

# Elvira Bach

19 Jan — 10 Mar 2018 at the Galerie Kornfeld in Berlin, Germany

8 FEBRUARY 2018



Elvira Bach. Courtesy of Galerie Kornfeld

With the exhibition *Frühe Werke 1979-1990. Zwei Tage in violetten Gummistiefeln*, 68projects presents the early works of Berlin painter Elvira Bach from between 1978 and 1990, and delves into Bach's artistic beginnings; a painter whose work has made an impression on generations up to the present day.

Elvira Bach (born in 1951 in Bad Neuenhain, Germany), studied under Hann Trier at the Hochschule der Künste (Berlin University of the Arts) between 1972 and 1978. As part of the "Junge Wilde" ("Wild Youths") and after receiving an invitation to Documenta 7 in 1982, she quickly gained national and international recognition, advancing to become one of Germany's most well known painters.

From the beginning, Bach's artistic works focused on women in all their human facets, in their power and strength, as well as vulnerability and fragility; but always and foremost, as autonomous and independent individuals. Elvira Bach put women center stage, gave them broad shoulders and large hands, adorning them with sensuality and strength. Her paintings are beacons of feminine power.

From 1978 onward, Bach created her first "self portraits", her trademark then and now. In these pieces, she explores a particular existential phenomenon that would appear throughout the entirety of her work: the Self in all its ambivalence. This was not only an examination of the private and personal, but also in reference to the archetypal "Daughters of Eve". Passion, joy, misery, sorrow, fear, or loneliness reflect in these portraits, walking a tightrope between disguise and self-revelation. Whether as Femme Fatale or snake charmer, this fascinating mix of melancholy and irony, erotic and exotic, is unmistakably Elvira Bach.

Berlin itself also played a part. Venues such as SO36, das Exil, and the Schaubühne am Halleschen Ufer created a broad field for experimentation. For Elvira Bach, the City of Berlin became a "fifth season", a place of inspiration, of interesting and moving people, a city of awakenings.

68projects will exhibit the early masterpieces of this exceptional artist, created between 1978 and 1990; presenting, as well, just how current her works are in a world moving faster and faster, where more and more challenges are put upon humanity. In this world, her women are like anchors, and the oeuvre of Elvira Bach is as contemporary as it ever was. Social networks and political change have put the individual and one’s needs into particular question.

The works of Elvira Bach have been shown in innumerable exhibitions, including prominent museums and collections such as the Guggenheim in New York, the Frankfurter Kunstkabinett, the Bayerisches Landesmuseum, and currently in the Museum in Landerneau, France.

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Galerie Kornfeld

The program of Galerie Kornfeld ranges from young contemporary positions to pioneering under-recognised artists of the avant-garde and beyond. Representing a combination of emerging and established artists and estates, the gallery is committed to contributing to a contemporary discourse.

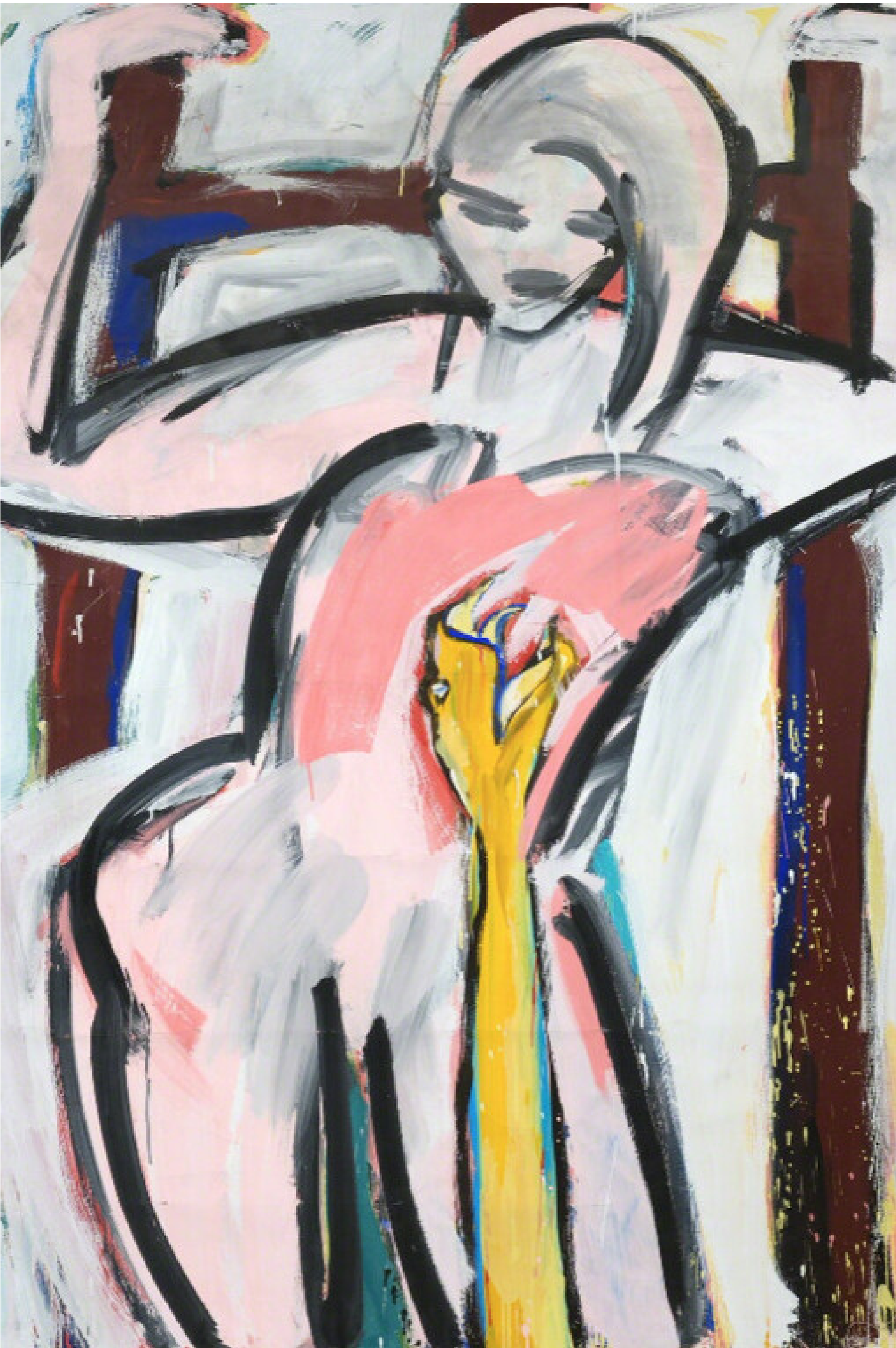
Gallery profile

Location

Berlin, Germany

Founded in

2011







1. Elvira Bach. Courtesy of Galerie Kornfeld

2. Elvira Bach. Courtesy of Galerie Kornfeld

Art & Exhibitions(<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/exhibitions>)

## artnet Asks: Painter and Sculptor Elvira Bach

The Berlin-based artist finds many possibilities in working with glass.



Lorraine Rubio (<https://news.artnet.com/about/lorraine-rubio-180>) August 18, 2014

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Photo: Courtesy of Freunde von Freunden.

[Elvira Bach](http://www.artnet.com/artists/elvira-bach/) (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/elvira-bach/>) moved to Berlin's Kreuzberg district in 1972. She attended the Berlin University of the Arts, where she developed her signature style of bold, broken brushstrokes depicting the female form, often emblematic of German neo-Expressionism. She was a member of the avant-garde movement Junge Wilde (German for "wild youth") that emerged in the late 1970s in Berlin, Cologne, and Düsseldorf. Her portrayal of vibrant females are based on and inspired by her experiences as an international artist and mother of two. Trained early on in stained glass, she still finds glass inspiring.

**When did you know you wanted to be an artist?**

Very early I knew that I could express myself, just about being an artist and about painting. It was always inside of me, through my whole life. Colors and forms are my way to meet the world.

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Elvira Bach, *Blaue Figur mit Amphoren* (1990)  
 Resin on canvas 90.6 × 74.8 in.  
 Photo: Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Deschler.

### What inspires you?

My own life, flowers, my sons, friends, simply to be part of this wonderful and exciting world!



Elvira Bach, *Bronzeskulptor*.  
 Hand glazed bronze 16.9 × 8.7 × 7.9 in.  
 Photo: Courtesy of the artist and Galerie  
 Michael W. Schmalfuss.

### If you could own any work of modern or contemporary art, what would it be?

A painting by Philip Guston (<http://www.artnet.com/artists/philip-guston/>)!

### What are you working on at the moment?

I am always working, on different paintings with different subjects.



Elvira Bach, *Da Komm ich her, da will ich hin* (2009)

Resin on canvas 39.4 × 31.5 in.

Photo: Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Deschler.

### When not making art, what do you like to do?

I like to be with my friends, sitting in a café, looking at people and enjoying them.

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Lorraine Rubio

(<https://news.artnet.com/about/lorraine-rubio-180>)

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# ART SPIEL

Contemporary Art and Culture

APRIL 29, 2019 BY NINA MDIVANI

## The Bold Women of Elvira Bach



*Elvira Bach, Untitled, 1982, Acrylic on paper, 88 x 62 cm | 34 2/3 x 24 1/2 in,*

In the context of the global feminist art of today there are a few trailblazers who continue to work and dazzle with their exuberance. Immediacy and mastery of visual resolution signal such fast-paced and intuitive artists. German-born Elvira Bach is one of them. Bach has created a striking painterly style that catches the eye and stimulates

further contemplation. For a viewer, Bach's expressiveness establishes an immediate and deep bond with the traditions of the German Expressionism, embodying in her paintings the Expressionists' core principle – namely, depicting the artist's inherent conflicts within the society and within herself. For Elvira Bach urgency of expression, empathy, and visual projection of deep inner strength are important attributes.

Bach's early pieces from her school years at Hochschule der Künste were influenced by her teacher Hann Trier, a close collaborator of Joseph Beuys who later became Director of Berlin University's Fine Art Academy and in 1967 started the monumental task of replacing the war-damaged ceiling paintings at the Charlottenburg Palace. Bach's paintings from this period give a sense of chaotic harmony that later blossomed and became more controlled.



*Elvira Bach, Gleich geht's los, 1993, Acrylic on paper, 49 x 63 cm | 19 1/3 x 24 3/4 in*

Elvira Bach's chaotic harmony became even more pronounced when as part of the Junge Wilde (Wild Youths) movement, along with other artists like Jorg Immendorff, she learned to bravely challenge the normative representations that dominated the day. Wild Youths challenged the prevailing trends of the art world by reasserting forms and styles that were deemed antiquated. In the wider art historical context Wild Youths corresponded to anti-establishment movements of the period such as neo-Expressionism in the US, Transavantguardia in Italy, and Figuration Libre in France. Elvira Bach was one of only few women within this movement and as such was able to effectively portray the zeitgeist for the traditional feminine archetype. After her participation in the famed Documenta 7 under artistic director Rudy Fuchs in 1982,

Elvira Bach rapidly gained national and international recognition, becoming one of Germany's well-known painters.

A deep current of Bach's works lies in the dichotomy between feminine strength and weakness, independence and subservience. By underlining the sexual power and femininity of her portrayed subjects, Bach used her own inner freedom as a starting point to establish her presence in global art history. Similar to other female painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century such as Marlene Dumas, Maria Lassnig, and Judith Bernstein, Bach insists on pinning down the multifaceted nature of the modern woman based on her own experience, as the artist puts it: "The light as well as the shadow of the world are belonging to the act of being human – for men and women. I paint myself and my life... I simply put the female in the limelight."



Elvira Bach, *Drei Königinnen aus dem Morgenland*, 1983, Polyester resin paint on canvas, 190 x 230 cm | 74 3/4 x 90 1/2 in

When asked to consider visual pleasure as a hallmark of her style, Bach says that her figures are marked by complexity and they are often attractive "in their dresses, decorated with flowers, symbols, the cigarettes, the vine, with kith and kin and cat... But I am not referring to the eroticization and sexualization of the women – this just happens intuitively throughout my experiences, observations, my inner world."

One such appealing character is front and center in "Nur eine Schlange" (Just a Snake), 1982. Utilizing relatively muted hues of pink, beige, white, yellow, with some hints of

blue undertones, this painting probes archetype of the first woman tempted by the snake. However, unlike the original story of Eve, the snake, although looking menacing, the woman is standing strong with her squared shoulders and raised hands. Eve interlocks her gaze with the snake and there is something erotic between them but her nudity is secondary. The snake and Eve seem to share the moment that does not diminish any of them or foretells the outcome. As in other paintings Bach underlines the ambiguity and multifaceted nature of gender, attraction, and femininity.



*Elvira Bach, Nur eine Schlange 1982 Polyester resin paint on canvas 160 x 130 cm | 63 x 51 1/4 in*

Elvira Bach's works provide a compelling and timely lens on the meaning of a powerful woman, her desires, and needs. Bach's women are not looking for excuses and are completely open to new experiences. Yet, simultaneously they are also full of nuances, melancholy, sorrow, fear, and loneliness, as well as passion, joy, and self-revelation. These compelling figures can be associated with archetypal figures of Eve, snake charmers and Femme Fatale. Her women are sophisticated, ambitious, and absolutely contemporary, inhabiting the world of current challenges, schedules, and increasingly fast pace. Intuitively, we are excited to see this raw feminine power.

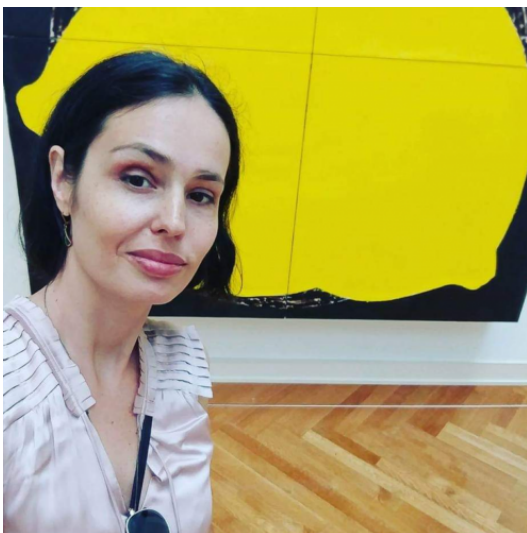


Elvira Bach, Nikita, 1982, Acrylic on paper, 101 x 72 cm | 39 3/4 x 28 1/3 in



*Elvira Bach, Stillleben mit Haifisch, 1981, Polyester resin paint on canvas, 166 x 130 cm | 65 1/3 x 51 1/4 in*

**All photos courtesy of the artist**



*Nina Mdivani is a Georgian-born and New York-based writer and independent curator, 2019 Curator in residence for Kunstraum, Brooklyn.*

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## ELVIRA BACH

### *Alive in Painting*

31 July 2025

"Ultimately, I painted my own life. When I think about it now, I realize that." – Elvira Bach

"Ultimately, I painted my own life.  
When I think about it now, I realize that."  
– Elvira Bach

Stepping into Elvira Bach's home is like walking into one of her canvases—vivid, unapologetic, and alive with stories. The apartment, infused with the timeless charm of West Berlin, unfolds beneath arched ceilings where her paintings watch from every wall, their hues vibrating in the soft summer light. Patterns playfully collide; colors speak in bold tones. In the kitchen, a ceiling adorned with red-and-white checks bursts overhead like a theatrical backdrop—a space where everyday life meets the drama of art.

ELVIRA BACH | ALIVE IN PAINTING



The visit took place on the occasion of her participation in the group show GUTEN MORGEN, DU SCHÖNE, at KÖNIG TELEGRAPHENAMT's additional space at the Forum an der Museumsinsel. Alongside works by Luciano Castelli, Rainer Fetting, Anne Jud, Helmut Middendorf, Salomé, and Bernd Zimmer, the show recalls a time when 1970s West Berlin pulsed through the night—a city of longing and liberation that shaped an entire generation of artists.



For Bach, the woman has always been both subject and protagonist: poised, sensual, defiant, and unafraid to take up space. From her early "Immer ich" portraits to her most recent works, she has crafted a universe where life and art blur into one another—much like her own home,

where every object, every pattern, every brushstroke tells a story of a life fully and fearlessly lived.

