

Andrew Edlin GALLERY

Susan Te Kahurangi King: Drawings 1975-1989
curated by Chris Byrne and Robert Heald
September 16 - October 30, 2016

Andrew Edlin Gallery is excited to announce its second gallery exhibition for Susan Te Kahurangi King, the self-taught artist from New Zealand. Organized by independent curator Chris Byrne and New Zealand gallerist Robert Heald, the show will run concurrently with the first solo museum exhibition for the artist, at the ICA Miami (curated by Tina Kukielski). A monograph for King, published by Lucia/Marquand, is due out in September.

In King's compositions, viewers will find peculiar perspectives, a collage-like, breaking-up of pictorial space and the subject matter she depicts in it, and a rollicking sense of the artist's powerful and expressive art-making line. The drawings from this period, from the artist's mid-twenties to late thirties, move away from colorful, twisted and gnarled cartoon bodies to a more monochromatic (graphite) and organic patterned abstraction. Here, King's trademark figures are less in number and, rather than jumping and screaming off the page like in her earlier works, they are more prone to being embedded and camouflaged by a series of delicately woven patterns of sinewy lines, whose borders form abstract fields of which no two are alike. The effect can be disorienting, and satisfying when the artist's deftly rendered and highly idiosyncratic configurations are located by the viewer.

Susan Te Kahurangi King was born in 1951 in Te Aroha, and raised with eleven siblings on the North Island. "Te Kahurangi" literally translated means "the treasured one," and King's father -- an editor by trade -- taught the Maori language and had a great passion for the people, devoting long hours to independent research.

Between the ages of four and nine, King gradually stopped speaking -- not suddenly or abruptly, but over a period when she would still occasionally hum or sing while she drew. Eventually the family moved to Auckland for her education (she currently lives with her sister Wendy).

King ceased drawing altogether for approximately 20 years and the exhibition includes several of her drawings from the period just before she stopped. With the encouragement of her mother and siblings she resumed again in 2008, picking up nearly where she left off.

The artist's extended family -- beginning with her maternal grandmother Myrtle Murphy -- have dedicated themselves to caring for Susan and preserving not only her work, but also anecdotes and artifacts from her life.

In addition to the current show at ICA Miami, King's drawings have been presented at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (2015), by Chris Byrne at the Outsider Art Fairs in New York (2014) and Paris (2013), Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York (2014), and Robert Heald Gallery in Wellington, New Zealand (2012).

Chris Byrne is an author, independent curator and co-founder of the Dallas Art Fair. He has organized numerous exhibitions including "Peter Saul: 50 Years of Painting" (Haunch of Venison, 2010) and "ZAP: Masters of Psychedelic Art" (with Gary Panter, Andrew Edlin Gallery, 2011). Byrne currently serves on the Board of Directors for Dallas Contemporary.

Robert Heald is a gallerist in Wellington, New Zealand and first exhibited the work of Susan Te Kahurangi King in 2012.