



An artist in Graffiti Alley, located in the city's North Arts District.

Habitat: Baltimore

BY KATHERINE McMAHON

Scattered around downtown Baltimore are benches emblazoned with the phrase “Baltimore: The Greatest City in America.” By contrast, the novelist Richard Price once proclaimed the city to be “Chaos Theory incarnate.” In conversation with its inhabitants, you are likely to hear words like “lopsided” and “idiosyncratic.”

But Baltimore boasts a tight-knit arts scene that is thriving. “There’s a true support system here,” said Amy Eva Raehse, director

of the gallery Goya Contemporary. “In other cities people seem to be competing for success. The art community in Baltimore seems to be moving forward together.”

This coming fall, the director and artist John Waters, the bard of Baltimore, will have a career retrospective at the Baltimore Museum of Art titled “John Waters: Indecent Exposure.” *ARTnews* paid a visit to him as well as other artists and spaces that put the charm in Charm City.



Carolyn Case

Painter Carolyn Case has been a big part of the Baltimore art scene as it has grown in the two decades since she moved for grad school and ultimately came to teach at the Maryland Institute College of Art, one of the oldest art schools in the country. “A lot of funding for the arts has been an excellent development,” she said, “as have grants for small independent galleries, which have helped stabilize them.” She also credited free-admission policies at the Baltimore Museum and the Walters Art Museum for creating accessibility, and spoke of inspiration she finds for paintings of her own in an aging urban landscape. “This city has lots of painted-over textures: thin coats over corrugated metal, delicate layers over structures that feel weighty.”

Resort

In the wake of Nudashank, a dynamic and catalyzing gallery they ran together for four years, Alex Ebstein and Seth Adelsberger recently debuted their new Resort gallery on the ground floor of a three-story building in the Bromo Arts District. “There are a lot of large spaces and a lot of people here for the academic art community who stay and make ambitious work because they have the space to do so,” Ebstein said. In addition to their duties at the gallery—whose next exhibition, a group show titled “Noise Margins,” opens in late March—Ebstein and Adelsberger are both also practicing artists. “Even though we’re not at the center of the market,” Ebstein said, “it continues to be inspiring to live and work here.”

