



# KATHRIN LONGHURST



**Pilot Girl**  
Size: 60cm x 90cm  
Media: Acrylic on Perspex



**Olga**  
Size: 180x160cm  
Media: Oil on canvas



**Battle Girl**  
Size: 60cm X 90cm  
Media: Acrylic on Perspex

Kathrin's work reflects her diverse cultural background, having lived in many European countries and finally settled in Australia in 2000. Kathrin grew up in Communist East Germany where she started taking life drawing classes at age 14. Her work is strongly influenced by socialist realism and communist propaganda art. Kathrin spent a decade in Scandinavia visiting galleries in Denmark and Sweden as well as a year in Belgium where her work gained its Art Nouveau influences. She travelled extensively through Europe, Asia and America.

Kathrin has been a fulltime artist since 2003. She is actively involved with Portrait Artists Australia, Australia's largest industry association for professional portrait artists, partaking on the committee for the last 5 years and as Vice President for three years.

Her work has been selected finalist in many art prizes such as the Sulman Prize 2012, Portia Geach Award 2011/2012, Shirley Hannan National Portrait Prize 2009, the Mosman Art Prize 2008/ 2012 and the WA Black Swan Prize 2008/2009. She is represented by galleries in Australia as well as in the US.

## STATEMENT - CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION

Former Soviet leader Joseph Stalin once declared, "You cannot make a revolution with silk gloves", yet paradoxically the women featured in Kathrin Longhurst's recent body of work Children of the Revolution revel in luxury. Their nails are beautifully manicured, their skin pale and unblemished, provocatively pouting their rouge slicked lips – all signs of wealth, opulence and femininity discouraged by early communist regimes.

Having spent most of her childhood in East Germany before her family fled to Scandinavia two years before the fall of the Berlin wall, Longhurst is all too familiar with the complexities of socialist ideology and communist propaganda. It was in the German Democratic Republic that she unwittingly consumed a bombardment of imagery portraying strong, fearless women used as ambassadors for the dissemination of political messages and the indoctrination of social adherence. These women, featured in posters, advertisements and often seen at public events, were not only depicted as strong and muscular (the very antithesis of conventional femininity), they were often shown in professions traditionally associated with men such as aviation, military and aeronautics. Longhurst draws on this imagery to form the basis of her powerful series – she depicts women in various types of headgear symbolic of such professions. Yet she infuses these 'socialist heroines' with a sexiness and sassiness redolent of 1950's American pin-up girls.



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There is no denying that the Communist party had a profound effect on the opportunities and rights of women in the Soviet Union (and Eastern Europe more generally) – in *Children of the Revolution* Longhurst specifically references Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space, and Marina Raskova, the first woman to become a navigator in the Soviet Air Force in 1933. She is particularly interested in the cult status these women attained, something Longhurst compares with the idealisation of ‘rockstars’ in the west. Yet such equality was achieved at a cost – female sexuality and femininity were heavily downplayed. This is particularly obvious in art history with the rise of Socialist Realism in the mid-1920’s, a style opposed to the progressive avant-gardism flourishing in Europe at the time, that instead declared to “depict the present day: the life of the Red Army, the workers, the peasants, the revolutionaries, and the heroes of labour”. Women were particularly portrayed as rosy cheeked, stocky workers dressed in ill-fitting, bulky clothing such as the female subject of Aleksandr Deineka’s painting ‘On expanse of Moscow buildings’ (1949).

While Longhurst’s figurative painting style is indebted to Socialist Realism, her female subjects are anything but sexless. The power of her work lies in a carefully balanced juxtaposition of opposing realities: the hint of nakedness, the supple flesh and doe-eye expressions of the women are in stark contrast to the harsh materiality of their headgear. So too is their model-like poses incongruent with the 5-pointed red star repeatedly featured, a common communist symbol used to represent the 5 ‘classes’ of socialist society. The slightly obscured Russian text in the background of many of the works, translated as provocative words such as ‘sassy’, ‘naughty’, ‘snob’ and ‘bitch’ is not only reminiscent of the format for magazine covers but also references the Russian Constructivists who used graphic text alongside abstracted forms and shapes, often imbued with politically charged meaning.

A historically, politically and socially attuned artist, Longhurst employs such visual techniques to explore broader dichotomies such as east/west, masculine/feminine and socialism/capitalism. Not only can the beautifully rendered works in *Children of the Revolution* be read as a profound satire of communist ideology, Longhurst also seems to be embracing two seemingly conflicting streams of feminism in her work – that where women seek the equal rights and opportunities provided to men by mimicking the qualities and professions typically associated with masculinity, and those who embrace stereotypical notions of femininity as empowering and differentiating.

*Children of the Revolution* is a series of works that are not only skilfully produced, but also conceptually strong – the proven makings of a truly successful artist. Longhurst herself has commented “I’ve really enjoyed producing this series as it’s allowed me to explore my own cultural heritage” and it is in that history that makes these glamorous, sexy, modern day women all the more powerful.

-Emma Crott

PhD Candidate, College of Fine Arts, Paddington

## AWARDS

- 2013 | Finalist Portia Geach Award
- 2012 | Finalist Sulman Prize
- 2012 | Finalist the Mosman Art Prize
- 2012 | Finalist Portia Geach Award
- 2011 | Finalist Portia Geach Award
- 2009 | Finalist Shirley Hannan National Portrait Prize



# KATHRIN LONGHURST

2009 | Finalist The WA Black Swan Prize  
2008 | Finalist the Mosman Art Prize  
2008 | Finalist The WA Black Swan Prize

## EXHIBITIONS

2013 | The Asia Contemporary Art Show Fall Edition, Hong Kong  
2013 | October, Finalist, Finalist Portia Geach Memorial Award, Sydney, NSW  
2013 | Singapore Affordable Art Fair  
2013 | Amsterdam Affordable Art Fair, The Netherlands  
2013 | Hamburg Affordable Art Fair, Germany  
2013 | Stockholm Affordable Art Fair, Sweden  
2012 | October, Finalist, Finalist Portia Geach Memorial Award, Sydney, NSW  
2012 | July, Finalist, Mosman Art Prize, Sydney, NSW  
2012 | July, Solo Show, Catherine Asquith Gallery, Melbourne, VIC  
2012 | April, Finalist, Sir John Sulman Prize, Sydney, NSW  
2011 | September, Finalist Portia Geach Memorial Award, Sydney, NSW  
2010 | May, "Divine Femme", Astras Galleries, Gold Coast, QLD  
2009 | October, "Unsung Heroes", Portrait Artists Australia, Parliament House Canberra  
2009 | September, Finalist Black Swan Portrait Prize, Perth, WA  
2009 | August, Finalist Mosman Art Prize, Sydney, NSW  
2008 | September, Finalist Black Swan Portrait Prize, Perth, WA  
2008 | June, Finalist Shirley Hannan National Portrait Award, Bega Regional Gallery, Bega  
2008 | April, "Miniatures", David Hart Galleries, Sunshine Coast, QLD  
2008 | January, "Dreams from Down Under" Solo Show, Dabbert Gallery, Sarasota, Florida  
2007 | October, "ArtSydney07", Fox Studios, Sydney  
2007 | April, "Intimately", Solo Show, SOHO Galleries, Sydney  
2006 | November, "Contemporary Figures", Group Show, Dabbert Gallery, Florida  
2006 | August, "Blooms of Summer", Group Show, Dabbert Gallery, Florida  
2006 | March, "La Belle Vie" Solo Show, SOHO Gallery, Sydney  
2004 | Affordable Art Show Sydney  
2004 | April Affordable Art Show Melbourne  
2004 | "Divas" Solo Show, Salmon Galleries, Sydney  
2003 | August Finalist Willoughby Arts Prize, Chatswood, Sydney  
2003 | August Affordable Art Show Sydney

## COLLECTIONS

Kathrin's work is included in private collections in Germany, Sweden, Australia, England, The Netherlands, Hong Kong and The United States

## CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

Allianz Building, Macquarie Bank, Australian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine, The Bureaux Melbourne.