

Further Reading, Viewing and Listening

A range of materials that includes publications by Kim Gordon such as her memoir GIRL IN A BAND, together with poetry by Sappho and others who have influenced Gordon, are available to purchase at the IMMA Shop.

Additional free resources such as talks, videos, interviews and selected press articles are available online at the IMMA website www.imma.ie.

Limited Art Edition

A new Limited Art Edition has been produced for this exhibition, titled *Dead Machines* (2018), and is available to purchase at the IMMA Shop. Donated by the artist, all proceeds from sales of this print help to fund IMMA's ambitious programme.

Don't forget, IMMA Members receive a 20% discount on Art Editions, 10% discount on IMMA Shop purchases and free entry, plus guest, to paid exhibitions.

Associated Talks and Events

Performance: An Evening with Kim Gordon with performers Body/Head, Heather Leigh and Elaine Kahn

Saturday 27 July / 19:00 – 22:00 / IMMA Courtyard

Tickets €25.00 [SOLD OUT]

IMMA is delighted to present *An Evening with Kim Gordon* in the beautiful surroundings of the IMMA Courtyard. The evening features live performances by Body/Head (an experimental electric guitar duo composed of Kim Gordon and Bill Nace), together with poet Elaine Kahn and guitarist Heather Leigh.

Artist Conversation: Kim Gordon and Sinéad Gleeson

Saturday 27 July 2019 / 13:00 - 14:15 / Light House Cinema, Smithfield, Dublin 7

Tickets €8.00 / Concession €3.50

IMMA is delighted to present renowned artist Kim Gordon in conversation with Irish writer, editor and freelance broadcaster Sinéad Gleeson. Together they will discuss the making and thinking behind Gordon's exciting new solo exhibition. This talk offers a rare chance to gain insights into Gordon's extraordinary ideas and processes as one of the most prolific cross-discipline artists working today.

Curator's Lunchtime Talk: Kim Gordon, *She bites her tender mind*

Friday 16 August 2019 / 13:15 - 14:00 / Meeting Point - IMMA Main Reception

Free – Drop In

Join curator Rachael Gilbourne for an insightful walkthrough of Kim Gordon *She bites her tender mind*. No need to book in advance, just come to the IMMA's main reception.

For full programme details and tickets visit the IMMA website www.imma.ie
All talks are free but ticketed unless otherwise stated.

IMMA would like to thank Kim Gordon for her energy and creativity, together with 303 Gallery, New York, for their support. We would also like to thank our hospitality partner The Dean Dublin and our invaluable IMMA Members, Patrons and Partners.

The exhibition *She bites her tender mind* has been curated by Rachel Thomas, Senior Curator: Head of Exhibitions, co-ordinated by Rachael Gilbourne, Assistant Curator: Exhibitions – Projects & Partnerships, and supported by Claire Power, Temporary Head of Exhibitions.

Have a question about an artwork? Want to know more? Ask a member of our Visitor Engagement Team, easily identifiable by their blue lanyards.

IMMA

COURTYARD GALLERIES – EAST GROUND

27 JULY – 10 NOVEMBER 2019

Kim Gordon She bites her tender mind



THE DEAN 303 GALLERY
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IMMA is delighted to present *She bites her tender mind*, a solo exhibition by Kim Gordon. With a career spanning more than three decades, Kim Gordon continues to work as a prolific and ground-breaking artist today. Synonymous with the iconic band she cofounded in 1981, Sonic Youth, Gordon crosses boundaries between visual art, music, fashion, film, writing and performance, and insists on radical experimentation within every field.

She bites her tender mind features new paintings and drawings, together with ceramic sculpture, fabric works, a glitter installation and an immersive video projection. Gordon adopts a holistic approach to making art and the works seen here often reference her practices in other disciplines. With this approach, Gordon's narrative of an imagined domestic space, branded yet irreverent, poetic yet punkish, creates at once a visceral and dream-like atmosphere. As Gordon states, "Art [has] always given me direction, a way forward, even when I sometimes felt I was floating."

She bites her tender mind is a poetic response by the artist to the architecture of these galleries. For Gordon, the series of four interconnecting gallery rooms, each with classical detailing, mouldings, mantles and fireplaces "feels like a home of sorts". A seasoned traveller, Gordon has drawn upon the domestic sensibility of the galleries as an analogy for contemporary urban lodgings, such as Airbnb or Homestay. There can be a certain dislocation and alienation within these faux homes away from home. Gordon considers the experience of morphing one's own reality with these symbols of an idealised commercialised lifestyle.

At IMMA, she suggests a fictional scenario where the galleries have become her own branded lodgings, decorated with lyrical gestures. Several of the new drawings on display such as

Airbnb Hollywood (2019) and *Airbnb 7* (2019) are taken from Gordon's new Airbnb series. This perspective mirrors previous exhibitions by the artist, such as *Kim Gordon Design Office: Coming Soon* (2014), which took place at the historic Rudolph Schindler-designed Fitzpatrick-Leland House in the Hollywood Hills of LA, and played on the notion of staging a house, like the 'property-porn' shown on real-estate reality TV shows. As Gordon mentions "...model-home communities have always fascinated me...".

Several of the works within *She bites her tender mind* shimmer with lo-fi glamour, from the glitter installation *Black Glitter Circle* (2008) to the metallic spray paint of *Atwater Village Palm* (2019). In her memoir, Gordon recalls "...I always had a feel for the seediness and sadness [of Sunset Strip, LA] – underneath anything... that's new, flashy, and fresh. I had always loved...the use of tacky, impure elements like metallic material and glitter, and painting over it to make it crusty and brittle has always reminded me of LA architecture".

In this scenario, where the artworks begin to act as props or décor, Gordon's conjuring of the ancient Greek poet Sappho abounds. The exhibition itself takes its title, *She bites her tender mind*, from a work by the prolific poet who is a renowned symbol of desire and love between women. The new and recent paintings contain references to Sappho. These works, such as the *Lay Down Thy Limbs* series (2019), see Gordon continuing her research about the body in a feminist reconsideration where she uses materials such as metallic ink, interference pigments and tracing papers in gestural works. The artist has stated how she feels that "...women aren't really allowed to be kick-ass. It's the famous distinction between art and craft: Art, and wildness, and pushing against the edges, is a male thing. Craft, and control, and polish, is for women. Culturally we don't allow women to be as free as they would like, because that is

frightening". With these works, a freedom appears in the immediacy of the artist's brushstrokes, the uninhibited gestures and the wild scrawling lines. The artist goes on to say that, "At the end of the day, women are expected to hold up the world, not annihilate it." These new works suggest a looseness; a willing abandonment of self across the canvas.

Similarly, the works *Untitled (from the boyfriend series)* (2015), imply the presence of the female body with their use of denim mini-skirts as paint surfaces. Turned on their sides and presented as minimalist art, these pieces carry an irreverence as Gordon dismantles the hierarchical sanctity of the 'art object'. They signal Gordon's bold handling of fabric and other materials in her practice. In previous pieces canvases have been treated with direct application of paints, resins and fiberglass, as well as physical manipulation. For the artist, performing a painting becomes its own medium where finished works are crumpled, overturned and flung.

This irreverent critique, merged with the motif of the female body, is carried through to the small-scale ceramic nude presented on Gordon's readymade "event table", *The Pitch 22* (2018); a comment on the commercialised contemporary artist, packaged and pitched for the art market.

Alongside these figurative works, other pieces include *Dead Machines* (2018) from the ongoing Noise Painting series that depicts the names of experimental and noise groups, and *#MOOD* (2018) that refers to hashtag culture in a similar way to Gordon's Twitter Paintings sourced from the Twitter streams of GIRLS television producer Jenni Konner, art critic Jerry Saltz and artist Richard Prince, among others. These word paintings act almost like branding, popularising what they symbolise and acknowledge. By orphaning the words from their intended context, Gordon forces them to exist in a pure visual language space. In this exhibition in particular, these paintings are used to

comment on other artworks around them as parts of the artist's imagined story-line.

Gordon has placed each of the artworks with the viewer's experience in mind, pacing the exhibition so that it becomes subtly more intense as you move through it. This journey culminates in the immersive three-screen projection *Proposal For A Dance* (2012) located in the final room of the galleries. A three-colour video of red, green and blue, the work is a gesture towards anti-pop and its implications for the female body. Two performers, Gordon and Eleanor Erdman, in Rodarte dresses wield electric guitars, creating sounds through their movements while spoofing the traditional, heroic gestures of the male rock guitarist.

Gordon describes her uniquely visceral approach to creating this exhibition and the effect of her fictional scenario, charged with the inevitable projected meanings from all sides, "I wanted to feel Sappho and make physical manifestations about her in sort of a daydreaming meditation: *to make myself into her*. Similarly, I try to locate or imagine myself within an Airbnb... Waking up in a strange place to strange art as decoration".

The quotes cited in this text are taken from Kim Gordon's own descriptions of the exhibition *She bites her tender mind*, and her memoir, *GIRL IN A BAND* (HarperCollins, New York, 2015).

About the artist

Kim Gordon studied at the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles in the late 1970s and has continued to work as an artist since. Her first solo exhibition presented under the name Design Office took place at New York's White Columns in 1981. For the past thirty years Gordon has worked consistently across disciplines and across distinct cultural fields: art, design, writing, fashion (XGirl), music (Sonic Youth, Free Kitten, Body/Head), and film/video (both as actress and director).

Recent selected exhibitions by Kim Gordon include in 2019 *Lo-Fi Glamour*, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, USA; in 2017 *Kim Gordon & Rodney Graham*, L'Académie Conti, Dijon, France; in 2016 *Manifesta 11*, Zurich, Switzerland; in 2015 *Noise Name Paintings And Sculptures Of Rock Bands That Are Broken Up*, Benaki Museum / Deste Foundation, Athens, Greece; *Design Office: The City Is A Garden*, 303 Gallery, New York; *All Instruments Agree: an exhibition or a concert*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; in 2014 *Coming Soon, Design Office*, Gagosian Gallery, Los Angeles; *INVERSIONS* with Nick Mauss, Frieze Projects, London; in 2013 *Design Office with Kim Gordon – 1980*, White Columns, New York; in 2012 *Karen Kilimnik & Kim Gordon*, 303 Gallery, New York; in 2009 *Sonic Youth ETC.: Sensational Fix*, (traveling exhibition) MUSEION, Bolzano; Kunsthalle Dusseldorf; Malmo Kunsthalle; Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid and in 2006 *Music is a Better Noise*, MoMA/PS1, New York.

Front cover:
Kim Gordon, *Lay Down Thy Limbs 2*,
2019; Acrylic and medium on canvas;
121.9 x 91.4cm. © Kim Gordon;
Courtesy 303 Gallery, New York