

# KUNKEL FINE ART

Zeichnungen, Gemälde und Skulpturen  
des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts

## KARIN KNEFFEL

(1957 Marl - lives and works in Düsseldorf and Munich)

Karin Kneffel is one of Germany's leading contemporary artists. During her studies at the Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, which she completed in 1987 as a master student of Gerhard Richter, she was already concentrating on purely realistic painting. In doing so, she consciously opposed prevailing art world trends. Her outsider position was reinforced by her treatment of traditional, supposedly exhausted themes such as still lifes of fruit and portraits of animals. But it was themes like these, the defining motifs of her work in the 1990s, that would launch her artistic breakthrough.



In addition to her still lifes of fruit and animal portraits, spatial settings referencing art, architecture and media history have inspired Kneffel to create extensive cycles of work that challenge the viewer's perception. These cycles can refer to real locations (such as museum interiors where visitors view paintings by Diego Velázquez or Gerhard Richter), or they can meld imagination and history by exploring the past lives of bourgeois modernist interiors and the art collections they once housed (such as the villas Haus Esters and Haus Lange built by Mies van der Rohe in the 1920s). In other works she meditates on domestic spaces in anonymous residential buildings. Despite all their differences in motif and content, Kneffel's hyperrealistic, sometimes monumental paintings, executed with the utmost technical perfection, are united by their pursuit of the illusion of reality. However, upon closer inspection this illusion dissolves or at least appears questionable. She thus points to internal contradictions, for example by allowing the reflection of a motif to diverge from its position or the way it moves in space. In addition to such surreal alienations, her use of extreme close-up, cropped detail and unusual perspective reinforces this effect.

Viewed as a whole, Kneffel's paintings form a self-referential corpus of work with recurring motifs that often create an intricate interplay between image, space and time. She layers and recombines personal recollections, art-historical sources and historical places. The viewer is gradually familiarized with a déjà-vu effect deliberately intended by the artist that challenges the relationship to reality and realism through the laborious process of oil painting. Kneffel's play with reality and her reflection on it have become her trademark.

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Kneffel, who is represented internationally by leading galleries, took on a professorship at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich in 2008. In recent years numerous museums have honoured her work in solo exhibitions.