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ART IN REVIEW  
**'#class'**

By HOLLAND COTTER  
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*Winkleman Gallery  
621 West 27th Street  
Chelsea  
Through Saturday*

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Can we talk? That seems to be an urgent art world question, partly because of an economic shakedown that sensible people — i.e., the writers of art fair news releases — keep saying is over, or never happened. But New York artists, in need of jobs or apartments or ways to pay their art school loans, are pretty sure that it did happen, and that it isn't all that over, even if [the Armory Show](#) really had an extraspecial year.

Winkleman Gallery is doing its part to keep the conversation on the boil with an exhibition called “#class,” organized by the artists Jennifer Dalton and William Powhida, who is on loan from Schroeder Romero & Shredder Gallery. The pair have turned the main exhibition space into a combination lecture hall and conference center, with big tables, sit-up-straight chairs and wall-to-wall chalkboards in a constant process

of being filled and erased as the show's events come and go.

So far, the schedule has included discussion panels titled “Success,” “Access,” “The Ivory Tower,” “The System Works” and “Bad Curating.” To get competitive juices flowing, the artist Amanda Browder of “Bad at Sports,” a Chicago-based art podcast, offered a presentation called “Battleship,” which pitted Formalists against Conceptualists, artists against dealers, and painters against the world. A bruiser, I hear.

The art historian and critic Mira Schor, author of an excellent new book called “A Decade of Negative Thinking” ([Duke University Press](#)), read an essay on the potentially positive aspects of failure and anonymity. And the writer Joanne McNeil and the artist An Xiao led a panel on the notion that the art world isn't as racially integrated as it likes to think.

So the show's program is substantial. And there's even something for gallerygoers in search of art on the wall. The chalkboards — think 1960s Cy Twombly — make for very entertaining reading. And Ms. Dalton and Mr. Powhida have small, conference-approved text drawings in the gallery's back room. (They're for sale, but with stipulations way too complicated and finicky to go into here.)

Bottom line: artists are artists' best friends, and there should be more gatherings like this one.

Final thought: class, as in social class, is the elephant in the art fair V.I.P. rooms, in the art school studios and in Chelsea galleries. Please, can we talk? Yes we can: Friday at 2 p.m. in the gallery, the estimable art critic Ben Davis will present his “9.5 Theses on Art and Class.”