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Kiki Kogelnik at König Galerie, Berlin

February 27~2016



König Galerie is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Kiki Kogelnik (1935-1997) in the chapel of the former St. Agnes Church.

Kogelnik's second exhibition at König Galerie focuses on a production period in the mid-1960s, shortly after Kogelnik moved from Europe to New York in 1961. This was an era of international upheaval, the looming tensions of the Cold War and the Space Race were at their height and fears of imminent nuclear warfare disrupted any sense of security. Likewise, it was an age for the young. Only in her mid-twenties at the time, Kogelnik was among the first generation to witness the promise of a glittering new age of American politics and the rise of the military industrial complex, all broadcast over the recently introduced color television. Movements addressing gender and racial inequalities were in full swing, as was the sexual revolution. In this maelstrom of change, the Austrian-born painter produced a vibrant body of socio-political and personal appraisals addressing a world with an uncertain future.

When understood within the context of the era, Kogelnik's works convey the unrest and optimism that were a result of the promises offered by advances in technology, science, space exploration, communication, and medicine. Rendered through a confident layering of eerily weightless bodies and body fragments, machines, robots, and shapes, the tension of the imagery contrasts its bright, playful colors. Kogelnik's flattened, fractured vision is an unsettling meditation on human existence and the singularity of the individual and their emotions within a context of the greater whole.

The works in the exhibition were produced during the same period as the conception and construction of St. Agnes Church. Much like the brutalist architecture of the building, Kogelnik's paintings and drawings seem to be a reaction to the frivolity of the past and the effect of an increasingly mechanized world on both the body and emotions. Here, the architecture and Kogelnik's work reveal their elemental nature while unpretentiously exploring the dualistic optimism and moral seriousness of the time.

Alicia Reuter

at König Galerie, Berlin
until 6 March 2016