

# NEW YORK

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## ART

EDITED BY KAREN ROSENBERG

### ON VIEW GET PSYCHED

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE IN  
KAREN FINLEY'S PORTRAITS.

**K**AREN FINLEY WANTS TO BE your psychic friend. For **Psychic Portraits**, her first show at the Kitchen in eleven years, the legendary performance artist is available by appointment to capture sitters' auras on paper. She will also be holding a séance, "Unsolved Mysteries of the Art World," in the Kitchen's theater on the evening of October 30. The new work is unlikely to provoke any NEA debates, although the American Association of Professional Psychics may come calling. "I wanted to think about the arts as a healing experience," says Finley, who was inspired by the enterprising characters hawking portraits and psychic readings along the pier in Santa Monica. She's often performed in states of trance, but is she ready for one-on-one sessions? "I just open up and become a medium, a vehicle. I don't question—I just go with the image and hear words, different things," she explains. Apparently, the gift runs in the family. "My father, a drummer, would go into a trance when he performed. There are clairvoyants on his side. When I was growing up, we had a family seer, and I learned divination." Subjects are encouraged to show up with pets or significant others, or in Halloween costumes. At \$100 for a gouache or \$150 for an iridescent, it's a far cry



**LOOK INTO MY (CAT) EYES:** A "psychic portrait" by Karen Finley (*Untitled*, 2003).

from street caricature, but less than the going rate in Chelsea for a work by an emerging artist. "It comments, in a theatrical way, on the art market," Finley says. "I've always had a conflict in terms of galleries: I'm thinking about outsider art, but I'm not an outsider." (October 31 through November 15; see "Galleries: Solos—Chelsea.")

K.R.