



## AN ABSTRACT AUDIENCE

Renaissance woman Kim Gordon paints her fans

By Megan Martin

You could say that seeing the world from a varied lens of beauty, pain, and perversion is what creativity feels like. Whether it's standing on-stage in front of a crowd of thousands, painting a series of portraits, building a fashion line, or having a quick conversation with a woman you've long admired, art is truly in the eye of the beholder.



Kim Gordon's paintings are untitled, watercolor on paper, 12 7/8 inches by 9.5 inches, 2008, courtesy of KS ART, New York.

Behold Kim Gordon.

She's spent the past 25 years performing with one of the most influential indie noise-rock bands as a bassist, guitarist, singer, wife, mother, friend, and no doubt, eternal muse. Although being part of Sonic Youth is one of her most significant — and unquestionably her most visible — projects, Gordon steps outside her element with those graceful legs freely and frequently.

"As a creative person, I think you always want to try new things," she says about her frequent leap across art worlds. "[Maybe it's] attention deficit disorder," she laughs.

Most recently, Gordon dabbled back into the art world with an exhibit at K.S. Art in New York City's SoHo District. The series of portraits titled *Come Across* invites the viewer into a lens that only Gordon would be able to lend.

With watercolor and metallic paint on rice paper, Gordon shows her view of the audience. A blurred reflection of reversed lighting and a sea of featureless faces, the portraits are playful yet dark and sad. In some ways, her portraits represent the unrequited attention of the audience. Thousands of fans absorb the art form; they know each band member's face and name, but that familiarity is not returned.

"I'm interested in that relationship between performer and audience and the psychology of it," Gordon says from her home in Northampton, Massachusetts. "I was trying to make them as abstract as possible, and I'd done some portraits that were more representational, but I was using metallic inks. And [the audience] is just what they reminded me of."

The exhibit, which began on March 8 and closed the second week of April, was meant to resemble a 1960s living room, complete with shag carpets and a low-fi stereo playing *Mirror/Dash* (Gordon and hubby Thurston Moore's side project). Hanging across the walls and resting on simple white shelves are the blurred faces of Gordon's audience — transparent, shimmering mosaics of show-goers.

As for music, Gordon released the album *Inherit* by her side project, Free Kitten, in May on Moore's Ecstatic Peace label. The group includes Yoshimi of the Boredoms and Pussy Galore's Julie Cafritz.

"I've played off and on with girls," Gordon says of playing with the Free Kitten ladies. "I like playing with Julie and Yoshimi because they're not ... they're so macho. When I played with Lydia [Lunch of Harry Crews in 1989] and this other girl [Sadie Mae], it was weird, and I didn't like it so much. This was more fun. I'm friends with them, and I like them as people, so it's kind of an excuse to hang out."

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