
Marcus Ratliff

Marc Ratliff was involved in the Judson Gallery in the late 1950s. _____

I found out about Judson House from the office of student housing at Cooper Union. It was just good luck that a room was available. Norman Keim, the associate minister for students at Judson Church, was kind enough to help me move my stuff with his own car from a shared Upper West Side apartment I was desperate to get out of. This was the winter of 1955–1956. Toward the end of that school year I became friendly with Eva Hesse and told her about Judson. She could not wait to move in. I took the next year off to travel to Europe and came back to Judson House in the fall of 1957.

Sometime in the next year, probably the fall of 1958, Bud Scott moved up to Norman Keim's apartment, and that seemed to correspond to the changing times. Soon after, I wanted to use the storage room, just off the lounge, as a studio. However, Bud Scott preferred to make a space to show a collection of Rouault prints and to make the room into a "gallery."

Unofficially, that space began to be called the Judson Gallery. As I recall it, no one was really in charge of planning future events. Before too long, I invited Claes Oldenburg to show his drawings and paintings. I knew Claes through Cooper Union, where he worked in the library. Another Cooper Union student, Tom Wesselmann, who lived in Brooklyn at the time, joined the small group of artists that began using the gallery, as did Jim Dine. Jim was living and teaching in Patchogue, Long Island. He was an old friend of mine from high school in Cincinnati. Then there were others, including Dick Tyler, Bob Thompson, Red Grooms, Jay Milder, and Phyllis Yampolsky.

After I graduated from Cooper Union in 1959 and no longer lived at Judson House, I was involved with shows and happenings for another year or so. The magazine *Exodus* was in its third (and last) issue. Slowly, the center of gravity for the original group shifted to the Reuben Gallery and then to the big time uptown. I was not

happy with my life as a painter, so I began to learn about printing and book design. Judson was still cooking long after my time there, but I had moved into a new career.

MARCUS RATLIFF

lives and works in New York City.