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Press Kit
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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

**BERLINISCHE
GALERIE
MUSEUM OF
MODERN ART**



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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

Online tickets

bg.berlin/en/tickets

Social Media

#KaetheKruseBG
#BerlinischeGalerie

Contact Press

Sascha Perkins
Head of Communications and Education
Tel +49 (0)30 789 02 829
perkins@berlinischegalerie.de

Paula Rosenboom
Communications
Tel +49 (0)30 789 02 831
rosenboom@berlinischegalerie.de

Berlinische Galerie
Berlin's Museum of Modern Art,
Photography and Architecture
Alte Jakobstraße 124–128
10969 Berlin
Tel +49 (0)30 789 02 600
berlinischegalerie.de

Admission 10€, concessions 6€
Wed–Mon 10 am–6 pm
Tue closed

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Biography

Käthe Kruse

1958

Born in Bünde/ Westfalia

1981

Moved to Berlin Kreuzberg to the squat at Manteuffelstrasse 40/41

1982-1987

Member and drummer of the group Die Tödliche Doris (with Wolfgang Müller and Nikolaus Utermöhlen)

1990-1996

Studied visual communication at the Hochschule der Künste Berlin (today: University of the Arts)

1991

- Married Yves Paul Rosset
- Birth of daughter Edda Luisa Kruse Rosset

1995

Birth of daughter Klara Odette Kruse Rosset

1996

- Diploma examination with Professor Bernhard Boes and Professor Heinz Emigholz
- Travel to Bhutan, video recordings of the performance Le Sexe Rouge

1997

- Scholarship for the promotion of young talent, Hochschule der Künste Berlin
- Meisterschülerin degree with Professor Heinz Emigholz

1999

- Travel through the USA, video recordings of the performance Le Sexe Rouge
- DAAD scholarship, Bonn

2004

Artist's grant, Stiftung Kulturfonds Berlin Brandenburg

2006

Neukölln Audience Award, 1st place, Galerie im Körnerpark, Berlin

2008

Artist's grant, Senate Department for Cultural Affairs, Berlin

2013

Adjunct instructor at Muthesius University, Kiel,
Text – Sound – Movement – Image: Performance

2015

Adjunct instructor at Zurich University of the Arts, Zurich,
Text – Sound – Movement – Image: Performance

2018-2022

Studio Advisory Board of the bbk Kulturwerk, Berlin

2020

Catalogue funding, Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin

2021

Peter Jacobi Werk Preis 2021 of the Peter Jacobi Foundation for Art and Design, Pforzheim

2020-2023

NEUSTART KULTUR grant, Stiftung Kunstfonds, Bonn

2023

President of the International Artists' Committee IKG

Exhibition texts

The artist Käthe Kruse has been an integral part of the Berlin art scene since the early 1980s. A member of the well-known West Berlin music and artists' group Die Tödliche Doris, she worked from 1982 to 1987 at the intersection between performance, music, text, painting, and film. To this day, Kruse maintains a cross-genre approach and deliberate amateurism in her solo projects, developing large-scale installations that combine a variety of media and forms of expression. Her departure points often 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 issues such as domestic violence, abortion, and war.

This retrospective pays tribute to Kruse's artistic work from the 1980s to the present. The program is accompanied by performances and a lecture by the artist.

Käthe Kruse & Die Tödliche Doris

The artists' group Die Tödliche Doris was founded in Berlin in 1980 by Wolfgang Müller and Nikolaus Utermöhlen, who were students at the Hochschule der Künste at the time. The collective worked in the context of the "Geniale Dilletanten" (Brilliant Dilettantes) movement, which elevated a lack of skill to the highest principle of artmaking. Käthe Kruse joined the group around two years later, after Müller and Utermöhlen saw her perform at SO36 wearing black wings and breathing fire. She remained a member until it disbanded, after which she continued to work with Müller and Utermöhlen.

The time with Die Tödliche Doris and the group collaboration were highly formative for Kruse's artistic development. Particularly as a solo artist, she retained a diversity of expressive form. A fundamental part of her work is transformation, i.e. a continuous working over of both materials and existing works of art. In this vein, in the large-scale installation "Die Tödliche Doris on Wallpaper," Kruse arranges the group's works on brightly patterned wallpaper, just as Die Tödliche Doris often used wallpaper as a background for their stage performances.

Experiment & Concept

For several years now, Käthe Kruse has made her time with Die Tödliche Doris the subject of her artistic work. The video piece "The Contract" addresses the actual contract the former group members drew up a few years after their breakup. With "Natural Catastrophe Ballet in a New Costume," Kruse returns to her first project with Die Tödliche Doris, a performance that can also be seen in the exhibition as part of "The Sea of Lies."

Already in her early works as a solo artist, Kruse's approach was both strictly conceptual and experimental. A transformation of ideas and concepts has always played a key role. This is evident in her "Annual Color Stripe Pictures" which she has been creating over the years and are based on her personal color system. "Le Sexe Rouge," a peak in the Swiss Alps, also provides subject matter for a number of Kruse's diverse works—including the photo collage presented here.

New Sounds

Music plays a central role in the artistic work of Käthe Kruse, who already played the drums and sang 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. Kruse's works also address instruments and recording mediums, which she artistically alters. Apart from the leather-covered instruments of Die Tödliche Doris, she mainly modifies vinyl records. When it comes to recording her own music and performances, the classic LP is still Kruse's preferred medium.

An Ordered Situation

Even if it may come as a surprise given her biography as a squatter in Kreuzberg in the 1980s, Kruse's early works reveal a keen interest in rigorous concepts. The theme of order provides the 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. She is not interested in rendering the artistic process invisible. On the contrary, imperfection is what brings her art to life and lends visual form to the painstaking labor behind the finished

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piece. Here, Kruse is acting entirely in the spirit of the Brilliant Dilettantes.

Kruse, who originally wanted to be a handicraft teacher, has a close connection to fabric and yarn. To the artist's mind, working with female-coded cultural techniques is also a way of examining gender stereotypes.

How Are You Now / It's All Good Now

This room is dedicated to Käthe Kruse's most recent works, which are based on the question "How are you now" and its response, "It's all good now." Kruse uses various materials such as wood, paper, and oil paint to visualize the two sentences, which originate in Die Tödliche Doris's fourth and sixth albums, "Our Debut" and "Six."

The LPs were recorded at the same time in 1985, but released one year apart. The pieces are arranged in such a way that when the albums are played simultaneously, a fifth, the so-called "Invisible LP," can be heard. The covers make it clear that the records belong together. While the question "How are you now" can be seen on the front of "Our Debut," the cover of "Six" offers the answer: "It's all good now." As the exhibition title, "It's All Good Now" also stands for Käthe Kruse's positive assessment of her oeuvre to date. The "Invisible LP" can be heard at the listening station in the center of the room.

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Exhibition catalogue

Käthe Kruse
It's All Good Now

The publication, released on occasion of Käthe Kruse's solo show at Berlinische Galerie, sheds light on the genesis of her works and performances and offers a comprehensive overview of her output from the 1980s to the present. Accompanying notes by Marie Arleth Skov and Miriam Schoofs as well as a conversation between Ilka Voermann and the artist probe various dimensions of her oeuvre.

Editors

Thomas Köhler and Ilka Voermann

Publisher

DISTANZ

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Marie Arleth Skov, Thomas Köhler, Miriam Schoofs and Ilka Voermann

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29,80 € (Museum Edition)

40,00 € (Book Trade Edition)



Programme

Performances

Konzert in Leder (Concert in Leather)

Thu 10.4., 6.30 pm

Tickets online at bg.berlin: 15 €, reduced 10 €

3927 Wörter (3927 Words)

Thu 8.5., 4 pm

Tickets online at bg.berlin: 10 €, reduced 6 €

Krieg (War)

Thu 22.5., 6 pm

Tickets online at bg.berlin: 10 €, reduced 6 €

Guided tours in English

Public guided tours in English

Mon 7.4., 5.5., 2.6., 3 pm

Every Sat, 4:15 pm

Included in museum's admission

Registration on-site, limited capacities

Information on further events (in German):

berlinischegalerie.de/kalender

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Press Images



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



Käthe Kruse, 2021, Photo: Sibylle Fendt / Ostkreuz



Käthe Kruse in front of „Texte und Töne“, 2023, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025, Photo: Max Cramer



Käthe Kruse, Unhörbar, 2023, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025, Photo: Max Cramer



Käthe Kruse, In Leder, 2013, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025, Photo: Jens Ziehe

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Käthe Kruse, In Leder, 2023, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025, Photo: Christine Fenzl



Käthe Kruse, In Leder, 2023, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025, Photo: Christine Fenzl



Käthe Kruse, Jetzt ist alles gut, 2025, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025, Photo: Christine Fenzl



Käthe Kruse, Jetzt ist alles gut, 2025, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025, Photo: Christine Fenzl



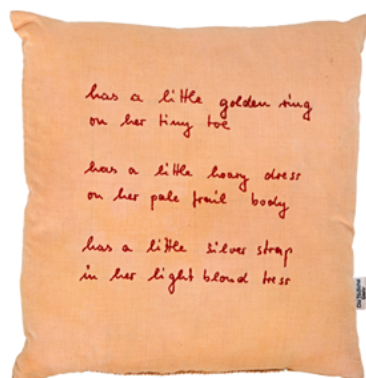
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Käthe Kruse, Jetzt ist alles gut, 2025, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025, Photo: Christine Fenzl



Käthe Kruse, 48 Farben, 2021-2022, © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025, Photo: Ludger Paffrath



Die Tödliche Doris, Maria, 1985, Photo: Christine Fenzl



Contact Press

Sascha Perkins
Head of Communications and Education
Tel +49 (0)30 789 02 829
perkins@berlinischegalerie.de

Paula Rosenboom
Communications
Tel +49 (0)30 789 02 831
rosenboom@berlinischegalerie.de

Contact Programme

Christine van Haaren
Head of Education and Outreach
Tel +49 (0)30 789 02 836
haaren@berlinischegalerie.de

Katrin-Marie Kaptain
Education
Tel +49 (0)30 789 02 837
kaptain@berlinischegalerie.de

Berlinische Galerie
Berlin's Museum of Modern Art,
Photography and Architecture
Alte Jakobstraße 124–128
10969 Berlin
Tel +49 (0)30 789 02 600
berlinischegalerie.de