



# Tom Rubnitz

## A Video



**Tom Rubnitz was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1956. Since 1978, when he graduated from the Kansas City Art Institute and came to live in New York he has produced a diverse body of work in video that has been exhibited internationally.**

**In 1981 Rubnitz began videotaping shows at the infamous Pyramid Cocktail Lounge, where he met many of New York's legendary "underground" performers, including Ann Magnuson, John Sex, John Kelly, Hapi Phace, Gerard Little and Ethyl Eichelberger. Although his earliest video works were straightforward documentations of Pyramid shows, such as a weekly spoof of "Family Feud," he quickly established a distinctive body of short works on video featuring many of the performers associated with the Pyramid Cocktail Lounge and Club 57. These short works range from music videos, public service announcements, pseudo-commercials and movie trailers (for non-existent feature films) to dragumentaries and video art works that share a kitsch, comic sensibility and a disarming charm.**

**Tom Rubnitz has been living with AIDS for the past four years and has witnessed the death of countless friends and collaborators, including John Sex, Ethyl Eichelberger and Tseng Kwong Chi. Yet his work has never wavered in its joyful celebration of life. Rubnitz's oeuvre is a unique document of a remarkable generation of young, mostly gay performers, many of who have succumbed to AIDS. But his work is living testament to the power of humor and to the community of artists, performers and personalities who he has collaborated with over the years. As Warren Sonbert ponted out in a recent review of his work: "For the length of Rubnitz's magic all thoughts of misery and death disappear and only joy and hilarity reign. This is no small accomplishment."**

**Tom Rubnitz continues to work with New York's most talented performers, such as the inimitable Sister Dimension, Ru Paul, Lahoma Van Zandt, Billy Erb, Lucy Sexton, Anne Iobst and The Lady Bunny, among others. He is also an accomplished, and until recently, closeted painter. The first solo exhibition of his visual art runs throughout April in the windows of Barneys.**

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