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## Evoking '60s Loft Life at 'Sundays on Broadway'

Cathy Weis opens her SoHo workplace and home for a special series called 'Sundays on Broadway'



Jon Kinzel and Cathy Weis at a 'Sundays on Broadway' event.

*PHOTO: RICHARD TERMINE*

By **ROBERT GRESKOVIC**

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*New York*

WeisAcres is what Cathy Weis calls her workplace and home at 537 Broadway in New York's SoHo neighborhood. Ms. Weis, who has been creating fascinating and award-winning performances that pair dance with video and technology for over two decades now, has recently opened her loft space for

the second year running to host a show-and-tell series called “Sundays on Broadway.” The informal one-off events feature, in the wording of a news release, “film screenings, performances, discussions, and all manner of gatherings” and are free and open to the public. Attending one offers a taste of what, in the 1960s and 1970s became familiar as loft dancing.

Once you ring buzzer No. 3 and get admitted, you’re in a mint sampling of another era. If you bypass the tiny elevator and opt to climb three flights of well-worn stairs, the creaking of the wood takes you back to the time before SoHo became the commercial area that bustles outside 537’s door. When you reach WeisAcres, a sign asks you to leave your shoes in the hall, before finding yourself in the open, 35-foot-wide space with “no columns,” as Ms. Weis, who has lived here since buying the place in 2005 from fellow choreographer Simone Forti, notes about the dance-friendly place.

A homey array of seating presents itself: chairs, benches, mats, sofas, as well as a throw-pillow-dotted, colorful area rug for those limber enough to sprawl while taking in the proceedings. Ms. Weis, who has a reedy speaking voice and suffers from multiple sclerosis, is an easygoing host, taking time to give anyone unfamiliar with locations like hers details of the past.

No. 537 Broadway has a history as one of the artists’ cooperatives known as “Fluxhouses” that came into being during the mid-’60s and early ’70s. It was the 16th such building that George Maciunas (1931-1978)—a Lithuanian-born American artist who headed the post-Dada, 1960s avant-garde art movement called Fluxus—acquired as “live, work, show” spaces for the city’s visual and performing artists.

This year’s “Sundays” have already offered a screening of choreographer Yasuko Yokoshi’s “Hangman Takuzo,” a poetic, stream-of-consciousness video about a Japanese performance artist who has practiced “the art of suspension” for over 40 years by hanging himself from a tree in his garden, using a makeshift harness looped under his chin. Most recently, filmmaker Charles Atlas showed “The Legend of Leigh Bowery,” which documents an Australian-born (1961-1994) provocateur on London’s club and gallery scene who made his extraordinarily costumed person into a performance art object. Each evening includes a wrap-up talk-back that draws into the conversation a mix of people close to the subjects and those who attend out of general curiosity.

Informal performances by dancers-choreographers Juliette Mapp, Jodi Melnick, Douglas Dunn and Ms. Weis herself remain in the offing this year. So do improvised showings from Jon Kinzel, Jennifer Miller and Vicky Shick. And conversations with veteran 20th-century dancers Carolyn Brown, Sara Rudner, Gary Chryst and William Whitener are on this slate. A film made of a recent German reconstruction of “Choreartium,” a now seldom seen but once prominent 1933 Brahms ballet by Léonide Massine, will be screened and discussed by the choreographer’s daughter, Tatiana Massine Weinbaum.

Ms. Weis has a sign-up sheet on hand for getting email announcements of her “Sundays”; anyone else interested in the individual events, which so far need no reservations, can learn more at [cathyweis.org](http://cathyweis.org). The atmosphere of these gatherings is congenial and casual; padding around in stocking feet sets a comfy tone. And while the atmosphere evokes New York in the 1970s, the artistry on view feels up to the minute.

*Mr. Greskovic writes about dance for the Journal.*