

GLADSTONE

Rachel Corbett, "Party Pictures," *Artnet*, May 6, 2012

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The opening of Karen Kilimnik at the Brant Foundation Art Study Center in Greenwich, Conn., May 6, 2012

Party Pictures LUSH LIFE by Rachel Corbett

The art world elite pre-gamed for the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** gala with a mid-day celebration on Sunday, May 6, 2012, at billionaire art collector **Peter Brant's** estate in Greenwich, Conn. Twice a year, Brant and his wife, **Stephanie Seymour**, invite a crowd of artists, celebrities, collectors and dealers to an opening party for the latest exhibition at his country museum. This time the event celebrated painter and installation artist **Karen Kilimnik's** new show, up through September.

Around noon, cars began pulling into Brant's driveway, past the polo fields and a blooming, four-story-tall **Jeff Koons** *Puppy*, up to the waiting valet attendants. Vans then shuttled guests to the **Brant Foundation Art Study Center** down the road. A select few could bypass the carpool, like textile tycoon and **Andy Warhol** hoarder **Alberto Mugrabi**, who drove a glistening vintage Mercedes convertible directly into an executive lot at the side of the museum.

Inside the two-story, 9,800-square-foot former barn, Kilimnik had hung some 50 paintings, a strange mix of old-world landscapes and fashiony portraiture from Brant's personal collection. The show also includes a dozen or so installations, such as a ballet theater that was exhibited at **Galerie Eva Presenhuber** in 2008, and her early assemblages, like *The Hellfire Club Episode of the Avengers* from 1989.

The theatrical, girlish installations -- a ransacked film set, a velvety boudoir, an old-timey circus tent, a French garden and candlelit altars -- occasionally felt trumped by the building's towering ceilings and wide-open spaces. But overall the effect was salutary, as the Brant Foundation space seemed to shrink the life-sized tableaux down to an intimate scale, like peeking through the windows of a dollhouse instead of passing through it. On the walls throughout hung Kilimnik's doll-like paintings of beautifully miserable models, her signature image, portraits as finespun as if she had discovered how to paint in cursive.

Outside, the party scene was even more lush. Whole lambs roasted on spits, waiting to make their way to the vast buffet (which might be reason enough to make the trip). And guests like **Matt Dillon**, **Linda Evangelista**, **Julian Schnabel** and **LeeLee Sobieski** sprawled on the lawn atop pink cushions, drank pink lemonade and sat at tables adorned with pink and white peonies.

Check out all of the art and the action in this slideshow. Photos by Billy Farrell Agency.

RACHEL CORBETT is news editor at *Artnet Magazine*. She can be reached at