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# The New York Times

## ART REVIEW; Where Witty Meets Gritty

Holland Cotter / Nov 15, 2002

### East Village

Actually, many of the area's institutions do double duty of various kinds. The estimable Tribes Gallery at 285 East Third Street, run by Steve Cannon, gives equal time to art and jazz. (It was between exhibitions this week.) The Bowery Poetry Club, founded by Bob Holman, is primarily a venue for readings, but also does exhibitions: at present it has a charming installation by Jenny Snider of vibrantly painted sculptural cars swarming across a wall.

Both Tribes and the Poetry Club are, strictly speaking, part of the East Village scene, where the gallery boom of the 1980's lasted a few years before being overwhelmed by establishment competition and a bad market. Still, a handful of its old, doughty nonprofit galleries still survive, and do so in style.

One of them is Kenkeleba House, run by Corrine Jennings, which has a beautiful survey of photographs by Beauford Smith. Mr. Smith joined Kamoinge, a workshop for African-American photographers, in 1965 -- he is now its president -- and the earliest pictures here, including one of a man weeping for the dead Martin Luther King Jr., date from that era; others, including a color image taken on Lower Broadway two days after 9/11, are recent. This is an impressive body of work, imaginative and humane, and Kenkeleba has done well by it. Bright, semi-abstract paintings by Linda Hiwot hang in the adjoining gallery.

Also afloat is P.S. 122, a converted public school building with a performance space -- who could ever forget Ethyl Eichelberger's appearances there? -- and a compact gallery. Its current three-artist show has attractive abstract paintings by Mary Schiliro and Lili White, and -- the pièce de résistance -- a sculpture by Linda Herritt that includes a pair of pink ziggurats floating over a vat of Pepto-Bismol.

If Ms. Herritt's meaning is hard to define (and it doesn't matter; the piece looks good), there is little doubt about what's on Max Schumann's mind in the paintings and collages hung salon-style in the lobby of the Theater for the New City. Titled "Things Are Still Being Smashed," the show reworks covers of popular magazines like Time and National Geographic to pull out messages of cultural and military aggression. Mr. Schumann is the son of Peter Schumann, who founded Bread and Puppet Theater and whose poetics of protest, like the paintings in the show, suit a neighborhood where ideological resistance still simmers.

*P.S. 122 GALLERY, 150 First Avenue, near Ninth Street, (212) 228-4249. Linda Herritt, Mary Schiliro, Lili White. Through Nov. 24. Hours: Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6 p.m.*