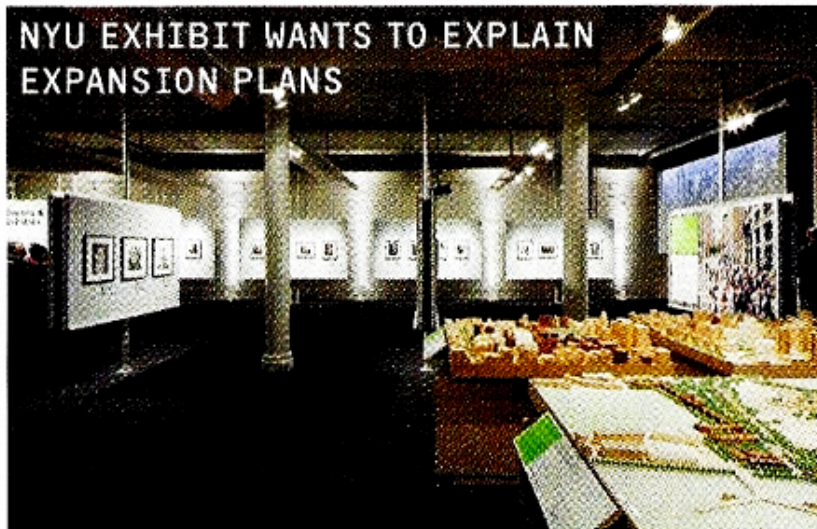


NYU EXHIBIT WANTS TO EXPLAIN EXPANSION PLANS



JEREMY BITTERMANN

NYU & YOU

Inspired by the memory of Soho's vibrant gallery-loft scene, architect James Sanders has designed NYU Open House, a new public space for New York University on La Guardia Place. Situated just two doors down from the AIA's Center for Architecture, the space occupies a 3,000-square-foot former bookstore, where an open plan functions as a rotating gallery and a 72-seat event space.

As its name implies, community outreach was at the heart of the project. NYU Open House is "a place for civic engagement, and a means of opening a dialogue between an academic institution and its urban setting," explained Sanders. Along one wall of the space is a 2x4-designed permanent exhibition called *A University of the City: NYU in NYC,*

1831–2031 dedicated to the university's controversial expansion plans.

"We're trying to get better at creating community," said Lynne Brown, a senior vice president at the university. "We're making a concerted effort to make our spaces more open and contribute to the streetscape." The space became available when NYU's Stern bookstore relocated with a year left on its lease. NYU Open House officially opened last October, and Brown said it will remain open through the fall.

Because of the temporary nature of the space, the project was executed on a modest budget. "We didn't have enough money for architecture," joked Sanders. "Instead, we emphasized the art installations." For the facade, he framed the

large plate glass windows in blue-gray paint, setting off the warm white walls visible within. Cast-iron columns bisect the fifty-foot-wide space and establish a rhythm and armature for organizing the floor plan. Around the perimeter, large angled panels recalling artist easels are attached to the painted brick walls, offering a more intimate scale to the gallery's soaring ceilings. Rows of aluminum light fixtures with wooden valences provide indirect lighting.

"We were trying to find a consistency of language so the space doesn't feel like a million different pieces," said Sanders. To help differentiate the space for different programmatic requirements, Sanders installed free-standing panels that pivot on aluminum poles, offering the ability to define a variety of flexible spaces. Sanders says the kinetic nature of the panels allows the space to have a sense of "choreography."

With the interior spaces complete, Sanders said one more thing needed to be done. "We wanted something to push out into the public realm," he said. Sanders' finishing touch was a horizontal teak canopy that hovers over the sidewalk entrance and glows at night with uplighting. "It really creates a zone of warmth on the sidewalk," he said. **BK**