

# KÖNIG GALERIE

## PHYLLIDA BARLOW | FENCES

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22 NOVEMBER – 22 DECEMBER 2023

KÖNIG GALERIE is pleased to present an installation by the late, acclaimed British sculptor, Phyllida Barlow. Dedicated to a single work in two parts, the eponymous UNTITLED: FENCES, 2010, the installation in the former Chapel space at St. Agnes offers a unique opportunity to see this work in an intimate setting. Although presented in isolation, UNTITLED: FENCES is nonetheless exemplary for Barlow's decades-long investigation into the relationship between exterior and interior spaces.

Beginning in the 1960s in London, Barlow turned her attention to forms related to barriers and boundaries, a pre-occupation that persisted up until her passing in March of this year. The fence as an object, especially as imagined by Barlow, is essentially a threshold form, dividing an otherwise undifferentiated space into two zones: inside and outside. Like many fences found in the world, Barlow's is porous, open to viewers who wish to look beyond its forbidding character. For this presentation, the fence in question seems removed from its context, or awaiting future deployment, as it is not entirely upright; rather, it leans against a large, black volume, itself curiously placed vis-à-vis the Chapel space. Brightly decorated, the fence stands in stark contrast to the closed, pure exteriority of the black object that supports it.

Barlow was unique among her contemporaries, not least for the fact that she willfully asserted her artistic identity as that of a sculptor, and not merely an artist in the general sense. So, is this contrast of color and form in the fence and its support meant to remind one of the history of the sculptural discipline, where a base or pedestal is erected in order to showcase a more elaborate, decorated object? It is also useful to note that in its Latin origins, the word "object" is likely the composite of two root words – ob and jacere – which together mean something like: that which is thrown in our way. The fence that is encountered in FENCES produces just such an experience, interrupting the normal passage through space, and is intimately linked to the memory of how fences work in the world outside the gallery as well.

The work of Phyllida Barlow remains one of the most significant in contemporary sculpture and will certainly continue to speak profoundly of the artist's prescient appraisal of her chosen discipline. For audiences both familiar and unfamiliar with Barlow's sculpture, FENCES offers a unique engagement, intimate, and yet perfectly consistent with the scale and surprise for which Barlow was celebrated.

Phyllida Barlow (194–2023) was a British visual artist who was known for creating extensive installations. Her academic journey led her through the Chelsea College of Art in London and the Slade School of Art in London, where she joined the university staff in the late 1960s and taught there for more than forty years. Taking inspiration from her surroundings, Barlow created imposing installations, both menacing and playful. Her large-scale yet anti-monumental sculptures were built from modest, low-grade materials such as cardboard, fabric, plywood, polystyrene, scrim, plaster, and cement, which the artist painted in industrial or vibrant colors. Barlow's sculptures stretch the limits of mass, volume, and height as they block, straddle, and balance precariously. Challenging the audience into a new relationship with the sculptural object, the gallery environment, and the world beyond, Barlow has always aimed to have viewers engage beyond the object itself into another realm of experience.

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### EXHIBITIONS

CLÉDIA FOURNIAU  
Ten Turns  
KÖNIG GALERIE  
22.11 – 22.12.2023

STEPHAN BALKENHOL

KÖNIG SEOUL  
16.12.2023 – 03.02.2024

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Phyllida Barlow has been exhibited at major institutions like the Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto, Canada (2023); the Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2022); Tate Modern, London, UK (2021); Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2021); The Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (2019); and the New Museum, New York, USA (2012), among others. In 2017, Barlow represented Britain at the 57th Venice Biennale in Venice, Italy.

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