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Shutting Shop

On Andrea Rosen



Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "Untitled" (*Blue Placebo*) (1991). Candies individually wrapped in blue cellophane, endless supply. Installation view: *Gods and Goods: Spiritualità e Confusione di Massa [Gods and Goods: Spirituality and Mass Confusion]*. Villa Manin, Centro d'Arte Contemporanea, Passariano, Codroipo, Italy. 20 Apr. - 28 Sept. 2008. Cur. Francesco Bonami and Sarah Cosulich Canarutto. Catalogue © The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation. Courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York

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Published 28 February 2017 in [Allan's Intro](#)

New York - The lack of ability to fulfill one's capacity—to be inspired, inspiring and original—is hardly the case with [Andrea Rosen](#). The recent [announcement](#) that she would be closing her gallery saddens and troubles me deeply.

Every once in a while, someone comes along who has a finger on the pulse of a new sensibility in art. Andrea got the 1990s as right as did [Leo Castelli](#) the 1960s; [Paula Cooper](#) the 1970s; and [Metro Pictures](#) the 1980s. Her exhibitions of work by her core stable of artists—led by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, John Currin, Sean Landers, Wolfgang Tillmans and Andrea Zittel—defined a new era in art. I learned about this generation through her.

As times have changed, Andrea has adapted, rethought and repositioned. In recent years she has mounted significant exhibitions of work by artists of earlier decades who had been overlooked.

Now, though, she is shutting shop. I have no doubt that Andrea will continue to share her infectious faith in the art she holds dear, and to be a meaningful contributor to this tribe of people who believe in art. But, her decision to close speaks to a wider issue in our industry.

For several years, many of us could not help but be concerned about how much the middle of the market has been challenged. While the growth of interest in art and in its value (in all senses of the word) is truly sensational—it is a fulfillment of belief in the creative power of art—the market has become so damn efficient that it is suffocating a crucial sector of the gallery system as we have known it, the part that has nurtured and financed whole generations of artists who were never big money-makers. The international art market that developed around New York's unparalleled community of artists has now eclipsed it.

In recent years we have witnessed numerous young and fledgling galleries close their doors (this happens with every generation). But Andrea's gallery—one of the most significant of our times—was a mature and fully staffed operation. Her decision to close is courageous, yet concerning. It is a signifier that a calling that was rarely driven by ambitions to be big business (but that could rise to it) is becoming consolidated and industrialized, like so many businesses—from banking to music. In the process, much of the life, eccentricity and nobility involved in the commitment to embracing risks by collectors, dealers and—I am afraid—even artists are being sucked out of our industry.

This is a major turning point that will expand success among a reduced population of major dealers. With that, will come great loss—of texture, community and creativity. Through the course of this editorial project—via articles, podcasts and other projects—we will dive into the issue of how to harness the strength of the market whilst maintaining a commitment to supporting the new as being of central importance in art.