

# MARTOS GALLERY

Howe, David Everett, "Goodbye to a neighbor," *Baudrillard's at Bergdorf*, September 9, 2014

## Baudrillard's at Bergdorf

### Goodbye to a neighbor



Nan Goldin, *Kathleen*, NYC, 1993

When Alex and I first moved to New York City, in the summer of 2006, we moved into a tiny one bedroom apartment in the Lower East Side, at 151 Ludlow Street. It was a second floor walk-up, in a grimy tenement building. Graffiti was caked all over the door; my Dad continues to joke that when he first came to help us move in, there was a homeless man sleeping in the doorway. It was, in essence, the kind of place New York City dreams were made of, right in the heart of things; pigeons cooed outside my window; the front of the building was overwhelmed with noise from the street, the back blissfully quiet; you could walk out the front door, and get a coffee across the street, and a drink down the block. Mountains of trash spilled off the curb, and rats occasionally ran across your feet at 3 in the morning. This was just before the area became completely gentrified, when there were still good bars to go to, and everything seemed genuinely run-down. It had its drawbacks, but I loved (and still love) the place.



Nan Goldin, *Kathleen at the Bowery Bar, NYC, 1995*

It seemed fitting then that our neighbors were Kathleen White and Rafael Sanchez, an artist couple. They lived literally down the hallway. They were very nice, but I thought at the time a little bizarre. They would ask our plans for the summer solstice; created colonies of worms in the big back yard, which for some reason I never really used; and built a massive, portable dolmen, which was reconstructed periodically. The thing was fucking huge, and kind of amazing (you can see me posing with it below, with some sort of cardboard cut-out stewardess we found in the trash).



Anyways, I don't think I fully appreciated Kathleen and Rafael until much later, after I had moved out and started to become more involved at PARTICIPANT, where they were also part of the community (both Kathleen and Rafael had a solo show of paintings and drawings there, in 2004). But like with most New York neighbors, there's a weird intimacy involved even when you're basically strangers. Like when a homeless man snuck into our building, and pulled down a massive ladder in the middle of the night, waking everyone. Or when there was some sort of fire scare, and we stood out in the hallway together, sort of watching and waiting. When I was moving out, Kathleen came in when the apartment was nearly devoid of furniture, and gave me her email to keep in touch, in case I wanted to write anything in her and Rafael's magazine, *aLuPiNiT*.

I never did, and we never became close. But when Kathleen died last week of cancer, it made me a little sad to think that that part of New York is gone, as she was so wrapped up in that building for me, and that time when I was new here, and the city was exciting, and exotic - just as much as the building's smells, or the way the radiators clanged in the winter. You may never really know someone well, but that doesn't mean they never had a presence to you.

