

## Art

**DEVON DIKEOU:** Her "Norma Talmadge's Chinese Theater: The Off Broadway Review" immortalized whoever happened into the gallery at the start of the show: those in the right place at the right time left imprints in the wet cement floor while Dikeou took pictures. They're now upstairs in a chapel to Norma (first to stumble into the Hollywood cement). Besides red carpet, candles, altars, and autographed Tinseltown photos, a sepia print of Cecil B. DeMille's *King of Kings* is playing—in case you miss the connection between celebrities and deities. Through October 1, Leonora Vega Gallery, 107 Mercer Street, 274-8102. (Levin)



# The Walk of Stars

*Devon Dikeou at  
Hohenthal und  
Bergen*

The New York artist Devon Dikeou, who previously showed this traveling exhibition in Los Angeles, showed an installation in two parts (phases): Entitled "Norma Talmadge's Chinese Theater" the exhibition refers to the Hollywood (1920's) star/movie/production system. The critical point is the glorification of movie actors. Its historical site is the street of stars which you can visit in Hollywood. There, movie stars left in concrete fields their hand and shoe prints, their signatures, and dates. Norma Talmadge was told to be the first one in the 20's. This was the model for the gallery visitors during the first phase of the exhibition. Making the imprints, participants were photographed by the artist. Also, they could inscribe their names in a red visitors book in which there are also the names of the titles—written in golden letters—of the films in which Talmadge played. In the second (part) phase of the show the visitor finds himself in a room that is enveloped by the glow of yellow and red light bulbs. The windows are covered by a red non-transparent volant curtain.

## *Bible Citations and Chinese Altars*

Replacing the clattering noises from the concrete machine, one listens to dramatic film music which accompanies the silent movie "The King of Kings" (1927: Cecil B. de Mille), and which is projected on the back

wall. It shows the life of Jesus from the point of view of Mary Magdalena. The film's action is commented through juxtapositions from citations of the bible in subtitle. On the left wall three small Chinese altars are hanging in which photographs of Norma Talmadge are shown illuminated by two candles each. In the front room of the gallery one can find more pictures of the actress which are combined symmetrically with photographs of gallery visitors in action. On shelves, two additional photo albums (books) are available for consultation. On top of all this hangs a red imprint print done by the artist. Of course, one can think that one encounters here, in an ironic and entertaining way, a critique of the humans' greed for fame. Also, it is about a version of Andy Warhol's "famous 15 minutes," as a gallery visitor inscribed in the concrete—but with the additional note that their fame already has passed before they even had "starred."

The concept of the artist appears pseudo moralistic. As a page of an American senator, Devon Dikeou had previously operated signature machines which were designed to give the impression to the voter the they are addressed personally. Once familiar with the mechanism of manipulation, she desires (or demands, or asks for) a "beautiful exhibition"—may be in an of artistic sentimentality. (M.F.)

Hohenthal und Bergen:  
Bismarckstra. 60. open Tue.-Fri.  
2;00-6:00. Sat. 11:00-14. Through  
the 31st of March.

# Listings

## GALLERIES

### Downtown

\* **Leonora Vega**, 107 Mercer St. (betw. Broome & Spring Sts.), 274-8102. Devon Dikeou, "Norma Talmadge's Chinese Theater: The Off Broadway Review." Perhaps the best part of this show has passed: visitors were invited to immortalize their footprints, handprints, faceprints and in some cases entire bodyprints, a la Grauman's. The artist snapped photos while cement mixers poured. Now that the floor is full of prints, the workers have been sent home and the gallery has been transformed into a shrine. Endearing photos of the show's participants have been bound into books; upstairs there is a quiet altar to the silent screen star who started it all, while in the background a beautiful sepia print of De Mille's *Kings of Kings* flickers on [through 10/1].





Jim Wilson/The New York Times

The gallery scene in Los Angeles is in such a state of flux that the newer, smaller dealers are finding a "not so great" market to be great. Sue Spaid operates her shoestring gallery out of a tiny storefront on Beverly Boulevard where she is currently showing Kevin Sullivan's work.

## The Los Angeles Art World's New Image

BY ROBERTA SMITH

Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES — Sue Spaid, a tall young woman who opened a gallery in a tiny storefront on Beverly Boulevard two years ago, is something of a legend in the freshman ranks of the Los Angeles art scene. Mention her name and people will remark that she has been known to work in a bakery at the minimum wage to keep her gallery going, or that she doesn't have a car.

Ms. Spaid admits to having "a financial crisis every six weeks," that she operates her gallery on about \$2,500 a month and that she has no staff, but "a lot of volunteers." Ask her what she thinks of the current state of the Los Angeles art world, where the recession has taken a high toll among galleries, and she says elliptically, "I think probably things' not being so great is what makes it so great."

Great, not so great. The gallery scene in this city is in such a state of flux that both adjectives are regularly applied. But something — maybe a few somethings — has reached critical mass here.

Talk to established dealers with

their large, sleek galleries and big overheads and you see an art scene that may have expanded beyond the needs of its environment. Three years ago new galleries were opening and older ones expanding at a remarkable rate; Santa Monica was being called the next SoHo and an art collection was the status symbol of choice among Hollywood and real-estate moguls alike. These days, after nearly a dozen galleries, most of them in Santa Monica, have closed, the dealers who remain open complain about the fickleness of local collectors or, more rationally, the narrowness or shallowness of "the collector base."

### Talking, Not Looking

Some cite real-estate barons who prefer to buy art in New York; others point to television producers who spend more time parked in front of galleries cradling car phones than they do inside looking at art. Along the way, still others complain that the new young dealers — Ms. Spaid, who is 31 years old, and her generation — are getting too much press, an unsurprising cavil in a scene whose dealers are notoriously insular. And two gallery owners, speaking anonymously of course, say that they think the only

### Young people are creating a no-frills, shoestring gallery style.

dealer who is doing any real business in Los Angeles is Arne Glimcher, the owner of the Pace Gallery in New York. Not only is Mr. Glimcher himself a sometime movie producer and director, his Hollywood connections are magnified by his close friendship with Michael Ovitz, who is the head of the powerful Creative Artists Agency and an avid collector of contemporary art.

Rosamund Felsen, who has been in business for 14 years (the last 2 in handsome new space in West Hollywood), and represents Los Angeles artists exclusively, sees collectors as "the weakest link" in the Los Angeles art scene.

"We've got everything else: really important artists, critics and museums," Ms. Felsen said. "The handful of important collectors continue to buy, but the others just don't realize that if they want to have an art community that's respected around the world, they have to support it. Not only have they stopped buying, they're not even coming in."

Michael Kohn moved from his West Hollywood gallery to an upscale Colorado Avenue mall in Santa Monica with several other dealers two years ago. "A lot of the collectors I used to sell to no longer buy, although I'd have to put collectors in quotes," he said. "People say don't close; hang on; hang on. I say buy art and I'll hang on. The Hollywood collectors, that necessary evil, consistently don't have time to look at art in their own city."

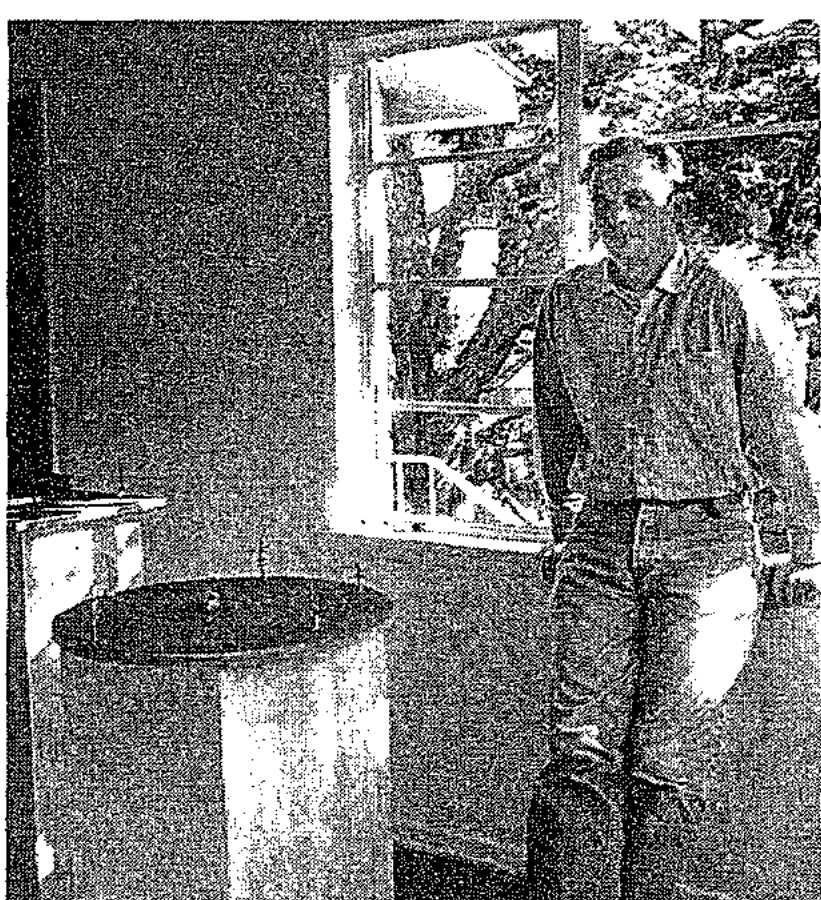
But in contrast to the market's contracting top is the expanding bottom, where Ms. Spaid and her colleagues are forging a no-frills gallery style. The last year has seen the emergence of several shoestring galleries and exhibition spaces with odd names like Food House, Nomadic Sites, 1301 and TRI. Some are in unrefurbished storefronts or private homes; others lack permanent addresses. Most concentrate on showing the young artists coming out of the area's unusually plentiful and unusually good art schools. All are run by a new generation of mostly 20-something dealers, artists and low-key entrepreneurs who are bringing a new vitality and community to a scene where traditional entry points like alternative spaces have been in short supply.

### Importing Established Artists

The conversations at this level, where everyone has a lot less to lose, are considerably brighter, with emphasis on local artists, non-Hollywood collectors, low prices (as in "nothing over \$3,000, most under \$1,000") and taking things into your own hands. The younger set sees the 1980's gallery boom as a free-floating, corporate-influenced phenomenon. It was a time when most big galleries, sometimes called dinosaurs, concentrated on importing established artists from New York and Europe rather than putting down roots in the local art community.

The new dealers cite as inspiration the shoestring approach of Thomas Solomon, son of the New York art dealer Holly Solomon, who operated a gallery out of a single-car garage on an alley in the Fairfax district for almost three years, giving a number of unknown artists from both coasts their first solo shows. After gradually expanding to five garages, Mr. Solomon moved two years ago to a relatively large gallery on North Fairfax

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**Brian Butler** operates his no-frills gallery out of his apartment in Santa Monica, where he displays the sculptures of Thaddeus Strode.

## A New No-Frills Image For Art in Los Angeles

Continued From Page C11

Avenue, a converted automobile mechanic's garage, as it turns out.

"The whole lifeline of the commercial gallery had run its course," said Leonard Bravo, a 27-year-old painter, as he explained why he and two other artists, Robert Grunderman and Stephen Hartzog, both 29, opened the tiny gallery called Food House in Santa Monica last spring. While Mr. Bravo referred to the "bigger was better" habits of established galleries, Mr. Grunderman called their own approach "back to basics."

Indeed, Food House, situated on the downscale end of Colorado Avenue, looks like a miniature, no-budget facsimile of what may soon be called the classic Santa Monica gallery. The space has the same spare industrial beamwork overhead, the same cement floor underfoot, but it measures only 500 square feet; its front desk is strictly plywood and its staff is limited to the gallery's founders. They already represent a dozen young artists. "We want to stay away from showing just one school," Mr. Bravo said, referring not so much to esthetics as to the way the graduates of a particular art school often form tight (and sometimes feuding) cliques.

### 'Art's Presentation'

What's emerging at the grass roots level may be a gallery for a small art scene, something flexible, modest and right in the living room. The most extreme example of flexibility is Nomadic Sites, a yearlong series of exhibitions initiated in July by a 27-year-old sculptor, Charles LaBelle. Organized by different artists at Mr. LaBelle's invitation, the shows have so far been held in donated spaces that have ranged from studios to vacant storefronts to the lobby of a public library. Mr. LaBelle said he saw the exhibitions as "a program about art's presentation" that "brings art back to the discourse rather than the market." Sticking closer to home are Brian Butler, Rory Devine and Amanda M. Obering, who all exhibit art in their apartments.

Mr. Devine, who is 27 and an artist, has a shy, deadpan manner that can remind one a little of Andy Warhol. (Another careless dealer, he said he moved from New York to Los Angeles three years ago, sight unseen, because "The Rockford Files" was

there) that it's too soon to tell if she will become a permanent part of the scene. Nonetheless, an installation piece by Devon Diekouthat covered the entire living room floor with several inches of cement, in homage to the Grauman's Theater's famous autographed sidewalk, indicating a certain level of commitment.

Brian Butler is a native of Los Angeles who has worked for art dealers in Cologne, Germany, and London, as well as his hometown. In February he set up his own gallery, 1301, in his small Santa Monica duplex apartment at 1301 Franklin Avenue. Mr. Butler works with a small group of artists who are mostly in their 30's, including Meg Cranston and Thaddeus Strode, giving them two-month shows in his living room while also running a separate business, Brain Multiples, that publishes inexpensive multiples and prints.

### 'Movie Tinseltown'

The tall, lanky Mr. Butler veers between dedication and an in-L.A.-but-not-of-L.A. attitude reminiscent of some of the more experienced art dealers. "I'm going to do this no

A gallery with \$2,500 a month in expenses and 'a lot of volunteers.'

matter what," he said. But he continued, "If you come into L.A. and have no expectations, it's a great city. I don't have any predisposed notion that people from here are going to buy from me; most of my sales are in New York and Europe. People don't want to be intellectually challenged here. If they did, this wouldn't be movie tinseltown, it would be cinema central."

Perhaps taking a page or two from the newcomers, a number of middle-generation dealers in their late 30's and early 40's seem to be attempting to lower both their expectations and their operating costs by radically restructuring the way they do business. In June, Susan Landau, of the defunct Krygier-Landau Gallery, opened a gallery in her home in West Los Angeles. Last month, Linda Cathcart, Stuart Regen and Richard Kuehlenschmidt, who have been open for 3, 2 and 12 years respectively, announced that they would close their galleries, but not go out of business, nor even stop holding exhibitions. Mr. Regen, for example, plans to rent different spaces on a one-show basis, beginning with a project by Richard Prince sometime in March.

"Maybe there wasn't anything in L.A. to begin with," said Ms. Cathcart, who represents more artists from New York than Los Angeles and has decided to move her gallery to her home. In October she purchased a four-level Santa Monica town house designed by Frank Gehry. She will display art on its ground floor, starting next month with an exhibition of sculpture by Louise Bourgeois. Ms. Cathcart will be open on Saturday and Sunday only, in an attempt to cater to clients who can only visit galleries on weekends.

"If the big guys aren't willing to spend their money here, staying open and sitting in our galleries all day long seems kind of silly," she said.

Showing works in storefronts, apartments or a single-car garage.

his favorite childhood television program.) With his office in his kitchen and his exhibition areas in his living and dining room, he runs his gallery, TRI, as a kind of domesticated alternative space. He does not represent individual artists, but instead orchestrates quirky group shows, like the one of work by six women named Laura ("The Laura Show") as well as the three-artist shows that gave the gallery its name.

Another stay-at-home dealer is Amanda M. Obering, who has so far had three exhibitions in AMO, as she calls the living room of her high-rise apartment. Ms. Obering, who is 27, is so freshly arrived from New York (the daughter of the painter Mary Obering, she grew up in the art world

# ART

## EXHIBITIONS

COMPILED BY EDITH NEWHALL

### GALLERIES

#### *SoHo and TriBeCa*

**DEVON DIKEOU**—The sidewalk in front of Grauman's Chinese Theater was the inspiration for this installation, titled "Norma Talmadge's Chinese Theater: The Off Broadway Review," that invites gallery visitors to leave their imprints in freshly poured cement; 9/6-10/1. Vega, 107 Mercer St. (274-8102).

# **Rölnner Stadt-Anzeiger**

**Köln, Freitag, 4. März 1994**

## **Hohenthal und Bergen: Devon Dikeou**

Mingle with the blessed stars, come and dip into the concrete: What recently Sophia Loren did on the most desired pavement of Hollywood is now possible in Cologne. Thanks to Devon Dikeou's installation, you can imprint yourself in "Cologne's stars" in the court of gallery Hohenthal and Bergen. Friday March 4 through March 10, from 4-8 PM. Opening of the finished work: Friday March 11, Bismarckstr. 60, gallery hours Tues.: Fri. 2-6 & PM, Sat. 11-2 PM telephone: 510-3410.



# from Abroad

Rheinlande London Paris New York  
Berlin New Delhi Los Angeles Roma

from Rheinlande ニーノ・タムダグ

ガブリエル・ホエンタル・ベルゲン 訳者 鈴木陽子

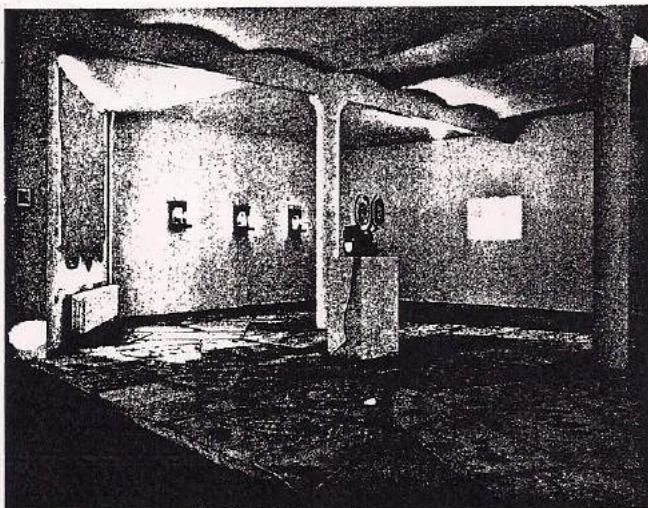
"Norma Talmadge's Chinese Theater: The European Leg",  
"Art after Collecting", etc.

The art scene in Cologne is always changing. A yellow banana sticker is put on the wall around the entrance of museums and galleries so that visitors can recognize that it is a building that is related to the arts. At some exhibition spaces where few people visit, new tenants take the places and they change the exhibition spaces into trendy beauty salons or design firms. However, in many cases, the exhibition spaces were closed because of moving. In three art districts in Cologne, many galleries have left, and many new galleries have moved in place. Some galleries, such as Max Hetzler and Paul Mentz opened their new spaces in Berlin. Now, Berlin is

a city where galleries have moved in or are going to move most frequently. An attitude to art works is also changing. Visitors are expected to attend the process of making art works again and artists are more positive and aggressive. Here I am going to introduce two examples. One is Devon Dikeou's installation, "Norma Talmadge's Chinese Theater-The European Leg" at Galerie Hohenthal & Bergen. Another is "Art after Collecting" at Galerie Philomene Magers. Dikeou's exhibition was divided into two parts and referred to star worship that is peculiar to Hollywood. Visitors of Part II of the exhibition were encouraged to record his or her existence permanently, by pressing hands or feet into cement in various kinds

of boxes. Dikeou got this idea from the street in Hollywood where Norma Talmadge pressed her hands in cement and made a palm print. The visitor's book—in which all of titles of movies that Talmadge appeared were written in gold ink—was used as the source of inspiration, and as thereference book. In Part II, Dikeou decorated the space in

red and gold in an ironic, sentimental, joyful way. She used velvet curtains which had beautiful drapes, photographs that were taken during Part I with kitschy frames, candles that were put in front of Chinese alters in which Talmadge's photograph was installed, a silent film that was projected on the wall, and dramatic screen music. This expression is related to not only an experience that all of us



デヴォン・ディクー / Devon Dikeou  
「ノーマ・タルメッジの中国の劇場：ヨーロッパの脚」 会場風景  
Courtesy Galerie Hohenthal & Bergen, Köln





「アート・アワード・コレクティング」展会場風景  
Photo Victor Dahmen Courtesy Galerie Philomene Magers, Köln

have about star worship, but also an experience, that the artist had in the past. When Dikeou worked for a senator, she operated a signature printing machine. This is a machine which can print signatures like hand-writing, at the end of the letter, so that a voter thinks that a senator speaks to him or her individually. Dikeou showed another signature in "Art after Collecting" at Galerie Philomene Magers, which an artist, Rainer Ganahl curated for his friends in New York. In this exhibition, Dikeou put two balls, on which famous American baseball players signed, on the shelf. It seemed that these two balls were expecting that baseball fans reverently touch the balls. Other artists also used materials in our daily life. In the center of the space, there was a trace of cooking, such as a full garbage bag, pots and pans, and utensils, on the floor around two poles. At the opening reception, a Thai artist, Rirkrit Tiravanija cooked lemon grass soup. Most works were attractive and humorous, but at the same time they made viewers have an antipathy towards these works. For example, there were a couple of clods of mud on the white pedestal. Next to it, there were bags for

vacuum cleaner that Lisa Hien made in the shape of horn of goat for the size of each clod of mud. At the corner of the space, Janine Antoni hung colorful, triangle cloth that she joined pockets of used trousers together. The ultimate one was a written petition to German collectors and cans for his request by Todd Alden. This is his attempt to make collectors collaborate on making art works. This was homage to Piero Manzoni. Until now, he sent his petition to collectors like Ludwig and Hoffman, but his impudent request that makes collectors producers, and makes the artist a collector is not accepted yet. It was said that many collectors in the United States accepted his request. However, in Germany, almost all cans were still empty.

Frankfurt Art Fair was, if anything, conventional, but some of exhibitions were great. One of the significant ones was an exhibition which was organized by Fred Jahn (Monchen). It was the exhibition of drawings by post-war German artists. Artists included Sigmar Polke, Jörg Immendorf, Gerhard Richter, and Georg Baselitz. (Reviewed by Gabriele Rivet)

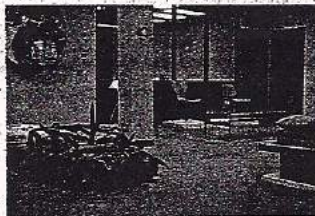


## Galleries

### LOS ANGELES

## "Alternative" Gallery Boom

Despite a spate of recent gallery closures, the L.A. art scene is still alive and kicking. Over the past three months, local artists and dealers have opened a series of exhibition spaces in unconventional locations ranging from Hollywood high-rises to low rent strip malls. At Amanda Obering Contemporary Art, a tenth floor one-bedroom at 7250 Franklin Avenue, a recent installation hung dozens of Grauman's Chinese Theater replicas from the entry hall ceiling and filled the bedroom doubles with visitors' footprints. In a backroom, there was work by young artists from both coasts. Similar ventures run by artists include Ken Riddles "Bliss" (825 N. Michigan Ave) in his Pasadena bungalow, and Rory Devine's "TRI" based in a 1920s apartment building at 1140 S. Hayworth. Projects like Charles LaBelle's "Nomadic Site" (Tel: 213.850.7518) have allowed artists to curate shows in unorthodox venues such as the South Pasadena strip mall. "Food House" is a small gallery in a Santa Monica ex food-processing plant. These new galleries seem to be rapidly forming a fresh rung on the ladder of the L.A. gallery system.



INSTALLATION VIEW OF "GOOD DESIGN/NOT WORKING." CURATED BY PAE WHITE AND JORGE PARDO, 1992.