

Elke Sommer

Born on November 5th, 1940 in Germany, Elke is a multi-talented actress, entertainer, and artist. Since the 1990s, she has concentrated more on painting than on acting, drawing inspiration from her travels as an actress. Her artwork shows a strong influence from Marc Chagall and has been presented in 39 one-woman shows.



Elke Sommer was born as Elke Schletz in Berlin. She started appearing in films in Italy in the late 1950s. She moved to Hollywood in the early 1960s. She became one of the top movie actresses of the 1960s and made 99 movie and television appearances between 1959 and 2005, including A Shot in the Dark (1964) with Peter Sellers as Inspector Clouseau, The Art of Love (1965) with James Garner and Dick Van Dyke, The Oscar (1966) with Stephen Boyd, Boy, Did I Get a Wrong Number! (1966) with Bob Hope, the Bulldog Drummond extravaganza Deadlier Than the Male (1966), and The Wrecking Crew (1969) with Dean Martin; Sommer was the leading lady in each of these films.

In 1964 she won the Golden Globe Award as Most Promising Newcomer Actress for The Prize, a film she co-starred with Paul Newman and Edward G. Robinson. She also performed as a singer, making several LP records. In 1975, Peter Rogers cast her in "Carry On Behind" as the Russian Professor Vrooshka. She became the Carry On's highest paid performer, at £30,000 (an honor shared with Phil Silvers for "Follow That Camel").

As an actress, she worked in half a dozen countries learning the languages (she speaks seven different languages and at one time considered a career as a diplomat). Her travels introduced her to a world of different cultures and landscapes, images which she stored up and would later express on canvas.

Elke dedicated herself to producing her own unique-style of art; joyful, vibrant characters. Her art has been presented in 39 one-woman shows and she hosted the 13 part series "Painting with Elke" on PBS. A select number of Ms. Sommer's originals have been reproduced as limited edition prints, serigraphs or lithographs. As of 2004, she lives in Los Angeles, California.

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