

Gillian  
Sez:

## Life is serious

By GILLIAN MCCAINE

*I like to have fun. I think everyone wants to have fun. I think that having fun is being happy. I know its not all fun, but maybe fun helps with the bad. I mean, you definitely cannot have too much fun.*

— Kenny Scharf from an interview in *Art News*.

Steve Hagar's *Art After Midnight: The East Village Scene* chronicles the punk/graffiti/expressionism/bad art scene from the mid-seventies to present. The

**Art After Midnight: The East Village Scene**, by Steve Hagar, published by St. Martin's Press, New York, 1986.

book is written like a documentary but reads like a novel. Hagar tells us stuff about a group of silly people in a sort of series of video-like vignettes.

There is the time performance artist Ann Magnuson held a Mary Kay cosmetic party at her grimy flat and only invited punkette princesses who insisted on being referred to as 'Debs'. They spend the afternoon giving each other sleazoid make-up jobs as the

Mary Kay guy looks on with dismay.

But that's only the social aspect of it. Then there is the Fun. There are theme parties to plan ("Hey! How about a Joan Crawford Mother's Day Celebration?"), and music to play ("I know! Let's play Pat Boone and the New York Dolls and the B-52's all at the same time!"), and then, of course there are your performances ("This time I think I'll come out on stage in a majorette outfit and do a tap dance, baton twirl, and juggling act to 'Hot Stuff' by Donna Summer") and last but not least, there is Art.

The Art could be a painting of a Hanna Barbara cartoon character with day-glo styrofoam snoballs attached to it. Or it could be a canvas decorated with a mixture of broken plates and paint that

looks like Jackson Pollock went into a manic seizure of rage in the kitchen. Or even a silkscreen of a Kraft grape jelly jar.

This is not political stuff. This is art created by people who were reared on junk tv, jello parfaits and etch-a-sketch. And this retro mish-mash of every weird cultural trend since 1950 is making people like Keith Haring, Kenny Scharf, Julian Schnabel and Jean-Michel Basquiat rich men.

Their secret to prosperity could be nothing more than an imagination developed by a combination of hallucinogens and campy 1950s sitcoms. Throw in a touch of Abstract Expressionism, Warhol, Formica and Amerika and you've got some pretty oddball art. And remember John Irving's words: "Life is serious but art is fun."

## Ritchie...

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alone. "Something had to give, either academic or non-academic, and it was in the best interest of the students to scale down the non-academic side."

With Ritchie's final recommendations a month away, de Toit says the staff association is worried that "our worst fears could be realized." Staff here and

at U.B.C. are sporting "Ritchie-busters" buttons, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees have published a report on the agency's activities and staff reaction at U.B.C. Staff morale at U.B.C., says the report, is at a low, and de Toit says workers here resent the study. "Attitudes have changed for the worse and people have just had enough."

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