

Fiske, Courtney. "Kiki Kogelnik", Critics' Picks, *ArtForum.com*.

New York

Kiki Kogelnik

SIMONE SUBAL GALLERY
131 Bowery, 2nd Floor
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Two silhouettes cut from sheet vinyl, one black, one butterscotch, hang from two coat hangers that are looped through wire to the canvas's upmost edge. Slung against an acrylic gradient (pink-rimmed azure melted in lavender), each silhouette traces the contours of a body once full but now flayed: an enervated membrane, all surface and no sex. Sterile yet strangely seductive, like moltings from a space being, they treat the body as schema or sieve, limp and radically inorganic.

The piece, *Hanging*, by Kiki Kogelnik was made in 1970 as part of a series of cutouts traced from human forms and executed in silky, slick resins. A transplant to New York from Austria, Kogelnik settled downtown in 1962, where she befriended Claes Oldenburg, Roy Lichtenstein, and Carolee Schneemann, among others. (*Claes*, not on view here but made the same year as *Hanging*, takes the soft sculptor's body as its template.) Her early art informel-style paintings quickly yielded to work that indexed the city's emergent Pop aesthetic, grafting its concerns with high-tech materials, synthetic color, and transfer techniques such as silk-screening and stenciling onto her commitment to militant feminism.

Spanning 1964 to 1971, the twelve works on view mine the possibilities of the human in the age of Sputnik and spectacle. Scissors emerge as Kogelnik's tool of choice, which she conceived of as both a surgical implement and a feminist weapon, in the manner of Valerie Solanas or Hannah Höch. *Women's Lib*, 1971, shows a silk-screened Kogelnik, her skin a martian shade of green, wielding a pair of oversize scissors over a tangle of hangings. It's a fitting self-portrait for an artist who considered the body a schizoid thing, disjunct and always desiring.



Kiki Kogelnik, *Hanging*, 1970, acrylic, sheet vinyl, hangers, canvas, 60 1/4 x 54".

— Courtney Fiske