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ART IN REVIEW

"Screw You"

By KEN JOHNSON

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Susan Inglett Gallery
522 West 24th Street, Chelsea
Through July 27



Things came to a head in the 1960s when the cyclone of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll swept into its vortex the minds of a generation of young Americans. Al Goldstein's Screw: The Sex Review, a newsprint tabloid that mixed highbrow writing, art and raw pornography, epitomized a moment when the fight for freedom of sexual expression was at its most politically and euphorically charged. It is the inspiration for this show, an enlightening exhibition of tabloids, magazines, books and other printed material with sexual content from the late '60s and early '70s.

The show — organized by David Platzker, director of Specific Object, a gallery that specializes in rare books and printed ephemera — displays copies of

Screw, Kiss, Stud, Gay Party and Kusama Presents an Orgy: Nudity, Love, Sex & Beauty for Adults Over 21, which was published by the artist Yayoi Kusama. Numerous other artists are on hand. Photographs of the Warhol superstar Ultra Violet by the sculptor John Chamberlain appear in an issue of The New York Review of Sex, along with satiny drawings of naked women and animals by Mel Ramos.

Elsewhere in the show are photographs of a naked, paint-smearred Carolee Schneemann in an environment like a walk-in Abstract Expressionist painting and a magazine containing reproductions of freely gestural drawings of people making love, by John Lennon. In The New York Review of Sex, an essay by the art historian and anthologist Gregory Battcock invokes Herbert Marcuse, Susan Sontag and Marshall McLuhan in defense of insouciant sleaze. There is a lot more, and it is altogether wonderfully illuminating.