



# THE ART NEWSPAPER

---

Page 4 What's On This Month

THE ART NEWSPAPER, No. 123, MARCH 2002

**“New York. The Wider Commercial Scene” by S.E. Canning**

**Jay DeFeo: Ingredients of Alchemy, Before and After The Rose**  
**Michael Rosenfeld**



Even goddesses fade and that supreme creative witch Jay DeFeo has had a patchy posthumous career as befits the original West Coast boho Wican. DeFeo was a seminal figure in the Californian 50s underground scene and hung with all the hipsters from Wally Berman to Dennis Hopper but also maintained a rare independent integrity as a female artist in a macho world. DeFeo became celebrated for working 1958-65 on a single painting, that monument to impasto entitled “The Rose”. Even when she was evicted from her home the painting came with her, it’s 2,300 pound weight hoisted by cranes, an event immortalized in film by Bruce Conner. The notoriety of this painting (which some think contributed with its toxic chemicals to her premature death in 1989) turned to fame when the Whitney finally bought it in 1995 to show in their “Beat Culture” exhibition. No single museum purchase has had quite such an effect, transforming DeFeo from marginal footnote to a major art-historical figure. The show at Michael Rosenfeld Gallery (who now represent her estate) fills in further rich details of this fascinating career, and is rightfully entitled “Ingredients of Alchemy, Before and After The Rose” (14 March – 4 May). Above, “Ring #2”, 1972.