



# BIRD FLIGHT. ERIKA GIOVANNA KLIEN IN DIALOGUE WITH CONTEMPORARY ARTISTIC POSITIONS

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## Bird Flight. Erika Giovanna Klien in dialogue with contemporary artistic positions

Exhibition dates 9 April – 7 September 2022

Opening 8 April 2022, 18:30. Entry permitted with Super Green Pass (3G)

Press preview 7 April 2022, 11:00

*Bird Flight* takes its title from a series of paintings by the Austrian artist **Erika Giovanna Klien** (1900-1957), in which the flight of birds is expressed through movement and light, which are central themes in her art. Overlooked by the history of art like many other twentieth century female artists, and included in **Lea Vergine's The Other Half of the Avant-Garde**, published in the 1980s, Klein was one of the most interesting exponents of the **Kinetism** movement, founded by Franz Cizek in Vienna after the First World War.

Right from its origins, Kinetism developed the idea that the individual energies of young people can only be freed from the rust of tradition by an education in art. It was a kind of **humanistic avant-garde** that connected dynamism with psychic and sensory movement, and renounced the aggressive myth of speed and movement embodied by Futurism.

*"The word Avant-garde itself comes directly from bellicose, military jargon – points out **Bart van der Heide** – and it defines the perennial need for change and radical renewal typical of Modernism. All the same, change does not always have to be necessarily violent. The vision of Erika Giovanna Klien and the Kinetists opens the way to an alternative concept of change that is not activated at the expense of others. Radical in their own way, the Kinetists state that change comes from within and is based on the fundamental effect of the human experience."*

In this exhibition, the utopias linked to the theme of flight converge with two pillars of modern and contemporary art – light and movement – both of which stand at the centre of Klien's visionary art. But the show – curated by **Bart van der Heide**, **Andreas Hapkemeyer** and **Brita Köhler**, with a layout designed by **Matilde Cassani** – does more than simply recount and display her work. *Bird Flight*, in fact, creates a **conversation** between the works of the Austrian artist and a **number of light and kinetic works from the Museion collection**. These include four youthful works by Klien herself, in order to display her **personal contribution to the Avant-Garde** by demonstrating her contemporary relevance and influence on future generations.



Alongside **loans** from the collections of the Belvedere Wien, the Vienna University of Applied Arts, the Wien Museum and the Eccel Kreuzer Museum in Bolzano, ***Bird Flight*** displays works from the 1920s by **Max Oppenheimer, Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack, Elisabeth Karlinsky** and **Fortunato Depero**, the 1960s by **Dadamaino, Mark Adrian, Otto Piene, Günther Uecker** and **Alberto Biasi**, and works by **Eva Schlegel, Spencer Finch, Ceal Floyer, Benjamin Tomasi** and **Liliana Moro** from the end of the 1990s.

The exhibition is staged with the generous support of the **Austrian Cultural Forum in Milan**.

***Bird Flight. Erika Giovanna Kliin Erika Giovanna Kliin in dialogue with contemporary artistic positions***  
**curated by** Bart van der Heide, Andreas Hapkemeyer and Brita Köhler  
**Installation design by** Matilde Cassani

**Artists:** Erika Giovanna Kliin in dialogue with Mark Adrian, Alberto Biasi, Dadamaino, Fortunato Depero, Spencer Finch, Ceal Floyer, Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack, Elisabeth Karlinsky, Liliana Moro, Max Oppenheimer, Otto Piene, Eva Schlegel, Benjamin Tomasi, Günther Uecker.

**With the generous support of** the Austrian Cultural Forum Milan



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