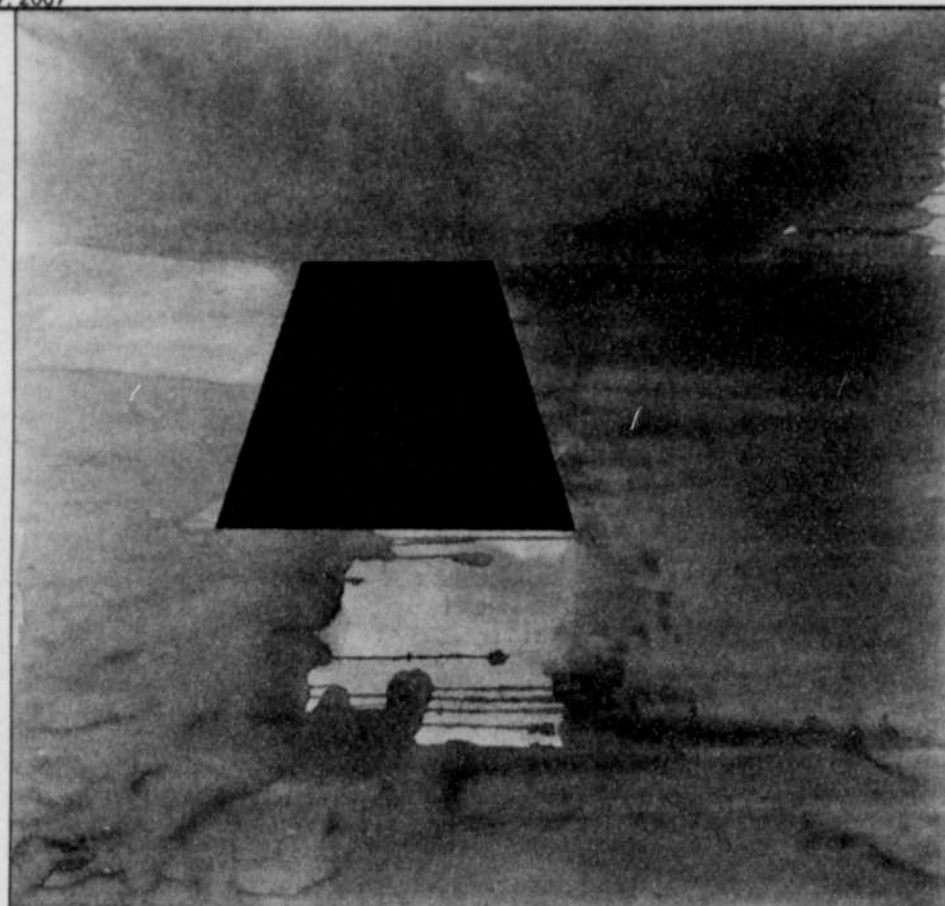
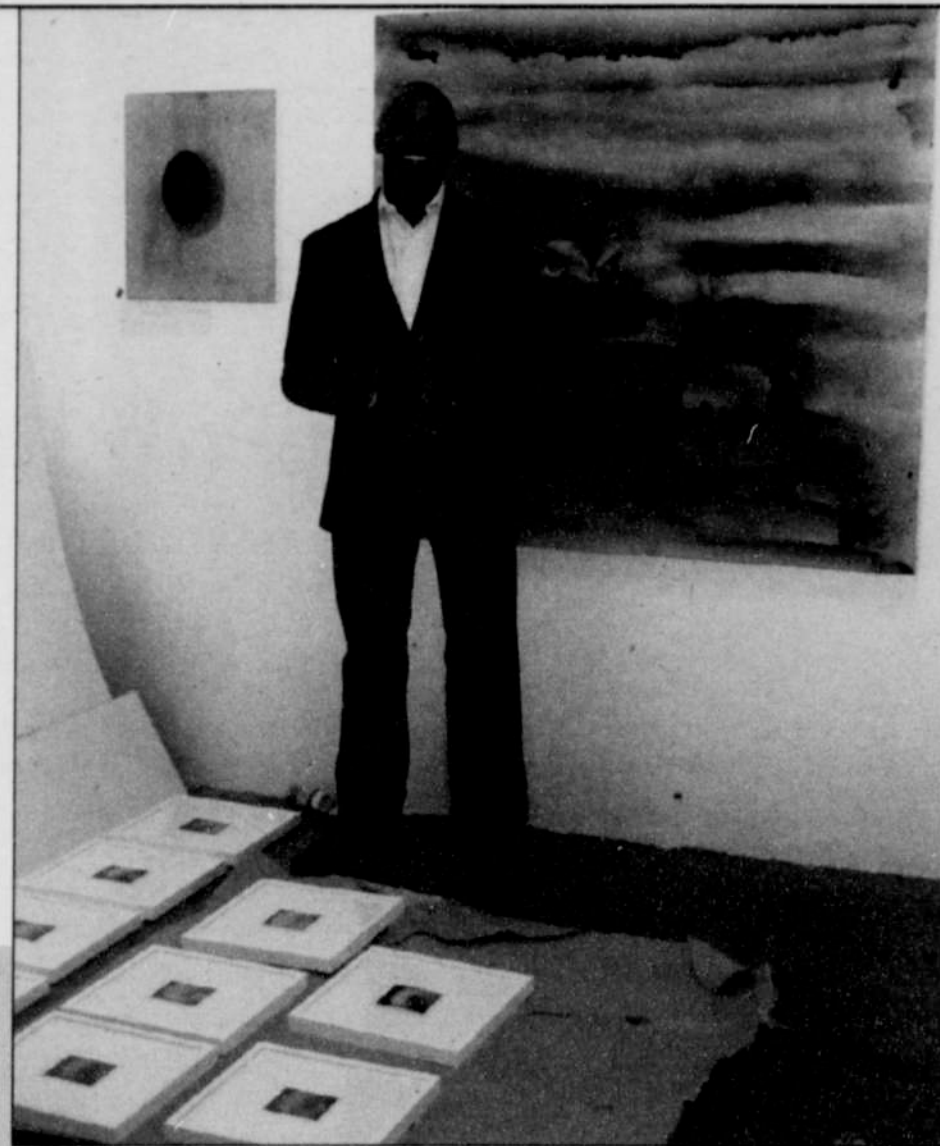




ANTONIO IANNARONE

Kemp invited artistic contributions by hosting a screening of Dario Argento's *Suspiria* and John Carpenter's *The Prince of Darkness*.



MARGARET LAURENA

T:BA:07

Prints of Darkness

Horror films—and our current political nightmare—inspire curator

Arnold Joseph Kemp is an artist, painter, writer and photographer. He is African American and, when asked of his sexuality, coyly replies that he is "open-minded." He is curator of the New York-based Visual AIDS online gallery (www.thebody.com/visualaids), which utilizes the resources of the Frank Moore Memorial Archive, a library of 15,000 slides by more than 380 visual artists, all of whom either live with HIV or have died of AIDS. The project, aiming to convey the message that "AIDS is not over," was founded in 1988 and showcases the work of different artists each month.

Kemp's ongoing body of work *Daydream Nation*, named in homage to a 1988 album by Sonic Youth, is a series of paintings, text works and video fueled by the psychological terror of our current political nightmare.

"I had no idea, when I went to exhibit the works, that Sonic Youth would be touring this summer and playing all the songs from that album," Kemp laughs, referring to a string of live gigs promoting a re-release of that seminal disc. While he says *Daydream Nation* is in no direct way derived from the mythical indie band's music, he has spoken of a Sonic Youth concert in Boston around the time of the album's release, an experience he described as life-changing in the way it influenced his sense of the possibilities of art and, specifically, abstraction.

Kemp was born in 1968 in Boston. He holds, among other degrees, a master's in fine arts from Stanford University. While still in Boston, he ran his own alternative art space. Subsequently he spent 10 years in San Francisco as an associate curator at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

Not shy in addressing sensitive issues, Kemp's work has included a series of photographic portraits of himself wearing Ku Klux Klan hoods adorned with African textile patterns.

Daydream Nation: The Suspiria Version, to be displayed at TBA

2007, was inspired by two eerie and imaginative horror films: Italian horror maestro Dario Argento's 1977 classic *Suspiria* and Halloween creator John Carpenter's *The Prince of Darkness* from 1987. Kemp hosted a screening of the films in May at Clinton Street Theater, an auspicious kickoff to his Portland residency.

"About 100 people came to the screening," Kemp recalls. "We ran out of popcorn. And the next day I was at Voodoo Doughnuts and this guy came up to me and asked, 'Are you the guy who put on the screening of those movies last night?' He was really ecstatic about it; he thanked me over and over again. And that's when it struck me that Portland has a really neat, little scene."



Arnold Joseph Kemp's *Daydream Nation* is fueled by the psychological terror of today's political climate.

The ulterior motive of the screening was to invite everyone in the audience to contribute visual and video art for *SuperNatural*, another collaborative show that Kemp curated as part of his contribution to TBA. The exhibition was conceived as a response to the current political and cultural climate and reflects a world in a suspended, sometimes horrific dream-state. "The call for submissions was a huge success," Kemp says. "We got over 500 submissions of art from Portland-area artists." (The lineup includes queer artists Adam Arnold, Kevin Killian and Storm Tharp.)

Unlike some who avoid the genre of horror, or who might consider it cheap thrills at best, Kemp holds it in high regard. "Horror movies, for me, are a way to have ideas about alternate realities—a way to get out of my own head, and a pathway to creativity," he explains. "They're a glimpse of something else, something that shocks you. *The Prince of Darkness* is part of a trilogy about the end of the world, about the devil coming back to get us all."

Kemp pauses and, in a seemingly random segue, asks me if I've ever been to a dog show. "It's a fascinating thing; you've got to go if you haven't. People put a lot of artistic energy into it. One of the things I heard that's always stuck with me and that informs my art...is 'You can't make art by making art.'" JO

DAYDREAM NATION: THE SUSPIRIA VERSION and SUPERNATURAL are on display through Sept. 29 at Pacific Northwest College of Art, 1241 N.W. Johnson St.

Kemp has also contributed art of his own to another collaborative art exhibition, *SPACE IS A PLACE*, which explores the psychological aura of an office by turning it into a gallery, transforming that which is mundane and familiar into something strange and sublime. The exhibit runs through Oct. 7 at Corberry Press, 1201 N.W. 17th Ave.

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