



The Woman Who Built Queen West

By Katrina Onstad

The art dealer Katharine Mulherin transformed a rundown strip into the coolest neighbourhood in the city. Then she found herself priced out of the world she created. The untold story of her dazzling life and tragic death

SOON AFTER graduating OCAD in 1998, Katharine Mulherin rented a gallery storefront at 1237 Queen West, a few streetcar stops west of bohemia in the wilds of Parkdale. It was a condemnable space, with the slanted walls of a funhouse, but it was cheap. Mulherin and her four-year-old son, Jasper, lived in the windowless storage space at the back, with a hotplate and a mini-fridge.

The first exhibit would showcase the work of her then-boyfriend, the artist Clint Griffin. A few days before the opening, Mulherin couldn't land on a name for the gallery. Griffin was part-way through scraping off letters on the window left by the old tenants: BUSINESS had become BUS, and Bus Gallery was born.

As Mulherin expanded into several pocket-sized galleries along Queen West and beyond, her misfit, unpolished aesthetic set the tone for a neighbourhood that would become the beating heart of buttoned-up Toronto's ascendant hipster cachet. If Toronto is finally cool, Mulherin is in no small part why.

In July of this year, she killed herself at age 54. When I asked her friends to describe her, the word they used more than any other was "real"—high praise in the art and culture corridors Mulherin forged as the queen of Queen West. Her DIY hustle was the epitome of late-'90s authenticity, a Gen X ideal whose currency has plummeted in the Instagram age. But authenticity—as in inborn, effortless, uncommodified taste—was unselfconsciously built in to the ways Mulherin lived and worked, which were one and the same.

In the beginning, Mulherin inhabited forsaken storefronts in desolate buildings, where plaster

fell from leaky ceilings and patients from the country's biggest mental hospital wandered through the door on day passes. Mulherin embraced the cracks and painted the walls white herself. She exuded rumpled art-chick style, makeup-free, her thick dark hair stuffed into an elastic, and a mischievous laugh running through her conversation like background music. She could make an ugly space beautiful by hanging a single light bulb.

Artists who passed through her galleries became a who's who of Canadian art: people like Shary Boyle, who represented Canada at the Venice Biennale in 2013 with her uncanny porcelain sculptures, and Kris Knight, whose tender pastel portraits led to a partnership with Gucci. In the early days, artists often lived with Katharine and Jasper, making art and sleeping in apartments behind the galleries and basements below.

The cruel cycle of cities is well known: immigrants build the neighbourhood, artists arrive because it's cheap, and the starting gun goes bang as gentrification and displacement commence. In the mid-2000s, it began to play out on Queen West. When the hippified Drake Hotel reopened in 2004, "the Beemers started appearing," said one artist whose rent went up by a third that year. The border of the west end, where Mulherin was among the first gallerists to venture, kept moving, so her galleries were suddenly not on the edge of downtown but smack in the middle of what *Vogue* named one of the coolest neighbourhoods in the world.

Today, the Queen West gallery boom of the early 2000s is over. The Thrush Holmes Empire on Queen at Dovercourt is now a Rexall. Mulherin's pioneer peers have scattered: the Angell Gallery is in the Junction, Clint Roenisch changed locations, and Stephen Bulger moved to Dundas West.

In a city starved for rental units, where downtown properties are snapped up by investors, and the income gap is more of a chasm, the artists have been priced out. That creative-class chic—Mulherin's single-light-bulb, cracked-plaster beauty—has become the neighbourhood's selling point. But it's false advertising: a lifestyle brand of a lifestyle that can't survive there anymore.

MULHERIN GREW UP in Grand Falls, New Brunswick, a small bilingual town marked by a waterfall where the Saint John River spills into a mammoth gorge. Her father ran a grocery store and her mother owned a gift shop, and from them,



Over the years, Mulherin exhibited artists like Winnie Truong and Margaux Williamson and schmoozed with art-world stars like Annie Leibovitz



Mulherin inherited the hard-core work ethic of the small-business owner. In her teens, she picked potatoes for cash and joined a friend flagging construction on a highway in a hardhat and reflective vest.

After taking a commercial photography course in Halifax, she arrived in Toronto to attend OCAD in the fall of 1989 with four friends. Mulherin organized the shipping of all their belongings in the back of a horse trailer, so everyone's clothes smelled equine for months. She dropped out of OCAD, but after having Jasper in 1994, she went back to major in criticism and curatorial practice. Selling art would surely be a more practical way to support a kid than making it.

Clint Griffin calls the prevailing practice among the young OCAD graduates of the time "makeshiftivism." He became known for collecting garbage bags full of rejected photos from a downtown Fotomat and turning them into collage art by cutting, painting, adding words. "I don't think you can explain the mandate, other than DIY. The less the better. Katharine totally had that headspace as well," said Griffin.

In the early 2000s, the Internet was still nascent, and art shows and artists received generous coverage in mainstream media. *Lola*, an irreverent art magazine, was distributed at galleries throughout the city for free. In 1998, the *Globe and Mail* praised a photography exhibit at Bus Gallery, writing that "it marked a tiny step in the shaping of a neighbourhood."

Mulherin soon rented other empty storefronts, taking over space at 1080 Queen West from the painter Casey McGlynn in 1999 and calling it 1080Bus. By 2000, she had four spaces, all elastic in function, shifting between conventional commercial galleries and artist-run centres; she made money by renting storefronts to artists who wanted to exhibit their own work. The space at 1086 Queen West, eventually called the Katharine Mulherin Gallery, was the formal one, and the money-maker. The other spaces served as pop-ups, artist studios, whatever might work. Eventually 1082 became No Foundation, where Mulherin showed weirder, more experimental exhibits, and 1080Bus evolved into Weekend Variety—a homage to her parents' shops—which sold prints, sculptures and quirky vintage objects. It also housed a mini-bookstore, Flying Books, curated by former House of Anansi editor Martha Sharpe. In a handshake deal, Sharpe could sell her books in exchange for working the till on weekdays.

In those early days, the art Mulherin showed was cheap and plentiful; hardly anything was priced over \$1,000. It moved quickly at such low prices, and artists sold or traded their works with each other. I purchased a small piece by Scott Griffin,

Clint's brother—an encaustic of two boxers sparring—from Mulherin at an outdoor art fair in Trinity Bellwoods Park for a couple of hundred bucks. It took pride of place next to a wood-mounted Basquiat from a head shop.

Mulherin's other revenue stream was the space itself: she sublet every square inch of her buildings. At 1080Bus, the rent was \$1,050, with McGlynn paying about \$500 to live and work in the back, and Mulherin reserving the front for art. There was no bathroom or kitchen, so McGlynn and his friends built them.

A grunge rive gauche took hold on West Queen West, with bicycle-riding artists living on top of each other, sleeping where they worked. Everyone took turns caring for Jasper, a thoughtful kid who became a kind of art-scene mascot, seen frequently on the back of his mom's bike with his long hair flying. There were always animals hanging around: a cat named Louise and a dog named Toaster who once inconveniently went into heat during an opening.

Many artists cut deals with Mulherin, either paying rent or hanging shows and doing labour in exchange for space. Once, the painter Jennifer Febraro had a six-by-six-foot canvas that she needed moved from her studio to 1080Bus, about a kilometre away. She wondered if they should get a van, but Mulherin, ever hands-on and money-conscious, scoffed. The two of them carried the massive canvas down Queen Street like moving men with a couch, laughing the whole time.

Early-2000s Queen West was pre-cocktail, pre-Uber. There was a crack house around the corner from Mulherin's galleries, and sex workers stood in the lamplight, across from Trinity Bellwoods. For a time, a rooming house sat atop 1080, where a Newfoundlander by the name of Yum Yum died when he fell out of the second-floor window while trying to reach into someone else's room for alcohol.

Mulherin adored the neighbourhood's rougher edges. She and her friends drank at the Gladstone, ate at the Elvis diner and hopped between openings. Galleries were proliferating fast, not in the austere, white-box mode of the city's commercial art headquarters in Yorkville, but in variations of the artist-run Mulherin flexi-model: they included Sis Boom Bah, headed by the abstract painter Matt Crookshank; Zsa Zsa, a rental gallery run by the artist Andrew Harwood, who lived in the back; and Spin, a big multi-venue space with a nightclub downstairs.

"It was a scene. It was an era," recalled performance artist Lex Vaughn. "A lot of people were magically touched and created some of the best work of their lives." Mulherin waitressed at the XXX Diner, where Vaughn also worked under the table, occasionally in exchange for weed.

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Once, Vaughn proposed an installation at 1080Bus where she would take over the space as a character called Peanut Brittle, a forgotten old man surrounded by faded artifacts, postcards and ham radios. Vaughn warned: "This will make you no money." To which Mulherin replied: "Who cares? I love it." During the exhibit, neighbourhood locals who resembled Peanut Brittle, some of them homeless, would come in off the street to meet him.

By 2001, Mulherin was making enough money from the galleries to quit waitressing entirely. She did well enough financially that she had a modest cottage at Crystal Beach on Lake Erie, but she never struck it rich. When a *Now* magazine reporter asked how she did it, juggling all those spaces and staying afloat, Mulherin said, laughing: "Cheap rents."

She also had her share of high-end collectors. Julie Hannaford, president of J.K. Hannaford Barristers, met Mulherin at an opening over 20 years ago through a friend, and bought dozens of paintings from her in the early 2000s, a pre-recession boom time for art collectors. Hannaford used to drive downtown from Summerhill on the weekend to sit and talk to Mulherin, charmed by her jargon-free descriptions of the art she loved. "Gallery owners can make you feel unworthy. There was none of that bullshit with Katharine," she said. Another Toronto lawyer who bought often from Mulherin remembered her openings as being filled with a cross-section of downtown creatives and uptown suits. One time, he rushed in as the doors opened at a Michael Harrington exhibit—he had been coveting a piece—and the filmmaker Atom Egoyan was walking out, having just bought the painting. Mulherin sold to institutions, too, placing pieces with the TD Bank collection and the National Gallery of Canada.

But the bulk of her sales in those early days were to buyers who had never collected before. There was an untapped market of neighbourhood art virgins transitioning out of the wall-poster phase, young professionals who might become older, richer professionals later. I spoke to Mulherin's son Jasper, now 25, about how so many Gen Xers living on Queen West first dipped a toe in the collecting waters at his mother's gallery. "Just about everyone who came into the gallery or sold in the gallery lived within a 10-block radius," he said.

Mulherin was open to creative business arrangements to help keep the work moving: McGlynn remembers her selling a multipanelled piece of his for \$20,000 on layaway, so the payment would be spread over five years—highly unusual in the art world. Those instalments paid McGlynn's heat and hydro for years. She'd also take her artists' work outside of Toronto,

A grunge rive gauche took hold on West Queen West, with bicycle-riding artists living on top of each other, sleeping where they worked

setting up booths at international art fairs in New York, Miami and L.A., an endeavour that could cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000 for a few days of space. She took Sojourner Truth Parsons' work to Untitled Miami in 2014, and Kris Knight to Volta in New York in 2013; both artists are now internationally acclaimed.

These entrepreneurial moves were strategic: she was competitive with other galleries, and one former assistant remembers her falling into a foul mood when a show didn't sell out. Even those artists who adored her could find her controlling. One night, Mulherin sent Kris Knight—an art star by that point—into a rough neighbourhood in Miami to buy her tampons: "She kept her artists in check," he said, laughing.

She first showed the painter Margaux Williamson in the early 2000s, and Williamson's star rose quickly through the aughts. Mulherin wanted to keep the prices low, but demand was so high that Williamson couldn't paint fast enough, and she started to feel burnt out. "It was like a first marriage. She built things on her own, which was incredibly fun and freeing as a young artist. But it was harder when artists got older," Williamson said. When Williamson announced she was leaving, Mulherin was upset. "I probably did it badly. I probably also stayed longer than I should have," said Williamson.

At the time, the Toronto art world tilted its attention toward conceptual work rooted in academic theory. Mulherin had no patience for obtuse; she liked pieces that were tactile, funny, unfinished. McGlynn remembers her walking into his studio 15 years ago while he was painting a piece that featured a figure with a giant empty thought bubble that he was about to fill with words. She ordered him to stop. The next day, she took the painting to an art fair in New York and sold it for \$4,000. He heard that it ended up with Dan Aykroyd.

Mulherin had continued her own photography, placing herself at the centre of her work as a beautiful loser figure. In one series, she appears in dressing room mirrors, swathed in an array of wedding dresses, her face blown out and obscured by the white flash of the camera—selfies before selfies were a thing. The images skewer the bourgeois ideals that Mulherin rejected, but there's poignancy in them, too, a Miss Havisham anxiety about lives un-lived. Perhaps it was hard for her to be surrounded by artists who were fulfilling their creative potential in ways she never did.

In her 20-plus years in the business, Mulherin didn't do many interviews. She was known to turn down invitations to appear on panels, and once, when she was the guest of honour at an

event, she was careful to arrive hours late to avoid being the centre of attention. This is the role of the gallerist: to make herself invisible, to create—literally—space for the artist, and step aside. Daniel Paquette, who eventually became her husband, said: “We went to a couple of fancy art-world functions. I think that was the only time I’d ever seen her uncomfortable. Like, ‘Can we get outta here?’”

I SPOKE TO Paquette in the west-end apartment above a Portuguese grocer where he now lives with their 16-year-old son, Satchel. The walls were filled with Mulherin’s vast collection of art. Her old pug, Jack, was perched nearby. Paquette closed his eyes when he talked about her. He seemed hollowed out.

Mulherin met Paquette, who goes by “Paco,” in 2002, when he was playing in a band at the venerable Cameron House. She got his email address through a mutual friend and asked him out. They went to see Ron Sexsmith perform at Harbourfront on Canada Day—the most Canadian first date ever. “Basically the date never ended,” Paquette said. “She was beautiful and a good kisser. She exuded confidence but she wasn’t confident at the same time. There was a duality about her that was intoxicating.”

A month after they met, Mulherin was pregnant and ecstatic about it. She and Paquette married at city hall several years after Satchel was born. Last year, Mulherin posted a throwback photo on Facebook of herself gazing happily out the window of 1086, big bellied, under the caption: “So much pregnancy. 2003.” Satchel was born that year.

Jasper said his mother always treated him like a peer among peers, talking to him about art and taking him to art fairs in Miami and L.A., where they would run the booth all day and

play in the pool at night. “She was a workaholic. She put everything into the gallery and made it work because that was how she provided for her family. She’d always be kind of passively working at home, but it never seemed like she was absent,” he said. He grew up playing Hot Wheels on the floor of the galleries.

In 2009, Mulherin set up a gallery in L.A.’s Chinatown, but after a year of airplane commuting, she gave up the space, setting a closer target: New York. She’d hit a ceiling. The Toronto art market is small, and New York was filled with potential collectors. She would bring them the best of Canadian art. She shared gallery space in Chelsea, then the Lower East Side. One location was dollhouse-tiny, hidden in a courtyard that seemed to appear as if by magic down an alleyway.

An early New York exhibit, in 2011, was for the Brooklyn-based artist David Kramer, known for massive, winking pop-art paintings. Kramer wanted to build a wine bar in the gallery as a kind of ironic statement on gentrification. It was ambitious to install an entire bar in her shoebox gallery, but Mulherin was immediately on board. While Kramer built the bar, Mulherin went out and bought six crates of cheap Trader Joe red wine that Kramer decorated with handmade labels. On opening night, the two of them would sneak away from the crowd, standing outside the gallery and smoking.

Along with Paquette and her sons, she moved into a sublet house in the Hudson Valley. It was on the river, with sledding in the winter and room for their pug, Jack, to tear about. Mulherin commuted to the city, relishing the New York-ness of bodega coffee and the train pulling into Grand Central Station. She was gleeful when the gallery got a mention in the *New York Times*. Once, a stranger walked in off the street and bought up almost the entire show by the Toronto artist Winnie Truong.

Just as major success seemed to be within her grasp, Mulherin’s mother died in 2017. They were close, and it was the start of a pile-on of misfortune. Mulherin had changed galleries in New York from shared to solo space, which meant that the overhead was higher, and so was the risk. She was dividing her time between Toronto and New York; it wasn’t unusual for her to open a show on Queen Street then get on the Megabus back to New York at midnight. That fall, she added Grand Falls to her commuting schedule, to handle her mother’s estate. Her relationship with Paquette had hit a wall after 16 years; they discussed splitting. Sales had slowed in New York, and Mulherin didn’t re-sign the lease.

She was familiar with emotional swings. Her can-do efficiency, that edge that made her so exciting to be around, could look from the outside like a form of mania. “For all the brightness she had, there was always darkness lurking,” said Vaughn.

But no one in her immediate orbit observed a serious mental health problem until December 2017, when she was levelled



Queen West gallerists David Liss, Katharine Mulherin, Clint Roenisch, Selena Cristo and Lawrence Williams in June 2002

by an unprecedented depression. Mulherin sat on the couch and barely moved off it for months, at times appearing almost catatonic. Jasper didn't recognize her. "I couldn't fix it," he said. "I would try to talk to her, and she would shut down or be negative." Locked in that mode, Mulherin refused to get help. She told Paquette she didn't deserve it.

In the summer, their visas came up for renewal, and they decided it was time to go back to Toronto. "She didn't leave the couch until July," Paquette said. "And the only reason she left the couch was because we had to move. So basically we had to throw the couch out."

THE QUEEN WEST that Mulherin returned to was much changed. The scruffy, found-art stylishness honed in Mulherin's spaces was now packaged as aspirational, even status. It was there in twee boutiques, hard-to-book restaurants and massive condo developments. To build these new towers, developers tore down 48 Abell, a legendary artists' squat that had been thus far left alone in the largely empty industrialscape.

Because of the area's new desirability, retail rents on Queen were soaring. A hair salon called Good Hearts at 534 Queen Street West paid \$8,000 a month in 2010 and \$14,000 a month in 2016. It closed. The surviving retail offerings are high-end and chain: a dozen eyewear stores, hardly any greengrocers. At the same time, buying habits have changed. A generation of consumers live online, and galleries around the world are noting a lack of foot traffic. Millennials, saddled with high rents, don't seem to be spending money on art, preferring—so goes the cliché—experiences over possessions. The photorealist painter Mike Bayne remembers having this conversation with Mulherin often. "She'd ask, 'What do you think I should do? How do we get people to want art if they think they already have it on their phones?'"

Back in Toronto, Mulherin seemed to return to herself. But within a month or so, another shift happened: "She was a rocket ship to Mars," said Paquette. Uncharacteristically, Mulherin was out all the time, partying hard, drinking and chain-smoking. In October, she announced to Paquette that she wanted a divorce and kicked him out of the apartment.

It was also the 20th anniversary of Bus Gallery, and she mounted a special exhibit of some of her favourite works. But media reporting on art is a rarity these days, and the event got no coverage at all. Mulherin was devastated by the lack of recognition for her decades of work.

At the same time, her rental situation on Queen was growing precarious. For decades, she'd had a great relationship with her landlord, Muhammad Akram, whom she called Mike. With no paper lease, Mulherin made sure to be an excellent tenant. She and Paquette did constant repairs themselves, even paying for a new furnace. In exchange, Mike kept rent low and left her alone. But when he began to develop dementia, he handed over many of his buildings to his daughters, including 1082. His son-in-law, Mian Saeed, took over 1080.

Mulherin's Toronto businesses had been limping along during her absence, and there was fallout. Knight, one of her

Mulherin with her son Jasper outside her gallery at 1080 Queen Street West in 2016



bestselling artists, switched to his European and North American dealers because she wasn't responding to his emails. By fall 2018, she couldn't afford a booth at Art Toronto, but she attended anyway, carrying her artists' work in plastic bags, to the delight of those who saw her. A curator for the National Gallery of Canada bought a tiny Mike Bayne painting straight out of a bag.

In January, Mulherin gave up 1082 Queen—partly because she could no longer afford it, but also because she had been scoping a new neighbourhood. Artists were migrating to the Dupont and Dufferin area, where rents were cheaper. Mulherin took photos on long walks, capturing the new neighbourhood with her phone. She found a property in an alleyway behind Emerson Avenue, a former auto body shop, and surrounded herself with younger artists. She took to wearing a trucker hat that read NO MORE FUCKS TO GIVE. She also started dating Matt Crookshank, proprietor of Sis Boom Bah gallery.

As had always been the case, Mulherin was enlivened by the prospect of a new project, getting to work on the new space. "She was exploding with energy," Crookshank recalled. But the new gallery was struck with bad luck and bad timing. The space was a lemon. It opened in November, when it was freezing, and the cost of the propane heating was about \$600 to \$700 every two weeks. At an opening in January, everyone had to wear parkas indoors. Turnout was low, and the work wasn't selling enough to cover her costs. Meanwhile, the rent at 1080 Queen West went from \$2,500 to \$3,500. It was still ridiculously cheap, but by March, even that was too much

for Mulherin. She put a notice up on Facebook offering the retail space at 1086 to anyone who might be interested in taking it over.

That month, the depression returned, full force. Mulherin stopped eating and, again, refused to move or accept help. One friend, Roberta McNaughton, tried to make an appointment for her to see her doctor, but Mulherin wouldn't go. The gallerist Erin Stump, her former assistant and friend, took over managing Mulherin's work as best she could. Paquette got Mulherin to her GP, who prescribed antidepressants, which she took briefly and then quit. Jasper returned from New York. At one point, he, Crookshank, Stump and Paquette joined forces and got her to the CAMH emergency department. But Mulherin didn't present as self-harming, so they wouldn't admit her.

At Mulherin's insistence, those closest to her kept what was happening private. "She said, 'I don't know if I want to reveal this because it could hurt my business,'" McNaughton recalled. Mulherin's identity was tied to her galleries; if she was breaking, then surely the galleries would break. And that would be unbearable.

ON FRIDAY July 12, Mulherin went to ServiceOntario with Paquette to renew his licence plates.

On Saturday, she cooked dinner, and ate it with her son. And on Sunday, at 54 years old, she killed herself. The next morning, Mulherin had been scheduled to meet with Saeed about how she'd fallen behind on rent.

Jasper posted about Mulherin's death on Facebook, and the news spread quickly. The evening of July 16, a group of friends, family and artists gathered outside Mulherin's Queen West spaces for a vigil. People wept and held each other; Jasper was near collapse.

Inside 1080, Saeed and another man were putting a deadbolt on the interior front door. Paquette was furious, screaming obscenities. Saeed didn't respond to interview requests for this story, but according to people at the scene, he said he was simply securing the place. Anyone with goods inside Weekend Variety and Rec, the adjacent vintage furniture store that Mulherin rented, was locked out.

The next morning, Martha Sharpe, Paquette and Ron Fraser, who ran Rec, met again at the galleries. They found that the door to Rec had been left open, probably forgotten in the fracas. They were able to get onto the premises from there. Everyone rushed in, grabbing art, books, furniture, hurrying back outside and stashing their stuff down the street at Dynasty, a plant store.

Paquette suspects there's still a bin in

the basement filled with treasures, but says Saeed hasn't let him in to check.

IN EARLY AUGUST, hundreds of people filled the Gladstone Hotel for a celebration of Mulherin's life. At Paquette and Jasper's request, Lex Vaughn hosted the event in character as Peanut Brittle, wearing an old man's red cardigan and crushed straw hat. People took to the stage and paid tribute. Others were clutching FUCK DEATH mugs. Vaughn, looking out at the crowd, described it as a battlefield with soldiers walking around with thousand-yard stares. "People who didn't drink were drinking. People who didn't smoke were smoking," she said.

"I know she was really sick because she never would have left those boys," said McNaughton, who recalled that after Robin Williams killed himself, she was with Mulherin, surrounded by family and dogs, at the Crystal Beach cottage, with a couple of Williams's movies from the local store. Mulherin kept saying that she couldn't believe Williams killed himself: "He had kids!" That part was unfathomable to her.

Crookshank hasn't been able to make art since Mulherin died. "I don't know if this city deserves art anymore." He's noticed that

in Queen West these days, the rents are so high that many storefronts are vacant once again. "Soon people will be stacked on top of each other in condos like cords of wood, with no music to go to, no art to see. Why live downtown at all?"

Of course, the cycle of cities goes on: populations migrate and gatekeepers change. Younger artists who haven't been pushed to the exurbs or small towns beyond are finding space in Mount Dennis, along the UP Express tracks. Erin Stump's gallery sits on the edge of those tracks, too, near the new MOCA.

With Jasper's help, Stump has shut down Mulherin's businesses. She's been going through all the art that Mulherin had collected, making sure all pieces are returned to their rightful owners. A GoFundMe page raised over \$80,000 for Mulherin's family. It will go to legal fees and the boys' tuition. Satchel graduates high school next year, and Jasper is considering culinary school out west.

In November, I walked down Queen Street on a cold night. Stump has put a proposal before city council to get the alley behind Mulherin's galleries named after her, and I wanted to see where the sign might go. I went past a pot store and a construction zone, and navigated the human traffic. Some people were blank-faced, heads down, but many more were laughing and talking as we passed each other. At Mulherin's galleries, the windows were covered in brown paper. ■

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