

**NEW  
YORK  
BY  
NEW  
YORK**

**Opposite:** Piet Mondrian, *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, 1942–43. Oil on canvas, 50 x 50 in. This playful work by the Dutch painter depicts his love for the Big Apple and one of its most famous streets.

**Endpages:** A map of Lower and Midtown Manhattan, northern Brooklyn, and western Queens.

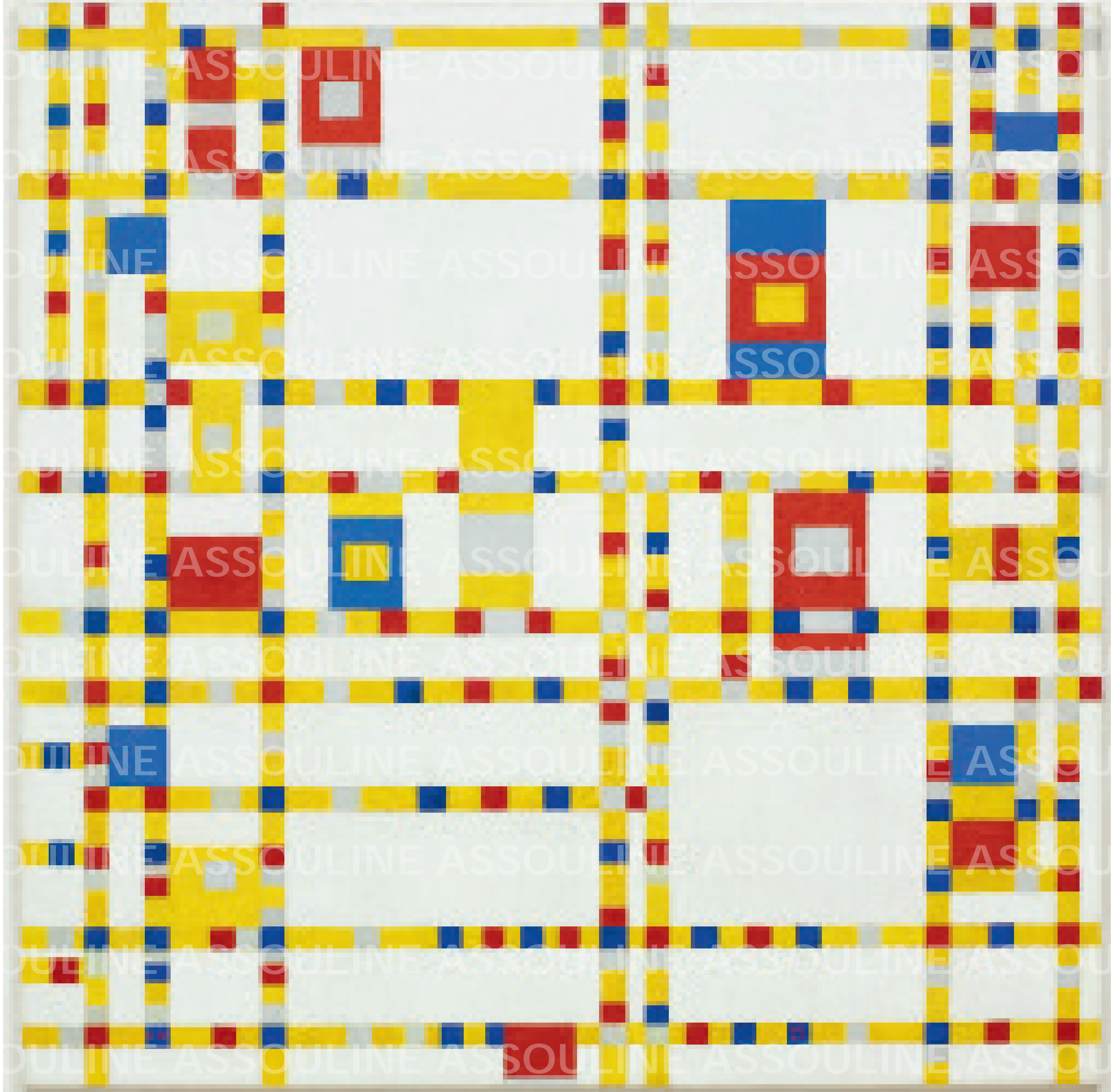
**Pages 6–7:** Downtown Manhattan captured by Gilles Bensimon. Kenmare Street, a corner of which is featured in this photograph, connects the neighborhoods of Nolita and Little Italy.

**Pages 8–9:** Rapper Maya Arulpragasam, better known as M.I.A., swings over the city in this photograph by Ryan McGinley.

**Page 10:** American cinematographer William H. Daniels, center left, behind the camera filming Jules Dassin's *The Naked City*, mid-1940s.

**Page 11:** *Naked City*, a police drama series that aired in the 1950s and 1960s, was inspired by Dassin's 1948 film.

**Page 13:** Bernard Boutet de Monvel, *New York*, 1930. Oil on canvas, 17 x 17 in. This work is part of a series in which the artist tried to capture the modernity of a city under construction.





By Wendell Jamieson  
Foreword by Jay McInerney

*For Dean and Paulina, my little New Yorkers.*  
—Wendell Jamieson

*A little tribute to the New York I love.*  
—Martine Assouline

NEW  
YORK  
BY  
NEW  
YORK

ASSOULINE

Slipcase back: Vik Muniz, *New York City by Night, After Berenice Abbott*  
(From *Pictures of Diamonds*), 2004. C-print, 60 x 48 in. ©TKTK.  
Front cover: Architects dressed as their world-renowned  
New York City buildings for the Beaux Arts Ball in 1931. ©TKTK.

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## foreword

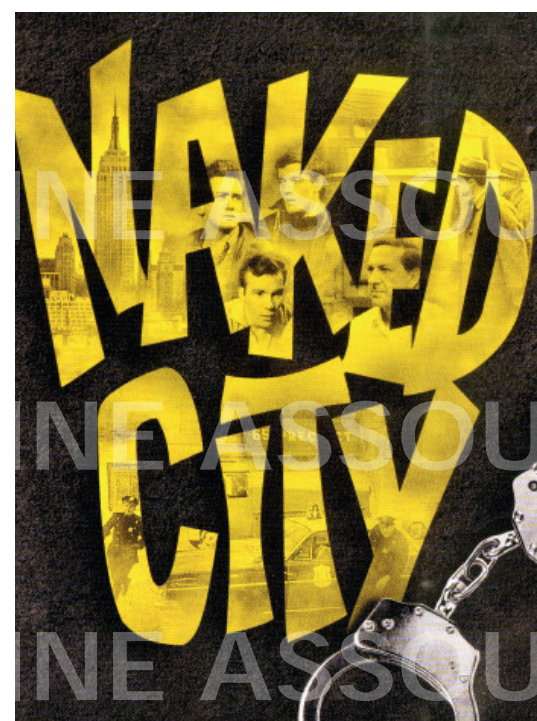
by Jay McInerney

I grew up in the suburbs, that neither-here-nor-there region that was, for me, alternately located somewhere outside of Boston, Detroit, Vancouver, London, and yes—New York City. My father was an upwardly mobile corporate executive, and I was constantly uprooted, only to be replanted in places that looked pretty much the same as the ones I had left behind. When I was about six or seven, living in Michigan, I encountered a television show called *Naked City*, a noirish urban drama anthology, every week a new story from the gritty streets of New York.

*Naked City* came on precisely at my bedtime, the tawdry and presumably illicit nature of the subject matter amplified by the sense that it took place after I was banished to my bed. I assumed that if only I could watch the show, I would get to see actual nakedness, the word “naked” being enough to send my preteen brain into a frenzy of speculation. Before I was sent from the room I would sometimes see the opening sequence, hear the tough-guy narrator announcing over a shot of the skyline of New York: “There are eight million stories in the Naked City. This is one of them.” It was astonishing to look at that aerial view of the cityscape and think about the fact that there were so many lives intertwined and coinciding on those streets and in those buildings.

As a young man without a hometown, and a writer in search of a subject, I was inevitably drawn to New York. If man is the social animal, I reasoned, then the city is surely his natural environment. And New York was the great American city, even if it wasn’t really part of America. It also seemed to me that New York was the center of the literary world, which I wanted to be a member of. It was the headquarters of publishing and journalism and almost everything that anyone could ever want to write about. As a novelist, I love its manic energy and its inexhaustible store of characters.

When I first moved to Manhattan at the end of 1979, the city was considerably dirtier and more dangerous, but to me and my friends, that was part of the appeal. You might get mugged, your apartment would probably get robbed by a junkie, and the subways worked only about half the time, but damn, was it exciting. The Clash was



playing at Tramps. That was indeed Lou Reed sitting next to you at the Mudd Club. And there was Norman Mailer walking across the street at Sheridan Square. We couldn't believe we were here, and sometimes we would look at each other and repeat Stevie Wonder's line, "Wow, New York, just like I pictured it." We all arrived with a mythic image of the city from movies and television, from songs and novels. And we were all here to create our own myths, to find our own place in a landscape that was larger than life.

New York is a place of extremes—the biggest, loudest, richest, tallest. It is the Olduvai Gorge of contemporary anthropology, where all the strata of American society are simultaneously exposed. Like Dickens's London, it is a place of radical juxtapositions of rich and poor, grand and squalid. As a lost boy in search of a home, I found New York very accommodating in its own careless, indifferent way. If you want to be a New Yorker—so, okay, guy, you're a New Yorker. There's no test. Your family name isn't terribly important; in fact, some New Yorkers, fashion models in particular, dispense with family names altogether. America may be a melting pot, but in New York there's no pressure to melt or to blend to fit in—nothing qualifies as heterogeneous on the streets of New York. Everything and everyone fits. It's a city of immigrants, of freaks, of people who don't belong elsewhere. You don't even need to speak the language so long as you can count in dollars and cents. You won't be judged by your accent, but you will be judged by your shoes. Appearances count here. As a New York resident in the late seventies, Joe Jackson sang, "You gotta look sharp!" His words still ring true today.

Manhattan has changed a great deal since I first arrived; most of the restaurants and clubs I used to frequent in my twenties are gone, and so are some of my old friends. And the city has become much more prosperous and less dangerous. Sometimes I fear it's less creative. Manhattan is no longer the only place to be: Brooklyn and even Queens have become havens for new young arrivals to the city. But New York is always transforming itself; change is the constant. I find it heartening that 1.2 million people in their twenties live in the city and many of them are writing novels, painting paintings, starting blogs. Young people still come to the city to make their fortunes; they still have their hearts broken; they still go out late at night to nightclubs and bars, sometimes consuming illicit substances along the way—the same substances we consumed in the eighties. The landscape changes, but this is still the place you come to search for your dreams. I feel the characters from my fiction all around me.

Whenever I return to the city and see the skyline rising above the Long Island Expressway, I think of what the fictional Nick Carraway observed, following this same trajectory more than ninety years ago across the pages of *The Great Gatsby*. Driving in from Long Island in Gatsby's great car, Carraway sees the "white heaps and sugar lumps" of the incomparable skyline and observes that "the city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and beauty in the world." And as he crosses the East River, he thinks, "Anything can happen now that we've slid over this bridge, anything at all." That wouldn't make a bad epigraph for a contemporary novel set in New York. Anything can still happen, which is why I live and write in New York.





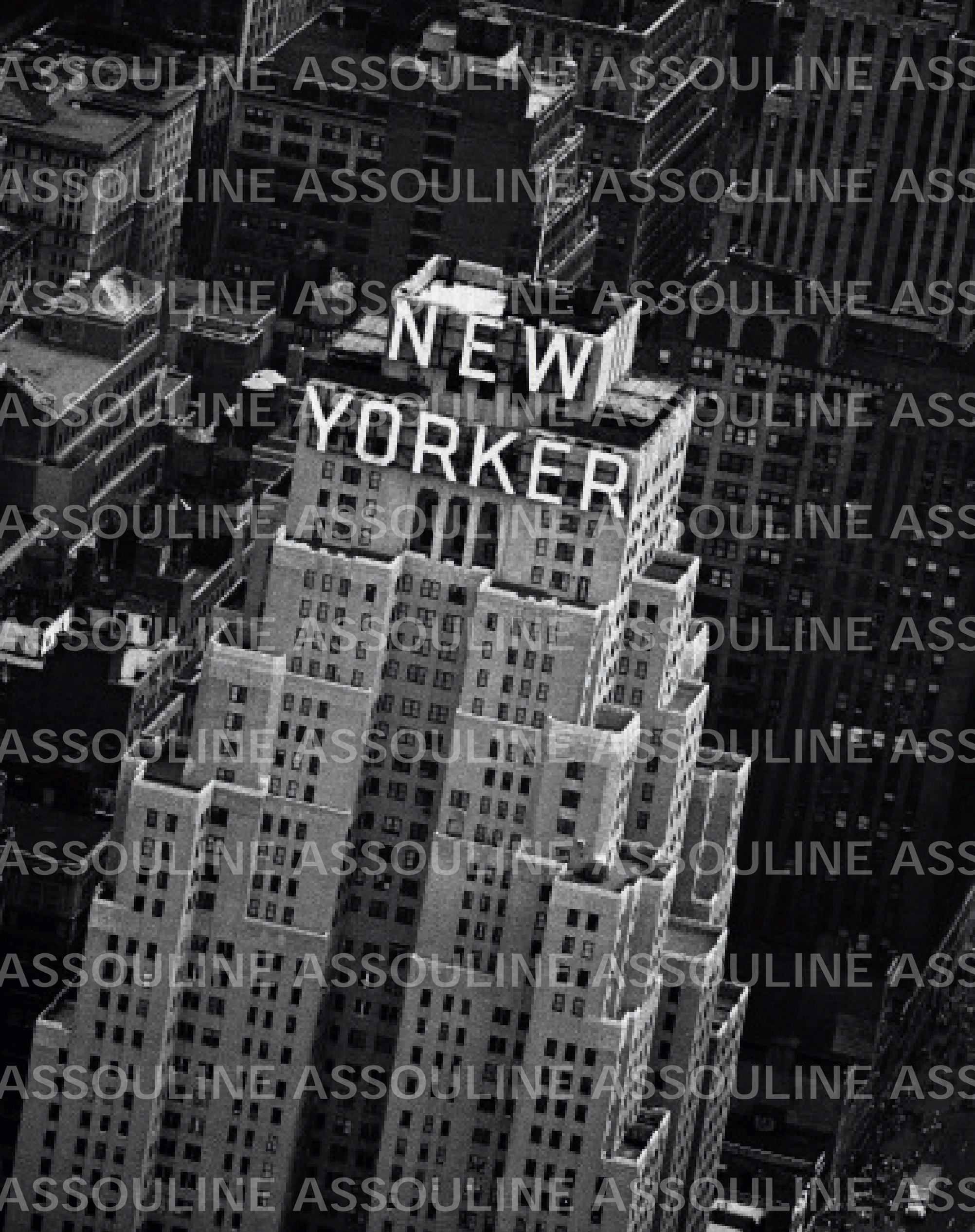
**Opposite:** Filmed in Manhattan, the 1971 action film *Shaft* features Richard Roundtree, pictured here, as private detective John Shaft.

**Page 16:** The Wyndham New Yorker Hotel, here photographed by Peter Lindbergh, used to house its own print shop and private radio station, and even an ice skating rink.

**Page 18:** Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis crossing Fifth Avenue, 1971.

**Page 19:** Dennis Stock's famous 1955 photo of James Dean alone in the rain in the middle of Times Square.





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## introduction

New York City drinks and dances in its darkest moments.

When Prohibition settled in with its do-gooder arrogance in the 1920s, thousands of speakeasies sprang to life and filled up. In the 1970s, when crime ruled the streets and arson lit the sky, Studio 54 pulsed in a glittering nocturnal orgy of disco, sex, and cocaine.

New York City finds the dark in its brightest moments.

The boom years after World War II gave birth to a new kind of urban dread. The macho, taut-suspender days of Wall Street in the 1980s, money-flowing, Gordon Gekko-praising greed, ended in handcuffs and a crash.

New York City doesn't just contradict itself—it argues with itself.

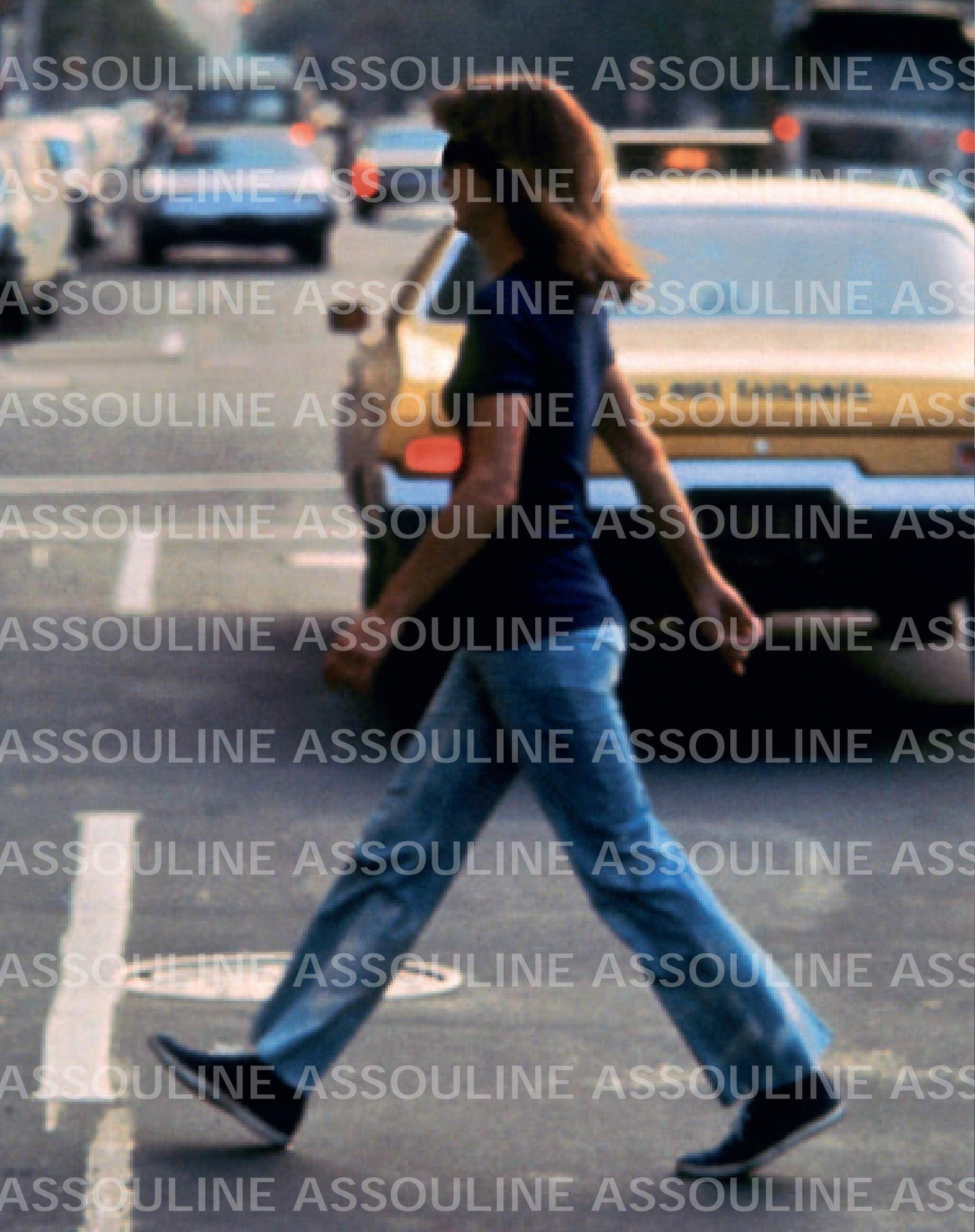
The spectacularly rich and destitute poor share its streets—they did in the muted hand-colored tones of the Gilded Age, and they do today, in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Stately brownstones built for lawyers and merchants and financiers empty out and are chopped into rooming houses until they are bought again, first by artists, then by lawyers and merchants and financiers.

Perhaps the only constants in New York City are the contrasts themselves.

The warmth of the Ashcan School artists like Robert Henri and John Sloan, whose painterly strokes captured the rushing streets and elevated trains in the first decade of the twentieth century, gave way to the fractured figures of the Cubists, who arrived with the Armory Show of 1913. And they were ancient history by the time American abstraction took hold in the 1950s, with artists like Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning exploding shapes even further, leading in what felt like a split second to the Pop Art of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein and the art world's move to a fading industrial corner of Lower Manhattan known as SoHo.

So New York City churns and builds, up and up and up, and wipes away what came before. Some of those stately brownstones were replaced by apartment buildings clad in pseudo-Roman columns, details stripped from the facades of buildings that rose a few decades later—form follows function, after all. Eventually, exterior walls themselves were gone entirely, replaced by glass.









Helicopters fly over the waters of the Hudson River with the Statue of Liberty in the background. There are multiple heliports in Manhattan, positioned on the Hudson and East rivers.

But it is still unequivocally, undeniably, inarguably New York.

But what is the true spirit of New York?

It is something different to everyone who inhabits it—for a lifetime, for a half-decade after college before raising the kids in the suburbs, for a few years as an expat, for a few weeks as a tourist.

It is energy and relentless change. It is a packed subway car. It is the harbor on a big blue day, the water green and dotted with whitecaps edged as if with Spackle. It is a yellow taxi or a grimy bar. It is a new restaurant with appetizers that look like spare abstract paintings. It is children of every color rushing to catch the school bus. It is a homeless person in a doorway. It is an art opening in Chelsea or a preview on Broadway followed by a drink at Sardi's. It is cyclists on the Brooklyn Bridge. It is the Parachute Jump at Coney Island. It is a cloud of steam rising from a hole in the asphalt. It is Korean food in Flushing, Queens, or Dominican food



**Above:** Actresses Kristin Davis, Kim Cattrall, and Cynthia Nixon, stars of HBO's hit series *Sex and the City* alongside Sarah Jessica Parker, shoot a promotional video for the show on the Brooklyn Bridge. Cynthia Nixon launched her campaign to run for governor of New York in March 2018.  
**Following pages:** Street life in Manhattan captured by Peter Lindbergh.

in the Bronx. It is beautiful young people in Midtown on the first warm day of spring. It is opening night of the New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center. It is a businesswoman walking to work in a cream-colored Chanel suit and sneakers. It is the crowds at Beach 110th Street in the Rockaways. It is police officers running with their hands on their holsters. It is the sun setting at the foot of an east-west Manhattan street for two days each year. It is a plate of red-sauce pasta. It is twentysomethings looking at their phones when they should be watching where they walk. It is a bartender with a spectacular beard expertly mixing a Boulevardier. It is a rolled-down metal gate on the coldest day of the year or a fire hydrant spraying on the hottest.

It is noise, always noise—honking horns and screeching tires, stories and laughter loudly shared on street corners in a hundred languages, the wail of a fire engine in the distance, the rumble of a subway train beneath







Four iconic images of New York. From left: Alfred Eisenstaedt's famous photo of an American sailor kissing a white-uniformed nurse in Times Square after news of victory in World War II in 1945; an unforgettable portrait of John Lennon at the Statue of Liberty, taken in October 1974 when he was fighting deportation; Marilyn Monroe leans over the balcony of the Ambassador Hotel on Park Avenue in March 1955; one of John Cerisoli's models of King Kong poised atop a Manhattan skyscraper in a scene from the classic 1933 movie.

**“And New York is the  
far from it. No urban  
after squares of flame,  
our poetry, for we have**

**most beautiful city in the world? It is not  
night is like the night there.... Squares  
set up and cut into the aether. Here is  
pulled down the stars to our will.”**

**EZRA POUND**





your feet, a jackhammer on a Monday morning, or the hiss of treble and the  $\frac{4}{4}$  *thump-thump-thump* of bass leaking out of a dance club.

It is being seen around the world as a leader and a center—of art, of theater, of business, and even, begrudgingly, of health. Under the administration of Michael R. Bloomberg in the early 2000s, New York instituted strict anti-smoking laws. The world followed, even Paris. *Mon dieu.*

It is the ability to move beyond the tragedies without truly overcoming them: the cold December night John Lennon was shot in front of the Dakota apartment building on the Upper West Side; the bright September morning the World Trade Center was destroyed. If you were in the city at those moments, you cannot ever let them go, try as you might.

Those who pass through the city carry it with them for the rest of their lives. They embrace the restaurants and the nights, are impressed and even made anxious by the skyscrapers, find romance and love.

Those of us who were born in the city and never left look up one day at all the glass and say to ourselves, *What is this place? It changed around us and we didn't notice.* But what can we do? We keep moving.

The epochs of New York City layer themselves on top of each other like the experiences of those who walk its streets. The spirit of each can be sensed, sometimes just below the surface, sometimes right on top. Squint on a winter night: Here is where a horse-drawn carriage waited, clouds of smoke furling from its puller's nostrils, in 1888; here is where a speakeasy admitted just the right people; here is where a man was stabbed to death; here is where a farm thrived on Staten Island; here is where the hottest restaurant once buzzed...where the doorman of the most storied nightclub stood watch...where rock band Television played.

All gone now.



**Above:** The cover of William Klein's book *New York 1954-55*. Klein is a filmmaker and photographer working in New York and Paris.  
**Opposite:** Artist Clifford Land painted this mural, commissioned by Donna Karan herself, in just ten days in 1992. Land worked for eight-hour stretches to finish the masterpiece, which was displayed on Broadway in SoHo for seventeen years.  
**Following pages:** The Chrysler Building shrouded in fog as viewed from Park Avenue.







The City and the Storm

introduction

Yet the spirit remains. Some say that New York City has become Disneyland, that its soul has been drywalled behind a panorama of bank branches and chain stores and those cookie-cutter glass buildings filled with outrageously priced apartments.

Yes, that is this epoch; and like all those that came before and those to come, there's good and bad.

But it is still New York.

Before the heat sets in on a July morning, take a walk from the Flower District in the West Twenties across town and up Second Avenue to Sixty-eighth Street. It should take about an hour. You will see the city in all its color and energy, the day shaking off the night, the sidewalks still bright from a predawn shower, the first few drinkers taking their barstools; and you will hear a dozen conversations: between students rushing to summer classes at the Fashion Institute of Technology, between businessmen striding briskly in pairs, between gossipy neighbors, or shouted from trucks to those on the sidewalks and back again. You will hear jokes and observations and compassion and a remarkable number of curses, and you will know that whatever it is, New York City is not Disneyland.

Or you can take a longer journey, one backward and forward in time through the moments and images—*especially* the images—that have captured the city in all its moods and eras since its modern life began. Savor them, because New York City is both permanent and fleeting, and that's perhaps the greatest contradiction of all.

**Above, top:** *New York* magazine, originally a Sunday supplement to the *World Journal Tribune*, launched as an independent weekly in 1968.  
**Above, bottom:** In 2002, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced a plan to ban all indoor smoking in the city. Unsurprisingly, New York newspapers lashed out in fear that the ban would detract from the city's character. Ultimately, Bloomberg's decision marked the beginning of a global war on tobacco.  
**Opposite:** Nighttime view of the New York City skyline, photographed in the aftermath of the 2012 superstorm Sandy for the November 5, 2012 cover of *New York* magazine.  
**Page 32:** Frequently touted as the birthplace of graffiti, New York's streets often showcase dramatic tributes to the city.  
**Page 33:** The city skyline viewed from across the East River during a World War II dimout in 1943.







**“The true New Yorker  
secretly believes that  
people living anywhere  
else have to be, in some  
sense, kidding.”**

JOHN UPDIKE



# the gilded age

## *The Sumptuous Town*

It was a small, sumptuous town then—for the lucky ones. Ensconced in row houses of brownstone brown, thick oriental carpets beneath their slippered feet, their hands sliding down banisters of polished mahogany, New York’s old moneyed class experienced lives of cosseted luxury.

They spent summers in Newport, Rhode Island, and rode their carriages through that new expanse of planned wilderness at the northern border of their hometown, the not-yet-appropriately-named Central Park. Mansions sprouted all along upper Fifth Avenue and gaslights burned a muted orange in the yards of houses around another leafy pocket of Manhattan, this one in the East Twenties, Gramercy Park. Here was perhaps the greatest luxury of all: privacy. You had a key to the wrought-iron gate only if you could afford to live across the street.

Mark Twain would call this the Gilded Age, and it’s when New York City truly came into its own as a world capital of money and progress, a city to rival Paris and London. To feel the spirit of New York today, one must first journey back to those days, for in those fleeting instances and the conflict they held between old and new, the soul of the modern city was born.



**Above:** Financier J. P. Morgan, a founder of the U.S. Steel Corporation, donated many works to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and his grandiose book collection became accessible to the public as the Morgan Library & Museum, solidifying his place in New York City history.

**Opposite:** The Vanderbilt mansion on Fifth Avenue, 1910.

**“It was the old New York way...the way people who dreaded scandal more than disease, who placed decency above courage, and who considered that nothing was more ill-bred than ‘scenes,’ except those who gave rise to them.”**

EDITH WHARTON, *The Age of Innocence*







**Above:** South Street Seaport in 1828. Today the area is a popular tourist attraction, housing shops, restaurants, and museums.  
**Previous pages:** A casual stroll near Madison Square circa 1900.

**T**he Gilded Age began, those who named it in hindsight concur, in the 1870s. The social rules and mores were as strict—if not stricter—back then as they were in those grand old capitals across the Atlantic Ocean. The New York City high season ran roughly from November to February, and the reigning social lions had a place on “the 400,” a list of the city’s wealthiest citizens, all with roots in the days of the Dutch, capped at the maximum number of guests who could be accommodated by Caroline Webster Schermerhorn Astor for her annual ball at her mansion at Fifth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street.

But there was new money in town, families who couldn’t trace their lineage back all that far and who had made their fortunes by earning them, and they wanted to come to the ball, too. They had names like Vanderbilt and Morgan and had made their money selling goods during the Civil War, in railroads, or as merchants. Some found this new breed distasteful, even vulgar. But as they got richer and richer, Mrs. Astor allowed them into her world.

Edith Wharton captured this epoch in *The Age of Innocence*, in which the romantic hopes and dreams of a striving young lawyer are elegantly strangled by the strict social codes. You can almost hear on those pages the clip-clopping hooves of the horses as they pull hansom cabs down lower Madison Avenue. Martin Scorsese directed a movie of the novel in 1993, the camera reveling in the plush textures of the thickly upholstered furniture and the painterly strokes of the portraits, landscapes, and still lifes hanging on the walls.

## But outside, everything was changing.

The city boiled with energy and expansion. Buildings shot skyward. Gaslight gave way to electric light. Bridges spanned rivers, the most iconic being the Brooklyn Bridge, whose Gothic towers stood higher than the rooftops in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Crossed at first by trolleys, it helped to create new neighborhoods in Brooklyn—like Park Slope—which became, in a sense, the city’s first suburbs. Subways burrowed relentlessly underground while the Els rattled above, knitting distant



P. T. Barnum’s American Museum was once located on the corner of Broadway and Ann Street. In typical Barnum fashion, the museum was quite strange, yet incredibly educational.

neighborhoods together. In 1898, the cities of New York (Manhattan), Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island were combined.

Steam presses allowed newspapers to publish hundreds of thousands of copies—the first true mass media. Legions of newsboys hawked them in the streets—that is, until they went on strike. Shopping became entertainment, a pastime. In the afternoons, women strolled down Manhattan’s Ladies’ Mile, coveting \$500 velvet dresses—every young woman should have one, if not two—and stopping at stores like Lord & Taylor, Siegel-Cooper, and the grandest of them all, Stern Brothers. You could make a whole day of it. The area was roughly between Sixth Avenue and Broadway and Fourteenth and Twenty-third streets. Ornamental cast-



iron facades with giant windows and triumphant entryways flanked by majestic columns announced to consumers that wondrous and wondrously expensive goods were to be had within.

A new art form was born: photography. One of its first commercial purveyors was William Henry Jackson, whose images of New York City, black-and-white and then hand-painted in muted shades of blue and brown, capture this city of contrasts and change. El trestles throw slotted shadows onto cobblestone streets where trolleys and horses compete for space. Bathers, including a man in a suit and tie, enjoy the surf in the Rockaways in Queens. Laundry lines hang between tenements while, in the hazy distance, the first skyscrapers rise. Trinity Church downtown, once the tallest spire in Manhattan, is dwarfed by new office buildings and hotels.

As New Yorkers spread out from Manhattan, Manhattan itself moved inexorably uptown. In 1884, the Dakota opened on Central Park West. A mountain of brick and stone, it was surrounded by a moat and had dumbwaiters in each apartment for residents who wanted to send meals homeward from the building’s dining hall. Why live in a row house when you could live in a spacious apartment as if in a hotel? Restaurants competed for attention and customers. Most famously, Delmonico’s, which had brought fine dining to New York decades before and had now moved to a cavernous home on Forty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue, battled with Sherry’s, across the street.

Old money still went to Delmonico’s for Lobster Newburg, roast suckling pig, and *veau à la portugaise*. It had been one of the first restaurants to admit women, as long as they were on the arm of a male customer.

**Opposite:** The Astors, one of the most famous families in history, epitomize the glimmer and glitz of the Gilded Age in New York City.  
**Following pages:** New York’s many parades are popular attractions for tourists and locals alike, as shown in this Easter Parade scene on Fifth Avenue in 1897.  
**Page 44:** Figures of the Gilded Age were often treated as royalty, and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt III is no exception. In this photograph from 1941, she sits in a Louis XVI-inspired room of her luxurious Fifth Avenue mansion.  
**Page 45:** Edmund C. Tarbell, *Henry Clay Frick and Daughter Helen*, circa 1910. Oil on canvas, 31 x 23 in. Frick’s former residence now houses the Frick Collection at East Seventieth Street.





**“The only  
credential the  
city asked was the  
boldness to dream.  
for those who  
did, it unlocked  
its gates and its  
treasures, not  
caring who they  
were or where they  
came from.”**

MOSS HART, *Act One*







But the newly minted rich loved Sherry’s. The slogan of the founder, Louis Sherry, was “Never disappoint a customer!” Here, lavish theme parties allowed the wealthy to show off.

The New York Riding Club had its white-tie banquet there—on horseback. Champagne had to be sipped through lengthy straws from saddlebags. “It was the first dinner party in American history requiring stable boys with dustpans to augment the regular staff,” wrote Michael and Ariane Batterberry in *On the Town in New York*, their tour through the city’s dining history.

The opulent interior of Sherry’s was designed by Stanford White, the legendary, hard-living architect with a taste for philandering who, with his firm McKim, Mead & White, designed numerous Beaux Arts structures that today define that era, including the arch at Washington Square Park, the second Madison Square Garden, and numerous private clubs. He was just one of the big personalities who filled the earliest gossip columns. Other big names included James Buchanan Brady, or Diamond Jim; Oscar Hammerstein; and “Gentleman Jim” Corbett, a noted boxer. Their wealth shined on them, and they embraced all the worldly pleasures life could offer.

And that’s what got Stanford White killed.

He’d long had a reputation as a rake, and one of his more well-known conquests had been Evelyn Nesbit, a famous showgirl. She married Harry K. Thaw, an eccentric playboy and heir to a railroad fortune, and perhaps unadvisedly told him about her early dalliances with the much older architect. Unable to control his jealousy, Thaw shot White in the head on the roof of Madison Square Garden as tuxedo-clad diners dove for cover and champagne glasses smashed to the floor; then he surrendered to a fireman, the only person around in a uniform.

Two trials, both public sensations. Nesbit, twenty-two, recounted the life she had once lived with White: his mirrored boudoir, her rides—naked rides, that is—atop a red velvet swing that he would push. Thousands of citizens jammed the streets to get any glimpse of her. After the second trial, Thaw was declared insane.

This was the first so-called Murder of the Century (there would be plenty of others), the first true live blockbuster media sensation trials, each development chronicled in afternoon editions. It could perhaps be seen as the final tawdry eclipse of that fleeting age.

New York builds over itself again and again and again. Only a few homesteads and churches survive from the Dutch days, only a few blocks from the Colonial era and the years before the Civil War. But whole swaths of the Gilded Age city remain. In a way, it is the first era in the city’s history that can still be experienced today. The grand facades of Ladies’ Mile remain along Sixth Avenue, though the stores now have names like Bed Bath & Beyond and ABC Carpet & Home. Whole blocks of the Upper West Side in Manhattan and Park Slope retain that quiet brownstone beauty. But perhaps nowhere is the feeling of this vanished era more enveloping than around Gramercy Park.

Walking along the south side of the park—which is still private and requires a key—you can glance up at the second-story window of the National Arts Club, once a mansion owned by Samuel J. Tilden, New York’s twenty-fifth governor, and glimpse beaded chandeliers and gilt frames on oil paintings and burnished wooden beams crisscrossing luminescent tiled ceilings. Next door is The Players, a theatrical club that opened in 1888 and inhabits what was once a banker’s town house. Spiked iron lanterns stand watch before the entryway, and amber light glows from within.

Walking down the block and turning left, you’ll pass in front of 34 Gramercy Park East, where marble Corinthian columns grace the mahogany-lined foyer and where the actor James Cagney once lived; and 36 Gramercy Park East, an apartment building with a row of fourteen gas lamps flickering out front.

Now turn around and face the park. Back in the Gilded Age, even after the first electric lights, New York was a dark place at night. While it isn’t anymore—cobrahead LED lights turn midnight into noon—Gramercy



Delmonico’s was a center for New York’s high society. At its peak, the restaurant maintained ten locations around New York City, but its grandest was the one on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street. Now in the Financial District, Delmonico’s remains open to this day.



**Above:** Delmonico’s was the first to allow customers to order from a menu à la carte and to offer a separate wine list.  
**Following pages:** Sharply dressed men wearing crowns made of holly leaves at a dinner with Broadway producer Harrison Grey Fiske in 1900 at the Montauk Club in Park Slope, Brooklyn.  
**Pages 50–51:** A busy scene on Rivington Street, which runs across Manhattan’s Lower East Side.



**“To say that New York came up to its  
advance billing would be the baldest of  
understatements. being there was like  
being in heaven without going to all the  
bother and expense of dying.”**

**P. G. WODEHOUSE, *America, I Like You***









**“It can destroy an individual,  
or it can fulfill him, depending a  
good deal on luck. No one should  
come to New York to live unless  
he is willing to be lucky.”**

E. B. WHITE, *Here is New York*





**Above:** Horse-drawn carriages and automobiles share space on a busy New York street.

**Opposite:** A New York street photographed by Alvin Langdon Coburn. Coburn is famous for photographing such historic figures as Mark Twain and William Butler Yeats.

**Page 52:** The Five Points junction, located where Baxter and Worth streets intersect, was a notoriously crime-ridden neighborhood in the late nineteenth century.

**Page 53:** In this 1890 photograph by Jacob Riis, men gather in an alley called Bandit's Roost in the Five Points. Riis's work drew attention to the neighborhood's wretched living conditions and inspired the city to eradicate the spot and the Mulberry Bend area where it was located.

Park retains that century-old blackness, the lit windows of the apartment buildings on the other side just visible through the canopy of leaves.

Listen closely. Maybe you can hear the clinking of fine china and heavy crystal glasses and the murmured conversation of a fine dinner party wafting onto the street, and the stamping feet and muffled breaths of carriage horses waiting to take their masters home in style.



# skyscraper city

## Manhattan Grows Up

Other cities grow sideways: They sprawl and spread, they creep over hills and roll across fields. But not New York; not Manhattan. By the time the island was populated from top to bottom, with still more headquarters of business and industry taking residence, there was only one direction to go: up.

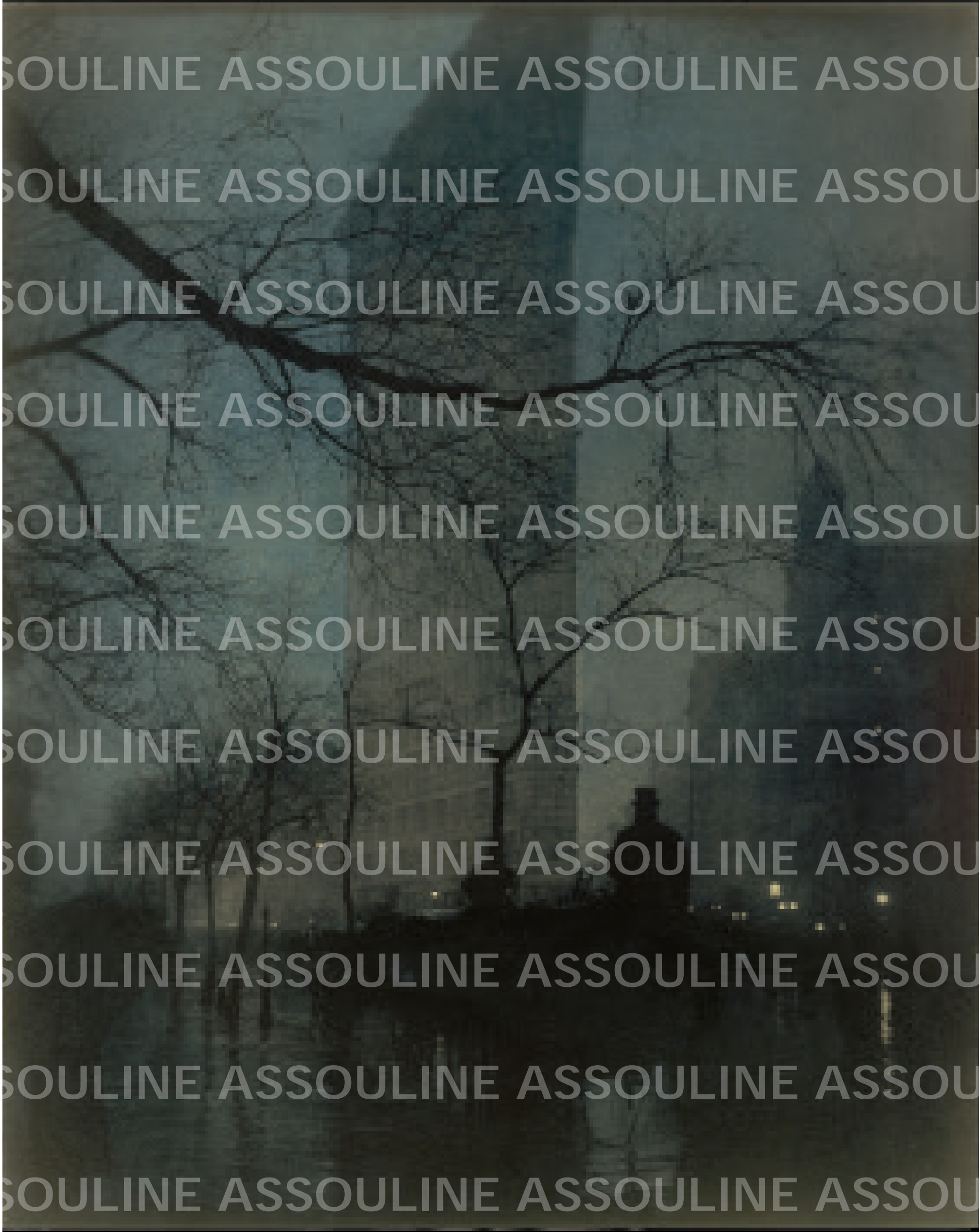
And up and up and up and up.

If one thing epitomizes the spirit of New York to those around the world, as well as to those who have lived in the city their entire lives, it is the skyscraper. The word itself suggests a belligerent challenge to nature itself. Other cities in flat parts of the United States and on other continents may boast one or two taller structures self-consciously designed specifically to pursue that title, but in Manhattan they’ve grown organically for more than a hundred years, as tall as technology and materials and money allow.



**Above:** The Flatiron Building as viewed from the western edge of Madison Square Park. Conceived by Chicago architect Daniel Burnham, it was finished in 1902.  
**Opposite:** An iconic photograph of the Flatiron Building taken by Edward Steichen in 1909, seven years after its completion.

It was in the midst of the Gilded Age that Manhattan’s architecture leapt skyward. Until then, building heights had been limited by the ability of masonry to support a structure’s weight and the number of steps a human being could comfortably ascend. The tallest were six or seven stories. But in the 1880s, two developments cast aside these engineering worries: the use of metal skeletons, first iron and then steel, sheathed in concrete, which could support far more weight while taking up far less space than thick stone walls; and the invention of the elevator. (It’s true that many architectural innovations were developed in Chicago—we’ll give credit where credit is due.)





**“Sometimes, from beyond  
the skyscrapers, across  
thousands of high walls,  
the fearful cry of a too-well-  
known voice finds you in  
your insomnia in the middle  
of the night, and you  
remember that this desert of  
iron and cement is an island  
of un-reality.”**

ALBERT CAMUS

The New York City skyline in the 1930s. In the foreground is the New York Public Library;  
in the background, the Chrysler Building.





**Above, top:** An aerial photograph of the Chrysler Building, which held the record for the world's tallest building in 1930—and lost the title the very next year to the Empire State Building.  
**Above, bottom:** Workmen taking a smoke break atop a gargyle on the Chrysler Building, 1940s. New York has been a center of Art Deco development since the 1920s, and the Chrysler Building is a quintessential example of this style.  
**Opposite:** A United States Army bomber flies over New York in 1938.

A sensation swept the city on December 10, 1890, when the new Pulitzer Building opened on Park Row across from City Hall in downtown Manhattan. This was a time when newspapers were giants and their owners sought to outdo each other and trumpet their importance with bigger and grander buildings. At sixteen stories, the Pulitzer Building, home to *The New York World* and *The Evening World*, was higher than the clock tower of the nearby Tribune Building and easier to see from miles away: It was topped by a shiny gold dome.

But it was the elevator that got the most attention. Rides were free for anyone who came on opening day, zipping up to the top for a view no one could have imagined just a few years earlier. Some were too terrified to look. But at least one unnamed New Yorker embraced the majesty of the day with just the right dose of ad-libbed humor, stepping off the elevator on the top floor and asking, “Is God in?”

### The race was on.

Office buildings got taller and taller, most of them downtown: the Royal Insurance Building on William Street and Maiden Lane and the East River Savings Bank building on Broadway and Reade streets, among many others. The 391-foot Park Row Building opened on the same block as the Pulitzer Building in 1899, its twin cupolas adding to the new shapes in the sky. They were elegant structures, decorated with cornices and other flourishes to break up the suddenly stretched expanse of facades, but they were not skyscrapers. They often crowded together, shoulder to shoulder.

The first true skyscraper may have been the twenty-two-story Flatiron Building (at the time the Fuller Building) uptown at Twenty-third Street, where a tight triangular plot at the intersection of Broadway and Fifth Avenue required a creative, three-sided architectural solution. The photographer Alfred Stieglitz was drawn to the new shape, capturing it again and again. To him it “appeared to be moving toward me like the bow of a monster steamer.”







Above, from left: Vintage postcards of the Whitehall Building, Bank of Manhattan Building, Standard Oil Building, and Liberty Tower. Following pages: Architects dressed as their world-renowned New York City buildings for the Beaux Arts Ball in 1931. From left: A. Stewart Walker as his Fuller Building, Leonard Schultze as his Waldorf Astoria Hotel, Ely Jacques Kahn as his Squibb Building, William Van Alen as his Chrysler Building, Ralph Walker as his Irving Trust Building, D. Everett Waid as his Metropolitan Life Tower, and Joseph H. Freedlander as his Museum of the City of New York.

“A hundred  
New York is  
times: It is a

times have I thought  
a catastrophe, and fifty  
beautiful catastrophe.”







It was as much a sensation when it opened in 1902 as the Pulitzer Building had been just twelve years earlier, especially because of one unforeseen result of the triangular footprint: It created powerful updrafts that lifted the long skirts of women passersby. The forty-seven-story Singer Tower opened at Broadway and Liberty streets in 1908, winning the height crown for a year. (It would go on to have a different kind of fame in 1968 when it became the tallest structure ever demolished by its owner.)

**U**p and up the city went. The fifty-eight-story Gothic-style Woolworth Building opened in 1913 across City Hall Park from the Pulitzer Building, which must have appeared to be shrinking. It was the tallest building in the world, a terra-cotta-clad monument to American business and all the merchandise sold at all the Woolworth stores for nickels and dimes on Main Streets across the United States. Knots of more modest skyscrapers created mini skylines in downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City, Queens.

The race got so heated, and New Yorkers so alarmed by the sudden absence of sunshine on many streets, that the city instituted its first height restrictions in 1916, a complicated set of calculations meant to bring some sanity to the height race. It required setbacks, or upper floors set away from the streets with the goal of letting in more sky.

The Woolworth Building held the tallest title until the 1,046-foot, 77-story Chrysler Building, with its silvery Art Deco spire and its brick friezes of automobiles with hub- and radiator caps in polished steel, opened in 1930 on East Forty-second Street in Midtown Manhattan, replacing a block of brownstones. The automobile was being celebrated now. That spire caught the colors of the sky, whether blue or gray or sunset orange, and shot them back at the city.

The Chrysler Building had thirty passenger elevators, magnificent, over-the-top Art Deco celebrations of geometric designs in inlaid polished wood. It came instantly to symbolize the romantic ideal of the New York skyscraper—and perhaps the shiny modern glory of New York City itself—around the world.



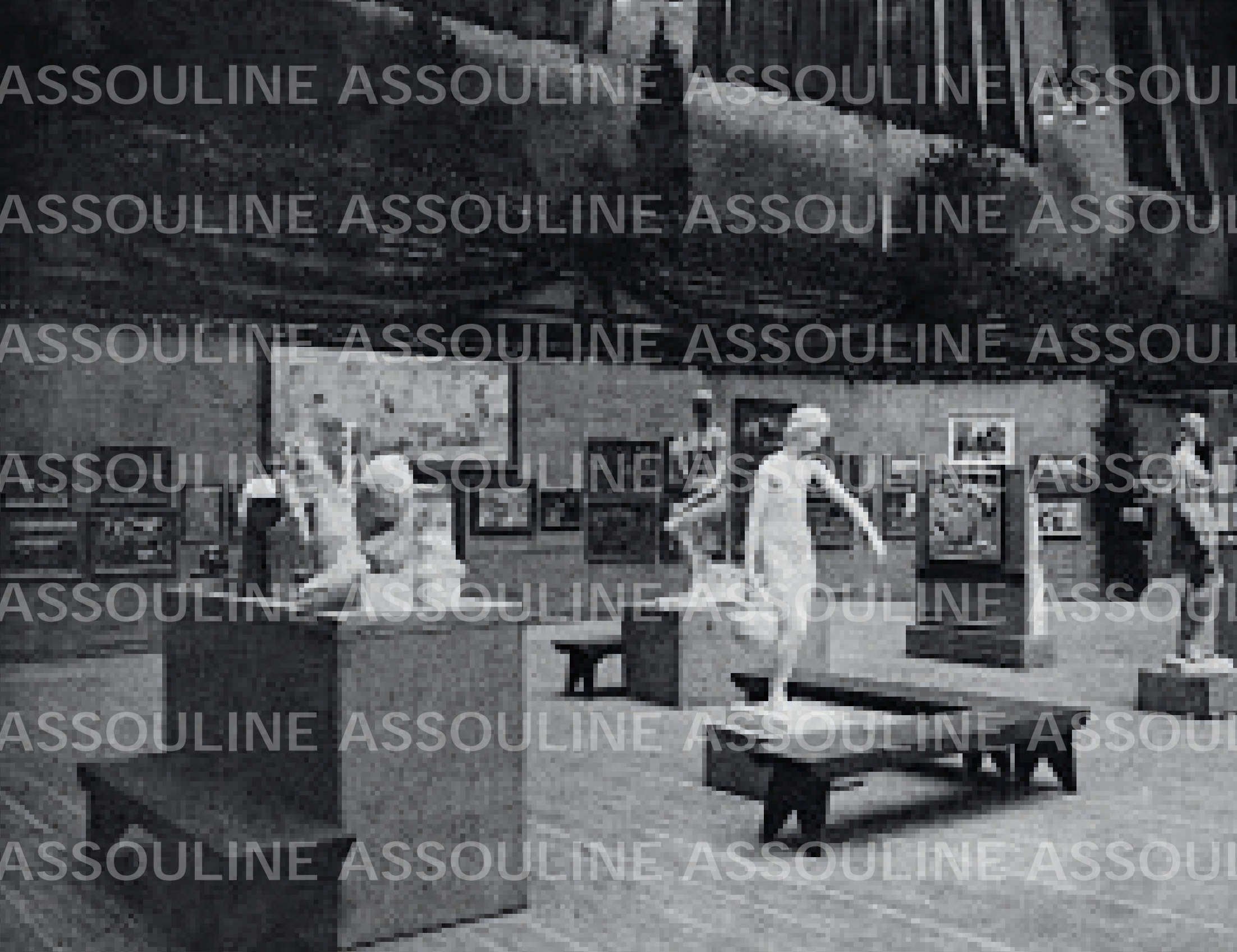
**Above, top:** Adequately summarized by former California senator George Miller, Jr., the Empire State Building is the only building that could possibly compare to the exceptional Chrysler Building.

**Above, bottom:** In 1908, Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí drew up flamboyant plans for the Grand Hotel Attraction, though unfortunately they were never realized.

**Opposite:** American photographer Margaret Bourke-White stands on the scaffolding of the then incomplete Chrysler Building with her camera to capture the majesty of the city from new heights.

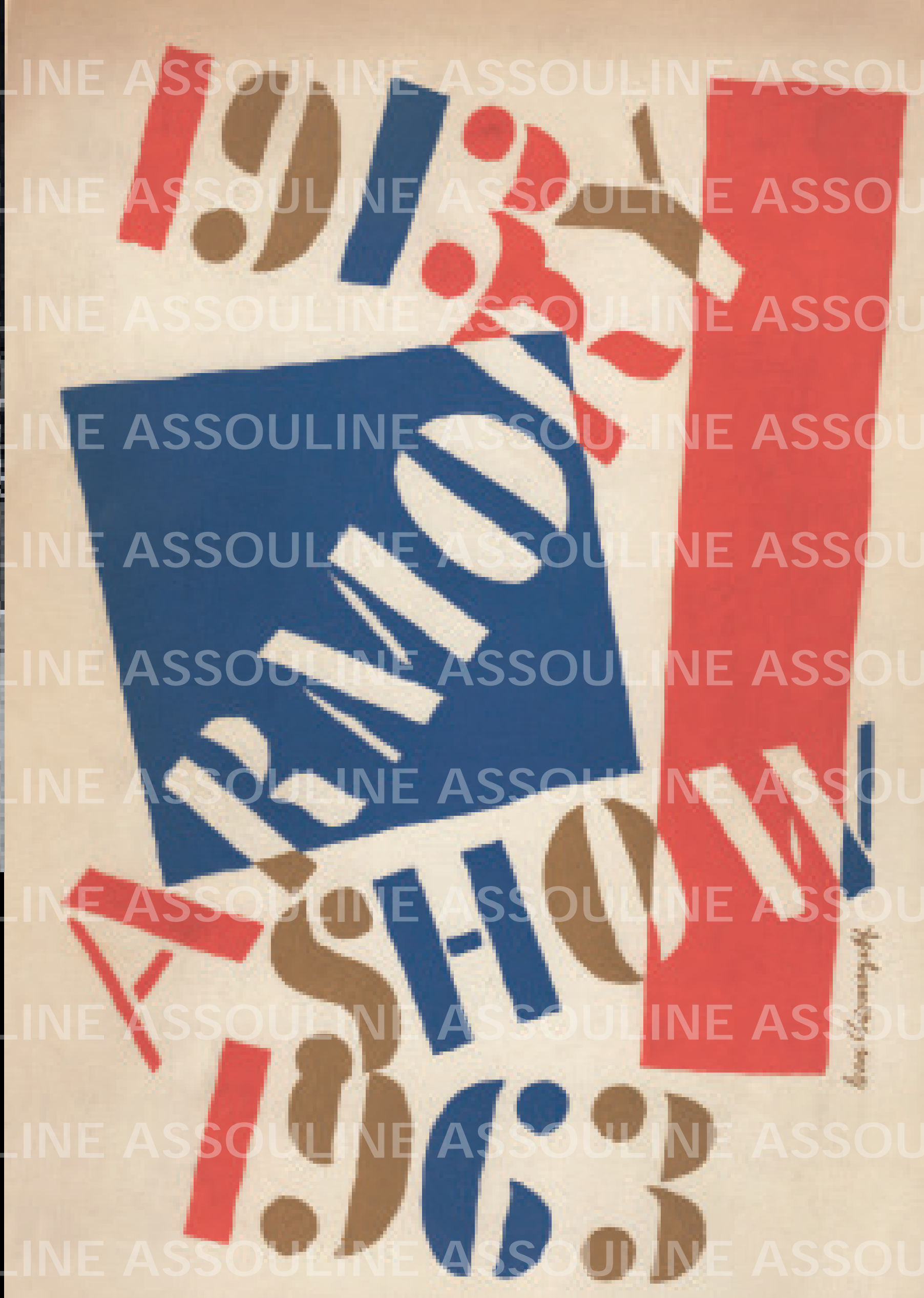


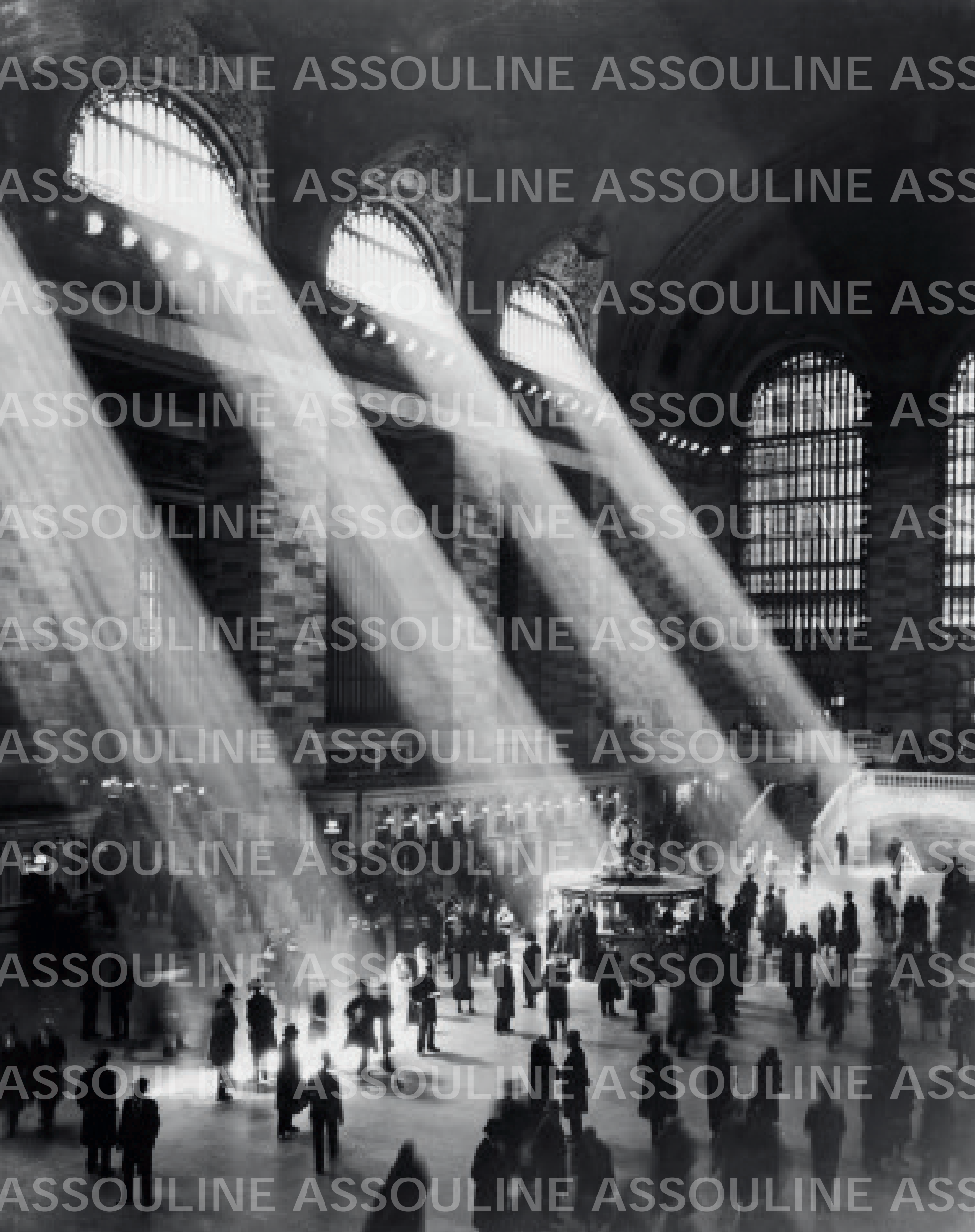




**“After twenty annual visits, I am still surprised each time to return to see this giant asparagus bed of alabaster and rose and green skyscrapers.”**

*CECIL BEATON, It Gives Me Great Pleasure*





**“To step from a train platform into Grand Central’s extraordinary concourse... is to feel in every fiber that you have arrived someplace important, to know that you have come into a great city and that great city has greeted you properly.”**

PAUL GOLDBERGER

**Opposite:** Grand Central Terminal’s main hall, photographed here in 1930, is one of New York City’s most recognizable landmarks.  
**Page 68:** The first New York Armory Show took place in 1913, and its outstanding collection of art stunned the nation and opened the door to modern art in America with artists like Constantin Brancusi.  
**Page 69:** A poster for the 1963 Armory Show Anniversary Exhibition, celebrating fifty years of the legendary art fair’s place in New York history.





That is, until the 1,250-foot, 102-story Empire State Building opened a year later, holding the title of the tallest building in the world until the World Trade Center towers opened in 1973—it recaptured, tragically, the title of tallest building in New York in 2001.

“The greatest office structure ever built by man,” a writer named W. Parker Chase said of the Empire State in his deeply earnest if overly boosterish *New York: The Wonder City* in 1932. “Words cannot describe this huge building—it must be *seen!*”

King Kong saw the Empire State and chose it for his final, doomed battle with the airplanes, swatting at them while dangling from a spire initially intended to dock zeppelins (it didn’t work—too windy) and bouncing off one of the skyscraper’s elegant setbacks on his way down.

The changes to the Manhattan skyline and to the lives of those who lived and worked within it were astounding in the forty years between the Pulitzer and Empire State buildings. Once, it was a low-lying city of bricks and ornate masonry. Once, you could see the clouds. Now, from the air, Downtown and Midtown looked like prickly mountain ranges of geometric stalagmites. Viewed from a ship arriving in the harbor, Manhattan rose in a neck-craning series of parallel vertical lines as if shooting straight up from the murky water itself.

The French architect and architectural theorist Le Corbusier said, “A hundred times have I thought New York is a catastrophe, and fifty times: It is a beautiful catastrophe.” He was speaking in the middle of the century, as masonry gave way to terra-cotta gave way to steel and glass buildings with their skeletons revealed for all to see. But he could have been describing that day the elevator in the Pulitzer Building started its ascent to God’s boardroom.

**T**he shape of the Woolworth Building—a soaring tower atop two setbacks with three progressively narrower sections—enthralled the city. But it was not the only new shape getting attention in that watershed year of 1913.

A young fan of New York snaps a photo from a helicopter fifteen hundred feet above the city.



This panorama of Central Park allows for a full view of its legendary grandeur. The park, spanning over two and a half miles, is larger than some countries, such as Monaco.

Uptown at the 69th Regiment Armory on Lexington Avenue, itself an imposing block-sized building of red brick, one of history's most ambitious art exhibitions was being viewed by crowds that lined up around the block. It was the International Exhibition of Modern Art, better known as the Armory Show. For Americans, it was like a thunderclap: For the first time, avant-garde abstract art created in Europe was being viewed across the Atlantic. Eyes accustomed to serene Hudson River landscapes and graceful portraits, light-infused impressionists and post-impressionists, were suddenly confronted by fauvism, futurism, and that newest of all collections of shapes, cubism.

More than thirteen hundred paintings and other works by more than three hundred artists were on display, including American artists whose visions may have been more familiar to New Yorkers who were still expanding their understanding of what a painting, what art, could be. More than ninety thousand people came to see what all the fuss was about.

Two of the most memorable pieces included were *Blue Nude* by Henri Matisse, in which a reclining nude is broken down into sensual but out-

of-proportion shapes, and *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* by Marcel Duchamp, in which a jagged form in shades of ocher and brown—is it a woman?—is splintered into echoing shapes, suggesting movement as if in a series of successive picture frames.

The response was all over the map. Some made fun of it. President Theodore Roosevelt thundered, "That's not art!" But American painters were transfixed, and their ideas of shape and form were forever expanded. The show unleashed the American abstract movement that would take hold in this country, especially in New York City, in the coming decades.

**T**he new shapes have never stopped coming. Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum opened on Fifth Avenue in 1959, a descending circle amid the rectangular apartment buildings, and Santiago Calatrava's World Trade Center Transportation Hub sits downstream of Wright's curved oculus: a spiky kneeling dinosaur in the heart of Downtown just a few blocks from the Woolworth Building.





**“New York, you are an Egypt!  
But an Egypt turned inside out.  
For she erected pyramids of  
slavery to death, and you erect  
pyramids of democracy with  
the vertical organ-pipes of your  
skyscrapers all meeting at the  
point of infinity of liberty!”**

SALVADOR DALÍ

The Seagram Building on Park Avenue was designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson as the headquarters for Canadian distillers Joseph E. Seagram & Sons. Today, the masterpiece is an office building and host to legendary restaurant The Grill.

Nor has the race for the sky ever really subsided, though now the building boom is for apartments, not headquarters of national corporations using architecture and height to celebrate and promote the glory of their industries, whether newspapers, dime stores, or cars. The Pulitzer Building, for example, is long gone. The new structures are sheathed in glass or aluminum and are as thin as pencils.

Just as steel skeletons and elevators allowed the first vertical leaps, new technologies let the new buildings reach heights that would have made those early-twentieth-century architects marvel. Steel and concrete are still the basic internal building materials, but the concrete is far stronger, allowing for heavier loads. And architects are inventing clever solutions to deal with one perpetual skyscraper challenger, the wind, since up there in the sky it can easily gust to a hundred miles an hour, causing a building to sway and unnerving those trying to live or work in it.

The designers of 432 Park Avenue—the tallest of the new generation at 1,396 feet—created a series of double-height floors at regular intervals that are essentially perforated, with no windows or apartments, just the building’s rounded central core, allowing gusts to pass through and around. Like all great engineering, it’s not only a brilliant solution, as simple in theory as it was complex in execution, but it’s wonderful to behold.

How long before 432 Park Avenue looks smaller than all the buildings around it?

**Opposite:** The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, a cultural mecca, is home to many world-famous productions, such as the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera, the New York City Opera, and the New York City Ballet.

**Following pages:** Designed by Frank Gehry and completed in 2007, the IAC Building, InterActiveCorp’s headquarters, is situated in Chelsea and looks toward New Jersey.

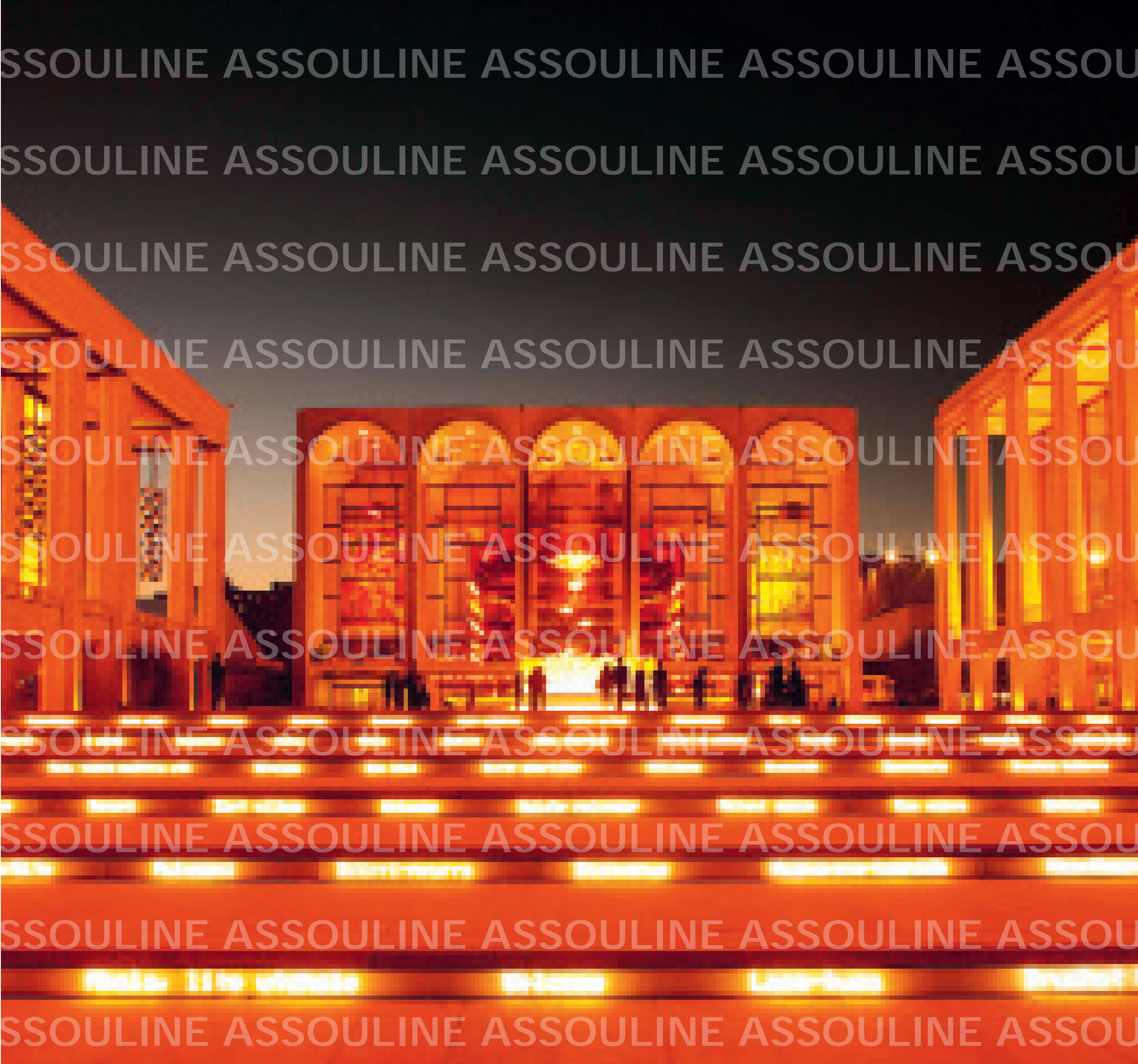
**Page 82:** The Twin Towers of the original World Trade Center, which opened in 1973.

**Page 83:** Each year, the New York City skyline commemorates the twelfth anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center (pictured, the twelfth anniversary in 2013) with a tribute in light.

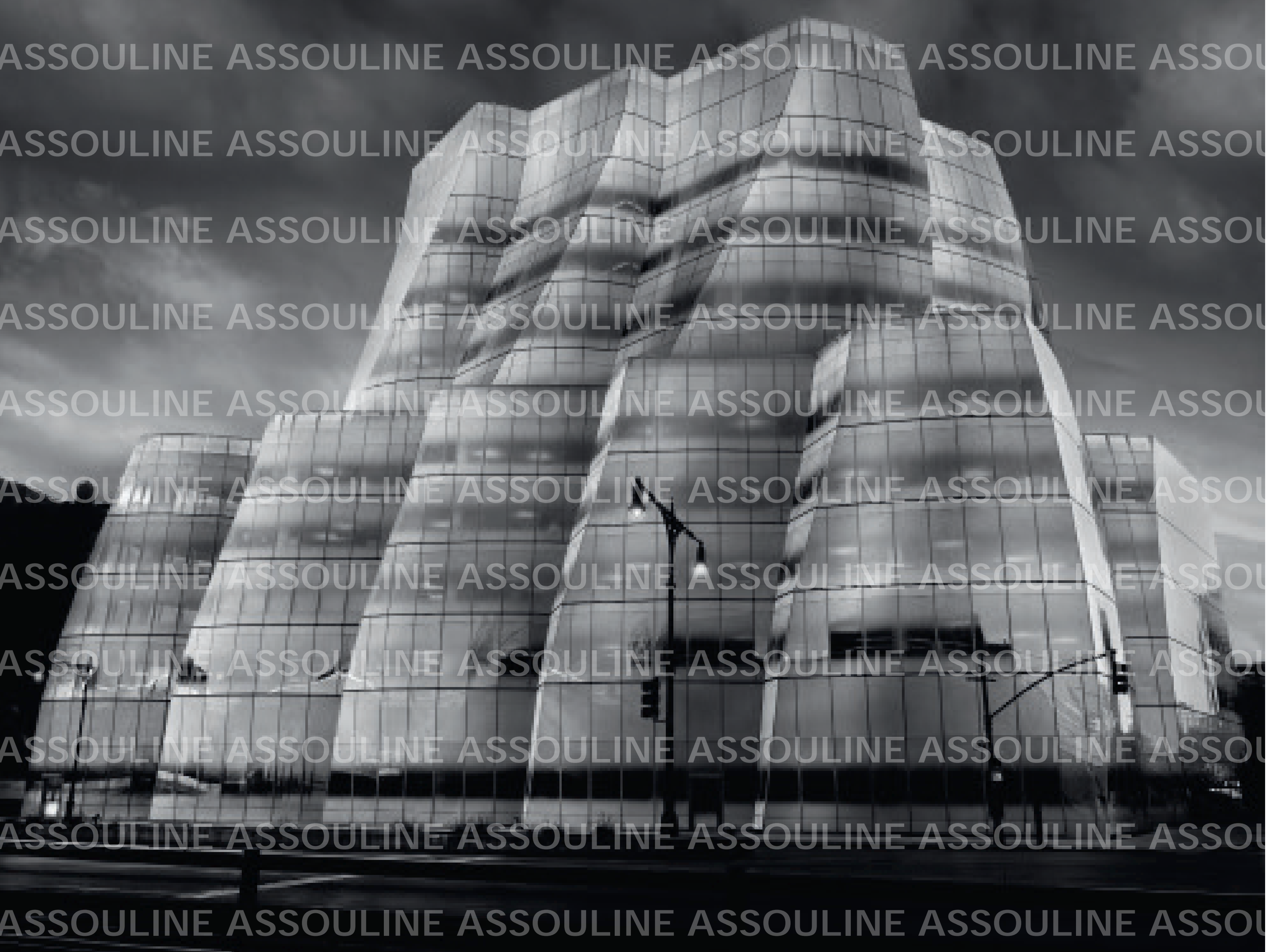
**Page 84:** Inside Santiago Calatrava’s Oculus, the eye-catching transportation hub of the new World Trade Center site. The plaza is adjacent to the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in Downtown Manhattan.

**Page 85:** A view of the Oculus’s stunning architecture.

**Pages 86–87:** A fantastical street winds through a futuristic vision of Manhattan as conceived by Spanish artist Dionisio González.

















# the great wave

## Immigrants Change New York

Marie Ganz had no idea she was part of the greatest migration of human beings in history; after all, she was just a little girl. In her earliest memories, she was small and terrified, “trudging along beside my father, who, weighted down with the great rolls of bedding we had brought with us from the old home, is guiding us through strange, noisy streets. I am staring in wonder at the great buildings and the great crowds of people.”



**Above:** A Sunday issue of the *New York World*, published on April 29, 1906, celebrates the arrival of immigrants to Ellis Island.

**Opposite:** Opened in 1892, Ellis Island was the first destination for many immigrants looking to enter New York City. Here, a group catches their first glimpse of both Ellis Island and the ever-hopeful Statue of Liberty.

**Following pages:** The German steamship SS *Patricia* teeming with people trying to enter the United States. Representative of the sheer volume of immigration, this image was taken by Edwin Levick in December of 1906.

They had come from Galicia in Eastern Europe in 1896; their first moments ashore were crushingly disappointing. “At last we turn into a dark, dirty alley, which runs like a tunnel under a tenement house and leads us to our future home,” Ganz wrote in her memoir, *Rebels*. “Oh, how hot and stuffy were those two little rooms that we entered.” Her father was proud, but “suddenly his smile gave way to an expression that reflected bitter disappointment and injured pride as he became aware of the disgust which my mother could not conceal.”

“So we have crossed half of the world for this!” she cried, thinking bitterly of the comfortable farmhouse we had left behind us.”

It was a common initial reaction. Ganz and her family were among thousands of Russian Jewish and Italian immigrants who arrived in New York City in the first years of the twentieth century. They tended to be poorer and less skilled than the Germans and Irish who came before them and either





**“The glamour of it all!  
New York! America!”**

CHARLIE CHAPLIN





the great wave

fanned out across the country or created their own neighborhoods in the city—Kleindeutschland and Yorkville in Manhattan, Woodhaven in Queens—and came to dominate local institutions like the police department or the political clubs. The Italians and Jews often got no farther than Lower Manhattan, whose crammed streets boiled with the smells and dialects of familiar cities and towns.

In due time, their personalities would soak into the culture of the place, with attitudes and outlooks—not to mention accents—that we recognize today when we think of New York. They altered and enriched the fabric of the city. These new arrivals would add boundless energy and countless pairs of working hands to a fast-growing metropolis shaking off the Gilded Age and rocketing ahead to the bright kaleidoscopic colors of the roaring new century.

## But first they had to get off the boat.

The first wave of immigrants had passed through Castle Garden, a circular, fortlike former resort at the foot of Manhattan. The federal government opened the redbrick Ellis Island immigrant inspection station on an island in the middle of New York Harbor in 1892. The Statue of Liberty had been built on nearby Bedloe's Island in 1886 and provided a beacon to many Jews, Italians, Hungarians, Poles, Greeks, and immigrants from other countries who arrived in the harbor after weeks jammed in the fetid holds of ships (though more than a few recalled the statue looking a bit smaller than they'd expected).

The new arrivals were herded with their meager possessions into the island's Great Hall, lining up as sunlight streamed in from its huge windows. The hall echoed with hundreds of voices. One Jewish woman had carried a jug of chicken fat across the ocean because she'd been told there was none to be had in the United States. They gave their names



**Above:** An 1887 sketch by an unknown newspaper staff artist of immigrants streaming past the Statue of Liberty.  
**Opposite:** *The Steerage*, a 1907 photo by Alfred Stieglitz notable for its perfect summation of this time in New York immigration history.

**“I would rather have  
a square inch of  
New York than all the  
rest of the world.”**

TEXAS GUINAN

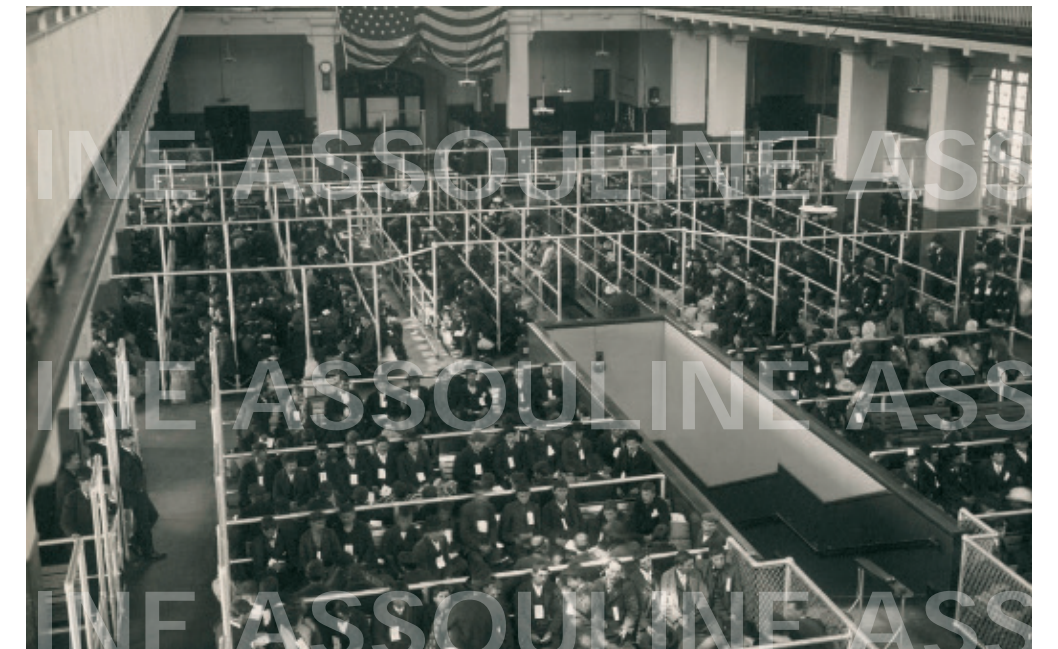
**Opposite:** A Russian Jewish immigrant arrives at Ellis Island, just one of 1,026,499 immigrants who passed through the site in 1905.

**Page 96:** Immigrants line up to greet authorities on Ellis Island in 1905.

**Page 97:** Immigrants in the pens in Ellis Island's main hall wait to receive their legal documentation.







and were subjected to medical exams, including having each eyelid turned up with a buttonhook to check for trachoma, which could lead to blindness. (Lax sanitary conditions meant that at least a few unlucky subjects caught trachoma from the hook.) They climbed a giant staircase with inspectors at the top looking for anyone wheezing or appearing ill. Those who did had their coats marked with an X and required further examination. In some cases, sick children were sent home while their parents were granted admission.

“At Ellis Island I was born again,” recalled an immigrant from Bucharest named Emanuel Goldenberg, who’d eventually change his name to Edward G. Robinson. “Life for me began when I was ten years old.”

Once immigrants made it through and were deposited at the bottom of Manhattan, they were set upon by fast-talking con men and thieves, offering legal services that immigrants did not require, jobs that did not exist, or rooms for rent at fictional addresses—and always for a fee. More than a few of the new arrivals lost what little they had, which they had gripped tightly over those arduous weeks at sea, in their first minutes ashore.





**Above:** Clotheslines in an immigrant neighborhood in 1900.  
**Opposite:** American propaganda during World War I harnessed the initial excitement experienced by many immigrants upon entering New York City, pushing them to do “your duty” and buy US bonds.  
**Page 100:** Mulberry Street, in Little Italy, is home to the Feast of San Gennaro, a yearly event showcasing Italian cuisine and tradition.  
**Page 101:** Broadway, long known for its association with New York City theater culture, runs through Lower Manhattan and ends in Westchester County, north of the Bronx.

The biggest year of all was 1907, when 1.3 million immigrants passed through Ellis Island. By 1910, roughly 2 million of New York City’s 4.7 million inhabitants were foreign-born.

Jewish families set themselves up on the Lower East Side around Rivington and Hester streets, took jobs in the garment industry or rolling cigars, and sold goods from pushcarts. They established synagogues and religious schools. A Yiddish theater district flourished, the home of composers George and Ira Gershwin and Irving Berlin; little Emanuel Goldenberg was an early star. A boy named Arthur Fellig, who arrived from Poland in 1909, would grow up to be the photographer Weegee, whose stark black-and-white images would indelibly chronicle New York in the 1930s and 1940s. Eventually, the Jewish immigrants crossed the new Williamsburg Bridge to create a Jewish neighborhood in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

the great wave

**I**talian immigrants came mostly from that country’s impoverished south, the Mezzogiorno, where society was stuck in feudal ways that allowed the landowners complete power and left the peasants, many illiterate and malnourished, in utter poverty. While Ganz had come with her whole family, Mezzogiorno escapees were mostly single men, many of whom planned to make money in New York and then return to their homeland. Some got jobs in the construction industry, which was desperate for thick arms and calloused hands. They built Grand Central Terminal and the subways.

These Italians made their homes in cramped tenement buildings around Mulberry Street and eventually spread to the surrounding blocks. They brought not only their language but their food, their devotion to the Catholic religion, and their culture. A Neapolitan street singer named Enrico Caruso would eventually follow the conductor Arturo Toscanini to New York and the Metropolitan Opera. A good-looking kid from Puglia named Rudolph Valentino wound up as a taxi dancer at Maxim’s café. But darker aspects of rural Italian society also arrived on these shores, like the Mafia.

Perhaps no motion picture has captured the squalid yet lively and even convivial conditions of those streets as well as Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Godfather Part II*. Scenes shot in shades of musty browns along East Sixth Street between avenues A and B in Alphabet City portray a world of fruit sellers and horse-drawn carts, handcarts and wooden stalls and fires burning in trash cans, dark-haired children running here and there, laundry hanging from windows—a teeming and dirty place that was still a vast and even joyous improvement over the *miseria* they’d left behind beneath the southern Italian sun.

None of these successive waves of newcomers were particularly welcomed by New Yorkers, even though those New Yorkers were descended just a generation or two from











immigrants themselves. (Still, many enjoyed visiting—briefly—the Jewish or Italian neighborhoods to eat, be entertained, and take in the exotic atmosphere.) But perhaps the most poorly treated were the Chinese.

Their numbers were tiny compared to the great waves of Germans, Irish, Jews, and Italians, and they were mostly men—not by choice, but because the United States wouldn’t allow them to bring their wives. Many came to the city after working on the Transcontinental Railroad and living in California until racial animosity chased them east. Once in New York, they slept in dormitory rooms in bunk beds. The virulently racist Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 had kept their numbers low. There were probably around ten thousand in the city in 1890, mostly around Chatham Square in downtown Manhattan. Some opened restaurants, which eventually became wildly popular, first in Chinatown and then in every corner of the five boroughs, even if the food would have been unrecognizable to those back in China—chow mein and chop suey were invented in the United States.

They also suddenly found themselves the dominant ethnic group in a new industry: steam-driven laundries. How did they end up in that particular line of work? Because a previous group of immigrants lost out: A factory dismissed all of its mostly Irish-immigrant female workers, the descendants of the previous wave, finding their wage demands too high.

Finally, the great waves of immigration that would shape the city slowed to a trickle with the exclusionary Johnson-Reed Act of 1924.

### And what about little Marie Ganz?

She started working at eight years old and left school at thirteen for full-time jobs, first making deliveries and then toiling in a sweatshop. But she grew up to be a labor leader, writer, and—briefly—an anarchist,

**Opposite:** Caffè Napoli, on the corner of Mulberry and Hester streets, is a well-known café in the neighborhood of Little Italy.

**Page 102:** An Italian specialty shop worker.

**Page 103:** A newspaper vendor on Mott Street in Chinatown, 1941.





**“The City is like Poetry;  
it compresses all life,  
all races and breeds,  
into a small island  
and adds music and  
the accompaniment  
of internal engines.”**

E. B. WHITE

This *New Yorker* cover from Valentine's Day 2000, painted by Mark Ulriksen, captures the spirit of New York City, a place where opposites can still find common ground and true love.



**“Make your  
mark in  
New York and  
you are  
a made man.”**

MARK TWAIN

threatening to shoot John D. Rockefeller after striking workers and some members of their families were shot and killed at a coal mine he owned. It comes as little surprise that, after experiencing her arrival in New York and watching the experiences of others, little Marie would develop a deep hatred of those who mistreated and took advantage of these legions of confused new arrivals who found themselves ashore in a strange land, their eyes pried open with dirty hooks, carrying only their rolled-up bedding and maybe a jug of chicken fat—and their hopes for the future.

**T**oday more than 3 million of New York City’s roughly 8.5 million residents are foreign-born. The largest group is from the Dominican Republic, followed by China, with 350,000 immigrants in the five boroughs. Immigrants from India, Russia, and Mexico make up some of the other major groups of newcomers.

Little Italy is not much more than one touristy block, but New York remains at the forefront of Italian culture in the United States. Cafés with espresso machines line the avenues in neighborhoods like Bensonhurst in Brooklyn, plastic chairs set on the sidewalks. Bill de Blasio was elected mayor in 2013; his mother’s family came to the country from Basilicata, deep in the Mezzogiorno. His children are named Chiara and Dante.

The blocks around Rivington Street where Jewish peddlers once sold their goods from pushcarts are now home to trendy restaurants and boutiques. But parts of Brooklyn like Crown Heights and Borough Park are distinctly Jewish: Men in round black hats made of sable carry their prayer books to synagogue on High Holy Days just as their forefathers did in the shtetls in Russia more than a century ago.

And Chinatown?

In Manhattan, it has grown well beyond its earlier borders. Flushing, Queens, is even more enveloping: On a rainy night, with the glow of all that neon in Chinese and Korean characters, you feel you are visiting the other side of the planet. In 2009, Margaret Chin became the first Chinese

A Jewish establishment on the Lower East Side in 1940. The neighborhood was home to many Jewish immigrants in the twentieth century.







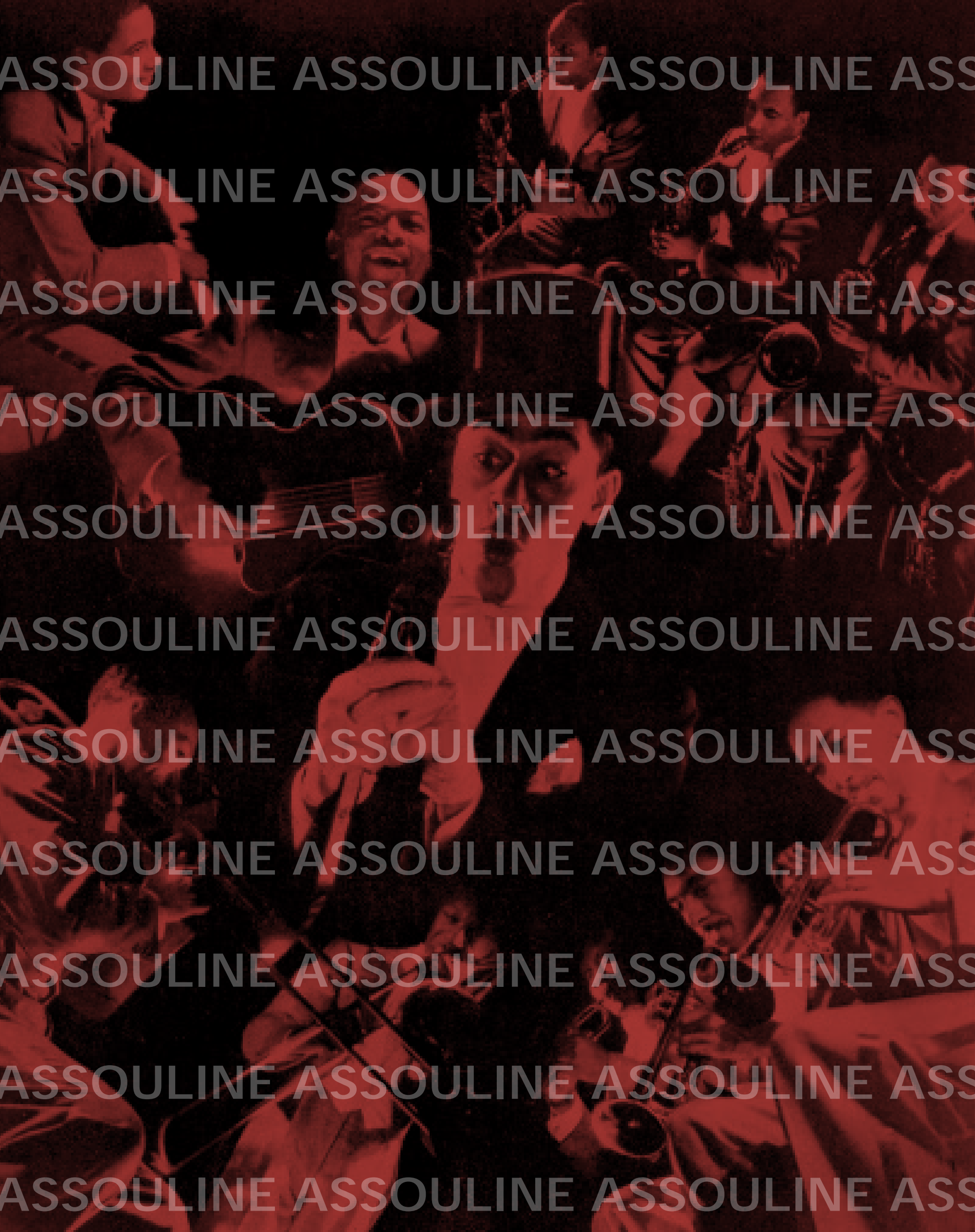
American woman on the New York City Council. To call something a Chinese laundry is politically incorrect, as they say, but many remain—what else can you call the San Toy Laundry on Seventh Avenue in Park Slope, with its faux-oriental red plastic signage hung out front? Restaurants from every region of China are packed on both weekday and weekend nights—Cantonese, Hunan, Szechuan, serving tourists and other New Yorkers, but also immigrants and visitors from their home regions.

Chop suey and chow mein are nearly impossible to find.

**Above:** The Lunar New Year Parade attracts thousands of onlookers every year. In February 1960, the Year of the Rat was celebrated on the streets of Chinatown.  
**Opposite:** On Pell Street, a New Yorker photographed by Katja Heinemann walks through his native neighborhood of Chinatown.







# the last drink

## *Prohibition Comes to Town*

It was a cold night in more ways than one when Prohibition arrived in New York City and the rest of the nation. Ice blanketed the streets as snowplows scraped the cobblestones. Wind whistled around corners.

Ice encased the hearts of the drinkers, too—could this really be happening? New York was a drinking town and always had been. Beer gardens swarmed with entire families, the fathers hoisting giant steins, the children running about. Swells packed the roof gardens and the cabarets and the lobbies of the grand hotels and filled Delmonico’s and Sherry’s. The taverns on every corner, with their ornate wooden bars, opened first thing in the morning and were three deep with drinkers by noon.

And now, on this cold night in January 1920, could it all be over?

Some hotels held elaborate wakes. At Maxim’s uptown, the waiters dressed as pallbearers. At Max’s Little Hungary on the Lower East Side, they held a farewell wine-drinking party. It’s hard to imagine any tipplers had kind words for Andrew Volstead, the dour, overly mustached congressman from Minnesota for whom the act enforcing Prohibition had been named. A congressman from Minnesota—distant, flat, boring, provincial, unsophisticated Minnesota—taking our whiskey, beer, wine, and champagne?

Outrageous. Impossible.

And then it was over. New York City went dry at midnight.

But not really.

A few minutes after the Volstead Act went into effect, down on lower Broadway, a man known as Filthy Phil because he couldn’t say a sentence without a curse crossed City Hall Park and joined an acquaintance for a quick walk to Nassau Street, their feet crunching the ice. They entered a dark building and went up a flight of stairs. And there they found a little room with a little bar and a bunch of bottles and a man serving drinks.

The speakeasy had been born.











the last drink

Rather than choke New York’s nightlife, the Volstead Act exploded it. With the stock market on fire and money pouring in, New Yorkers paid as much attention to the new law as they might have some arcane farming regulation from the 1820s. Alcohol’s new illicitness, combined with everyone’s fat wallets, gave birth to a new kind of nocturnal wildness.

Just as young lovers have to sneak away from prying eyes to be alone, and just as that sneaking makes their love that much more intense, so too did the need to be furtive bring a fresh urgency to New Yorkers’ imbibing. It felt so good to do something illegal. Jazz was the rage, the corny banjo and hokey rhythms of Dixieland replaced by something hotter, more stripped down, even dangerous.

It blew hot in the clubs as lines of dancers in shimmering rows of sequins flapped on stages big and small. Radio spread the word, along with a new kind of newspaper, the tabloid, which was the perfect compact size for reading on the subway, offering prose like a blazing staccato trumpet solo under titles like *The Daily News*, *The Mirror*, and *The Evening Graphic*. Liquor was under the table or on the table; it flowed and flowed.

Some of the bigger bars and taverns simply stayed open, as visible as ever, the owners paying off the cops and treasury agents. Sometimes the agents would shut them down to make a show or even wreck them, but the places would reopen at the same spot or somewhere nearby. But it was the speakeasies—the “speaks”—that took center stage. They proliferated everywhere as the decade danced on.

“Back in 1920 I shocked a rising young businessman by suggesting a cocktail before lunch,” F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote in his short story *My Lost City* some years after publishing his iconic novel of the twenties, *The Great Gatsby*. “In 1929 there was liquor in half the downtown offices, and a speakeasy in half the large buildings.”



**Above:** John Sloan, *McSorley’s Bar*, 1912. Oil on canvas, 26 x 32 in. Established in 1854, McSorley’s Old Ale House is the oldest Irish tavern in New York City and remained a “men only” pub until 1970.

**Opposite:** Prohibition forced bars and clubs to close operations. Naturally, the city rejoiced when the act was repealed in 1933.

**Page 112:** The Cotton Club was a New York City nightclub located first in Harlem and later in the Theater District. Cab Calloway led his orchestra through many showstopping performances at this venue in the 1930s.

**Page 114:** A *Vanity Fair* cover from 1928 illustrates the Harlem Renaissance.

**Page 115:** Elegant couples photographed by Edward Steichen in 1926.

**Previous pages:** The Cotton Club operated mostly during New York’s Prohibition era, offering solace to those who still wanted to have a little fun.









**Above:** Based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby*, the 1974 film, directed by Jack Clayton and starring Mia Farrow (pictured, center), perfectly represented the lives of the wealthy in the Roaring Twenties.

**Previous pages:** Duke Ellington (top center, with baton) was a pioneer of big-band jazz who composed thousands of scores over the course of his fifty-year career and was a fixture in Manhattan's vibrant Broadway nightclubs.

Speaks came in all shapes and sizes. The Columbus Circle Club up on Ninth Avenue on the West Side of Manhattan had a telegraph ticker, weak beer, and high-proof rye or scotch at fifty cents a glass. Drinkers spit into spittoons. The Old Fashioned Club on Fiftieth Street near Midtown was similarly simple, though many spoke highly of the free lunch of prime beef or pinkish Virginia ham, as well as the cocktail for which the place was named.

Not so plain was Club Napoleon a few blocks away. A doorman needed to see a card of introduction before he'd press the buzzer. But once you were in—mirrors, an orchestra, four bartenders making every colorful concoction known to drinkingkind, and an expansive menu with Chateaubriand steak, the specialty. Bill's Townhouse at 57 East Fifty-fourth Street was swanky, too: Currier and Ives prints, checkered tablecloths, elegant copper lighting fixtures. This neighborhood was the center of speakeasy culture; a few blocks west, on Broadway, theater folk lamented the lack of a good speak in their corner of the world.



The police believe there were nine thousand speaks by the time Prohibition came to an end. Others are more generous. One guess was thirty-two thousand, twice the number of bars that existed before. Another estimate was one hundred thousand, from the Babylonian-like palaces to the little rooms up a flight of stairs, like the one Filthy Phil found that first cold night.

Or you could just make your own party behind closed doors. Hotel rooms, flats in Greenwich Village—they boiled over. “I remember riding in a taxi one afternoon between very tall buildings under a mauve and rosy sky,” Fitzgerald wrote, describing an apartment-to-apartment booze crawl. “I began to bawl because I had everything I wanted and knew I would never be so happy again.”

The era brought forth the first boldface names. Walter Winchell chronicled them all in his column. Mayor Jimmy Walker, sharply dressed in fitted double-breasted suits, a handkerchief bursting from his breast pocket, his wide-brimmed fedora atop his head at the jauntiest of

**Above:** *The Great Gatsby* was adapted to the screen once again in 2013 and featured Leonardo DiCaprio (right) and Tobey Maguire (center).  
**Page 124:** Speakeasy “membership cards” allowed holders to participate in illegal drinking during the Prohibition era. Other methods included secret passwords and being friendly with the bouncers.  
**Page 125:** Harlem's Cotton Club featured not only live music but also live dancing, including eye-catching costumes.  
**Page 126:** Legendary jazz singer Billie Holiday began her career singing in Harlem's neighborhood nightclubs.  
**Page 127:** Duke Ellington and his orchestra played many a performance in Harlem and also toured Europe in the 1930s.



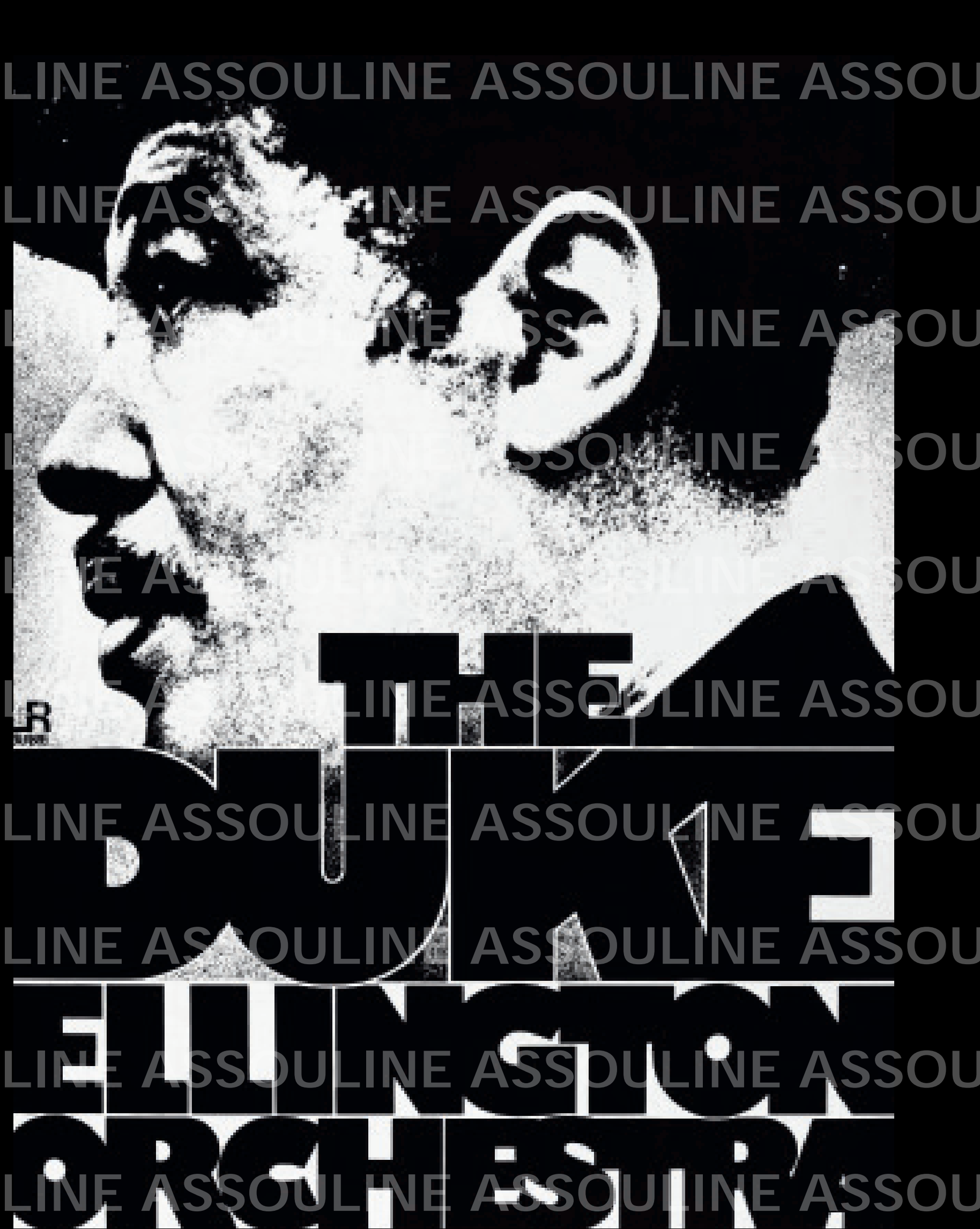


angles, was the top man in town: You'd see him as often in a speakeasy as you would in a legitimate Broadway theater. The queen of the nightclubs was Texas Guinan, with her booming voice, Marcel wave in her hair, lipstick, and strands of pearls. She ran a place called the El Fey, where the dancing girls pranced around nearly nude. It was half nightclub, half burlesque house. When that fizzled, she opened a place in the basement of the Century Theatre that was half nightclub, half circus. She was known by one and all for her greeting: "Hello, sucker!"

Night crawlers expanded their hunting grounds. Suddenly, Harlem was the rage. Jazz had spurred an interest in black culture, and now white patrons traveled to northern Manhattan to hit places like the Cotton Club, designed to look like a plantation, where Duke Ellington played; and Connie's Inn, where the front door was beneath a red canopy—classy. The Cotton Club may have had black performers, but it barred black guests.

Langston Hughes, the poet, playwright, and novelist, thought that not only was this outrageously racist, it was bad for business: Part of the appeal for white customers was enjoying the fun along with black patrons, and many clubs that copied the Cotton Club's door policy soon closed. For Hughes, the real joy was in rent parties, where









Harlemites gathered among other Harlemites, contributed a little at the door so the host-tenant wouldn't be evicted that month, and had a grand time.

He wrote that the parties "were often more amusing than any night club, in small apartments where God knows who lived—because the guests seldom did—but where the piano would often be augmented by a guitar, or an odd cornet, or somebody with a pair of drums walking in off the street. And where awful bootleg whiskey and good fried fish or steaming chitterling were sold at very low prices. And the dancing and the singing and the impromptu entertaining went on until dawn came in at the windows."

But there had to be a price for all that fun. And the price was danger. It was the age of the bootlegger; after all, someone had to supply all that illegal hooch.

Arnold Rothstein, one of the biggest crime bosses of them all and who some say fixed the 1919 World Series, smuggled liquor down the Hudson River from Canada and up the coast from Cuba. He soon had a host of bootleggers working for him whose names would go down in history, forever linked to those wild days: Meyer Lansky, Legs Diamond, Lucky Luciano, and Dutch Schultz.

They called Legs Diamond the clay pigeon for his talent at absorbing bullets. Everyone said he was a hothead. Case in point: He got into an argument about a boxing match one evening at the Hotsy Totsy Club, one of the swankiest speaks of them all. Bullets and blackjacks flew. When it was over, two men were dead. But that was only the beginning: Several witnesses were murdered; a hatcheck girl and a cashier disappeared; the bartender was shot. In the end, not a single witness was left to testify. Legs walked.

The shooting was in July 1929. The stock market collapsed three months later. By the time Prohibition was repealed in 1933, many New Yorkers couldn't afford a cup of coffee, much less a drink.

LIQUORS

**“In a famous old French movie, lovers say, ‘Paris is too small for such a big love.’ But here Manhattan was too big for their little love story. New York City can crush a love story with all its party lights, crazy musicians and rivers of alcohol. When you get older, you know love is precious, you learn to protect it. But they were too young to fight alone against the Big Apple’s Forbidden Fruit.”**

FRÉDÉRIC BEIGBEDER ON J. D. SALINGER AND OONA O’NEILL,  
*Manhattan’s Babe*







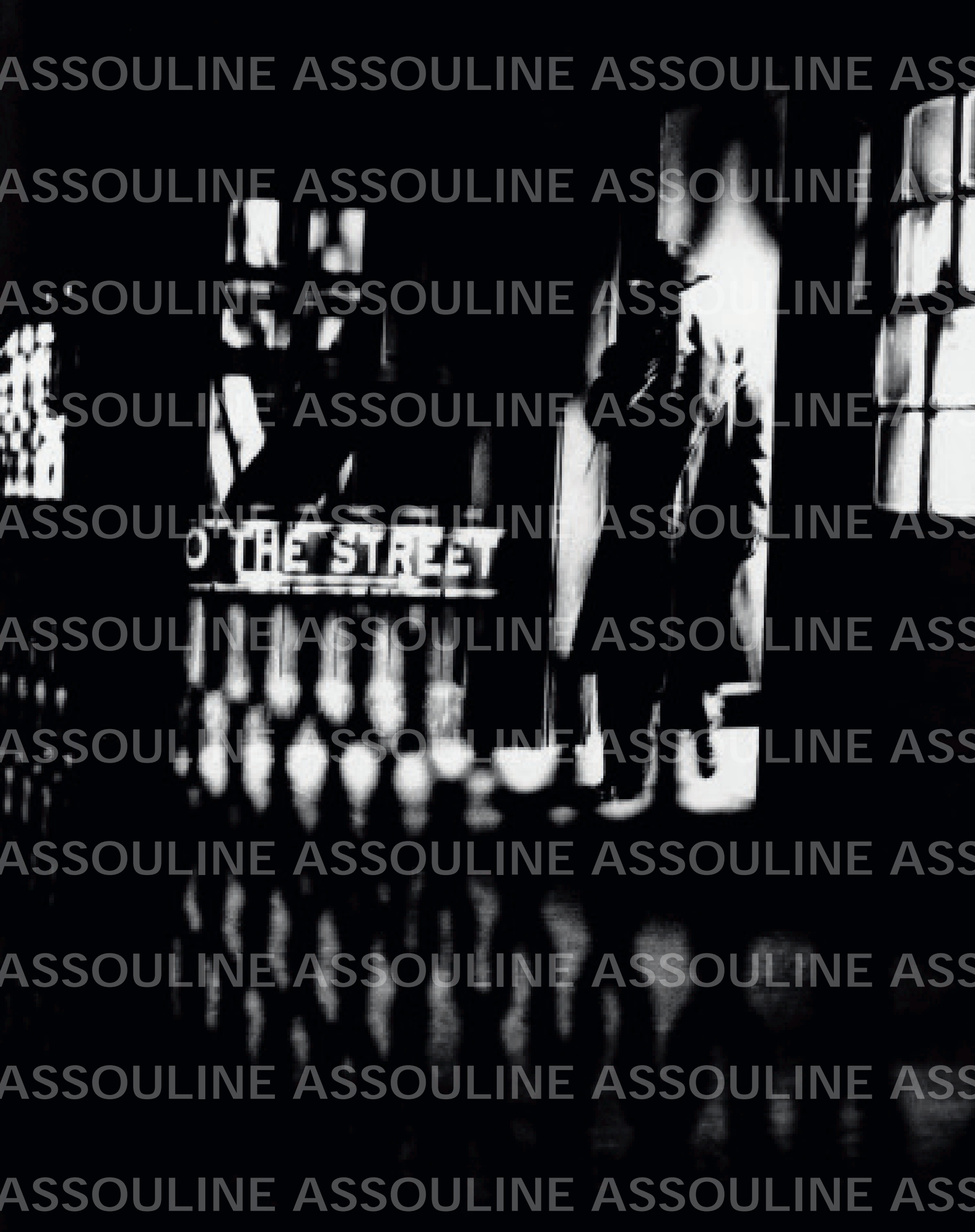
**T**he 1920s created a kind of New York nightlife that lingers today. Some places had always been exclusive, but those places with peepholes and buzzers brought exclusivity to a new level. And the romance of those times, of the illicit knock on an unmarked door or dresses that shimmered and shimmied, is having a comeback.

In the 1990s, a place called the Lansky Lounge opened on a side street off Delancey on the Lower East Side. You had to go down some stairs and a small alley to get to it. Inside, it was all coolness and well-made drinks and pretty girls. The cocktails got better at Milk & Honey in the next decade, but the place had no sign—you had to know where it was to get in, and even then, you didn't every time, just like at Club Napoleon.

These days, two summer weekends a year, Governors Island in the middle of New York Harbor echoes with jazz trumpet and the taps of feet Charlestoning in unison. It's the Jazz Age Lawn Party, and it feels like each weekend is more packed than the one that came before, the ferries filled with women in cloche hats and cocktail dresses and men in striped suits and tweed caps. One year after releasing his cinematic treatment of *The Great Gatsby*, the director Baz Luhrmann was there backstage mixing drinks, out in the open, the sun beating down, trumpet blowing in the distance.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, Texas Guinan, Jimmy Walker, and Filthy Phil would have loved it.  
Andrew Volstead? Not so much.

**Opposite:** On Grand Central Terminal's one-hundredth birthday, many gathered to celebrate at the Campbell Apartment cocktail lounge. The setting is appropriate, considering the space was once the private salon and office of railroad tycoon John W. Campbell.  
**Pages 128–29:** Archibald J. Motley, Jr., *Blues*, 1929. Oil on canvas, 36 x 42 in. Motley's painting perfectly captures the jazz culture that pervaded the twenties.  
**Page 130:** Clearly not a city where Prohibition was welcomed, New York still sports neon signs advertising alcohol, such as this one.  
**Page 131:** Pictured here in 1927, ballroom dance teachers Jose Lennard and Santos Casani dance the Charleston, a step named for the city in South Carolina. The technique made its way to New York after becoming mainstream in 1923.



# the dark city

*Nightclubs and Dread*

And then the noir city.

New York rolled and roared during World War II. The subways were as crowded at two a.m. as they were during the evening rush, men in khaki, blue, and white uniforms rushing to Grand Central Terminal for trains to their postings or trying to cram fun into every last second of liberty. Teenage girls in pleated skirts and penny loafers with bobby socks walked across the Brooklyn Bridge to the Hotel St. George in Brooklyn Heights, the biggest hotel in the city, to swim in its saltwater pool, the biggest in the world, and listen to big bands in the ballroom. Others in shapeless jumpsuits worked at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where wounded battleships and kamikaze-blackened aircraft carriers were jackhammered back to life amid showers of sparks. Convoys gathered ship by ship in the harbor, crowding it with gray, until one morning they'd be gone, leaving only the seagulls.

The great clubs and restaurants were also jammed, with more uniforms everywhere. These places became popular during the dark brown days of the Depression, when a new phrase was coined to describe those who could still afford to go out and have fun: *café*



**Above:** This late-night 1940s street scene shows several cars parked for the night while a window still shines with light, portraying New York City as the "city that never sleeps."  
**Opposite:** Photographer Paul Himmel captures the mysteriously dark shadows that often fall over New York.





“Something’s  
always happening  
here. If you’re  
bored in  
New York, it’s  
your own fault.”

MYRNA LOY

**Opposite:** Attorney General David Wilentz smokes a cigar while entering a New Jersey courthouse during the infamous 1935 Bruno Hauptmann trial. Hauptmann was accused of kidnapping aviator Charles Lindbergh’s baby, Charles Lindbergh, Jr.  
**Following pages:** Edward Hopper, *Nighthawks*, 1942. Oil on canvas, 33 x 60 in.  
This painting is said to have been inspired by a specific restaurant on Greenwich Avenue in the West Village.

society. Now, during the war, they hit their peaks: El Morocco on East Fifty-fourth Street with its famous zebra-patterned banquettes; The Copacabana on East Sixtieth Street; La Vie Parisienne on East Fifty-second Street; and, on East Fifty-first Street, the most storied of them all: the Stork Club.

**A**h, the Stork Club. Like El Morocco, it had been a speak, but when Prohibition was repealed it became the center of all things social, a place to see and to be seen. Revelers gathered beneath the sidewalk canopy and behind the gold chain—the successor to peepholes, the predecessor to the rope at Studio 54. Those lucky enough to be admitted went in, past the hatcheck girl and the bar with its rows of shiny bottles, to the mirrored dining room where bands always played standards and Latin music and, if really lucky or famous, maybe into the Cub Room, the distant hideaway that the owner, Sherman Billingsley, reserved for his most special customers: Claudette Colbert, Orson Welles, Betty Grable, Clark Gable, Fred Astaire, our friend Edward G. Robinson, and a young crooner named Frank Sinatra, who drew lines around the block when he played at the Paramount in October 1944.

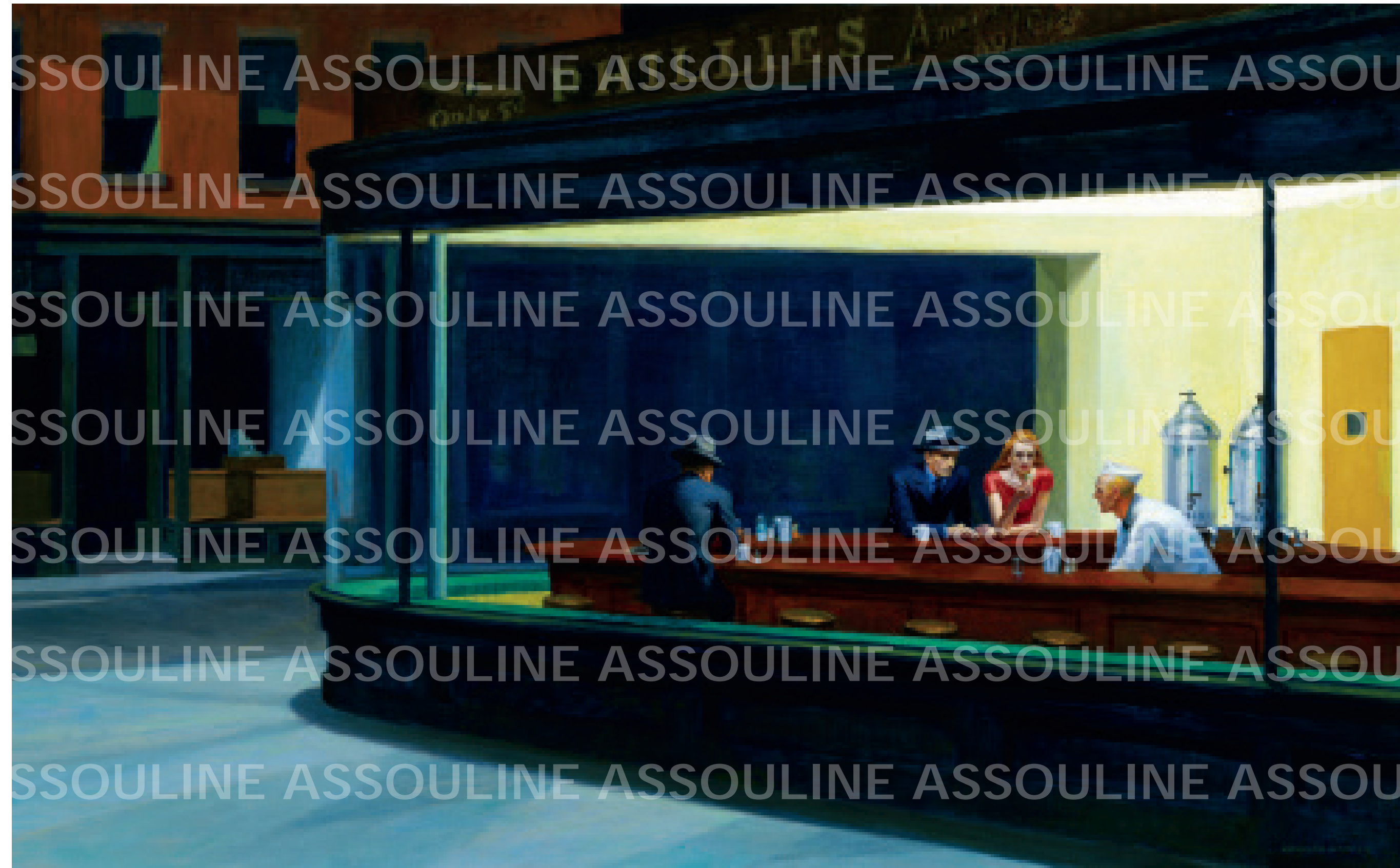
To name a few.

Billingsley had his own radio show. The whole world listened and imagined life at the Stork Club.

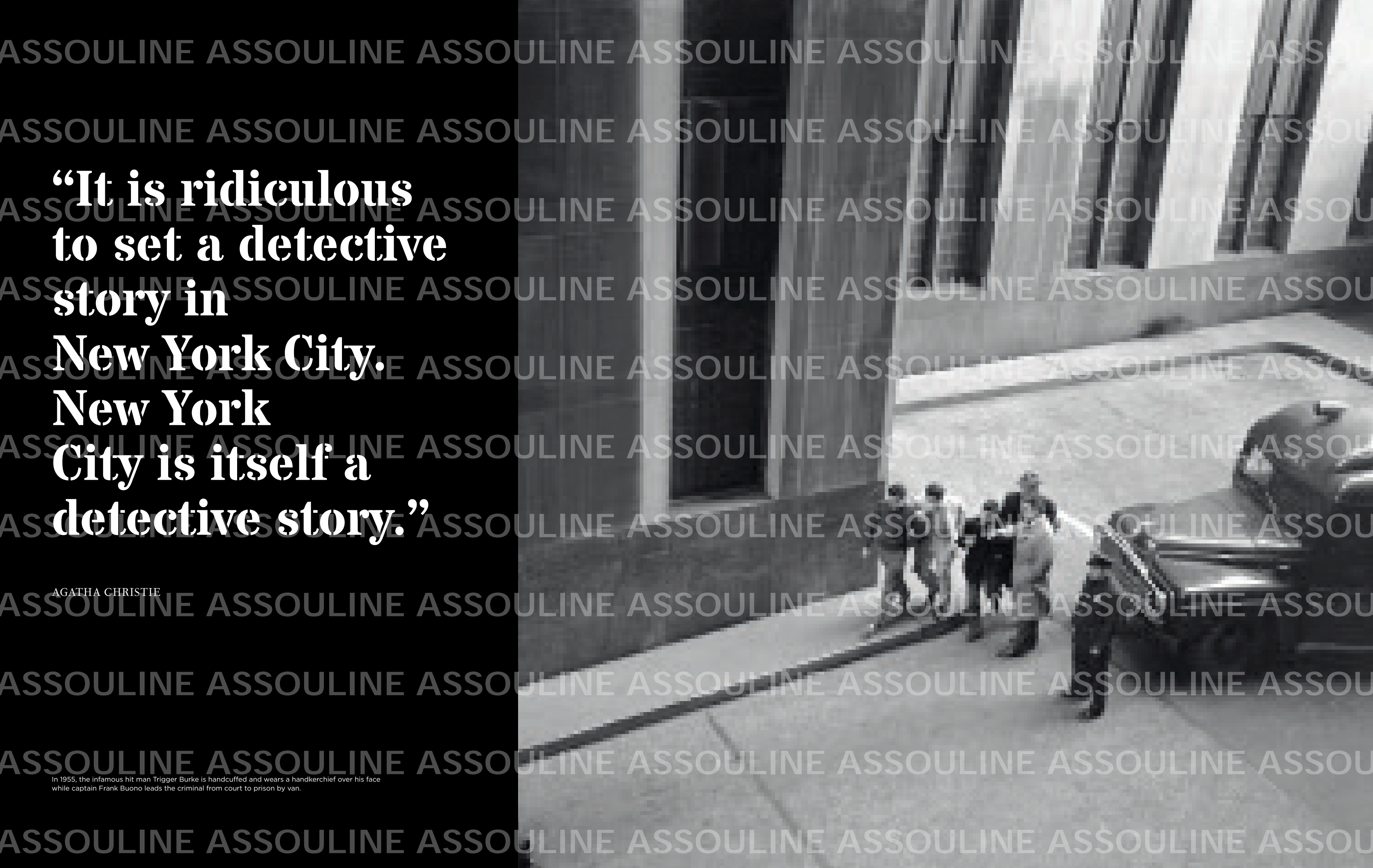
New York celebrated the end of World War II with a huge spontaneous party in Times Square in August, and then again on October 27, 1945, when many of the great ships that had helped defeat the Axis powers stood in a seven-mile line up the Hudson to be reviewed by President Truman. The city's diminutive wartime leader, nicknamed "The Little Flower," Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia, who was in charge of the home front, was also on hand. You'd think it was the beginning of a years-long party.

But then a strange thing happened.

Darkness set in.



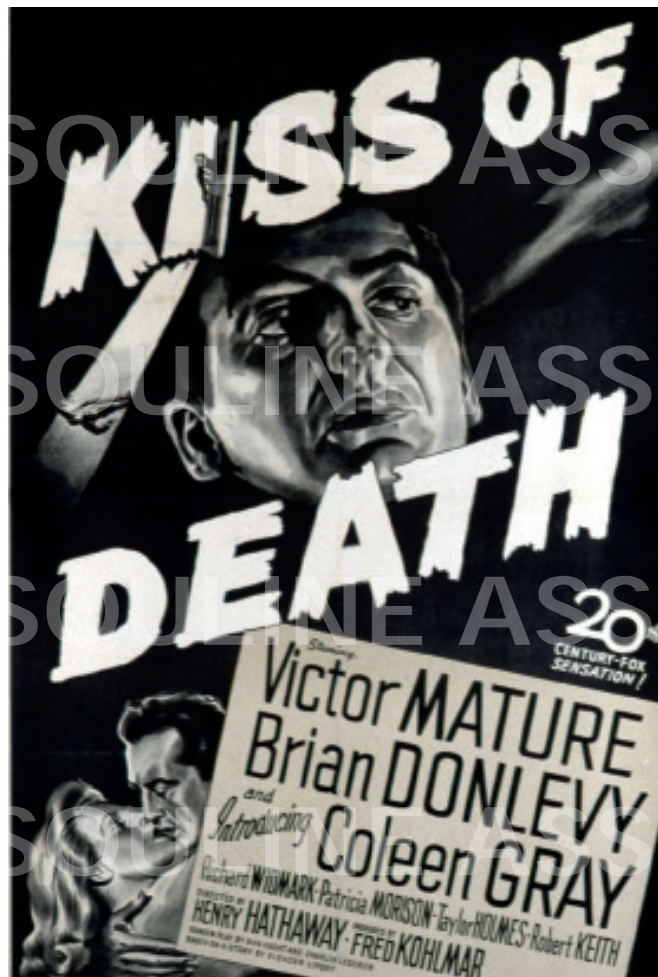




“It is ridiculous  
to set a detective  
story in  
New York City.  
New York  
City is itself a  
detective story.”

AGATHA CHRISTIE

In 1955, the infamous hit man Trigger Burke is handcuffed and wears a handkerchief over his face while captain Frank Buono leads the criminal from court to prison by van.



**Above:** Directed by Henry Hathaway in 1947, *Kiss of Death*, starring Coleen Gray and Victor Mature, tells the story of an ex-con attempting to start a new life with a loving family.  
**Opposite:** New York City at night, as seen through the lens of photographer Berenice Abbott in 1933.  
**Following pages:** An aerial view of Manhattan's Third Avenue in 1936.

While New York had found time for revelry in its most challenging epochs, during Prohibition or, as we shall see, in the smoke and urban decay of the 1970s, now, in the late 1940s, dread seeped down the avenues.

Looking back, there are many possible reasons for this. The world had entered the nuclear age. Would Manhattan be a target? Soviet Russia was on the rise. Men back from war, briefly heroes, wrestled with mundane office worries just months after fearing for their lives. Was this all there was? And yet the crowds still collected under the canopy of the Stork Club, drinking, eating, being seen. They had no idea of what the fighting men had experienced in foxholes.

What did it all mean?

It was Hollywood that best captured this moment on celluloid, and New York became one of its main stages. New technologies made it easier to film on location instead of on the controlled soundstages of sunny California. And so the crews came and began filming a new kind of crime melodrama, one that borrowed the harsh black-and-white contrasts of German expressionism, featured a war-scarred hero who often wasn't really a hero at all, and layered on top of it an existential sense of hopelessness—what did it all mean?—to create a genre that would be labeled by French critics years in the future as film noir.

Now, skyscrapers celebrated for their height and elegance became platforms from which to toss unwitting victims—that's what happens to Manhattan-born William Bendix in *The Dark Corner*. The shadows of El trestles became spiderwebs on the sidewalks, trapping poor saps in a netherworld of light and dark. Fancy drawing rooms provided the perfect hideaways for smooth-talking villains. Every dark alley or nighttime office building became an ominous setting for a murder, footsteps in the distance. The criminal underclass flooded the swankiest restaurants and clubs, which always seemed to have one empty table in just the right spot when the hero or baddie entered the scene.











the dark city

## Were there gangsters in the Stork Club?

Film scholars argue about what constitutes film noir and which were the first examples. Looking at New York noirs, Otto Preminger's 1944 *Laura* is as good a place as any to start. While this was still a Hollywood version of New York City, of Manhattan penthouses, restaurants, and advertising agencies built on soundstages, it set the basic pattern for the character of New York in the deluge of noirs to come: a city of wealth, corrupt power, and ambition where dark forces hid just beneath the glittering surface.

*Laura*, played by Gene Tierney, is a beautiful young advertising executive killed by a shotgun blast to the face, or so we think. Waldo Lydecker, played by Clifton Webb, is a powerful newspaper columnist who is determined to make her a success and becomes jealous when she draws the attentions of others. And Mark McPherson, played by Dana Andrews, is a detective who falls in love with a painting of her. New York is a key supporting character throughout: its skyscrapers standing sentry outside Lydecker's terrace, its modeling agencies filled with beautiful women, its Gilded Age-era brownstones harboring a coterie of slimy suspects.

**T**he city moves closer to the center in director Henry Hathaway's 1947 *Kiss of Death*. Every scene is shot on location, a fact proudly announced at the beginning of the film. Victor Mature plays an ex-con who, desperate for money, pulls off a robbery in the Chrysler Building, those inlaid-wood Art Deco elevator doors featured prominently. He's busted, does time at Sing Sing, and eventually redeems himself by helping bust a real bad guy: Tommy Udo, played by Richard Widmark in his debut role, his New York accent as thick as the sludge at the bottom of the harbor, in one famous scene hurling a terrified wheelchair-bound elderly lady down a flight of stairs.

For the Mature character, Manhattan streets and vestibules and restaurants mean danger, and safety is the little brick house where he lives in leafy, almost-suburban Astoria, Queens, just in the shadow of the then-new Triborough Bridge.



**Above, top:** Yellow police tape marks a crime scene.  
**Above, bottom:** Batman watches over Gotham City, often thought to be modeled after the character and architecture of New York.  
**Opposite:** Crime photographer Arthur Fellig, better known as Weegee, got his strange moniker from the popular fortune-telling game Ouija. The mystical nickname is well deserved: Fellig was often the first photographer at the scene of a crime.





Alfred Hitchcock chose New York as the location for his successful 1954 thriller *Rear Window*, starring Grace Kelly and James Stewart.

The city takes center stage once and for all, muscling out its costars and stealing scene after scene, in Jules Dassin’s 1948 almost-documentary, *The Naked City*. A woman is murdered and the cops set out to find her killer. That’s all you need to know about the plot—otherwise, enjoy the shots of Midtown from above, the buildings pointing menacingly at the aerial camera, the Empire State Building tallest of all; the liner SS *America* tied to its nighttime dock on the Hudson; a deserted Wall Street. Later, a key scene unfolds on the corner of Rivington and Norfolk streets on the Lower East Side, where Jewish immigrants

filled the streets and where, in the early decades of the twenty-first century, a hot spot called Schiller’s Liquor Bar with a noisy, tiled interior would draw a different kind of crowd. In the movie, a stationery shop sits on the corner that would one day be Schiller’s, and a horse-drawn cart passes in the foreground.

*The Naked City* was inspired by the photographs of Arthur Fellig, who as we recall came to New York from what is now Poland via Ellis Island in 1909 and took the name Weegee because he was like a Ouija board: He got to crime scenes so fast, bulky four-by-five-inch Speed Graphic camera in hand, that it was like he saw the future. The name of the film, on which he served as a consultant, came from his 1945 book.

Weegee set up shop at police headquarters on Mulberry Street, listened to the police radio, and roamed the city at night, racing to murders, fires, bar fights, mob hits, car accidents, and more fires. His images appeared again and again on the front pages of *The Daily News*, *PM*, and *The Daily Mirror*. His synchronized flash, attached to the camera or held in his free hand, and his preset exposure of 1/200 stopped down to f16, froze images in sharply contrasting pools of the blackest blacks and whitest whites.

He stripped away any softness—truth was laid bare. Here was a victim with blood pouring from his head; here was a man who had just murdered his wife, his eyes vacant; here was a body being pulled from the Hudson muck; here were the shocked survivors of a fire, all their possessions gone.

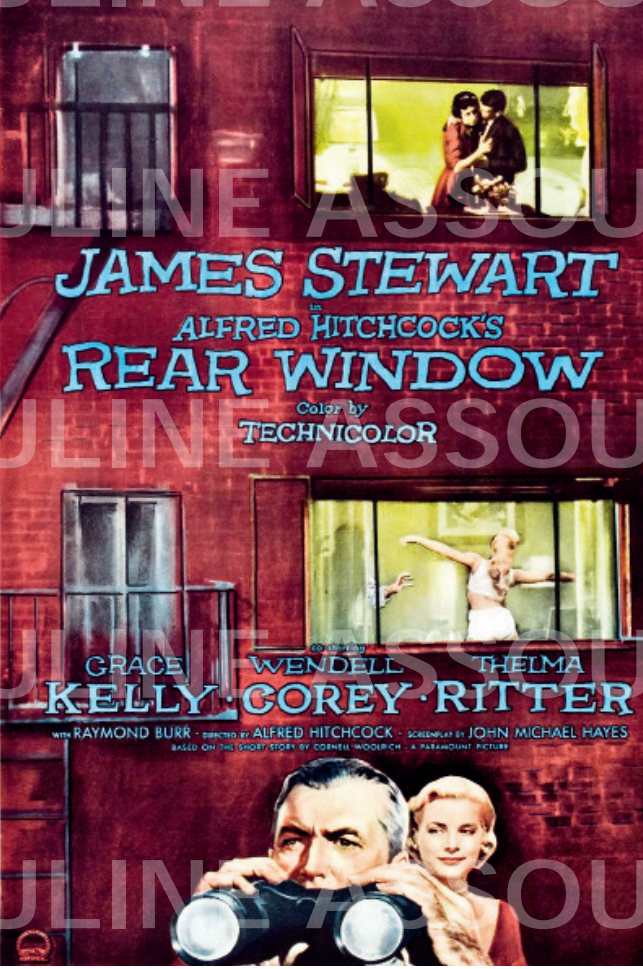
But Weegee’s camera also captured joy: mobs crowding every inch of sand on a beautiful Coney Island Sunday; children laughing during a movie; a mother and daughter dancing in Central Park; New Yorkers proudly hoisting front pages announcing the end of World War II.

And café society. Because if New York City is anything, it is a place of contrasts, and while the planet worried about World War III and the doomed antiheroes of film noir unraveled mysteries that often led to their own deaths, the socialites still went to opening night at the Metropolitan Opera, cigarette holders in hand, and packed the banquettes of the Stork Club and El Morocco. Weegee illuminated them all for one two-hundredth of a second.

As the 1940s became the 1950s, the black and white of noir morphed into countless shades of gray, and so did the genre’s portrayal of New York. And so did life in general. New York was changing; it was always changing. Families in long-stable neighborhoods in the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and upper Manhattan started moving to the suburbs. The subways emptied out and started falling apart. Crime rose. Newspapers closed, *PM* first.

And the Stork Club? It felt less and less exclusive and less and less fun. In the late forties, a scandal erupted when the black singer Josephine Baker was treated poorly by the staff. Accusations of racism flew; Billingsley denied them all.

The place never quite recovered. It became the hangout of the squares, of visitors from out of town, its music old-fashioned, its food boring—who wanted a giant pile of cold crudités? Hip young people went to Minton’s in Harlem and places like Birdland, the Five Spot, the Village Vanguard, and the Jazz Gallery to listen to a new kind of jazz called bebop and its younger sibling, modern jazz. The rhythms and solos got so complex that

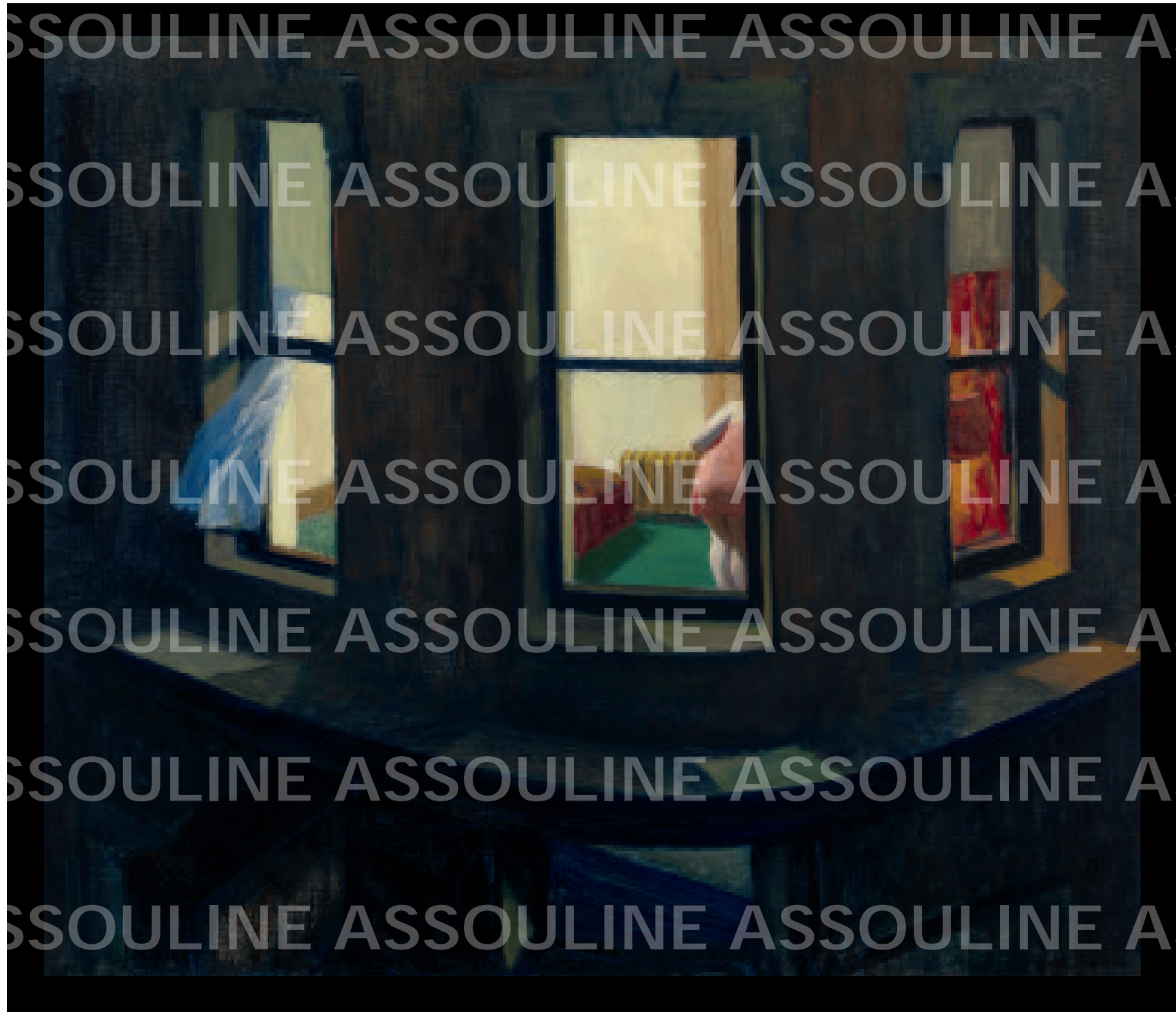


**Above:** *Rear Window* depicts the too-close-for-comfort life often present in an urban environment. In the film, a wheelchair-bound photographer spies on his neighbors through his rear window, eventually leading him to suspect one of them of murder.

**Page 150:** Edward Hopper, *Night Windows*, 1928. Oil on canvas, 29 x 34 in. This work presents another view of the rampant voyeurism and strange loneliness that many experience living in the close quarters of New York City.

**Page 151:** Photographer Jean-Michel Berts chooses to photograph New York City at dawn, when the city that never sleeps is in between night and day.





**“There is something in  
the New York air that  
makes sleep useless.”**

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR



**“As only New Yorkers know, if you can get through the twilight, you’ll live through the night.”**

DOROTHY PARKER

you couldn’t dance to them, but they had their roots in the rhythms that filled the 1920s rent parties that Langston Hughes wrote about.

Folkies crowded coffee joints in Greenwich Village like Cafe Wha?, the Gaslight, Le Figaro, The Bitter End, and Gerde’s Folk City, listening to the broken, staccato prose of beat poets like Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso and singing along to strummed acoustic chords. Others went to the earliest nightclubs—the forerunners of discos—like The Dom, Le Club, and Max’s Kansas City to enjoy the loosening social mores of the time.

Nobody was in uniform. The Stork was left behind.

Don Bader was for many years the club’s bandleader. Ralph Blumenthal, in his book *Stork Club*, describes the day in 1963 when Bader saw an ad in *The New York Times* in which Sherman Billingsley’s once exclusive gathering place had advertised a burger and fries for \$1.99. He clipped it and showed it to the band.

“Guys,” he said, “it’s all over.”

**I**f you stand on a Midtown corner at night and squint, you can still see the noir city.

All along Seventh Avenue in the Garment District on the West Side of Manhattan, the stepped-back tops of 1930s office buildings stand in ominous silhouette, just like a film set; any one of them would be an ideal spot from which to toss a victim. Down at street level, neon liquor store signs still beckon, as do trios of golden orbs that mark pawnshops. Just off West Thirty-seventh Street, a bar called the Distinguished Wakamba Cocktail Lounge suggests all the worrisome danger of a place where nobody wants you to know their name. But go in and it’s actually a convivial bunch of guys at the bar, and the Presidente beers are ice-cold.

In the 1990s, a brief swing dance craze took hold, and some promoters opened a luxurious throwback to those clubs of the Stork era: the Supper Club in the Edison Hotel on West Forty-seventh Street. A young couple could save their salaries for a big night out on the town—and back in time.

**Opposite:** A blurry scene of New York City’s ubiquitous lights.





Weegee views are everywhere. It's hard not to think of him when a police car races by, flashing red light that throws shadows and briefly illuminates the rolled-up metal gates of closed stores. New York plays its role again and again, villain or hero, ingenue or heavy, although you never hear an accent like Richard Widmark's anymore.

**Opposite:** Shots of the crowded streets of Manhattan often reflect the never-ending bustle of city life. Pushing and shoving is common on these streets. If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere—and more important, if you can make it anywhere in the city on time, you are superhuman.  
**Pages 158–59:** Photographer Paul Himmel's tribute to the Brooklyn Bridge and thoughtful contemplation.



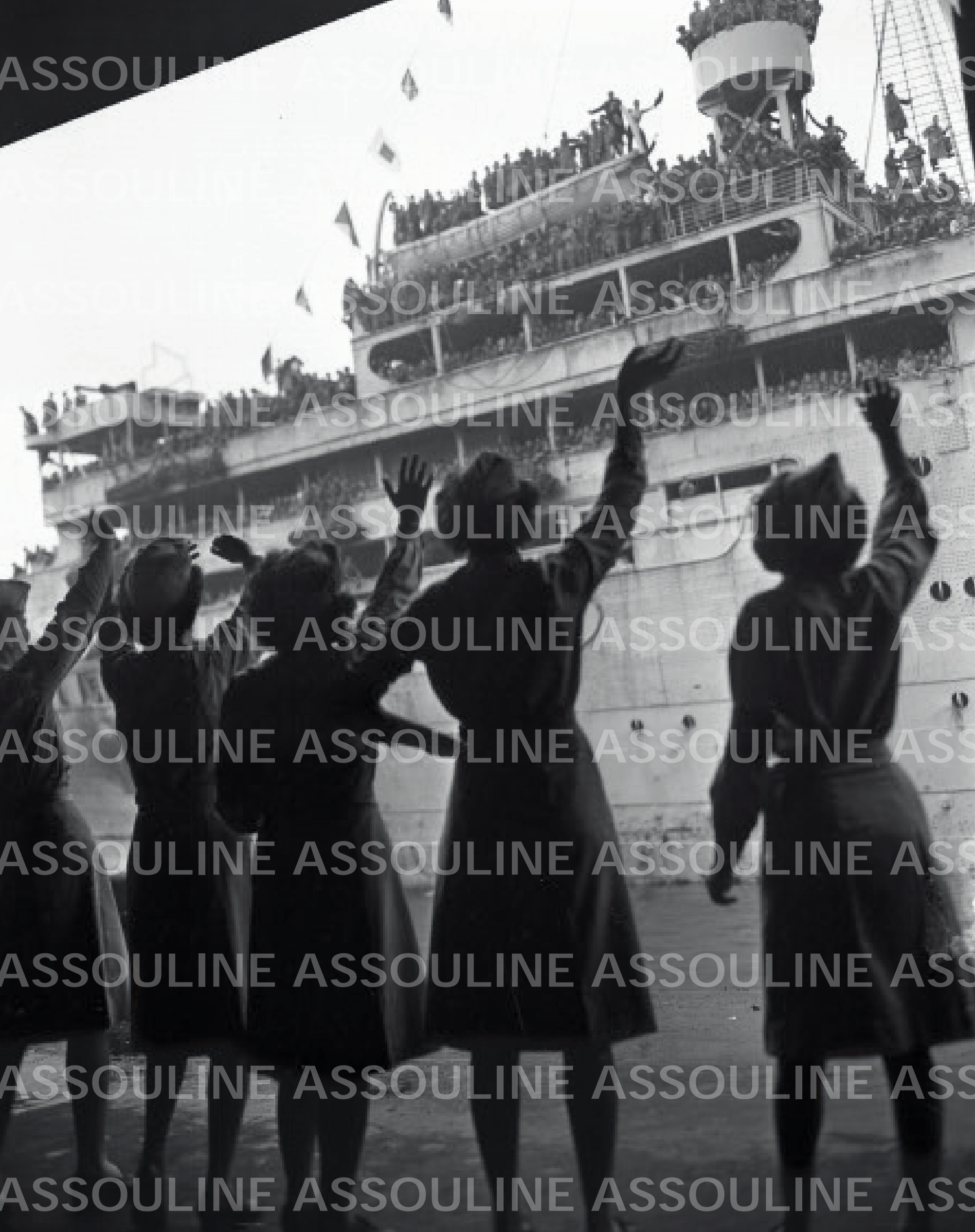
"I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye. I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove. Sometimes, in my mind, I followed them to their apartments on the corners of hidden streets, and they turned and smiled back at me before they faded through a door into warm darkness. At the enchanted metropolitan twilight I felt a haunting loneliness sometimes, and felt it in others-- poor young clerks who loitered in

front of windows waiting until it was time for a solitary restaurant dinner--young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life.

Again at eight o'clock, when the dark lanes of the Forties were five deep with throbbing taxi cabs, bound for the theatre district, I felt a sinking in my heart. Forms leaned together in the taxis as they waited, and voices sang, and there was laughter from unheard jokes, and lighted cigarettes outlined unintelligible gestures inside. Imagining that I, too, was hurrying toward gayety and sharing their intimate excitement, I wished them well."







# the great port

*These Streets Sprang from the Water*

Now let’s go back to 1524.  
In March of that year, a French sailing ship, *La Dauphine*, piloted by the Florentine navigator Giovanni da Verrazzano, arrived outside of what is now New York Harbor after a fifty-one-day journey from Madeira. *La Dauphine* and its crew were heading north along the coast, looking for a northern sea route to Japan and China, when they encountered this enticing opening along the shore.

Passing through the narrows that would one day bear the navigator’s name, the crew found themselves in “a very beautiful lake,” an expansive and smooth body of water, golden in the afternoon sun, that provided shelter from the ravages of the open sea. Forests lined its shores. Beds of oysters covered its bottom. Fowl filled the skies above it. Lenapes in brightly colored feathers approached *La Dauphine* in small boats “very cheerfully, making great shouts of admiration,” as Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace described in their epic history, *Gotham*.

New York City had begun.  
For much of the twentieth century, few who have made their lives in the city thought much about the water. Maybe they glimpsed the gray East River and the harbor beyond as they crossed the Manhattan Bridge on the way to work on a packed D train. Maybe they watched the Fourth of July fireworks from Brooklyn Heights. That was it. But New York City



**Above:** This 1908 poster for the Cunard Line advertises a transatlantic voyage linking Liverpool to New York and Boston via Queenstown, Ireland.  
**Opposite:** Members of the Women’s Army Corps wave to troops on the RMS *Aquitania* in its New York port, 1940s. The ship’s maiden voyage was in 1914, when it sailed from Liverpool, England, to New York Harbor.  
**Following pages:** The RMS *Queen Elizabeth* and SS *France*, at the time the world’s longest ocean liners, viewed from the Hudson against the New York City skyline in the 1960s.



**“The city  
seen from the  
Queensboro  
Bridge is  
always the city  
seen for the  
first time, in  
its first wild  
promise of all  
the mystery and  
the beauty in  
the world.”**

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD, *The Great Gatsby*





**“New York is a diamond iceberg  
floating in river water.”**

TRUMAN CAPOTE

**Above:** Marlon Brando with director Elia Kazan on the set of *On the Waterfront*, 1954.  
**Opposite:** Docks and pier on the East River, 1946.





The British liner *Queen Mary* arrives in New York Harbor in 1945 carrying US troops returning home from Europe after World War II.

exists, first and foremost, because it is a port, a remarkable geographic anomaly along a coastline thousands of miles long that, via a small but deep opening, provides a safe and vast aquatic parking lot for ships, whether the wooden sailing vessels of Verrazzano's time, the great battleships of World War II, or even the container ships of today that are so gargantuan that the Bayonne Bridge between Staten Island and New Jersey has to be raised to let them through.

If it weren't for that beautiful lake, the gaslights of the Gilded Age would not have glowed along Gramercy Park and Mrs. Astor would never have hosted the 400. Ellis Island wouldn't have welcomed millions of

immigrants. The Empire State Building wouldn't have beaten the Chrysler Building to the sky. Filthy Phil wouldn't have found that speakeasy. Sherman Billingsley wouldn't have had his own radio show from the Stork Club.

## It all came from the water.

The city grew from the shorelines in. By the 1800s, hundreds of piers splayed out from Manhattan like countless fingers beneath forests of masts. The big ships came up the Hudson River, known to seamen as the North River (the Chesapeake being the South River). The docks were crowded, noisy, and dangerous; the taverns and flophouses that accommodated sailors roiled through the nights. Yet moments of quiet reverie could still be had.

"There now is your insular city of the Manhattoes, belted round by wharves as Indian isles by coral reefs—commerce surrounds it with her surf," Herman Melville wrote in the opening pages of *Moby Dick*. "Right and left, the streets take you waterward."

All sorts of industry sprouted up: ship chandleries, repair yards, hiring halls. The waterfront was a place for labor, not relaxation. Who had time to look at the view? There was work to be done. Ferries connected Manhattan to Brooklyn and New Jersey. Sailing packets and the first steamers jostled for space with barges and tugs. Black smoke billowed from funnels. Longer piers were built to accommodate the new side-wheel steamships taking passengers to and from Europe that were run by Cornelius Vanderbilt, known as the Commodore. Goods from around the world flowed through New York City.

The bard of the waterfront in the twentieth century was a writer for *The New Yorker* named Joseph Mitchell who roamed the docks and markets and waterfront barrooms with notebook in hand, recording their characters and the sights and smells of those days. Of a visit to the bustling Fulton Fish Market at the bottom of Manhattan, he wrote, "The smoky riverbank dawn, the racket the fishmongers make, the seaweedy smell, and the sight of this plentifulness always gave me a feel of well-being, and sometimes they elate me."

**B**ut the waterfront could be a brutal place. Corruption ruled the docks. Thousands of longshoremen unloaded those ships, many gathering in semicircles around hiring bosses in the mornings, hooks over their shoulders, stamping their feet to keep warm, hoping to get a day's work. More often than not, they had to give a kickback to the man who hired them if they wanted to work again. No job security, no insurance, and, if injured—as many were—no future.

"He's the longshoreman, the dock walloper, the little man who isn't there at investigations, the forgotten man in the great city of New York, the forgotten man of American labor," wrote Budd Schulberg in *The New York Times* in 1952. Schulberg had spent some time observing life on the docks, gathering material that would become *On the Waterfront*, the 1954 film directed by Elia Kazan and starring a young and brooding method actor named Marlon Brando.

**"There is no human reason to be here, except for the sheer ecstasy of being crowded together."**

JEAN BAUDRILLARD



**“I too lived,  
Brooklyn of  
ample hills  
was mine,  
I too walk’d  
the streets of  
Manhattan  
island, and  
bathed in  
the waters  
around it...”**

WALT WHITMAN,  
“Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”

These forgotten men fueled and loaded and provisioned some of what were among humankind’s most glorious and glamorous mechanical creations, the ocean liners. Along with the skyscraper, perhaps no image captured the drama of Manhattan in the eyes of the rest of the world—at least until the 1960s—better than the sight of a big streamlined liner sidling up to the jagged cityscape. In fact, when the big ships docked right in the middle of Manhattan, it was as if their funnels and superstructures became part of the skyline itself, just like the masts of Melville’s time.

The first truly modern liners were the British *Mauretania* and *Lusitania* of the Cunard Line, whose steam turbines could wrest far more horsepower from coal than a simple reciprocating steam engine, allowing these twin thoroughbreds to cross the Atlantic in five days. They looked how we imagine an ocean liner should: four swept-back funnels, straight bows cutting the waves, curving sterns that wouldn’t have looked out of place on a yacht.

The rival White Star Line sought to do better a few years on with the *Olympic*, *Titanic*, and *Britannic*. *Titanic*, of course, never made it to New York, sinking on her maiden voyage in 1912 after striking an iceberg.

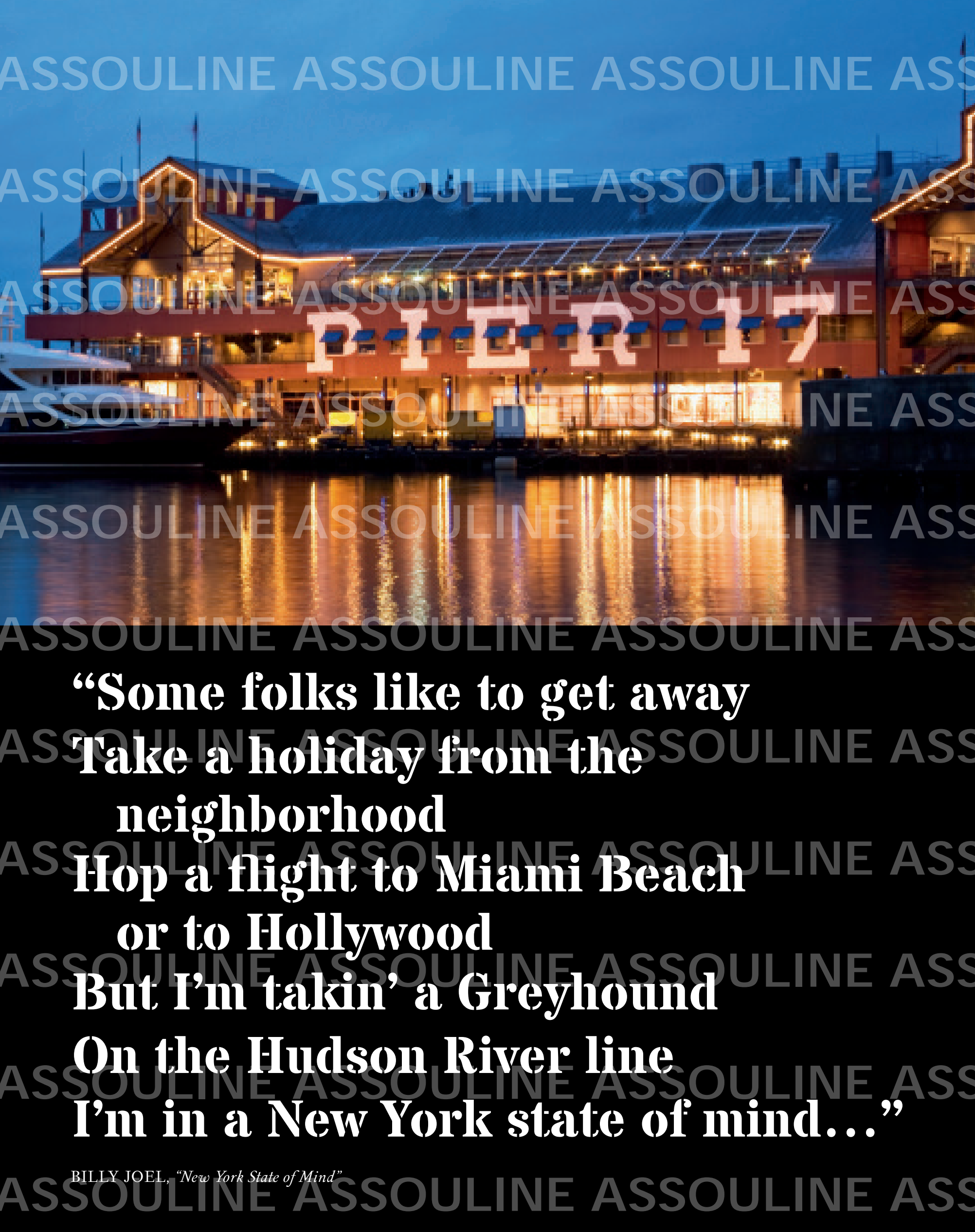
Other storied names followed through the decades, known to longshoremen and liner-obsessed boys ashore: *Bremen*, *Île de France*, *Rex*, all representing the hopes of nations that sought to claim their spot on the world stage by building the biggest, the fastest, the most luxurious liner afloat.

In 1935, France seemed to have won that title with the *Normandie*, a fast-moving Art Deco extravaganza. This spectacular creation had a flared prow and three funnels squatter than those of the British ships and declining in height from bow to stern, giving the impression of blinding speed.

Her life was short, and she died a very New York death. After France fell and the United States got into World War II, the *Normandie* was requisitioned as a troop ship. Work began at a West Side pier stripping away all those Art Deco accoutrements, but an errant spark from a careless welder’s flame started a blaze that could not be contained. It was

The USS *Missouri* is remembered as the site of Japan’s surrender, which consequently ended World War II. Here, the battleship rests in dry dock in Bayonne, New Jersey.





“Some folks like to get away  
Take a holiday from the  
neighborhood  
Hop a flight to Miami Beach  
or to Hollywood  
But I’m takin’ a Greyhound  
On the Hudson River line  
I’m in a New York state of mind...”

BILLY JOEL, “New York State of Mind”

the great port

a freezing winter day with ice floes in the Hudson. Mayor La Guardia showed up in a fire chief’s hat and coat to oversee the proceedings. Fireboats shot streams of water onto the flaming hulk until it capsized, becoming a destination for thousands of spectators until it was finally righted and broken down into scrap.

The Manhattan skyline sported the fantastic shapes of liner funnels into the 1960s. The *France* had funnels with wings on them; those of the gleaming white Italian liners *Michelangelo* and *Raffaello* were encased in spindly steel latticework. Some said those Italian ships held as many charms on the inside as they did on the outside. John Malcolm Brinnin, in his history of transatlantic travel, *The Sway of the Grand Saloon*, noted approvingly, “On an Italian ship, the passenger ringing his call button would likely be greeted in a few moments by a stand-in for Sophia Loren.”

**T**oday, big ships still dock along the piers of Manhattan, sidling up to the skyline. But they are mostly cruise ships, not liners, with walls of balconies and steep square sterns that make them look like apartment buildings turned on their sides. The last true liner, the *Queen Mary 2*, continues to cross the Atlantic Ocean but docks in Brooklyn, in the low-lying waterfront neighborhood of Red Hook, towering over old brick warehouses. The descending lines of her decks at the stern are reminiscent of the *Normandie*, as her designers intended.

Just a few miles away, on a quiet street in Brooklyn Heights, a bit of the *Normandie* herself lives on: The panels of the first-class dining room doors, each showing a scene from Normandy, are now used as the front doors of a church. Along the West Side Highway in Manhattan, the steel frame of the front of the pier toward which the doomed *Titanic* was bound still stands, a rusted tombstone. These are just two little reminders of New York City’s past as the western terminus for the great liners.



**Above:** Yellow taxis are present not only on New York’s streets but on its waterways as well, shuttling passengers between boroughs or on cruises around the island of Manhattan.  
**Opposite:** At New York City’s historic South Street Seaport, Pier 17, which reopened in summer 2018, is the area’s popular shopping destination.





“The sensual  
mysticism of  
entire vertical  
being.”

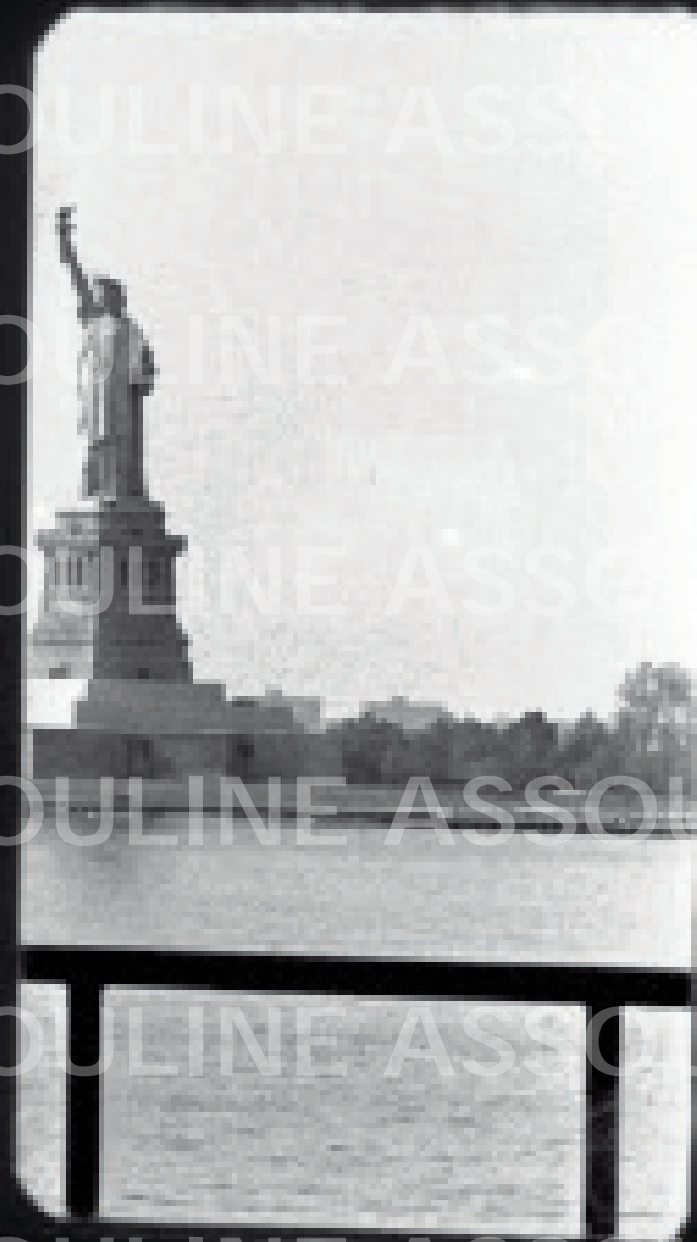
E. E. CUMMINGS

**Opposite:** Pier 17 is home to many historic boats moored on the East River.  
**Page 174:** New York City makes use of its waterways in practical manners, such as with the Staten Island Ferry.  
This passenger route, which operates 24/7, is the only mass transit connection between Manhattan and Staten Island.  
**Page 175:** A man on a ferry stands silhouetted against the Statue of Liberty, 1967.



**“He could see the island of Manhattan off to the left. The towers were jammed together so tightly, he could feel the mass and stupendous weight. Just think of the millions, from all over the globe, who yearned to be on that island, in those towers, in those narrow streets! There it was, the Rome, the Paris, the London of the twentieth century, the city of ambition, the dense magnetic rock, the irresistible destination of all those who insist on being where things are happening—and he was among the victors!”**

TOM WOLFE, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*





But the waterfront thrives today in a way that those forsaken dockwallopers would never have imagined, even if the tugboat men still call the Hudson the North River. The cargo ships and the longshoremen (far fewer now, with good wages and ironclad job security) work in New Jersey. Much of the harbor and the Hudson River has become a playground. Parks with cycling lanes line its shores. Glass apartment buildings take full advantage of panoramas no longer hindered by cranes and piles of scrap and corrugated metal fences and plumes of smoke and forests of masts. Apartment owners pay high taxes, helping to fill city coffers. And everyone enjoys the view. The harbor teems with sightseeing boats out for dinner cruises, lines of bobbing kayakers, and schools of sailboats piloted by children taking classes.

But it is still New York Harbor, from which the city itself sprang to life, and Giovanni da Verrazzano and the crew of *La Dauphine* would still revel in its safety from the sea, marvel at its size, and squint at the beauty of the afternoon sun glinting on its surface.

This 1950s aerial view shows just how interconnected the five boroughs of New York City strive to be, displaying the Manhattan and Brooklyn bridges and the East and Hudson rivers.





## the show goes on and on

*Broadway and Times Square*

Audiences love a twist, a showstopper, a surprise that makes everyone gasp, a heart-tugging moment of show-must-go-on bravado.

And all of the above happened on the evening of August 25, 1980, when one of the most anticipated shows of that Broadway season, *42nd Street*, opened at the Winter Garden. It was directed by Broadway legend Gower Champion and produced by David Merrick, one of the greatest showmen in New York theater history. They knew they had a hit despite poor out-of-town reviews. Just the opening—a line of dancing feet and legs beneath a half-raised curtain—was enough to make an audience swoon. And swoon the audience did that August night, buzzing happily at intermission, applauding all the songs that the show, essentially a revue of old standards, had repackaged for the modern age.

But then Merrick emerged at the final curtain to deliver a shock not only to the audience but to the cast gathered around him and the crew backstage.

“This is tragic,” he said, to nervous laughter. “No, no, you don’t understand. Gower Champion died this morning.”

The director of the biggest show of the season dying on opening day? It was a great story, on the front page of all the papers. *42nd Street* was an instant smash hit.

Champion had been sick for months with a mysterious blood disorder. There were rumors that Merrick had kept his death secret for several days so he could deliver the opening-night, headline-grabbing, ticket-selling bombshell. True or not, it worked, and the opening of *42nd Street* went down in the annals of Broadway.

It couldn’t have happened at a better time for New York theater and for Times Square, the famous crossroads with which it has always been inextricably linked, because at that moment, Broadway was recovering from decades of decline.





**“In New York, people don’t go to  
the theater—they go to see hits.”**

LOUIS JORDAN





**“New York  
is where the  
future comes  
to audition.”**

ED KOCH

**Opposite:** Guy Peellaert, *42nd Street* (Luis Buñuel, Jack Johnson, Federico García Lorca, Salvador Dalí), 1995–99. Photomontage. This artwork depicts a rich and vibrant scene on Forty-second Street, drawing the eye in several directions.

**Page 178:** Photographed by William Klein, this Forty-second Street movie theater prepares to show *Wings of the Hawk*, a 1953 Western directed by Budd Boetticher.

**Page 180:** Born in Brooklyn, the composer and pianist George Gershwin was vital to Broadway culture in New York City. Gershwin wrote many Broadway musicals and operas with his brother Ira Gershwin and Buddy DeSylva. Here, he is the focus of a magazine advertisement from the 1940s.

**Page 181:** Tennessee Williams's play *The Glass Menagerie* premiered in Chicago in 1944 before moving to Broadway, where it became Williams's first big success. It has since been revived multiple times, including in 2017 with Sally Field in the lead role.

**Following pages:** Set in 1950s New York, Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge* takes place in an Italian American neighborhood near the Brooklyn Bridge. Here, Miller (center) rehearses with Mary Ure and Anthony Quayle.



Until 1975, when a new kind of intimate, personal show opened—one with a diffuse plotline but a few undeniable showstoppers called *A Chorus Line*—there hadn't been a bona fide hit in years. The halcyon days of *West Side Story* and *The Music Man* were long gone. The neighborhood had gone to seed, with hustlers and prostitutes replacing the fast-talking, colorful characters who'd once filled its nightspots, and theaters showing XXX-rated movies everywhere. Tourists came in on buses to see the plays, ran nervously into the theaters, and got right back on the buses when the shows were over. Now, Broadway was roaring back and would never fade again. And that was at least partly because of those dancing legs beneath that half-opened curtain and the spectacular timing of one particular death.

**B**roadway began life as a path of the Lenape tribe that started at Manhattan's southern tip and led north, cutting diagonally northwest, then aiming north again to the top of the island, a total length of eighteen miles. When city planners laid out the Manhattan street grid in 1811, they let Broadway wend its slanted route unchanged. "Robust, monumentally vulgar, and durable is Broadway," Edward Stanley wrote in *Holiday* magazine in 1951. "Like humanity it survives, swinging its earthy hips athwart the neat geometry of Manhattan, twisting along the hard high backbone of the island from one corner to the other."

The first theaters, including P. T. Barnum's first circus, were gathered in the knot of conjoining roads around Nassau and Ann streets at the bottom of the island, but as the city moved northward, the theaters went with them, chasing cheaper real estate and more room.





**“If I can make  
it there  
I’ll make it  
anywhere!  
It’s up to you  
New York,  
New York!”**

FRANK SINATRA, *“Theme from New York, New York”*









**Above, top:** Lauren Bacall and playwright Tennessee Williams in Bacall's dressing room during Abe Burrows's play *Cactus Flower*, 1966.  
**Above, bottom:** Broadway shows span genres, from splashy musicals to intimate two-handers like John Logan's *Red*, which tells the story of Mark Rothko and the murals he was commissioned to paint for the Four Seasons restaurant.  
**Pages 186–87:** The ever-illuminated Times Square.  
**Previous pages:** Limousines are part of a glamorous New York lifestyle.

It was around 1900 when the roots of today's theater district first dug down into Manhattan soil at Longacre Square, where Broadway crossed Seventh Avenue at Forty-second Street. This had been where New Yorkers bought and sold horses. But bigger money was to be had putting on shows: A syndicate of theater owners created Beaux Arts temples for their productions. The shows then went on the road. A hit could earn a million dollars in its first year.

Movies threatened to put live performances out of business in the 1920s, so Broadway producers introduced bigger and broader spectacles with extravagant sets and song-and-dance numbers. It became the Great White Way, so named for the thousands of electric lights that lit up the marquees. Most of the plays are forgotten today, but many of the songs live on, standards penned by Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, George Gershwin, and the team of Rodgers and Hart. Who remembers Porter's shows, for example, like *Paris* or *Wake Up and Dream*? Not too many, but those scores included tunes that are now standards, like "Let's Misbehave" and "What Is This Thing Called Love?"

It wasn't until Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* in 1943 that the concept of the modern musical was born, with songs that moved the plot along, real characters expressing real emotions, and a dramatic arc that delivered a payoff at the end. *Oklahoma!* would change the perception of what a musical could be and say. It ran for 2,212 performances.

**B**ut the area wasn't only home to shows and stages. Back in 1904, *The New York Times* had moved from its offices in Lower Manhattan to a narrow tower right at the nexus of Seventh Avenue and Broadway. Owner Adolph Simon Ochs petitioned the city to change Longacre Square's name, and this bustling crossroads was soon known by its new moniker, Times Square, in every corner of planet earth.

The *Times* was one of more than a dozen New York papers then, but it set itself apart by promising to cover all the news impartially. Ochs

bestowed a slogan on his publication—"All the News That's Fit to Print"—that remains atop its front page today.

Editors and reporters for the *Times* didn't stay long in that narrow tower; it was too impractical. They soon moved halfway down West Forty-third Street, even as a news ticker continued to display moving headlines on the tower, which in 1907 became the location of a particularly curious New York tradition: the dropping of the ball on New Year's Eve.

With dozens of theaters beneath glittering marquees, dance halls and movie theaters, and newspaper trucks rumbling through after dark, Times Square became an attraction in and of itself, drawing millions of tourists or New Yorkers out for a play or dinner or just to see the sights. Neon spread like a four-alarm fire, with towering billboards for everything from Maxwell House Coffee to dental cream turning night into day. A giant ad for Camel cigarettes blew smoke rings and, for a time, a towering Mona Lisa two hundred and fifty times the size of the original smiled her half-smile down at the hordes.

"The sound of Times Square always was louder than anywhere else," the columnist Jimmy Breslin wrote in *Damon Runyon: A Life*, "because the instant people stepped into the hot bright lights, they became excited and raised their voices."

The Tenderloin district in the West Twenties had long contained saloons, brothels, and gambling houses. It moved north to Times Square and, for a few decades, Broadway glitter and criminal grime lived happily side by side. But as the city's fortunes declined in the 1950s and 1960s, Times Square went down with them. Movie theaters that played "grinders"—repeated showings of fourth-run films—switched to pure pornography, and adult bookstores encouraged by liberal First Amendment rulings sprang up. Prostitutes, junkies, and male hustlers crammed the sidewalks. Con men tantalized the naive with games of three-card monte. Police officers, overburdened as crime swept the city, looked the other way.

The *Times* hired a bus to take its night shift workers to Penn Station or Grand Central Terminal. Broadway producers, ensconced at their tables at



**Above, top:** Tennessee Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1955 and was later made into a film twice, in 1958 and 1984.  
**Above, bottom:** Jane Fonda and James MacArthur sit side by side on a park bench during a scene from *Invitation to a March*, 1960.  
**Following pages:** An illustration of a beautiful night in Times Square.







**Above, top:** Theatergoers wait in line to purchase tickets sold for \$100 at St. James Theatre for the Broadway production of *The Producers* in 2001. The musical, originally a film by Mel Brooks, at the time is Broadway's biggest hit since *The Lion King*. **Above, bottom:** *The Broadway Melody*, directed by Harry Beaumont, was the first sound film to win the Academy Award for Best Picture. This 1929 poster features a scene of chorus girls fighting. **Opposite:** The original Broadway cast recording of the much-loved musical *Hair*, released by RCA Victor Records in 1968.

the legendary Sardi's on Forty-fourth Street, where hand-drawn caricatures of showbiz legends covered the walls, gazed through the windows with alarm. Most New Yorkers stayed away. Teenagers from the boroughs took the subway in to a neon-crowned video game arcade called Playland to get fake IDs before getting out of there as fast as they could.

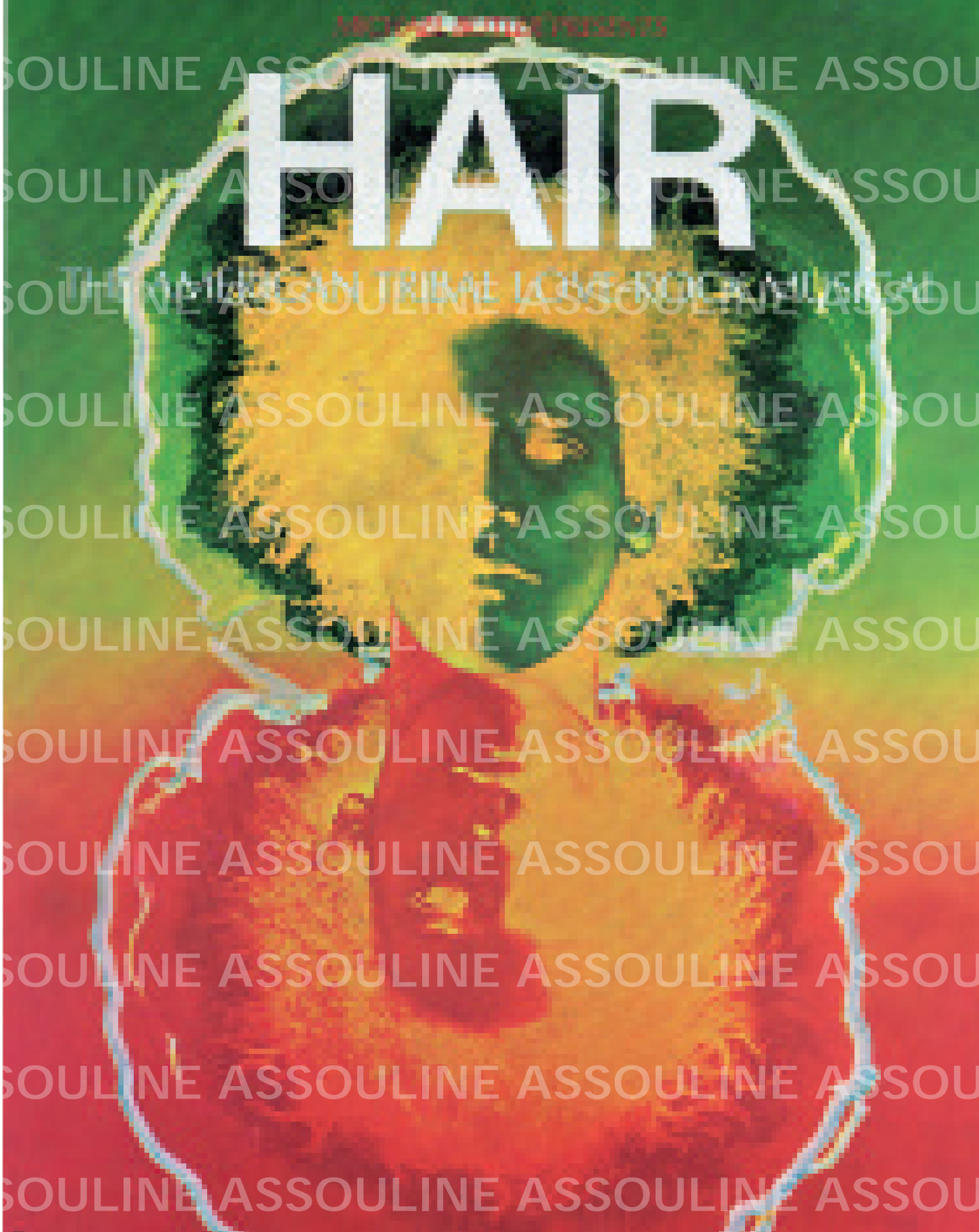
*A Chorus Line* and *42nd Street*—and the dramatic, heartbreaking night *42nd Street* opened—were keys to the upcoming revival. But in 1982, the British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and the producer Cameron Mackintosh crossed the Atlantic with a musical that was more spectacle than theater: *Cats*. Perhaps more than any other production, it would help usher in a new era on Broadway and Times Square.

Based on the poems of T. S. Eliot, it featured a troupe of actors clad in extravagant catsuits prancing around the stage, with one, Grizabella, belting out the showstopping ballad, “Memory.” She’s later lifted into the rafters on a hydraulic tire.

The set designers of those 1920s musical revues would have blinked in astonishment. P. T. Barnum might have done the same.

Lloyd Webber and Mackintosh wanted an unconventional space for the show’s multitiered junkyard set, but a walk to inspect one on Forty-second Street scared them—*Cats* was meant to be family entertainment, after all, and they were waylaid by prostitutes and drug dealers at every step. How could they expect suburban mothers and fathers to bring their children here? So they opted for the Shubert Organization’s Winter Garden farther north and away from the scrum, the same theater where *42nd Street* had opened.

Watching those prancing cats may have made serious theater people cringe a little, but the tourists loved them. As Michael Riedel recounts in his book, *Razzle Dazzle: The Battle for Broadway*, *Cats* forever changed Broadway. It had a record \$6 million in advance sales before it even opened and would play for eighteen years.







**Above:** Radio City Music Hall, the largest indoor theater in the world, opened in 1932 in the wake of the Great Depression thanks to John D. Rockefeller. To date, more than 75 million visitors have walked through its doors to admire the legendary Rockettes.  
**Opposite:** An illustration of New York City's glimmering theater district.

Incentives to developers, aggressive policing, and tough anti-pornography laws helped clean up the area in the 1990s. Shiny new office towers replaced scruffy low-rise buildings. First-run movies returned. Today, the imprints of *Cats* and Lloyd Webber's follow-up, *The Phantom of the Opera*, remain clear: Broadway and Times Square are no longer the realm of the Runyonesque con man nor the hunting ground of the prostitute, the hustler, and the drug dealer. Shows like *Wicked* and *The Lion King* seem poised to run forever. Families come from all over the world. And movie stars, too—big names appearing for limited runs on Broadway have become a staple, including Al Pacino in *American Buffalo* back in 1983, Nicole Kidman in *The Blue Room* in the late 1990s, and, more recently, Denzel Washington in *The Iceman Cometh*.

Much of the square, once a honking, clamoring, nonstop traffic jam, is a pedestrian plaza. The administration of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg gets the credit—or the blame—for that. Some edginess lingers: Women wearing paint and little else, known as *desnudas*, smile at tourists for tips; so do performers dressed as cartoon characters, though you can't see their smiles through their masks, and sometimes they get aggressive when the tips aren't big enough. *The New York Times* moved a few blocks away to a modern fifty-story tower designed by the architect Renzo Piano with rows of porcelain rungs on the outside to keep the afternoon sun at bay. But the great crossroads that bears the newspaper's name, trod once by the Lenape and now by naked ladies, can still be glimpsed from a few stories up.

Revelers still raise their voices when they walk beneath all those lights. Sardi's is still there, too, with its waiters in red jackets. And so are all the caricatures on the walls, famous faces from every stage of the Great White Way's immortal history. And some of the Broadway old-timers having drinks at the bar even remember the night that Gower Champion died, and how the show went on the next night, and the night after that, and the night after that, and the night after that.







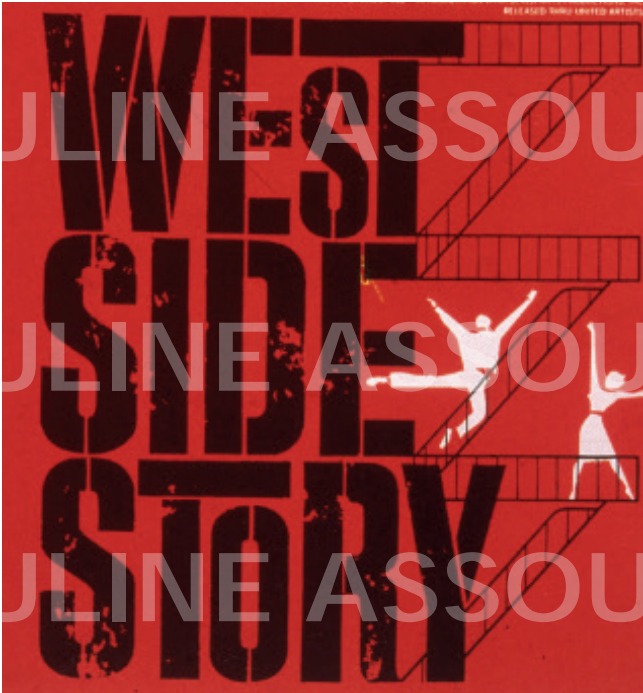
# west side story

*Manhattan's Rough Edge*

Salvador Agron and Tony Hernandez walked into the playground on West Forty-eighth Street in Manhattan well after dark on that sweltering night, August 30, 1959. They were both sixteen. Sal was hard to miss—he wore a dark blue, red-lined, Dracula-style cape and shiny shoes with buckles. “Where’s Frenchy?” he asked a bunch of kids who’d been hanging out. No one knew a Frenchy. Sal and Tony left.

Here’s the thing: Sal and Tony were Puerto Rican, part of a big influx in the fifties of new New Yorkers from that island. The kids in the park were white. Tensions between the factions simmered like August asphalt, still warm after dark, and had already been chronicled in the Broadway smash, *West Side Story*, soon to be a movie. Maybe Sal thought he was starring in it, hence the cape. It’s hard to tell what he was thinking or what his motives were. Friends said he could barely read or write.

Sal and Tony came back to the playground with a bunch of other guys from two Puerto Rican gangs, the Young Lords and the Buccaneers. The white kids would later tell reporters they got up to leave. “No gringos leave the park,” Sal growled. Knives came out, and when it was all over, two of the white teens, Robert Young and Anthony Krzesinski, were dead. Sal was



**Above:** A poster for *West Side Story*, the dramatic, romantic musical film masterpiece directed by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, 1961.  
**Opposite:** Tenement apartment buildings were a common sight on New York City’s West Side.  
**Following pages:** Actors playing members of white gang the Jets on the street in *West Side Story*.







**Above, top:** The Sharks, the Puerto Rican gang in *West Side Story*, with actor and master dancer George Chakiris as Bernardo, their leader.  
**Above, bottom:** Salvador Agron, the Puerto Rican gang member who murdered two teenagers in Hell's Kitchen, is pictured on this *Daily News* front page from 1959.

arrested four days later and charged, and he would enter tabloid fame as the Cape Man.

Those were two of the 390 murders that occurred in New York City that year. What had become of the orderly, if dread-infused, New York of the 1940s?

These killings resonated. One reason was their seeming randomness: Sal had never met his two victims. This was the greatest of all urban fears, being set upon and murdered by a stranger. And he was just sixteen. Why were the city's young people killing each other?

Then there was the strange mix of popular culture, mass communications, and celebrity. Sal became a legend and had his name in all the papers because he committed a crime and wore a cape while he did it. And except for the cape, the crime was similar to the rumble and stabbing in *West Side Story*.

Sal was certainly ready for the reporters when they tossed questions at him as detectives walked him into the station house.

"Do you feel like a big man?" one shouted.

"Do you?" he shot back.

And then, finally, the fact that it was on the West Side. Here was Manhattan's toughest neighborhood, a place where racial divisions were as sharp as late-afternoon shadows and always had been. A place where the mob ran the lucrative docks along the Hudson River, the neighborhood's western border. A place where gangs roamed and the cop on the beat had to be very, very careful. A place so hot with crime and struggle that its nickname was Hell's Kitchen.

**T**he waterfront had always been tough, and the whole West Side was waterfront, from the Battery up through the neighborhoods we now know as Tribeca, the West Village, and Chelsea, up to Hell's Kitchen and continuing on to the Upper West Side, where upper Broadway is the main drag.

But it was Hell's Kitchen that represented the West Side of Manhattan to much of the city and the world. A joke used to go that the only reason

Puerto Ricans congregate on their tenement building steps, 1950s.





to visit was to board a liner for Europe. The Ninth Avenue El cut straight down the middle. The eastern border was Times Square with all its neon energy. Gangs roamed the alleys and bars: the Gorillas, the Parlor Mob, the Tenth Avenue Gang, and the most famous—and, despite their benign-sounding moniker, deadliest—the Gophers, apparently so named because they met in basements. Hell’s Kitchen was the setting for *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*, the George Balanchine ballet at the end of Rodgers and Hart’s 1936 Broadway musical *On Your Toes*.

Benjamin Appel was a writer of the hard-boiled school who grew up in Hell’s Kitchen and wrote a slew of noir books. In 1952, he published a novel-memoir called *Hell’s Kitchen* about the childhood he remembered in those seething streets as World War I raged in Europe. This was forty years before Sal donned that cape, but it captures the world he found when he arrived with his family from Puerto Rico and why perhaps his darker skin drew menacing stares.

“A little Dublin, the Tammany politicians said when they were talking fancy,” Appel wrote in the opening pages of the book. “But it was Hell’s Kitchen to everybody else: the cops who walked their beats in pairs, ever on the lookout for a flying rooftop brick; the mothers weeping for sons cooling their heels in the Tombs or up the river in Sing Sing; the saloonkeepers who kept sawed-off baseball bats or some other pacifier handy for the Saturday-night dock wallopers or teamsters who, with a shot of whisky too many and tired maybe of debating whether America should’ve gone to war against Kaiser Bill or stayed the hell out, were always ready to wreck the joint.”

Tough place.

Sal and his family came to the mainland as part of Operation Bootstrap, an effort after World War II to turn Puerto Rico from an agricultural economy to an industrial one. Under the plan, farmers would come to the mainland states and work in factories. And come they did: By the time of the murder, 642,000 Puerto Ricans lived in New York City, which didn’t have enough factory jobs for all of them and was losing such jobs by the



**Above:** On a Hell’s Kitchen rooftop, musical groups Run-DMC and the Beastie Boys announce a co-headlining tour in the summer of 1985.  
**Opposite:** Basketball courts, such as this one photographed in 1965, can be found all over Manhattan.  
**Following pages:** Fire escapes, characteristic of New York, appear here in bright colors.  
**Page 208:** The Actors Studio, a famed drama school on New York’s West Side, certainly caught the attention of many soon-to-be legends, including Marilyn Monroe.  
**Page 209:** Paul Newman sits in on a class at the Actors Studio in 1955.



score every week anyway. The docks were also fading. Enough Puerto Ricans ended up on welfare that certain small-minded New Yorkers came to the conclusion that they all were.

Same old story: Someone descended just a generation or two from immigrants resents all newcomers, even if they aren't immigrants at all, but Americans.

This was the friction at the heart of *West Side Story*, a modern reimagining of *Romeo and Juliet*. When the composer Leonard Bernstein and the choreographer Jerome Robbins conceived of the idea, the thought was that the ethnic groups in conflict would be Catholic and Jewish. The working title was actually *East Side Story*. But as tensions rose in Manhattan, the creative team, which grew to include a young lyricist named Stephen Sondheim, changed the factions to whites and Puerto Ricans and set it in the streets north of Hell's Kitchen. So one of the oldest stories became suddenly modern, addressing the kind of simmering urban friction point with which Broadway had never previously wrestled. It was revolutionary to represent Puerto Ricans on the Broadway stage, even if there was a certain amount of stereotyping: "Always the hurricanes blowing; always the population growing."

It opened at the Winter Garden Theatre in September 1957. Gangs were at the heart of it, the Sharks and the Jets. Ethnic slurs and accents shot across the stage. It was dark and gritty with a tragic ending. Audiences were wowed by the sophisticated music and lyrics—"Tonight" and "Maria" became instant standards—and by Robbins's extended and blisteringly energetic dance sequences. In the end, it lost the Tony for Best Musical to *The Music Man*, but it managed to change the idea of what musical theater could be, just as *Oklahoma!* had the decade before: Musicals needed not be just frivolous but could also embrace complicated, modern topics.





**“New York: where everyone  
mutinies but no one deserts.”**

HARRY HERSHFIELD

A few blocks from the Winter Garden, gangs continued to rule the West Side after Salvador Agron and Tony Hernandez went to jail, and *West Side Story* closed after 732 performances. West Side toughness had a last hurrah in Hell's Kitchen in the 1970s and 1980s, and this was a throwback, an Irish gang.

The feds called them the Westies, though members always insisted there was no real gang, just a loose confederation of racketeers, kidnappers, and extortionists who ruled the streets and would kill for no better reason than a rumor.

They battled the city's Mafia families for control—not of the docks, as they were gone, but of all the illegal money to be made on the periphery of the construction and the running of the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, which opened in the 1980s on Twelfth Avenue and West Thirty-fourth Street. Such projects were a part of a strategy by the city: Build on top of a troubled neighborhood and the problems might just go away. Same with Lincoln Center, up in the West Sixties, whose shimmering water fountain and futuristic opera house rose up on the very real streets where the fictional whites and Puerto Ricans faced off and danced in *West Side Story*.

The Westies were certainly different, and perhaps more brutal, than the Gophers and all those old gangs—especially the Young Lords and the Buccaneers—but they counted on one local attribute utilized by all the others: the West Side code. No one would rat on someone else from the neighborhood to the cops, no matter what that person did. Of course, codes were made to be broken, and in the end one of the more notorious Westies, Francis “Mickey” Thomas Featherstone, turned on his pals as well as his enemies in court, and the last big gang of the West Side was no more.







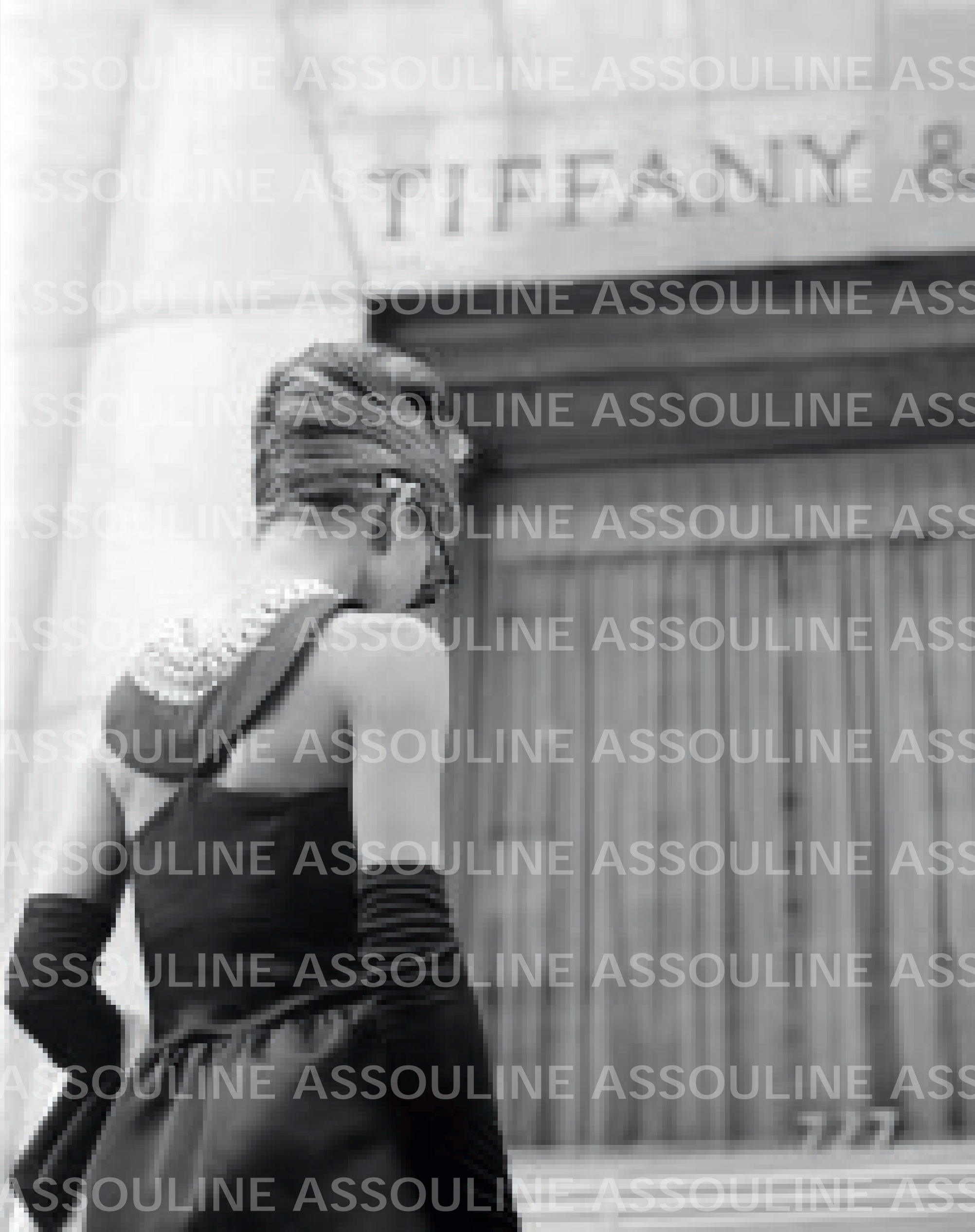
**Above:** A sunset over New Jersey as viewed from the West Side.  
**Opposite:** Sunset over Hudson Yards, along the Hudson River.  
**Previous pages:** A mural on the West Side, created as a tribute to Alfred Eisenstaedt's iconic Victory over Japan Day image from 1945.

**W***est Side Story* was made into a movie starring Natalie Wood and Rita Moreno and was reprised again and again. Some of Sondheim's lyrics were translated into Spanish for a 2009 revival by one of Broadway's newest stars, Lin-Manuel Miranda, who grew up even farther up Manhattan's West Side in a neighborhood called Inwood and whose father had himself moved to New York from Puerto Rico. The translations helped smooth away some of the stereotyping that had marred the initial production.

Salvador Agron and his outfit got a last moment in the footlights, too. The popular musician Paul Simon became fascinated by the Cape Man tale and, working with the writer and poet Derek Walcott, wrote a musical about Sal and the killing. Simon spent ten years on it and interviewed people who'd known the young killer; by the time it opened in 1998, it had cost \$11 million to create. The score featured Latin music and doo-wop, with a little gospel thrown in. But at its heart was a character who was simply unlikable, a cold-blooded sixteen-year-old killer who thought he was a tough guy.

It bombed.





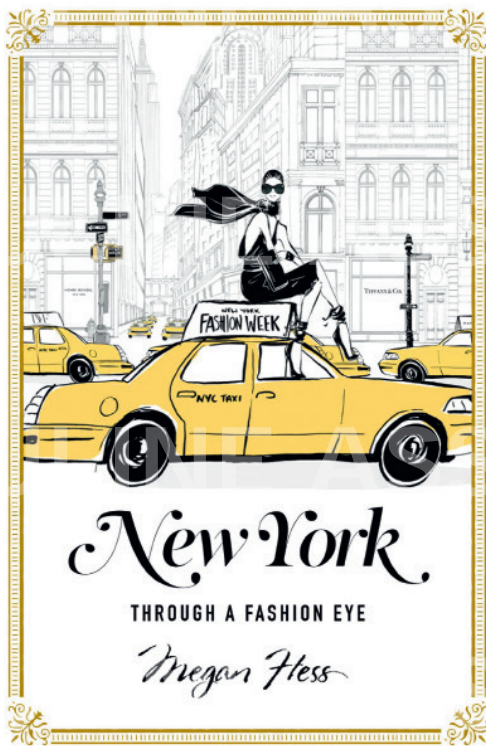
# east side story

*Breakfast at Tiffany's*

Manhattan is the island of diminishing perspective; it can feel like it never ends. The planners who designed the grid of avenues and streets above Houston Street in 1811 created some of the most mathematically perfect urban views on the planet. Perhaps the purest example of this phenomenon is Park Avenue, which runs like a rich vein of wealth and prestige along the East Side. No stores or garish signs mar its facades beyond small, eye-level plaques marking doctors' offices. It's six lanes across, traffic going both ways, with a landscaped median. The median is carefully tended, with cherry blossoms and tulips in spring and summer and trees with thousands of floating white Christmas lights in the chilly early-sunset days of December.

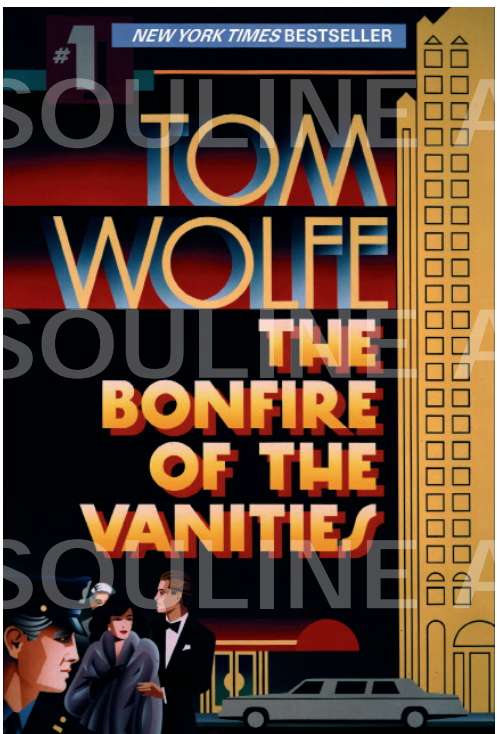
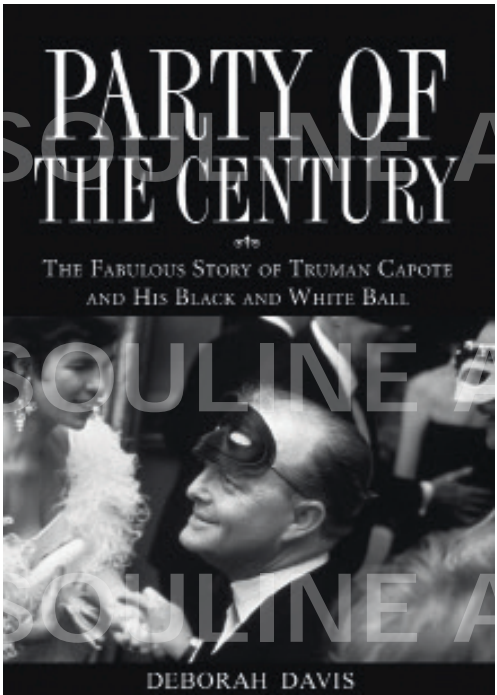
Stand on that median at Sixty-eighth Street. Looking south, Park Avenue slopes downward to the Beaux Arts Helmsley Building, itself dwarfed by the brutal 1960s mass that is the MetLife Building, once the Pan Am Building (helicopters used to land on its roof). Then turn around and look north: Park Avenue appears to go on into infinity, the buildings smaller and smaller but never quite seeming to end.

If the West Side was always Manhattan's rough side—when Manhattan had a rough side—then the East Side was its rarefied side. Park Avenue is its spine. Two blocks to its west, the brown stone wall along Central Park on Fifth Avenue creates its own diminishing line. To the East, the



**Above:** The cover of Megan Hess's illustrated guide, *New York: Through a Fashion Eye*. Hess's drawings take her readers through one of fashion's biggest capitals.  
**Opposite:** Audrey Hepburn gazes longingly into the window of Tiffany & Co. in a photo still from the treasured film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, directed by Blake Edwards in 1961.





**Above, top:** In November 1966, Truman Capote threw the “party of the century” for *Washington Post* publisher Katharine Graham. The lavish fete took place at the world-renowned Plaza Hotel.  
**Above, bottom:** As described by Tom Wolfe in his 1987 satirical novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, not everything in New York City was perfect. Wolfe’s novel touches on issues such as race, politics, and class.  
**Opposite:** In its time, the Stork Club was easily one of the most prestigious in the world. Established in 1929 by Sherman Billingsley, the club became a symbol of the wealthy elite, until its closure in 1965.

neighborhood ends at the East River, not with docks—the East River is no match for the mighty Hudson since the big ships can’t fit—but with more apartment buildings, some stately, some flashy, some of gray or white stone, newer ones of glass.

In between the borders, between the park and the river, is a neighborhood of apartment buildings and brownstones, galleries, hotels, and auction houses that has as many stories to tell as any other in the city. The mayor lives on the periphery in stately Gracie Mansion, built in 1799, overlooking the portion of the East River known as Hell Gate. Third Avenue was once a raffish place with bars and restaurants, like Tenth Avenue on the West Side, captured in a famous sequence in Billy Wilder’s *The Lost Weekend* in which a desperate Ray Milland scours the city for an open liquor store on a Sunday.

The far East Side had no train service until the Second Avenue subway opened in 2017. Until then, some pockets like the streets near Carl Schurz Park on the river had the feeling of drowsiness, of being cut off from the rest of the city.

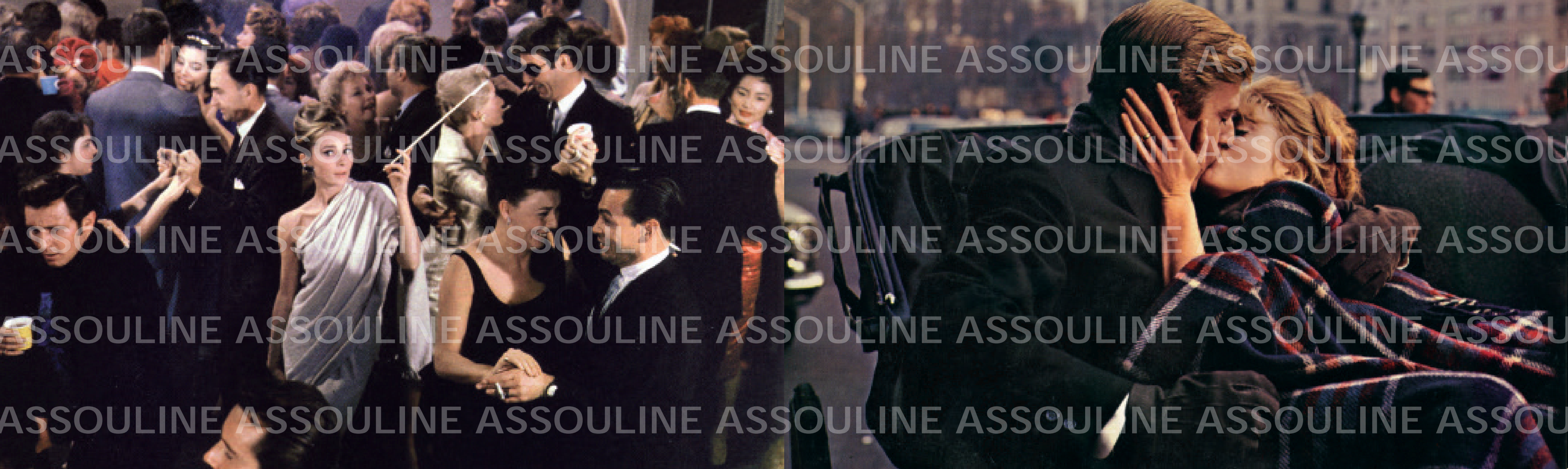
**B**ut back to Park Avenue, and two addresses: one real, one fictional.

The first is 740 Park Avenue on the corner of East Seventy-first Street. On the outside, while clearly luxurious, it doesn’t set itself apart from the buildings around it. After all, this is the so-called Gold Coast, the rectangle between East Fifty-ninth and East Ninety-sixth streets and Fifth and Park avenues. These are buildings where the elevator opens to just two apartment doors, or just one, or even inside the foyer of a marble-floored apartment itself. Seven Forty, as it’s known, is a sumptuous if shapeless mass of stone, tapering on its top floors with balcony setbacks. It’s a cooperative, meaning that the residents don’t own their apartments but own shares in the building equal to their size and value—a classic New York arrangement and an oddly socialist system, considering that the owners tend to be wealthy capitalists.









**Above:** The charming Holly Golightly, Truman Capote's most famous character, played by Audrey Hepburn, attends a party on the Upper East Side in the 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.  
**Previous pages:** Park Avenue runs from Manhattan into the Bronx. During the spring and summer, it is dotted with beautiful flower displays, especially on the Upper East Side. In winter, its trees are covered with hundreds of lights.

The building was designed by the architect Rosario Candela and opened in 1929. It was conceived, Michael Gross writes in *740 Park: The Story of the World's Richest Apartment Building*, as “the most expensive, the most exclusive, simply the best apartment house in the world.”

Bad timing: In the depth of the Depression, there wasn't too much demand for gigantic Manhattan apartments. But in time that changed. Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis grew up there, as did heirs to many of the country's biggest companies. Some modern tycoons have called it home, including Ronald O. Perelman and Henry Kravis. Saul Steinberg, the businessman and financier, lived for decades in the duplex penthouse he bought for \$225,000 in 1971 from the widow of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. It was twenty thousand square feet—most Manhattan apartments are seven hundred fifty or so—and it featured, Gross wrote, “anywhere from twenty-three to thirty-seven rooms, the discrepancy caused by such questions as whether one included hallways and foyers and the size of ballrooms, servants' quarters, and the fourteen bathrooms.”

Alas, Steinberg had to sell in 2000 when his fortunes tumbled. He got roughly \$30 million for the place.

It sounds like an awful lot to take care of. (The monthly maintenance fee at the time was \$6,528; it's surely much higher now.) So let's visit another Park Avenue apartment, this one much smaller but much cooler.

Don Draper lived at 783 Park Avenue, which would have been around East Seventy-third Street, had it existed; like Don and his second wife, Megan, the address is fictional. Draper was the main character in *Mad Men*, Matthew Weiner's seven-season HBO drama about life in Manhattan's advertising business in the 1960s and 1970s.

So even though Don and his ice-cold stare never really existed, the fact that the show's creators chose to move Draper to an apartment on Park Avenue to signify his success tells us a lot about the thoroughfare's place in the Manhattan psyche.

And what a groovy pad it was.

Based on Neil Simon's 1963 play *Barefoot in the Park*, the film version, released in 1967, stars Jane Fonda and Robert Redford. Here, they enjoy a classic carriage ride in Central Park.



**“I love New York,  
even though it  
isn’t mine, the  
way something  
has to be, a tree  
or a street or a  
house, something,  
anyway, that  
belongs to  
me because I  
belong to it.”**

TRUMAN CAPOTE, *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*

Gordon Parks’s photography captures the elegant loneliness of Park Avenue.





**Above, top:** A stylish old-fashioned car on Park Avenue.  
**Above, bottom:** Illustrator and photographer Cecil Beaton created this chic collection of artwork and snapshots depicting New York City.  
**Opposite:** Model Jean Patchett at the Museum of Modern Art, 1940s.  
**Following pages:** The Museum of Modern Art, affectionately referred to by its acronym, MoMA, was established in 1929 and is one of the largest modern art museums in the world, attracting upwards of 2.8 million visitors each year.

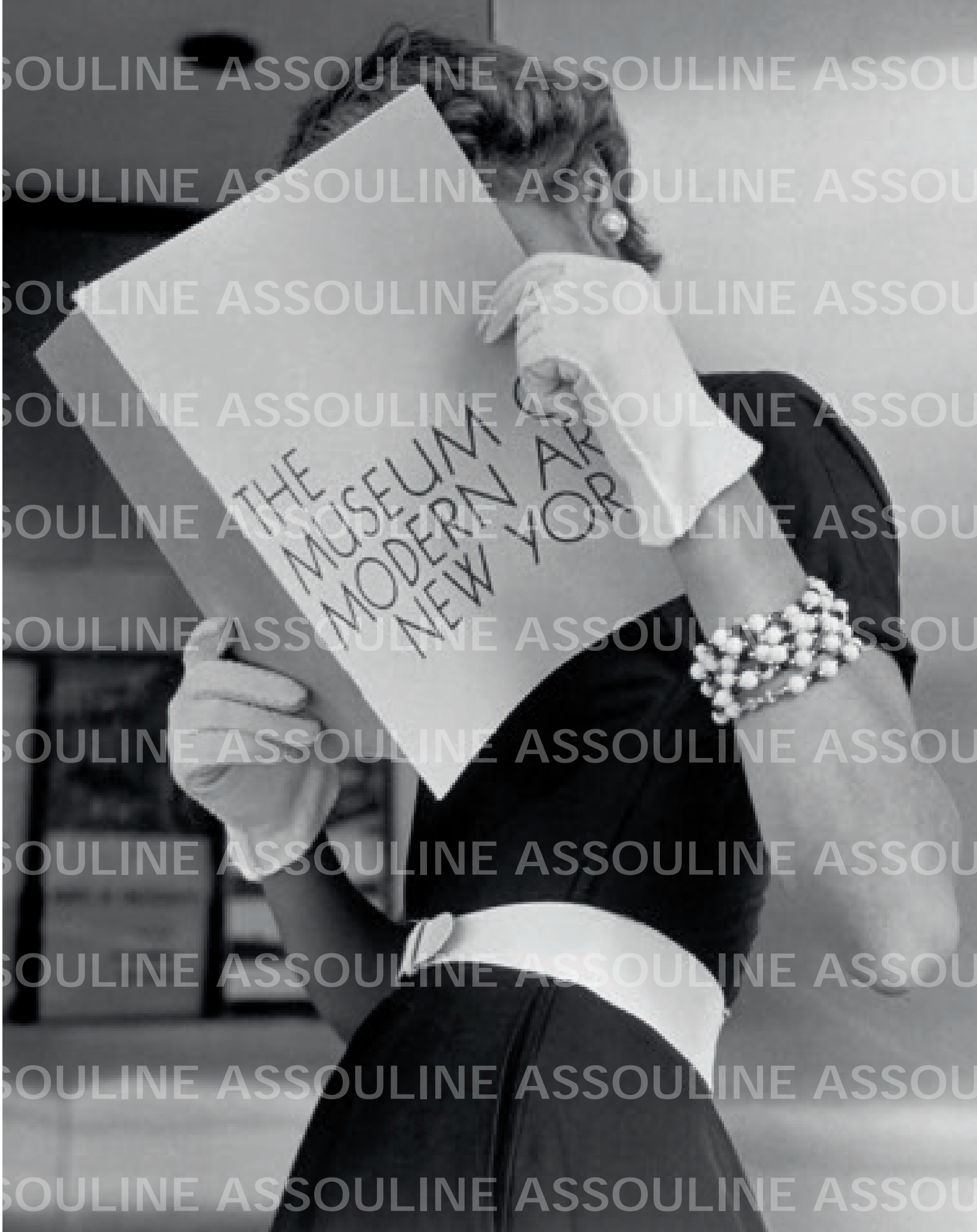
A sunken living room with built-in mid-century modern chairs. Bold and clashing primary colors on the walls. Lots of dark polished wood. A balcony with expansive views of 1960s Manhattan, even if the skyscrapers were often obscured by smog, one of the less appealing phenomena of the decade. And a few design choices more common in those days than today: small windows in all but the living room, and a kitchen walled off from the rest of the apartment, not the center of attention.

Weiner told *Interior Design* magazine of the apartment: “For me, personally, it satisfies a lot of my fantasies. It’s very sexy. There’s texture, wood. It’s open, but you feel protected. It’s very cosmopolitan. You feel smart there. You feel handsome.”

But remember, it’s fiction. Trulia, the online real estate site, determined that Draper could never have afforded it, not on a *Mad Man*’s salary. And anyway, no matter how groovy the sunken living room, Draper wasn’t happy.

You can still enjoy the cool mid-century vibe a few blocks south at the Grill, formerly the Four Seasons Restaurant, nestled in the Seagram Building at 375 Park Avenue, Mies van der Rohe’s 1958 gray mass masterpiece of form-follows-function simplicity. Draper could have put his expense account to good use here. For the cost of a martini, you can still sit at the square bar at the front of the Grill, on a sleek stool beneath Richard Lippold’s gravity-fighting and slightly nervous-making sculpture of hanging metal rods, and float back to a swankier time.

**A**nother fictional character inhabited these streets before Draper, a woman who is almost New York personified and who reinvents herself just as the city does, again and again. She’s perhaps best remembered for a movie that captured the Upper East Side in the early 1960s, but the novella that first gave her life was set much earlier, in the 1940s. Her name was Holly Golightly, and the novella was *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* by Truman Capote.









“If I had to choose a single destination where I’d be held captive for the rest of my time in New York, I’d choose the Metropolitan Museum of Art.”

TIM GUNN

**Above:** The Metropolitan Museum of Art, photographed by Gideon Lewin on the occasion of Richard Avedon’s exhibit there. Opened in 1872, it is the third most visited art museum in the world with a permanent collection of over two million works.  
**Opposite:** Established in 1937 as a home for impressionist and contemporary art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is famous for its spiral structure. Shown here is *All*, an exhibit by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan that was on display from 2011–12.  
**Following pages:** *The Gates*, a multimillion-dollar project by artist Christo and his wife, Jeanne-Claude, graced the footpaths of Central Park in February 2005. The saffron-colored flags covered twenty-three miles of walkway.









**Above, top:** This June 8, 1970 issue of *New York* magazine features a satirical essay by Tom Wolfe criticizing the social activism of composer and author Leonard Bernstein. Wolfe juxtaposed Bernstein's anti-establishment attitude with his comfortable lifestyle.  
**Above, bottom:** Woody Allen & the Eddy Davis New Orleans Jazz Band maintain a Monday night residency at Café Carlyle, upholding the tradition of jazz after great names such as Sammy Davis, Jr. and Bobby Short. The café features murals by French illustrator Marcel Vertès.

The movie starring Audrey Hepburn and George Peppard is all thin ties and big cars with fins and quiet Upper East Side residential streets. Golightly, a southern bumpkin who has reimagined herself as a chic Manhattan sophisticate, experiences numerous romantic travails before finally finding love with Peppard, her downstairs neighbor, who is something of a male gigolo.

As the opening credits roll, Hepburn is all made up in a little black dress, dark glasses, and strings of pearls, visiting the famed Tiffany & Co. jewelry store on Fifth Avenue on a deserted morning, the sidewalks uncharacteristically vacant, and gazing in the windows while eating a pastry and drinking coffee.

Anyone who grew up in New York City knows that fleeting and delicious experience when, by fate or timing or a night too late on the town, you feel like you have Manhattan to yourself, the sun coming up, and that it's a playground just for you.

It's impossible in the mind's eye to imagine anyone but Hepburn as Golightly, so iconic has her performance become, so perfect the little black dress that Hubert de Givenchy designed for her. She sports a ridiculous collection of hats and wields an impossibly long cigarette holder. But the book is much different from the film, as books often are—to begin with, Golightly is a blonde. The characters are far more nuanced, the Upper East Side not nearly as polished.

This was a neighborhood in a wartime city, where you had to run to the bar on the corner to make a phone call, where a young writer from the South could afford a little furnished apartment, his first. The narrator—a stand-in for Capote himself—and Golightly are friends, never lovers, and she is promiscuous and conniving, even dangerous. The Upper East Side is a kind of small-town Manhattan. A street has trees “that in summer make cool patterns on the pavement.” Golightly sits on a fire escape playing guitar. The narrator admires a birdcage in a scruffy antiques store on Third Avenue. Australian army officers sing and dance “over the cobbles under the El.” In one comical action scene, the Capote character tries desperately to stay atop a runaway horse, with Golightly close behind on her own steed as they race past taxis, buses, the Frick Mansion, and the Pierre Hotel.

*Breakfast at Tiffany's* would speed Capote's climb to literary fame; his 1966 nonfiction “novel,” *In Cold Blood*, would cement it. In time he'd become one of the Upper East Side's most fascinating denizens, a gossip column staple, a regular at parties at George Plimpton's near the river on East Seventy-second Street. He'd split his time between an apartment in United Nations Plaza and a house in Sagaponack, on Long Island.

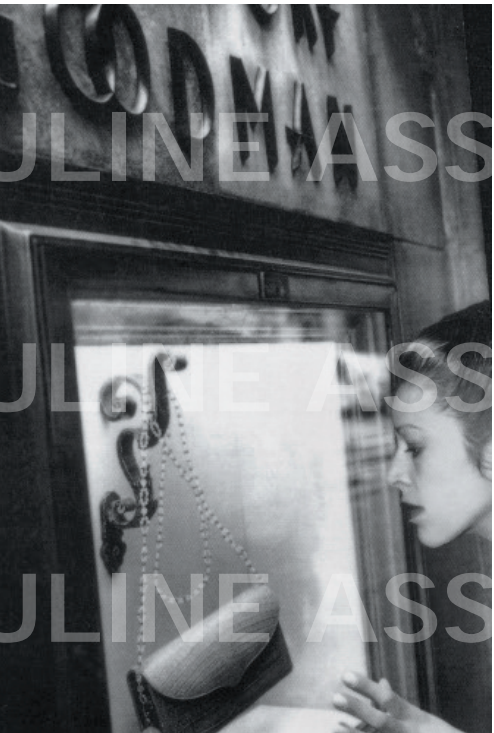
Profits from *In Cold Blood* allowed Capote to host one of the city's most memorable parties, his November 1966 Black and White Ball at the Plaza Hotel. Five hundred and forty of his closest friends were there, from the actress Tallulah Bankhead to Frank Sinatra to Gloria Vanderbilt to Lionel Trilling. They drank Taittinger champagne and feasted on spaghetti and chicken hash at midnight.

Capote was the toast of the town until he wasn't. His short story “La Côte Basque, 1965,” named after the French restaurant in the West Fifties and meant to be an excerpt of a forthcoming novel, was published in *Esquire* in November 1975. A thinly veiled tell-all, it immediately made the writer persona non grata to the Upper East Side “swans,” as he called them—the wealthy and thin women who lunched together at the storied restaurant, whom he'd transparently portrayed. Gloria Vanderbilt was one; she was made to look vacuous and vain. “The next time I see Truman Capote,” she said after reading the story, “I'm going to spit in his face.”

The slight is not forgotten, even today. Her son Anderson Cooper, the cable news journalist, said not too long ago, “I think Truman really hurt my mother.”

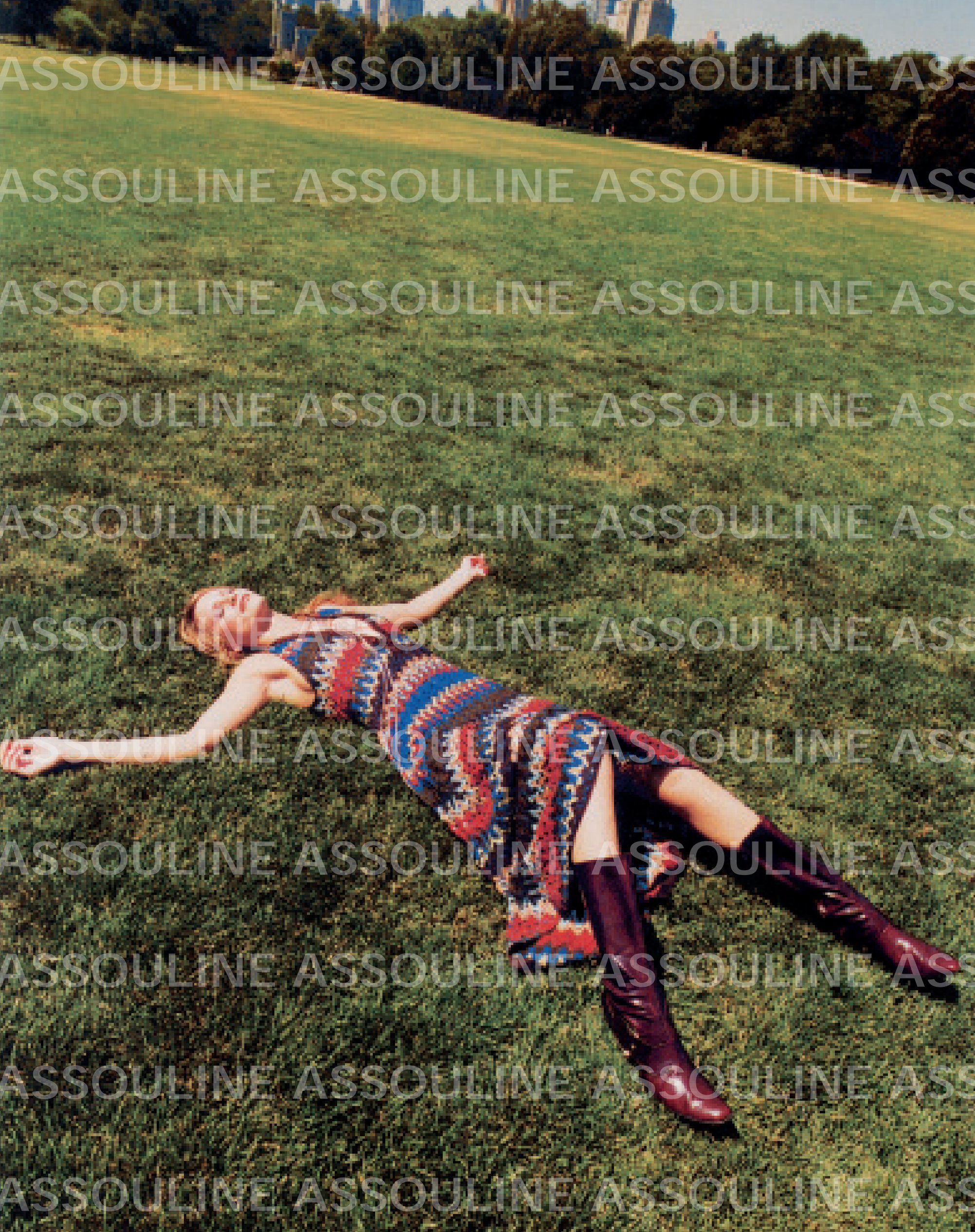
Sure enough and soon enough, Capote found himself uninvited to all those parties, shunned by those with whom he'd once gossiped, and increasingly dependent on alcohol and drugs. He died in 1984 at fifty-nine. The novel was never finished.

There was something pathetic in his final years. Far better to remember him on that horse, zipping past the Frick, Golightly right behind, with Manhattan a playground for two young friends, just for them even when the rest of the city is wide awake.



**Above, top:** Linda Fargo when she first began at the iconic department store Bergdorf Goodman, where she is today the senior vice president of the fashion office and director of women's fashion and store presentation, and has created hundreds of the store's famous window displays.  
**Above, bottom:** The Ty Bar at the Four Seasons is a longtime center of social life on the Upper East Side.  
**Page 234:** Central Park, the place to be during warmer months, photographed by Pamela Hanson.  
**Page 235:** Xinxin Xu, *Summer Manhattan*, 2017. Oil on canvas, 8 x 8 in.





**“I’ve lived in New York all my life, and I know Central Park like the back of my hand, because I used to roller-skate there all the time and ride my bike when I was a kid...”**

J. D. SALINGER, *The Catcher in the Rye*



## leo and ivan

*The Art World Moves to SoHo*

Leo Castelli and his wife, Ileana Sonnabend, were well-dressed, well-bred, interesting to talk to, and interested in what you had to say—in several languages. He'd grown up in Trieste, she in Bucharest. They'd both run galleries, his in the Place Vendôme in Paris. They came to New York City after World War II broke out with their daughter, her nanny, and their long-haired dachshund. In Manhattan, Mr. Castelli was often asked: When would he open a gallery on this side of the Atlantic?

His eye for talent was as legendary as his charm. But Castelli felt that the timing wasn't quite right. And even more than that, the artists weren't. Those like Matisse and Picasso were well-known and already represented, their prices high and climbing. Willem de Kooning—a friend, they spent summers together in the Hamptons—was already a big name.

No, no. Before Mr. Castelli would rejoin the art game, he needed some fresh talent: someone or something, some vision or new kind of energy, that had been undiscovered and that he could represent from the moment it hit the scene.

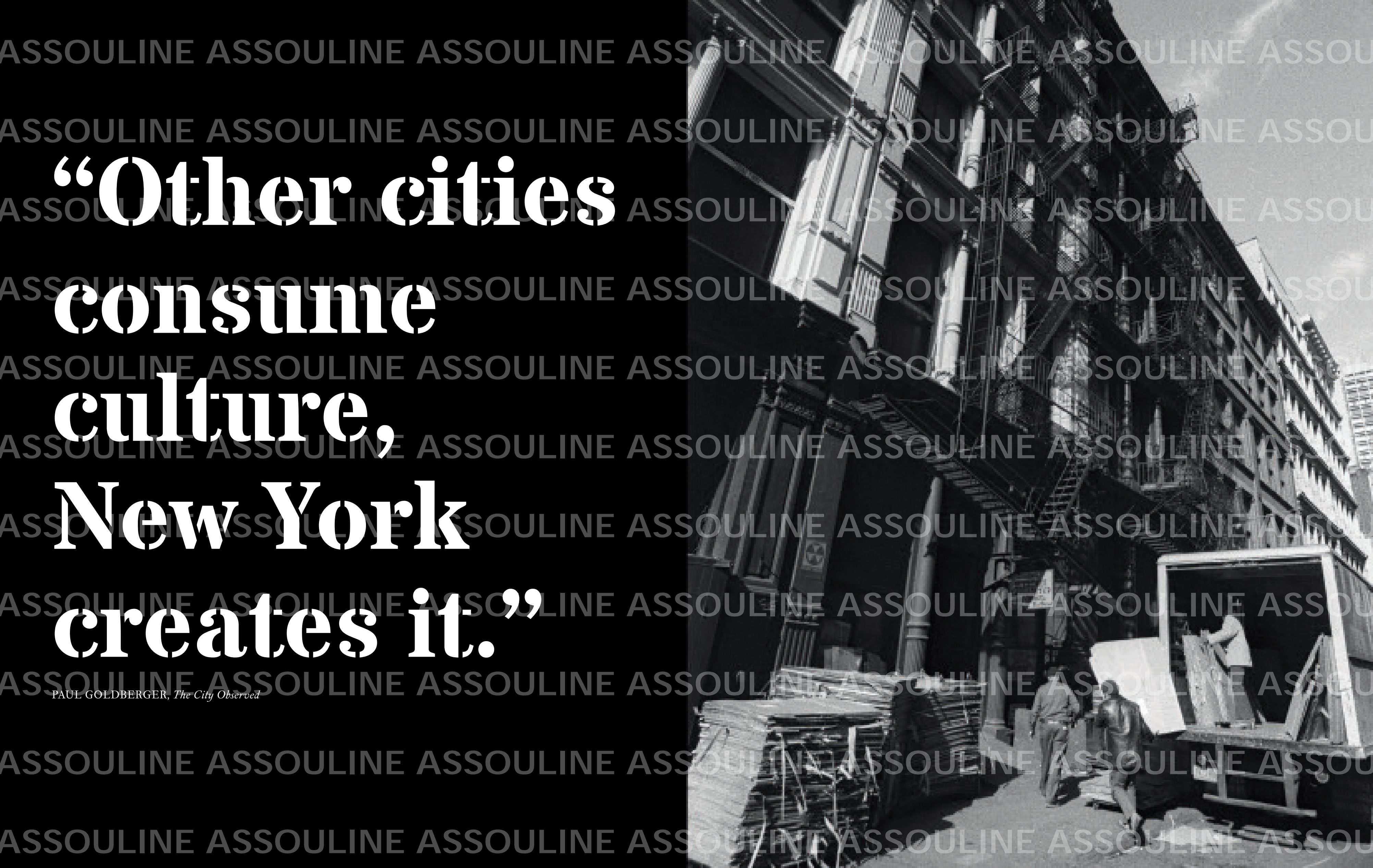
Then he saw some early collages by a young artist by the name of Robert Rauschenberg, disparate images and random clips of text that, when placed together, created a compelling whole. In 1957, Castelli opened a small gallery in the town house where his family lived on East Seventy-seventh Street, and Rauschenberg became a client. But he was only the first in a remarkable string of connections, because soon Rauschenberg took Castelli to see a painter who lived in his building, a painter by the name of Jasper Johns. The era of American abstraction had begun.

John Russell, in his 1999 obituary of Castelli in *The New York Times*, said the dealer had likened the moment he first saw Johns's work—paintings of maps and stacks of numbers exploding in bright shades of oranges, yellows, and blues—to walking into the tomb of Tutankhamen and seeing the treasures there."

Now the world took notice: A new kind of art was emanating from the United States, specifically New York City. Ileana Sonnabend did her own considerable part to spread the word when she opened her own gallery of modern American art in Paris in 1962.







“Other cities  
consume  
culture,  
New York  
creates it.”

PAUL GOLDBERGER, *The City Observed*



**Above:** Crosby Street in SoHo, photographed by Thomas Struth in 1978.  
**Page 236:** Art dealer and collector Leo Castelli opened his own art gallery in 1957. Through the 1970s, the gallery was the most renowned commercial art venue in the world, representing major names in contemporary art including Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, Andy Warhol, Cy Twombly, and Roy Lichtenstein.  
**Pages 238–39:** Leo Castelli gave the American Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein his first solo show. Some of Lichtenstein's works are pictured here in Castelli's private apartment, along with Jasper Johns's iconic American flag piece.  
**Page 241:** Greene Street, SoHo, February 1977.

Castelli's chief assistant was named Ivan Karp. It's hard to imagine two more distinct personalities: Castelli, a multilingual European sophisticate with a charming and knowledgeable wife, and Karp, a rough-hewn, Bronx-born son of a hat salesman. But the two played well off each other.

American abstraction would lead to Pop Art, to Andy Warhol with his silk-screen prints of Campbell's Soup cans and Roy Lichtenstein with his ironic takes on comic strips, two artists whom Castelli and Karp promoted.

Karp decided to go his own way in 1969. He headed south. He opened a gallery in an eight-thousand-square-foot space on West Broadway in a neighborhood called SoHo and called it OK Harris, because, as he was quoted as saying, it was "a tough, American name that sounded like that of a riverboat gambler."

SoHo, after all, was still the wild frontier.



The familiar neon sign of SoHo's Fanelli Cafe, the second-oldest food and drink establishment in New York and a center for artists and gallerists in the 1960s.

It had been called Hell's Hundred Acres, a sprawling swath of Lower Manhattan where industry had once thrived but where the biggest business was now arson. Landlords could get more for burning down these buildings than they could get for renting them. Who needed giant unfinished lofts that you reached with slow, creaking freight elevators? In the late afternoons, musty yellow sunlight slanted across cast-iron facades, throwing the columns and arches into dramatic relief. Glass bricks embedded in the sidewalks glowed red when they were hit with shafts of sunset, or in the midnight hours let off their own barely perceptible glimmerings from basement light bulbs dangling deep within.

It was the largest collection of cast-iron facades in the world. Once, in the 1910s, this had been a revolutionary and fast way to build a building: You could make the parts elsewhere and just put them up. If damaged,



**“Living in New York City gives people real incentives to want things that nobody else wants.”**

ANDY WARHOL

segments could be easily replaced. But by the 1960s, the neighborhood looked like an empty, decrepit museum. The New York economy no longer needed scores of little factories. Why not tear down all those buildings and replace them with apartment blocks? The city drew up plans.

But then the artists came, and SoHo went from an empty ghost world to a vibrant hub of studios and galleries. Those vast spaces were perfect for expansive canvases and towering sculptures, those creaky manual elevators big enough to get them down and out the door to clients. Artists could have the studios of their dreams for pennies. Many simply moved in illegally.

“In those lofts, artists lived and worked,” wrote Allan Tannenbaum, who had been the chief photographer for the *SoHo News*, the scrappy weekly chronicling the area’s changes. “It seemed like another business left SoHo every day, with machinery being loaded onto flatbed trailers, and another artist or gallery moving in to take its place.”

Sensing something miraculous was happening, and with no money to do much tearing down anyway, the administration of the city’s dashing young Republican mayor, John V. Lindsay, scrapped the demolition plans and changed the law to allow artists to live legally in spaces that had once been deemed unlivable.

West Broadway became the main gallery thoroughfare. Karp roamed the streets, thinking of himself as SoHo’s unofficial mayor (several others claimed that title for themselves). He kept seeking and promoting new talents, nurturing the careers of artists like John Chamberlain and Claes Oldenburg. He was a fan and promoter of photorealism, the style of super-representative painting that strives to look as precise as a photograph. “No genius should go undiscovered,” he’d say.

Castelli followed him to SoHo in 1971, opening at 420 West Broadway in a second-floor space likened to an airline ticket office, where he was as affable with knowledgeable and moneyed buyers as he was with curious passersby who just happened to walk in. More galleries cropped up: In 1977, a young woman named Mary Boone opened a showroom downstairs from Castelli that would, in due time, change the local scene again.

**Opposite:** Frank Stella, shown here in his studio in the 1960s, continues to live and work in New York City.

**Page 246, top:** An opening of a show at the Tanager Gallery circa 1960.

**Page 246, bottom:** Sculptor Duane Hanson (blond male at rear) joins in the developing artistic spirit of SoHo in the 1970s, standing in front of the OK Harris gallery with several life-size models.

**Page 247:** In cooperation with the Green Gallery, artist Claes Oldenburg’s *The Store* promotes the selling of artwork through galleries, 1961.





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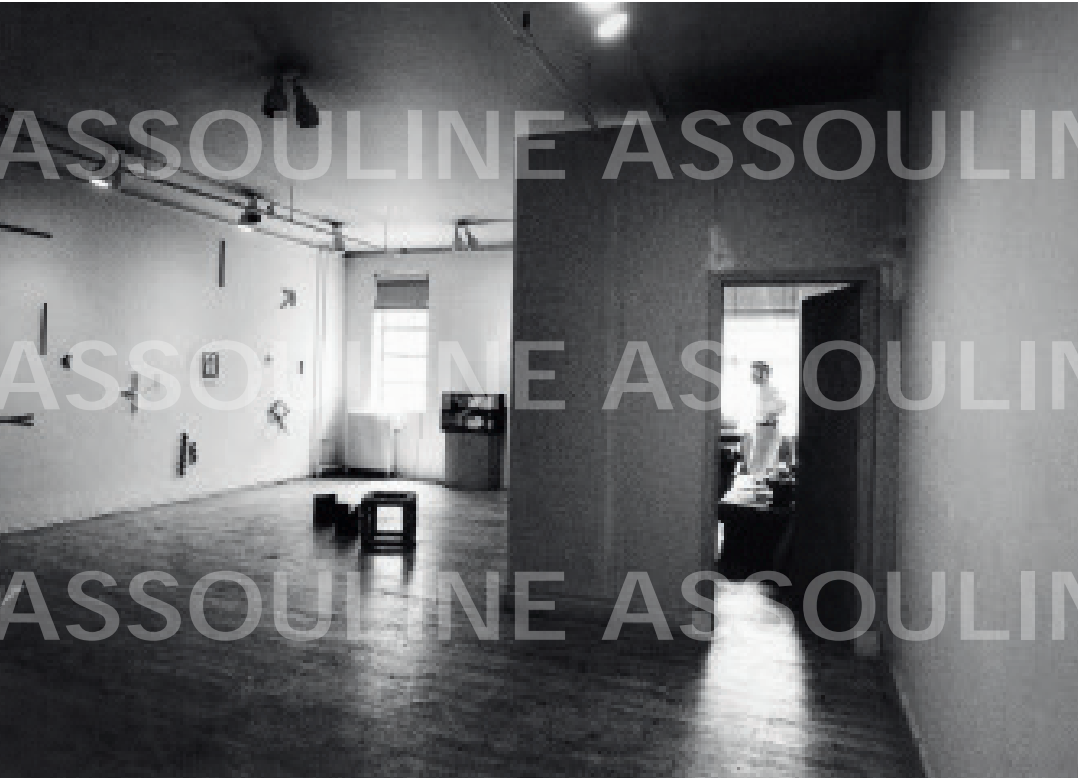
**THE  
STORE  
BY  
CLAES OLDENBURG**

**107 E. 2<sup>ND</sup> ST.**

**HOURS: FRI., SAT., SUN. 1 TO 6 P.M.**

**AND BY APPOINTMENT  
IN COOPERATION WITH  
THE GREEN GALLERY**





Photographed here in the fall of 1964, Greek artist Lucas Samaras stands in his *Room No. 1* at the Green Gallery, a recreation of his own bedroom. The gallery was open for only five years, from 1960 to 1965, but managed to bring visibility to such artists as Donald Judd and George Segal.

Hopping from one show to the next became a popular weekend activity for many New Yorkers, including families, with moms and dads sometimes having a beer on the sidewalk outside Fanelli Cafe on Prince Street—one of the last old-school bars from the Hell’s Hundred Acres days—before heading home with the kids.

Tannenbaum described how the “streets were often scenes of paintings being carried from studios to galleries.” That’s what happens at the end of Paul Mazursky’s 1978 half-drama, half-comedy, *An Unmarried Woman*, where the lead character, played by Jill Clayburgh, negotiates SoHo’s now teeming streets with

an unmanageable wall-sized painting given to her by her bearded artist lover. Throughout the film, which chronicles her character’s journey after the sudden breakup of her seemingly idyllic Manhattan marriage, SoHo represents a more vibrant, if perhaps rougher, side of New York City when compared to the comfortable if soulless world our heroine once inhabited on the Upper East Side.

Peeks at SoHo in the film capture those dirty cast-iron facades covered with fading posters, light stanchions plastered with torn leaflets and piles of garbage at the curb. Clayburgh’s character works in a gallery on Spring Street beside a row of shabby, rusted storefronts. The scenes exemplify the increasing location shooting in New York in the 1960s and 1970s thanks to the creation of the Mayor’s Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting—one effort by the Lindsay administration to change New York’s tottering economy from industrial to cultural and tourist. (They even had a name for it: “Fun City.”)

By the time Woody Allen used SoHo streets for crucial scenes in his 1986 masterpiece, *Hannah and Her Sisters*, the neighborhood had changed even more. The rusted facades were still there, and the occasional pile of

garbage, but so too were new restaurants with designer lighting and wide-open coffee shops flying by in the background as characters pounded down the sidewalks.

Uptown, near ratty Union Square on Fourteenth Street, Andy Warhol thrived and created his own Pop Art universe in multiple dimensions—paintings, prints, movies, even a magazine. He called it The Factory, and it began life on Forty-seventh Street, the place where he and his team of workers (followers?) turned out

printed images to sell to a mass audience. Castelli and Karp had supported and promoted Warhol, who’d come to New York from Pittsburgh in 1949 and had great success as a commercial artist before becoming one of Pop Art’s most visible characters. Fellow art world denizens regarded Warhol with a mix of awe for the way he manipulated the press and something close to derision for the quality of much of his work.

Say what you will about his prints or his avant-garde movies, such as an eight-hour shot of the Empire State Building in which pretty much nothing happens, but few people have managed to so self-consciously make themselves iconic: He wore a silver wig, became a fixture at nightclubs, and embraced an air of eccentricity that seemed somehow very of-the-moment. He famously remarked that in the future, “everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes.”

But fame has its drawbacks. Warhol attracted a coterie of losers and weirdos, including Valerie Solanas, a twenty-eight-year-old woman known for wandering around Greenwich Village begging for money and trying to sell a bizarre manifesto she’d written. She showed up one day at The Factory and Warhol took her in; he found her interesting. He put her



**Above:** Five American Pop artists pose in Andy Warhol’s famed New York City loft in 1964. From left: Tom Wesselmann, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, Warhol, and Claes Oldenburg.

**Following pages:** A photo snapped by Nat Finkelstein in 1965 shows the artistic spirit of the sixties with Andy Warhol, Lou Reed, and Edie Sedgwick.

**Page 252:** An exhibit at the Tanager Gallery displayed the work of New York City artists from December 1956 to January 1957.

**Page 253:** Claes Oldenburg’s *The Street* was housed in the Judson Gallery in Judson Memorial Church. The space was known for being the incubation center for many new and radical art forms, many of which emerged in the 1960s.





# EXHIBIT

OPENING FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1956, 11 P. M. CONTINUING THROUGH JANUARY 18

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DAILY 1-6 P.M.

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KOTIN  
LEITER  
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SANDER  
SWINDEN  
SPAVENTA  
ROSATI  
RESNICK  
VICENTE  
KOHN  
WINTER

“Culture just seems to be in  
the air, like part of the weather.”

TOM WOLFE, *The Purple Decades: A Reader*







in a movie. She became obsessed with him, and he eventually tired of her affections. So she shot him one day while he was on the phone.

He lived, of course, popping up for twenty more years at parties and openings and setting off flashbulbs. Getting shot had only added to his weird fame. Solanas went to jail.

But she'd had her fifteen minutes.

**B**ack in SoHo, the restaurants followed the galleries. And then came the boutiques and shoe stores. It became legal for non-artists to occupy those cavernous lofts—turns out they made fantastic apartments, not just studios. Castelli died in 1999. His uptown gallery lives on, run by his third wife. Ivan Karp died in 2012; OK Harris closed a few years after. Some galleries remain, and some artists still work up in those lofts, but they are getting harder and harder to find amid all the restaurants and clothing stores, all jammed to the walls on weekends.

But Fanelli Cafe is still there, the burgers are still good, and the afternoon sun still creates dramatic shadows on those cast-iron facades. And those glass bricks still glow when the light hits them just right.

**Above:** American abstract painter Ad Reinhardt at work on an untitled painting in his Manhattan studio, 1966.

**Opposite:** Mark Rothko, *Untitled [Seagram Mural Sketch]*, 1958–59. Oil on canvas, 104¾ x 85 in. Instead of hanging in the Four Seasons restaurant as originally intended, Rothko's Seagram Murals went to the Tate Modern in London and the Kawamura Memorial DIC Museum of Art in Sakura, Japan.

**Page 258:** Photographed by Burton Berinsky, Senator John F. Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline Kennedy, ride through a parade on Fifth Avenue during his 1960 presidential campaign. A month later, Kennedy would defeat Richard Nixon in the election for the 35th President of the United States of America.

**Page 259:** Robert Rauschenberg, *Untitled (1964)*, 1964. Print. Rauschenberg utilized commercially produced silk screens to make his works, incorporating his own photographs and images he found in popular media.



"It was in the Depression period. I had a studio in a loft on Twenty-second Street. So after a day's work I used to hang around Washington Square Park at night. Also we used to sit at the Waldorf Cafeteria. For years the artists had met there, you know, everybody. Rothko didn't come there very often. That's why I didn't know what he looked like. I had never met him. And so one night, in the park, it was late, wasn't a soul around. I walked around—thought I would sit a little bit on a bench. I was sitting way on the right side of the bench and kind of a husky man was on the left end of the bench, and I thought maybe I ought to move and sit on another bench.... I didn't know what

he was thinking. We were just sitting there--wasn't a soul around. It must have been very late, or otherwise it was just one of those evenings that people didn't show up. And the park was really quite empty. And we just sat there until Mark said something like it was a nice evening. And so I said, 'Yes, nice evening,' and we got to talk.

I guess he must have asked me what I did. I said, 'I'm a painter.' He says, 'Oh, you're a painter? I'm a painter, too.' And he said, 'What's your name?' I said, 'I'm Bill de Kooning.' I said, 'Who are you?' He says, 'I'm Rothko.' I said, 'Oh, for God's sake,' and said it was very funny. Then we talked, and a couple of days later he came to visit me in my studio."



**“I was in awe of the painters;  
I mean, I was new in New York,  
and I thought the painting that  
was going on here was just  
unbelievable.”**

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG







## if these rooms could talk

*Death and Life at the Chelsea Hotel*

Dylan Thomas, the celebrated Welsh poet, collapsed in room 205 after drinking at the White Horse Tavern. He died soon after. William S. Burroughs wrote most of *Naked Lunch* in his room, his addictions tolerated by the manager-proprietor, Stanley Bard, who, it should be said, tolerated pretty much anything. Arthur Miller took up residence after his breakup with Marilyn Monroe, writing *After the Fall* and noting in a subsequent memoir that you could get high from all the marijuana smoke wafting around the hallways and up the echoing, wide-open staircase. Bob Dylan lived in room 211 for a time in the sixties, writing “Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands.” Edie Sedgwick, with her giant eyes and short blond hair, one of Andy Warhol’s so-called superstars, accidentally set fire to her room. Patti Smith and Robert Mapplethorpe shared room 1017, supposedly the smallest in the place, in 1969. This is where Mapplethorpe took his first photographs, using a Polaroid camera lent by a neighbor. In the late 1970s, Sex Pistol Sid Vicious fatally stabbed his girlfriend, Nancy Spungen, in room 100. Aging punk rockers still make pilgrimages in hopes of seeing the notorious space. And finally, in the 1980s, a young woman named Madonna Louise Ciccone moved in. Soon enough she’d be known by her first name only. She returned in her fame to be photographed in room 822 for her book, *Sex*.

Welcome to the Chelsea Hotel on West 23rd Street.





**Above, top:** A Christmas message for peace from John Lennon and Yoko Ono in Times Square, 1969.

**Above, bottom:** A women's liberation demonstration in 1970.

**Opposite:** The 1960s were known for their radical protests and calls for change. In this shot taken by Daniel Kramer, Bob Dylan and Joan Baez pose near a protest sign in 1964.

**Page 260, left:** Playwright Sam Shepard and singer and poet Patti Smith at the Chelsea Hotel in 1971.

**Page 260, right:** The Chelsea Hotel is known as much for its long-term artist residencies as for its scandals. It is the site where former Sex Pistols band member Sid Vicious murdered his girlfriend Nancy Spungen in 1978.

If ever a single building captured within its walls the spirit of a place, moving not quite gracefully through the eras of the city it inhabited, this is it.

Built as an apartment house in the 1880s, the Chelsea was given the name of the neighborhood where it was located and looked like something out of fog-shrouded Victorian London: a bulky twelve-story edifice of red brick, lined with wrought iron balconies, topped by chimneys and dormers, looking down on one of Manhattan's double-wide east-to-west streets. It was just off the periphery of the Tenderloin, the red-light district of taverns and brothels and illicit gambling houses that ran north from Twenty-fourth Street and just east of the busy Hudson River piers.

Freight trains with locomotives spewing smoke rolled by a few blocks away on an elevated trestle.

The Chelsea failed as an apartment house, so it became a hotel. Some survivors from the *Titanic* stayed here briefly. This was when the city's professional theaters were gathered nearby. But that didn't quite work out, either. The theaters moved uptown and the neighborhood went from bustling to shabby. The Chelsea eventually became a residential hotel, or S.R.O. in New Yorkese.

Bard was the son of one of the buyers who took it out of bankruptcy in 1939 and became the manager in 1964, having started as a plumber's assistant in 1957. Easygoing (perhaps too much so), mildly eccentric, and unfailingly optimistic, he never conceded there was a problem even when a room was on fire—he was as tolerant as he was a bad businessman.

The Chelsea was already a center of bohemian life when Bard took over; Mark Twain, Thomas Wolfe, and Ashcan painter John Sloan, among others, had stayed there. But as rents in Manhattan rose and rose in the latter part of the twentieth century, Bard made it possible for poets and painters and musicians and photographers to live in the center of the city. He'd accept art as payment: It lined the walls, much of it quite bad. He'd let rents go unpaid or even lend money. Every now and then he'd do





his best to collect, so many of his deadbeat residents spent their time avoiding him within those shabby, once elegant hallways, an endless game of urban hide-and-seek.

The list of notable residents goes on and on: Viva, another Andy Warhol star; Warhol himself for a time; Claes Oldenburg; the artist Christo and his wife, Jeanne-Claude, who were known for wrapping things (he once wrapped her there); musicians Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen, and Dee Dee Ramone; Jack Kerouac, who worked on *On the Road* at the Chelsea, and Arthur C. Clarke, who completed *2001: A Space Odyssey* there.

Sherill Tippins, in her history of the Chelsea, *Inside the Dream Palace*, hypothesizes that Clarke based the astronaut David Bowman's final, light-spinning journey in *2001* on the psychedelic experiences of the author's fellow Chelsea residents.

Of course, not everyone who lived and created at the Chelsea went on to great success. For every talent who entered the hotel, dozens of eccentrics and hangers-on and just plain crazy people came, too, filling its two hundred and fifty rooms with a constant off-kilter buzz.

Ed Hamilton, who lived in the Chelsea and wrote a blog about it, captured some of its characters:

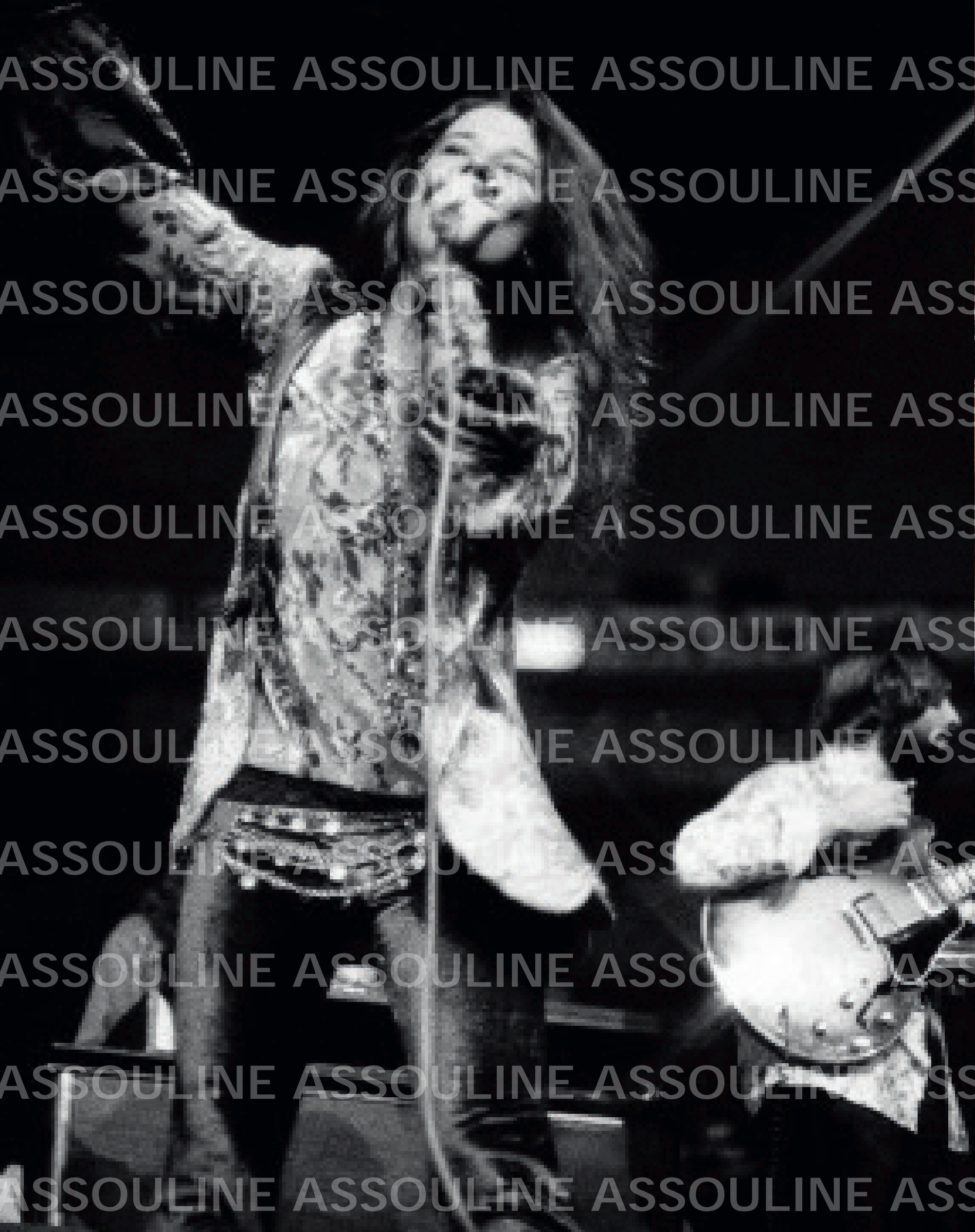
The giant, half-drunk actor practicing with a sword in the hallway. The Japanese painter supported by his parents back home, who apparently just wanted him out of the country. Shirley the telephone operator, nasty to everyone, who also started a fire in her room but was welcomed back to work nonetheless. (Fires seemed to occur regularly.) The voodoo priest who, legend had it, turned an addict into a zombie by drugging him, performing a bizarre ritual, and burying him in a planter on the roof. (Bard quickly blocked rooftop access.) The Voodoo priest then used his zombie to run errands.

**Opposite:** Robert Mapplethorpe and Patti Smith at the Chelsea Hotel in 1970. The hotel is known for having housed famous writers, musicians, and artists of all stripes.  
**Following pages:** Guy Peellaert, *Rock Dreams*, 1973. Peellaert was known for his rock music album cover art, including David Bowie's emblematic *Diamond Dogs*. *Rock Dreams* features Elvis Presley, John Lennon, Bob Dylan, Mick Jagger, and Bowie.



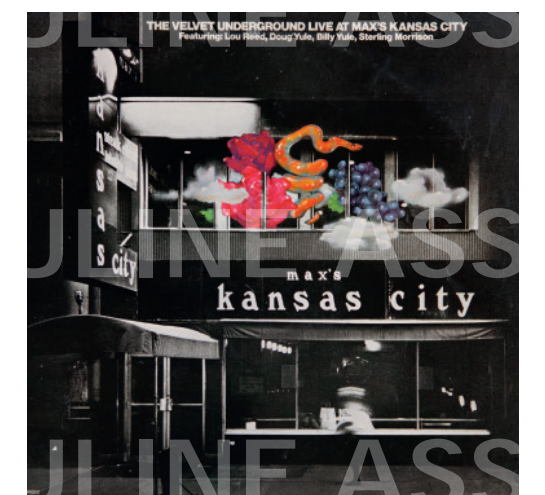






Patti Smith and Robert Mapplethorpe paid just \$44 a week for tiny, one-bed room 1017. “The single bed was good for sleeping close, but Robert had no space to work and neither did I,” Smith wrote in *Just Kids*, her memoir of her *Zelig*-like journey through the Manhattan art and music scenes of those decades. But it was worth it. “We could have had a fair-sized railroad flat in the East Village for what we were paying, but to dwell in this eccentric and damned hotel provided a sense of security as well as a stellar education.”

Mapplethorpe’s expansive and moody black-and-white photographs, mostly portraits, nudes, and still lifes, would become iconic images in the seventies and eighties. A stark portrait he took of Smith graced the cover of her 1975 debut album, *Horses*. His homoerotic photographs of Manhattan’s BDSM scene would go on to create a national controversy over what constituted art and what was pornography.



**Above, top:** Chelsea Market, in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan, today comprises an entire city block of food and specialty shops.  
**Above, bottom:** The Velvet Underground released a live album recorded in 1970 at Max's Kansas City, a nightclub and restaurant on Park Avenue South. The club was beloved in the 1960s and 1970s by artists, poets, and politicians alike.  
**Opposite:** Janis Joplin plays a memorable show at New York City's Madison Square Garden, 1970.





Since the late 1980s, contemporary art galleries have moved from SoHo to Chelsea, which is today the center of avant-garde art, boasting top galleries such as Gagosian (above, top), Pace (above, bottom), David Zwirner (opposite), Matthew Marks, Paul Kasmin, and Leila Heller.

And it was that little Polaroid camera that got him started on his way. Arthur Miller wrote an essay for the literary magazine *Granta* in which he described the day the eternally Pollyannish Bard gave him a tour: “He waved a hand over the room saying: ‘Everything is perfect. All the furniture is brand new, new mattresses, drapes. Look in the bathroom.’”

Nothing was new. Miller described a worn path down the middle of the carpet and what felt like coal dust crunching beneath his shoes.

On the street level, well into the new millennium, the Chelsea remained a throwback. A fishing and tackle store. A guitar store. A record store. And a Spanish restaurant, El Quijote, that felt preserved in amber from the day it opened in 1930. The waiters in vests and ties served garlic shrimp that brought some heat, Estrella beers in iced wineglasses, and martinis with tiny ice floes atop their meniscuses. Dozens of statues of Don Quixote with his lance and shield gazed down upon the crowded bar.

In the 1990s, with New York emerging from fiscal ruin and real estate prices shooting up, Bard tried to bring the Chelsea into the present, or maybe back to the grandeur of the past. He redid the common areas and many of the rooms and drew a new class of celebrities who had no problem paying the rent on time. Among them were the comedian Eddie Izzard and the singer and songwriter Ryan Adams.

But it wasn’t enough. Bard’s rather singular way of doing business—*The New York Times* called it “a studied obliviousness”—did him in. The board, frustrated that the Chelsea was barely squeaking by while real estate and hotels in Manhattan were going gangbusters, ousted him in 2007. He died of a stroke in Florida in 2017.

**T**oday, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, Chelsea is a hot neighborhood. The piers are now used for recreation, the old warehouses and factories home to thriving art galleries that migrated here when SoHo became too expensive. That elevated train line has been turned into a long, narrow park above the streets, the High Line, which attracts millions of tourists and has spawned a boom of apartment buildings along its railings.



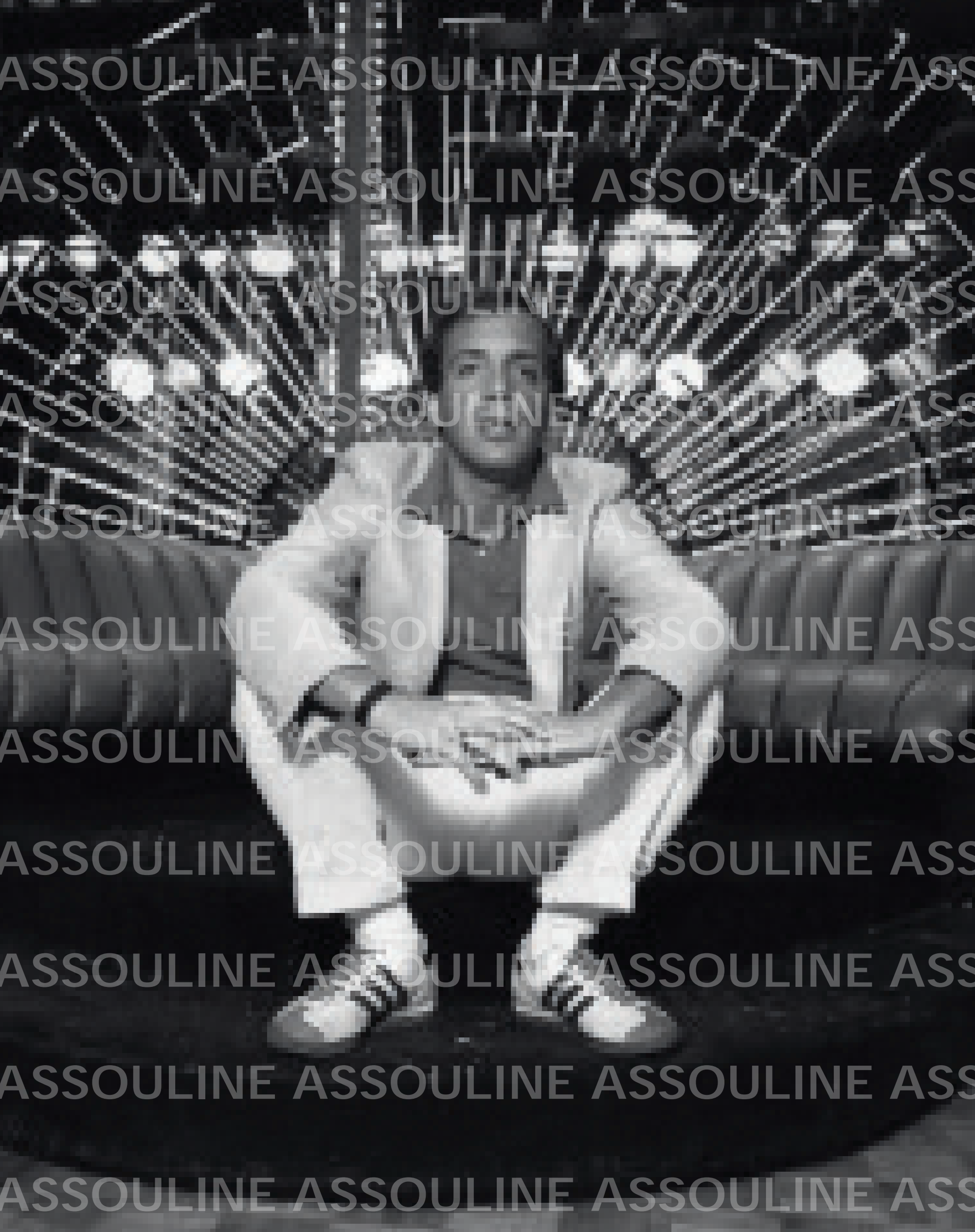




The board that ousted Bard sold the Chelsea for \$80 million in 2011. Massive renovations began, and no more long-term tenants were allowed. In 2013, it changed hands again and was closed for rehabilitation. It's covered in scaffolding and black netting these days, the three-story-high neon sign dark. The tackle shop and record store are gone, an artisanal doughnut shop in their place. Chelsea Guitars is open. El Quijote, where Patti Smith used to find William S. Burroughs slightly drunk and where the martinis were ice-cold to the last, is closed, at least temporarily. The last days were packed, with lines outside. The owners say they'll reopen in six months; New Yorkers have heard that promise before about other beloved bars and restaurants and know it's usually a death sentence.

But it's still the Chelsea Hotel, a mass of red brick and wrought iron standing ominously in Victorian splendor over Twenty-third Street. Bronze plaques next to the entrance note some of the famous past residents: Dylan Thomas, Arthur Miller, Thomas Wolfe. They'd all still recognize the place, all those windows for all those rooms filled with all those ghosts and all those stories, even if the neighborhood around it has changed so much—and even though it's impossible these days to find a good zombie to run errands.

*Bernd and Hilla Becher: In Dialogue with Carl Andre and Sol LeWitt, an exhibit of the German artists' work at the Paula Cooper Gallery in 2018.*



# studio 54 nights

*Boogying While the City Burns*

When a dump truck fell through the elevated West Side Highway, that was it, a low point among low points: The roads in New York City had crumbled so badly that they couldn't hold vehicles, which is basically the least one should expect from a road. Clearly, the city was going to hell.

This was 1973. Decay was everywhere. Entire swaths of the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Upper Manhattan were laid to waste by arsonists, many hired by landlords like those in SoHo who learned that they could make more money from insurance than from tenants. With residents fleeing, scared by vacant, charred buildings and by new neighbors in those that were still standing, the city collected less in taxes—so it cut services, which had once been among the most generous in the nation, and more residents fled. The Lower East Side emptied out.

In the summer of 1977, a power outage brought the second blackout in a decade. The first time, back in 1965, folks gathered and enjoyed the



**Above:** Studio 54 VIP ticket, 1977.  
**Opposite:** Steve Rubell, co-owner of the legendary disco Studio 54, photographed by Michael Abramson in 1979.  
**Following pages:** The film *54*, inspired by Studio 54, was released in 1998 and directed by Mark Christopher. It starred Ryan Phillippe, Salma Hayek, and Mike Myers.





**“The key of  
the success  
of Studio 54  
is that it’s a  
dictatorship at  
the door and a  
democracy on  
the dance floor.”**

ANDY WARHOL



Dubbed “The Crystal Ball of Pop,” *Interview* was founded by artist Andy Warhol in 1969. The magazine featured candid and insightful celebrity-on-celebrity interviews. Diana Vreeland, at the time New York’s queen of fashion, is pictured here on the magazine’s cover in December 1980.

darkness, drinking beer in bars before it got warm and engaging in other activities—it’s been said, though never quite proven, that more than a few babies were born nine months later. Not this time. Teenagers ran wild in the streets. Storefronts were smashed; glass covered the sidewalks. Looters grabbed what they could: televisions, sneakers, sofas, soda, anything that wasn’t nailed down.

And a madman with a big, .44-caliber handgun stalked the outer reaches of Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, hunting for lovers on lovers’ lanes. The *Daily News* and the *New York Post*, the latter having been recently bought by an Australian press baron named Rupert Murdoch who liked to terrify his readers, screamed out the latest terrors and outrages. So did movie screens. Robert De Niro’s Travis Bickle fantasized about cleaning all the scum off the streets in *Taxi Driver*, trying his best to do so in the blood-soaked finale, and a gang of machine gun–armed mercenaries hijacked a subway train in the pulse-pounding *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three*; in one scene, a crowd boos the mayor. Things were so bad that these plots were completely believable. The real mayor, the hapless Abe Beame, an accountant by training, didn’t have it any easier than his fictional counterpart.

But in the darkness, some saw opportunity. Some saw bright lights.

Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell knew what the city needed, or at least what the glittering, nightlife-loving dancers of Manhattan wanted.

Studio 54—or just Studio, as regulars and those who wanted to be regulars called it—came to symbolize an era, just as the speakeasies and the Stork Club had defined eras past. And it was just as hard to get in, though the tools used to block the unwanted were now a velvet rope and a doorman, not a peephole and a buzzer.

In New York City, fantastic wealth has always resided next to unspeakable poverty. But the 1970s may have marked the most disordered era of them all. As the city fell apart, dump trucks plummeting to earth, a party broke out. Maybe it was the sense that the world was collapsing—people worried less about nuclear war, but the nation was still recovering from Vietnam and Watergate. Maybe it was the sense that the city was

going through a transition, but no one knew where it would end up.

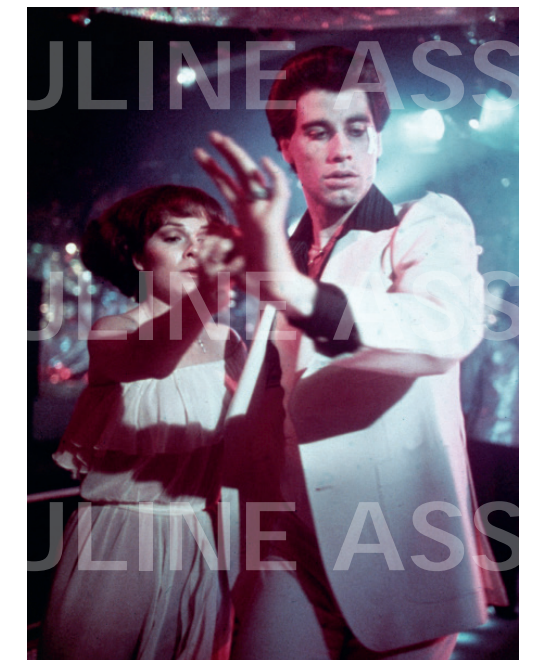
Would we all even be alive tomorrow?

Discotheques had started in Paris. In New York in the late 1960s, one of the most popular places tried to sound French: Le Club. Hurrah, a music venue with sleek lines and a nightclub vibe, came a bit later. Bands played at Max’s Kansas City. Over on West Forty-third Street, Le Jardin, a gay club, comprised two separate floors of the Diplomat Hotel.

Two entrepreneurs named Maurice Brahms and John Addison opened a place on Broadway called Infinity. They spent roughly \$150,000 to get it up and running, and it was packed from the first night on when it opened in the fall of 1975. It was bigger and flashier than those that had come before. Everyone came. Donna Summer, already the reigning queen of disco, even paid her way in.

Rubell and Schrager had met at Syracuse University. Rubell wanted to go into the restaurant business, and Schrager joined him. They opened a few restaurants—in New Haven, Connecticut, and in Queens—but found themselves enticed by the siren song of Manhattan nightlife. They hit Le Jardin and Infinity and Maurice Brahms took them under his wing. The two young men soaked up all the details they could. Soon they were looking for their own place and decided on the empty television studio on West Fifty-fourth Street. They wanted a venue that was bright while other clubs were dark. They took advantage of the cavernous space and the lighting circuits and the fly system that were already up and running. They would out-Infinity Infinity. Studio 54 was born.

Cher and Margaux Hemingway were there the first night, in April 1977, dancing by themselves, but it took a while for things to heat up. A reporter from *The New York Times* came to see what all the fuss was about but left after a little while. It was a slow start.



**Above, top:** Studio 54 was always a popular hangout for the rich and famous. Here, John Travolta and Sylvester Stallone share a drink at the club in 1978.  
**Above, bottom:** The New York City disco scene thrived in the 1970s. *Saturday Night Fever*, directed by John Badham in 1977, starred John Travolta and featured hits by the Bee Gees.  
**Following pages:** On her birthday in 1977, Bianca Jagger rode into Studio 54 on a white steed, launching the club into the social stratosphere.







“A city of strong flavors, of gasps and not sights. It feeds you on mustard and Tabasco sauce and makes you mailine on adrenaline. It is not possible to be neutral about it. It has a thumping heart.”

TREVOR FISHLOCK, *Americans and Nothing Else*

And then Bianca Jagger held her birthday party there. A lithe couple, naked but for gold paint, brought out a white horse, and Jagger climbed on and rode through the club. Dick Corkery of the *Daily News* snapped a picture. It flashed around the world. Studio had arrived. Nero fiddled while Rome burned. The beat bounded on in the blinding colored lights. Anything went in the mirrored coed bathrooms. Cocaine blew as if in a blizzard.

Suddenly, if you were gay, there was no reason to hide it. In fact, you could strut it, and many did. The gay rights movement had emerged in full force in New York City after a riot in 1969, when police raided a gay bar in Greenwich Village called the Stonewall Inn. Gay clientele became an important and welcomed—not to mention enthusiastic—part of the disco scene. Straight women discovered the benefits of dancing in a gay club—no jerks hit on them.

Studio and the disco craze also brought new fashion courtesy of the designer Halston. Gone were the over-the-top psychedelic styles of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Halston’s simple, loose lines and sheer fabrics allowed women to wear the same outfits to work that they danced in comfortably at night—that is, if those out on the dance floor wore anything at all. Clothes came off; nipples were everywhere.

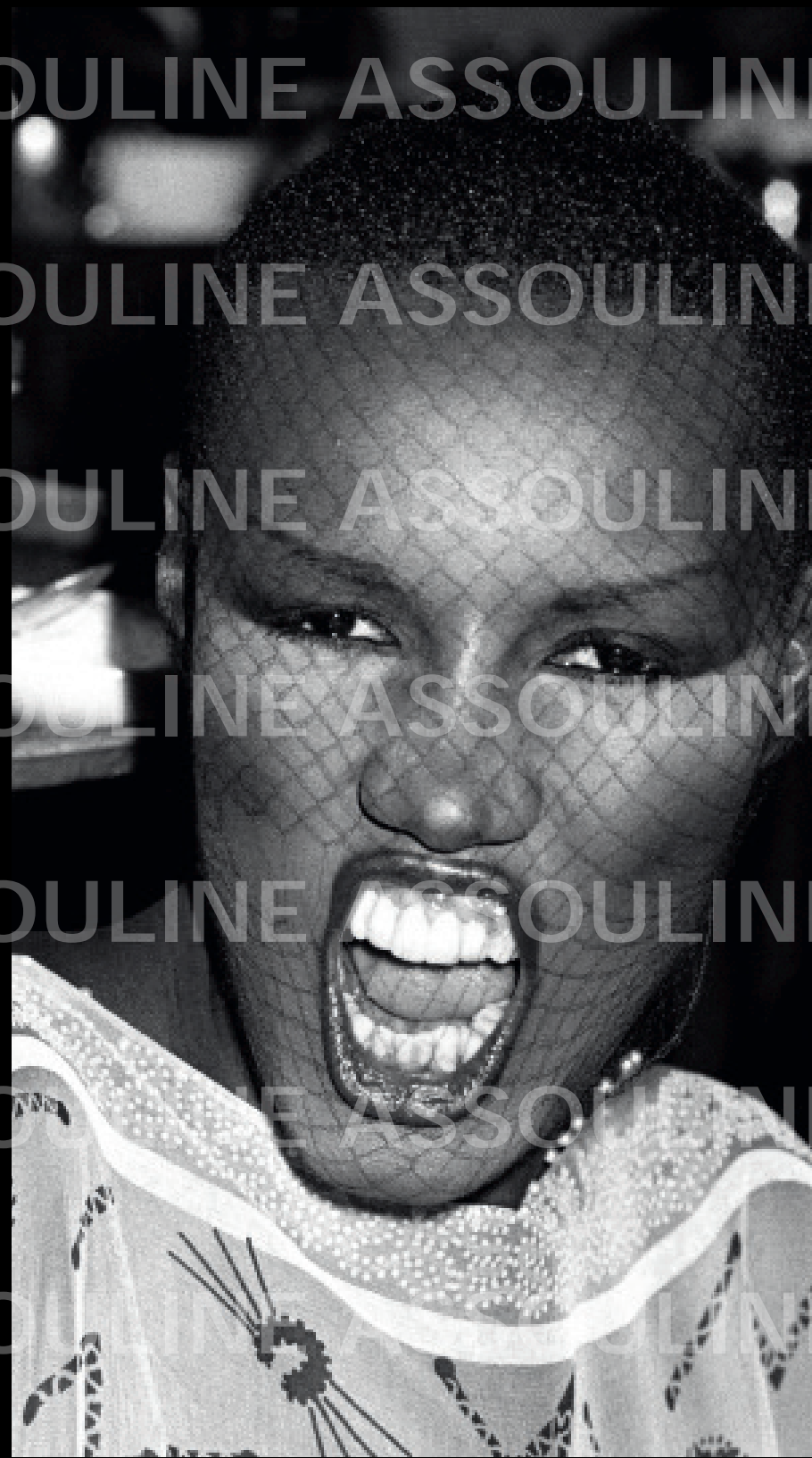
All the most fashionable people who loved nightlife came to Studio, as well as those who wanted to be near all the most fashionable people.

Good luck. Rubell kept a strict, occasionally cruel door policy. Let in too many members of the Bridge and Tunnel Crowd—that is, people from New Jersey, Brooklyn, and Queens who have to go over or under a river to get there—and the fabulous will stop coming. Once, he admitted a snappily dressed man visiting from Ohio but blocked his newlywed bride. (The groom went in anyway—wonder how that marriage turned out.) Another night, a man asked how he could get beyond the rope—what would it take? The doorman pointed to his own jacket and told him to get one like it; they were at Bloomingdale’s. The next night, the man returned wearing one. He still didn’t get in.



**Above, top:** This iconic group shot features Bob Colacello, Jerry Hall, Andy Warhol, Debbie Harry, Truman Capote, and Paloma Picasso posing at Studio 54 in the 1970s.  
**Above, bottom:** A concession worker in eye-catching garb offers snacks at Studio 54.  
**Opposite:** Another popular nightclub, Xenon, also enjoyed a star-studded clientele. Performer Divine and singer and model Grace Jones gathered at the club in 1978 to celebrate Jones’s birthday.





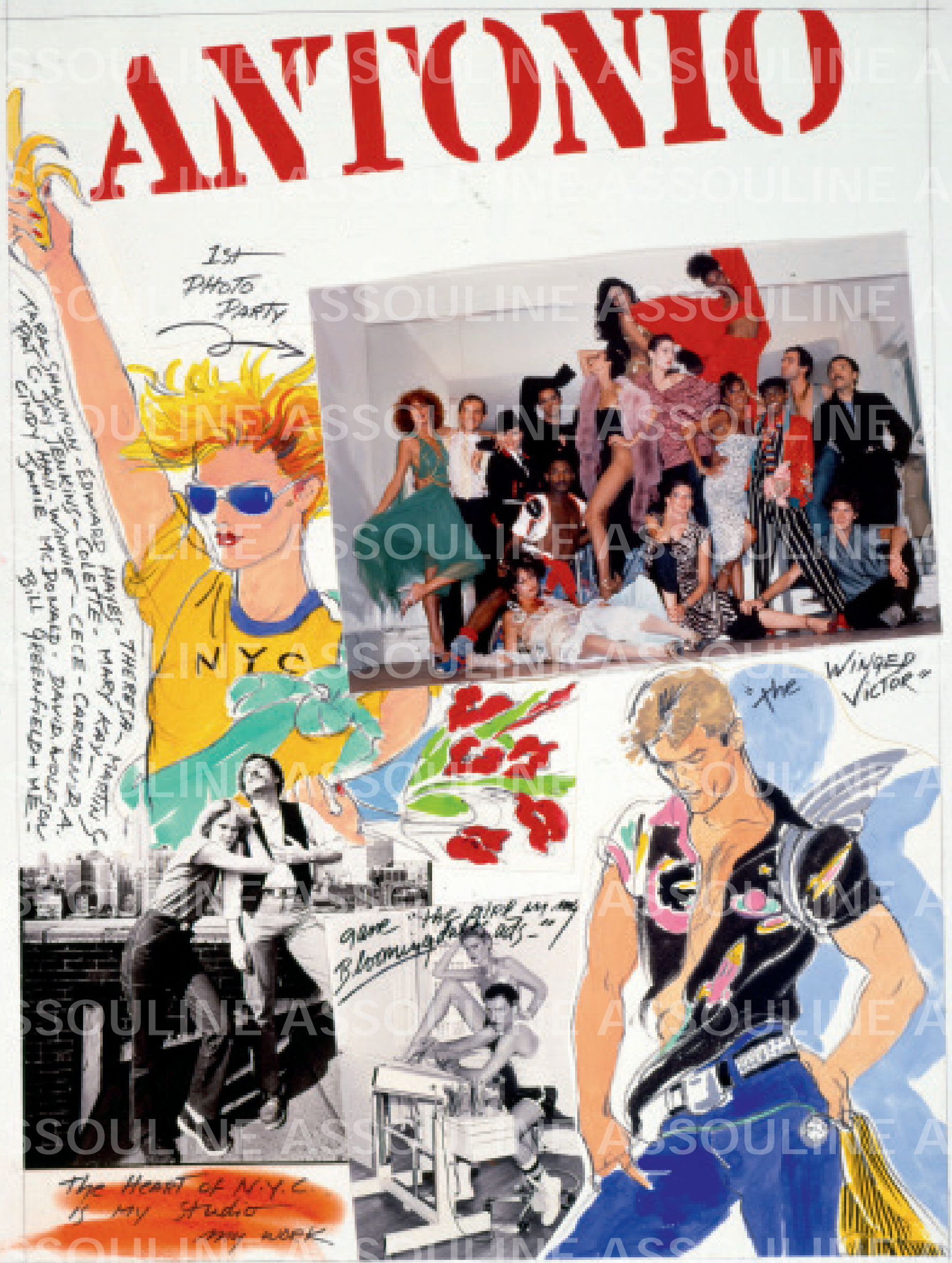
**Above, left:** Fashion editor Diana Vreeland and model Jerry Hall enjoy a night out at Studio 54 in 1977.  
**Above, right:** Studio 54 was often the chosen site for industry events. Here, fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg and hairstylist and fashion photographer Ara Gallant attend the book launch for Egon von Furstenberg's *The Power Look* in 1978.  
**Opposite, left:** Disco wasn't just a dance: It was a way of life. Grace Jones attends a 1978 Disco Convention Banquet at the New York Hilton Hotel.  
**Opposite, right:** Clockwise from bottom left: Bianca Jagger, Jack Haley, Jr., Liza Minnelli, and Andy Warhol ring in the new year at Studio 54.

“When I’m in  
walk down the  
this thing, like

New York, I just want to  
street and feel  
I’m in a movie.”

RYAN ADAMS









In 1978, Schrager and Rubell renovated the place and glitized it up even more, adding a swinging bridge through the middle of the cavernous main room. Anthony Haden-Guest, in his colorful history of those years, *The Last Party*, recounts how the singer Antonia de Portago sang on it when she performed with her band, the Operators. “It was very scary for me to be on that bridge,” she said. “Uhhhhh! I hated it.”

But Elton John liked going up on the bridge, and so did Diana Ross. Whether others did or didn’t is lost to fading cocaine-dusted, mirror-reflected memories, but one thing is for certain: Artists, dancers, and actors all came to Studio to sprawl on the couches and boogie beneath those bright lights, among them Andy Warhol, Mick Jagger, Diane von Furstenberg, Jackie Kennedy Onassis, Freddie Mercury, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Al Pacino, Bruce Jenner, Robin Williams, and Salvador Dalí.

There were other clubs, of course: The stalwart Copacabana on East Sixtieth Street mixed the elegance of a forties nightclub, which it had once been, with the pulsing sexiness of disco and was memorialized in Barry Manilow’s pulsing anthem of that era (“Her name was Lola...”).

But there was one club downtown with another never-ending party that couldn’t have been more different from Studio even as it, too, helped define the era: CBGB on the Bowery. Dark, smelling of cigarettes and beer-soaked wood, and with a cramped stage and bathrooms scrawled with curses and plastered with band stickers, it was where all the groups of those days, those bands linked forever with the New York punk movement even if they weren’t really punks, got their starts: the Ramones, Television, Talking Heads, Blondie.

They weren’t wealthy, those musicians, but they could afford New York because it was falling apart. They could live and play and write songs and rehearse. The East Village, with its broken glass in the streets and vacant lots and addicts crowding the doorways, was their home. One thing can be said for a city where dump trucks fall through elevated highways: Real estate is cheap.

Somehow it got around that punk and disco were sworn enemies. But everyone out in nightttime Manhattan just wanted to have fun. The crowds mixed. The queen of the East Village, the queen of CBGB, and one of the biggest stars to come out of that world was Debbie Harry, the gorgeous blonde singer of Blondie (that’s what truck drivers called her as they drove past). The band even borrowed and built upon disco’s pounding 4/4 beat in its hit “Heart of Glass.” And plenty of nights, there was Debbie Harry at Studio up on West Fifty-fourth Street, hanging out with the other fabulous people.

## And then it was over. But that’s New York City.

Rubell bragged about how much money they were making: \$7 million that first year. Bad idea. He got the attention of the IRS, which raided the place. He and Schrager were arrested. They pleaded guilty to tax evasion and went to jail.

But not before one final goodbye. Studio closed with a wild party in February 1980. Diana Ross serenaded the two soon-to-be inmates.



**Above:** The early 1970s saw the rise of punk music, with the Ramones, originally from Queens, at the forefront of the movement. Here, a flyer promotes a Ramones concert at CBGB.

**Opposite, top:** Antonio Lopez with Nancy North, 1973.

**Opposite, bottom:** The 2018 documentary *Antonio Lopez 1970: Sex Fashion & Disco* chronicles the artist’s eccentric life.

**Page 286:** A page from the diary of Antonio Lopez, the most influential fashion illustrator of the sixties and seventies. His illustrations appeared in many prominent publications, such as *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, and *The New York Times*.

**Page 287:** Antonio Lopez and his creative circle of friends at Carnegie Hall Studios in 1966, photographed by Dick Balarian.

The group includes, clockwise from bottom: Lopez, Kathleen, Ingeborg Marcus, Cathee Dahmen and friend, Charles James, and Juan Ramos.

**Page 290:** *The Deuce* is a period drama set in 1970s New York. The HBO series stars James Franco and Maggie Gyllenhaal and tells the story of the rising porn and drug industries in those years.

**Page 291:** The dance floor at Studio 54.





**“What about community standards?”**  
**“Apparently New York has none.”**

*THE DEUCE*





## new art, new money

*You Remember the Eighties*

Wall Street was on fire.

With Ronald Reagan in the White House and deregulation in the air, the stock market took off, riding a bull market that rivaled that of the Roaring Twenties. In the sixties and seventies, it may have been gauche to show off your money. No more—that sentiment vanished from many New Yorkers’ psyches in the time it took to flash an American Express Platinum Card.

A new crowd filled Manhattan restaurants and apartments: young urban professionals, or yuppies, in taut suspenders and expensive suits, working around the clock, and, in those few moments when they weren’t working, spending, spending, spending. The price of real estate soared. So did the price of fine art—owning the newest work and spending the most on it, even without seeing it first, became a status symbol. So was splurging and being seen at restaurants: Diners would leave the Quilted Giraffe on the East Side full of nouvelle cuisine but lightened by the removed weight of \$500.

What was the point of having money if you couldn’t show it off? Laura Steinberg and Jonathan Tisch, the philanthropist and scion of the Loews Corporation, paid \$17,000 for a wedding cake. This was a second Gilded Age, though a distinctly tacky one. A man named Ivan Boesky in a hitherto little-known corner of the financial industry called risk arbitrage summed it all up in a 1985 speech: “Greed is all right. Greed is healthy. You can be greedy and still feel good about yourself.”

**“New York is  
an arrogant  
city...  
has always  
wanted  
to be all  
things to all  
people, and  
a surprising  
amount of the  
time it has  
succeeded.”**

PAUL GOLDBERGER

Michael Douglas, playing a character based on Boesky and wonderfully named Gordon Gekko in the 1987 movie *Wall Street*, put it even more succinctly:

**“Greed is good.”**

Not always. The rise in real estate values added to a growing problem in the city: homelessness. Legions of men and women filled corners of Grand Central Terminal on winter nights, a slumbering nocturnal army. The elegant arched ceiling of the main concourse, with its intricate lighted constellations, was black with decades of smoke and soot.

Other dark tidings vibrated below the surface just as Wall Street and its millions pulled New York City out of the wreckage of the 1970s and just when it seemed the long winter was ending. A new kind of highly addictive cocaine appeared, bringing with it a crime scourge that quickly overwhelmed the police. And a new disease, mysterious at first, began showing up in the city’s gay community, a group that had been able to publicly embrace and even celebrate its own identity only beginning in the decade just past. Finally, all that Wall Street wealth was built on lies and criminal trading. It would tumble down. It always does.

**A**nd yet...

To be young in New York City in the 1980s was to experience the highs and the lows from up close and far away, even if you didn’t understand, and would never entirely understand, what “risk arbitrage” meant. Though real estate and modern art prices were rising, the city remained rough enough around the edges that it could be experienced and enjoyed with almost empty pockets.

CBGB was still packed, its bathrooms still disgusting, and some of the great bands of the era still gigged there and at other clubs, like Danceteria on East Twenty-first Street and the Ritz on East Eleventh Street. The music fads came and went, playing out first and foremost in New York City—punk, new wave, ska, rockabilly. Over at Max’s Kansas City in 1981, a band called Emmy and the Emmys broke up and the lead singer had

**Opposite:** Wall Street houses the world’s two largest stock exchanges, the New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ. Pictured is a ticker-tape parade on lower Broadway, during which confetti is thrown from nearby office buildings onto the parade-goers.

**Page 292:** With the Stock Exchange in the center, microscopic pedestrians are seen weaving through Nassau Street in New York City’s Financial District.

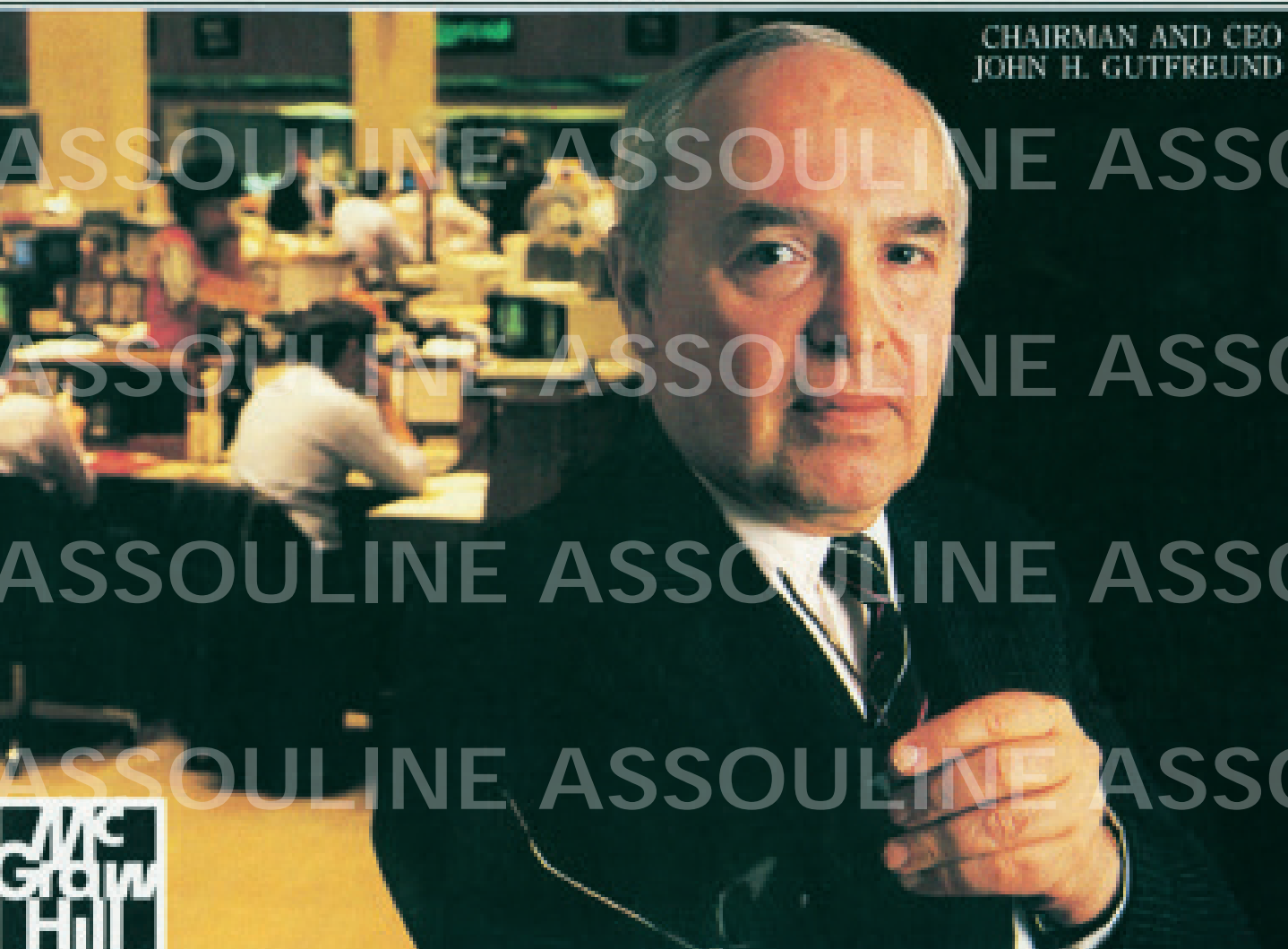




# THE KING OF WALL STREET

An inside look at Salomon Brothers' stunning rise to preeminence—and how it wields its power

PAGE 88



CHAIRMAN AND CEO  
JOHN H. GUTFREUND

Mc  
Graw  
Hill

**Above:** John Gutfreund, head of investment bank Salomon Brothers, is pronounced "The King of Wall Street" by *BusinessWeek* on December 9, 1985.

**Opposite:** The New York Stock Exchange is the world's largest stock exchange by market capitalization. Shown here is its interior trading floor, photographed in the 1980s.



her first solo show; the former resident of the Chelsea Hotel called herself Madonna. Over at the Ritz, Brian Setzer, founder, lead guitarist, and singer for Stray Cats, took a swig of bourbon onstage as the sweaty crowd cheered on the night the band's first album went gold.

On East Fourteenth Street, the Palladium started the decade as a concert hall and ended it as a nightclub-disco with a special back room for VIPs, the Michael Todd Room. (Shades of the Cub Room at the Stork Club?) Here comes Andy Warhol gliding down Fourteenth Street with his entourage; there is Senator Ted Kennedy dancing drunkenly in a corner, Secret Service agents with earpieces watching nervously. Up above, the hustlers at Julian's pool hall, a vestige of gritty noir 1940s New York, took it all in through the expansive plate glass windows.

If you were young in New York City in the 1980s, you walked from one end of the city to the other when the subways went on strike in 1980. The mayor, Ed Koch, greeted the army of walkers on the first day of the strike. You noticed a new trend: women who had to cross the Brooklyn Bridge on foot to get to work put their nice shoes in their handbags and wore sneakers with their business clothes and off they went. The trains got running again after a week, but the sneakers stayed, adding a dose of casual, even rebellious, comfort beneath expensive Chanel suits.

It was a time when downtown and uptown captured the duality of Manhattan, at least in the public eye. Two movies in 1985 nailed this split. One, *Desperately Seeking Susan*, featured Madonna, on her way to being the decade's defining star, as a free spirit who inspires an amnesiac suburban mom to have more fun in her life, while the second, *After Hours*, directed by Martin Scorsese, features Griffin Dunne as a yuppie who has a misadventure downtown and can't get back uptown no matter how hard he tries.

Neither film truly stands the test of time, but both are worth watching for the city they capture: wealth uptown; ragged, deserted, even menacing streets downtown. The wreckage of the 1970s was everywhere, waiting to be paved over.



**Above and opposite, left:** The slick and sleazy Wall Street banker was immortalized first by Michael Douglas as Gordon Gekko in 1987's *Wall Street*, directed and cowritten by Oliver Stone, then by Leonardo DiCaprio as Jordan Belfort in 2013's *The Wolf of Wall Street*, directed by Martin Scorsese.

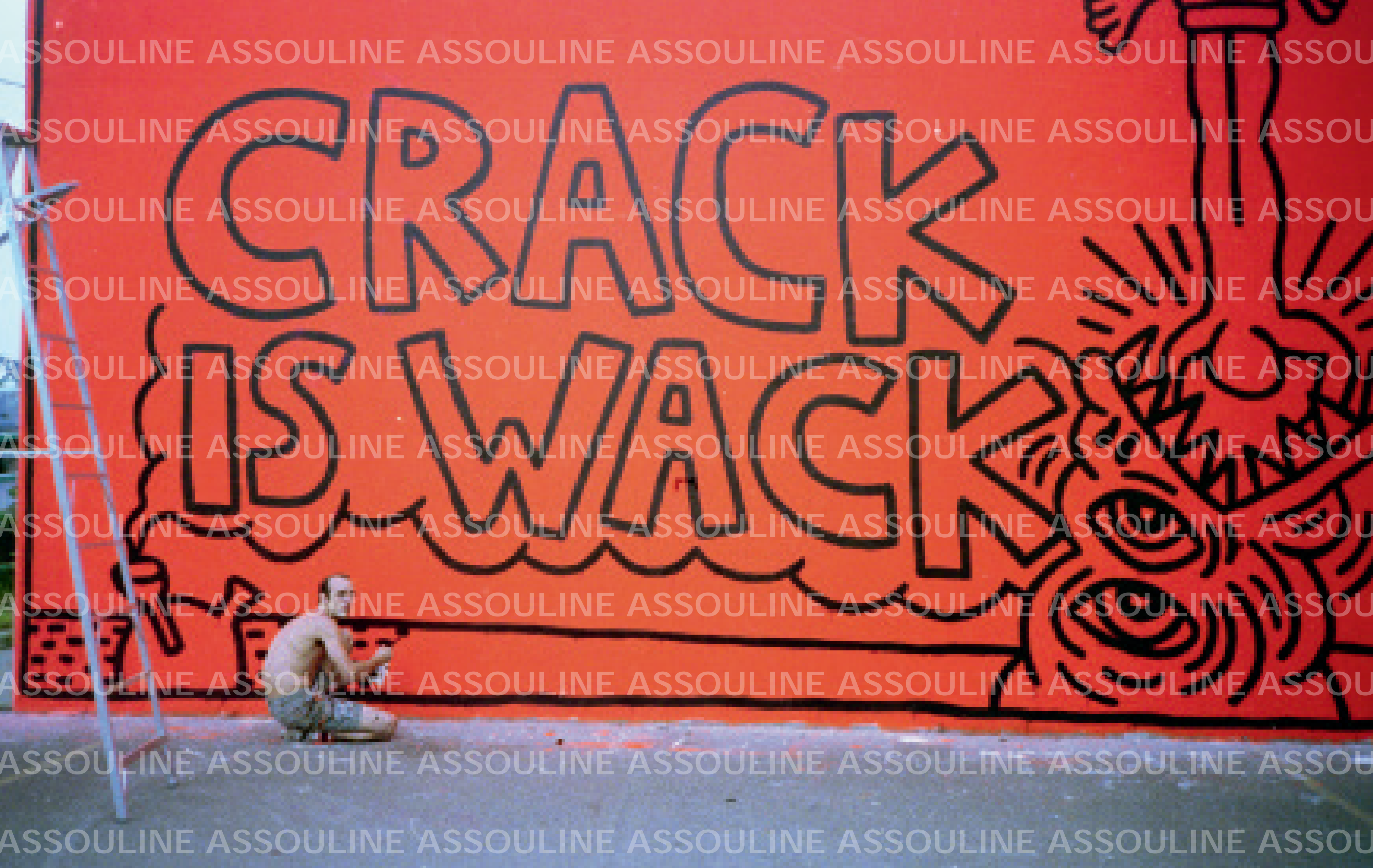
**Opposite, right:** The stately facades of Wall Street.



**“Tad’s mission in life is to have more fun than anyone else in New York City, and this involves a lot of moving around, since there is always the likelihood that where you aren’t is more fun than where you are.”**

JAY MCINERNEY, *Bright Lights, Big City*







If you were young in New York City in the 1980s, you practically lived in the pages of Jay McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City*. There on the paperback cover (and it was only in paperback) were the glittering twins of the World Trade Center, as well as The Odeon restaurant, part of a new breed, an old-school cafeteria reimagined for modern Manhattan with smart French food, snappy service, and prices that weren't shy. Black-jeaned painters, bleach-blond gallery denizens, and narrow-tied Wall Streeters all mingled around its tables.

And there, on those pages, was someone else: *you*. In one of modern fiction's bolder gimmicks, but one that somehow works and gets better as the book goes on, the entire novel is written in the second person. You. You. You. The cocaine-fueled nights are captured with anthropological accuracy, but even more so are the brutal mornings after.

"It is worse even than you expected, stepping out into the morning," you wrote. "The glare is like a mother's reproach. The sidewalk sparkles cruelly. Visibility unlimited. The downtown warehouses look serene and restful in this beveled light. An uptown cab passes and you start to wave, then realize you have no money."

Artists saw opportunities on those unblemished warehouse walls. If there was one visual scourge that defined the lawlessness of New York in the preceding decade, it was graffiti, with teens armed with spray paint cans writing their street names—tags—in giant, colorful, bubble-ized or angular letters on hard-to-scale buildings or embankment walls, bridges, and, of course, subway cars. But as the 1980s began, this "street art" caught the eye of the art world and moved indoors.

One tag that had been familiar on the Lower East Side of Manhattan was SAMO, pronounced "same-oh." It was the work of a kid from Brooklyn named Jean-Michel Basquiat and a friend, Al Diaz. They said the tag came



**Above:** Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat circa 1985.

**Opposite:** Photographed by Michael Halsband for a vintage invitation to the nightclub-gallery Area in 1985, this group of New York artists includes David Hockney, Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Robert Mapplethorpe, Armand Arman, and Francesco Clemente.

**Previous pages:** Keith Haring, *Crack Is Wack*, 1986. Mural. Haring painted this now famous *Crack Is Wack* mural on a handball court in Harlem. A repainted version can still be seen on East 128th Street and Harlem River Drive.

**Following pages:** Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Slave Auction*, 1982. Collage of wrinkled paper, acrylic, and oil stick on canvas, 72 x 120 in. Basquiat is known for his provocative exploration of dichotomies, in particular wealth versus poverty and integration versus segregation.









During the 1980s, New York City was in the throes of raging crime. This headline, written by Vincent A. Musetto, though horrific, is unfortunately an accurate representation of city life at that time.

to them while stoned—the joint they were smoking was the “same old shit.” From the bold contours of graffiti, Basquiat developed a furious painting style of slashing, colorful images, recognizable yet abstract, that fell within the burgeoning movement of neo-expressionism.

Mary Boone, running her eponymous gallery in SoHo, saw their potential. She also saw profit. She already handled two of the biggest neo-expressionists, Eric Fischl and Julian Schnabel. Now she took on the kid from Brooklyn. She was a relentless and smart promoter. Something about those seemingly crudely drawn yet sophisticated images, capturing the fractured energy of New York City as well as its contradictions, made Basquiat the artist of the moment. The customers came from far and wide, many so desperate that they plunked down their money for paintings that were not even started. If they hesitated? Too bad: The painting went to someone else.

In the first Gilded Age, money had been made by building new companies, like railroads and steamship lines. Now it was about slicing and dicing businesses. Find a struggling company, borrow heavily to buy it, then sell it off for parts to cover your interest payments while making a heady profit. Never mind all those workers who lost their jobs. And then spend some of that money on a lavish birthday party for yourself.

The stock market loved it, and brokers raked it in. The wealth floated down to brokers in their twenties and thirties—they are all around the nightclubs in Bright Lights, Big City. Boesky made his money by betting on the stock swings that accompanied the corporate takeovers. He lived in Westchester on a two-hundred-acre estate, but loved to throw his money around Manhattan: Once, in the Café des Artistes on the Upper West Side, he ordered everything on the menu just for the fun of it.

Others, like Michael Milken, called the junk bond king, made profits by floating the bonds that financed many of these takeovers.

The problem was, everyone was in on the game.

Boesky and his pals tipped each other off as to which companies were going to be bought and sold so they could buy or dump stock in advance, making even bigger killings. Of course, that’s illegal, and by the middle part of the decade, he and Milken and a bunch of others were off to jail.

If you were young in New York City in the 1980s, you experienced the news through the gut-punch headlines of the afternoon *New York Post*:

MOM-TO-BE IN 911  
SEX-RIDE TERROR  
HEADLESS BODY IN TOPLESS BAR

Or through the more sedate pages of *The New York Times*.

It was there, on August 8, 1982, that you read a troubling story: A DISEASE’S SPREAD PROVOKES ANXIETY. It was the first mention of AIDS, acquired immune deficiency syndrome, in the newspaper. The cases were appearing chiefly in the city’s gay community, and panic quickly set in, with men who believed they had symptoms flooding emergency rooms. All the sexual freedoms let loose during the 1970s took a scary turn. Famous names would be claimed by AIDS, like Robert Mapplethorpe, who died of complications from the disease in March 9, 1989, at the age of 42. Outrage grew that the city wasn’t doing enough.

It was in the *Post* that you read screaming headlines about the scourge of crack cocaine, a highly addictive and cheap variation of cocaine that prompted the city’s crime rate, which had started to decline from its highs in the 1970s, to shoot back up.

Again and again, Ed Koch asked how he was doing. You were never quite sure.



Run-DMC, comprising (from left) Darryl McDaniels, Joseph Simmons, and Jason Mizell, originated in Queens and was at the forefront of the new-school hip-hop movement.





wall street and street art

In the end, the contrasts were finally too much, and all the darkness pulled the second Gilded Age down. In October 1987, the stock market crashed, and seats in expensive restaurants were empty soon after. Basquiat died of a drug overdose in his studio on Great Jones Street in 1988. By the end of the decade, the crazy prices Boone and other dealers had been demanding were seen as part of the decade's bubble, and they plummeted; Boone had to sell off some of her personal collection to avoid bankruptcy. "I think I lost my way. It was the eighties," she later told an interviewer. "I got too involved with fame and fortune."

**A**nd then, in the 1990s, something surprising happened: New York City found its footing.

To be young in that decade was to experience a place that, for a moment, found the proper balance between grit and polish, past and future. Maybe it had been like this in the 1940s and 1950s; you had no idea. Vestiges of the old industrial city hung on: Printers in overalls still got coffee in diners after their overnight shifts on Hudson Street. The subways sparkled, scrubbed of graffiti, and ran on time. You could afford a spacious apartment on a writer's salary. The Chelsea Hotel was getting nicer but was still affordable, the martinis still ice-cold at El Quijote. Your girlfriend could afford a place in SoHo. You could afford The Odeon.

Around it a new neighborhood flourished—TriBeCa, the Triangle Below Canal Street. Robert De Niro and others founded the Tribeca Film Festival and invested in restaurants like the Tribeca Grill. Yet it still had an edge, the feeling of not being the center of things—John F. Kennedy, Jr., could walk his dog freely, without worrying he'd be mobbed. There were no tourists in Tribeca. Not yet.



**Above, top:** *Who's That Girl* was singer Madonna's first soundtrack album, released in 1987. While the film was a box office bomb, the *Who's That Girl* World Tour was an enormous commercial success.

**Above, bottom:** Madonna and Jean-Michel Basquiat shared a short-lived but passionate relationship, having met at the crux of their respective careers.

**Opposite:** Musician Tina Weymouth and DJ Grandmaster Flash in front of a Lee Quinones-graffitied handball wall in 1981.



**“I go to Paris,  
I go to London,  
I go to Rome,  
and I always say,  
there’s no place  
like New York.  
It’s the most  
exciting city in  
the world now.  
That’s the way  
it is. That’s it.”**

ROBERT DE NIRO



**Above:** The Tribeca neighborhood of Lower Manhattan hosts the annual Tribeca Film Festival, a screening of independent films. The festival was founded in 2002 as a reaction to the loss of vibrancy in the neighborhood due to the September 11 attacks.  
**Opposite:** Glamorous New York City couple John F. Kennedy, Jr., and Carolyn Bessette in Tribeca in 1997. John John’s cool lifestyle promoted the “downtown chic” of Tribeca, where he had an apartment, and the neighboring areas.

Crime dropped dramatically. It happened for many reasons, but one was the aggressive policing that began under Koch’s successor, David N. Dinkins—the city’s first black mayor—and was pushed even harder under the administration of Rudy Giuliani, who was elected in 1993. Murders would eventually fall to fewer than five hundred per year from more than two thousand.

**B**ut New York still felt like that rough-edged, real city. There were record stores. Cars drove through Times Square. You could smoke in bars. Michael Bloomberg had yet to arrive and impose his schoolmarmish vision on the city, a vision that you couldn’t help but agree with—voted for, even—although it took away some of the fun. Giuliani had his schoolmarmish moment in 1999 when the Brooklyn Museum hosted a show of young British artists that included a mixed-media painting by Chris Ofili of the Virgin Mary juxtaposed with elephant dung. The mayor became enraged, spouting echoes of Roosevelt’s response to the Armory Show of 1913—“That’s not art!”—and tried to stop the museum’s city funding, but in the end, he succeeded only in bringing more attention to the work. New York wasn’t willing to be sanitized.

In the 1990s, the homeless army receded—briefly, at least. Workers cleaned the ceiling of the great concourse at Grand Central Terminal, removing decades of smoke and grime, but leaving one little black rectangle to remind you how dirty it once was.





# the boroughs rise

*Beyond the 212*

The Bridge and Tunnel Crowd.

That's what Steve Rubell called them when he ran Studio 54, back before he went to jail. Uncouth, with accents, the women with towering hair, the men with gold chains around their necks, they were the New Yorkers who traveled above and beneath rivers to party in Manhattan, the shiny city of Oz. They saved their dollars for big nights but didn't have a lot in the bank. They wanted so desperately to be part of the scene, but Rubell feared their mere appearance chased away the customers he wanted: the beautiful people, the partiers with plenty to spend night after night.

So it went back then if you were from Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, or Staten Island. They'd all been joined into one metropolis in 1898, but they







**“Brooklyn was a dream. All the things that happened there just couldn’t happen. It was all dream stuff. Or was it all real and true and was it that she, Francie, was the dreamer?”**

BETTY SMITH, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*





remained distinct, and Manhattan looked down on them. If you were from Brooklyn in the early 1980s and you visited people on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, for example, you would be teased, asked if you had a telephone or used an outhouse or traveled by horse. Taxis wouldn't take you home at night. To the rest of the city and the world, the boroughs meant crime, rough-hewn baseball crowds, and burning buildings.

But if Manhattan was New York City's feverish creative brain, these four boroughs—some called them the Outer Boroughs—were the city's beating heart and soul. This was where the New Yorkers who made the city run were born, where they raised families and made tidy homes, and where they died. This was where children were baptized and made their communion, where families walked to temple on Sabbath evenings, where gospel and wailing organs sang out from churches on Sunday mornings. Where the bars would fill on Saturday nights. Where ships were repaired and bread was baked and thousands of little family stores awoke with the dawn, and where Little League teams played on Saturday afternoons and children laughed and ran in the street on June evenings, water running down the asphalt in snaking rivulets from opened fire hydrants, the sky still bright at nine p.m.

A slew of elegant, almost ethereally beautiful suspension bridges connect all the boroughs. Most cities would be proud having just one; they'd probably make it part of their logo. It was those bridges and the subways that made the boroughs ideal first stops for many immigrants after Lower Manhattan became too crowded.

The boroughs would suffer more than Manhattan during the rough years. But in due time, a shift would occur. By 2018, the boroughs would become home to hot restaurants and scenes, with real estate as expensive as that in Manhattan, towering glass-sheathed apartment buildings,



**Above:** Williamsburg features many rooftop venues perfect for enjoying stunning views of Manhattan's skyline. The club Output keeps the party going with live music.

**Opposite:** Enrapturing street art exists in all boroughs of New York City. This mural, on Wythe Avenue in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, is by Icy and Sot, two street artists who often include children in their works.

**Page 312:** A map of the five boroughs of New York City: Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.

**Page 313:** Directed by Francis Ford Coppola, Woody Allen, and Martin Scorsese, the 1989 film *New York Stories* chronicles three separate lives in the city.

**Pages 314–15:** *Once Upon a Time in America*, the 1984 film directed by Sergio Leone and starring Robert De Niro, documents a Jewish former gangster's return to the Lower East Side.

**Previous pages:** This water tower sculpture by artist Tom Fruin sits on the rooftop of 20 Jay Street and is viewable from Dumbo, the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges, FDR Drive, and Lower Manhattan.





**Above:** Edward Hopper, *Room in Brooklyn*, 1932. Oil on canvas, 29 x 34 in. This work captures the despair of the Depression in the 1930s.  
**Opposite:** Brownstone apartment buildings in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Crown Heights are a hallmark of the area.

business start-ups, and giant, thriving, almost completely self-contained immigrant communities where few people particularly wanted to cross a river via a tunnel or bridge. They had everything they needed right where they were—why go into the city?

**B**rooklyn is the largest borough; with more than 2.6 million residents, it would be the third largest city in the United States if it were on its own. A big battle took place there during the Revolutionary War. Its Atlantic Ocean beaches are outdoor playgrounds: Coney Island is home to sprawling amusement parks, the spindly Parachute Jump almost as recognizable around the world as the Brooklyn Bridge, its rickety wooden Cyclone roller coaster a true terror to experience. Brooklyn is home to miles of brownstone row houses and countless church spires piercing the sunset—it's been called the Borough of Churches. It's also home to two of the city's premier cultural institutions, the Brooklyn Museum and the





Brooklyn Academy of Music. Its downtown feels like a midsize city of its own, a Cincinnati or a Cleveland that just happened to be plopped down next to Lower Manhattan.

For much of its existence, Brooklyn was a source of amusement to the rest of the city, to the rest of the country. From the way people made fun of the accent, you’d have thought every word out of a Brooklynite’s mouth was “dese,” “dem,” or “dose.” (An instrumental piece with that title by Glenn Miller was a hit for the Dorsey Brothers in 1935.) The early television comedy *The Honeymooners*, starring Jackie Gleason as Ralph Kramden, a bus driver with big dreams and a big mouth who lived in a shabby apartment with his long-suffering wife, Alice, took place in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Bensonhurst.

The Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team played at Ebbets Field near Prospect Park and was known as “Dem Bums”—a hapless, ragtag bunch of lovable losers who always got creamed by the Manhattan-based Giants or the Bronx-based Yankees (except in one memorable year, 1955). The archetypal Dodgers fan was drawn by the *Daily News* as a scruffy down-and-outer with a gaping, moronic grin and one lonely tooth. But they were the first team to integrate, in 1947 hiring a black second baseman named Jackie Robinson who had a talent for stealing home, and in time Robinson and the Dodgers changed the face of baseball.

Truman Capote moved to an apartment in Brooklyn in the 1950s from the Upper East Side flat where *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* was set. The apartment was in a house in Brooklyn Heights, a stately neighborhood of brownstones and wooden Federal-style houses on a bluff overlooking New York Harbor, and provided a visceral tour of its almost southern charms in an essay for *Holiday* magazine in 1959.

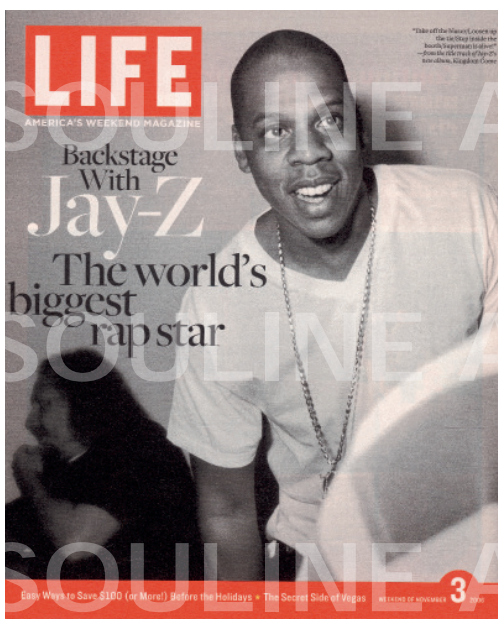
His opening: “I live in Brooklyn. By choice.”



**Above:** American artist Kara Walker paid homage to the workers who toiled for little or no wages in the sugar industry with *A Subtlety*, a sculpture mainly made of sugar and depicting a sphinxlike, African-featured woman. The piece was displayed in the Domino Sugar Factory from May through July 2014.

**Opposite:** The old Domino Sugar Factory, as viewed from the East River. The building dates back to 1882, when it was the largest sugar refinery in the world.





**Above, top:** The 1990s were the era of denim. Jay-Z, Lil' Kim, and Lil' Cease at the Tommy Jeans mixtape party at the Altman Building in 1999.

**Above, bottom:** Rapper Jay-Z, a native New Yorker born in Brooklyn, hit the big time in the early 2000s. This November 23, 2006, cover of *Life* names him the world's biggest rap star.

**Opposite:** Spike Lee's 1989 film *Do the Right Thing* focuses on the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn, known to locals as Bed-Stuy, and the racial violence that explodes there one summer day.

The accompanying photographs by David Attie capture a neighborhood of quiet and leafy urban streets, parking spots everywhere, ships filling the busy piers, boys swimming in the East River, and waiters in white jackets and bow ties serving diners in a neighborhood restaurant with wooden booths.

The Heights and the rest of Brooklyn were in decline at the time—crime was on the rise, the Dodgers decamped to Los Angeles, and the local newspaper, the *Brooklyn Eagle*, shut down. Coney Island faded. Parts of Brooklyn would descend further than the rest of the city—entire neighborhoods would be seared by fires during the 1977 blackout; others would be hollowed out by homicides—before roaring back like the Cyclone to heights few could imagine.

**T**he next borough, if you travel east along the waterfront, is Queens. It was a bunch of towns before it was formed into a whole, ranging from the suburban feel of Douglaston to the urban centers of Long Island City and Jamaica. One of the towns, Kew Gardens, has a wonderful collection of Tudor apartment buildings. The fact that Queens was created from so many disparate entities partially explains the bizarre street numbering system—an avenue can be followed by a road and then by a drive, all with the same number. It can be maddening. Before GPS, it was almost impossible for non-natives to navigate, to the amusement of the natives.

Over the years, the city used Queens's wide-open spaces for grand projects: two airports, LaGuardia and John F. Kennedy International, and two world's fairs, in 1939 and 1964. The circle-and-spire Trylon and Perisphere at the 1939 World's Fair was one of the most recognizable images of New York City from those years. More travelers enter the United States via Kennedy than any other airport, making this borough with the crazy street numbering system the first stop for untold millions. It also had enough room for Shea Stadium, now Citi Field, where the Mets picked up where the Dodgers left off: For the majority of their existence, this new team would be lovable losers, too, except in the electrifying seasons of 1969 and 1986 and *almost* 1999.







**“Coney Island was the center of the world for me. I loved the rides, the hot dogs—I’ve never gotten over it.”**

HAROLD FEINSTEIN



The borough had its own Ralph Kramden, Archie Bunker, played by Carroll O'Connor in the 1970s sitcom *All in the Family*. The show's comedy derived from Archie's narrow, bigoted view of the world and of anyone different; it was funny in a very uncomfortable way. The opening credits rolled over a pan shot of row houses in the neighborhood of Astoria. That the borough of Queens, or a man from Queens, would come to represent racism to the rest of the country would take on a wonderful irony in the decades that followed, because Queens, like Brooklyn, would also come roaring back in its own way.



**Above:** Manhattan and Queens street signs.  
**Opposite:** The Queensboro Bridge, also known as the 59th Street Bridge, is a vital connection between Manhattan and Queens.  
**Previous pages:** Of the many famous neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Coney Island is perhaps one of the most recognizable. Both a beach and an amusement park, the spot is a favorite summer destination of natives and tourists alike.  
**Following pages:** Gantry Plaza State Park in Long Island City, Queens, is twelve acres of wide-open space along the East River.

**I**n the late 1930s, at the height of the Depression, the city built the Triborough Bridge, a multipronged Art Deco masterpiece that connected Queens to Manhattan and the city's northernmost borough, the only one connected to the United States mainland: the Bronx.

It began as farms, and with the arrival of the subways became a thriving community of European immigrants at the beginning of the twentieth century. There was a sense of kinship, of small town-ness, that reflected a world where everything you needed was a few blocks away. Like Brooklyn, the Bronx was mostly low-rise, but with more hills and parks. Deer wandered down from Westchester. The writer E. L. Doctorow, the son of second-generation Russian Jews and an attendee of Bronx High School, one of the city's most prestigious, painted a lovely picture of growing up near Claremont Park in his 1985 novel-memoir, *World's Fair*.

"I remember the light on Eastburn Avenue," he wrote. "It was a warm and brilliant bath that bleached the brick houses of red and of yellow ocher, the ruled sidewalks, the curbstones of blue Belgian block, into a peaceful and forbearing composition."

Not far away, the Yankees played in their cathedral-like stadium just off the Harlem River, becoming perhaps the ultimate powerhouse baseball team and featuring legends of the game like Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.









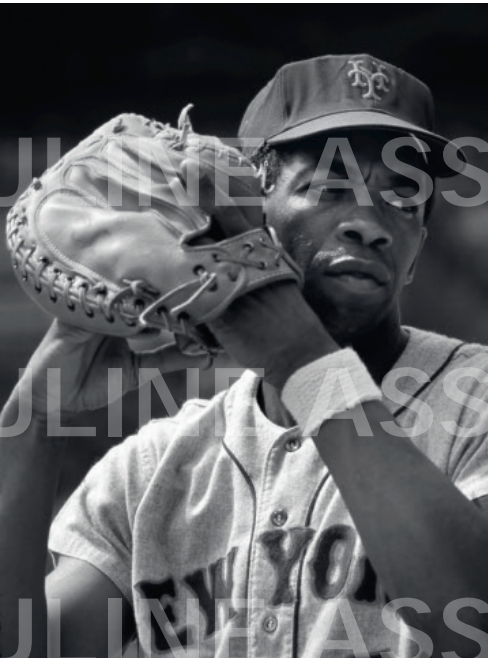
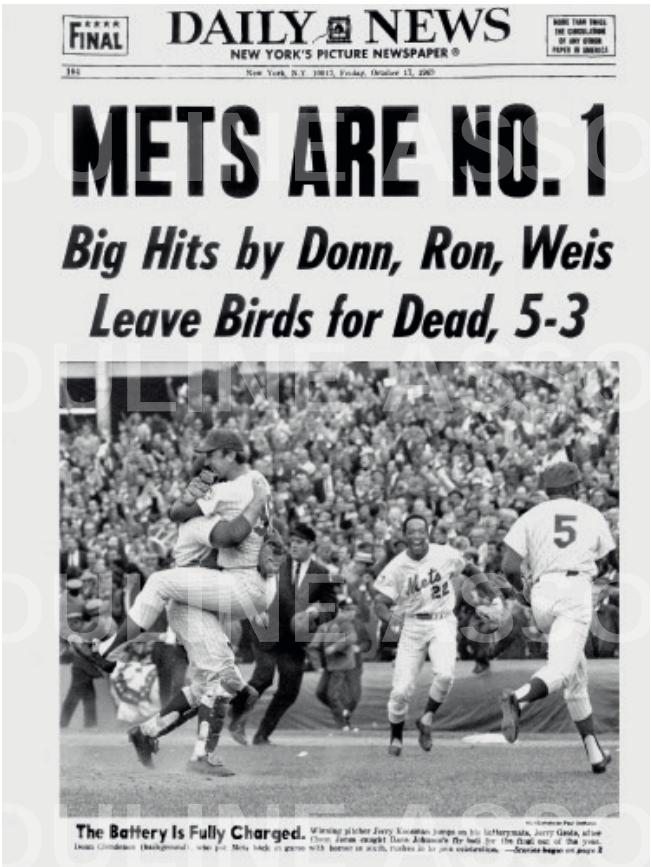
Much of the Bronx declined terribly in the 1970s as older residents moved to the suburbs and landlords, as they had elsewhere, found that burning down their own buildings could be more lucrative than renting them.

In a city out of control, graffiti became a scourge, but some Bronx kids embraced it as art: They’d paint, or tag, subway cars at their northern terminus in the Bronx, knowing that the trains would head south and travel the entirety of the city, showing off their handiwork the whole way.

Hip-hop was another art form born in the decay of those years. A kid named Joseph Saddler became fascinated by his father’s record collection and started disc-jockeying at parties. But he wasn’t content to just passively play records; instead, he was part of a cadre of DJs who viewed the turntable as an instrument, switching between two to extend drum-only beat portions of songs, for example, or “scratching”—flicking the record forward and backward to create a new repertoire of sounds. He went on to lead Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five.

Perhaps most otherworldly is Staten Island, which was more rural than suburban until it was connected to Brooklyn via the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge in the late 1960s. It’s also by far the smallest of the boroughs, with 479,458 residents, according to the 2017 Census. There were farms here not so long ago, as well as a towering garbage dump where the city sent much of its refuse. Squadrons of seagulls circled and squawked shrilly above.

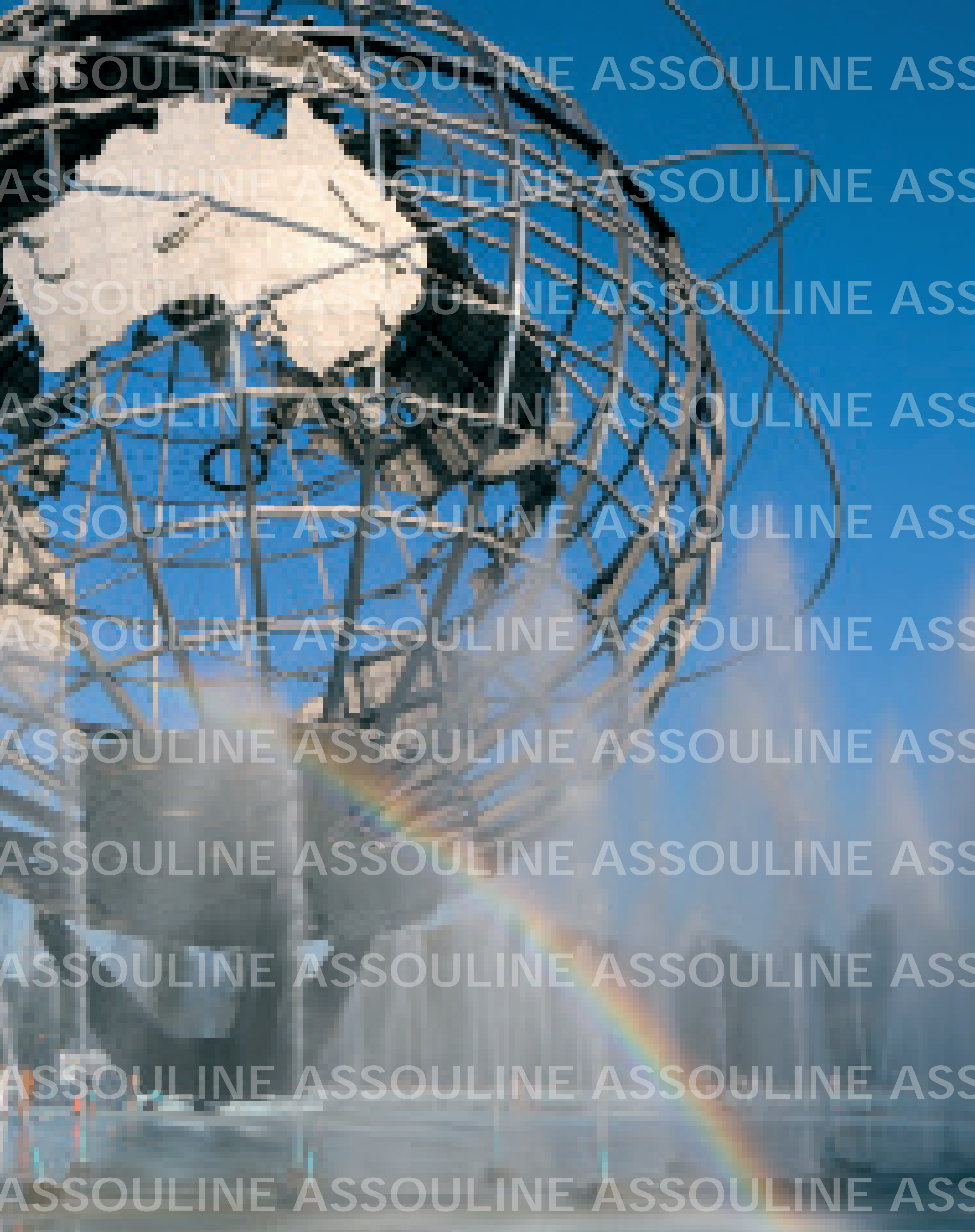
On Staten Island you can discover something you won’t find elsewhere in New York City: suburban-style shopping malls. One even hides a tiki bar. But its coastline is distinctly urban and remains the city’s only true working waterfront: dry docks, tugboat companies, and other maritime businesses line its northern shore, from which the Manhattan skyline is a distant vision.



**Above, top:** New York Mets’ home turf of Citi Field is in Flushing, Queens.  
**Above, bottom:** This snap of American baseball player and Mets team member Donn Clendenon was taken during a heated 1969 game against the Pittsburgh Pirates at Forbes Field.  
**Opposite:** A view of the Empire State Building from a street in Queens.







**“As for New York City, it is a place apart. There is not its match in any other country in the world.”**

PEARL S. BUCK







“You just learn to cope with whatever  
you have to cope with. I spent my  
childhood in New York, riding on  
subways and buses. And you know  
what you learn if you’re a New Yorker?  
The world doesn’t owe you a damn thing.”

LAUREN BACALL

**Above:** *The Get Down*, cocreated by Baz Luhrmann, is a musical television series set in the South Bronx in the 1970s. It follows the rise of both hip-hop and disco music.

**Opposite:** This sign was conceived by the Haven Project, a plan organized by the New York Restoration Project to welcome visitors to the northernmost borough of New York City, the Bronx.

**Pages 334–35:** The 5Pointz Aerosol Art Center, usually shortened to 5Pointz, was a mural in Long Island City, Queens and was considered the world’s premier graffiti mecca until it was demolished in 2014. Located in Long Island City, it features Escobedo Soliz’s studio installation in its courtyard.

**Page 336:** Flushing Meadows Corona Park, a large public park in Queens, features the Unisphere, a structure built for the World’s Fair in 1964–65.

**Page 337:** MoMa PS1 is one of the country’s largest institutions dedicated solely to contemporary art. Located in Long Island City, it featured Escobedo Soliz’s studio installation in its courtyard in 2016.

**Previous pages:** This Pepsi-Cola sign in Gantry State Park, a former dockyard, in Long Island City, Queens, is visible from Manhattan’s east side waterfront.

**Following pages:** *The Get Down* showcases the DJs and MCs of the 1970s Bronx music scene.







new york now

**N**ow, the big twist. Today, the spirit of New York lives equally in all the boroughs. Manhattan no longer looks down on the others. Sometimes, taxis won't even take you there.

On the coast of Staten Island, a giant Ferris wheel is rising to rival the London Eye, and the views promise to be spectacular. The onetime garbage dump is a sprawling park. But the tugboats still come and go.

In the Bronx, the Yankees have a new stadium next to where the old one used to stand, and developers are moving hungrily into once-scorched corners of the South Bronx. In Queens, skyscrapers rise across the East River from Manhattan in Long Island City, and thousands travel to a cavernous Korean spa on the weekends, lounging in saunas and bathing in outdoor hot tubs. Flushing feels like a thriving Asian city, the smells of exotic fowl and vegetables wafting from outdoor markets, snazzy cocktail and karaoke bars, and giant seafood restaurants. But you remember you are in New York City when the 7 train rumbles noisily overhead.

Archie Bunker is dead and buried. Good riddance.

And Brooklyn? Brooklyn has become a worldwide brand: A television show in France and a café in Tokyo have Brooklyn in their names. Its new skyline rivals Manhattan's. Old warehouses in Gowanus are filled with art studios. For some crazy reason, the borough has become synonymous with farm-to-table dining and artisanal boozes and pickles. The restaurants are jammed weeks in advance, with fantastically bearded bartenders mixing all kinds of complicated cocktails. The bustling piers Truman Capote could see from Brooklyn Heights are now crowded parks. House prices are through the roof. There are no parking spots.

What on earth would Ralph Kramden have thought?



**Above, top:** The Bronx's huge and beautiful New York Botanical Garden provides educational resources on plants and conservation. This piece, by Manolo Valdés, was on view from September 2012 to May 2013.

**Above, bottom:** Jennifer Lopez, aka "Jenny from the Block," often sings about her experiences growing up in the Bronx. She is pictured here leaving the borough's Children's Hospital at Montefiore.

**Opposite:** Actress Kerry Washington always makes sure to honor her Bronx roots. Here, she accepts an award at the Bronx Children's Museum Gala at Tribeca Rooftop, 2017.

**Following pages:** The South Bronx, recognized for its hip-hop culture and legendary graffiti works.









**“I grew up in the Bronx. The Bronx teaches  
you to survive. It’s like, ‘Bring it on!’”**

WESLEY SNIPES



Today, church spires still pierce the sunset in Brooklyn, though they are often dwarfed by condominiums and construction cranes. Once-bad neighborhoods are good, once-good neighborhoods great. It's gentrification, for all its positives and negatives. In some neighborhoods, working folks are being forced out. But in some traditionally white areas, minorities feel more welcomed. In any event, no more "dese," "dem," or "dose."

Is it a new Gilded Age? Maybe it's the Glass Age. But that's just the grand circle of New York City, no matter the borough, no matter the era. Contradicting itself, arguing with itself, burying its past while celebrating it, always with a cacophonous soundtrack, whether it be ship whistles or horse hooves or car horns, punk rock or hip-hop, Stray Cats or *Cats*, subway trains, car alarms, or fire engines.

Never the same, but always the same.

**Opposite:** The Staten Island Ferry is an essential part of mass New York City's mass transportation, helping 70,000 people complete their commutes every day.

**Pages 348-49:** Founded in the Hunts Point area of the Bronx, the Savage Skulls gang, photographed here by photojournalist Jean-Pierre Laffont in 1972, gained increasing notoriety in the 1970s.

**Previous pages:** Kids enjoy a sprint through the sprinklers on a sweltering summer day in the Bronx.

**Following pages:** More than just a mode of transportation, the Staten Island Ferry also offers beautiful views of Manhattan from New York Harbor.









# new york moments

- 1524** Giovanni da Verrazzano, the first European to see New York Harbor, names the island Nouvelle-Angoulême.
- 1614** The Dutch settle the colony of New Netherland on the island of Manhattan, a name derived from the Lenape Native American word manaháhtaan, which roughly translates to “place for gathering the wood to make bows.”
- 1625-26** The Dutch West India Company founds New Amsterdam on the southern tip of Manhattan Island; the Lenape sell the island to the Dutch.
- 1664** Peter Stuyvesant, Dutch director-general of New Netherland, cedes New Amsterdam to the English, who rename it New York after James, Duke of York.
- 1673-74** The Dutch regain New York, renaming it New Orange; after the Third Anglo-Dutch War, they then cede it permanently to England per the Treaty of Westminster.
- 1703** The first Federal Hall is built.
- 1733** The *New York Weekly Journal* begins publication.
- 1754** King's College, later Columbia College and then Columbia University, is established; the New York Society Library, which later served as the first Library of Congress, is established.
- 1762** The Queen's Head Tavern, later named Fraunces Tavern, opens.
- 1767** The John Street Theatre, sometimes called the birthplace of American theater, opens.
- 1771** New York Hospital is founded.
- 1776** Various events in the American Revolution, including the Battle of Brooklyn, the Battle of Harlem Heights, the Great Fire of 1776, and the Battle of Fort Washington, take place.
- 1785** The New York Manumission Society is founded to promote the abolition of African American slaves within the state of New York.
- 1783** British troops depart; New Yorkers celebrate Evacuation Day.
- 1789** George Washington is inaugurated as the first US president.
- 1790** New York becomes the largest city in America with a population of 33,131, surpassing Philadelphia.
- 1798** A major yellow fever epidemic kills 2,086 people.
- 1801** The *New York Evening Post* begins publication.
- 1804** New-York Historical Society is founded.
- 1811** The Commissioners' Plan of 1811 lays out the Manhattan grid between Fourteenth Street and Washington Heights.

A Veuve Clicquot polo event in New Jersey with the Manhattan skyline as its backdrop.

1812	New York City Hall is built.
1817	The New York Stock & Exchange Board and the Staten Island Ferry are established.
1818	The Lyceum of Natural History is established.
1822	The Fulton Fish Market is established.
1826	Lord & Taylor department store opens.
1827	An Independence Day parade marks the end of slavery and full emancipation in New York; Delmonico's restaurant opens.
1831	The University of the City of New York, now NYU, is founded.
1832	A cholera pandemic breaks out, killing over 3,500 and forcing over 80,000 to flee.
1833	Harper & Brothers publisher, now the flagship imprint of HarperCollins, opens.
1835	The New York Stock Exchange and hundreds of other buildings are destroyed by the Great Fire; the School of Law of the University of the City of New York, now the NYU School of Law, is established.
1836	The Astor House hotel, the city's first luxury hotel, opens.
1838	Green-Wood Cemetery opens in Brooklyn.
1842	Barnum's American Museum opens; the Philharmonic Society of New York and the Board of Education are established.
1845	The New York City Police Department is established.
1847	Madison Square Park opens.
1848	The Associated Press is established.
1850	The first Winter Garden Theatre is built.
1851	The <i>New-York Daily Times</i> , now <i>The New York Times</i> , begins publication.
1858	Central Park opens; the first all-star baseball game is played in Corona, Queens.
1859	The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art is established.
1863	Approximately 50,000 people riot in protest of President Abraham Lincoln's announcement of a draft for troops to fight in the American Civil War.
1865	The Metropolitan Fire Department is established.
1867	The West Side and Yonkers Patent Railway Company construct the first elevated transportation line along Greenwich Street and Ninth Avenue.

The High Line park, in Manhattan's Meatpacking District, affords visitors the pleasures of viewing public art, including this mural by French artist JR.





- 1870
- Hunter College is established; Schwarz Toy Bazaar, now FAO Schwarz, opens.
- 1871
- Grand Central Depot, now Grand Central Terminal, opens; Washington Square Park is redesigned.
- 1872
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art opens; Bloomingdale's opens on Third Avenue.
- 1874
- The Tompkins Square Riot, a clash at Tompkins Square Park between the New York City Police Department and a demonstration involving thousands of unemployed civilians, takes place.
- 1877
- The Museum of Natural History opens.
- 1878
- St. Patrick's Cathedral opens.
- 1879
- The first Madison Square Garden opens.
- 1883
- The Brooklyn Bridge and the Metropolitan Opera House open; *Life* magazine begins publication.
- 1884
- Hotel Chelsea and the Dakota are built.
- 1886
- The Statue of Liberty is dedicated.
- 1888
- The Great Blizzard of 1888 paralyzes the Eastern seabord from Maryland to Maine, and twenty-one inches of snow fall on the city; the Washington Bridge is built; Katz's Delicatessen opens.
- 1891
- Carnegie Hall opens.
- 1892
- The Washington Square Arch is constructed; the US Immigrant Inspection Station begins operation on Ellis Island; *Vogue* magazine begins publication.
- 1895
- The New York Public Library opens.
- 1898
- The City of Greater New York is created, consolidating the existing City of New York with the eastern Bronx, Brooklyn, most of Queens County, and Staten Island; the National Arts Club is founded.
- 1901
- Bergdorf Goodman department store opens.
- 1902
- Macy's Herald Square and the Algonquin Hotel open; the Flatiron Building is constructed.
- 1903
- The Williamsburg Bridge opens.
- 1904
- The New York City Subway begins operation; the steamboat *General Slocum* catches fire and sinks while on the East River near Astoria, Queens, killing more than 1,000 passengers.
- 1906
- Socialite Harry Kendall Thaw kills Stanford White at Madison Square Garden in what is known as the crime of the century.
- 1907
- The tradition of the Times Square Ball drop begins; the Plaza Hotel opens; the *Zeigfeld Follies* begin.
- 1908
- The Singer Building is constructed.
- 1909
- The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company Tower is constructed; International Women's Day is held.

- 1910
- Pennsylvania Station is built.
- 1911
- The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire claims 146 lives.
- 1912
- The New York Highlanders change their name to the New York Yankees; the RMS *Carpathia* arrives with the 705 survivors of the RMS *Titanic*.
- 1913
- Vanity Fair* magazine begins publication; the first Armory Show exhibition, organized by the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, opens.
- 1914
- Russ & Daughters food store opens.
- 1916
- Margaret Sanger opens her first birth control clinic in Brooklyn.
- 1918
- The Great Influenza Pandemic rages across the city; ninety-seven people are killed in the Malbone Street Wreck, the deadliest crash in New York City subway history.
- 1919
- The Spanish flu leads to 30,000 deaths in the city; the *New York Daily News* begins publication; the Algonquin Round Table becomes active; the 135th Street YMCA opens.
- 1921
- The Port of New York Authority, now the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, is established; the Council on Foreign Relations is headquartered in the city.
- 1923
- The Cotton Club and Barneys department store open; the Duke Ellington Orchestra becomes active; the New York Yankees win their first World Series championship.
- 1924
- WNYC radio begins broadcasting; Saks Fifth Avenue and Simon & Schuster open; the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade tradition begins.
- 1925
- The New Yorker* begins publication; the New York Giants are one of the five football teams to join the NFL; the population reaches 7,774,000, making New York City the largest in the world.
- 1927
- The Coney Island Cyclone begins operation; Random House, the Strand Bookstore, and Sardi's open for business.
- 1929
- The Museum of Modern Art opens; the Stork Club and the 21 Club open; the Wall Street Crash of 1929 occurs; the Great Depression begins.
- 1930
- The Chrysler Building is constructed; the Carlyle Hotel opens.
- 1931
- The Empire State Building is constructed; the Whitney Museum of American Art is founded; the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel opens.
- 1932
- Radio City Music Hall opens.
- 1933
- The RCA Building, now 30 Rockefeller Plaza, is constructed.
- 1935
- The New York Passenger Ship Terminal is built; the Frick Collection opens.
- 1936
- The Triborough Bridge opens.
- 1937
- The Lincoln Tunnel opens.
- 1939
- The New York World's Fair opens; the New York Municipal Airport, now LaGuardia Airport, opens.

1941	The city's first two television stations sign on the air: WNBT Channel 1, now WNBC Channel 4, and WCBW Channel 2, now WCBS-TV.
1942	The SS <i>Normandie</i> burns and capsizes at Pier 88; the New York at War military parade takes place.
1943	The first New York Fashion Week is held.
1944	The Fashion Institute of Technology is established.
1945	Victory over Japan Day is celebrated in Times Square.
1947	Jackie Robinson of the Brooklyn Dodgers crosses the baseball color line; the Blizzard of 1947 shuts down the city.
1948	The New York International Airport, now John F. Kennedy International Airport, is dedicated.
1950	The Port Authority Bus Terminal opens.
1952	The United Nations Headquarters is built.
1955	The New York branch of Sotheby's opens.
1957	The musical <i>West Side Story</i> premieres.
1958	The first Puerto Rican Day Parade is held.
1959	The Guggenheim Museum opens; construction on the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts begins.
1961	The City University of New York is established.
1962	The Pan Am building, now the MetLife Building, is constructed; Andy Warhol opens his first Factory; the New York Mets are founded.
1963	The first New York Film Festival is held.
1964	The 1964 New York World's Fair is held; the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and Shea Stadium open.
1965	Malcolm X is assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom; the Beatles perform at Shea Stadium; Pope Paul VI visits the city; the Northeast Blackout of 1965 occurs; Max's Kansas City opens.
1966	Truman Capote holds his Black and White Ball.
1968	<i>New York</i> magazine begins publication; the Stonewall riots take place; <i>Sesame Street</i> premieres.
1970	The first New York City Marathon run takes place; the first LGBT Pride March is held; the New York Knicks win their first NBA championship.
1973	The World Trade Center towers are built; CBGB music club opens.

New York City is full of unique public art. This Jeff Koons piece, titled *Seated Ballerina* and co-presented by the Art Production Fund, sat in Rockefeller Center in Midtown Manhattan in 2017.







TIMELINE

- 1974** Philippe Petit performs his high-wire stunt between the towers of the World Trade Center; the first Village Halloween Parade is held.
- 1976** The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation is formed; David Berkowitz, aka the "Son of Sam," begins terrorizing the city with a series of attacks that lasted a year.
- 1977** The Blackout of 1977 is followed by rioting and looting; Studio 54 and the New York branch of Christie's open; the I♥NY advertising campaign begins
- 1982** *Late Night with David Letterman* premieres.
- 1983** The first Coney Island Mermaid Parade is held.
- 1988** *Phantom of the Opera* opens on Broadway and goes on to earn the record of longest-running show; Jay McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City* is published.
- 1989** New York becomes a sanctuary city for illegal immigrants; *Seinfeld* premieres.
- 1993** A bomb planted by terrorists explodes in the World Trade Center's underground garage, killing six people and injuring over a thousand.
- 1994** Rudy Giuliani is elected mayor of New York City; *Friends* premieres.
- 1998** *Sex and the City* premieres.
- 2001** The Neue Galerie New York opens; Michael Bloomberg is elected mayor of New York City; the World Trade Center's twin towers are destroyed in a terrorist attack, killing 2,996 people and injuring more than 6,000.
- 2003** The Time Warner Center is built.
- 2009** The first phase of the High Line park is completed; Citi Field and the new Yankee Stadium open.
- 2011** The National 9/11 Memorial opens; Mayor Bloomberg calls for a smoking ban in all parks, boardwalks, beaches, recreation centers, swimming pools, and pedestrian plazas; Occupy Wall Street begins.
- 2012** The NBA Nets play their first game at the Barclays Center, bringing professional sports back to Brooklyn for the first time since the Dodgers left in 1957; Hurricane Sandy brings flooding and high winds that result in several deaths and widespread power outages.
- 2014** The National 9/11 Museum opens; Bill de Blasio becomes mayor; One World Trade Center, the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere by architectural height, opens; 432 Park Avenue tops out, becoming the tallest building by roof height in New York City and the tallest residential building in the world.
- 2015** *Hamilton* premieres; 34th Street–Hudson Yards, the first new subway station in twenty-five years, opens; Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's presidential campaigns are headquartered in the city.
- 2016** The World Trade Center Transportation Hub, with Santiago Calatrava's Oculus as its centerpiece, is completed.
- 2017** The Second Avenue Subway opens.
- 2018** The release of Assouline's *New York by New York!*

**Opposite:** A sunset reflecting off the city's skyline is visible from Assouline's New York office.  
**Page 366:** Milton Glaser, *I (Heart) NY concept layout*, 1976. Paper, ink, and tape on board, 10¾ x 16¼ in. This is the very beginning of the design that now adorns all sorts of New York City souvenirs, including T-shirts, hats, bags, and mugs.  
**Page 368:** Author Wendell Jamieson as a young boy on the steps of the OK Harris gallery in SoHo.  
**Endpages:** A map of Midtown and Upper Manhattan and western Queens.

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