

The New York Times

Art in Review

Published: December 13, 2002

Tammy Rea Carland

*Spring Street Gallery
186 1/2 Spring Street, SoHo*

Through Dec. 21

Spring Street Gallery, which the artist and musician Kathleen Hanna opened in October, has a stimulating show in the New York solo debut of the California-based Tammy Rae Carland. Ms. Carland works in several media; she recently created a music video for the New York feminist band Le Tigre, of which Ms. Hanna is a member. But she is represented here by a series of large-format color photographs titled "Lesbian Beds."

All the beds depicted belong to friends of Ms. Carland, except the one she shares with her lover. With their closely cropped views of bunched-up pillows and patterned, mismatched, tossed-aside sheets, they suggest both abstract paintings and funky, body-warmed updates on the mournful billboard-size photos of empty beds produced by Felix Gonzalez-Torres in 1991 in response to the AIDS epidemic.

They also have ideas in common with other contemporary work, notably Patricia Cronin's monumental tombstone sculpture of two women -- Ms. Cronin and her partner, Deborah Kass -- embracing on a bed. The creation of such imagery by women, with its same-sex merging of death, eroticism and domesticity, is something relatively new in art. It's already taking interestingly varied forms and appearing in some unexpected locations. Ms. Cronin's sculpture, "Memorial to a Marriage," was installed last month in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, where she and Ms. Kass own a burial plot.

HOLLAND COTTER