

223  
West Broadway  
New York NY  
10013

**ARTISTS  
SPACE**

# PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Roberta Sklar (212) 226-3970

## WITNESSES: AGAINST OUR VANISHING

Organized by Nan Goldin  
November 16 - January 6, 1990  
Opening Reception: Thursday, November 16, 6-8 pm  
Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11-6

Artists Space is pleased to present **Witnesses: Against our Vanishing** a group exhibition organized by artist/photographer Nan Goldin. The exhibition includes photographs, drawings, paintings and sculpture by artists David Armstrong, Tom Chesley, Dorit Cypis, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Jane Dickson, Clarence Elie-Rivera, Darrel Ellis, Allen Frame, Peter Hujar, Greer Lankton, Siobhan Liddell, Mark Morrisroe, Perico Pastor, Margo Pelletier, Vittorio Scarpatti, Jo Shane, Kiki Smith, Janet Stein, Tabboo! Stephen Tashjian, Shellburne Thurber, Ken Tisa, Robert Vitale, David Wojnarowicz. Accompanying the exhibition is a catalogue with reproductions of each artist's work and essays by Nan Goldin, David Wojnarowicz, Linda Yablonsky and Cookie Mueller.

**Witnesses** represents a personal reflection on the influence AIDS has had on aesthetics, culture and sexuality among Goldin's friends in Manhattan's Lower East Side community. The intention of the exhibition is to emphasize a continuum of cultural activity and a personal response to the move away from sexual liberation occasioned by the AIDS crisis. The show addresses the issue of the sublimation of sexuality through art and the fact that sexual liberation and/or sexually explicit work seems currently less visible due to the epidemic and its ravaging of the art community in recent years.

In her selections, Goldin emphasizes the effects of AIDS as a metaphor for the evolution of the gay aesthetic, as in the nostalgic photographic pairings of Allen Frame or the theatrical sculptures of Janet Stein. Peter Hujar's elegant, male portraits and Mark Morrisroe's self portraits also touch on this issue. Some of the work in the exhibition explores drug abuse as a related disease in terms of active use, drug recovery and spiritual reclamation: Ken Tisa, Tom Chesley, Clarence Elie and Shellburne Thurber. Goldin suggests that recovery is possible only through an artistic investigation of the disease and its side effects.

While the work of artists such as David Armstrong, David Wojnarowicz, Greer Lankton, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Jo Shane and Stephen Tashjian deals directly with AIDS, several of the artists treat sexuality in a more general way. Dorit Cypis' conceptual piece about the female body and Perico Pastor's figurative paintings speak in a positive or hopeful way about sexuality and gender in the wake of AIDS.



Janet Stein, Jane Dickson, Kiki Smith, Darrel Ellis, Margo Pelletier and Siobhan Liddell have created new work for the exhibition.

The exhibition is a tribute to Goldin's friends - some who have died of AIDS and others who have found ways to respond to the disease through their art. From the specific point of a view of Goldin's contemporaries, the show speaks to the concerns of the larger community of AIDS survivors. The exhibition examines the impact of this critical social issue on contemporary art.

There will be two evenings of readings in conjunction with the exhibition on November 28 and 29 beginning at 8 p.m. The readings are organized by Nan Goldin and Barbara Barg.

On December 1 Artists Space will be closed in participation of A Day Without Art, a national awareness event sponsored by Visual Aids. On this day cultural institutions across the country will either close or contribute AIDS related programming.

**Witnesses:** Against our Vanishing is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation.

Artists Space activities are made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; Institute of Museum Services; New York State Council on the Arts; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; Art Matters, Inc., A.T. & T. Foundation, Inc., Cowles Family Charitable Trust, Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, Inc., Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Jerome Foundation, The J.M. Kaplan Fund, Leonhardt Foundation, The Joe and Emily Low foundation, Inc., The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Inc., Menemsha Foundation, The New York Community Trust, Betty Parsons Foundation, The Reed Foundation, Inc., Mark Rothko Foundation, Robert Sterling Clark Foundation; Surdna Foundation, Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, Chase Manhattan Bank N.A., Consolidated Edison, Equitable Real Estate Group, Inc., General Atlantic Corporation, R.H. Macy & Company, Mobil Foundation, Inc., Morgan Guaranty Trust of New York and Philip Morris Companies, Inc., U.S. Trust, Warhol Foundation, Artwatch, Galleries in Support of Artists Space, as well as numerous Friends.

Artists Space is a member of the National Association of Artists Organizations (NAAO) and Media Alliance.