

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

# The New York Times

Kiki Kogelnik

Through June 29. Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 534 West 26th Street, Manhattan; 212-744-7400, [miandn.com](http://miandn.com).



Kiki Kogelnik's "Hands," 1967-68, in her first solo at Mitchell-Innes & Nash. Credit Kiki Kogelnik Foundation and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York

Kiki Kogelnik, who was born in Austria and who, before her death in 1997, was active in New York, liked to put the human body in silhouette. In her painting “Friends,” a handful of bright figures, some missing a head or limb or with large circles cut right through their torsos, are thrown across a jazzy background. In “Hands,” she painted a group of dismembered arms and legs spread out like letters in a printer’s tray, and for “Divided Souls,” she cut figures out of black and white vinyl and hung them on a garment rack. The woman striking a pose in “Dynamite Darling,” the highlight of Kogelnik’s first show at Mitchell-Innes & Nash, isn’t technically a silhouette because she isn’t a monochrome, but she’s definitely flat.

And whether it happens in the pages of a fashion magazine, under the sexism of the art world, or in the pitiless gears of the atomic age, all that flattening is certainly violent. But somehow the violence seems incidental. What’s really notable about Kogelnik’s flatness is that she never lets it entirely succeed. Punk kabuki makeup gives the face in “Dynamite Darling” the suggestion of depth, as well as irony and plenty of affect, and even the physiques in “Hands” and “Divided Souls” are distinctive enough to feel individual. To me, this suggests an optimism about our power to resist the dehumanizing forces of modernity — or an invaluable insight that nothing’s ever as flat as it looks. *WILL HEINRICH*