

Katharine Kuharic
Coda



ADAA: The Art Show
Booth C1
November 3 - 7, 2021

P·P·O·W is pleased to present *Coda*, a three-decade survey of works by the innovative figurative painter Katharine Kuharic. Seductive and subversive, Kuharic has pioneered a genre of distinctly queer image-making that is both pastoral and pop. Eschewing various gendered historical tropes, Kuharic's work conjures open-ended narratives, always insisting that things are different from what they seem. Emphasizing an individual aesthetic counter to the virtual realities of technology, Kuharic's performative, labor intensive process necessitates an equivalent time-based immersion and emotional impact on the viewer. Featuring works from the late 1990s and 2000s alongside her latest series, this presentation showcases Kuharic's consistently multi-layered symbolism, hyper-realistic style, and highly keyed pallet, forming a dizzying yet incisive picture of America.

In densely collaged metaphorical scenes, linear narratives are upended with a stream-of-conscious flux. Utilizing severe cropping and incongruous scale shifts, Kuharic juxtaposes various female types, such as lesbian daddies, femme fatales, showgirls, and nuns, creating a carnivalesque array of potent symbols and allegorical narratives. In *Backwards Flag*, 1998, for example, Kuharic renders a smiling young woman with a short, blond haircut; a corseted pin-up figure suspended from a knotted rope; a backwards American flag; cushioned chairs with floral upholstery; and a determined female miner adorned with hard hat and dolphin sticker. Honed over the course of a decade, Kuharic's work from this period demonstrates a singular combination of political surrealism and pop art realism, which David Humphrey aptly described as "Queer Populist Hallucinatory Realism" in his catalogue essay for her 2004 exhibition *THROB*. Amplifying a cyclonic, pulsating charge, these works engulf the viewer in Kuharic's hypnotic and rebellious American landscape.

Contrasting nature's abundant beauty with its piercing brutality, this presentation will also feature large-scale new paintings that grapple with the passage of time and the erosion of our natural environment. In *Coda* and *Sentinel*, 2021, Kuharic embeds references to Albrecht Durer, El Greco, and Stanley Spencer into her withering tangles of closely observed clippings from the natural world. Adamant that her sources are real and not photographic, Kuharic also collects dead hummingbirds, cardinals, and finches and paints them to scale directly onto the canvas as "ghost" images rendered only in the grisaille of the underpainting. Working quickly to capture nature's waning beauty and resilient life force, Kuharic imbues these works with the memories and feelings of their lost lives. At once murky and radiant, Kuharic's alluring compositions parallel sunsets heightened by oil particulates and carbon dioxide, a visible reproach for our ongoing destruction of the planet.

Katharine Kuharic (b. 1962) was born in South Bend, IN and completed her BFA in Painting and Drawing at Carnegie Mellon University in 1984. She has exhibited in the U.S. and abroad in solo or group exhibitions in Paris, Rome, Tokyo, Stockholm, London, and Amsterdam. Kuharic has been the subject of museum exhibitions at the St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO; The Delaware Center for Contemporary Art, Wilmington, DE; The South Bend Regional Art Museum, South Bend, IN; The Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, MO; and The Portsmouth Museum of Art, Portsmouth, NH. Since 2004, Kuharic has held the Kevin Kennedy Professor of Art at Hamilton College, Clinton, NY. She has been represented by P·P·O·W since 1994 and presented four solo exhibitions with the gallery.