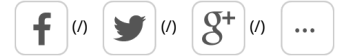


New Yorkers Fete Izhar Patkin and His Mass MoCA Show

BY JULIE BAUMGARDNER | JANUARY 16, 2014



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Alan Cumming and Izhar Patkin

On Tuesday night, in celebration of his new Mass MoCA show, “Wandering Veil,” the Israeli-born artist Izhar Patkin welcomed throngs of art world insiders to a cavernous space hidden from the street behind not one but two unmarked doors in the East Village. Patkin bought the building, a former school, in the 1980s, and has since has turned its classrooms into a home and studio for himself, decorated in funky furnishings devised by his own hand. Space may be the ultimate commodity in New York, and the mixture of seclusion and and spaciousness elicited obvious envy among many of the guests. And that’s before they saw the 2,000-square-foot vine-covered rooftop.

Mario Batali, a good friend of the artist’s, served a Tuscan-inspired spread of prosciutto and burrata, on plates that Patkin had painted with portraits of famous Jews (including unlikely ones like Elizabeth Taylor). Mass MOCA director Joseph Thompson and Rivka Saker of Artis described the Patkin show to an attentive audience that included other friends like Alan Cumming, Carlo McCormick, Jon Kessler, David Ross, Nicole Klagsburn, Linda Yablonsky, and new L.A. MOCA director Philippe Vergne. Despite Mass MoCA being three hours away in North Adams, Massachusetts, many in the crowd seemed determined to head north to see Patkin’s experiential installations alluding to the annals of art history, all arranged as a sort-of maze. Perhaps with this exhibition the shroud will be lifted on Patkin, an artist whose works have been known and collected mostly by art insiders in recent decades. But to get into his house, you’ll still need to be in the know.