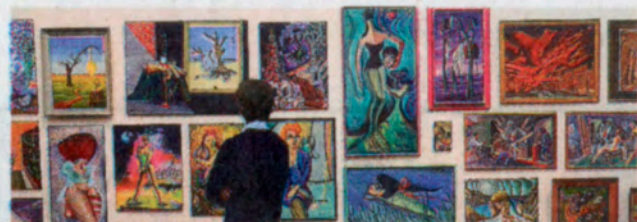


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# Weekend Arts II

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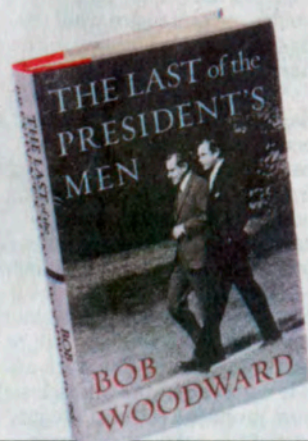
## Wading Back Into Watergate

President Richard M. Nixon's decision to install a secret recording system in the White House and the decision of an aide named

**MICHIKO KAKUTANI**

BOOKS OF THE TIMES

Alexander Butterfield to disclose its existence to the Senate Watergate committee on July 16, 1973, changed the course of history. The tapes — including the damning “smoking gun” conversation, days after the Watergate break-in, in which Nixon and his chief of



The Last of the President's Men

By Bob Woodward

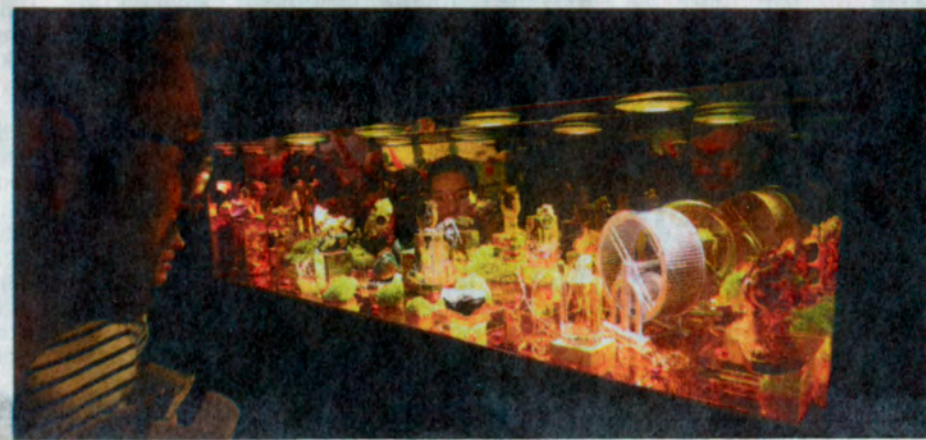
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staff, H. R. Haldeman, brazenly talked about ordering the C.I.A. to block further F.B.I. investigation — sealed the president's fate, impli-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

## The Big Show Redefines Newness



“Greater New York” the title of MoMA PS. It's every five years

that time, you're not going to get a job at a big ad firm," said Debra Schmidt Bach, who organized this show with Nina Nazionale.

It's not difficult to divine the attraction of superheroes. America was struggling out of the Depression. The clouds of fascism, anti-Semitism and war hung low across Europe.

What New York kid wouldn't scan the sky for a Superman?

"Superheroes in Gotham" continues through Feb. 21 at the New-York Historical Society, Manhattan; 212-873-3400, nyhistory.org.

tune so tonight and did I rescue more men than women?"

Mr. Siegel created Superman a year after his father died during a robbery in Cleveland. Scholars have argued that the Superman myth is the story of Moses, with the baby Kal-El arriving in a rocket ship rather than an ark of bulrushes. They have suggested that the name Kal-El has roots in Hebrew.

My friends and I roamed the city in search of dusty shops with piles of old comics filled with such mysteries. We found a favorite haunt on Amsterdam Avenue, an unnamed, often padlocked storefront known as "the old lady's

comics sit somewhere in my basement. Maybe our pasteurized city has less need of superheroes, although one who could roll back insane rents or bring an arrogant hedge funder to his knees might be welcomed. (The writer Ta-Nehisi Coates has signed on to reimagine Black Panther, an African superhero who spends, of course, much time in New York City.)

More likely, a Bangladeshi kid in Elmhurst and a Senegalese kid in University Heights are doodling in their seventh-grade math classes, and they have their own ideas. You may hear about them in the New-York Historical Society's next superhero show, in 2060.



Left, superhero fans at the exhibition, which focuses on the artists — many of whom were from New York — who created the first comic books. Above, a display of comics, with some books that visitors can take off the shelves to read in the gallery.

Sure, New York City has plenty of vibrant public spaces and man-made structures for everyday urban exploration. But there is another part of the city, largely off limits, where only the most adventurous or well-connected tread: lavish terraces guarded by vigilant doormen and stunning interiors tucked away behind closed doors.

This weekend is your chance to visit some of these sites, along with dozens of architectural wonders, during Open House New York Weekend. The event, now in its 13th year, is organized by the nonprofit Open House New York, which aims to educate the public about the city's architecture and design.

Some of the locations could be the destination of any second-grade field trip, but others are truly exclusive New York experiences, like a tour of Eero Saarinen's TWA flight center at Kennedy International Airport. This modernist terminal (open on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.) was largely closed to the public 14 years ago. Visitors can bask in

the glamour of the Jet Age for what may be the last time before the terminal becomes part of a planned hotel.

Misers looking for a taste of gilded city life will most likely have to miss out on tours of the Mercedes House, the snaking, terraced residential building in Hell's Kitchen, and the Tudor City penthouse that was used as the Green Goblin's lair in the "Spider-Man" movies, as both have already sold out. But some of New York's most coveted real estate is still open for gawking, including a renovated brick townhouse in Red Hook, Brooklyn (Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.); tours by the architect take place every 30 minutes) and the Bartow-Pell Mansion in Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx (Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.), a moneyed estate of yesteryear that is now a museum.

## Weekend Miser

Jonathan Wolfe

And you won't need to be on official business to climb what appears to be a floating staircase at City Hall in Lower Manhattan and grab a seat in the City Council's chamber (Saturday from noon to 4 p.m.), or to tour the Department of Transportation's Traffic Management Center in Long Island City, Queens, the control center for 12,500 traffic signals and 250 real-time cameras (Saturday at 11 a.m., reservations required).

Twenty interior landmarks, including the Ford Foundation's atrium and the Four Seasons restaurant, both in Midtown Manhattan, will also be open for this year's event, which is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the city's landmarks law. Most of the weekend events are family-friendly, and some have special programming for children.

And here's a tip: Many museums

waive entrance fees for this event, including the New York Hall of Science, the Museum of the City of New York and the Morgan Library & Museum.

(Saturday and Sunday at various times. For some events that require reservations, there is a \$5 reservation fee. More information is at ohny.org.)

## Tours in Gowanus and Chelsea

Not to be outdone, dozens of artists will also be opening their studios this weekend. In Gowanus, Brooklyn, visitors can join a curator-led bike tour of some of the more than 300 participating art studios (\$20) or explore on foot (free). Just below the High Line, in the West Chelsea Arts District, more than 50 studios will be accessible as part of a



BRENDAN CRAIN

The New York State Pavilion from the 1964-65 World's Fair in Queens is part of the Open House event.

free self-guided tour.

(Gowanus: Saturday and Sunday from noon to 6 p.m.; artsgowanus.org. Chelsea: Saturday and Sunday from noon to 6 p.m.; the self-guided tour starts at the West Chelsea Arts building; highlineopenstudios.org.)