experienced with my father. The physical violence I experienced as a child seemed connected to it and is perhaps why the photographs felt familiar to me. I began to understand the impact it had on my father's life, and unknowingly on mine. I began to understand the shame attached to his experience of poverty as a child, and my family's escape from poverty in Great Britain, and the impact of this migration on the people who had already been inhabiting North America for thousands of years. It's turtles all the way down.

Kiki Kogelnik: Inner Life

Hanne Mugaas and Martin Clark in conversation

Kunsthall Stavanger
Madlaveien 33, 4008 Stavanger, Norway
Through Aug 13
kunsthallstavanger.no

MARTIN CLARK: Tell me about how you approached this show. Are you focusing on a specific element of Kiki Kogelnik's work, or trying to introduce it more broadly?

HANNE MUGAAS: I've chosen to focus primarily on works Kogelnik produced in the 1960s and 1970s. I find her preoccupation with technology, new materials, and body politics during that period way ahead of its time. I became really fascinated with her cyborgian works, such as Plug-in Hand (ca. 1967) and Human Spare Part (ca. 1968), both pvcuare hand sculptures with technologies embedded—a telephone handle and an electrical plug—as well as the vinyl Hangings, which allude to a future where bodies can be taken on and off.

MC: I agree: Kogelnik's work feels extraordinarily timely right now. Like so much good art, it seems to be announcing a future that's finally arriving in one form or another. How do you see her work resonating with younger artists and practices, beyond an art historical interest?

HM: Her work was definitely foreseeing our current quest for integrated hardware and software and on inside our bodies. Although, as Kogelnik pointed out, the cyborg had already arrived through medical science, in the form of pacemakers for instance, as exemplified in her work Woman with Artificial Heart (1964). (The first pacemaker was implanted in 1958.) Her work does feel very timely in 2017, in the context of a range of young artists who grew up fully absorbed in technologies such as the Internet and the iPhone, currently utilizing them as both tools and subject matter.

MC: The work is extremely political, in the sense of a wider political engagement with feminism and the way women were (and still are) represented, but also in the way in which it deals on a smaller scale with the body itself, and the interaction of individuals in communities and culture.

HM: Very political, indeed, especially when it comes to feminist issues. For instance the unmistakable shape of the Diapak—the contraceptive pill dispenser, also developed in the 1960s—keeps reappearing in her works. Then there are the works that deal with gendered divisions of labor, like Chandelier Hanging (1970), a collection of small vinyl women's bodies hung on one of those racks for drying underwear and socks. There's a collage on a baking tray. And of course, the installation Seelenwasche (Soul Laundry, 1992) refers directly to what you're saying about the interaction of individuals in general: a washing machine continuously washing black, white, and gray bodies, which are then hung up to dry in the gallery on clotheslines.

MC: My favorite works in the show are those incredible draped and hanging bodies. They are totally seductive and beautiful, but at the same time unsettling, even violent. They seem to be perfectly evocative of our continuing attitude toward women's bodies and their representation—particularly their almost Russellian, interchangeable idealization and "use" within fashion and the media.

HM: Absolutely! My fascination with Kogelnik started with the Hangings, the sheet-vinyl bodies based on tracings of friends and family members. I agree that they are violent. The emptiness and shell-like composure of the bodies is uncanny, even frightening. They are flat and hanging like skins, but they're extremely lifelike. And although the bodies are not exclusively female, they're definitely about the objectification, utilization, and display of women's bodies. (There might also be a link here to the Vietnam War, with the enemy body count used as the primary measure of progress; and to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki radiation skin burns.)

MC: And there's a kind of fetishism of the dismembered body part: the woman split up, reduced to erotized and idealized images of the hand, the arm, the leg, the lips—the skin, even, as a kind of drapery or veil.

HM: One of Kogelnik's main tools was definitely the scissors. It's interesting that she worked in tandem with Pop artists and their depictions of the perfect body, while all of her bodies are in parts, cut up or ripped apart. The painting Self Portrait (ca. 1964) shows her body floating and ripped in two halves. To me, this has everything to do with the different roles imposed on her as a woman, the frustration she might have felt. The most frequent body part is the hand—presumably the artist's hand. It's everywhere, seemingly touching the works, or still working? Adding an additional layer.

MC: But then you get the insides, too. And here Kogelnik brilliantly disrupts reductive sexualization and introduces another idea of the body—this time as a machine. She makes me think about another brilliant and overlooked artist from that period, Nicole L.. In her work there's a similar attitude toward the body as a kind of lump of stuff, or collection of parts, that we drag around with us. This idea of the extended, enhanced, or prosthetic body gets mixed up in her work, too, with ideas of design, technology, and fashion.

HM: Nicole L. and Kiki Kogelnik are definitely related. I love Nicole L.'s "functional art," such as Woman Pregnant with TV (1970) and Femme Commode (1969). For a woman, the body is definitely something you drag around, that you always have to think about, and then in addition you have to drag around an additional body (or two) when you're pregnant. This is also something Kogelnik alludes to—the womb as a kind of machine—but also its link to space, with the floating bodies in her paintings, in the washing machine, and her own body in the film Floating (ca. 1964). She was, of course, fascinated with the Space Race and did a happening in Vienna during the Moon landing, where the audience watched the event live on TV while she produced prints of the first words uttered by the astronauts while they walked on the moon.

Ericka Beckman at Secession

Ericka Beckman interviewed by Emily Watlington

Secession
Friedrichstrasse 12, 1010 Vienna, Austria
July 6-September 3
secession.at

Spectacle sports have been the subject of Ericka Beckman's work since the 1980s, but the recent US election has reemphasized their troubling place in American culture. Here she discusses this political reframing of her work as part of the current rediscovery of her 1980s films, which will be displayed this summer at Vienna Secession.

EMILY WATLINGTON: You were part of John Baldessari's "post-studio," the Pictures Generation, and Structural film, but your work was never fully embraced by these movements. Recently, you've been sort of "rediscovered."

ERICKA BECKMAN: I was very active in the 1980s, but that activity didn't run in tandem with what was happening at the galleries. I showed media work in alternative venues that were active then, established by curators who didn't get museum jobs. Those crowds were huge and lively, but they weren't the commercial galleries. Galleries were interested in my work but didn't know how to sell media art. And I would submit my work to festivals where the "avant-garde" showed, but it was never understood in that context.

Fast forward. I was digitizing footage for the astronaut words uttered by the astronauts while they walked on the moon.
Il Mondo Magico: Italian Pavilion Venice Biennale

Cecilia Alemani interviewed by Wendy Vogel

Arsenale di Venezia, 2012, Venice, Italy
May 13–November 26
labiennale.org
ilmondomagic02017.it

WENDY VOGEL: This year’s Italian Pavilion exhibition at the Venice Biennale is Il mondo magico, a title borrowed from the 1948 book by Ernesto de Martino. Your curatorial statement refers to de Martino’s description of rituals as “devices through which individuals try to regain control in times of uncertainty and reassert their presence in the world.” Can you explain how this theme resonates in our political climate?

CECILIA ALEMANI: Il mondo magico is the book that inaugurates de Martino’s studies about the world of magic. He looks at ancient civilizations and their rituals, shamanic practices, mythologies, beliefs. After Il mondo magico, he keeps studying the theme of magic in the “Southern trilogy,” which was published in the 1950s and 1960s. In these books, he examines Italy in a specific way, culturally—the Second World War, when there was a sharp distinction between the north and the south. The north is associated with the economic boom and industry, while the south has been seen as the poor and the peasant region. De Martino goes on missions to study the magic world of these southern populations. He looked to magic as a tool to reaffirm one’s presence in the world, and not as an escape into an irrational world. I am struck by his role in giving voice to the populations of southern Italy, which at that moment were seen as a second-class culture. I use this idea to frame the exhibition called Il mondo magico, which includes three artists whose work is embedded in research into rituals, as well as belief and faith in imagination. They use new mythologies as tools to rewrite history and to face a moment of crisis.

WW: Your curatorial text states that the exhibiting artists move away from documentary-style narratives. Do their methods resonate with the way de Martino worked?

CA: Yes, because de Martino’s approach was incredibly experimental. He was using the methodology of anthropology, but instead of applying it to all cultures, he applied it to his own contemporary culture. His research was also incredibly interdisciplinary. He would travel with photographers like Franco Pinna,