

Press Release

Karen Kilimnik

Early Drawings 1976–1998

April 8–May 21, 2022

Sprüth Magers, London

Sprüth Magers

Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are pleased to announce *Early Drawings 1976–1998*, a solo exhibition by Karen Kilimnik at the London gallery, presented jointly with Galerie Eva Presenhuber in New York. The show features the artist's own rich and varied selection of over fifty previously unseen early works on paper. Detailed, finely-worked pastel drawings created between 1976 and 1998 are presented along with ink drawings and other work from that same period; together they illuminate the scope, complexity and virtuosity of Kilimnik's thematic world.

For more than forty years, Kilimnik has navigated an inexhaustible cosmos influenced by the traditions of Romantic painting, portraiture, and landscape painting. Her work gives equal weight to a broad array of subject matter, finding inspiration in such diverse sources as popular culture and fairy tales, Old Master paintings and television programs, films, literature, magazines, advertising, as well as window displays. The result dissolves the distinctions between "high" and "low" culture. This creative mixture appears in some of Kilimnik's earliest output: after studying art and architecture in Philadelphia, the artist exhibited a series of genre-bending constellations in the mid-1980s and early 1990s; assembled works included paintings, photographs, drawings, sculptures, and films. Her oeuvre explores themes of mythology and femininity, history and fiction.

Especially Kilimnik's drawings and collages often emerge from general observation and contemplation. Exemplifying that approach is a drawing of a red sports car from the year 1979, *car rally Avengers £50,000 breakfast, vrrrooom!*: inspired by the 1960s British TV series *The Avengers* – a recurring motif that appears in a number of other works as well – it shows the vehicle speeding past forests, a person wearing black leather gloves at the wheel. The piece depicts a particular scene from the series involving a car rally; it finds Kilimnik, whose juvenile career considerations included becoming a race car driver, drawing imagery from the world of popular culture.

The accompanying exhibition at Galerie Eva Presenhuber in New York runs from April 30 to June 18, 2022. A catalogue for both shows will be published by Edition Patrick Frey.

Karen Kilimnik was born in Philadelphia in 1955, where she lives and works. Her work has featured at major museums worldwide, including at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City. Important solo exhibitions have been held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver (2012); Belvedere, Vienna (2010); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2006); Serpentine Gallery, London; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami; and Le Consortium, Dijon (all 2007); Istituzione Fondazione Bevilacqua la Masa, Venice (2005); and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2002). In 2018, Kilimnik participated in the 57th Carnegie International, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA, and has been featured in significant group exhibitions at institutions including Fondazione Prada, Venice (2021); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2008); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; MoMA PS1, New York (both 2006); MoMA, New York (2005, 2001, 1999); Institute of Contemporary Art, London (1997, 1992); and Secession, Vienna (1994). In 2011, Kilimnik designed backdrops for *Psyche*, a ballet at Opéra national de Paris.

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