

THE KITCHEN

CENTER FOR
VIDEO, MUSIC,
DANCE AND
PERFORMANCE

REVIEWS

Eric Bogosian, *Party*.
112 Greene St. (December).

The Kipper Kids.
Pat Oleszko.
The Kitchen (November-December).

By now the notion of doing bits of pop entertainment in art performance is an acceptable, almost commonplace, one. As such, its impact as an art concept has considerably diminished, laying a neat trap for unwary performers. When the idea/art end of such a performance fails or the script fails to be original, the audience will soon succumb to comparing this performer to the pop idol he is referring to. The result is usually a new appreciation of the prototypical media star, whose technique is invariably perfect. Three recent performances come to mind.

The Kipper Kids all but threw up all over the Kitchen, and were quite funny at times. Very professional for an art performance, I kept thinking, a relaxed, well timed pair. Amusing material, but not very original: fart noises, diaper antics, food fight. The audience liked it, but how much more might they enjoy Moe, Larry, and Curley, or even Buddy Hackett and a frozen yogurt bar. I do admit to being irritated by their proffering the accumulated

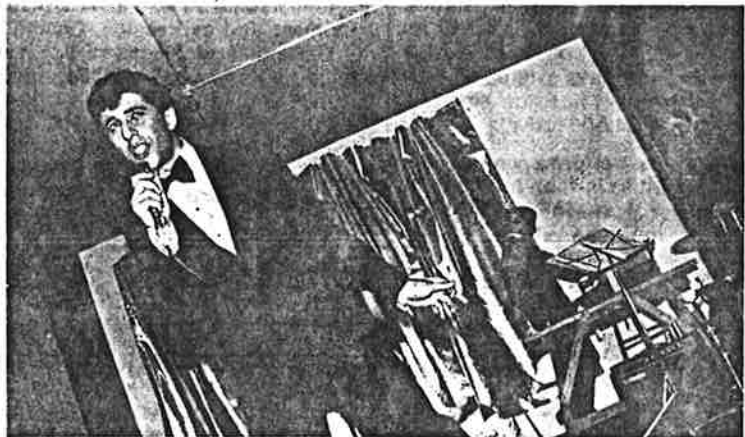
mess as the new painting, so I suppose they score some points there somewhere. I shouldn't care.

Pat Oleszko's Installation and performance at the Kitchen was separated into live work and short films. Although all of the work was highly produced, the films were considerably more animate, more focused, possessed of genuine charm. In the first, she personified her lower legs as a strolling couple, taking in the streets of Manhattan. The small faces painted on her knees were wonderfully expressive. In the second, an uncanny pair of tiny shoes transformed her fingers into a pair of legs. Her hand became a pert pedestrian, beautifully mimed. The gags were clear and nicely developed. The third film, a version of Cinderella, seemed less to the point, but managed a certain buoyancy. The costumes and decor were disappointing. The performer herself, when confronted with the live audience, seemed at a loss for a stage presence. The physical comedy was awkward and low voltage, and one sensed an ambivalence on her part about her role in the proceedings. She was at all times either enmeshed in an elaborate mask of some sort or sharing the spotlight with a filmed image of herself. I found her performance an uneven affair.

Eric Bogosian's *Party* at 112 Greene was a tougher nut to crack. I liked it, but I didn't, yet I did ... for reasons having to do with Lenny Bruce and Danny Ackroyd. In the end, it was not Eric's surprisingly good manic stand up comedian bit, for that remained a take-off on a media prototype, but his role for Barbara (Barbie) Allen which established an original point of view. Her desperately grateful chanteuse was both subtle and hysterical, and created a focus for the evening. Barbie was radiant yet passive, the necessary counterweight to Eric's opaque and aggressive persona. It's too bad that their wrap up rap into shared hand held mike was so terse; one wanted to see more of the possibilities explored. In the end, this work which had seemed so obvious at first, revealed itself as a considerably more complex affair.

Bogosian, simply by having the sense to leave the production raw, discourages any confusion of this with the "real" thing. Instead of a failed approximation of Hollywood/Vegas technique, we get fairly satisfying manipulation of contexts and strong performance energy. This is perhaps because behind the scenes, the writer has a firm grasp on his material and the nature of his imagery.

Tony Mascatello



Paula Court

PARTY

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