

“THE ONLY AUSTRIAN POP ARTIST” REDISCOVERING KIKI KOGELNIK’S SCULPTURAL LEGACY

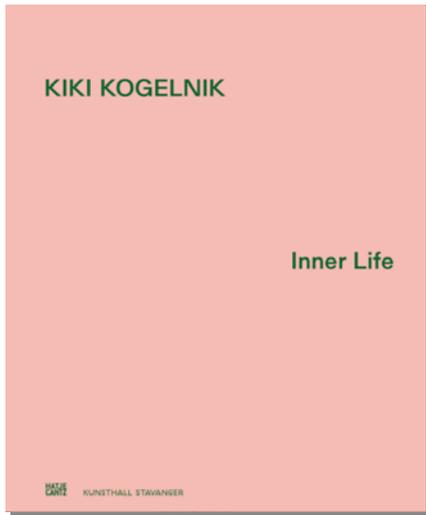
The artist Kiki Kogelnik is a well-known non-celebrity. The public is familiar with only a small aspect of her work and usually connects her name to colorful heads made of Murano glass. The new monograph *Kiki Kogelnik, Inner Life* is now the first to focus on the Austrian artist’s entire sculptural oeuvre, presenting a multifaceted artist with an international presence.

Berlin, July 25, 2017 — At the age of twenty-five Kiki Kogelnik (1935–1997) went to New York City and quickly discovered an artistic signature of her own, which brought her the title of “Austria’s only Pop artist.” Even though she spent many years working on the same level as famous Pop artists, this attempt at categorization is only partially correct. It’s true that Kogelnik painted brightly colored silhouettes of bodies and dot patterns in a skilled Pop Art style, but their contents were different than the content of works by artists such as Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol.

“I’m not involved with Coca Cola ... I’m involved in the technical beauty of rockets, people flying in space and people becoming robots. When you come here from Europe it is so fascinating ... like a dream of our time. The new ideas are here, the materials are here, why not use them?” In her work Kogelnik was less concerned about the stream of images from the consumer sphere. Rather, in her occasionally very colorful paintings, sculptures, collages, and installations, she examined themes related to politics, social critique, the space age, and the human body. She was fascinated by technological progress, but did not ignore the political and military aspects of it. For instance, she cut out flat body shells from sheets of vinyl and hung them on clothes hooks—including some made out of camouflage colors and displayed under the name *Vietnam Hangings*. She also bought two bomb cases (without explosive materials) for three dollars in a navy store and transformed them into *Bombs in Love*. “Make love, not war” is the clear message from the killing machines adorned with little hearts. Born in 1935, Kogelnik and her art were strongly influenced by the war and the post-war era of her youth.

She was political in other ways in her paintings of women. There are ambiguous confrontations with the dilemma she found herself in, as well: being reduced to her feminine beauty. So Kogelnik added disturbances to her work, for example, the large scissors boring into the model in one of her pieces. Again and again in her work, this instrument symbolizes liberation from power relations inside the patriarchal society. Kogelnik’s entire oeuvre is permeated by the pleasure she takes in subversion. She always played with conventions and caricatured predominant conditions. In her colorful, yet always subtle works she tested traditional patterns of thought pertaining to sculpture and painting, the difference between high and low art, between art and kitsch, and the separation of art and life.

The monograph *Kiki Kogelnik, Inner Life* is the first to concentrate mainly on the artist’s sculptural legacy. This richly illustrated publication features Kogelnik’s actions and happenings, as well as some works that have not been seen since the 1960s.



KIKI KOGELNIK
INNER LIFE

Texts by Jenni Sorkin, Wendy Vogel

English

2017. 120 pp., 55 ills.

hardcover

24.50 x 30.50 cm

ISBN 978-3-7757-4337-2

38,00 EUR

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