



Kienholz

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This new Ed Kienholz overview casts the Los Angeles assemblage pioneer as a powerful moral force in postwar art. Kienholz (1927-1994) was a polarizing presence in American art from the start of his career, when his first large-scale installation *Roxy's*--a recreation of a brothel--was shown at the Ferus gallery in 1962 (it later caused a huge stir at Documenta 4 in 1968). War, racism, sexism and media exploitation were among his recurrent themes, and he tackled them with an ethical clarity that, at the time, was frequently mistaken for shock tactics. This substantial monograph--the first since his major touring retrospective of 1996--includes more than 200 color plates of Kienholz's assemblages, reasserting his art as a morally driven enterprise, and pointing towards his ongoing influence among contemporary artists such as Jonathan Meese, Thomas Hirschhorn and John Bock.

Edward Kienholz (1927-1994) was born in Fairfield, Washington, and grew up on a farm, where he acquired the mechanical and carpentry skills that he was later apply to his art. He moved to Los Angeles in 1955, and opened the NOW gallery in 1956. That year he met Walter Hopps, with whom he opened the legendary Ferus gallery, and began to construct assemblages from detritus found on the streets, which soon developed into large tableaux. Throughout the 1960s, Kienholz's art was frequently a subject of controversy for its brutal depiction of racism and misogyny in America. In 1981, Kienholz officially declared that all his work from 1972 on should be retrospectively understood to be coauthored by his wife and collaborator, Nancy Reddin Kienholz. Kienholz died suddenly in Idaho on June 10, 1994, from a heart attack. He was buried inside one of his works, a 1940 Packard coupe containing a deck of cards, a bottle of wine and the ashes of his dog Smash.

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