

# SWISS INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES PERMANENT NEW HOME AT 250 BOWERY IN NEW YORK CITY

*The organization is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year*



Swiss Institute team outside 250 Bowery. Photo by Lee Mary Manning.

NEW YORK, NY, JUNE 29, 2026 — Swiss Institute (SI) is pleased to announce its acquisition of the ground floor and lower level of 250 Bowery, marking the first time in its forty-year history that the institution has owned its premises and ushering in a new era for one of New York's leading platforms for experimental contemporary art. This fall, SI will begin a bespoke renovation led by internationally acclaimed architecture firm Johnston Marklee who will transform 250 Bowery into an accessible and environmentally sustainable cultural space expressly designed for SI's innovative exhibitions, engaging public programs, and artist-led education and community initiatives. The new location will open to the public in Spring 2027, and will remain free of charge.

The acquisition and move represent a defining institutional milestone and a long-term commitment to championing experimental and international contemporary art in New York City. Expanding SI's footprint from approximately 7,000 square feet at 38 St Marks Place to 11,000 square feet, the new location will increase SI's capacity to support artists at various stages of their careers, serve its growing, diverse

audiences, and strengthen its position as an essential resource for the local community.

For four decades, SI has rented spaces across New York City, adapting alongside the city's rapidly shifting cultural landscape. From its first location in a townhouse on West 67th Street, to 495 Broadway in SoHo in 1994, 18 Wooster Street in SoHo in 2011, 102 Franklin Street in Tribeca in 2016, and most recently, 38 St Marks Place in the East Village in 2018, each chapter has shaped SI's evolving identity. At 38 St Marks Place, SI deepened its commitment to supporting artists, providing free public access and education, and embedding environmental consciousness into its programming and institutional ethos, while significantly expanding its international visibility and critical recognition.

This momentum has now enabled SI to take its most ambitious step yet of securing a permanent space that will preserve and expand the institution's mission for generations to come. Located on one of New York City's oldest and most dynamic streets, 250 Bowery will position SI alongside esteemed peers



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Free and open to the public

including the recently expanded New Museum, Giorno Poetry Systems, Participant Inc., and others. The move will create unprecedented opportunities for ambitious curatorial projects, live programming, education initiatives, and partnerships with local and international communities, while increasing visibility, audience growth, and long-term institutional sustainability.

Philippe Bertherat, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, stated: "SI has always been a home for experimental art-making, evolving alongside artists and responding to the contemporary global moment. Securing 250 Bowery allows us to think boldly about how we can support future generations of creative voices, expand access to contemporary art and culture, and ensure that SI remains an enduring and dynamic presence in New York City for decades to come."

Maja Hoffmann, President, remarked: "For forty years, SI has demonstrated how an independent institution can shape contemporary culture through a deep commitment to artists and experimentation. Establishing a permanent home at 250 Bowery secures SI's position for future generations, creating a lasting space for creativity, international exchange, and community-building. At a moment when cultural institutions are being challenged to evolve, this next chapter reflects SI's belief in the power of art to inspire new ways of thinking."

Stefanie Hessler, Director of SI, said: "As we celebrate SI's 40th anniversary, moving to 250 Bowery marks both a culmination and a beginning. Owning our own space for the first time in the institution's impressive history allows us to secure the foundation for an even more generative future grounded in experimentation and support of artists. 250 Bowery will give SI the opportunity to evolve with emerging generations of artists, expand our forward-looking programming, and contribute to quickly evolving conversations in art, ecology, and technology, while reaffirming our commitment to New York City's cultural landscape. Here, we will put down roots and continue to grow."

Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee added: "We have always admired SI as a place that is experimental, global, and rigorous while generous towards ideas and people, where artists come first. Our vision for SI on the Bowery is as a kind of laboratory dedicated to artistic presentations, education, and community engagement, while fostering the sense of intimacy that defines SI for us. We are honored to collaborate with SI in shaping its first permanent home and to contribute to its future on the historic Bowery."

## DESIGNING A NEW HOME FOR SI

Drawing from SI's legacy of artistic experimentation and innovation, Johnston Marklee's design imagines SI as a living ecosystem that will shift and evolve alongside SI's programming, supporting new forms of artistic production, collaboration, and public engagement. Emphasizing flexibility, modularity, and the creative reuse of existing conditions and furnishings, the design will prioritize spaces that are inviting, nimble, and responsive to a wide range of artistic and public uses. In line with SI's environmentally conscious mission, the renovation will incorporate reclaimed materials, energy-efficient lighting systems, reusable exhibition infrastructure, and reuse of existing 250 Bowery mechanical systems. A reimagined street-facing façade will create a more visible and accessible public presence on the Bowery, strengthening SI's identity as a free and welcoming cultural space.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMMING

While renovations are underway, SI will continue its programming through offsite exhibitions in New York City and internationally. In Fall 2026, SI will present *Kino East*, an offsite exhibition by Zurich-based, Polish artist Rafał Skoczek, whose practice moves between painting, exhibition-making, publishing, music, and collaborative programming, often taking shape through social and infrastructural forms. For his exhibition, the artist will transform a disused commercial space into a site for gathering and exchange, drawing on a network of ongoing projects, friendships, and affinities. Part cinema, part bookstore, part venue, the exhibition will develop progressively throughout its duration, functioning less as a static presentation than as an evolving set of conditions.

## OPENING EXHIBITION, SPRING 2027

SI at 250 Bowery will open to the public in Spring 2027 with *The Environment*, an international group exhibition drawing inspiration from an artist-led, community-created project initiated by experimental filmmaker Bud Wirschafter that unfolded in downtown New York between 1966-68. *The Environment* will foreground the social, infrastructural, ecological, and technological dimensions that constitute public space, influence, and participation in decision making processes today, while fostering generative connections between artistic practice and the formation of social communities. In this spirit, *The Environment* is committed to unmaking institutional boundaries and embedding aesthetic experience into the everyday life of public space, with artworks to be presented not only at SI but also across building facades, community gardens, and other public spaces.

## About Swiss Institute

Founded in 1986 by artists and art patrons, Swiss Institute (SI) is an independent non-profit contemporary art institution dedicated to promoting forward-thinking and experimental art making through innovative exhibitions, education, and programs. Committed to the highest standards of curatorial and educational excellence, SI serves as a platform for emerging artists, catalyzes new perspectives on celebrated work, and fosters appreciation for under-recognized positions. SI is committed to being an organization that is diverse, equitable, accessible, and environmentally conscious in its work, structure, and programming. Open to the public free-of-charge, Swiss Institute seeks to explore how a Swiss context can be the starting point for international conversations in the fields of visual and performing arts, design, and architecture.

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## About Johnston Marklee

Sharon Johnston, FAIA and Mark Lee are the founding partners of Johnston Marklee, based in Los Angeles. Since its establishment in 1998, Johnston Marklee has been recognized nationally and internationally for its engagement with arts and culture within the contemporary city, while rooted in the history and foundations of the discipline. Projects undertaken by Johnston Marklee are diverse in scale and type, spanning fourteen countries throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Recent projects include the permanent home for the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program (ISP) at Roy Lichtenstein Studio in New York; the UCLA Margo Leavin Graduate Art Studios in Los Angeles; the Menil Drawing Institute in Houston; and a renovation of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee were the recipients of the Richard Neutra Award for Professional Excellence in 2024 and the American Academy of Arts & Letters Award in Architecture in 2022. The firm's work is in the permanent collections of MoMA, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Menil Collection, SFMOMA, Carnegie Museum of Art, and the Architekturmuseum of TU Munich.