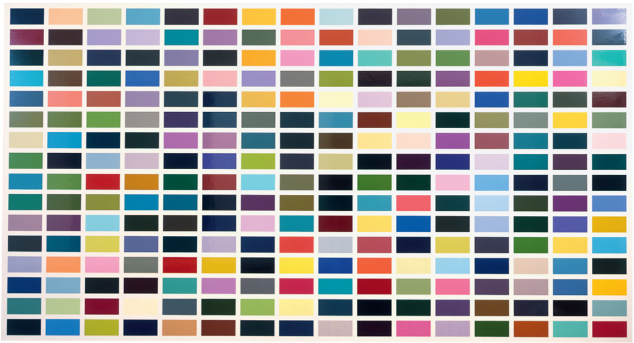
FOR
ART



Gerhard Richter • BENTE LARSEN

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GERHARD RICHTER
PART I

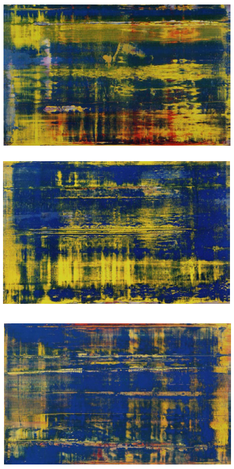
1: Introduction

Buchloh:Your photo painting of the early 1960s does have an anti-artistic quality; it negates individual handling, creativity, originality. So up to a point you do follow Duchamp and Warhol. And your painting also negates content, by demonstrating that the motifs are picked at random.

Richter: But the motifs never were picked at random: not when you think of the endless trouble I took to find photographs that I could use.[1]

Introducing this study of some aspects of Richter's work with a quotation by Richter himself is misleading when it comes to the methodology applied. Contrary to most of the innumerable interpretations of Richter's work, this study will give no privileged position to his own pronouncements. Then again, the quotation gives a very good picture of the problems involved when approaching the works of Gerhard Richter.

In the short passage taken from a long interview of Gerhard Richter conducted by the art critic Benjamin Buchloh, two different positions appear. The statements on Richter's works that are also meant as questions reveal the modernist point of departure of the interviewer, Buchloh. Only with a theoretical basis in modernism and post-modernism is it relevant to focus on questions of negation. Richter's point of departure is, however, totally different, and therefore he does not (or pretends not to?) understand the question. When Buchloh states that Richter's paintings negate content because the motifs are picked at random, Richter answers that they were not picked at random, but carefully chosen from photographs. Buchloh talks about problems connected to representation; Richter talks about presentation. To Buchloh, reality is different from depictions; to Richter depictions are reality.



One conclusion to be drawn from this brief introduction is one of substance: the need for a reevaluation of the theoretical framework in the interpretation of Richter's work. Another conclusion is more formal or polemical. The extract from the interview shows that the artist's pronouncements can contribute to the interpretation of the artist's work, but only ironically. The information he provides about his work is a form of non-information; he performs a mise-en-scène of himself not in a synthesis with his paintings but parallel to them, and through this performance he distances himself from his works. This distancing has theoretical and methodological implications. Therefore the artist will be included in the study, not to testify on behalf of his works but as a performer, and it is as a performer that the artist can provide interesting aspects to his artistic practice.

Gerhard Richter's work manifests a focusing on 'abstract painting' and 'photo paintings'. Both seem to develop into new genres in Richter's hand, providing the well known categories of abstraction, photography and painting with new content and implications. Richter's work also eludes any categorisation of it as an oeuvre. Instead of unity of expression or developmental linearity, Richter repeats himself throughout his career. When he again takes up motives, styles and techniques he does not change them, he merely repeats what he has already done, allowing for small variations only. This repetitive pattern is emphasised by another pattern, the pattern of simultaneity: Richter works on different styles and genres at the same time. It is a pattern, however, that depends on the use of displacements as expressive means. As a whole his work can be seen as an unfolding of displacements of art historical genres and styles. He turns Tizian into kitsch (Verkündung nach Tizian 1973) and he retouches advertising photographs into riddles (Frau Niepenberg 1965). He makes apparently banal tourist photographs unique (St. Moritz 1993), and, in River 1995, the poetics of Monet's Waterlilies are turned into fluorescent manifestations.

In his photo-paintings Richter displaces the identity of photography, turning nature into an effect rather than a motive and turning abstraction into a motive. Nature is no longer the point of departure for abstraction, and abstraction is both a means and a result. This way, abstraction and figurativity in Richter's work are allowed to unfold in a processuality of gesticulation. On the face of it, Richter's expressive brush stokes suggest close attachment to expressive movements such as German neo-expressionism and American abstract expressionism in particular. But in spite of the similarities in brushwork and use of colour as well as tonality, the expressive gesture unfolding in Richter's art differentiates it from these expressionist movements in being permeated by the process of distancing from, first of all, art itself, turning art into an act of mise-en-scène of art through art. Therefore Richter's expressionism eludes a definition of his art as either the expression of a metaphysical truth as is dominating the reception of abstract expressionism, or as the expression of a collective consciousness through the gestures of the artist's brush as we see it in Anselm Kiefer's expressionism. Instead of implying qualities usually attached to the gestures of expressionism such as freedom and authenticity, the gestures unfolding within Richter's art appear first of all staged. This does not mean that the gestures are in any way constrained or that they express constriction; neither does his art imply an expressionism of inauthenticity or of a wish to unveil the inauthenticity of expressionist styles. The gesticulating brush strokes within Richter's works are first of all the unfolding of a mise-en-scène of gestures.

This leads us to the central question of this essay: how to approach an oeuvre in which authenticity is closely tied up with the staging of gesticulation and repetition. It is an oeuvre in which the uniqueness of each work as belonging to an immanent developmental process is replaced by the materialisation of an oeuvre in which repetition predominates. It is an oeuvre in which the repeated changes in styles liberate the use of style from any metaphysics, and it is an oeuvre in which the brush strokes are expressions of gesticulation.

Richter's oeuvre appears as one aesthetic construction in which divergence itself predominates. Its only coherence is the repetition occurring in a seriality in which different aesthetic expressions are allowed to unfold repeatedly and simultaneously. Postulating transience rather than profundity, and superficiality rather than authenticity, his oeuvre, as well as each individual work, seems to imply disintegration. But his work is not about disintegration; it is about staging, the mise-en-scène of art through art: it is a staging with no subject to secure meaning, with an insistence on a surface in which there is no longer room for the construction of meaning and where the sign of the hand is no longer the medium of the expression of a subject and without any essence transcending the sign itself, and it is a staging in which the painting as a whole resists any immaterial spatiality transcending surface. Instead, the oeuvre of Richter is an oeuvre of surface artistically as well as aesthetically. On that surface, sensations are staged as presentations excluding an understanding of his art works as being representation in spite of the strong element of recognisable motives. Gilles Deleuze has conceptualised this relationship between representation and presentation on the basis of the copy and the simulacrum, and in the last part of this study I shall discuss Deleuze in relation to the element of imitation in Richter's art. On this basis I shall focus on his photo paintings in particular, but his mirror and glass paintings, his grey paintings and his colour chart paintings will also be included. I do not intend to present a synopsis of the increasing amount of art historical and critical writing on Gerhard Richter.

In the second part of this study I shall instead put a critical focus on the predominance of modernist reception that still prevails. This is in particular expressed within the issue of negation and the theory of 'the death of painting', both of which have dominated the reception of Gerhard Richter. Both represent fundamental modernist approaches based on an ontology of art as the potential carrier of truth, and both presuppose a core within the art object from which it transcends its own material into a meaningfulness lying beyond the object, but still dependent on it. In part three I shall present an interpretation in which this dialectic is replaced with the concept of folding, in which the concept of truth is replaced with sensation, and death with melancholy.

Most writers have succumbed to the temptation to make extensive use of Richter's own comments on art in their discussions and interpretations of his work. Taking into consideration the number of texts in the form of interviews, notes, catalogue texts and letters that have been published and the high level of reflection of his comments, this is understandable. Furthermore, Richter himself seems very conscious of attracting attention to himself. True enough, he does so underlining that his works are more important than he is, a statement that, however, appears to be part of the same mise-en-scène that is performed in the gesticulations of his works. From this point of departure the analysis of Richter's own statement turns out to be an analysis of a performance undertaken by the artist, taking place independent of but parallel to his activity as an painter. As it sheds light on the artistic performance as well, I shall start this analysis by letting the artist himself do the talking.

2: The mise-en-scène of the artist

In the famous interview Richter gave to Benjamin H.D. Buchloh in 1986[2], Richter continuously and explicitly tries to let the theorisations made by Buchloh on his work fall to the ground. Part of the interview reads like this:

Buchloh: The theoretical implications that were read into Warhol, his radical opening-up of the definition of art, his anti-aesthetic position, of a kind that hadn't existed since Duchamp, were also present as a characteristic of Fluxus. It must have attracted you very much at that time?

Richter: Yes, it attracted me very much; it was really vital to me. Fluxus above all.

Buchloh: There are contradictions here that are hard to understand. On the one hand you were attracted by Fluxus and Warhol, but on the other hand you're saying 'I couldn't do that; all I wanted to do and all I could do was paint.' You align your own painting with this anti-aesthetic impulse, and at the same time you maintain a pro-painting position. To me this seems to be one of the entirely typical contradictions out of which your work has essentially evolved.

Richter: Yes, it is curious, but I don't actually find it contradictory. It's rather as if I were doing the same thing by other means, means that are less spectacular and less advanced.

Buchloh: So the negation of the productive act in art, as introduced by Duchamp and revived by Warhol, was never acceptable to you?

Richter: No, because the artist's productive act cannot be negated. It's just that it has nothing to do with the talent of 'making by hand', only with the capacity to see and to decide what is to be made visible. How that then gets fabricated has nothing to do with art or with artistic abilities.[3]

The message Richter is putting forward here is: I am doing nothing but painting, and he is making that claim by pointing to the fact that painting can be neither contradictory nor can it be negated. He insists on painting, on painting being nothing but painting. Interestingly, he is staging this basically vitalistic and common-sense point by agreeing to give an interview to a person known for an analytical approach to art and an insistence on critical theoretical reflection. The result is a clear demarcation of his own position in relation to his art as a position of distance. The way he keeps up this position is underlined in another part of the same interview:

Buchloh: It seems to me that you introduce process-related painting as just one of painting's many possibilities, while not insisting, as Ryman did, that this is its only aspect. It's one aspect among others.

Richter: Then why should I go to such lengths to make it so varied?

Buchloh: Because you're setting out to call off all the aspects there are, like a catalogue; because you're really trying to pursue both a rhetoric of painting and the simultaneous analysis of that rhetoric.

Richter: If all this were just a display of matter — the way the yellow, tatteredged area rises up against the blue-green background — how could it tell a story or set up moods?

Buchloh: A mood? You mean it really sets up an emotional experience?

Richter: Yes, and, aesthetically pleasure, too.

Buchloh: That's something different. Aesthetic pleasure I can see, but absolutely not a mood.

Richter: So what is a mood?

Buchloh: A mood has an explicitly emotional, spiritual, psychological quality.

Richter: That is exactly what is there

Buchloh: Fortunately only in the weakest parts.

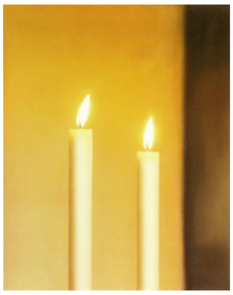
Richter: Surely you don't think that a stupid demonstration of brushwork, or of the rhetoric of painting and its elements, could ever achieve anything, say anything, express any longing.

In this part of the interview Buchloh wants so much to make Richter admit to a more profound reflective painterly practice, and, in his reluctance to give in, Richter reverses the situation, turning the interview into a play in which he takes over the part of the interviewer. In the succeeding dialogue he manages to present himself as the painter who is at once consigned to painting and separated from his own painterly practice. In the interview he presents himself as a painter of immediacy. The irony is that in real life as well as in painting any mise-en-scène implies the dissolution of immediacy. So far, painter and painting fuse. The performance Richter gives as a painter is a repetition of his painterly practice. In as far as the artist personifies and performs this practice, the painter himself contributes to the understanding of his art. That is the reason why a presentation of the painter in this case adds to the understanding of his art, and not because his comments in any way occupy a privileged position in the interpretation of the work.

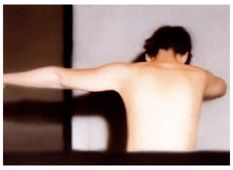
PART II: OBJECTS AND RECEPTION

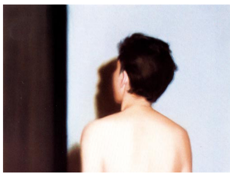
Few painters have so extensively adopted different modernist artistic means and styles as Gerhard Richter. Throughout his career he adopts photography, abstract expressionism, pop art, the ready made, monochrome painting, geometric abstraction and installation. Not only is the diversity itself remarkable, he repeats himself throughout his career, and the medium in which he adopts these modernist and avant-gardist styles is in the traditional medium of oil on canvas. Even though these elements represent fundamental breaks with modernism and modernist artistic practice, modernism still prevails in the reception of Gerhard Richter. Before, in part three, I draw an outline of an alternative strategy of interpretation based on the issues of staging and simulation, I shall in this second part focus on two specific modernist issues still predominating the reception, the issues of the ready made and of photography.

1: Works



Even though Richter's artistic practice is characterised by a repetitive use of motives and styles, the use of the sources for the photo-paintings change somehow over time. In the sixties the motive is dominated by amateur photos picked from the family album such as Familie Schmidt (1964), Terese Andeszka (1964), Familie im Schnee (1966) and Portrait Kühn (1970). In the sixties there is also a dominance of the use of pictures from magazines and newspapers. Examples of these are Turmspringerin I (1965) and Grosse Sphinx von Giseh (1964) and Frau Niepenberg (1965). In these pictures he uses black and white.

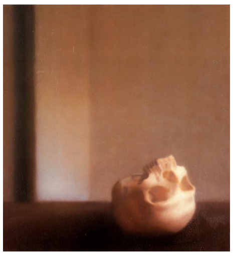


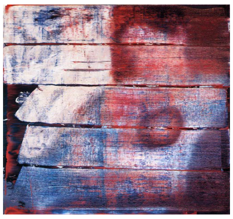


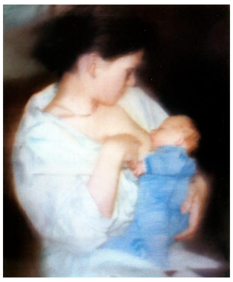
Even though he made a portrait of his first wife Ema (Akt auf einer Treppe) as early as 1966, it not until twenty years later that portraits from his closest family dominated his photo-paintings. He has made portraits of his second wife, Isa Genzken, Isa (1990); his daughter from his first marriage, Betty (1991) and Lesende (1994); and in 1995 he made a number of pictures of his third wife Sabine Moritz with their son, Moritz, all of them called S. mit Kind. In 1996 he even included a self-portrait. These works are not painted from snapshots, but from portrait photographs he has taken himself.

During his whole career landscapes dominate his photo-painting. These landscapes change between panoramas, Kleine Landschaft (1965), Himalaja (1968), Korsika (1968), Garmisch (1981), Jerusalem (1995) and more intimate cuts such as Scheune (1984), Apfelbäume (1987), St. Moritz (1993) and Schlucht (1996). Furthermore, different versions of Seestück predominate his landscape-paintings using the photo as source.

Another genre that he returns to throughout his career in his photo-paintings is the genre of still-life. He painted flower still-lifes, Blumen in 1992 and 1994, and Tulpen in 1995. In the eighties he painted still-lifes in which the motives refer to symbols used in the art history such as the Schädel (1983), which is an old symbol of 'Vanitas', and the burning candles as in Zwei Kerzen (1983) is the symbol of souls. In 1993 he made two strange pictures, both called IG. The person, obviously his second wife, Isa Genzken, is portrayed from behind the neck, implying still-life rather than a depiction of a living person.







Another gesture that underlines Richter's photo-paintings as presentations rather then representations is the change some of them are put through in the process from the photograph itself to the finished painting. These photo-paintings are retouched by the sweeping of a broad brush across the surface while the paint is still wet[4], distorting the motive, such as in Tulpen. Other photo-paintings seem to be covered with a filter. In Haus, the lower right corner is completely effaced, and the rest of the picture is blurred, making the house appear to be shrouded in fog. In other pictures he covers the surface with transparent filters of different kinds, as can be seen in some versions of S. mit Kind. Then again, in paintings like Blumen, from 1992, and Betty, the photographic sharpness is emphasised, and the picture takes on a three dimensionality that makes the motive transcend the space of the picture into the space of the viewer.

Yet another version of photo-paintings is represented in the paintings in which Richter does not blur the whole surface but covers part of the motive with paint, put on with strong gesticulating strokes. In pictures such as Tisch from 1962, and again from 1982, Richter paints a few strokes on the motive. In Venedig from 1986, the paint that is added to the surface is not put on by brushstrokes but by a spatula being drawn over the painting, leaving only a few remnants of paint. The same technique is used in A.B., Silbersee from 1995. Whereas the motive is easily recognisable in Venedig, it has almost completely disappeared in A.B., Silbersee. On top of a light blue that can be recognised as the sky, Richter has covered the rest of the surface with paint in nuances of blue, purple and grey, put on with a spatula. In A.B., Kapelle from 1995, Richter has used the same technique, leaving the motive barely discernible behind the workings of the spatula.

One interesting aspect of the two pictures A.B., Kapelle and Abstraktes Bild (835-4) from 1995 is that they seem hardly to differ when it comes to the question of figuration versus abstraction. Through the titles, Richter has made this point explicit. Not daring to trust the judgement of the audience, and maybe as the result of an enormous need for communication, Richter has discreetly added the letters A.B. to the titles of both Silbersee and Kapelle.

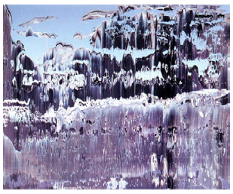
During the eighties and nineties Richter made numerous versions of Abstraktes Bild. The way these pictures are made resembles the method used for the production of photo-paintings. After having applied huge amounts of paint to the canvas Richter spreads the paint horizontally or vertically with wooden spatulas the same size as the picture, or with big brushes.

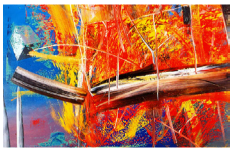
Throughout his career Gerhard Richter has produced works that do not conform to the definition of painting, but that, on the other hand, relate to the photo paintings and the abstract painting: the glass and mirror paintings and the colour charts. In 1967 Richter mounted four glass panels with black frames, [4] Glasscheiben. The four glass panels are identical. They are firmly attached to ceiling and floor and can be made to swing, which turns the four identical shapes into a variety of shapes and dimensions. These four panels of glass were ten years later echoed in four glass plates painted grey on one side, creating a reflection on one side and stopping the view in the paint on the other. In 1981 he made mirrors to hang on the gallery wall, and in 1992 he painted them grey. Both the glass plates and the mirrors open up a field of vision that is in principle without limits, but which in the arena of the gallery is limited by the white gallery walls or by the visitor who happens to be placed in front of or behind the plates.

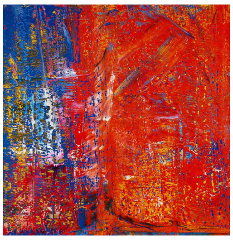
Richter made his first Colour Charts in 1966 and resumed the motive in 1971, 1973 and 1974. Consisting of small industrially produced colour samples, the Colour Charts look like the charts found in paint stores.

One difference between the artistic strategies of the glass and mirror paintings and the colour charts on the one side and the photo-paintings and abstract paintings on the other is that they assume a ready made quality by turning the empirical world into art by framing (mirror and glass paintings) and by copying (colour charts). Instead of having abstraction and photography as motives, they have the real world. When Richter uses artistic means (abstraction and photography) as motives he submits them to some kind of artistic process, whereas the empirical world is left as it is in the art work. The irony is that there seems to be no change in the expressive qualities.

2: Modernist themes







On the face of it, it seems strange that the reception of Gerhard Richter has to a large extent focused on the fact that he paints oil-painting, taking into consideration that abstract expressionism from the mid-century as well as Richter's contemporary colleagues, the German expressionists, have used the medium of oil and canvas. One reason is without doubt that the way Richter uses oil and pencil differs fundamentally from the language of abstract expressionism. While abstract expressionism in the hands of Jackson Pollock as well as Anselm Kiefer is imbued with transcendentalism and universalism, this kind of authenticity is absent in Richter's oil-painting. Even his abstract paintings are devoid of the abstract qualities of the gesture of the authentic self. Rather than being expressions, they seem to be depictions of expressions or depictions of expressionist pictures. This estrangement from the authenticity of expression provides Richter's abstract paintings with yet another element that differentiates him from, for example, his contemporary Anselm Kiefer, and that is the element of reflexivity.[5]

Another modernist theme that Richter's pictures touch on is the relation between photography and painting. In his oil paintings, this theme of photography has been inaugurated by his photo paintings. What is striking in these paintings is that they add nothing to either photography or to painting. In their exact reproduction of a photograph by oil painting they seem to add nothing to the motive reproduced. Even when he retouches the wet paint with a brush or a spatula, this gesture of retouching does not change the motive itself. Instead, it functions merely as a surface that disturbingly blocks the view.

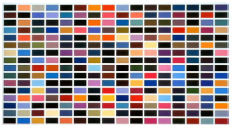
Another theme that occurs within Richter's work is the theme of the ready-made.
Not only abstract paintings but also monochrome paintings and geometric abstraction have been transferred into oil-painting through the motive of colour charts, and in his mirror and glass paintings the gesture of framing turns the outside world into a ready made in the installation.

On the basis of the interpretation of Richter's painterly practice as a reflexivity of the powerlessness of oil painting, Benjamin Buchloh has defined his paintings as a materialisation of the practice of the Hegelian notion of the death of painting.[6] It is an interpretation that takes the modernist conception of negation as its point of departure, and it has been very influential within the reception of Gerhard Richter. Before I discuss this I shall look into another modernist strategy of interpretation that takes the ready made as a point of departure.

3: The Ready made

A pivotal point of focus within the reception of twentieth century art is the exhibition of the bottle rack of Marcel Duchamp in 1915. It is an event that art historians and art critics within the area of modernism and postmodernism return to again and again, confirming what the French art historian and the prominent Duchamp interpreter Thierry de Duve has pointed out: no art can avoid the recognition of the ready made.[7] Particular focus is placed upon the disintegration of any borderline between the art object and the non-art object, implying a break with the bond between the art of painting and the craft of painting. With this border being dissolved, the concept of painting is no longer unanimous, the argument runs.[8] It is on the basis of this problematisation of painting through not only ready made motives such as the colour charts and the mirror and glass paintings, but also through Richter's use of oil painting as such, that the concept of the ready made forms a point of departure in the interpretation of his work.

i: colour charts



Richter produced his colour chart pictures, Farben, between 1966 and 1974. They consist of coloured squares placed at random and separated by a white grid pattern that does not allow the elements to touch each other. In letting chance be the leading principle behind the organisation, the Farben repeats a strategy developed by Dada and Surrealism. Here, chance evolved into forming the basis of an aesthetics of unlimited artistic freedom and a provoking anti-compositional strategy. In Duchamp's picture Tu m' from 1918, colour charts unfold from the top left corner. Here "chance" is also the key word. The formation of chance as the constitutive principle behind the creation of the art was taken up again in the fifties by artists like Ellsworth Kelly and François Morellet. Whereas Richter's choice of colour is totally arbitrary, Kelly has, in a picture like Spectrum Colours Arranged by Chance (1951-53), chosen 21 colour-elements lying close to each other. This resulted in the colour-elements forming a kind of pattern, or as Kreul and Salzmann call it, a 'super-sign'.[9] In his Répartition aléatoire sur fond blanc, rouge 40%, bleu 40%, orange 10%, vert 10%. (1969/70), Morellet has left chance to be the leading principle behind the organisation of his colour fields, and, as with Richter's colour fields, the elements do not touch each other. The difference is that whereas Richter uses any colour, Morellet uses only four colour nuances. According to the psychology of reception, similar elements tend to be perceived as one figure. But despite of these differences, these three artists share, as Kreul and Salzmann also point out, an artistic practice in which the principle of chance is constitutive, implying the exclusion of subjective categories like inspiration, emotionality, sensibility, handwriting and expression.10 The rejection of these elements, furthermore, differentiates Richter from geometrical abstraction and constructivism, movements to which Richter's art represents some formal similarities.

However, one artist that Richter obviously resembles in this work is Jim Dine and his A Color Chart (1963). The principle behind the organisation of this is chance, just as it was in the case of Duchamp's Tu m' and in Richter's Farben. The modernist credo of originality seems to be replaced with the copy and repetition. The absence of subjective categories in art making leads once more to Duchamp, this time not to a particular motive, but to the concept of and the practice of the ready made. As ready mades, the colour charts are nothing but the replication of the industrially produced colour charts developed for use in paint shops. Arman's Running Colour (1968) is conceptually very close to

Richter's pictures. In Arman's picture the colour is literally the industrial product of colour tubes implying the ready made. One important difference is though that in Arman's picture the colours running out of the tubes develops into a substance of sculptural sensuousness, while Richter's colours keep their non-artistic industrial quality.

As ready-mades, Richter's Colour Charts can be interpreted as a renunciation of any connection between abstraction and music as well as abstraction and spiritualism. Also, any association of abstraction and social utopia represented by movements such as De Stijl, Bauhaus and the Russian constructivists are ruled out. Kreul and Salzmann interpret Farben as a critique of the different abstract movements evolving during the 20th century[11] The late German art historian Stefan Germer sees Farben as a critique against expressionist movements in particular. Germer claims that, by dissociating colour from any descriptive, symbolic or expressive functions, Richter has formulated a critique of the application of metaphysical content to works of art, as colour in particular has been regarded as the place in which painting "defies rational interpretation".[12] Implying a focus on colour as a ready-made and not as a means of expression, what remains of colour is its substance as pigment, and Germer concludes:

...In their combination of rationally-planned and chance elements, the Colour Charts are indicative of the systemic as well as experimental nature of Richter's painterly investigation of painting; it is an endeavour which is not interested in working out of schemes formulated a priori, but rather in the empirical investigation of his medium's potentialities.[13]

The conclusion Germer draws from his analysis and definition of Farben as lying closer to the artistic means of the ready made than to the use of colours in expressive movements is modernist in its essence. His insistence on critique and on the artistic medium itself as basic elements in Farben is an insistence on ascribing the meaningfulness of a teleology of the process of art as the materialisation of truth into Farben.

ii: Mirrors and glass

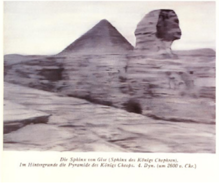
In 1967 Richter made an installation called 4 Panes of Glass. The framed glass was hinged to an iron structure fixed to the floor and ceiling, tilting around a central axis. Then, years later, the free-standing panes of glass were covered with grey paint on one side. Now the frames reflect the viewer because of the opacity of the painted glass on one side, and on the other the painted glass acts as a surface that blocks vision as it centres it in the frame. In the mirror-paintings the painted glass is put on the gallery wall. In 1981 Richter installed large mirrors along with grey paintings from the seventies. Here, reflection contrasted with the surface as extreme, achromatic materiality.

These installations repeat in many ways the thematics touched on above. As was the case in Farben, the motive is derived from Duchamp's production. Here, the installation of the panes of glass recalls his La grand verre. Furthermore, the effect of the mirrors also resembles that of the ready made, turning anything that happens to be reflected in the mirrors into art. The German art critic Johannes Meinhardt sees in the installations a reflection on visuality. Meinhardt maintains that the mirrors and glass do not integrate the viewer; on the contrary, they represent, according to Meinhardt, a literal measure of the expulsion of the subject. Meinhardt sees four different optical levels of visuality in the installations, the light from the room behind the glass or the mirror, the material surface of the glass or mirror, the two-dimensional projection of real space on the surface of the glass and the fictive space behind the mirror or the glass.[14] Another German art critic, Philippi, touches upon the same thematics, claiming that,

> Each of these bodies of work isolates one of the qualities that, in shifting constellations, constituted oil on canvas as painting at different historical moments: transparency, materiality of the two-dimensional surface, and reflection. The pieces thus call attention to the entirely arbitrary and conventional relation of these qualities to painting.[15]

As visuality alone legitimates the existence of painting, calling attention to the arbitrariness of the qualities of visuality to painting implies a problematising of painting as a whole, Meinhardt claims. Meinhardt compares the glass and mirror installations with the photo-paintings, maintaining that when it comes to the thematisation of optical ambiguity the installations are far more complicated than the photo-paintings. In the photo-paintings there is a simple optical ambiguity between the object and the picture of the object. This way they remain within the domain of the object, "sie erzeugen keinen visuellen Widerspruch von Wahrnehmungsebenen, da sie ich auf dieselbe wahrgenommene Welt beziehen."[16] This does not mean, however, that the photo-paintings are simple theoretically, on the contrary.

iii: Photo-paintings


Die Sphinx von Gise (Sphinx des Königs Chephren).
Im Hintergrunde die Pyramide des Königs Cheops. 4. Dyn. (um 2600 v. Chr.)

In his photo-paintings the snapshots themselves function as ready mades, thematising themes of uniqueness and authenticity. Regarded as representations of representations, the traditional painterly problems such as sujet and composition are left behind. This can be regarded as an overall theme within the photo-paintings. An example is the non-unique character underlined by means of text left under the pictures in paintings like Grosse Sphinx von Giseh (1964) and Kleine Pyramide (1964). In characterising Richter's works as being dominated by a double negation[17] directed against both the belief in a return of art to its existential origin and against the avant-garde's vision of the death of art, Germer applies this thematic to the affiliation of the ready-made:

> [...] Richter's painterly reflection upon painting did not begin at some fictitious historical 'point zero', but rather with the readymade — since it represented the most profound critique of preceding pictorial production and contained the potential justification for subsequent artistic endeavour. In both the conceptual and literal senses, the readymade has remained an historical point of reference for Richter's production, for each of his works adapts, alters or destroys existing pictures.[18]

Germer does not link Richter's art to a 'point zero' solely, but to the readymade, regarding the readymade as both representing the most profound critique of preceding pictorial production and at the same time containing a justification for the continuation of artistic practice.

In both the conceptual and literal sense, the readymade has remained an historical point of reference for Richter's production, for each of his works adapts, alters or destroys existing pictures. In this way, Richter is not simply responding to the fact that painting always involves intervention in an existing history of painting, but acknowledging that since Duchamp it always also requires formulating an attitude toward the concept of the readymade.[19]

Peter Osborne sees in Richter's application of the readymade a determination of the forces of this negative painting that keeps painting alive. He claims,

> Henceforth, all painting worthy of the name will have to legitimate itself conceptually as art over, above, and beyond the continuity of its relation to the history of its craft by incorporating a consciousness of the crisis of that history into its modes of signification, into its strategic deployment of craft. All painting that aspires to art must be postconceptual. It is within the terms of this idea of postconceptual painting that Richter's strategy of double negation is to be understood and judged.[20]

Osborne argues that photo-painting represents one way of painting after the readymade that incorporates a consciousness of the crisis of painting into its constitutive procedures, which "derive both their extrinsic rationale and intrinsic logic from their critical reflection on the concept of painting itself."[21] If painting after the readymade must re-establish its relation to its craft, this is the precondition for its status as painting and not as art, Osborne underlines. Osborne sees Richter's project tied up in a dialectic of concept and craft.

Richter's work, I suggested, is exceptional, not because it is displaced from the field of contemporary art, but rather because of the peculiar way in which it seems to distance itself from this field by the very success of its strategy of dealing with it.[22]
As Osborne himself underlines, his theorisations on Richter's works follow the path of Germer. In one central way Osborne dissociates himself from Germer, specifically, Germer's interpretation of Richter's work as an 'updating' of the ready made in reaction to its reification. Osborne claims that while reification is the point of ready made, the problem it faces over time is not reification but routinisation. The strategy of negativity by pure nomination disappears over time. Osborne's point is that while photo-painting is based on the ready made, this does not update the ready made; it regresses the ready made to the status of artistic material.

For it is no mere nomination here that renders the photographic image 'art', but its transformation into a traditional artistic medium (painting). If anything, photo-painting thus passes an ironic comment on the failure of the readymade to secure itself a future independent of the model from which it derived (photography).[23]

This footnote is important because it reduces the impact of the ready-made on Richter's work. Instead of implying substance, the ready-made functions as an aesthetic material providing the photo-painting in particular and the rest of Richter's paintings in general with a frame of reference of reflexivity. Being an absolute central modernist term, the reduction of the ready made to an
artistic material rather than substance liberates the new material which it influences from the stronghold of modernism, leaving what Osborn sees as a distanced melancholy quality in Richter's early paintings: "Richter's paintings mark time, the historical time of their production, the time of the crisis of painting, and they mark time with paint."[24] Osborne sees a reflectivity in this enactment by means of and within the sources and dimensions of this crisis. It is a reflectivity in which the act of painterly appropriation is contested, but confirmed in this contestation. In opposition to Germer, Osborne argues that Richter thereby does not postpone a predetermined end of painting. "Rather it is the

interpretation of negation as an end (finis) that the paintings contest."[25] It is in the determination of this force of negative painting that keeps painting alive that Osborn turns to the ready-made.

4: Painting as the negation of painting

Few other contemporary painters have, like Richter, brought about a discussion in which the most central themes of modernism are included. One is the theme of death brought about by Richter's use of photography in his photo paintings. In the article "Painting: The Task of Mourning", the art historian Yves-Alain Bois maintains in referring to the writings of Walter Benjamin that photography and mass production meant the end of painting at the same time as they provided a base of what he calls the essentialist urge of modernist painting: "Challenged by the mechanical apparatus of photography, and by the mass-produced, painting had to redefine its status, to reclaim a specific domain"[26] This domain was characterised by what was left out by the industry, the hand, and therefore the touch, texture and gesture were emphasised.[27] "From Courbet to Pollock one witnesses a practice of one-upmanship"[28] he claims.

This means that the introduction of photography in the 19th century caused a change in the conditions of painting, not as fundamentally as the one created by the ready-made, but still a change that forced painting into adopting new strategies. Representation in itself had already been perfected by photography, and the traditional task of painting was rendered superfluous. Instead, painting was forced into new domains, one of which was the domain of the subject. As a result, importance was attached to qualities such as touch, texture and gesture, elements that photography could not materialise .

Even though photography in many ways liberated painting from some of its external obligations, such as that of representation, art historians and art critics have had a tendency to value the changes it brought with it as negative changes. This negativity is closely connected to the claim of the death of painting. According to Bois it is a claim that is most often connected to abstract painting and to a longing for its death or as a demarcation of the death of painting.[29] First of all, it is a claim closely connected to modernism.

Indeed the whole enterprise of modernism, especially of abstract painting, which can be taken as its emblem, could not have functioned without an apocalyptic myth. Freed from all extrinsic conventions, abstract painting was meant to bring forth the pure parousia of its own essence, to tell the final truth and thereby terminate its course.[30]

Referring to Ad Reinhard and his claim for his Black Paintings to be the last, and Malevich as well as Mondrian, both of whom postulated that painting was done for, Bois concludes that the activity throughout this century has appeared as a mourning.[31]

Taking Bois' article on modern painting as governed by an awareness of an impending and inescapable death, the late German art historian Stefan Germer has stated: "Richter's work initially stemmed from a desire to abolish painting."[32] Peter Osborne introduces his article on Richter maintaining that Richter's work implied the focusing on one problem, "The problem of the continuing possibility of painting as a historically significant activity."[33] Taking this as a point of departure, Osborne defines Richter's painting as a

> contradiction between the end of painting as a living form of collective representation and its continuation within the art institution on the basis of a serial ingenuity that, symptomatic in its individuality, carries the weight of a historical condition.[34]

The German art critic Johannes Meinhardt[35] considers Richter's works to be materialisations of a negative theology, and Kreul and Salzmann analyse Richter's works in connection with another modernist credo, that of 'the death of the author'.[36]

In this discussion the readymade will occupy a central position. Conceived as an art object that is by definition mass-produced and non-unique, the readymade in itself subverts traditional notions of originality and artistic creativity, in short, it is the very opposite of oil-painting. On the other hand it also implies a 'point zero'; the final settlement with old forms of representation and the opening of the absolute different.

i: Photo-paintings as double negation

Two elements of the photo-paintings have been discussed in particular: the process of copying photographs into oil painting and the blurring of some of the pictures. The main issues discussed in connection with the photo-paintings are issues of the impact of photography on painting and the relationship between the photo-paintings and the ready-made. The two most important protagonists are Peter Osborne and Stefan Germer. Their analyses will be discussed along with issues dealing with the role of the viewer as Meinhardt defines them. Germer exemplifies his point by referring to Richter's photo-paintings. He claims that the snapshots, which acted as their basis, offered Richter the possibility of "leaving behind the traditional painterly problems such as sujet or composition."[37]

Germer bases his analysis on cultural and economic factors. Thus, he points out that Richter's artistic practice involves socio-economic considerations such as the social origin of the artist and the socio-economic status of the recipients of the products. Germer claims that by using photographs in which the content seems accidental and in which any compositional motivation is obviously absent, Richter, through his photo-paintings, both subverts high art and relativises "the social significance of pictorial practice."[38] Rather than creating a self-contained totality in each work, the artist "intervenes in something already formulated — inserting himself as artist into a pre-existing context which is thereby modified in a slight yet decisive fashion."[39]

Germer determines this modification through Derrida's concept of difference, describing it as a negative term: it annuls one meaning without formulating a new one to replace it, and on the level of genre it is neither photography nor painting and it does not formulate a new genre. Because his pictures blur not only the motive but also any unequivocal relationship between the 'signifier' and the 'signified', and thus any possibility of the determination of a meaning, his pictures are to be described as negative:

> Content is only arrived at by means of a negation of form, form only as a negation of content: which means that the whole project or representation is called into question.[40]

The question of representation also forms a central issue in Osborne's analysis of Richter's work. Osborne links photography to modernism, underlining that not only has photography led to a change of painting, painting has also changed photography. Richter's response to the challenge is to make photo-painting. Unlike Fluxus, he did not cease to paint. Instead, he sets himself against the more radical artistic impulses by painting, seeking new ways to avoid redundant figuration as well as the inflated subjectivism and idealism of the various forms of abstraction.

According to Osborne, the use of photographs in Richter's works performs a number of different functions. Firstly, the objectivity or givenness of the photographic image is used to counter the perceived subjectivism of painting at two levels, extrinsically, by placing the responsibility of representation onto the photograph, and intrinsically, by predetermining compositional form and reducing its representational task to that of reproduction. On the basis of that, Osborne concludes that photo-painting is an "affirmation of photography by painting."[41] This implies that he does not simply use photographs as models to secure the objectivity of the painting. By being paintings of photographs, they produce a double distance from the object, sometimes signified by the inclusion of text. The photograph is the content of the new picture, both the particular photograph and the practice of photography. Osborne thus indicates a use of photography as providing the motive as well as the material for the painting.

Referring to Roland Barthes, Osborne states that every photograph is a certificate of the presence of the past within the present. Every photo-painting is a certificate of the presence of the photograph in representation and this can only be marked in a different representational form. Therefore photo-painting is an affirmation of photography by painting, but it is also an affirmation of painting in the face of photography, Osborne underlines. Even though the photo-paintings participate in the negation of painting's function of naturalistic representation by photography, Richter's paintings remain paintings. This implies a double negation, according to Osborne and his argument runs like this:

> If the use of photographs as the subjects of the paintings, along with the quasi-photographic aspects of their form, signifies a recognition of the historical negation of painting by photography, such pictures nonetheless enact a painterly negation of this negation, a reappropriation of photography by painting, that would seem to seek to rescue painting, as photo-painting, from its fallen position however little this has been the original intent of these pictures.[42]

On the basis of this, Osborne poses the question of what kind of meaning this double negation implies. "What kind of painting does it begin?"[43] Osborne applies the concept of negation as it was formulated by Adorno to Richter's photo-paintings. The point about the negativity of Adorno that Osborne focuses on is the non-identity of the two terms of painting and photography. This means that instead of returning to the starting point or reconstituting the identity of each term, the second negation dwells on the reciprocal negativity of the non-identity. Through mutual negation, painting and photography find "the utopian shadow of the reconciliation" they are denied.[44] The connection Richter has with this double negation is that the negation of photography by photo-painting matches and reinforces the first, the negation of painting by photography. It is as enactments of this double negation that Richter's role in the history of painting is defined, Osborne maintains. Taking the death of painting as a point of departure, Osborne claims that Richter does not start painting anew but keeps painting alive by exploring the state within painting itself. “In painting the negation of painting, however, Richter cannot but paint (enact) another negation as well: the negation of that negation by painting.”[45]

ii: Destruction

Meinhardt bases his analysis on Richter’s photo-paintings on two elements: sujet and the hand. Being tied together, these two different levels undermine each other, creating instead a network of connections that determine each other negatively. According to Meinhard, sujet or the motive has no meaning of its own in Richter’s photo-paintings. They are reproduced at random through the hand, he claims, just as the picture itself is not the result of a conscious choice, and, like the media-picture, it does not belong to consciousness. The organisation of the picture is decided on beforehand by the photo itself and is not created by a subject. The motive is not understandable, it is accidental and it is meaningless. The hand only performs a mechanical carrying through of lines and patterns given beforehand. It copies blindly without letting consciousness of the artist intervene. No psychic energies are allowed to unfold in the brush strokes that are without any traces of gesticulating expression.

Meinhardt sees Richter’s photo-paintings falling apart in four different optical levels that at the same time emphasise each other through destruction. One level is the photo that is being painted. Another is the motive that has been photographed. A third is traces left by the hand and, finally, the fourth level is the one made visible within the spatiality of the blurred painting. This analytical approach in which the picture is falling apart, held together only by destruction, differentiates the picture from the self-analysis of modern painting in not implying any urge of ontological purification. The history of this kind of modernism is brought to an end, Meinhardt claims.

Johannes Meinhardt likewise underlines what he determines to be a strategy of destruction in Richter’s works expelling any idealistic or subjective elements. He claims that his basic strategy is the destruction as a first step, the second step implying the deconstruction of a definition of painting as being dependent on subjectivity and intelligibility. This destruction involves an understanding of the ‘sujet’ as carrying meaning, the surface of the painting as forming the basis of meaning, the hand as expression and the painting as an immaterial, spiritual spatiality. What is left when all these idealistic components are done with, Meinhardt has defined as Richter’s big question.[46] In opposition to American modernism and its critique of painterly illusionism and idealism as it was formulated by Greenberg Richter, it does not accept the material surface of the painting to be representing its new and true reality. The big question Johannes Meinhardt poses is, to what extent can a painting without subject and without the creative process of the painter contribute to anything? It is a question, Meinhard points out, that cannot be solved by a reduction of the painting to its surface.[47]

iii: Pop Art

Another theme from modernism that has been associated with Richter's art is that of Pop Art. In taking the media world as his point of departure, Richter's art comes close to the expression of Andy Warhol's pictorial world in particular. Warhol picks his motif from the world of the mass media, the cultural industry and from the commercials. His work represents an aesthetic practice that has been interpreted as a means of breaking down the breach between art and life, between high culture and low culture. Being a part of modernism, Pop Art nevertheless represents a break with the concept of autonomi as developed in the modernism of Greenberg.

Characteristic of Andy Warhol's portraits is the negation of any kind individuality. In portraits like Marilyn Monroe (1967), Warhol has, through an abstraction of her face into a few features, turned her portrait into a cliché of herself. Kreul and Salzmann compare Warhol's portrait with Richter's portrait Elizabeth I (1966), pointing out that Richter, in his Offset print, just as Warhol did to Marilyn Monroe, leaves her to appear in the way she is shown in the media without allowing any indication of her personality to be present.[50] But unlike Warhol, Richter shows only a minimum of physical likeness. Where Warhol, by exaggerating the features of Marilyn Monroe doubles the 'kitschy' character of Marilyn Monroe's face into making the representation itself 'kitschy', Richter blurs the features of Queen Elizabeth. He thereby renounces the motive in his representation of it. Warhol uses the opposite strategy in his presentation of the person in the same way in which she is represented in the media, only exaggerated into satire.

Another difference between Richter's photo-paintings and the Pop Art of Andy Warhol is that Warhol chose well-known motifs, usually from the film industry or from advertisements. Only rarely did Richter choose motifs that in themselves would connote anything to the audience. Even when he chooses a motif of any interest, such as the portrait of Jackie Kennedy, Frau mit Shirm, 1964 he turns it into a picture of any person.[51]

Kreul and Salzmann determine the practice of portraiture unfolding in Warhol's and Richter's paintings as a deconstruction of personality. It is left to the viewer to create any meaningful connection to the portraits as well as to create any meaning at all. Furthermore, the unity of empirical person and artwork as it was formulated already by Baudelaire is destroyed. Kreul and Salzmann perceive this as belonging to the concept of 'death of the author' as it was formulated by writers like Mallarmé, Foucault and Roland Barthes. At the same time as the author dies the reader is born, they proclaim, preparing for an abundance of meaning. Kreul and Salzmann see Warhol's Marilyn as an example of materialising an icon, whereas Richter's Frau mit Schirm does not imply any creation of any meaning. This non-birth of the reader leads, according to Kreul and Salzmann, to a focusing on the "Bild an sich und seinem Kontext"[52] rather than on iconographic or psychological content.

iv: Abstract paintings and destruction

On the face of it, the abstract paintings represent the exact opposition to the photo-paintings. Aesthetically, abstraction calls for a completely different set of conceptualisations than photo-based paintings. It is primarily associated with movements such as abstract expressionism and German expressionism in which spontaneous gesticulation are valued, or with the more controlled and geometricised Post-Painterly Abstraction. In his Farben, Richter acquired a formal language that seemed to come close to Post-Painterly Abstract painters like Kenneth Noland and Ellsworth Kelly. In his abstract paintings he likewise seems to have adopted the language of the abstract expressionists. Colours take on expressive value and the spontaneous gestures apparently do not fall short of the one of de Kooning. However, as already seen in Farben, colour in Richter's painting seems to distance itself from being the expression of the painter's personality, and it does not appear to lead to a transcendent reality.

Germer has compared Richter's use of colour to that of the ready-made. Rather than providing the medium for an authentic expression, Germer describes the way in which Richter produces the Abstract Painting as a process of destruction: to create new images Richter paints over or effaces previous compositions. Thus, Richter's Abstract Paintings combine conscious artistic invention with the process of destruction that negates the intervention because the artist can never completely control the result.

The conclusion Germer draws is that Richter's pictures are not the product of a process of abstraction but of concretisation:

> In contrast to abstraction, concretisation involves neither hierarchical order nor pictorial syntax, being based upon no such notion of an external reality. Instead of an ordered reduction, an irreducible variety of visual phenomena appear.[53]

Germer describes the Abstract Paintings as allegorical. This is motivated by a difference between experience and its representation. "Richter's paintings can be understood as a form of communication which is cancelled in the very act, even though the painter's desire to communicate with his viewers persists."[54] Germer characterises this awareness of the necessity of utopia and the recognition of its inaccessibility as melancholy. This melancholy is no less predominating the figurative pictures as the abstract:

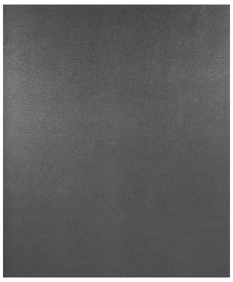
> [The] apparent decodability is an illusion, for like their abstract contemporaries, Richter's figurative works are the product of a displacement. That is, they are dealing with a psychological content that is other than what they represent; as in the Abstract Paintings, they deny access to the beholder since in a sense they conceal what their creation behind the motifs they depict is.[55]

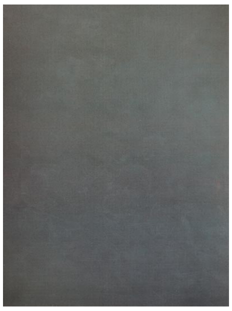
Germer draws two very important conclusions on Richter's work. One conclusion is that the Abstract Paintings are subjected to a process of "revealing while concealing",[56] and the other is that his work is governed by one basic principle: "a belief in painting's necessity born of radical doubt in its potential."[57]

A far more radical concept of destruction appears in Meinhardt's analysis. A central term here is the concept of neutralising destruction. Meinhardt claims that it does not result from a critical impulse toward visuality as a historical phenomenon. Instead, a ‘blinden Machens’ unfolds in the incomprehensibility and contradiction in his pictures. The work of the artist consists in blind destructive ‘Machen’ and the perception of the alienation that increases continuously. "Der Künstler beseitigt alle einfachen, geordneten Sichtbarkeiten in einer nicht abschliessbaren Arbeit des Wegmalens, des Zerstörens."[58]

In this process of destruction, which Meinhardt determines as central to the understanding of Richter’s art, any positive aspect of visualisation is destroyed by the building-in of new levels of visualisations. Pictorial phenomena like pattern, line, gestures, spots, colour and perspective are, in the abstract paintings, combined in impossible ways visually, breaking any laws of perception, Meinhardt maintains. The conclusion Meinhardt draws from his analysis of Richter’s works is that they materialise a negative theology. Within the destruction of any positivity and any definition, the divine appears as ‘das Absolut-Andere’, "Auf dieselbe Weise wird Malerei für Richter zur einzigen Hoffnung, die unfassbare Wirklichkeit erahnen zu können, da sie sich im Gemälde abzeichnet."[59]

v: The Grey Pictures





Richter made his first grey painting in 1966. The picture, called Zwei Grau, consisted of two grey squares in different nuances on a lighter grey. Between 1970 and 1976 in particular he made pictures in which the motive was grey. In his grey paintings he put on the grey colour with different tools, giving the grey pigment different textures ranging from totally pure, cold grey to a warm, almost monochrome texture. As Kreul and Salzmann notice, the overall characterisation of grey is that it has no character, that it expresses nothing,[60] and Paul Klee even thought of grey as implying "Verlust des Lebens".[61] As Germer, Kreul and Salzmann underline, Richter’s grey paintings differ fundamentally from monochrome painting known hitherto in art history. In the avantgarde, monochrome painting was introduced as an artistic strategy to overcome the tradition of easel painting. By emphasising either colour’s materiality or its spirituality, the reduction of painting to a single colour was teleologically motivated: "It was used to indicate the existence of a reality beyond the painted canvas, which was thought to be of a political or a spiritual nature."[62]

According to Germer, Richter lost faith in this metaphorical level of reality. Instead of this metaphysical point of reference toward which monochrome painting had been directed, Germer determines Richter’s grey paintings as being a part of the painting’s ongoing engagement in self-criticism. According to Germer, Richter himself has defined his project "neither as a reduction of coloration nor as a demonstration of colour’s symbolic potential, but rather as an effort to extinguish colour",[63] and on the basis of this pronouncement Germer concludes:

The Grey Paintings should therefore be understood as achromatic rather than monochromatic painting. Their greyness constitutes a différance, for although embodying the combination of all colours and thus referring to colouration as a concept, colour is visually present in them only as an absence.[64]

Comparing Richter’s work with Yves Klein’s monochrome pictures, Kreul and Salzmann claims that while Klein visualises the totality of the immaterial and the infinite, Richter distances himself from the idea of the grey implying any transcendence. “Ihm geht es um die referenzlose Totalität des Nichtes, des Absurden im positiven Sinne.”[65] As Kreul and Salzmann point out, this radical denial of any claim of validity is of course also ex negativo a claim of validity, and, significantly, it is a claim that cannot be misused contrary to the often authoritarian and ideological ambitions of modern abstract painting.[66]

To illustrate how the grey paintings can be seen as materialisations of Richter's concept of an aesthetics of absence, Kreul and Salzmann compare Richter with Robert Ryman. They see in Ryman's purist paintings a focusing on the medium itself. A general trait of his paintings is the use of the square and the white colour, made with different qualities and tonalities. While Kreul and Salzmann maintain that Ryman and Richter share an interest in the possibilities of an investigation into the possibilities of visual art, they don't see the same sensual richness and poetry in Richter's grey paintings as in Ryman's white canvases. Instead, they find Richter's grey dead, and on the basis of that they interpret the grey paintings as the expressions of the death of painting. It is, however, a death that implies a new beginning of a painting that they claim arises not so much from the aesthetic experience as from cognition. Thus, Kreul and Salzmann exempt Richter from any kind of sensuousness; instead, they associate him with rationality.

5: Summary: Richter as part of modernism

Modernism is still the cultural standard which even today governs our conception of what art is. Therefore contemporary criticism is bound up with a consideration of modernism. In the texts on Gerhard Richter that have been referred to above, this point appears clearly. Even though Richter's art is determined as being non-modern, aesthetically the frame of reference in which he is analysed is modernistic. Modernism is not only bound up with the self-criticism as determined by Greenberg. It is not only defined by being bound to its own formally reductive system, as Brian Wallis defines it, a system in which "Transgression or critique could take place only within the terms of artistic creation already established."[67] Modernism is also about criticism, negation and absence. This means that thinking of negation is thinking in modernist terms. Negation is bound up dialectically with its opposite, the positive, just as the death of painting makes no meaning without the life of painting, and talking about life and death implies thinking in cycles or in change and progression.

Thus, when Osborne defines Richter's work as focusing on one problem, "The problem of the continuing possibility of painting as a historically significant activity,"[68] he is talking from a modernist frame of reference. Normativity is another characteristic of modernism, and Osborne is normative when he evaluates Richter's work on the background of its ability to maintain the tension of double negativity. Osborne proclaims that Richter's painting gets its meaning from this contradiction of art as authentic and as dependent on the institution. Richter's work as a whole, and each work individually, derives its importance from the way this common condition is taken up within the very act of painting. "Posited as affirmative, negation becomes determinate,"[69] Osborne underlines. He concludes, however, by expressinga doubt that Richter's latest works, the abstract paintings maintain this tension of double negativity, "the moment of historical reflexivity, and the extent to which this is annihilated or suppressed in a merely affirmative celebration of the possibilities of paint."[70] Osborne bases his analysis on what he defines as a definite difference between Richter's modes of expression, and it is on the basis of the normativity that he differentiates between the stylistic expressions in Richter's art. He disapproves of art that is not part of something big like 'the moment of historical reflexivity'. The rest is nothing but affirmative celebration. He calls this post-conceptual thinking it is modernist, just like it is a modernist way of thinking when Germer claims that Richter's work initially stemmed from a desire to abolish painting.

A more gloomy modernism appears in Meinhardt's analysis of Richter's paintings. Meinhardt claims that Richter's paintings are both more extensive historical-analytically than modernism in not responding to any positivistic reality at the same time as they are governed by an almost mystical Hope, "der Hoffnung, dass Malerei fähig sei, die unzugängliche 'Wirklichkeit' jenseits der bekannten, determinierten Wahrnehmungsordningen sichtbar zu machen."[71] Thus painting serves, according to Meinhardt, through the use of perceptual scepticism a means of a critical analysis of visualisation. That he can only do by destroying the self-evidence of the picture by means of surface and painterly gesture.[72]

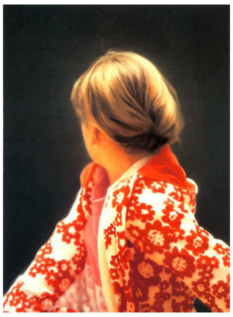
Through the use of a vocabulary that is metaphysical in origin, the themes to be discussed in connection with Richter's art are defined almost beforehand. The discussion seems to take as a point of departure Bois' words of modern art as a mourning: "The feeling of the end, after all, did produce a cogent history of painting, modernist painting, which we have probably been too prompt to bury."[73] It is this story that the critics referred to above are a part of.

Fifteen years later, Bois' predictions have proven right insofar as painting is not dead; painting has survived and so has the desire for painting. This does not mean that painting as the mourning of painting, be it pathological or not, is necessarily a central theme of painting. Richter's work stands as the proof of that. While he continues to paint he does so independent from any claims of an apocalypse or a resurrection of painting. By staging the gesture so central to abstract modernism he renders superfluous any traumatised redefinition of painting with the purpose of redefining its domain after the role of representation has been taken over by technology. The notion of any authenticity related to gestures as the result of craft is irrelevant to Richter; so is the idea of painting transcending itself, which is the idea Bois characterised as essentialist. Instead of saving painting by painting, Richter plays with painting. and in his doing so ,he includes the elements defined as being constitutive of painting: space and surface. The reflective attitude to painting unfolding within his paintings does not therefore imply a critique of painting; it implies rather a reflectivity in which all the elements constitutive of painting are involved without involving either the mourning of the end of painting or the critical reflectivity of the medium predominant in the notorious definition of modernism put forward by Clement Greenberg. The mourning saturating Richter's painting is of another kind; it is the mourning of the recognition of the powerlessness of painting. Therefore, rather than expressing the mourning of the end of painting, his art expresses the melancholy of painting as an expression of the resignation of art. It reflects the modernist view that the destruction of the possibility of experience is itself drawn from art. Richter's insistence on art leaves open the wound. Richter does not reconstruct any negation of meaning and he does not deconstruct his artistic means. Richter constructs, and it is as aesthetic constructions that I shall approach his work in the last part of this study.

PART III

In this final part, an alternative interpretation to Richter's painting will be presented. It is an interpretation that does not take for granted reflexivity as the point of departure in the discussion of his work. In casting doubt on the application of absence and loss to Richter's work it will present a discussion on his work based on presence and nearness. It does not accept a definition of surface as opaque, transcending itself into another world, but it bases itself on surface as the place in which art happens. It does not initiate a discussion that only implies the focusing on Richter's work as articulating the loss of both the historical and subjective significance and identity of painting. As Philippa points out, it is a discussion that takes as its point of departure that only in the past did painting have an authentic presence; therefore the truth of present painting resides only in reflexivity, in the conditions of representation. "Congruent with the claims of conceptual artists such as Joseph Kosuth, the visual is regarded as no longer commensurable with the visible; it instead comments on the state and (con)text of the latter."[74] This way of approaching Richter's art brings with it at least two problems; it insists on an essence of art, of the possibility of an ontology of art, and the focus on reflexivity leaves little room to say anything else about art. "In fact, the more successful a piece is in problematising its own conditions of representation, the less it can be said to signify anything else."[75] Even though the thematics of mourning will play a role in this final discussion, it will not be mourning as the feeling of the end of painting as Bois defined it, but mourning as a realisation of the powerlessness of painting. It will be mourning not as an apocalyptic feeling but as melancholy. It is the melancholy of the powerlessness of vision and of painting as sensuous material.

1: Visualisation and The case of 'Betty'



To illustrate this I want to take Betty from 198891 as a point of departure. The picture bases itself on a photograph Richter took in 1977 from his then eleven-year-old daughter, Betty. It is a picture made in offset print, made on the basis of a photograph of an oil painting Richter made from a photograph from 1977. This means that the picture has passed through four techniques of reproduction, photography, oil painting, photography and offset print. Furthermore, Richter uses a technique that emphasises the impression of the picture being a photograph. He has coated the print with a colourless nitro lacquer that provides the picture with the same shining surface as is usually only seen on photographs.

Another strange aspect of the picture is the motive. It shows the upper part of the body twisted toward the viewer simultaneously turning the head turned away. In the twist, one shoulder seems to be forced out of the picture into the space of the viewer. This impression of nearness produced by the transcendence of the space of the viewer and the space of the picture is deepened by the effect of extreme realism caused by the coating of the lacquera. It is an impression that, on the other hand, is reversed by the angle from which the face is depicted: the twist of the face away from the viewer focusing on nothing but blank darkness implies distance and inaccessibility.

In taking modernist themes of negation and death of painting or the author as a point of departure, Kreul and Salzmann have interpreted Richter's family portraits as representations of a denial of "einer motivischen Aussage und die Ästhetik der Indifferenz, Leere und Absenz."[76] Using Betty as an example, they claim that the depiction of Betty in front of one of his grey pictures is a visualisation of her absence in the presence.[77] Kreul and Salzmann concludes that Betty can be interpreted as a negation of the genre of portraiture. But it is a negation with a dialectical turn. By negating the traditional function of the portrait and by liberating the portrait from any demands on content he renders possible depiction.

Nicht die nostalgische Affirmation anachronistischer Bildgattungen und verlorener ästhetischer Positionen, vielmehr die bewusste Verneinung der Tradition ermöglicht die modifizierte Fortexistenz derselben, wie die Druckgrafik Betty überzeugend belegt.[78]

In the portrait of his daughter Richter has put a focus on the daughter's shoulder, portraying her head from the back. She shares with the viewer the gaze on one of Richter's own grey paintings.[79] Of all his works, the grey pictures offer very little when it comes to sensuousness; compared to the expressive quality of monochrome paintings by, for example, Yves Klein, Richter's grey pictures give nothing in return for the effort of looking at them, except for the experience of having the gaze closed. By portraying Betty from the back, with her hiding her gaze and her face looking into a nothingness that cannot even be described as emptiness, as that would provide the picture with a content of transcendence, Richter is presenting to us a picture about vision rather than the negation of a tradition or on the impossibility of vision; by creating a focus on the extreme sensuous quality of Betty's shoulder protruding into the space of the viewer instead of on her face, the picture develops first of all into a thematisation of a mise-en-scène of a visuality depending on not only surface but on the surface as opaque.

This focus on surface and opaqueness as the places in which the potentials of visuality are allowed to unfold is conditioned by dualism. In Betty there is a dualism of motive as well as of surface, of visuality and of content, of expression of immediacy and distance. In a series of photo paintings Richter made with his third wife and baby: S. mit Kind (1995), this dualism assumes an almost choking effect. In the paintings, Richter changes between the sharp three-dimensional focusing on the mother and child to the poetic silk-like dimness and to the grotesque blurring of the motive with fluorescent stripes on top of the motive. Because of the intimacy of the motive, the blurring becomes all the more brutal as it seems to nihilate the motive, turning it into a mere effect on the same level as any other effect. And then again, the motive is important because it functions as a catalyst of the surface as the place in which the picture as visuality takes place.

2: The surface

The pictorial element of surface is thematised throughout Richter's works. It is the theme in his mirror and glass installations. By exhibiting the glass and mirrors together with the grey pictures and by painting some of the glass in the later glass installation, he creates a focus on the impenetrability of pictures. This way, the grey pictures create a contrast to the apparent transparency of the mirrors and point to a fundamental opaqueness of paintings. The combination of mirrors and grey paintings, furthermore, underlines opaqueness as a fundamental condition of paintings revealing three-dimensionality as but an illusion. In the photo-paintings, surface is underlined by the gesture of blurring on the surface. Even though the surface is actually transcendent, it reveals a representation, and this is merely another picture and not some kind of reality. In some of the abstract paintings, Richter produces the same effect. The gesticulations on some of the abstract paintings from the eighties appear to be made on another motive, and in A.B., Silbersee from 1995 he combines the procedures of abstract paintings andphoto-paintings. In an abstract picture also from 1995 the activity of the spatula does not take place on another representation; instead, the canvas is revealed behind the gestures. These two pictures reveal the impact that surface has on Richter's works. The abstractions are not abstractions because that would imply an object or a reality for the picture to be abstracted from, and Richter shows us that there is no reality in his paintings outside that of the representations. These representations, on the other hand, are representations of representations, forming the basis for sensations and not for the cognition of some reality lying outside his pictures. It is not transparency that forms the basis of his pictures, but sensations.

By materialising the suspension of any difference between abstraction and figuration, A.B., Silbersee can be seen as incarnating the painterly practice of Richter. Taking the opaque surface as a point of departure of analysis, Richter's oeuvre appears to be a totality in which visualisations of sensations or maybe even the sensation of visualisation form the basis.

The thematisation of surface and sensation does not only represent an alternative to the prevailing dialectical way of conceptualising the relationship between form and content, it also renders irrelevant any thematisation of authenticity. It represents an alternative to the focus on negation and destruction that dominates the reception of writers such as Stafan Germer and Benjamin Buchloh. Taking the concepts of destruction and negation as a point of departure, Germer describes the way in which Richter produces the abstract paintings as a process of destruction in which existing compositions are effaced in order to create new ones. Germer proclaims that Richter's activity of destruction is first of all a negation of intervention and therefore authenticity is simultaneously destroyed.[80]

An alternative approach to Richter's artistic practice as a materialisation of the dialectical turn of the representation of absence is to focus on his artistic practice as an unfolding of the gesture of making visible. In that gesture, surface is the pivotal point. It is a surface that does not transcend itself; it makes visible and conditions sensations.

Furthermore, the gesture of visualisation that unfolds on the work of art as surface renders any reference to the outside world accidental. It seems a paradox considering the fact that in all its diversity the gesture of imitation pervades all of his work. In his mirror and glass paintings he imitates through the process of framing; in his colour charts imitation assumes a quality of the ready made; in the photo paintings photographic images are imitated, and his abstract paintings appear as imitations of abstraction. In spite of the easily recognisable content, representation is absent in the gesture of imitation. Richter does not represent an outside world, whether it be the material world or the inner world of the artist's mind. Instead, he presents a reality that seems first of all to be the reality of the artworks.

Gilles Deleuze has thematised this difference between representation and presentation adopting the concepts of the copy and the simulacrum.[81] The simulacrum is distinguished from the copy in two ways: the copy is "endowed with resemblance", whereas the simulacrum need not be; and the copy produces the model as original, whereas the simulacrum "calls into question the very notion of the copy as the model".[82] The simulacrum harbours, according to Deleuze, "a positive power which denies the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction."[83] Deleuze thereby inverts the Platonic distinction between the original and the image, proclaiming that the true Platonic distinction does not lie between the original and the image but between two kinds of images: the copies and the simulacras.[84] Another consequence of this inversion is that difference does not unfold within the relation between the original and the copy, but within the simulacras.[85]

Identifying with Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return, difference is given its own concept, and it is in this repetition that Deleuze places difference as a play of the simulacra. It is a play that renders the concepts of artistic authenticity as well as of uniqueness obsolete. Without the concept of originality and of any identity except for the identity with its own being different, the notion of process within art history as well as within the oeuvre of the individual artist becomes meaningless. Processuality implies progression, a mastering of the representational abilities determined by the unfolding of the artwork in its sensuous moment, a moment that is only to fade away to be replaced by other artworks with other expressive qualities, connected to and influenced, negatively or positively, by the previous works.

In Richter's works representation is disrupted. Therefore he does not negate content, as Buchloh proclaims in the fragment of the interview quoted above. Instead, his strategy can be described as a subversion of representation. Hal Foster claims that in the future representation may be superseded not by abstraction alone, as in prewar art, but by simulation. "For if abstraction tends only to sublate representation, simulation tends to subvert it, given that simulation can produce a representational effect without a referential connection to the world."[86]

In Deleuze's thinking the simulacrum is granted its own model. Instead of copying it, it is its own model, the model of difference in itself. As Keith Ansell Pearson points out, "It is the eternal return which best articulates for Deleuze the nature of univocal Being."[87] This being is bound up with the definition of the plane of immanence in which the outside denotes a field of immanence in which, strictly speaking, there is neither an internal self nor an external one. According to Deleuze, the absolute outside is devoid of selves "because interior and exterior are equally a part of the immanence in which they have fused."[88] Deleuze also expresses it like this: "Thus, even biologically, it is necessary to understand that "the deepest is the skin."[89]

This plane of immanence implies that Deleuze's surface is like a plane upon which, page after page, images of thought rise up. Thus, surface is not to be understood in simple opposition to depth, and thereby as an appearance, which must be passed through on the way to its essence. And it is neither to be understood as consisting in envisaging a "ground or base upon which everything is arranged. This is the idea of a support, a table or tableau, the condition of possibility of particular associations."[90] Indeed, Jean-Clet Martin maintains in his article on the aesthetics of Deleuze, that a surface is an extremely populous plane, a plane of gaps and lights which are consolidated in an anonymous way. And yet one must admit that in a certain respect such a plane lets nothing be seen. But letting nothing be seen must not be confused with nothingness or, worse, dissimulation...Here we have one of the most important requirements of Deleuze's philosophy: on a surface nothing is hidden, but not everything is visible. And this is why philosophy does not have to interpret towards a hidden essence; it is not disclosure but the construction of a moving image. It is a constructivism.[91]

Daniel W. Smith compares Deleuze's aesthetics with Kant's. In Kant's aesthetics the theory of sensibility as the form of possible experience and the theory of art as a reflection on real experience are central. Gilles Deleuze argues in favour of a uniting of Kant's dualism, in what Schelling called a 'superior empiricism':

> it is only when the conditions of experience in general become the genetic conditions of real experience that they can be reunited with the structures of works of art. In this case, the principles of sensation would at the same time constitute the principles of composition of the work of art, and conversely it would be the structure of the work of art that reveals these conditions.[92]

Deleuze differentiates between two kinds of sensations: sensations that force us to think and sensations that constitute the basis for the aesthetics, sensations as objects of recognition.

According to Smith, one of Deleuze's philosophic aims is to show that the singularity and individuality of the diverse can only be comprehended from the viewpoint of difference itself. The Idea of sensation is constituted by two interrelated principles of difference: the differential relations between genetic elements, and the differences in intensity that actualise these relations. They do not indicate some sort of metaphysical reality beyond the senses; as Ideas, they are posited in order to account for sensibility, though they are not given in experience as such. Whereas in Kant, Ideas are unifying, totalising and transcendent, in Deleuze, they are differential, genetic, and immanent.[93]

The most general aim of art is, according to Deleuze, to produce a sensation. Deleuze wants of art to create a 'pure being of sensation', a sign. The work of art is, as it were, a 'machine' or 'apparatus' that utilises these passive syntheses of sensation to produce effects of its own.[94]

Another strategy that lies behind the strategy of the subversion of representation is the strategy of appropriation. It is a strategy that first of all relates to the artistic practice of treating tradition and artistic expressions as a store of ready-mades to appropriate.[95] This strategy opens for an analysis of Richter's works as implying figuration as the production of a representational effect without a referential connection to the world. It allows for an understanding of his abstract paintings as yet another appropriated style. It turns the outside reality into a ready-made in his glass and mirror paintings, which in turn deprives the colour charts of any privileged position they have obtained in the literature of Gerhard Richter as exemplifying his use of the ready made as an expressive means.

Also, the seriality of Richter's artistic practice suggests simulation. Foster draws a direct line between the serial production of minimalism and pop art, proclaiming that "not until minimalism and pop is serial production made consistently integral to the technical production of the work of art."[96] Foster claims that serial production rids art of representation rather than any anti-illusionist ideology. This is due to the relationship between abstraction and representation where repetition tends to subvert representation, "to undercut its referential logic."[97] Even though Richter's art is different from minimalism and pop art, it is still the repetition that creates the difference in Richter's art. The repetitive pattern releases both his photo-paintings and his abstract paintings from the referential connection to the world of representation and abstraction.

Within Richter's artistic practice the concept of simulation opens for an understanding of repetition as a repetition devoid of any references to process or progression. Thus, when Richter repeatedly throughout his career turns to previous styles or ways of expression, there is no indication that he does it to make changes in order to improve, or to continue where he did not succeed; he merely repeats what he already did five or ten years ago. When he does make changes within an artistic material, the changes seem to have no relationship to representational purposes. When, in his photo paintings for example, he changed from black and white into colour, it was a change that came about concurrently with the breakthrough of colour photography.

In Richter's oeuvre, difference is not a matter of autonomy but of repetition. Through the unfolding of seriality, determining repetition not only within one sequence of the same motive but by means of the repetition of the same motive or gesture during his whole career, Richter differentiates his activity as artistic. That makes any claim of negation, critique or reflexivity irrelevant in the rapprochement of Richter's work. Repetition, furthermore, annihilates any demand of progress. The modernist credo of purification to sustain autonomy belongs to a different conception of art. Richter's art creates sensations; they happen on the surface. Even though the surface consists of several layers, they are nothing but surface. It does not mean that the skin of the painting has become essence. In Deleuze's as well as in Richter's worlds there is nothing behind the surface. Belonging to the plane of immanence, the surface represents the place on which art happens. Surface reveals nothing and it hides nothing.

Turning her back to our gaze, Betty hides nothing and she does not reveal anything. This way she personifies Deleuze's conception of the surface. We are looking at a person whose back is turned to us, leading our gaze into a grey painting that merely stops the gaze, declaring that there is nothing behind the background, because the background is the surface and as such the painting. We cannot penetrate this surface in a search for some hidden meaning, because nothing is hidden. But it is not a happy vision Richter is offering us. His turning the painterly gesture into a mise-en-scène of gesture parallels the mise-en-scène of himself as a painter. Even death is staged. Appropriating art historical clichés such as the burning candles (Zwei Kerzen 1983) and the skull (Schädel 1983), Richter circumvents another art historical cliché, that of the death of painting. Through the staging of death, the story of the death of painting is visualised as nothing but a story, but the theme of the stage setting is that of melancholy.

FOOTNOTES

1 Interview with Benjamin H. D. Buchloh in Hans-Ulrich Obrist(ed.), Gerhard Richter. The Daily Practice of Painting. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995, pp. 132-166

2 Reprinted in Obrist 1995, pp. 132-166

3 Obrist 1995, pp. 139-140

4 To keep the oil wet Richter uses oil of cloves and covers the canvas with a thin covering. See Jutta Nestegard, Gerhard Richter. The Art of the Impossible. Paintings from 1964-1998, Exhibition catalogue, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, 1999, p. 28

5 The Swedish philosopher Sven-Olov Wallenstein has claimed that the absence of reflexivity within Kiefer's work has turned his art into kitsch: "it is no longer filtered through the necessary structures of iconoclasm and loss of language imposed on us by the history of Modernism." (Sven-Olov Wallenstein, "Gerhard Richter and the Historicity of Painting" in Birgit Bærøe (ed), Art and Aesthetics in the 90s, Oslo: Spartacus Forlag AS, 2000, 93-94.

6 Benjamin Buchloh, "Die Malerei am Ende des Sujets" in Gerhard Richter, Stuttagart: Edition Cantz, 1993

7 Thierry de Duve, Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 188

8 De Duve 1991, p. 188

9 Andreas Kreul and Sigfried Salzmann, Gerhard Richter, München: Verlag Fred Jahn, 1993, p. 34

10 Kreul and Salzmann 1993, p. 34

11 Kreul and Salzmann 1993, p. 35

12 Stafan Germer, "Retrospective Ahead" in Seam Rainbird and Judith Severne (ed): Gerhard Richter, London, The Tate Gallery 1992, p. 27

13 Germer 1992, p. 28

14 Johannes Meinhardt, "Ende der Malerei und Malerei nach dem Ende der Malerei", in Kunstforum, bd. 131, August-Oktober 1995, p. 242

15 Desa Philippi, "Moments of Interpretation" in Oktober, Fall 1992, The MIT Press, p. 117.

16 Meinhardt 1995, p. 242

17 see discussion below

18 Germer 1992, p. 25

19 Germer 1992, p. 25

20 Peter Osborne, “Painting Negation” in Oktober, Fall 1992, The p. 111

21 Osborne 1992, p. 111-12

22 Osborne 1992, p. 112

23 Osborne 1992, p. 106

24 Osborne 1992, p. 110

25 Osborne 1992, p. 110

26 Bois 1986, p. 31

27 Bois refers inparticular to Meyer Schapiro who describes this process in “Recent Abstract Painting”, in Modern Art; 19th and 20th Century, New York, 1978, pp. 217-19. Ref. from Bois 1986 p. 31

28 Bois 1986, p. 31

29 Bois 1986, p. 30

30 Bois 1986, p. 30

31 Bois 1986, p. 48-49

32 Germer, 1992, p.25

33 Osborne 1992, p. 103

34 Osborne 1992, p. 113

35 See Meinhardt 1995

36 See Kreul and Salzmann 1993

37 Germer 1992, p. 25

38 Germer 1992, p. 26

39 Germer 1992, p. 26

40 Germer 1992, p. 26

41 Osborne 1992, p. 106

42 Osborne 1992, p. 107

43 Osborne 1992, p. 108

44 Osborne 1992, p. 109

45 Osborne 1992, p. 110

46 Meinhardt 1995, p. 237

47 “Deswegen lässt sich die Frage danach, was eine subjectlose Malerei ohne die schöpferische Arbeit des Künstlers leisten kann, nicht vorweg durch die Reduktion von Gemälden auf materielle Oberflächen beartworten und erledigen.” Meinhardt 1995, p. 237

48 Meinhardt 1995, p. 242

49 Meinhardt 1995, p. 243

50 Kreul and Salzmann 1993, p. 26

51 See Kreul and Salzmann 1993, p. 27

52 Kreul and Salzmann 1993, p. 28

53 Germer 1992, p. 31

54 Germer 1992, p. 31

55 Germer 1992, p. 31

56 Germer 1992, p. 31

57 Germer 1992, p. 32

58 Meinhardt 1995, p. 243

59 Meinhardt 1995, p. 245

60 This is how Johannes Itten in his Bauhaus period describes the colour grey in Johannes Itten: Kunst der Farbe. Subjektives Erleben und objektives Erkennen als Wege zur Kunst. Studienausgabe, Ravensburg 1987, p. 37, from Kreul and Salzmann 1993, p. 45-46

61 Paul Klee, Das bildnerische Denken. Form-und Gestalungslehre. Band I. Hrsg.: Jürg Spiller. Basel und Stuttgart 1971, p. 500, cit. fra Kreul and Salzmann 1993, p. 46

62 Germer 1992, p. 29

63 Germer 1992, p. 29

64 Germer 1992, p. 29

65 Kreul and Salzmann 1993, p. 46

66 Kreul and Salzmann 1993, p. 46

67 Brian Wallis, "What's Wrong With This Picture? An Introduction." I Brian Wallis (ed): Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation, New York, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995, p. xiii.

68 Osborne 1992, p. 103

69 Oborne 1992, p. 113

70 Osborne 1992, p. 113

71 Meinhardt 1995, p. 238

72 Meinhardt 1995, p. 239

73 Bois 1986, p. 48

74 Philippi 1992, p. 118

75 Philippi 1992, p, 118

76 Kreul and Salzmann 1993, p. 47

77 Kreul and Salzmann 1993, p, 47

78 Kreul and Satzmann 1993, p. 27

79 See, among others, Kreul and Salzmann, 1993, p. 45. They recognise the painting from the bottom corner at the right, where they consider the lover part of picture to be painted.

80 Germer 1992, p. 31, see discussion above

81 Gilles Deleuze, The Logic of Sense, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990

82 Gilles Deleuze, "Plato and the Simulacrum", in op. cit. p. 5. This point is also underlined by Hal Foster, The Return of the Real, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996, p. 104. This citation is taken from his book, ibid.

83 Deleuze op. cit. p. 262. This citation is taken from Keith Ansell Pearson, Germinal Life. The difference and repetition of Deleuze, London: Routhledge 1999, p. 17

84 Pearson op. cit. p. 17. Pearson refers to a contrast made by Plato in the Sophist. Here he differentiates between 'likeness' (copies) and 'semblances' (simulacra) and, as only the former resembles the original, the difference is a difference in kind. (ibid)

85 Pearson 1999, p. 17

86 Foster 1996, p. 103

87 Pearson, 1999, p. 18.

88 Deleuze and Guattari, Mille Plateaux, Paris, PUF, 1980, p. 194; A Thousand Plateaus, trans. B. Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1988, p. 156.

89 Deleuze, Logique du sens, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969, p. 126; Logic of Sense, trans. M. Lester with C. Stivale, London, Athlone Press, 1990, p. 103.

90 Jean-Clet Martin, "The Eye of the Outside" in Paul Patton, Deleuze: A Critical Reader. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1996, pp. 18-19

91 Martin, 1996 p. 19

92 Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze's Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality" in Patton, op. cit. p. 29

93 Smith 1996, p. 38

94 Smith 1996, p. 39-40

95 Foster, 1996, p. 99 - 101

96 Foster 1996, p. 63

97 Foster 1996, p. 63

ILLUSTRATIONS

1 River, 1995

2 Zwei Kerzen, 1983

3 I.G., 1993

4 I.G., 1993

5 Schädel, 1983

6 S. mit Kind, 1995

7 S. mit Kind, 1995

8 A. B., Silbersee, 1995

9 Athen, 1985

10 Abstraktes Bild, 1987

11 Farben, 1974

12 Grosse Sphinx von Giseh, 1964

13 Grau, 1973

14 Grau, 1976

15 Betty, 1988