

Oliver Twist

Rental

120 East Broadway, at Allen Street,
Lower East Side
Through June 16

Rental, the latest addition to the expanding Lower East Side gallery scene, is the first one to have the light and views — if not the interior design — of a Chelsea space, thanks to its location on the sixth floor of a corner building with big windows. But that is not its distinguishing characteristic: true to its name, and like its predecessor in Los Angeles, Rental is for rent to selected out-of-town dealers. The first Rental was founded in 2005 by Daniel Hug and

Joel Mesler; the New York version has been set up by Mr. Mesler.

This could unsettle the gallery scene's home-away balance of power in interesting ways. Dealers who give artists their first shows elsewhere will not necessarily have to hand them over to New York galleries to obtain exposure here. They can do the work, walk the walk and talk the spiel themselves.

The next show, opening June 23, will be organized by Trudi, who runs a tiny space in Los Angeles. This fall brings the Cologne dealer Christian Nagel, followed by Sister Gallery and the Black Dragon Society from Los Angeles and Raster Gallery from Warsaw.

In any event, Rental's inaugural exhibition, a group show called "Oliver Twist," is an ecumenical, seemingly rushed mishmash of work by 29 artists — all represented by future renters of Rental — that ranges from figurative to abstract and from oil on canvas to whatever. The better-known participants include Chris Johanson, Evan Holloway, Katie Grinnan, Jason Meadows and Rebecca Quaytman, and all the efforts confirm that the current direction of contemporary art is anyone's guess.

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