

Jutta Koether

born 1958 in Cologne; lives in Berlin and New York

Biography

Visual Arts

Music

In the Exhibition

1977–1981: Studies art education at the University of Cologne

From 1985: Editor and co-publisher of the music and pop culture magazine *Spex* as well as reviewer and staffer for numerous magazines, including *Texte zur Kunst*, *Flash Art*, and *Artscribe*; lectureships at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg (HFBK), the School of Visual Arts, New York, Berlin University of the Arts (UdK Berlin), Bard College, New York, and Cooper Union, New York

Since 2010: Professor of Painting/Drawing at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg

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Visual Arts

Commuting between the metropolises of New York and Berlin, Jutta Koether travels not only geographically but also thematically within the network of international art. In her exploration of image, language, and music, and the interrelationship between them, she resolutely lives out the »fraying« of the arts that Theodor W. Adorno described in 1967.

Since the 1980s, she has taken up a feminist position as a response to the Cologne art scene dominated by men like Martin Kippenberger and Albert Oehlen. As co-publisher and editor of the music magazine *Spex* and as reviewer and staffer for other influential journals like *Texte zur Kunst*, *Flash Art*, and *Artscribe*, she has made a significant contribution to the development of art criticism and the discourses of German pop culture. Koether's creative work is linked thematically to the »great narratives« of art history. She follows an agenda of »restitution through repetition,« of reparation through appropriation and recapitulation, in order to emphasize the importance of female (co-)authorship. In the 1990s, she aroused interest with works like *Cézanne, Courbet, Manet, van Gogh, ich* (Cézanne, Courbet, Manet, van Gogh, and I, 1990) or *Ganz (100 % Malerei – Niemand ist eine Frau)* (Entire [100 % Painting – Nobody Is a Woman], 1991), with which she made her mark as a young woman artist in the male-dominated tradition of modern art. Using irony, she challenges the iconizing of the old masters and the cult of genius that has existed since the German Romantics, and jolts the self-image of the (male) artist with disenchanting and humorous comments.

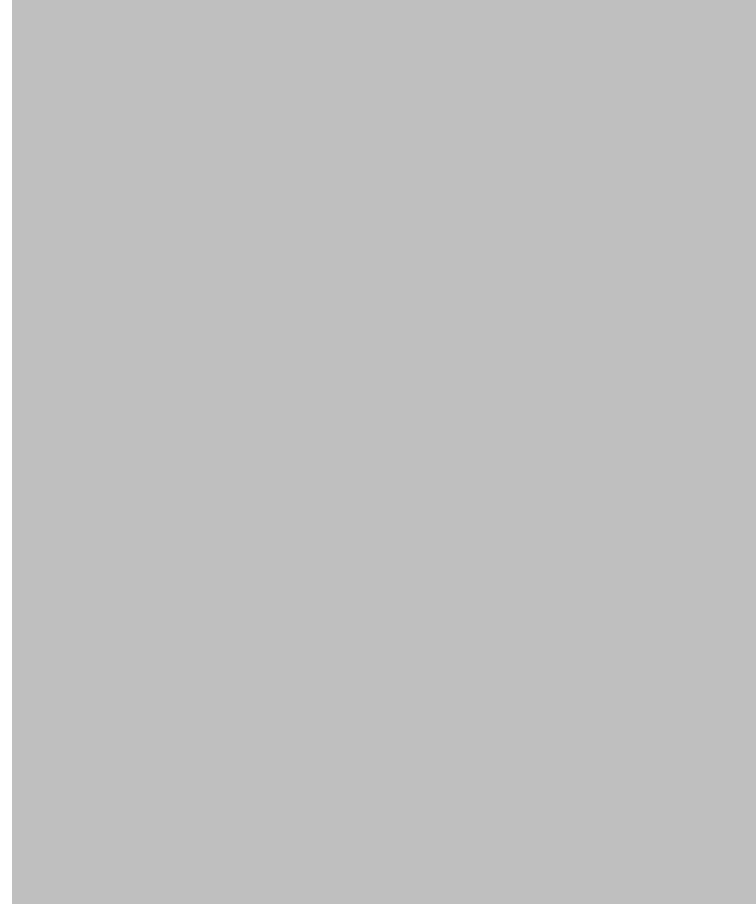
Her very personal style of painting is characterized by an overlaying of fine layers of drawing and painting usually in striking red. In her early works, by integrating everyday objects and using the fake glitter of »poor« materials (foil, tinsel, metallic paint), she created a kind of trash-chic aesthetic, which alluded to the glitz of the new millennium and criticized the capitalism of the 2000s as empty glamour.

Author: Lona Gaikis



Jutta Koether, »Cézanne, Courbet,
Manet, van Gogh, Ich«, 1990
Oil on canvas, 74.80 × 47.25 inches.
Photo: Courtesy Galerie Buchholz,
Berlin/Cologne/New York; © Jutta
Koether

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Jutta Koether, »ganz (100% Malerei –
Niemand Ist Eine Frau)«, 1991
Oil on canvas, 98.43 × 98.43 inches.
Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Donation
Thomas Borgmann. Photo: Courtesy
Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne/New
York; © Jutta Koether

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Jutta Koether, »Lagerfeld«, 2002
Acrylics on canvas, 23.62 × 19.69
inches. Private Collection. Photo:
Courtesy Galerie Buchholz,
Berlin/Cologne/New York; © Jutta
Koether

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Music

Jutta Koehler achieved her international breakthrough as an artist in the 1990s by moving to the USA and collaborating with a number of musicians, above all the protagonists of the New York post-punk and no-wave scene. Especially important was her long artistic and musical friendship with Kim Gordon, singer and bass player with the US band Sonic Youth. At the start of the 2000s, projects that manifested as performance or music and poetry readings and provided an accompaniment to Koehler's paintings and exhibitions took on ever-greater importance. While language, music, and image all have the same significance in her work, music is the form that synthesizes all her spheres of activity and plays a special role in facilitating an exchange with colleagues and the public. Other people's music has been a source of inspiration for her right from the start. Whether by quoting from idols of the beat generation and others or by collaborating with musician associates, Koether succeeds in finding the contemporary relevance of the classical subjects she references in her painting and manages to break down the principles of modern art by transgressing into pop culture.

In the Exhibition

Jutta Koether

Galerie Francesca Pia, Zürich, August 29, 2008, with Jutta Koether, 9:39 min.

Film: Heinrich Schmidt, Vernissage TV

Koether frequently extends her painting and object-based art to include musical performances, as in the 2008 exhibition *The Fact That You Place Your Bet on Red Does Not Mean That the Black Is Not Still There* at the Francesca Pia Gallery in Zurich.

At the opening of the exhibition, she plays on her Nord Lead 2 analogue synthesizer, which she wheels into the space at the beginning as a deliberate part of the performance. In the course of her musical improvisations in no-wave style, she even places her head at one point on the keyboard—another gesture she deploys in an attempt to undermine any appearance of a traditional formal musical recital. Dressed in red, the artist blends in with the red paintings and drawings on the red wall. A tangle of recording tape clings as if by chance to the technical equipment—perhaps a reference to the analogue recording techniques of the past.

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