König Galerie is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Kiki Kogelnik (1933–1997) in the chapel of the former St. Agnes Church.

Kogelnik’s second exhibition at König Galerie focuses on a productive period in the mid-1960s, shortly after Kogelnik moved from Europe to New York in 1962. This was an era of international upheaval, the looming tension of the Cold War and the Space Race were at their height and fears of imminent nuclear warfare disrupted any sense of security. Laos was in the grip of a civil war, and in her mid-twenties at the time, Kogelnik was among the first generation to witness the promise of a glimmering new age of American politics and the rise of the military-industrial complex, all broadcast over the newly introduced color television. Movements addressing gender and racial inequalities were in full swing, as was the sexual revolution. In this maelstrom of change, the austere-born painter produced a vibrant body of socio-political and personal appraisals addressing a world with an uncertain future.

While understood within the context of the era, Kogelnik’s works convey the current optimism that were a result of the promise offered by abstraction in technology, science, space exploration, communication, and machinery, balanced through a constant layering of heavy, weighty blocks and body fragments, machines, colors, and shapes, the tension of the imagery explores a bright, pigment colors. Kogelnik’s fragmented, fragmented vision is an unrelenting meditation on human existence and the singularity of the individual and their emotions within a context of the greater world.

The works in the exhibition were produced during the same period as the conception and creation of St. Agnes Church. Much like the brutalist architecture of the building, Kogelnik’s paintings and drawings seem to be a reaction to the brutality of the past and the effect of an increasingly mechanized world on both the body and emotions. Here, the architecture and Kogelnik’s work reveal their elemental nature while unremittingly exploring the dualistic optimism and moral seriousness of the time.

Alina Reuter

at König Galerie, Berlin
until 6 March 2006