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It Ain't the Prometheus Bronze. But This Ain't 30 Rock

By James Tarmy | Apr 27, 2014 12:54 PM ET | [0 Comments](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)

Standing in the narrow lobby of 1001 Sixth Avenue in New York, Cindy Farkas Glanzrock points to a giant overturned plastic ice cream cone.

"Some people might think this is juvenile," says Glanzrock, a commercial real-estate broker turned art consultant. "As far as I'm concerned, the art gives the building a brand. It lends it a sense of humor."

That a workaday commercial highrise near Times Square might kill at Carolines seems a stretch, but Glanzrock and **ABS Partners**, the building's manager, installed the sculpture by **DOC** to "keep our existing tenants happy [and] get new tenants and give people something to talk about," she says. There are also plastic lollipops on pedestals.

Blue chip art has been in blue chip buildings for decades. In the 1930s, David Rockefeller famously commissioned the muralist Josep Maria Sert to decorate **Rockefeller Center**. The nearby **Time & Life Building's lobby** has site-specific artworks by the abstract artists Josef Albers and Fritz Glarner.



Source: UNIX Gallery

"Medium Meltdown - Grape" by Desire Obtain Cherish on display in the lobby of 1001 Sixth Avenue.

What's becoming more common is art in buildings referred to as Class B, a not-quite-prestigious level of commercial real estate that's currently in high demand. Available inventory has **shrunk 45 percent** since 2011.

"Rents are skyrocketing," says Carri Lyon, an executive director at commercial real estate broker Cushman & Wakefield. "When you're paying \$70 a square foot, you don't want to see the same crummy lobby," she says. "You expect to see more than when the rent was \$28 a year."

Landlords can update common corridors, improve building services like doormen and cleaning staff or renovate the office space itself. But the lobby has a big impact, since it's the first thing that everyone sees.

Since March, Glanzrock has put art in three of ABS's buildings across Manhattan, on a fairly small scale. She leases art from galleries for six months and charges the building operator a percentage of the art's purchase price. (The ice cream cone sells for \$36,500.) The owner can then buy the art or pass and have Glanzrock bring in something new.

"It makes a difference," says Marc Zand, a principal at the accounting firm **Schulman Lobel**, which has an office on the 10th floor of 1001 Sixth. "The art they have in there spruces it up somewhat, and gets people talking to each other."

Glanzrock is waiting for the sculpture to bring new business to the building. "Maybe this will draw potential tenants in," she says. "Maybe they'll think: This landlord knows something about art."



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