

KW

K, A Year with P. Krishnamurthy 3 February – 16 December 18

Venue: Ebersstraße 3, 10827 Berlin-Schöneberg
Opening: 3 February 18, 5–7pm
Open Fridays, 11–5 pm and by appointment at
kontakt@k-komma.de

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is pleased to inaugurate *K*,—a “workshop for exhibition-making” founded by designer, curator, writer, and educator P. Krishnamurthy. Established as part of the residency format *A Year with ...*, *K*, proposes a space for production, presentation, and pedagogy. This initiative extends and rethinks his previous project, *P!*, an exhibition space, gallery, and “Mom-and-Pop-Kunsthalle” located in New York from 2012–17. As Krishnamurthy has suggested in other contexts, the new venue

proffers a particular proposition: that curating, design, and other artistic pursuits in our present times must eschew the promotion of perfect products, instead presenting the creative process itself, with its plurality of positive outcomes and periodic faux pas¹

that perhaps

can make even everyday things bumpier²

—or some kind of cacophonous, cryptic, confusing kaka like that.

As an exhibition-maker and graphic designer, Krishnamurthy has played with a broad set of ideas, including identity and its constructions, typographic micro-narration, self-referential modes of display, idiosyncratically-ordered curatorial systems, and institutional models alongside issues such as design’s relationship to historical and contemporary power structures. *K*, represents both taking stock and building anew: the workshop space functions as a site for reflection upon existing models of interdisciplinary creative practice. During 2018, the space hosts a single, continuous residency and exhibition. As part of this program, *K*, invites outside participants—artists, curators, designers, and others whose names (or pseudonyms) begin with the letter “K”—to transform this ongoing presentation in dialogue with Krishnamurthy. *K*, will also collaborate with art schools and educational programs to test emerging ideas in situ. Through these activities, the program renders visible the process of thinking and creating within a bounded space and period.

The program’s yearlong trajectory opens in February with an exploration of the work of East German graphic designer and exhibition-maker Klaus Wittkugel

- 1 Prem Krishnamurthy with Stella Bottai, exhibition text and publication for *P!CKER* at Stanley Picker Gallery (Kingston University London, September 2017)
- 2 Prem Krishnamurthy, *P!DF* (O-R-G: New York, 2017)

In contrast with high-gloss finishes—which maintain their sealed surfaces in the face of water, oil, acid, or worse—*bumpy* objects are irregular and inviting. These contours pick up particles along the way.

Page 155 from *P!DF* by Prem Krishnamurthy, version 2.0.0, 2018

(1910–85). Wittkugel, a leading design figure of his day, communicated Socialist ideals and aspirations through his posters, book covers, and propaganda exhibitions in the service of the former GDR. His approach employed modernist abstraction and self-reflexive photomontage, while adapting its formal palette to a given commission. Wittkugel was also an influential professor of graphic design, teaching for over forty years at the art academy in Berlin-Weissensee. The presentation at *K*, features printed materials, photographs, and spatial designs, installed in an associative manner. Emerging out of Krishnamurthy's extensive research on Wittkugel, as well as a 2016 exhibition at *P!*, this display opens his body of work—with its embedded questions around the role of political ideology within design—to contemporary critical perspectives and future research. A significant, controversial, and multidisciplinary figure whose work is still under-recognized, Wittkugel represents one starting point from which to explore interwoven questions around abstraction, typography, political language, and historical narrative in parallel.

Kainotophobia: fear of change, resistance to something due to fear.

From this cold-weather kickoff with the classic communism of Klaus Wittkugel, *K*, careens forward on a seemingly-chaotic yet calmly-calibrated course. Over the calendar year, the space compounds collaborators, commingling their individual conceptions of exhibition-making. Rather than crystallizing completely from the start, this cast catalyzes a cycle of crescendoing experimentation with contrasting formats and approaches. Comprising both calculated and casual additions, subtractions, and multiplications—of artworks, objects, ideas, and displays—the presentation accumulates. And so *K*, collects itself, one komma-delimited character at a time.

k-komma.de

KW Institute for Contemporary Art
KUNST-WERKE BERLIN e. V.
Auguststraße 69
10117 Berlin
Tel. +49 30 243459-0
info@kw-berlin.de
kw-berlin.de

Colophon

Director: Krist Gruijthuisen
Curator: P. Krishnamurthy
Project Assistant: Judith Gärtner
Assistant Curator and Project Management:
Cathrin Mayer
Project Website: Christoph Knoth, Konrad Renner
Head of Production: Claire Spilker
Technical Management: Wilken Schade
Text: P. Krishnamurthy
Editing: Judith Gärtner, Friederike Klapp,
Cathrin Mayer, Katja Zeidler

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In 2018, *K*, will be organized in collaboration with KW Institute for Contemporary Art. KW Institute for Contemporary Art is institutionally supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe.