

VOGUE

Artist Leelee Kimmel Attracts a Buzzy Crowd to Her First Solo Exhibition

By Lilah Ramzi | January 22, 2018



A guest looks at the pieces in the gallery

A stylishly bundled-up crowd congregated in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, at The Journal Gallery for “Channels,” the first solo exhibition of Leelee Kimmel. Professionally, Kimmel (née Sobieski) made a transition from the silver screen to the white box gallery, but in actuality, Kimmel has been an artist all along. “I’ve always painted,” she said last night, her hair coiled into a single braid that fell to one side, “I almost can’t stop myself from doing it.”

Guests including Klaus Biesenbach, Arden Wohl, Claire Distenfeld, Rita Ackermann, Josh Smith, and Jeffrey Deitch toured the work on view—a series of large-scale abstractions featuring amoebic forms rendered in punchy-colored acrylic drizzles. Gallerygoers also queued up for a virtual reality installation, which Kimmel found most inspiring to work on: “To not be limited by space is really exciting,” she explained.

The clan regrouped at Andrew Carmellini's Leuca (located in the glossy Williamsburg hot spot the William Vale) for a family-style dinner—appropriate, as many in the crowd were indeed family. Kimmel's husband, Adam, circulated the room, and other relatives included fashion photographer Alexei Hay and his wife, Batsheva (of the Batsheva dresses, which are all the rage here at the Vogue offices).

While Kimmel's work warrants serious merit, she admits to not taking herself too seriously when she's making it. "If you leave a voicemail for your best friend and you're just being really foolish, speaking really fast, giggling, and being not self-aware, you'll listen back to that message and think, Oh, I like that girl," she explained. "That's the way I approach painting."

"Channels" is on view through February 18 at The Journal Gallery.



L to R: Jonah Freeman and Arden Wohl ; Leelee Sobieski Kimmel and Adam Kimmel



L to R: Valerie Macaulay, Claire Distenfeld, Maria Baibakova, and Annelise Peterson Winter; Peter Eley, Jeffrey Deitch, Michael Nevin, and Klaus Biesenbach