

Former White Cube Director Sara Kay Opens a Blue-Chip Gallery on the Lower East Side

The Lower East Side's newest gallery comes from art world veteran Sara Kay.

By Sarah Cascone | September 18, 2017



Sara Kay. Courtesy of Ungano + Agriodimas.

The list of stops for your next Lower East Side art crawl just got a little longer—and posher. Art world veteran Sara Kay, formerly of London's White Cube and founder of the Professional Organization for Women in the Arts (POWarts), has announced the opening of her new eponymous gallery, coming to 4 East 2nd Street on September 28.

The news follows a spate of recent high-profile gallery closings—among them Andrea Rosen, Mark Weiss, and Feuer/Melser in New York—but the challenges of running a brick-and-mortar art gallery haven't dampened Kay's optimism.

"I think I always dreamed of having my own art gallery," Kay told artnet News. She's especially excited about the

space, a 19th-century townhouse with exposed brick and wide-planked floors, once home to Rivington Arms (2001–09) and most recently to American Contemporary (2011–15). “It has been vacant for a while, so I feel like it has been waiting for me.”

Kay will launch with an exhibition from the collection of Audrey Heckler, which she touted as “one of the greatest collections of Outsider art in private hands, no question,” featuring the likes of James Castle, Aloïse Corbaz, Madge



Left to right: Adolf Wölfli, Untitled (1918). Martín Ramírez, Untitled (1953). Courtesy of the Foundation to Promote Self Taught Art, Inc., New York. © 2017 Visko Hatfield.

Gill, Martín Ramírez, and Adolf Wölfli. After years of being lent out piecemeal to various exhibitions, the works will here take center stage for the first time. The show will give “such a great taste of the collection as a whole and such great insight into Audrey’s vision and her process and her passion,” said Kay.

Beyond Picasso and Outsider Art, Kay is planning an exhibition of work by Natalie Frank in March. The show is timed to the Armory Show and will be accompanied by a catalogue, *The Story of O*, with an intro by Joshua Cohen.

Showcasing the work of women artists is one of Kay’s longstanding goals. “I don’t intend to exclusively show women, but we will definitely support women artists. It’s no secret I’m an advocate for women in the field,” she said.

As POWarts, an organization that provides professional support to women in the arts, nears its tenth birthday, Kay’s new venture represents a natural culmination in her career. “I think the vision was always there,” she said, but “the art market has changed. There have been a lot of shifts in the past 20 years. All of my experience involved things that I needed to do for that vision to come together the way that it has now.”