Hedy Klineman
United States (b. 1940, Hamburg, Germany)

Hedy Klineman’s artistic career has been an odyssey of discovery and evolution. According to the artist herself, the trajectory of her career has been unwittingly “decade-oriented,” molded by personal experience, exposure to social change, and a variety of other elements.

While at Cooper Union and throughout the 1960s, Klineman was taken by Abstract Expressionism and with such artists as Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline. In the 1970s, she experimented with Color Field Painting, a movement within Abstract Expressionism that focused on the power of color; all-over, flat, solid, and serene color that marks the work of Mark Rothko and others, who pioneered the style.

In the 1980s, with the lines between art and commerce blending, expanding the realm of art and unleashing the imagination of artists in the visual arts, music, and even fashion, Klineman began to experiment with fabric. After working with damask tablecloths and silks, she ventured into using clothing, first her own and later of her celebrity friends. Asking friends for articles of clothing or accessories that they felt captured their essence, she created a series known as Fashion Portraits. Among others, Michael Jackson gave the leather boots he wore in his “Bad” video; Betsy Johnson gave her pink leather boots; and Andy Warhol his glasses, which Klineman captured in a painting, and which she views as a celebration of their friendship. Working with Warhol’s master printer, Rupert Jasen Smith, she created a limited series of prints, each accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.
As the onslaught of the AIDS epidemic traumatized many communities, especially the world of art and fashion, the exuberance of the 1980s slowly began to give way. The early 1990s found the world turning inwards, including Klineman herself, as she embarked on a journey of self-discovery through meditation and yoga, eventually developing a fascination with Eastern philosophy and mysticism. Her interest in spiritual enlightenment and transcending oneself inevitably influenced her art and she began to paint Eastern deities, which are then silk-screened.

Hedy Klineman continues to expand her horizons and her artistic interests, with heart and mind open to the world.

About the Artist

Born in Hamburg, Germany, to Polish parents, Hedy Klineman moved to New York at the age of three with her mother and her younger brother, for fear of the approaching World War II. They settled in Brooklyn where they were joined by her father, who was fortunate enough to survive the Holocaust unlike many other members of the family. Attending a progressive primary school, Klineman was encouraged by her teachers to explore the world of art, to which she was immediately drawn. In 1962, she graduated from New York's Cooper Union with a degree in fine arts, having studied sculpture, architecture, and calligraphy. Having also studied fashion at the Pratt Institute for Design, Klineman spent several years as President of the American division of Charles Jourdan shoes, an experience that later permeated her art.

With a career that spans more than 50 years, Klineman currently lives and works in New York. Her work has been shown in the Tibet House Museum, Patterson Museum of Contemporary Art in New Jersey, the New England Museum of Contemporary Art, the Rubin Museum, Hook Museum at Dartmouth College, and others.