

# inbrief

**Rent to Sell** | In May, Los Angeles native **Joel Mesler** opened **Rental** in New York City's newest art frontier, Chinatown. True to its name, the former mah-jongg parlor with spectacular views of the Manhattan Bridge is available for rent by galleries from outside the city. It's the East Coast version of Rental in L.A., which Mesler has run since July 2005 and plans to reopen after a hiatus next April.

Having hosted a couple of group shows, Rental New York took on as its first official tenant **Parker Jones**, who runs the edgy L.A.-based gallery **Black Dragon Society**. In late August, Jones installed 13 paintings—dark portraits and spooky still lifes riffing on Old Masters (see image below)—by fellow Angeleno **Charles Karubian**, 38, for a show held September 1 through 30. Prices were modest, for today's market, at \$2,000 to \$8,500.

In the week after his exhibition opened, Jones saw about a dozen people each day, but not just anyone, he says: "These are collectors and curators, who are specifically seeking out the gallery or the artist." And before long, the show sold out—Karubian's works are now in the collections of Athens industrialist **Dakis Joannou**, **Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit** trustee **Burt Aaron**, **Marc and Livia Strauss**, who run the **Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art**, and Italian artist **Maurizio Cattelan**.

"This is a bridge between the L.A., New York and European markets," says Mesler. But will tenants find it profitable? Mesler is reticent about what he charges. "I'll publish that in my memoirs," he says coyly. SARAH DOUGLAS

