



**Left:** Smack Mellon Gallery, located in a former 1910s boiler-house **Below:** Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park, where water meets the green in Dumbo

ist studios and 200 residential rental properties and has leased out more than 500,000 square feet of office space since 1980. At least 30 galleries, including Smack Mellon, located in a spacious 1910-era former boiler-house, now make their home in Dumbo. "To me, it's the

new seat of New York culture," says Smack Mellon's executive director, Kathleen Gilrain. "Chelsea [Manhattan's main art district] is still a huge force in the art world. But Dumbo has dance, theater, multi-use cultural spaces and tons of nonprofits. We're more all-inclusive."

Dumbo's appeal is due also to its food scene—a decidedly low-brow mix of joints like Grimaldi's Pizzeria on Old Fulton St and the younger, hipper Superfine on Front St, a Brooklyn bar/restaurant with a Mediterranean-inspired menu and a rollicking social scene on the weekends. Celebrity chef Jacques Torres opened a chocolate store on Water St a few years back, which makes an ideal stop during an afternoon of shopping at nearby boutiques Blueberi, which sells revamped vintage clothes, and Zoë, where you can find upscale designer collections. The mix seems to reflect the neighborhood's one-foot-in-the-past-and-one-in-the-future sensibility.

Down at the waterfront, on the vast stretch of lawn that is Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park, people are sprawled about, soaking in the last glints of fall sunshine and the Manhattan view. The Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges soar dramatically overhead, literal links between the part of New York that once defined the entire city and the part that is defining its future. ■

## 3 DUMBO

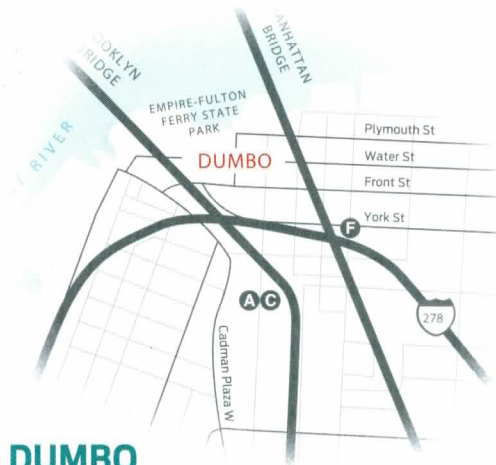
THREE RAIL-THIN MEN wearing black bodysuits and covered in shaving cream are dragging a manhole cover—on which two women are riding and screaming—toward the Smack Mellon Gallery in Dumbo, Brooklyn's booming arts district located Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass. Passersby are not even remotely befuddled by the weird happening on the street: It's just another performance in Dumbo's 11th annual Art Under the Bridge festival. There's even an Asian elephant parading the streets—a neighborhood mascot of sorts.

Two hundred years ago, Dumbo was Brooklyn's most bustling commercial center. Iron, metal and corrugated cardboard (the first ever made in the United States) were among the materials produced here. Today this waterfront area is filled with thirtysomething Brooklynites meandering from gallery to gallery, many with toddlers in tow, and the neighborhood feels a bit like a newer, ritzier and more grown-up sibling to Williamsburg.

The industrial area's reimagining as an enclave for artists and year-round residents is due in large part to the efforts of Two Trees Management, a development company that has created 500 art-

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## DUMBO

Subway A, C to High St; F to York St

**Smack Mellon Gallery** The nonprofit's 6,000-square-foot space (dubbed "fresh and messy" by *New York* magazine) showcases the work of artists who are under-represented by the Manhattan art juggernaut. (92 Plymouth St; 718-834-8761)

**Jacques Torres Chocolate Shop** Sensible adults will be reduced to little kids after setting foot in this local headquarters for handmade chocolates, French pastries and hot chocolate. (66 Water St; 718-875-9772)

**Superfine** This hopping joint offers the ideal hangover cure with its weekly Bluegrass Brunch on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nothing like a banjo, homemade sausage and huevos rancheros with green chiles to make you forget the previous night's indiscretions. (126 Front St; 718-243-9005)



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