

JUXTAPOZ

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current



life—style

Life Cafe honors the notorious and beloved players of the East Village's artistic renaissance in *Land of 1000 Galleries—Art From the East Village/LES—The 1980s*. Kathy Kirkpatrick, producer of the event and original owner of Life Cafe, gathered a curating committee of seven East Village and Lower East Side residents who were active during this period as gallery owners, curators, artists, writers, and poets. Together they assembled the works of over 50 artists of the 1980s, including such notables as Keith Haring and David Wojnarowicz, to be showcased in this unique multimedia exhibition. "It's an appropriate time for us to look at that period and to some of the artists who made the East Village famous in our recent memory and experience," says Kirkpatrick. Lured by cheap rent and artistic camaraderie, Kirkpatrick and David Life opened Life Cafe in 1981 in a ramshackle storefront on 10th Street and Avenue B in Manhattan's Lower East Side. A coffeehouse that fulfilled the need of local writers and artists to gather, Life Cafe was soon joined by a handful of other artists who opened the East Village's first art galleries. By 1985, there were over 100 galleries operating out of storefronts around Life Cafe, which had become a respected art and performance space worldwide. Before the close of the decade, the yuppie invasion, rent increases, and the onslaught of AIDS had dismantled the artistic community that both influenced and intimidated the world of contemporary art. Life Cafe survived to tell the story, and continues as a haven of East Village artisans. *Land of 1000 Galleries* will extend its series of group shows through August to accommodate the overflow of significant artists, giving further opportunity to celebrate the dynamic impact of this era.

Clockwise from top left: *Untitled*, by Greer Lankton. *Untitled*, by Rick Prol.