

## An Arts Crawl, All in a Browser



Photographs by Suzanne DeChillo/The New York Times

**ON THE TOUR** Sonya Blesofsky, an installation artist, and Vargas-Suarez Universal, a muralist, show their work on Studio Visit.

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SITTING in the lounge at Heathrow Airport last month, [MoMA](#)'s chief curator at large and P.S. 1's director, Klaus Biesenbach, did a quick tour of some artists' studios, logging on to Studio Visit, a new site that lets artists and collectives exhibit their works on the Web.

The Internet has been an alternative display outlet for artists since the late 1990s, allowing them to show and sell their work. It has proved so popular — millions of artists have Web sites — that users are often overwhelmed by the choices.

[Studio Visit](#), officially opened by [P.S. 1](#) on Feb. 1, combines the museum's tradition of presenting work by emerging artists with a reference tool that puts information on hundreds of artists at your fingertips.

The site's studio tour includes — along with images and video of the artists' works — an image of each artist's studio building, a brief statement by the artist, images of the studio's interior and a satellite map showing the location. For now, the site is limited to artists living and working in the New York metropolitan area. In its first month, more than 750 people have signed up, mostly young and emerging artists living and working in Dumbo and other Brooklyn neighborhoods.

Among them is [Sonya Blesofsky](#), a 32-year-old installation artist with a studio in her Williamsburg home. She regularly applies online to calls for shows and residences and didn't hesitate to sign up with Studio Visit after hearing about it from a curator at P.S. 1.

"I try to apply to and be involved in as many things as possible," she said. "It is the possibility of another set of eyes looking at my work."

The site is averaging 6,500 hits a day, but on some days the traffic has climbed as high as 13,700, Mr. Biesenbach said, adding, “We have been sort of overwhelmed by the response.”

Created by a P.S. 1 Web designer on a budget of \$2,500, the site “is basic, but effective and user-friendly,” said [Miya Ando](#), 32, a sculptor with a studio in a warehouse on J Street, right on the water in Dumbo. She, too, was excited by the networking potential.

“I looked at the site, looked who was in there already, found some people I knew and so decided to do it,” she said. “It was a 15-minute thing, so really didn’t require much effort at all.”

Ms. Ando posted her submission in early February and quickly heard from several artists, “e-mailing me saying they loved my work and wanted to do a project together,” she said.

It is no surprise given the volume of submissions, but the quality varies tremendously. In a way, that is the point, says Rafael Vargas-Suarez, 37, of Brooklyn, who under the name [Vargas-Suarez Universal](#) makes zany wall murals and paints on aluminum thermal blankets.

“It is about giving everyone a shot,” he said. “It is not about personality or networking. It is about the art.” The strength of the site is the number of little-known artists, many starting their careers. Among them are Mike Estabrook and Ernest Concepcion of the [Shining Mantis](#), a collective of artists who create sprawling, graffiti-like battle drawings they call Kangarok.

Mr. Biesenbach said that artists’ work would remain on the site for at least one month and that he planned to invite outside curators to pick artists to stay on longer.

“Right now anyone can join and there is no limit to the number of artists, but at some point I can see a need to positively edit it, so that it doesn’t become like a telephone book,” he said. “If it gets too big, then nobody will read it anymore. It will become like more white noise.”