

# KÖNIG GALERIE

XENIA HAUSNER  
UNINTENDED BEAUTY

29 APRIL – 19 JUNE 2022  
ST. AGNES | NAVE

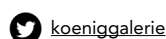
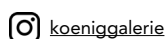
KÖNIG GALERIE is pleased to present UNINTENDED BEAUTY, a solo show by one of Austria's foremost contemporary painters, Xenia Hausner.

Xenia Hausner explores the question of beauty. Her latest show comprises twelve new paintings by the Berlin- and Vienna-based artist and is entitled UNINTENDED BEAUTY. Hausner looks at how beauty and the coincidental combine in contemporary art. But underpinning her current exhibition is also the question of how beauty and dread relate to each other. The distinction between them is fluid. "Every angel is terrifying," says the often-cited line from Rilke's Duino Elegies (1912-1922). "For beauty is nothing but the start of terror, that we are still able to bear, and we revere it so, because it calmly disdains to destroy us." Hausner adapts Rilke's words for her own purposes, suggesting that "in art, terror is nothing but the start of beauty". From the apocalyptic murmurings there suddenly rises a glimmer of hope; prophecies of destruction are countered with the inventiveness and power of art.

Chance moments are written into Hausner's art alongside conscious mises-en-scène. But Hausner – who uses photography and interior settings to produce her art – does not set out to distort her co-actors. Quite the opposite, in fact: the artist says that she attaches great importance to "the figures retaining their authentic body language". Yet at the same time, Hausner adds, the people she paints are also "like actors playing a part in my story". The traditional, subtle power relations between painter and subject, then, become a bi-directional exchange, with each side revealing aspects of themselves. "Painting has to do with affection," says Hausner. Her images, painted in acrylics and oils on Dibond sheet, show her particular interest in composition, light and the power of colours. Thus, even supposedly secular subjects, such as buoys in a harbour basin, or politically representative, highly charged image media such as postage stamps can become a playing field for painterly and social questions. They are dropped like anchors into the depths of a semi-conscious story that may contain elements of autobiographical scenes, or "questionable idylls", as the artist calls them.

UNINTENDED BEAUTY poses a contradiction to our zeitgeist, as Hausner's pictures hold on to beauty. Subjected to affirmative slickness, says the philosopher Byung-Chul Han, beauty is useless to art, because art needs friction and negativity. The cultural critic Laurie Penny commented on the toxic-normative core underlying this slickness quite some time ago, saying that every day, women are bombarded by films, TV, ads, print media and even fleeting encounters and their more or less subtle messages that they are not young, slim, light-skinned or submissive enough. And yet the actors in Hausner's predominantly female cosmos appear to represent a counter-world that draws its aesthetic power from everyday reality. They are depicted as confident and fully occupying the space. So, could this be a way of defending beauty through the medium of art? These paintings are dialectically close to reality but also utopian.

by Kito Nedo



## EXHIBITIONS

ZHANNA KADYROVA  
Palianytsia  
ST. AGNES | CHAPEL  
29.04 – 20.05.2022

AUSTYN WEINER  
Honey High  
KÖNIG SEOUL  
15.04 – 22.05.2022

CLAUDIA COMTE  
An Impending Disaster (HAHAHA)  
KÖNIG GALERIE IM KHK  
27.04. – 22.06.2022

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koeniggalerie.com

Opening Hours  
Tue – Sat 10 AM – 6 PM  
Sun 12 PM – 6 PM

# KÖNIG GALERIE

Xenia Hausner (born 1951) lives and works in Vienna and Berlin. The Museum Franz Gertsch in Burgdorf, Switzerland, is currently showing a retrospective previously presented at the Albertina in Vienna and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow (2021). Hausner has presented other solo shows in the Palais Populaire, Berlin (2020); the Austrian Cultural Forum, New York (2019); the Palazzo Ducale di Mantova, Mantua (2019); the Danubiana Meulensteen Art Museum, Bratislava (2018); the Today's Art Museum, Beijing (2014); the Hong Kong Arts Center, Hong Kong (2014) and elsewhere. Hausner was also part of Glasstress, a collateral event accompanying the 27th Venice Biennale in the Palazzo Franchetti, Venice (2017); the 8th Moscow Biennale at the State Tretjakov Galerie, Moscow (2019); and the Bienalsur, South America's Art Biennale 2019, in Cúcuta, Colombia (2019).



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