

## **“Open for Business: The Art of the Storefront” Is Now Open**

*Digital Exhibition by James and Karla Murray hosted by the Municipal Art Society’s Freedman Gallery*

(November 24, 2020 | New York, NY) The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) announced the latest exhibition in the [Doris C. and Alan J. Freedman Gallery](#): a collection of photographs capturing some of New York’s most iconic mom & pop shop storefronts in the lead up to Small Business Saturday and the holiday season. From hosiery to work boots, wontons to knishes, small businesses across the five boroughs have continued to open their doors and serve their community throughout this difficult year. Titled [Open for Business: The Art of the Storefront](#), the exhibition will be featured through mid-January 2021.

“We are delighted to feature the work of James and Karla Murray, highlighting their beautiful, evocative photographs. They expertly capture the art and spirit of New York’s iconic storefronts,” said Elizabeth Goldstein, President of MAS. “Writ large in neon lights and bright paint, the typography and design of mom-and-pop shops is a familiar bit of home that resonates with any New Yorker. This year even more than most, we are grateful for local retail and the shop owners and workers who show up every day to enliven our streets and keep our neighborhoods running.”

“New York City is defined by its icons and for us the timeworn and tested generational mom-and-pop stores that line the city's streets and avenues are just as iconic as the Empire State Building, Chrysler Building, or Central Park,” said the artists, James and Karla Murray. “A great many of these stores have not only survived but continue to play a vital role in their neighborhood as ad hoc community centers. We hope that our storefront photos act as an artistic intervention to help draw attention to and preserve the small shops whose existence is essential to the unique and colorful atmosphere of the city's streets.”

In its new digital format, the Freedman Gallery seeks to highlight the work of artists based in or inspired by New York City, whose work deepens our understanding of the relationship between people and the built environment. Future exhibitions by Stanley Greenberg and Jeff Chien-Hsing Liao will debut in 2021.

### **About the Artists**

James and Karla Murray are husband-and-wife architectural and interior photographers and multi-media artists based in New York City. For the past twenty-five years they have focused their lens on the streetscape through portraits of storefronts and shop owners and have strived to capture moments of city life that often go undocumented but capture the spirit, energy and cultural diversity of individual neighborhoods. They made it their mission to thoroughly document unique 'mom-and-pop' stores when they began to notice the alarming rate at which the shops were disappearing. Their critically acclaimed books include *Store Front: The*

*Disappearing Face of New York, New York Nights, Store Front II- A History Preserved, and Broken Windows-Graffiti NYC.* James and Karla live in the East Village of Manhattan with their rescue dog Hudson.

For more information, visit <http://www.jamesandkarlamurray.com>

#### **About the Doris C. and Alan J. Freedman Gallery**

The Doris C. and Alan J. Freedman Gallery was housed at the former offices of MAS at the Villard Houses prior to the organization's move in 2010. In 2020, the gallery was reimagined as a digital space made accessible to visitors from across the city and world. Both the digital gallery and its original programming at the Villard Houses have been made possible through the generosity of the Freedman Family. Doris Freedman (1928–1981) served as New York City's first Director of Cultural Affairs and founded the Public Art Fund in 1977. Alan Freedman (1923–1982) was the founder and chairman of the WNYC Foundation, which raised private financing to support public radio broadcasting in New York. Both Doris and Alan Freedman served as Presidents of MAS in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

#### **About the Municipal Art Society of New York**

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) lifts up the voices of the people in the debates that shape New York's built environment and leads the way toward a more livable city from sidewalk to skyline. MAS envisions a future in which all New Yorkers share in the richness of city life—where growth is balanced, character endures, and a resilient future is secured. Over more than 125 years of history, our advocacy efforts have led to the creation of the New York City Planning Commission, Public Design Commission, Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the Tribute in Light; the preservation of Grand Central Terminal, the lights of Times Square, and the Garment District; the conservation of more than 50 works of public art; and the founding of such civic organizations as the Public Art Fund, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, P.S. 1, the Historic Districts Council, the Park Avenue Armory Conservancy, and the Waterfront Alliance.