



31 September 2016

## "It's All True": The East Village Eye Show



Friday, September 16–Sunday, October 9, 2016

*The Eye's unswerving editorial position was to advocate for the neighborhood's uniqueness, even when money became a central part of the equation.*

—Dan Cameron in the catalog for the New Museum's 2004 exhibition *East Village, USA*

How! Happening: An Arturo Vega Project is pleased to shine a light on another important source of East Village social and cultural history: **The East Village Eye**. A monthly magazine published from 1979 through 1987, *The East Village Eye* focused on popular and avant-garde culture, politics and other issues relevant to the East Village and environs. Self-styled as “a community in print,” the magazine is noted for its groundbreaking coverage of the emerging punk, new wave and hip hop music scenes of the time, as well as the influential art, literature, film and performance worlds of the era.

**The East Village Eye Show** will feature covers, centerfolds, interior pages, ephemera and photographic prints, as well as key artwork from the era. The show draws from the nearly 4,000 pages, 3,000 photographs, sets of original copies and attendant materials that constitute *The East Village Eye* Archive, dubbed “the King Tut's tomb of downtown New York.”

Artist and Colab co-founder Christof Kohlhofer was the first art director of the *Eye*. Kohlhofer, who studied with Joseph Beuys, introduced Abrams to the influential artists who were a part of the flourishing EV art scene. “I credit Christof with steering the *Eye* towards art, but also for injecting a Beuys-like approach. Basically doing whatever was necessary at the time,” says Abrams in the 2014 *Hyperallergic* article [The East Village Eye: Where Art, Hip Hop, and Punk Collided](#).

As a result, the magazine featured art world luminaries including David Wojnarowicz, Richard Hell, Cookie Mueller, Lucy Lippard, and Rene Ricard. The magazine’s covers read like a who’s who of cultural influencers like Patti Astor, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Vito Acconci; emerging artists such as Sue Coe, Barbara Kruger and Kiki Smith; as well as musicians like Patti Smith, Run DMC, Annie Lennox, and the Beastie Boys.

Richard Hell explained how he and other New Yorkers, and not English kids, “invented” punk; Cookie Mueller dished out bold and often hilarious health advice; Glenn O’Brien, the leading avant-pop writer and media figure, expounded on the New York Yankees; and the aforementioned David Wojnarowicz wrote about his harrowing past and present as a street hustler and later as an artist living with HIV.

Creative collaboration was the hallmark of the magazine’s legacy. “The mix of fashion, music, art, politics, comics etc., the way it was presented by the *Eye*, the constant changing impact through all those different people who worked on the paper, and Leonard’s attitude not to interfere with that, made it a very lively subject,” says Kohlhofer in the *Hyperallergic* article.

Over a period of eight years, the magazine chronicled the spectacular rise and eventual implosion of the East Village art scene. The *Eye*’s coverage of the arts and music scenes helped illuminate the psychosocial conflicts running through EV/LES culture, NYC, and beyond. Later issues of the *Eye* touched upon the beginnings of radical changes in the neighborhood. In April 1986 the magazine ran a feature on the rise of “The East Village Yuppie.” Six months earlier, the *Eye*’s art editor, Carlo McCormick, published an obituary for the neighborhood’s art scene. “Though the greed and envy have disbanded our beautiful community,” wrote McCormick, “the East Village will continue to exist as the simulacrum of itself. The art world is finally ready to preserve our youth like the glamorous visage of the internally decrepit Dorian Grey.”

**Ultimately, *The East Village Eye* was the monthly record of a time and place in which the radical shifts of the post-Vietnam era produced a reckless thirst for experience and expression that redefined the world we live in today. Through this exhibition, Howl! Happening stands in solidarity with the EV/LES artists and community—past and present—whose creativity continues to fuel us.**

#### Special Events:

Sunday, September 18, 2016 / 7 PM

#### ***East Village Art: Scene or Circumstance?***

**A Panel Discussion with Leonard Abrams, Yasmin Ramirez, Ph.D., Sur Rodney (Sur), Arthur Fournier, and Anthony Haden-Guest**

Expanding upon the East Village Eye Show, key figures from the period and beyond discuss the times and the neighborhood that changed the culture forever. Moderated by Leonard Abrams, editor and publisher of the *Eye*.

Saturday, September 24 and Sunday, September 25 / 3 PM

#### **East Village Eye Showcases the Films of The 1980s**

From The Cinema of Transgression known for its shocking themes and black humor and Sara Driver’s “lost” debut film to a fully restored version of Tommy Turner and David Wojnarowicz’ *Where Evil Dwells* and films that helped define the No Wave scene by key members of Downtown No Wave Cinema, this evening presents works by some of the most important

# NEWS ALERT

Howl! Happening: An Arturo Vega Project  
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filmmakers to come out of the East Village in the 1980s. Reflecting the cultural turmoil and the explosion of creative expression of the times, these films illuminate the groundbreaking, sometimes shocking, experimental ethos of the neighborhood.

Saturday, September 24

## **New/No Wave Films**

**Coleen Fitzgibbon** *LES* (Lower East Side) (1975)

**Vivienne Dick** *Liberty's Booty* (1980)

**Sara Driver** *You Are Not I* (1981)

**James Nares** *Rome 78* (1978);

Sunday, September 25, 2016

## **Cinema of Transgression**

**Richard Kern & Nick Zedd** *Thrust in Me* (1985)

**Richard Kern** *Stray Dogs* (1985)

**Tommy Turner** *Simonland* (1984)

**Tommy Turner and David Wojnarowicz** *Where Evil Dwells* (1985)

**Nick Zedd** *They Eat Scum* (1979)

October 6, 2016 / 7 PM

## **Channeling the Dead**

Reading of works by seminal writers **Kathy Acker, Jessie Bernstein, John Farris, Tuli Kupferberg, Cookie Mueller, Rene Ricard, David Wojnarowicz** and (too many) others. Hosted by Bob Holman with readings by Holman, Max Blagg, Carl Watson, David Huberman, David Katz, Leonard Abrams and others TBA.

The East Village Eye provided a home for some of the most important writers of the times. Fueled by a collaborative spirit and easy socializing among the painters, writers, filmmakers, poets, musicians and unclassifiable artists, this disparate group were influential in the extreme—the voice of a generation that set the tone for a fervent assault on the existing order. Bent on changing the rules, ruminating on the oppressive politics and the social order, and exploring the explosion of artistic expression in the 1980s, they produced lasting works amidst an environment of burnt out buildings, drugs, and the specter of AIDS.

## **East Village Eye – Special Edition**

A special edition of *The East Village Eye* will act as the catalogue. The tabloid-sized magazine will include historical essays; political commentary; articles about current events and people who are impacting our world; and guides to goings-on in downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Howl! Happening: An Arturo Vega Project  
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**Gallery Hours: Wed-Sun, 11–6 PM**

## **ABOUT HOWL! HAPPENING**

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