

NEW YORK

Brief Lives Valley Guy

by Edith Newhall
September 26, 1988

Still sleepy at three in the afternoon, John Boskovich is desperately drinking black coffee at SoHo café. Dressed in a rumpled T-shirt and black leather jacket, the Los Angeles artist is in town to hang his first New York show at the Laurie Rubin Gallery. And he's tired because he's been out every night—partying or causing trouble backstage at Sandra Bernhard's *Without You I'm Nothing*, which he helped write.

"We met at a Valley barbecue," says Boskovich, 31, a handsome man with slicked-back hair, recalling his 1985 introduction to the comedienne. They wrote her satire of pop culture—everything from Stevie Nicks to Revlon's Anti-Aging Firming Eye Gel—in the San Fernando Valley, where Boskovich grew up and Bernhard now lives.

Boskovich's art critiques contemporary culture, too, but in a less direct way. His mixed-media pieces combine photographs of the artist, movie stills (*The Creature From the Black Lagoon* is a favorite), found art (one work incorporates an eighteenth-century Spanish banner), and fragments of writings by Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and Karl Marx.

These diverse references reflect Boskovich's eclectic education. After graduating from high school in Sherman Oaks ("across from Bullock's"), he went to Madrid in 1978 to study art history and then spend a term at Cambridge's Trinity College. He returned to California, got a B.A. in philosophy at USC, and then earned a B.F.A. and M.F.A. from the California Institute of the Arts. He also has a degree from Loyola Law School, which he attended while a graduate student at Cal Arts.

Bored with law—he worked as an intern from the public defender's office—Boskovich didn't show his art until two years ago. "I wanted to wait until I could say something that was well informed." His patience was rewarded—his show last winter at L.A.'s Rosamund Felsen Gallery got rave reviews: *Artforum* called it "an auspiciously provocative debut."

Though Boskovich often visits New York to work with Bernhard (he'll direct the movie version of *Without You*), he lives in "the *very* artsy Brentwood area," he says with a deadpan expression. Still, he refers to the Valley as his spiritual home. "You should really make a point of going there," he says. "Go down Ventura Boulevard. You know, go shopping or something. At least get your hair cut."