



The Kitchen Center
for Video, Music, Dance,
Performance, Film & Literature

512 West 19th Street
New York, NY 10011
Tel: 212-255-5793

info@thekitchen.org
www.thekitchen.org
Fax: 212-645-4258

For Immediate Release:

Isabelle Deconinck
212.255.5793 x14
isabelle@thekitchen.org

Michael Chagnon
212.255.5793 x25
michael@thekitchen.org

September 23, 2003

Get "psyched" out and own an original portrait of yourself by performance and visual art legend Karen Finley...

Karen Finley

Séance: Unsolved Mysteries of the Art World
October 30 (Thu) 8pm \$25

THE KITCHEN ART GALLERY: Psychic Portraits

October 31 - November 15

Open Tue-Sat 2-6pm Free

GALLERY TALK: November 15 (Sat) 5:30pm Free

CLOSING RECEPTION: November 15 (Sat) 6-8pm

PSYCHIC PORTRAIT SITTINGS:

Wed & Thu 10:30am-4pm, Fri & Sat 1:30-7pm (by appointment only)

Options: Halloween (Come in Costume), Bring your Pet, From Beyond/Past Lives.

Sittings are scheduled every half-an-hour.

To make an appointment, call 212.255.5793 x25

Gouache: \$100/Iridescent: \$150 (individual)

Gouache: \$175/Iridescent: \$200 (couple)

Legendary art world persona **Karen Finley** returns to The Kitchen after 11 years to explore trance as a vessel for higher emotional states and freedom of imagination. Karen's appearance will take two forms: *Séance: Unsolved Mysteries of the Art World*, a one-night-only séance-as-performance; and *Psychic Portraits* (New York premiere), including a series of one-on-one sittings open to the public and completed by a gallery installation.

Best known for her daring, disturbing and often tongue-in-cheek performances, Karen Finley began performing at The Kitchen in 1985, tackling sensitive topics head-on such as the perpetrator's role in sexual abuse with *The Constant State of Desire* (1986); and the day-to-day interactions of a dysfunctional family in *The Theory of Total Blame* (1988), among others. In 1990, while premiering *We Keep Our Victims Ready* at The Kitchen, her NEA grant was revoked, bringing her art to a debate on the Senate floor (by no other than Jesse Helms) and to the Supreme Court. In *Séance: Unsolved Mysteries of the Art*
over

World, "Madame Karen" converts The Kitchen's first floor into a psychic salon and joins psychic friends to summon spirits from the art world. Audience members get the chance to ask what they've been *dying* to know from the likes of Marilyn Monroe, Judy Garland, Jackie O, Andy Warhol and others.

While pursuing her celebrated career as performer and author, Karen Finley has been continuously creating and exhibiting drawings and paintings in galleries such as Feigen Contemporary, Lipton Owens, Amy Lipton, Rene Fotouhi, and Mo David. With *Psychic Portraits* in The Kitchen Art Gallery, her visual and performance practices come together, offering a unique opportunity to fans and art lovers to own an original portrait of themselves, signed and dated by Karen Finley. Participants make individual appointments; and in a process she likens to Surrealist automaticism, the artist conducts an intuitive reading of the sitter's psychic emanations, which she then transfers to a 10 x 15" gouache or iridescent portrait. The sessions are open to the public from a discreet distance, and will run concurrently with a two-week long gallery exhibition. Each work will be shown in the gallery space, and can be picked up at the closing reception (November 15, 6-8pm). Preceding the reception, Karen Finley will offer a Public Talk (November 15, 5:30pm), in which she shares her experience of making *Psychic Portraits* as a natural synthesis of her performance and visual work.

Biography:

Karen Finley is a New York-based artist whose personal performances, writings, installations and visual art have long provoked controversy and debate. Born in Chicago, Finley attended the San Francisco Art Institute and moved to New York in 1983 after receiving a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. She began performing in cabarets first at the club Danceteria, which eventually came together as her early piece *I'm an Ass Man*. When Finley traveled to London to perform the piece at the ICA, she was forced to cancel after being threatened with arrest and deportation. She was invited to perform *The Constant State of Desire* at The Kitchen in 1986. In 1988, she created the multi-media performance *A Suggestion of Madness* to honor the 10th anniversary of her father's death, ending each show by reading his suicide note. *A Certain Level of Denial*, Finley's response to the outrage and loss of the AIDS epidemic, premiered at Lincoln Center in 1992, and she received a Guggenheim fellowship for the project *The American Chestnut*, a parallel of "the illnesses of nature and the illnesses of society." Finley was one of four artists whose NEA grants applications were vetoed in 1990 due to content considered "inappropriate," sparking a Senatorial and Supreme Court debate that led to the government's right to place restrictions on funding based on "decency standards." Finley wrote and performed *The Return of the Chocolate-Smeared Woman*, a rebuttal to Jesse Helms, in 1998 during the Supreme Court proceedings. As a visual artist, Finley has been exhibited since the early 1980s on both coasts and in the Midwest, United States, and internationally in Germany, England, Spain, the Netherlands, and Brazil. In New York, her visual work has been seen at The Kitchen Art Gallery, P.S. 122 Gallery, Franklin Furnace, White Columns, Threadwaxing Space, Paula Cooper, Cristinerose, Castelli Graphics, Denise Bibro Fine Art, Liebman Magnan, and Hallwalls (Buffalo). Finley's multimedia projects and installations include *Memento Mori*, centered around grieving rituals for those who have died of AIDS; *1-900-ALL-KAREN*, a performance featuring daily pre-recorded phone messages by Finley; and *Go Figure/Fear of Offending*, which included an audience participation website. Finley has made numerous dance records and has written and directed plays, among them *The Theory of Total Blame* and *The Lamb of God Hotel*. She is the author of *Shock Treatment* (City Lights, 1990), *Enough is Enough* (Poseidon, 1993), *Pooh Unplugged* (Smart Art Press, 1999), *A Different Kind of Intimacy: The Collected Writings of Karen Finley* (Thunder's Mouth Press, 2000), and she edited and contributed to *Aroused: A Collection of Erotic Writings* (Thunder's Mouth Press, 2001).

###

www.thekitchen.org

The Kitchen is located at 512 West 19th Street (between 10th & 11th Aves.).