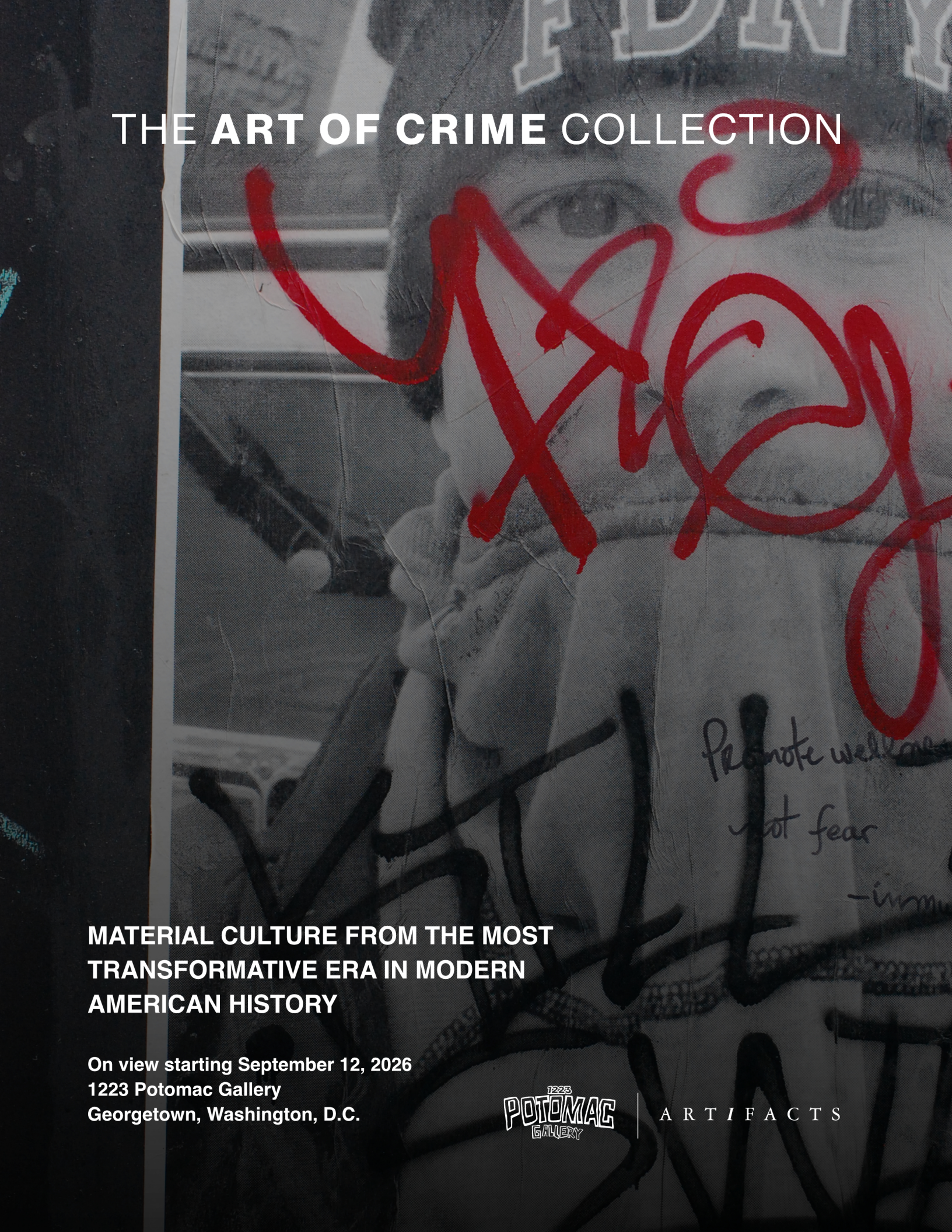


THE **ART OF CRIME** COLLECTION

MATERIAL CULTURE FROM THE MOST TRANSFORMATIVE ERA IN MODERN AMERICAN HISTORY

On view starting September 12, 2026
1223 Potomac Gallery
Georgetown, Washington, D.C.

1223 POTOMAC GALLERY | ARTIFACTS

"UNLIKE THE CAVES OF LASCAUX (WHICH ARE ON THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES LIST) MOST OF THIS WORK WON'T BE PROTECTED OR ANTHOLOGIZED – BUT IT SHOULD BE. THE LINGUAL MESSAGES AND CODED IMAGES ON THESE PLYWOOD FACADES ARE THE MEANS BY WHICH FUTURE HISTORIANS AND RESEARCHERS WILL COME TO UNDERSTAND THIS TIME AND GIVE OUR GENERATION A PROPER NAME."

– SEPH RODNEY, ART WRITER & CRITIC / THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON, D.C., 12 SEPTEMBER 2026 – This September, ARTIFACTS is presenting Lot 11 (149 Mercer Street) in its first public exhibition, at 1223 Potomac Gallery in Georgetown. The set is offered for private sale as a centerpiece in The Art of Crime Collection, twenty-one unique cultural artifacts salvaged from the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District (NYC) following the societal upheaval of 2020.

History rarely hands a nation, in one year, four crises capable of reshaping it overnight: a global health emergency severe enough to empty streets, an economic shutdown so total it left commerce at a standstill, an energized protest movement filling those emptied streets, and a presidential contest so bitterly disputed that its outcome would itself become a national flashpoint.

New York City, in conjunction with most of America's major cities, absorbed all four of these events from spring to fall of 2020. It's difficult to imagine another American year in which they converge again, which is precisely why so little that survived that year, in its original state, can ever be authentically produced again.

Lot 11 is one of the fullest such records to survive intact. It consists of four unique ¾-inch pine plywood panels, twelve by eight feet in total, installed early June 2020 over the windows of the Balenciaga flagship at 149 Mercer Street.

Within days, the black panels carried something their installers never anticipated: three wheat-pasted portraits from the Inside Out Project's global "Thank You" campaign, oversized photographs of "essential workers" photographed at the height of the global health crisis, one in a FDNY beanie, the second in a hard hat, and a third female - all masked. It was an unsolicited tribute, the kind that appeared on plywood across the city that spring, made by people with no claim to the wall beyond the willingness to use it.

LOT 11

"OUR RESPONSIBILITY EXTENDS BEYOND EXHIBITING ART; IT IS TO PRESERVE THE STORIES, OBJECTS, AND VISUAL LANGUAGE THAT DOCUMENT OUR COMMUNITIES AND THEIR PLACE WITHIN THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE."

– JUSTIN "YADDIYA" JOHNSON, FOUNDER, LONG LIVE GOGO, 1223 POTOMAC GALLERY



Lot 11 (Four Unique Window Barriers) | 144 x 96 x 0.75 in.

"THE SOUND OF BRICKS ON GLASS, HELICOPTERS CIRCLING, ENGINES ROARING DOWN THE TIGHT COBBLE STONE STREETS OF SOHO. THESE CAPTURE SOMETHING WE'LL HOPEFULLY NEVER EXPERIENCE AGAIN BUT NEED TO REMEMBER."

– JOSH MILLER, FOUNDER, ARTIFACTS

The tribute did not go untouched. Aerosol eventually made its way across the portraits: looping red scrawl obliterating sets of eyes, the words "KILL THE SWINE" and “DEATH TO THE PIGS” cutting across multiple panels in black, a handwritten plea to "promote wellness, not fear" nearly lost beneath it. Elsewhere on the same panels, in a different hand and a different register entirely, someone chalked small turquoise hearts and, beside one, an appeal in red marker to a community bail fund. A third voice, in green, yellow and gold paint, added something closer to a gesture than a word. None of these interventions answers the others. They simply exist together, in the order they arrived, on the same four boards.

That August art critic Seph Rodney, writing for the The New York Times, described them as heirs to the painted caves of Lascaux – a public square, in his phrase, where a community shares the knowledge it cannot yet put into any other form. Rodney also noted how little of what he saw was built to last; most of it, he observed, would vanish before it could be properly recorded. Lot 11 belongs to the small remainder that did not vanish. It was never meant to. Like nearly everything painted on plywood that spring, it existed to be temporary, to be pulled down the moment the storefronts behind them reopened, and it is only through happenstance that these four panels survived.

“This archival work represents a defining moment in the nation's ongoing conversation around race, justice, protest, and collective memory” said Justin “Yaddiya” Johnson, Founder of 1223 Potomac Gallery. “At 1223 Potomac Gallery, we believe that art is activism, and we pride ourselves on being curators of culture while, more importantly, being of the culture. Our responsibility extends beyond exhibiting art; it is to preserve the stories, objects, and visual language that document our communities and their place within the American experience."



Lot 11 (Right Window Barrier) | 48 x 96 x 0.75 in.

Download Images **Here**

EXHIBITION

Lot 11 will remain on view at 1223 Potomac Gallery, 1223 Potomac Street NW, following its September debut, marking the first time any material culture from The Art of Crime Collection has exhibited outside New York.

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ABOUT ARTIFACTS

ARTIFACTS provides salvage and curatorial services dedicated to the preservation and sale of ephemeral, site-specific works created during moments of civic upheaval. Its inaugural offering, The Art of Crime Collection, comprises unique plywood window barriers recovered from the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District in the aftermath of the civil unrest of May–June 2020. More information is available at a-facts.com/AOC.

ABOUT 1223 POTOMAC GALLERY

1223 Potomac Gallery is a gallery and creative hub in the heart of Georgetown, operated by The Long Live GoGo Foundation as a daily working studio and exhibition space for Black and Brown artists preserving Washington, D.C.'s cultural identity, including its native Go-Go music heritage. More information is available at 1223potomacgallery.com.

