



Käthe Kruse, at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, 1985.
Photo: Joachim Blank/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025

Käthe Kruse

It's All Good Now

7.3. – 16.6.25

The artist Käthe Kruse (*1958) has been an integral part of Berlin's art scene since the early 1980s. A member of West Berlin's well-known music and artists' group Die Tödliche Doris, she worked from 1982 to 1987 in the intersection between performance, music, text, painting, and film. To this day, Kruse also maintains a cross-genre approach and deliberate amateurism in her solo projects, creating large-scale installations that combine a variety of media and forms of expression. Her departure points frequently consist in everyday objects that she physically alters while assigning new meanings to them. Kruse's works are often closely linked to her personal experience, but also reference larger social problems and topics such as domestic violence, abortion, and war.

With "Käthe Kruse: It's All Good Now," the Berlinische Galerie pays tribute in its anniversary year to Kruse's remarkable work from the 1980s to the present day. It is the first major institutional retrospective in Berlin. The approximately 50 works, among them large-scale installations, offer insight into her highly diverse oeuvre. The exhibition shows painting, object art, videos, photography, sound works, and performances. Kruse's work is not presented in chronological order, but according to thematic connections among the works on view. This corresponds to Kruse's artistic practice, for which transformation plays a special role. In addition to everyday objects, Kruse alters completed works to situate them in entirely new contexts. The result is that her work is always in a state of flux.

Die Tödliche Doris on Wallpaper

The exhibition begins with the large-scale installation "Die Tödliche Doris on Wallpaper" (2025). Kruse has covered a 35-meter-long wall with a variety of colorful wallpaper patterns on which she arranges works by Die Tödliche Doris, such as paintings, pillows, lamps, and costumes, as well as her first independent work "The Ordered State" (1986). Kruse was a member of Die Tödliche Doris from 1982 to 1987, and her artistic practice is still influenced by this period. The decorative wallpaper is a reference to the group, which used the material as a backdrop for their performances or simply threw it onto the stage. In "Die Tödliche Doris on Wallpaper", Kruse is primarily interested in a relaxed, non-museum-like approach to her own past. Instead of presenting the works of Die Tödliche Doris as dusty relics, she transforms them into a new work of art.

Experiment & Concept

The first room of the exhibition also focuses on the Die Tödliche Doris itself. Recordings of the group's performances and concerts are juxtaposed with Kruse's video "The Contract" (2013), which shows the artist sitting naked at a table reading the contract Die Tödliche Doris drew up a few years after their breakup. For Kruse, the work is an important exploration of her own artistic beginnings. As a solo artist, Kruse's approach has remained both strictly conceptual and experimental. This is also evident in her "Annual Color Stripe Pictures", which are based on the personal color system she has been creating over the years.

New Sounds

Music plays a central role in the artistic work of Käthe Kruse, who was already playing drums and singing during her time with Die Tödliche Doris. To this day, her works are the product of a close connection between music, performance, and object art. Many of her installations are complemented by music or spoken text. Performances in which she sings or speaks with musical accompaniment are a fundamental part of her art. The highlight in the main exhibition space is the installation "In Leather" (2023), which consists of Kruse's drum kit from her time with Die Tödliche Doris as well as all of the group's other instruments wrapped in leather.

The Ordered State

Already Kruse's earliest works reveal a keen interest in rigorous concepts. The theme of order provides the recurrent basis for many of her works. In "48 Colors", Kruse uses the 48 standard colors of polyester yarn to sew row after row on A4-sized sheets of paper. In this and other works, Kruse always accepts a certain degree of irregularity and imperfection. In contrast to many other conceptual artists, she is not interested in perfection or in rendering the artistic process invisible. Instead, small errors demonstrate the challenges of a painstaking working process.

How Are You Now / It's All Good Now

In the last room of the exhibition, Käthe Kruse explores the question "How Are You Now?" and the answer "It's All Good Now." She uses various materials such as wood, paper, and oil paint to visualize the text, which comes from Die Tödliche Doris's fourth and sixth albums (Our Debut and Six). As the exhibition title, "It's All Good Now" also stands for Käthe Kruse's positive assessment of her oeuvre to date.

Performances

Live performances have been part of Käthe Kruse's artistic work since the beginning, and the exhibition pays tribute to this important aspect. In the performance "Konzert in Leder" (Concert in Leather), Käthe Kruse and her musician friends will play all the leather-covered instruments from Die Tödliche Doris for the first time (10 April). Visitors can also experience the well-known works "3927 Wörter" (3927 Words) on 8 May and "Krieg" (War) on 22 May respectively. Participating artists: Sophia Bicking, Danielle de Picciotto, Myriam El Haik, Alexander Hacke, Edda Kruse Rosset and Alma Neumann

About the Artist

In 1981, Käthe Kruse left Bünde in North Rhine-Westphalia, where she was born and raised, and moved into the squat at Manteuffelstrasse 40/41 in Berlin. One year later, she met Wolfgang Müller und Nikolaus Utermöhlen of Die Tödliche Doris. She became a member in 1982 and remained the group's drummer until 1987. Kruse studied visual communication at the Hochschule der Künste Berlin (now the University of the Arts) from 1990 to 1996, graduated from Heinz Emigholz's master class, and received a scholarship for the promotion of young talent. She received artist's grants from the Stiftung Kulturfonds in 2004 and the Senate Department for Cultural Affairs in 2008 (both in Berlin). In 2021 Kruse was awarded a scholarship by the Peter Jacobi Foundation for Art and Design in Pforzheim. She received a NEUSTART KULTUR grant from the Stiftung Kunstfonds in Bonn (2020–2023) and has been president of the International Artists' Committee (IKG) since 2023.



Exhibition catalogue

A bilingual catalogue (German/English) with texts by Marie Arleth Skov, Thomas Köhler, Miriam Schoofs und Ilka Voermann will be published by DISTANZ Verlag to accompany the exhibition.

Accompanying events and outreach in English

Guided tours in English take place every Saturday at 4:15 pm. No extra charge to ticket-holders. No advance booking required.

Press images

berlinischegalerie.de/en/press-release/kaethe-kruse

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Admission 10€, concessions 6€

Wed–Mon 10 am–6 pm

Tue closed