

GALERIE BERND KUGLER

Elke Silvia Krystufek

Banana Justice

13.11.2025 – 19.12.2025

On the evening of May 17, 2019, as the opening of her exhibition “30 Years — No Overview” in Vienna coincided with the opening of the Ibiza video scandal and the subsequent collapse of the conservative-right-wing coalition government, I was doubly glad to have seen Elke Silvia Krystufek's work. I attributed this palpable moment of relief then, as now, to the impact of the artist's painterly search for truth. Her pursuit of truth consistently reveals an ambition to provoke reactions beyond the art world and to use art as a concrete example to address broader media, cultural, and political issues. The current exhibition, aptly titled “Banana Justice,” at Galerie Kugler continues this series of Krystufek's (media-)critical installations. It loosely comprises new artistic productions, collaborations, older works, and, additionally, gaps in their presentation that sharpen perception.

It is impressive how nimbly the artist reacts to the loss of binding painterly discourses, continuing to trust in painting as a highly differentiated language comprised of a multitude of techniques, methods, and artistic devices, but instead of lavish large-format works, she favors several diverging smaller formats of paintings from different periods, and, in addition to some art historical references, also makes intensified thematic references to cautionary imbalances within democracies and ongoing, still unresolved judicial scandals. In this way, varying inconsistencies in such differently intricate cases as those of diplomat Rakhat Aliyev, high-ranking official Christian Pilnacek, whistleblower Julian Hessenthaler, or the artist's own ongoing criminal trials against lawyers can all find space together in a single small, round format as In Memoriam Cold Cases Austria (2025). In Banana Justice, the garish signal language of emoticons turns against itself, silent screams become audible, posthumous homages to deceased fellow artists like Michael Vonbank (1964-2015) receive respectful appearances full of collaborative spirit, as do reports of the sadly arms-racing world events, raw and pointed artistic commentary in interplay with the artist's daughter. This exciting presentation context not only enables the continuous discourse surrounding Elke Silvia Krystufek's work and shows how the artist can reflect on and (further) develop her painting practice, but also urgently highlights, in relation to the diverse cultural and political conditions of today's image production, the explosive democratic question of right and wrong for us, a constantly agitated but attention-span-struggling public.

Christian Egger lives in Vienna as a visual artist, musician, and freelance writer. His texts are regularly published in international art magazines such as ArtReview, Texte zur Kunst, SPIKE, Springerin, Camera Austria, and many more. The book Shows, Signals, Unvernehmen (Disagreement) brings together his texts from 2005 to 2020 and was published by Floating Opera Press (Berlin).