

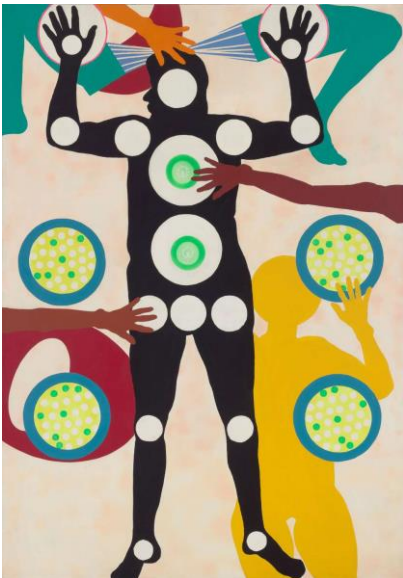
Kiki Kogelnik: The Dance

May 24 – Aug 3, 2024
5 Hanover Square
London

Exhibition Walkthrough: Thursday, May 23, 5.30pm
Led by Stephen Hepworth, Director of the Kiki Kogelnik Foundation

Opening Reception: Thursday, May 23, 6 – 8pm

London Gallery Weekend: Friday, May 31, 5pm
Exhibition tour led by artist Paulina Olowska



Kiki Kogelnik, *Astronaut*, 1964 © Kiki Kogelnik Foundation. All rights reserved

Pace is pleased to announce *Kiki Kogelnik: The Dance*, the first solo presentation of the pioneering artist's work in London, running from May 24 to August 3. This exhibition, whose title draws inspiration from the allegorical *Danse Macabre*, or the Dance with Death, will include works across various mediums that are emblematic of Kogelnik's profound exploration of the future possibilities—and perils—of outer space, and her relationship to the altered and abstracted twentieth-century body. Incorporating work spanning three decades of production, *The Dance* showcases Kogelnik's unique, futuristic visual language as a means in which to communicate the universal fragility of terrestrial life.

Kogelnik's singular visual language of weightless bodies, geometric repetition, and vibrant, neon colours defies categorisation. Born in Austria in 1935, she relocated to New York in the early 1960s, where she was introduced to artists including Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, and Tom Wesselmann. Charged by the city's artistic vitality—set against the pervasive background of the Cold War and Space Race—Kogelnik's practice surged into a prolific phase of creative development. Alongside her distinctive 'Kiki' style of painting, her assemblages proposed mechanical augmentation of the body as a means of survival, using novel materials such as sheet vinyl, plastics, and fibreglass. A shift in Kogelnik's work throughout the course of the 1970s and 80s saw her treatment of the female body become more pronounced, concurrent with her growing dissatisfaction of the artistic scene's 'boys club'. With dynamic fluidity across paintings, works on paper, and ceramics, her explicit commentaries on the representations of women in modern society are imbued with an irony, critique, and pessimism that diverge ideologically from the canonical Pop art of her counterparts.

Pace's upcoming exhibition in London will include a suite of chromatic paintings that speak to Kogelnik's fascination with space travel and her desire to be free. *Bomb for Alfonso* (1962), last seen at the 59th Biennale di Venezia, *Brutal in Outer Space* (c. 1962-63), and *Untitled (Skull)* (1960-63), encapsulate Kogelnik's mixed sentiments to the burgeoning technologies of the 1960s. In these paintings, silhouetted figures and disembodied limbs hover amongst falling bombs, pink skulls, and flattened silver spheres. Any sense of morbidity suggested by their composition is offset by their gleefully psychedelic palette of teals, tangerines, crimsons, and mauves.

From 1964, Kogelnik began incorporating objects onto the surface of her canvases as three-dimensional augmentation to the bodies they depicted. *Artificial Man* and *Artificial Woman* (both 1965), two paintings not seen since the artist's solo exhibition in 1965 at the Austrian Institute, New York, have recently been reassembled and will also be on view. A long, twisting hose hangs from the chest of the orange male form, who, additionally, sports four arms and a disconnected limb suggestive of a 'spare part'. In lieu of an internal organ, a clear, plastic love heart is affixed to the green wire that is encased in the piping. A similar length of tube extends from the torso of the entirely deconstructed female figure, as she floats amidst her three arms and four legs.

To create these life-size forms that populate her paintings, Kogelnik traced around bodies—sometimes her own, and sometimes those of her acquaintances—in a process akin to photography that she described as 'taking'. Enhancing their mechanistic quality, the tape Kogelnik used to secure her cutouts remains delineated, suggesting that the figures and their extra limbs resemble both garments for paper dolls and integral components of a larger machine.

In a large-scale sculpture included in the exhibition, titled *Seventh Ave. People* (1986), flat, outlined bodies produced on sheet vinyl drape on hangers that suspend from a clothing rail, perhaps suggesting that identity is something that can be slipped on or off at will. Kogelnik's first studio in New York was not far from the Garment District on 7th Avenue, whose rush of clothing racks, tailors, and designers was a dynamic source of inspiration for the artist. Uncoupled from distinctions of sex, gender, or race, these vibrantly coloured cutouts offer the joy of Kogelnik's world and sixties-era utopianism. Yet, the threat of death in this—and Kogelnik's other hanging works—cannot be escaped. Like flayed skins, these depleted bodies portend a post-atomic world that is subject at any moment to weapons of mass destruction. By fusing the imagery of *memento mori* with symbolically optimistic materials, like vinyl, Kogelnik's works manifest life and death on the edge of destruction.

For Kogelnik, the body that would survive the future was something that could be engineered, cloned, and automated. Like her cutouts, she produced figurative imprints using anatomically accurate stamps of the body, bone structure, circulatory system, and inner organs. A body of twelve drawings included in *The Dance* that feature these stamps portray their eponymous *Robots* in narrative sequence: their creation; their ascension into space and journey to other planets; the nirvana of celestial travel and their subsequent transformation; and finally, their fall and destruction. Circles permeate these works, from the glowing spheres around which body parts orbit, to smaller, clustered beads redolent of medical blister packs.

In the early 1970s, Kogelnik departed from depictions of androgynous bodies, instead sourcing her models from advertisements or fashion editorials, and focusing on the archetypes of femininity circulated in mass media. The painting *On the Beach* (1973), included in the exhibition, imitates the wide format of a billboard: like shop mannequins, the women in this painting model swimwear and summer dresses while holding stiff, unnatural poses. Like the ceramics also on view, their faces are mask-like. Blank, cutout eyes, boldly outlined lips, and smooth, flat surfaces assert the artificiality of the female ideal. Just as Kogelnik envisioned Space utopias, she likewise revealed the culturally constructed expectations of women's bodies as fantasy, otherwise expressed by her often-repeated maxim, "art comes from artificial, because it is not nature."

Concurrent with *The Dance*, Kogelnik is the subject of a major retrospective at Kunsthhaus Zurich, on through July 14, 2024. In Paris, three ceramic sculptures by the artist are included in the exhibition *Le monde comme il va (The World as It Goes)*, at The Pinault Collection, Bourse de commerce, on through September 2, 2024.

Kiki Kogelnik (b. 1935, Graz, Austria; d. 1997, Vienna, Austria) is widely recognized for her striking compositions, flat graphic geometries, vibrant colour palette, and depictions of the human form. Although historically associated with the Pop Art movement, she eschewed categorisation, developing her own personal visual language that expressed her fascination with the uncertainties and possibilities of a new, technology-driven future and evolving representations of the female form.

Important solo museum exhibitions include *Kiki Kogelnik: Hangings*, MAK- Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna (1996); *I Have Seen the Future*, Hamburger Kunstverein, Hamburg (2012); *Kiki Kogelnik: Fly Me to the Moon*, Modern Art Oxford, United Kingdom (2015); *Kiki Kogelnik - Inner Life*, Kunsthalle Stavanger, Norway (2017); *Kiki Kogelnik: Les cyborgs ne sont pas respectueuses*, Musée des beaux-arts de La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland (2020); *Kiki Kogelnik: This is Your Life. An Archival Account*, Werner Berg Museum, Bleiburg, Austria (2021); *Kiki Kogelnik: Now is the Time*, Kunstforum Wien, Vienna, which travelled to Kunstmuseum Brandts, Odense, Denmark, and Kunsthaus Zurich, Switzerland (2023-24). She was the subject of major retrospectives at bsterreichische Galerie Belvedere in Vienna in 1998 and at Kunsthalle Krems, Austria in 2013.

Pace is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.

Today, Pace has seven locations worldwide, including European footholds in London and Geneva as well as Berlin, where the gallery established an office in 2023. Pace maintains two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace's long and pioneering history in California includes a gallery in Palo Alto, which was open from 2016 to 2022. Pace's engagement with Silicon Valley's technology industry has had a lasting impact on the gallery at a global level, accelerating its initiatives connecting art and technology as well as its work with experiential artists. Pace consolidated its West Coast activity through its flagship in Los Angeles, which opened in 2022. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, along with an office and viewing room in Beijing. In 2024, Pace will open its first gallery space in Japan in Tokyo's new Azabudai Hills development.



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