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Art in 'Alphabetland'

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The ABC's (and D's) of the Exploding East Village Scene

IN JUST A FEW SHORT YEARS, the East Village—once notorious for its burned-out tenements and overlively drug traffic—has emerged as a new and vibrant force on the New York art scene, promising, in the words of *New York Times* art critic Grace Glueck, "to erupt into Manhattan's third art district, after Uptown and SoHo." More than a dozen galleries, art bars and not-for-profit spaces—bearing names like Nature Morte, Fun, Gracie Mansion, Redbar, Limbo Lounge and Kenkeleba—have sprung up, transforming one of Manhattan's poorest neighborhoods into a highly active scene created largely of, by and for a new group of young and dynamic artists and dealers.

Piezo Electric has hosted a group exhibition, "29 Artists from the Lower East Side," and has shown work by, among others, Rick Prol and Dan Asher. Prol's boldly colored paintings depict angular figures who might be familiar to many residents of the area—living, as his subjects do, with bathtubs in their kitchen, water up to their knees, cracked windows, broken bottles and the ever-present threat—or aftereffects—of violence.