

Staff. "Robert Kobayashi: Moe's Meat Market," *TheGuide.Art*, 25 October 2020.

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In 1977, artist Robert Kobayashi–Kobi, for short–bought an old tenement building in Little Italy with his wife, the photographer Kate Keller. Over the next four decades, the site would become a hub for arts-centered activities and gatherings in the neighborhood, as the couple transformed part of the ground floor into an exhibition space. They named it Moe's Meat Market, after the butcher shop that had formerly occupied the storefront.

As Keller recalls:

The store had been emptied, as well as, the first-floor apartment. All the other apartments were occupied with people who lived in the building before the 1970s. Kobi and I didn't have a clear plan for the building and hadn't researched the fine art of being a New York City landlord. We only saw space–space to live, studio space for Kobi, and a darkroom for me. We renovated the first-floor apartment with the help of friends from MoMA, where both Kobi and I worked, and to the horror of the older neighbors who witnessed the plaster dust billowing out our windows. Our apartment was a floor-through with enough room for the front to be the studio and the back half for living. The old kitchen on the ground floor that served the restaurant became my darkroom.

On view at Susan Inglett Gallery, "Robert Kobayashi: Moe's Meat Market" presents a survey of work produced by the Hawaiian-born artist at the location. Kobayashi often used found materials, foraged from the neighborhood. Discarded ceiling tin became his preferred medium: *White Sheet* (1997) [pictured], for instance, displays a nude female form against a backdrop composed of painted wood scraps and his signature stamped ceiling tin. After Kobayashi passed away in 2015, Keller had to sell the building and close the gallery a couple of years later. Yet the legacy of Moe's Meat Market will live on–as long as there are people to remember it.

Robert Kobayashi, *White Sheet*, 1997. Ceiling tin, paint, nails on wood, 17 3/4 x 15 1/2 x 1 1/2 in. Copyright the artist.