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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

An Exhibit Lands on Its Feet

By **KIMBERLY CHOU**

"This is the little show that could," said Rich Blint, co-curator of "Bigger Than Shadows," a new group exhibition that almost never happened—twice.

Earlier this summer, Mr. Blint and his co-curator, Ian L. Cofre, were busily preparing the exhibit, which addresses the black male body using a mix of sculpture, painting, photography and video, for an October opening. Then the host venue, Sue Scott Gallery, abruptly closed. After Messrs. Blint and Cofre managed to find a new home for the show, it was further imperiled by Hurricane Sandy.

"We were scheduled to open and there was the biggest flood in a hundred years or whatever," said Mr. Blint. "Through Sue Scott closing and the delay of the show opening [due to the storm], there was some anxiety. That was the sentiment expressed to me by some of the artists: "Will it happen? Will it happen?"

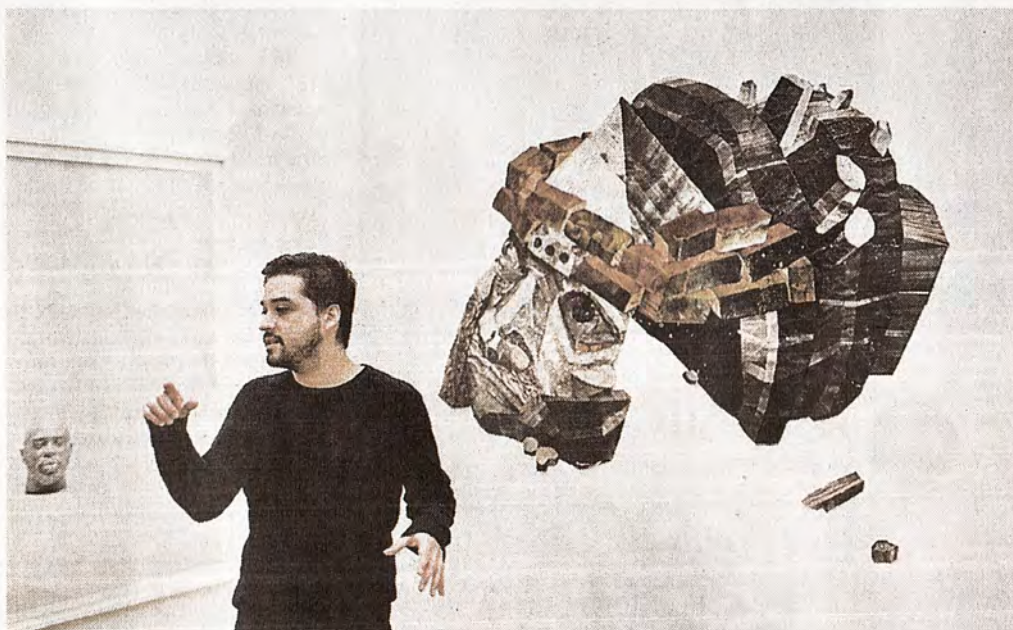
Finally, it has happened. "Bigger Than Shadows" opened Saturday at the DODGEgallery on Rivington Street—just a few doors down from Sue Scott, where Mr. Cofre was the director before it closed. The exhibition features such artists as Duron Jackson (who also has an exhibition at Brooklyn Museum open-

ing this week), photographer Deana Lawson, painter Noah Davis and the performance and video artist Jacolby Satterwhite.

"What's really exceptional about the show is that it presents emerging artists and some more established artists [engaging with] the black male body, alongside the work itself," Mr. Blint said.

(A number of the artists in the show, including Messrs. Davis and Satterwhite, also have work on view as part of "Fore," the latest installment in a series of emerging-artist exhibitions presented by the Studio Museum in Harlem. The first edition of that

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Philip Montgomery for The Wall Street Journal

Co-curator Ian Cofre at the DODGEgallery, where his new exhibit moved after its initial home suddenly closed.

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series, "Freestyle," curated by Thelma Golden in 2001, helped propel the careers of now-better-known artists like Julie Mehretu, Rashid Johnson and Rico Gatson, who has two pieces in "Bigger Than Shadows.")

Mr. Cofre first conceived the idea of an exhibit exploring the black male body in late 2011, while he was working as an independent curator. In early 2012, after he had been hired as the director of Sue Scott Gallery, the opportunity arose to curate the show, and he brought in Mr. Blint, a writer and cultural critic.

"We scheduled the show and we were working from there," Mr. Cofre said. He couldn't have anticipated the next hurdle. "What changed was that Sue Scott Gallery closed during the summer and we had to find a new venue." (Ms. Scott declined to comment.)

So Messrs. Blint and Cofre proceeded to shop the show to galleries around Chelsea and uptown for this fall, hearing some interest but with limited results due to their shortened time frame. "We were really trying to shoot the moon with the project and it's hard because everyone schedules many months out," Mr. Cofre said. "Really, whomever we talked to were pretty much scheduled through the end of 2013-2014."

Finally, Mr. Blint suggested Dodge. Fortuitously, the gallery had a spot in its fall calendar, and it agreed to provide a home for "Bigger Than Shadows" alongside a solo show by artist Darren Blackstone Foote, whose



Rich Blint and Ian Cofre at the Dodge Gallery, where they have co-curated the exhibit 'Bigger Than Shadows.'

primarily abstract sculptural work often deals with the body. "Darren's work is a really good parallel" for "Bigger Than Shadows," Mr. Cofre said.

"The irony of Dodge being just down the street [from Sue Scott Gallery] cannot be lost on us," Mr. Blint said. "We were looking everywhere else and Dodge was right under our noses."

Added Mr. Cofre, "You know, we got lucky."

Dodge even turned out to be a good fit for "Bigger Than Shadows." With its generous double-height space, the gallery is capable of mounting two shows at the same time, and regularly invites outside curators to organize exhibitions. Rarely, though, are those exhibitions fully realized before the invita-

tion is even made.

"Being offered an intelligent pre-packaged show was obviously tempting," said Dodge founder and director Kristen Dodge, via email. Her gallery was already in the process of rearranging its exhibition schedule when it was approached about "Bigger Than Shadows." Hence the availability.

Dodge did not suffer any material damage during Hurricane Sandy, but having some of the new art works delivered and installed still presented logistical hurdles. "Getting some of the art into the city was a bit of a challenge with the gas shortage," said Patton Hindle, Dodge's director of operations.

Because the storm delayed the opening, Duron Jackson's as-

sistant wasn't able to make it to the gallery for the installation of Mr. Jackson's work, a sculpture that resembles a coffin for a man with arms outspread, lined with dominoes. Another artist featured in the show, Ebony G. Patterson, came to New York during the original, intended opening weekend, but wasn't able to stay for the actual opening date a week later.

For the curators and the gallery, though, "Bigger Than Shadows" turned out to be worth the wait.

"I felt a bit like I was holding out my arms and being handed something unexpected, unknown, but just right," said Ms. Dodge. "As much as you plan, you never know quite what is going to come up in this business."