Garofalo**. The artist and the actress play sisters resembling "Laverne and Shirley" in Levy's make-believe comedies. **Miguel Calderon** adds a video loop that further explores the "buddy" concept by teaming up with a famous 1970s

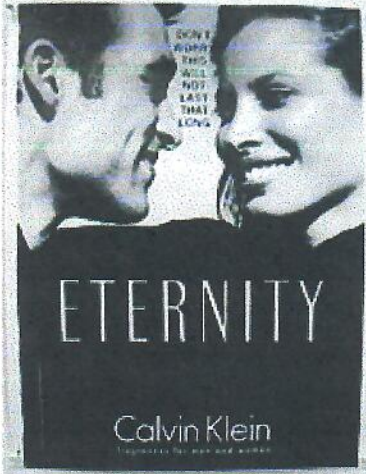


[Habib Kheradvar](#)  
left to right [Michael O. Gold, 2000](#) and [Clyde Beswick, 2000](#) at Pierogi

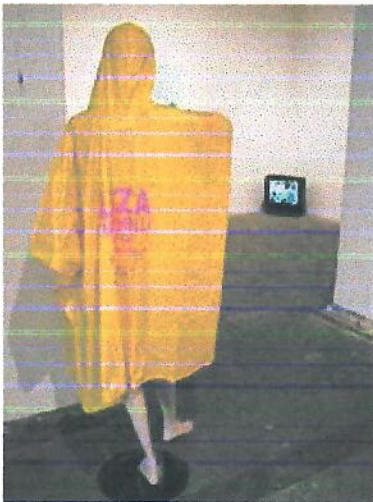




[Joe Amrhein](#)  
[Empty Shelves](#)  
2000  
at [Eyewash](#)



[Sante Scardillo](#)  
[Don't Worry It Won't Last That Long from](#)  
[Lifestyles](#)  
2000  
at [Eyewash](#)



[Cary Leibowitz/Candvass](#)  
[Liza Minelli for President](#)  
2000  
at [Momenta Art](#)



[Leslie Brack](#)  
[with her painting 21 Hottest Stars...](#)

Mexican comedian **Enrique Cuenca**. The young artist, who is comically dressed like his older counterpart, tells bad jokes that sound successful thanks to an added laughtrack.

At **Flipside** (84 Withers Street), **Meredith Allen** photographs some of Hollywood's best-known animated characters (including Bugs Bunny, Mickey Mouse and Tweety Bird) in their last moments before meltdown as edible popsicles on location in the Hamptons. Allen's last body of work explored the sexual ambiguity of kiddie rides -- the kind you stick your kid onto and feed quarters into. In this new series, dubbed "Sticky," Allen shows us what happens to an American icon if it's not quickly consumed -- it fades away.

If ice cream isn't your treat, then get on over to **Roebling Hall** at 390 Wythe Avenue on Williamsburg's South Side. **Heidi Cody's** "Branded" exhibition presents a product alphabet made from the first letters of familiar supermarket brand names (from *All to Zest*). The candy-colored letters are isolated in 28 by 28 inch lightboxes that wrap completely around the gallery. Cody delivers a seductive cart full of goodies that engage the viewer in a lively guessing game. Choose a letter for \$1,500 or take home the entire alphabet for \$35,000.

Spanish artist **Pablo Rey** fills **Holland Tunnel Art Projects** with a wall of abstract drawings inspired by a road trip from New York to Texas. Upon returning to his New York studio, Rey captured his memories of the journey through a mix of drawing, painting and collage methods on aged construction paper. The resulting body of work lights up the intimate gallery like the colorful flowers that once inhabited this former garden shed.

Flowers, serpents and birds are the subject of **Glenn Goldberg's** show at **4 1/2 Projects** in the offbeat mini-mall on Bedford Ave and 5th Street. Goldberg exhibits a site-specific wall drawing and a number of works on paper in the gallery's inaugural show, entitled "Antidotes." The abstracted two-dimensional forms seen in the small drawings are reiterated in a lively rendering on two of the gallery walls. The grouping of subjects constructs a view of paradise and conjures the mystical nature of a sand painting.

The interest in works on paper continues at "Line," a show of 12 talented artists at **Arena@Feed** at 173A N. Third Street. **Angela Wyman** makes enchanting and surreal figurative works, **Chuck Agro** paints abstract heads in shifting layers of color and **Calvin Seibert** constructs whimsical architectural fantasies. The exhibition includes artists just out of the gate (**Eric Hongisto**, **Erick Johnson**, **Cotter Luppi**, **Vargas-Suarez Universal**) and those that have already crossed the finish line (**Joanne Greenbaum**, **Giles Lyon**, **Paul Henry Ramirez**). It's a fascinating overview of drawings organized by my favorite gallerist, **Renee Riccardo** (after all, she's my wife!). Prices range from \$550 to \$1,200.

Another gallery of choice is **Bellwether** in nearby Greenpoint. Recent Yale grads **Rebecca Smith** and **Simone DiLaura** have joined forces with **Matthew Keegan** and **Daphne Fitzpatrick** to make this artist-run space a bubbling caldron of new work. All four members of the team are gifted artists in their own right and devote boundless energy to their growing community.

Since opening this past November, **Bellwether** has exhibited an admirable variety of media by a number of up-and-coming artists including **Melissa Brown**, **Sharon Core**, **Seth Kelly**, **Anissa Mack** and **Alison Smith**. A summer show titled "Kosmobiologie" will present the work of 12 "stellar" artists that guest curator, **Nancy Chaiken** has chosen to collectively represent the zodiac. The stars continue to shine brightly in Brooklyn.

**PAUL LASTER** is an artist.