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## Elke Silvia Krystufek

The Box



Elke Silvia Krystufek, *Bossi Burger Lie*, 1998

LIVING AND WORKING BETWEEN VIENNA AND BERLIN, ELKE SILVIA Krystufek is well known in Europe but not so in the United States. "HARMONIE 3" at The Box is a provocative and slightly mysterious introduction to her work for local audiences.

According to gallery director Mara McCarthy, Krystufek was a prolific producer of images back in the '90s, when she first started to gain traction in her art career. She has since decided to stop producing new images; when asked to do a show now, she curates a selection of her previous work. Hence, "HARMONIE 3", which is part of a series of solo exhibitions at various locales worldwide, is a collection of works that "relate in one way or the other to Elke Silvia Krystufek's time in and imaginations about Los Angeles and its art scene."

That quote is from a statement prepared by the artist to accompany this exhibition; throughout the statement—which is a significant piece of literature in itself—she refers to herself in the third person, and by her complete name. This interesting tactic of constantly referencing herself while at the same time maintaining a certain discursive distance can also be seen at play in the works on view. The show is quite personal, organized as it is by the artist's own random internal references, and it features a few appearances by Krystufek herself. But its compositional focus is on the relationships, collaborations and influences that were around the artist in a particular time and place.

The exhibition is at once murky and dynamic, filled with images that are both bold and unreadable. The painting *Christkind* (1998) features the image of a sculpture by Paul McCarthy (a friend and collaborator of Krystufek's, and also father to Box director McCarthy) with some German text that translates as: "Dear Baby Jesus! I would like to finally know, how many households in Austria are equipped with a PC?" The words somehow work in tandem with the sculpture's mechanical comedy.

Nearby is *You have one Jamie* (Portrait of Cameron Jamie) (1998), a beautiful portrait of the LA-born, now Paris-based artist (and one-time lover of Krystufek) done on patterned fabric. In the downstairs gallery is the video *Flex Performance* (1998), in which Krystufek and Jamie wrestle while McCarthy and Mike Kelley's band, Destroy All Monsters, plays in the background. Other works seem to play with stereotypical notions of Hollywood; there is *The idea of Love (Hollywood)* (1999), a romantic painting of the Hollywood sign at night, and *BORN TO BE WILD* (1992), a hilarious video in which Krystufek and a friend cruise the streets of Vienna on a motorcycle, to the tune of the eponymous song.

Krystufek's imagery is charismatic, but this intimately self-curated show foregrounds her as an artist among other artists, rummaging equally through personal relationships, the concomitant incest of the art world, and larger cultural signifiers.

- Carol Cheh

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