

FLASH ART ITALY

E.V. R.I.P.

by
Rick ProL

Wow, the East Village. What a time, what a place. It all started for me then and it was a moment of great opportunity. In retrospect it all happened so fast. I met and became friends with many of the greats-- Martin Wong, David Wojnarowicz, Walter Robinson, Jean Michel Basquiat, Mike Bidlo, Renee Ricard, Lee Quinones, Richard Kern, Patti Astor, Pat Hearn, Timothy Greenfield Sanders, Michael Roman, Keith Haring to name but a few. At the same time that I started to show my work I was curating shows at the East 7th Street Gallery. The first show titled Underdog was written up in ArtForum by Thomas McEvelley who asked the question "Is there an East Village style?" With the resounding answer being NO! Some of the artists in the shows were-George Condo, Peter Schuyff, Milan Kunc, Mark Kostabi, Donald Baechler, Christof Kohlhoffer, Keiko Bonk, Rodney Allen Greenblat, Wojnarowicz, Wong and on and on. There was always great work to be seen in the Galleries on any given day by the likes of Richard Hambleton, Anton Van Dalen, Daze, Lori Taschler, Philip Taffe, Keily Jenkins, Fab Five Freddy, The East Village was a heady mix of fun,

ambition, experimentation, socializing, hustling and Art. There was always the next show the next hurdle. It was all fuel that helped to drive the making of my work. Sadly many of the scenes luminaries died way too young, way before their time- David Wojnarowicz, Martin Wong, Jean Michel Basquiat, Nicolas Moufferage, Greer Lankton, Dean Savard who ran the Civilian Warfare Gallery. The list is long. For myself I am forever grateful to the East Village as the place where I got my start. Amazingly enough my studio is still there to this day on East 6th St. It was once the B-Side Gallery. Just one of the many galleries I showed with at the time. And I still live in the West Village just like back then. I think of the East Village now like some incredible ship that started out very small, navigated primarily by artists. The ship kept getting bigger and bigger to accommodate the evergrowing influx of artists, dealers, galleries, critics and hanger-ons. The ship began to be almost unrecognizable to the amazement of many of its original passengers. And as it sailed forward it inevitably began to lose some of its earlier charm and quality for better or worse. Then suddenly, almost without warning (at least to me) the ship, with all its hopes and dreams its ambitions and life began to sink. What was the cause? Many hands were lost in the mad rush to survive the wreckage. But some were able to hang on and continue. Thus ended the Great Glory Days of the (dare I say) innocent, wonderful, terrible, exciting place known as The East Village Art Scene of the 1980's. There will never be another like it. E. V. R. I . P. Long live the East Village!

Rick ProL

JAN. 2004, NYC