

MARTOS GALLERY

Sánchez, Rafael, "Spirit Drawings," April 2016



Nan Goldin, *Kathleen at Her Studio*, c. 1996

Spirit Drawings

Throughout the 1990's Kathleen created ephemeral sculptures utilizing human hair and wigs. The exact beginning of these pieces is difficult to pinpoint, however their overall import came from her close connection to the downtown Manhattan performance world of the late 1980's and early 1990's.

She titled this activity *Spirits of Manhattan*, in which the hair forms were delicately suspended in space in installations throughout the 1990's (New York, Boston, San Francisco). Friends from the drag and performance scene contributed their hair and wigs to the seemingly ongoing project.

The activity represented a double bind: at once a symbiotic affirmation performance of life and creative celebration while death consumed that very community as it was being decimated by AIDS.

Kathleen cared for sick and dying friends, as many in the community did at the time. Still her studio practice continued in full bloom producing a cross-pollination of mediums. Intimate drawings evolved combining pencil, pigment, burns, watercolor and hair on phone book pages with moody self portraits, portraits of friends (hair ancestors) and strangers, eyes and other mysterious beings.

She referred to the drawings as “spirits.”

Rafael Sánchez, NYC, April, 2016
The Estate of Kathleen White



Kathleen White
Self Portrait, Spirit, 1995
watercolor, pencil, glue, hair on phone book page
11 x 8 ½ inches



Kathleen White
Spirits (McCarthy-McConnell), 1995
watercolor, glue, hair on phone book pages
11 x 8 1/2 inches