

Kiki Kogelnik *No Coca-Cola*, Johann König, Berlin, 2014
31 May – 28 June 2014
Opening: 30 May 2014, 6 – 9 pm

"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?" Kiki Kogelnik

Johann König, Berlin is pleased to present works by Kiki Kogelnik (1935-1997) for the first time in a solo exhibition at the gallery.

The exhibition focuses on paintings, works on paper and sculptures from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. Body parts including internal organs, skulls and skeletons are spread among the works. The second phase of the Austro-American artist, who moved from Vienna to New York in 1961, is characterized by the optimism of the time, the ambitions of the Space Age and a proximity to a thriving art scene, which was in the midst of formulating the American Pop canon as it entered its heyday. In this context, Kogelnik developed an aesthetic vocabulary that would long accompany her. Working with lively colors and emphasizing surface and contour, she explored dualisms within the portrayal of the human body, often dissected into arms, legs, torsos and hands. The works testify to a critical consciousness stemming from her European origins and the experience of the post-war years.

The large format *Skull* (1970), which Kogelnik riveted together from colorful vinyl sheets on a black background as an emblem against time, contrasts the blind optimism of an era defined by an almost naïve trust in technical and economic progress with a subjective *vanitas* feeling. This over-sized skull not only represents an apotheosis of a symbol that served as a leitmotiv in Kogelnik's work, but intertwines cultural history with the present. Its multiple occurrences can be interpreted as a time phenomenon and an expression of a threatening up-to-dateness. In internal and external views of her own and other bodies, Kogelnik examines modalities of human existence between living and dead, between man and machine.

"Art comes from artificial" was one of the guiding principles of the artist, who said that she was not interested in reproducing nature mimetically. The works emphasize artificiality and favor the use of synthetic materials. The style, the materials and the audacity that characterizes many of her works, testify to and are typical of an artistic oeuvre anchored in Pop Art that simultaneously now seems more contemporary than ever.

Kiki Kogelnik (born 1935 in Austria) lived and worked in New York and Vienna. She died in 1997 in Vienna. A retrospective was held last year in Kunsthalle Krems, Austria (2013). Her work was recently featured in *POWER UP – Female Pop Art* at the Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria (2010) and *Seductive Subversion: Women Pop Artists 1958–1968* at the Brooklyn Museum (2010). Selected one-person exhibitions include Galerie nächst St. Stephan, Vienna (1961), the Austrian Institute, New York (1965), Galerie Kornfeld, Zürich (1978), the Kärntner Landesgalerie, Klagenfurt, Austria (retrospective, 1989), MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, (1996) and Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna (retrospective, 1998).