

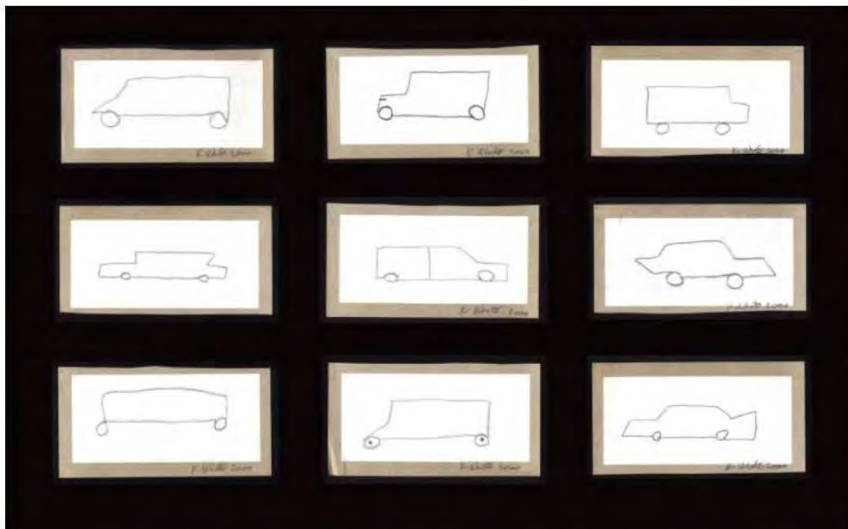
MARTOS GALLERY

Graves, Cassidy Dawn, "Exhibitions To See: 8-Bit Reality, Kathleen White, Immigrant Women," *Bedford+Bowery*, December 12, 2017

BEDFORD + BOWERY

Exhibitions To See: 8-Bit Reality, Kathleen White, Immigrant Women

Cassidy Dawn Graves December 12, 2017



Kathleen White, Untitled, 2000, 9 car drawings on storybook paper, 2 x 4 in. each (image via Martos Gallery / Facebook)

A Year of Firsts
Opening Thursday, December 14 at Martos Gallery, 6 pm to 8 pm. On view through January 27.

Kathleen White, an artist who worked in mediums such as painting and performance and was a notable figure in the downtown New York alternative arts scene during the AIDS epidemic, passed away

in 2014 after a battle with cancer. Though her physical form is gone, her work is very much alive and well, and can currently be experienced at two places in the city: Martos Gallery in the Lower East Side and Pioneer Works in Red Hook. The latter is a dual exhibition, consisting of photographs of White by Nan Goldin and White's creations made from performer's wigs, many of whom died during the AIDS epidemic. White's work is intimately acquainted with loss, but even moreso focused on the power of friendship and community, particularly within marginalized groups and subcultures.

MARTOS GALLERY

Sánchez, Rafael, "Spirit Drawings," April 2016



Nan Goldin, *Kathleen at Her Studio*, c. 1996

Spirit Drawings

Throughout the 1990's Kathleen created ephemeral sculptures utilizing human hair and wigs. The exact beginning of these pieces is difficult to pinpoint, however their overall import came from her close connection to the downtown Manhattan performance world of the late 1980's and early 1990's.

She titled this activity *Spirits of Manhattan*, in which the hair forms were delicately suspended in space in installations throughout the 1990's (New York, Boston, San Francisco). Friends from the drag and performance scene contributed their hair and wigs to the seemingly ongoing project.

The activity represented a double bind: at once a symbiotic affirmation performance of life and creative celebration while death consumed that very community as it was being decimated by AIDS.

Kathleen cared for sick and dying friends, as many in the community did at the time. Still her studio practice continued in full bloom producing a cross-pollination of mediums. Intimate drawings evolved combining pencil, pigment, burns, watercolor and hair on phone book pages with moody self portraits, portraits of friends (hair ancestors) and strangers, eyes and other mysterious beings.

She referred to the drawings as “spirits.”

Rafael Sánchez, NYC, April, 2016
The Estate of Kathleen White



Kathleen White
Self Portrait, Spirit, 1995
watercolor, pencil, glue, hair on phone book page
11 x 8 ½ inches



Kathleen White
Spirits (McCarthy-McConnell), 1995
watercolor, glue, hair on phone book pages
11 x 8 1/2 inches