

Maria Kozic

Collecting Kozic

Maria Kozic, the 42-year-old Melbourne-born multimedia artist, has produced a large body of work that includes sculptures, paintings, films and videos as well as large-scale installation pieces. She has also released CDs of her music collaborations with Melbourne cultural identity Phillip Brophy and produced short-run magazines such as *Things*, *T.I.T.S.* and *Dynamite*. Her work draws inspiration from 'trash culture' such as comic book illustrations, cult films and pop music. As an artist, Kozic's allegiance is to no single medium, but to a pop art sensibility.

Kozic, based in New York since 1995, first came to prominence in 1978 as a member of Tsk Tsk Tsk, a music, performance, film and visual art collective. Kozic was also producing her own work and was featured in influential exhibitions such as the National Gallery of Victoria's seminal *Popism* show curated by Paul Taylor. Kozic's work had also appeared in the 1981 *Biennale of Sydney* and by the time of the inclusion of her work in the 1986 *Venice Biennale* as part of the *Aperto* section, she had emerged as one of Australia's leading contemporary artists.

Although Kozic is often associated with Australian art of the 1980s, some of her most ambitious projects have been executed in the 1990s. *Wolf Pack*, an installation of papier-mâché wolves exhibited in *Australian Perspecta* 1991 at the Art Gallery of NSW, was an audience favourite. Its combination of a populist sensibility with theatrical lighting and sound effects was a neat distillation of Kozic's aesthetic. Other projects in the 1990s such as her *Blue Boy* inflatable from 1992, installed on the roof of the Museum of Contemporary Art, and her provocative *Maria Kozic Is Bitch* posters mounted at locations around inner city Sydney and Melbourne in 1991, were playful and media savvy. *Blue Boy* was part of the *Birth of*



Maria Kozic, *Wolf Pack (The Lair)*, 1991. Papier-mâché, wire, lights and sound, various dimensions.
COURTESY: ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY



Maria Kozic's *The Birds* installation at the National Gallery of Victoria, part of the *Popism* show, 1981. COURTESY: ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY

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Blue Boy exhibition and the street and railway posters promoted her *Bitch* series at City Gallery in Melbourne and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery in Sydney.

Kozic's canvases command prices around \$3,500 through her two Australian dealers, Anna Schwartz Gallery in Melbourne and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery in Sydney. In the secondary market Kozic has been under-represented. Works from the 1980s, *Clutch* I, II and III, (1984) sold at Joels in 1993 for \$1,650. Two years later, *Lichtenstein Dot*, a key early work from 1986, achieved \$1,380 at Sotheby's June sale in 1995. Although only three works have been offered at auction (*Meow*, a screen print from 1983, sold for \$220 at Joels in 1995) all were sold, albeit at modest prices. With the presence of contemporary art at auction on the rise, it would appear that work by Kozic represents an opportunity for the astute investor.

Kozic's work has been acquired by public galleries including the National Gallery of Australia, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Queensland Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Victoria. Her work can also be found in private and corporate collections such as the Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Australian Art, and Artbank.

New work by Maria Kozic can be seen at Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, throughout December.

- Andrew Frost