

Press Release

Karen Kilimnik

The Kingdom of the Renaissance

January 20–March 18, 2023

Sprüth Magers, NY

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Sprüth Magers is pleased to participate in Master Drawings New York with *The Kingdom of the Renaissance*, an exhibition of works by Karen Kilimnik and her old master predecessors, curated by Mireille Mosler. Inspired by a variety of sources, from old masters to present day, Kilimnik conjoins components while constructing her own universe. From depictions of royal menageries of the Renaissance through public figures' pooches, the artist filters her inner imaginary world through source material procured from books and museum exhibitions. Early works on paper from the 1980s and more recent paintings are paired with Renaissance sculptures, paintings and drawings from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries.

Although Kilimnik is fluent in a multitude of mediums – including Nymphenburg porcelain – the mini-survey *The Kingdom of the Renaissance* focuses on drawings and paintings inhabited by animals. Void of humans and localities, the artist's imaginary world becomes even more elusive, lacking any reference to her usual protagonists. Animals in Kilimnik's world are actors in their own universe, substituting princesses and movie stars. Sometimes appropriating old master paintings, Kilimnik's titles, however, add another layer to this magical world rather than paying abject homage to her precursors.

Kilimnik's *dinner in the alley*, a small canvas from 2010, shows a dog guarding his meal from a vigilant cat, while following Jan Baptist Weenix's (1621–1660) much larger composition. Other paintings, such as *friends in the woods* and *the witche's familiars in the woods* (both 2010) reveal Kilimnik's inspiration and witty interaction with an oil sketch by Jan Fyt (1611–1661).

There is no contiguity in Kilimnik's encounters with old masters: it is her fictitious fantasy that jumps the narrative and makes us believe you can be in any existence of your own choosing. Kilimnik's Christmas reindeer meets *The Highland Nurses* by Sir Edwin Landseer (1802–1873), while her sea horses encounter a Renaissance bronze of a sea monster, and *Napoleon + favorite camel, Hector at the pyramids of Giza, Egypt*, a pastel from 1987, is shown alongside a cavalryman by French academician Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier (1815–1891) providing us a construed narrative as we enter Kilimnik's kingdom.

Karen Kilimnik (Philadelphia, PA). Major solo exhibitions include Kunsthaus Glarus (2023), Le Consortium, Dijon (2013, 2007), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver (2013), The Brant Foundation, Greenwich (2012), the Belvedere Museum, Vienna (2010), the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago (2008), the Serpentine Gallery, London (2007), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami (2007), the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2006), the Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice (2005), Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2002) and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia (1992). Major group exhibitions include Fondazione Prada, Milano (2021), Haus Mödrath, Kerpen (2020), the Carnegie International, 57th Edition in Pittsburgh (2018), the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016, 2008, 1993), the Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2015, 2010), Le Grand Palais, Paris (2013), the Tate Modern, London (2012), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2012), the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven and the MOMA PS1, New York (both 2006), the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2005, 2001, 1999), the Institute of Contemporary Art, London (1997), and the Secession, Vienna (1994). In 2011, Kilimnik created a stage setting for the ballet "Psyché" at the Opéra National de Paris.

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