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2 January 2004

KATHLEEN WHITE
DEVOTION

January 17 - February 15, 2004

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 17, 7-9pm

From January 17 - February 15, 2004, PARTICIPANT INC will present ***DEVOTION***, a solo exhibition by **KATHLEEN WHITE**. This exhibition of paintings and drawings, serial in nature, comprises the last two years of White's ongoing studio practice. A distinguishing palette and recurrent markings characterize this selection of seven small-scale oil paintings on canvas, which are drawn from a larger body of works developed as unworded letters over time. Also on view will be a selection of drawings, *Notes to Self*.

Emanating from a range of pinks, the paintings make reference to monochromatic painting, however, with the introduction of heavier markings (leaning toward white or beige) on lighter surfaces. By deliberately disturbing formal continuities like figure/ground, the paintings allude to more enigmatic forms, like cave paintings or code writing in a diary--where messages are placed on a background. Families of markings comprise the compositions and textures of each painting, and together in white space, they infuse the room with a vaporous glow.

White's challenging use of color--a palette suggestive of makeup, carefully and methodically layered as well as aggressively applied--creates an atmosphere of subtle expectancy laced with uneasiness, as the seductiveness of her color choices do not add up to the expectation of softness and gaiety ordinarily implied. Her use of pink cannot help but be cynical, yet the paintings are sadly optimistic in their dedicated reiteration of marks and hues. Although predominantly abstract in nature, the accumulated works recall the impact of films such as Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* or Roman Polanski's *The Tenant*--films in which the character of make-up is taken to various limits.

In his essay on Smith's 1963 film masterpiece, *Flaming Creatures*, Jonathan Rosenbaum describes the film as "an act of love, not of revenge," towards the mainstream icons he provocatively emulates. Much like Smith's "creatures," White's present and previous works comprise an assortment of bittersweet ensembles. Her ongoing *Spirits of Manhattan*--falls of drag queen hair previously belonging to friends--provide an afterlife to these forlorn wigs. Her paintings disclose a similarly persistent, perhaps unrealizable conversation that, like Smith's heart-shaped lipstick, is all the more engaging in its impossibility.

Born in Fall River, Massachusetts, Kathleen White lives and works in New York City. Exhibitions include: *Spring Show*, The Fifth International, NY (2001); *Shy*, Artists' Space (1999); *Kind of Blue*, Judy Goldman Fine Art, Boston (1998); *Spirits of Manhattan*, Jenn Joy Gallery, San Francisco (1998) and Apex Art, NY (1996); *Presence/Absence*, Tufts University Gallery, MA (1997); as well as exhibitions at Paul Morris Gallery, NY; Mario Diacano, Boston, and Beth Urdang, Boston.

PARTICIPANT INC's exhibitions are made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

PARTICIPANT INC has received generous support from the Harriett Ames Charitable Trust, Bloomberg, Materials for the Arts-NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, The MAT Charitable Foundation, the Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and numerous individuals.

PARTICIPANT INC is located at 95 Rivington Street, between Ludlow and Orchard Streets on the Lower East Side.