

I've Got You

The logo for KIT (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology) is displayed in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters 'K', 'I', and 'T' are stacked vertically and are highly stylized, with the 'K' and 'I' having a unique, blocky appearance.

Antonia Freisburger
Pia Krajewski
Antonia Rodrian

28 October 2023
to 4 February 2024

Antonia Freisburger, Pia Krajewski, and Antonia Rodrian have created new paintings for their exhibition at KIT, inviting us into a mysterious world of surfaces, light modulation, and textures. Subtle and delicate, full of energy and depth, these three painters create a space where their works, both individually and collectively, exude a suggestive aura. Behind these paintings are strong personalities: artists committed to their craft and confidently pursuing their path.

While no people appear in these works, the human presence never seems far away. The narrative essence in each painting allows us, as observers, to imagine a connection to them. We can immerse ourselves in the canvases, discovering fleeting scenes of life captured within, experiencing a bit of the “museum” atmosphere at KIT. If we take our time and truly look, we might drift into an unfamiliar yet intriguing realm. We sense what Antonia Freisburger, Pia Krajewski, and Antonia Rodrian, who shared a studio for five years, hint at in the title *I've Got You*: No matter where each one's journey takes them, they can always rely on each other.

The exhibition begins with the 30-meter-long work on paper *Hyper-Eli* by Antonia Freisburger (*1990). The artist chose the flattest part of the room to start her oversized drawing. For hours and days, she leaned over, intuitively drawing in this seemingly unearthly location. We, the visitors, struggle to approach the beginning of the drawing without adopting a similar, strained posture as the artist.

The other six paintings by Antonia Freisburger hang on the walls. Unlike the drawing, their composition is meticulously planned. Here the artist draws us into the painted three-dimensionality of organic shapes. The painted surfaces seem simultaneously smooth, wet, and matte. What we perceive defies our imagination, and we struggle to categorize it. Yet various associations emerge: we see flames, vessels, body parts, clouds, or waves. One might assume these colors and forms are not of this world but represent an unknown substance from a vast cosmos. Can our eyes penetrate this cosmos?

Our need to categorize what we see is swiftly dismissed: Freisburger presents us with a painterly “void” of light and oil paint, aspiring to create something new and organize the world; brushstrokes are barely visible. The transformation of her emotions flows into the creative process. “While painting, I follow strict rules that I must implement within the painting,” says Freisburger, who also explores pain management strategies and quantum physics.

Gazing at her flowing, floating color gradients (in her most recent paintings, often painted in pairs, she uses soft red tones, and occasionally a forest green), one can lose oneself or get caught up in the sudden emergence of flames or blood vessels. The titles of her works, including *Cryoflutter*, *Themidrift*, and *Whyowhya*, sound as if they come from a fictional language, enhancing the extraterrestrial aura of the paintings.

Pia Krajewski's (*1990) paintings, by contrast, seem to be at home in the terrestrial. They depict details of surfaces and objects, leaving it ambiguous whether they are man-made or natural. Her paintings follow a constructive logic, as if inspired by a clear model, perhaps something she might have found while wandering in a forest or observing a medieval garment. Krajewski photographs or collects things that interest her and adds them to her archive, from which she then draws inspiration. Her observations of these subjects result in newly invented shapes on the canvas, reminiscent of faded memories. Using a cotton cloth, she rubs the paint onto the canvas in an even and harmonious layer. She treats the canvas as one would a malleable mass in sculpture. Only toward the end of the painting process does she use a brush to apply paint. This technique gives her paintings an intensely tactile and lively quality; one is drawn closer, wanting to touch them, to breathe in their color. In recent years, "English red" dominated her color palette, but recently, green and yellow have made their way into her works. The large-scale, often diptych and triptych paintings recall still lifes, but her focus is more the essence of beautiful things. These are figurative motifs that cannot be easily categorized; they seem distant, controlled, and reverent like Renaissance portraits, originating from one era and pointing to another. They create an aura, urging us to delve deeper into the painting, elevating the ephemeral to reality. The evocative titles, such as *Taking Root*, *The Driven Ego*, and *FOMO* (fear of missing out), lend a human touch and character to the subjects. A title such as *Outstanding* suggests many things: perhaps a medal recipient or a high achiever, which we might find in the delicate colors and shapes of the painting.

Antonia Rodrian (*1989) incorporates human actions and everyday objects into her paintings, recurring motifs that refer to each other across the canvases: hands, nail polish, pencils, contact lenses, and hair dye applied with brushes—the range seems endless. What may appear beautiful at first glance becomes strange upon closer examination. The depicted elements repeatedly intertwine and overlap. The longer we observe, the more the painted subjects deconstruct themselves. We witness objects animate, dancing in playful choreography. These depicted groupings cast shadows, transform, and evolve, turning into performance pieces on canvas. Rodrian first captures her ideas in sketches. Using thin oil paint and minimal layers, she creates a composition that seems uncanny yet theatrical, such as brushes without bristles painting thick cord-like hair. Still, we understand the intent: an attempt to beautify, which becomes abstract, deviating from human action. *To Sharpen (Group of Four)*, a kind of pencil-sharpener dance, also animates an inanimate object, without any human intervention. Of course, the painter is in control. Much like E.T.A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman," in which the automaton Olympia invokes a subtle horror in readers, Antonia Rodrian's objects exude an unsettling allure, potentially reminiscent of artificial intelligence and robots, taking over tasks and control. Human gestures are aestheticized through repetition and formal structures, causing us as viewers to jump from the depicted narrative back to the painting.

The artist's small, round *Shaped Canvases* seem as if they have been cut out from a larger whole, like quotations, amplifying the impact of the paintings. These *tondi*, a popular format since antiquity, often served as decorative elements in architecture.

Rodrian embraced this concept, transforming a corridor into an airy painting gallery with her series.

This exhibition also marks a farewell: In their search for a shared studio in Düsseldorf, Antonia Freisburger, Pia Krajewski, and Antonia Rodrian found a space in Flingern in 2017. This space included a small anteroom and a storefront on Birkenstraße, which also allowed for exhibitions. Initially they mostly showcased fellow artists from Germany, but international perspectives soon followed. Under the name sonneundsolche, the three painters, all graduates of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, curated this space over the years with 44 solo and group exhibitions.¹ Now their paths diverge, as successes have been achieved, and changes in location are imminent: the perfect time to celebrate this moment of departure and farewell with a splendid presentation at KIT.

¹ The current and final exhibition at sonneundsolche, *An Empty Sofreh* with Samira Hodaei, will be on view until 17 December 2023 at Birkenstraße 44. Further information: <https://www.sonneundsolche.com>

PROGRAMME

(mostly in German, events and guided tours are available on request)

I've Got You

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Pia Krajewski
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28 October
2023 to
4 February 2024

EN

KIT/meet+talk

Saturdays, 1pm–5pm

Public guided tours

Sundays, 3pm–4pm

Public guided tours in dialogue

on the first Sunday of each month, 3pm–4pm

5 November 2023, Public guided tour with artist in dialogue

3 Dezember 2023, Public guided tour in dialogue

7 January 2024, Public guided tour with artist in dialogue

4 February 2024, Public guided tour in dialogue

Sparda-Kunst-Apéro

free entry

Thursday, 7 December 2023, 6pm, Spill the tea.

Gertrud Peters and KIT-Team give insights how an exhibition comes together.

Thursday, 18 January 2024, 6pm, Guided tour with Gertrud Peters

Baker Tilly Artist Scholarship

free entry

Wednesday, 22 November 2023, 6pm, Presentation and guided tour with grant winner

Pottery Lab

Two day Pottery Workshop with artist Isabel Schober

For all visitors from the age of 16 up

Sunday, 19 November 2023, 11am–1pm,

Start at Hetjens – Deutsches Keramikmuseum

Sonntag, 3 December 2023, 11am–1pm, Start at KIT

Participation in Pottery-Workshop is free.

Please book your place in advance via 0211.8994210

(museum box office of Hetjens – Deutsches Keramikmuseum) or via bildung@kunst-im-tunnel.de. Only few places are available.

Family Day at KIT

on the second Sunday of each month, free entry

Guided tours for families (4 years and up)

12 November 2023, 1 pm–2.30 pm, *Wenn Farbe verläuft*

10 December 2023, 1 pm–2.30 pm, *Die Party des Alltäglichen*

14 January 2024, 1 pm–2.30 pm, *Genau hingeschaut*

Participation in guided tour for families is free.

Cooperation project of

KIT

HETJENS Deutsches
Keramikmuseum

KIT

Through space and time

Children's Museum Night 2024 (aged 5 to 10)

free entry

Friday, 26 January 2024, 5pm–10.30pm

Together with their families, children have the opportunity on this evening to discover Düsseldorf's cultural institutes outside normal opening hours. Exciting workshops and unusual guided tours are on the program. More info at www.musenkuss-duesseldorf.de.

Participation in the children's museum night is free. Registration is not necessary.

Acoustic Guided Tour

For blind, visually impaired and sighted visitors

Friday, 19 January 2024, 4pm–5.30pm

Participation in Acoustic guided tour is free.

Please book your place in advance at bildung@kunst-im-tunnel.de.

Let's Talk About... Fiction!

free entry

Wednesday, 13 December 2023, 5pm–6.30pm

Education project in dialogue by the trainees of KIT and Kunsthalle Düsseldorf

Participation in Let's Talk About and a cold drink at KIT Café is free.

Registration is not necessary.

Guided architecture tour

Every third Saturday of each month, 2pm–3pm

Underground – Wie die Kunst in den Tunnel kam

18 November 2023, 16 December 2023, 20 January 2024

Participation in Guided architecture tour is free.

Entrance fee is not included. Please book your place in advance at bildung@kunst-im-tunnel.de.

Podcast „KITcast – der Podcast aus dem Tunnel“

This QR code will take you to the podcast on the exhibition “I've Got You”



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