



INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARCH 26, 2007



Karen Kilimnik, *Ian Playing Soldier*, 1997  
Water soluble oil color on canvas, 20 x 16 inches  
Courtesy of 303 Gallery, New York.

## NEWS RELEASE:

# KAREN KILIMNIK

APRIL 20–AUGUST 5, 2007

EXHIBITION WALKTHROUGH LED BY INGRID SCHAFFNER, ICA SENIOR CURATOR WITH

INSIGHTS FROM CATALOG ESSAYISTS DOMINIC MOLON AND SCOTT ROTHKOPF

THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 5–6PM, ICA MEMBERS ONLY

OPENING RECEPTION: THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 6–8PM

## PHILADELPHIA, PA

The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) is pleased to present the first American survey for Karen Kilimnik. Drawing correspondences between romantic tradition and consumer culture, Kilimnik's work brings a haunting and contrary sense of beauty to contemporary art. The world of the ballet and childhood, romantic painting and pop music, icons of film and fashion, signs of witchcraft, time-travel, and murder comprise an imagery that has been culled from the historic and recent past into an unsettling present. In a world where the forces of nature, youth, and terror, have taken awesome hold, Kilimnik's art rematerializes a quest for the romantic sublime.

Occupying both the ICA's main gallery spaces, the survey was selected by the curator with the artist, who typically approaches the exhibition of her work as a form of theatrical mis-en-scene. For this installation, Kilimnik specified the first floor galleries appear almost empty except for a discrete chamber where her paintings are installed salon style on red walls—a romantic museum framed by the postmodern architecture. This exhibition spans fifteen years of painting, drawings, assemblage sculptures, installation, photographs and video. Curated by Ingrid Schaffner, ICA Senior Curator, this exhibition is accompanied by a catalog publication and will be on view April 20–August 5, 2007.

In the early 1990s Karen Kilimnik emerged as part of the "scatter" generation of artists (Felix Gonzales-Torres, Mike Kelley, Cady Noland, and Jack Pierson, among others) who were so-called for their patently punk, deconstructed installation art. Representative of this period is *The Hellfire Club of The Avengers*, 1989, an exploded rendition, complete with soundtrack, of an episode of the 1960s British spy show that Kilimnik continues to reference for its cool style and high artifice. The artist's use of copying as means of taking possession of, or mastering, an image is demonstrated by the "Master Hare" series of paintings after the eponymous work by Sir Joshua Reynolds. (In the most recent iteration, the young master has contracted a bad case of chicken pox.) Alternatively, Kilimnik submerges her identity in the "Me As" series of paintings and photographs, in which she is disguised as various models and movie stars. The poetics and frustrations of projecting one's self through media culture are expressed in drawings, which crib from a wide range of sources, to read as diary-like disclosures. Collectively, these works show how Kilimnik has expanded an essentially collage-based practice into a full-scale and theatrical form of production. One of her current projects is to realize a ballet—everything from costumes to choreography—made entirely from passages clipped from classic performances. The video installation *the bluebird folly*, 2006 presents the concept in action.

This is a timely look at Kilimnik's art. Given the rise of the subjective as an aesthetic mode, it's an opportunity to assess her work in relation to younger figures such as Laura Owens, Elizabeth Peyton, and Jim Hodges, as well as to her immediate peers. How does Kilimnik's "scatter art" of the 1990s find precedence in Postminimalism and Process Art? How does its use of the decorative and performed identities relate to a Feminist art history? There are also specif-

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\*Images available upon request

## GENERAL INFORMATION

ICA is located at:

118 South 36th Street at the University of Pennsylvania.

ICA is open to the public, except during installation, from 12:00pm to 8:00pm on Wednesday through Friday and from 11:00am to 5:00pm on Saturday and Sunday.

Admission is \$6 for adults; \$3 for students over 12, artists, and senior citizens; and free to ICA members, children 12 and under, PENN card holders, and on Sundays from 11:00am to 1:00pm.

For more information, call 215-898-7108/5911, or visit [www.icaphila.org](http://www.icaphila.org).

## INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Founded in 1963, the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania is a leader in the presentation and documentation of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, commissions, educational programs, and publications, ICA invites the public to share in the experience, interpretation and understanding of the work of established and emerging artists.

ic correspondences to be drawn to the art of Andy Warhol (whom Kilimnik frequently references) and Joseph Cornell (whose work engages many of the same romantic themes). Like them, Karen Kilimnik confronts us with an art of glittering allure.

It is significant that ICA is hosting this exhibition. Not only because Kilimnik's first museum show was held here in 1992, but also, because of a history of exhibitions that contextualize her art. These include: "Images Scavengers" (1982) a pioneering exhibition about appropriation art; "Accumulated Vision, Barry Le Va" (2005) a survey of a major figure of "scatter art" from the postminimalist generation; as well as surveys of two of Kilimnik's peers in painting (Lisa Yuskavage in 2000), and sculpture (Polly Apfelbaum in 2003). Like them, Kilimnik also hails from Philadelphia.

Concurrent with the exhibition at ICA, the Powel House in Philadelphia is planning a site specific installation by the artist to take place in June. Built in 1765 as the home of power couple Elizabeth and Samuel Powel, the Powel House is furnished with museum-quality clocks, portraits and other treasures and is among the nation's best-preserved examples of Georgian architecture. It is also one of the artist's favorite local landmarks.

An artist of international stature, Karen Kilimnik (b. 1957) is a native of Philadelphia, who lives in the region. In 1992, ICA presented her first museum show as part of the "Investigations" series of emerging artist work. Since then, she has received solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, Ireland; Kunsthalle, Zurich; White Cube, London. Her 2007 exhibitions include an exhibition organized by L'Arc in Paris which traveled to the Serpentine Gallery in London and a show of her ballet-related art at Le Consortium in Dijon, France. In 2005, she created two major site-specific installations within the historic setting of the Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice, and Kirschgarten Basel Historisches Museum, Basel. Important group shows include: "Plastic Fantastic Lover (object a)," 1991; "Post-Human," 1992; "Belladonna," 1997; and "Ideal Worlds: New Romanticism in Contemporary Art" in 2005. Monographic publications include: Karen Kilimnik: Paintings 1992-2000; Karen Kilimnik: Drawings, 1997 (both Patrick Frey Editions); Parkett (no. 52) and a new monograph by JRP|Ringier books, 2007.

## PUBLICATION

A fully illustrated catalog will accompany the exhibition. It will feature a curatorial essay by the curator analyzing the development of the artist's work and its historic contexts. A series of brief commissioned essays on related themes will also be included: "Gossip" by cultural critic Wayne Koestenbaum; "Ballet" by dance historian Joel Lobenthal; "Titles" by art historian Scott Rothkopf; and "Affect" by Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, curator Dominic Molon. The catalog will also include a complete bibliography and an illustrated exhibition chronology.

## CURATOR

Ingrid Schaffner is a writer and the senior curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Philadelphia, where she organized such exhibitions as "Accumulated Vision, Barry Le Va," "The Big Nothing" and "Polly Apfelbaum." Exhibitions prior to her appointment include "Julien Levy: Portrait of an Art Gallery" (with The Equitable Gallery, New York); "Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing and Archiving in Art" (with Siemens Kulturprogramm and The Haus der Kunst, Munich) and "Jess: To and From the Printed Page" with Independent Curators International. Her most recent book is Salvador Dalí's Dream of Venus: The Surrealist Funhouse at the 1939 World's Fair.

## TRAVEL DATES

This exhibition premieres at ICA (April 21 – August 5, 2007) and travels to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami (September 7 – November 4, 2007), the Aspen Art Museum (December 14, 2007 – February 3, 2008) and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (February 23 – June 8, 2008).

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All programs subject to change. Please visit the ICA website, [www.icaphila.org](http://www.icaphila.org), for more information on programs in conjunction with Karen Kilimnik.