

Situationist Alexander Trocchi to Factory habitué Taylor Mead to photographer Ralph Gibson. Berman himself is a bit underrepresented, with only one large-scale Verifax print with his trademark image, a serially repeated handheld transistor radio encasing a variety of Pop images, and a few of his amazing works with Hebrew lettering. Conner, surely the most prodigious of Berman's peers, also gets short shrift (fortunately, Susan Inglett Gallery presented an excellent sampling of his assemblages), and artists like DeFeo or Altoon are limited to one or two paintings. The real finds are obscurities like the visionary, heretofore unknown paintings and drawings of Cameron, occult mistress of Kenneth Anger and star of his 1954 film *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (Cameron, like Conner, had a very worthwhile concurrent show at Nicole Klagsbrun); superbly macabre drawings by Berman's ex-lover Loree Foxx (who died indigent in the early '70s, most of her work having been lost or destroyed); surprisingly sure-footed collages by Stockwell and Tamblin; Jean Conner's Redonesque painting *Floating Head* (1960); Jack Smith's unusually detailed ink drawing *Untitled (Your Pussy or Your Life)* (1969); and Patricia Jordan's breathtaking beatnik tapestry, *Golden Damsels Descending from the Clouds* (1962), a collage on linen that unfurls with a variety of Egyptian, Indian, and Byzantine iconography and photos of Berman's wife, Shirley, surrounded by a calligraphic love sonnet.

The poets' dalliances with painting and drawing are uniformly trifling; even Henry Miller would have been well advised to stick to the written word, given his sub-Chagall efforts displayed here. In contrast, Berman's foray into photography yields evocative portraits of his associates, and equally impressive are those by his fellow photographers Charles Brittin, Hopper, and the extraordinary Edmund Teske. It's also fascinating to encounter the trinkets the Berman circle created for one another alongside various correspondences; in the current age of electronic communication, it's rather touching to see these tactile works shared among friends. The show also exhibits various home movies, made by Basil, Tamblin, and Paul Beattie, which not only document the Berman circle's social interactions (including a weekly baseball game and a trip to "Swinging London") but their predilection and drive to turn even their pastimes into art. Berman's hyperkinetic, rarely seen 16 mm film *Aleph* (1956–1966) is also included, a pitch-perfect transposition of his collage technique to cinema.

One might expect the catalogue of "Semina Culture" to best the exhibition itself, considering its scholarly bent, but in fact the organizers' Festschrift spirit comes across much better in the gallery than between two covers; with no specific path to follow, the visitor can crisscross the various personages and images, making a real-time collage of this classically hip, West Coast extended family.

—ALAN LICHT



TONY CONRAD, INSTALLATION VIEW OF "YELLOW MOVIES." COURTESY GREENE NAFTALI GALLERY, NEW YORK.

TONY CONRAD

GREENE NAFTALI

The provocation of the monochrome is twofold. On the one hand, it presents an ineluctably opaque canvas, resistant

to any attempt to impose meaning; on the other, it stages itself as a blank screen waiting to be filled. During the first Happening, at Black Mountain College in 1952, Robert Rauschenberg's "White Paintings" (1951) were used

as screens for projected slides, then resumed their role as monochromatic paintings when the event concluded. Tony Conrad capitalizes on this duality by openly conflating the monochrome and the screen in his series "Yellow Movies," presenting paintings of "frames" and denominating the frames' contents as imperceptibly slow movies. In each a central pale rectangle is delineated by a thick black outline, leaving an open middle area that mimics the scale and aspect ratio of a cinematic projection. Conrad, an important contributor to early minimalist music and a structural filmmaker known for his "flicker" films, which rapidly alternate black and white frames to create trancelike effects, here brings his shutter to a halt. Or rather, a near halt. The "screening" of this exhibition first occurred in 1973, but Conrad planned that the "action" of his movies would transpire as they aged and yellowed over subsequent decades. Indeed, the house paints and floor varnishes have acquired a grubby patina, with the sheets of paper scuffed and even torn in places, activating the temporally static media of painting and offering yet another of the artist's reconceptualizations of what film is and can be.

—EVA DIAZ

DODIE BELLAMY

WHITE COLUMNS

When Kathy Acker died of breast cancer, in 1997, she left behind her extraordinary poems, books, plays—and a closet full of clothes. To view her papers, one may visit Duke University; to see her clothes, one could have gone to "Kathy Forest" at White Columns in New York (and previously seen at New Langton Arts in San Francisco). San Francisco-based writer Dodie Bellamy gathered a selection from Acker's wardrobe and transformed it into a commemorative installation. Hanging from the ceiling of a small room, these souvenirs were an invitation to see the playful sartorial sensibility of the visionary Acker, who emerged from the New York literary underground in the mid-1970s and spent two decades developing a new feminist prose style. There was a strange intimacy in walking through the show, among the Vivienne Westwood, Norma Kamali, and Betsey Johnson dresses, shirts, and skirts; that Acker was quite petite emerged as a poignant detail. While Acker introduced a transgressive fiction that probed subcultures, championed strong-willed women, and confronted the



DODIE BELLAMY, INSTALLATION VIEW OF "KATHY FOREST." COURTESY WHITE COLUMNS, NEW YORK.

implications of violence, this à la mode collection provides a glimpse of the writer that is no less inspiring than her prose. Her audacious style in print and in clothing serves as a reminder that the personal and the political still go hand in hand.

—NUIT BANAI

DAVID HAMMONS

L&M ARTS

No title, no press release, and, as of press time, no pictures: these were the stipulations issued by David Hammons on the occasion of his recent solo show in New York. It featured only one piece, which consisted of six fur coats hanging on antique dress forms in two rooms of the Upper East Side brownstone that houses L&M Arts. In such an imposing and privileged setting (a doorman shadowed viewers as they walked through the space), the coats alone had strong visual impact. So one was little prepared for the fact that the backs of the exquisitely tailored pelts were covered with paint. The white fox coat was sprayed blue, red, and green; a black sable had a thick splotch of yellow paint on its rear; the large, intimidating wolf was splattered pink. On the second floor, a spotlight shone down on a lone silver chinchilla fur. The back of this coat was charred, some parts down to the lining, and there was a faint smell of burned hair. There was something savage about the way the coats were mutilated, and, without the usual curatorial handholding, one was left to determine whether Hammons's work was a commentary on painting, a scathing critique of the artworld's exclusionary tactics, or a spectacularly effective PETA intervention.

—CLAIRE BARLIANT