

For Editorial Consideration
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NEW YORK BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

By Ellen Harvey

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Between 1999 and 2001, small oval old-fashioned landscapes painstakingly painted in oils appeared on graffiti sites all over New York City – on walls, dumpsters, phone boxes and even the occasional car. These exquisite five by seven inch paintings were the work of artist Ellen Harvey. The paintings are documented in the newly published book, *New York Beautification Project*, which also includes the diary Harvey kept while painting illegally throughout the city. The narrative is both provocative and hilarious as she describes the reactions of neighbors, passersby, police and other people she encountered while painting.

Harvey's "beautification project" raises a number of intriguing questions. Are Harvey's paintings graffiti? Or are they art? Are you really breaking the law if most people like what you are doing? Is this public art? Who is allowed to make public art in our society? And who decides what art is, anyway?

Ellen Harvey was born in the United Kingdom and currently lives and works in Brooklyn. She is a 1999 graduate of the Whitney Independent Studio Program and took part in the PS1 National Studio Program in 2001. She was a recipient of the New York Foundation for the Arts Lily Auchincloss Painting Fellowship in 2001. In 2004, she was awarded a Rema Hort Mann Foundation fellowship and was a Palm Beach County Cultural Council Artist-in-Residence. Harvey has exhibited extensively in the United States and abroad. Recent solo exhibitions include *A Whitney for the Whitney at Philip Morris* for the Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria in New York, *Context is Everything* at Mullerdechiara Gallery in Berlin, and *New is Old* at the Center for Contemporary Art in Warsaw.

In October 2005, Harvey's solo exhibition, *Mirror*, funded by the Pew Charitable Trust's Pennsylvania Exhibitions Initiative, will open at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. *Look Up Not Down*, a mosaic commissioned by the MTA Arts for Transit program, will be installed at the Queens Plaza subway station in Long Island City at the end of the year.

Founded in 2004, Gregory R. Miller & Co. publishes high quality books about contemporary art and artists. These books aim not only to enhance our understanding and appreciation of art, but also to make a contribution to the broader cultural dialogue, of which contemporary art is an essential part. *New York Beautification Project* is the second publication of Gregory R. Miller & Co. The first book, *Lyle Ashton Harris*, published early in 2005, included a recent series of major photographs by the artist and an essay by Anna Deavere Smith. Several additional publications are planned for 2005 and 2006, including *Art Life: Selected Writings 1991-2005* by Lawrence Rinder. Gregory R. Miller & Co. publications are distributed by D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers.

For more information, contact:

Christina Foxley
christinagsmld@earthlink.net
Staci Smith
stacigsmld@earthlink.net

General Strategic Marketing
78 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10011
646.638.2479

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