

# MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE

## GERHARD RICHTER

Exhibition and gallery opening: 14 October 2014, from 6:00 to 8:00pm  
The exhibition will remain on view until 20 December 2014

Marian Goodman is honoured to announce that an exhibition of new and recent works by Gerhard Richter will inaugurate her London gallery. This will be Richter's first gallery exhibition of this nature in London for nearly two decades. Consisting of over 40 works, with important bodies of new 'Strip', 'Flow' and 'Doppelgrau' paintings, the show will also include a large glass sculpture and a selection of key earlier pieces.

Over the past five years Richter has been primarily concerned with a series of paintings premised on systematically deconstructing a photograph of his own abstract oil on canvas from 1990. Revisiting an idea he first employed in his late-seventies project '128 Photographs of a Painting', he divided the work's surface into two vertical sections, then halved those halves, and so on, subjecting them repeatedly to a premeditated procedure he described simply as 'dividing, mirroring, repeating'. At the point when this digital process had generated 4,096 infinitesimal vertical sections, Richter intervened with a rigorous selection process, re-imposing his subjective will and choosing particular preferred strips with which to continue working. Following one further final halving and mirroring, he had each work printed to his desired scale, so that we might contemplate what have become remarkable horizontal, rhythmic fields of fine lines, oscillating with vibrations of colour, the largest of which stretches over ten metres, as seen on the gallery's first floor. By tellingly entitling these unique works 'Strip' paintings, Richter is referring not to those lines, but both to the miniscule vertical strips they represent of their source and to the sense of physically 'stripping' – taking apart and dismantling his original painting. Of not only reinventing, but wholly paring down and fundamentally abstracting his own abstraction.

On contemplation, Richter's 'Strip' paintings distill the pictorial investigations of a 60-year career into a body of work that is wholly consistent with, and contingent on, everything that has preceded them. As photography once opened new pathways for him in the 1960s, digital technology has now added to the expansive territories of his work. By refuting established categorization, Richter has again been able to exploit one media to deconstruct the possibilities of another, arriving at uncharted and unprecedented new propositions. Although the final incarnation of his 'Strip' paintings are empirically pigment printed on paper through a mechanical means, the processes, choices and concerns are entirely those of the artist as they would be in the process of making a traditional painting – and the results are as radical and rewarding. As Robert Storr puts it, 'There has never been a body of work more "retinal" than Richter's strip abstractions of the past several years.... these works await the individual viewer in ever shifting yet ever unique spatial and temporal circumstances identical to those in which his works on canvas await us.'

Another new territory through which Richter has reinvestigated his means of abstract painting, whilst undermining preconceptions of what it means for us to encounter them, are his 'Flow' paintings, a group of which are presented in one of the ground floor rooms of this exhibition. Their title refers to the gestural currents of enamel paint that have been frozen in motion at the moment Richter fixed a pane of glass directly to the surface of a painting in process on the floor – arresting a once fluid image at a precise chosen instance. His technique of pouring and manipulating paint captures a tension between chance versus the decisive gesture of the artist's hand. And, while the glass face of each work serves to magnify the materiality of the paint, it also removes the element of direct tactility and undermines how immediacy of touch is typically supposed to facilitate an expressive connection

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between painter and viewer. Richter leaves us instead with a smooth surface that not only distances us from subjective gesture, but also reflects ourselves and our surroundings.

If the latter is intrinsic to the experience of his 'Flow' paintings, in the four large diptychs Richter has presented in the main ground floor space, reflection has been employed almost entirely in lieu of mark-making in itself, which opens up fundamentally different readings of the monochrome. Each work juxtaposes two different shades of grey paint behind glass, hence their titles, 'Doppelgrau [Double Grey]'. Sculptural as well as pictorial, each diptych is mounted to a support that projects the picture plane forward off the wall towards the viewer, hovering in space. Their fields of pure grey betray no gesture, so they and the reflections of the architectural space and spectators around them, mean we absorb both tangible spatial division and subtle differentiation of colour simultaneously. This series continues Richter's nearly 50-year engagement with grey monochromes, an enduring fascination explained by his dictum that 'Grey is the epitome of non-statement'.

Richter has placed in the middle of this main room a monumental work entitled '7 Panes of Glass (House of Cards)', one of the key new glass pieces Benjamin H. D. Buchloh describes as 'The culmination of a lifelong preoccupation with the material... [and] an allegorical negation of the long and heroic history of material tropes within the painting and utopian architecture of the twentieth century'. Falling somewhere at the intersection of architecture, picture-making and sculpture, while defying categorization within each, it is constructed from sheets of glass propped against each other at angles that produce the illusion of shards slicing through, layering and dislocating light. If all such Richter glass pieces belong to a lineage from his 1966 'Four Glass Panes', this work in particular also recalls a trip he made to Greenland in 1972, initially inspired by Friedrich but during which Richter soon abandoned that romanticism for a fascination with the formal qualities of icebergs, and took whole volumes of photographs of them.

In addition to the new works in the show, Richter has punctuated and augmented the exhibition with a selection of paintings on canvas, glass and photographs made over the last 15 years – including his 'Abstraktes Bild' and 'Farben' paintings – which inform and re-contextualize his more recent pieces. And that sense of continuum is not only appropriate, but vital to this exhibition. To return to Storr, 'As he has done so many times before, Richter manages to debunk one set of clichés while taking the measure of fresh, as yet "unscripted" possibilities, in particular novel frameworks that qualify or condition the act of looking... What emerges is a desire to claim the whole of an unexplored territory he could see laid out before him from a vantage point to which a previous, intensively pursued practice had lead him.'

*Gerhard Richter has recently been the subject of substantial solo exhibitions at the Fondation Beyeler, Basel; The Kunstmuseum Winterthur; and the Staatliche Kunstsammlung, Dresden. The artist's work was last seen in London in 'Gerhard Richter: Panorama', a comprehensive retrospective at Tate Modern in 2011, which travelled to the Neue and Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin, and The Centre Pompidou, Paris. A fully-illustrated, hardback catalogue with essays by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, Dieter Schwarz, and Robert Storr will accompany his Marian Goodman exhibition.*

*The new Marian Goodman Gallery London is housed in a former Victorian factory warehouse measuring 11,000 square feet over two floors, which has been completely renovated with the help of David Adjaye. The gallery is located on Soho's Golden Square and open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00am-6:00pm. For further information please call +44 (0)20 7099 0088 or email [martin@mariangoodman.com](mailto:martin@mariangoodman.com)*

*The next exhibition in this space will be new work by Danh Vo, opening in January 2015. This will be Vo's first solo show in London, and will precede his representation of Denmark in the 2015 Venice Biennale.*

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