

Adams and Ollman

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Adams and Ollman
418 NW 8th Avenue
Portland, Oregon
503.724.0684
adamsandollman.com

For general inquiries:
info@adamsandollman.com
For press inquiries: team@danamannix.com

Kinke Kooi

The Grotesk of Raising

Adams and Ollman

August 7–September 4, 2021



Adams and Ollman, in collaboration with New Discretions (New York), is pleased to present the first West Coast solo exhibition of Dutch artist Kinke Kooi (b. 1961, Netherlands).

The show will bring together a selection of recent works that explore crucial ideas that the artist has long explored: gender, equality, and notions of the “other.” In her intricate, inventive paintings and drawings—which can take up to a year to complete—multi-faceted feminism is woven together with a seductive, sinewy line that blurs and merges inside to outside, convex to concave, surface to depth, ornament to function, emotional to verbal, high to low, flora to fauna.

Rendered in soft shades of pinks, reds, yellows, and greens, Kooi’s images are filled with ornate and florid details that coalesce to form a strange, seductive and anthropomorphic garden. She depicts an intertwined world, one that is flourishing and non-hierarchical. Clamshells, pearls, flowers, fruit, seedpods, fleshy folds, orifices, breasts, hair, baubles, and lace repeat throughout Kooi’s feminine terrains. In *Birth of Venus, 2020* elaborately drawn clamshells open slightly to reveal their pearls while a softly glowing moon influences the tide, and theatrical curtains pull back to reveal nighttime vignettes. In another work, *Bonding, 2019*, a candy-colored rope dances on the page as it ties itself into decorative knots

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linking a fleshy landscape of crevasses lined with pearls to an area of gray that reads as the vastness of the unknown.

Shells—symbols of strength and solitude—point to the artist’s interest in patterns and fractals with their mathematical precision. Pearls denote hidden knowledge and perfection, signifying decoration and adornment, their smooth surface countering severity and sharpness, while strawberries reference sensuality, fertility, and abundance. The range of Kooi’s motifs draws from the language of ornamentation and decoration, which are themselves gendered concepts. Whereas ornament traditionally decorates a structure, Kooi’s line, color, form, shape, space, and gestural movement carry meaning and exist on their own terms: the decorative is an end in itself.

Another key theme is adaptability and hospitality; inviting someone in—whether it is to one’s conversation, home or body—subverts their autonomy. With a shared linguistic root, *hostis* means “to eat” or “to destroy,” as hospitality and hostility dialogue in Kooi’s compositions. Her imagery overtakes and overwhelms, creating visual equality that resists dichotomies or exclusivity but instead consumes everything. Kooi’s subversive non-binary utopia embraces pretty or ugly, welcoming or repelling. The works are decidedly feminine and feminist; however, instead of eschewing formal elements and clichés—pink, frills, or adorned—the work

wholeheartedly embraces them. Again, with Kooi, everything is connected.

Kinke Kooi was born in 1961 in Leeuwarden, Netherlands, and attended the Academy for the Visual Arts in Arnhem. From 1998 through 2013, Kooi had five one-person exhibitions with Feature, Inc., New York. Kooi has had solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in Arnhem and has participated in group exhibitions at Mills College Art Museum in Oakland and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, both California: Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam and the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art in Ridgefield, Connecticut, among other venues. Her work is in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Arnhem Museum, Arnhem; Rijksmuseum Twente, Enschede; Fries Museum, Leeuwarden; and the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, New York. Kinke Kooi lives and works in Arnhem, the Netherlands.

Above:

Kinke Kooi

Birth of Venus, 2020

acrylic, color pencil, gouache on paper

40 x 30 inches

60.96 x 48.26 centimeters