

## Interview

---

*Rotraut, Yves Klein,*

---



## Rotraut: Yves Klein's Legacy: First London Solo Show In Fifty Years

07-07-2015

**A rare treat is on offer at 45 Park Lane in London – the first London solo show in over 50 years from Rotraut (b.1938). Presented by Swiss Galerie Gmurzynska, fourteen paintings and sculptures by the German-born artist Rotraut Klein-Moquay are on show and are for sale in the public spaces of the hotel. The sculptures, in brightly painted aluminium, installed both inside and outside the hotel, nicely complement the artist's colourful, playful abstract paintings upstairs. While internationally renowned as an artist in her own right, Rotraut is also notable for her work with her first husband, Yves Klein (1928-1962), whose estate she still manages.**

**Joanne Shurvell** for Artlyst caught up with Rotraut at the preview of her London show to discuss her practice, Yves Klein's legacy and the dinner they were about to be served by Wolfgang Puck at 45 Park Lane's CUT.



**JS:** Is this exhibition at 45 Park Lane your first solo show in London since your show at the New Visions centre in 1959?

**Rotraut:** That's right, this is my first show in London since my debut in 1959!

**JS:** Regarding your practice, do you have a preference for painting over sculpture or vice versa and why? And am I correct in thinking that your earlier work from the 1950s onward was painting and drawing and that you didn't move into sculpture until the 1990s?

**Rotraut:** I started out as a painter but came to realize that the images I created had a special personality, essentially demanding a life outside the frame for them to freely unfold. And so my move to sculpture as the central aspect of my practice occurred around that time you mention.

**JS:** How do you feel about exhibiting outside of a traditional gallery space? Is this the first time you've done so? As a gallerist myself I've done the same and showing outside of a gallery definitely has its pros and cons. It's important to ensure viewers realise they are seeing the work as an exhibition not merely as decoration.

**Rotraut:** I think it's an interesting and nice context to exhibit my works as the installation within the interior of the space conveys a sense of domesticity - of living with the art - which I think is a key aspect of people and their relationship to the art they acquire. When you are really invested in a work of art it becomes like a friend or a loved one, with which you want to surround yourself in your home and maintain a spiritual connection to. I think that the works shown here in London transmit the aliveness and 'personhood' I mentioned earlier, so they are quite the opposite to functioning as mere decor.

**JS:** I couldn't help thinking of Joan Miro when I saw your paintings upstairs at 45 Park Lane. And presumably Yves Klein was a major influence - in what way? Have any other artists, writers or musicians inspired you and influenced your work?

**Rotraut:** I love the references, however if you look at a broader range of my work over the years you can see that my image-making evolves out of my own personal vocabulary, imprinted as it is by my memories but of course also by the encounters and experiences with other practices such as the ones you point out. My art comes out of my inner self and expresses total freedom.

**JS:** Your work has been exhibited alongside your first husband Yves Klein's work on an ongoing basis since his death in 1962. Did you collaborate with him before he died? And do you feel a responsibility to keep his legacy as an artist alive?

**Rotraut:** I have a lot of respect for his legacy of course, this is also something more general though, in terms of respect from one artist to another. However, or because of this,

I have continuously avoided key aesthetic markers of his practice and to this day have never employed his signature blue hue. It would mean sacrilege to me to do so.

**JS:** What is your next project? I believe you have a show in Amsterdam?

**Rotraut:** It's Amsterdam for the great "ZERO" show opening at the Stedelijk, where the work of my brother Günther Uecker is being shown as well as Yves Klein's whom I'm representing on this occasion and then in the fall I will do a show in Knokke, Belgium and after that in Germany.

**Rotraut: 'Let's Dance' 45 Park Lane, London W1 Until 1 September 2015**