

MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

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GERHARD RICHTER: *Paintings and Drawings*

May 7 – June 25, 2016

The exhibition opens Saturday, May 7th, 10 am - 6 pm

Marian Goodman Gallery, New York is delighted to announce an exhibition of new work by Gerhard Richter which will open to the public on Saturday, May 7th and remain on view through June 25th, 2016.

Over the past five decades and through a prolific history, Gerhard Richter has explored painting through a rich and diverse range of ideas that has spanned realist works based on found images and photographs, abstractions made with a squeegee, two and three dimensional glass works, abstract drawings, and overpainted photographs made from images of daily life.

On view will be a major representation of new works by the artist spanning five years, including a new cycle of *Abstraktes Bild*, 2014-2015; a new group of abstract drawings, 2015; works from the *Aladin* cycle of paintings under glass, 2010; and overpainted photographs, 2014-2015.

A comprehensive catalogue, *Gerhard Richter: Abstract Paintings and Drawings*, is being published on the occasion of the exhibition and will include full-color plates and two important new texts: '*Gerhard Richter: Drawing the Conditions of Drawing*' by Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Modern Art History at Harvard University, and '*Beginning Again: New Abstract Paintings by Gerhard Richter*' by Dieter Schwartz, Director of Kunstmuseum Winterthur.

This exhibition marks the beginning of a new body of work and a return by Gerhard Richter to the process of abstract painting following the last major group of abstract works from 2009 and the subsequent period from 2010-2013 in which he dedicated himself to exploring primarily non-painterly means in his work, i.e. the *Strips*. They represent a 'dialectical inquiry into painting from aesthetic engagements at its margins'. Following this fertile period of investigating painting by other means, in the summer of 2014 the artist commenced the *Birkenau* cycle of works, which are currently the centerpiece of a larger exhibition at Museum Frieder Burda, Baden Baden, through the end of May 2016 and have been widely seen, first in Dresden at Galerie Neue Meister, Albertinum, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, and then in Basel at Foundation Beyeler.

Between December 2014 and May 2015, Richter produced the series *938-941, Abstraktes Bild* on view in the current exhibition. These works demonstrate the most recent focus of Richter's commitment to abstract painting based on the visual historical system for which he has become known, achieved through the build up of painted layers, separated by intervals of time, in which the paint is first applied, then scraped away and added to. These richly chromatic and textured works have an antecedent in a long line of abstract works which have constituted the largest part of his oeuvre. Arrived at through various

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techniques over the years, since the late eighties he has utilized the squeegee to render compositions based on a hybrid exploration of choice and restraint, control and chance, expressive gesture and mechanical execution, painting as an act and as accident.

As Dieter Schwartz writes in his catalogue essay for this show, beginning in 2010 Richter turned his attention to “initiatives directed towards recasting painting... in various ways, in order to return to it in the end.” This included the series of paintings behind glass: *Bagdad*, *Ifrit*, *Perizade*, *Abdallah*, and *Aladin*, the latter of which is represented in the five *Aladin 913* works on view in the current exhibition. In 2011 a new pictorial invention was explored: the *Strip*, shown first at Galerie Marian Goodman, Paris in 2011 and later at Marian Goodman Gallery, New York in 2012. In these works the artist erased his hand in an effort to arrive at a new mode of abstraction achieved through digital means, casting an existing painting, *AB 724-4*, 1990, into divided vertical fields which fractured pictorial space into a multiplicity of technologically rendered chromatic striations, but still granted the artist an authorial role in their final composition. Finally, in 2013 Richter explored glass as a medium once again, in the large sculptural glass works such as *7 Scheiben/ (Kartenhaus) (7 Panels/ (House of Cards))*. In the interim and preceding this, there were several important cycles of abstract paintings, such as the *Cage* paintings of 2006, conceived as a single coherent group and first displayed in 2007 at the 52nd Venice Biennale curated by Rob Storr; as well as the white abstract works exhibited at Marian Goodman Gallery, NY in 2009-2010, and earlier in Paris in 2008.

The important new cycle of forty abstract drawings in the current exhibition were created in the spring of 2015, and can be considered “*not preparatory studies for paintings but rather a kind of finale, which can be understood in relation with the introduction, crescendo, development and conclusion of the painting sequence*”, writes Dieter Schwartz in the current catalogue, who also organized the retrospective of drawings at Kunstmuseum Winterthur in 1999, and notes that Richter has “*returned to the genre in isolated instances, for example around 1964 and then again in the later 1970s ... [and into the 1990s], and then again in 2000, 2005, and sporadically between 2009-2011: “Like beginning to paint, resuming drawing is likewise a symbolic gesture with which Richter embraces the hope that an art based on the artist-subject can still persist in the face of the infinite possibilities of digital image production.”*

Benjamin Buchloh, reflecting in this catalogue on the historical conditions of drawing and on Richter’s own uses of the medium, writes, “*The conditions and procedures fragmenting modernist drawing seem to erupt in Richter’s work from the 1960s onwards, once he had shed his Socialist Realist past.... Ultimately ...dispers[ing] drawing’s potential of any function of referentiality itself, delivering it as merely a residual remnant. To sever the line from its referent, to increasingly detach the inscription from the hand that makes it, to dislodge the mark from its maker as much as to disunite and differentiate all marks, gestures and fractures from each other, and make the linear ensemble appear as a simultaneity of equally valid, yet non-correlative marks, will now become one of the defining strategies of Richter’s drawing throughout his career. And these strategies seem to have reached their apogee in the artist’s recent corpus of drawings from 2015.*”

Discussing the trajectory of Richter’s drawing and the dialectical impulses contained therein, he notes such striking features such as: “*notational discontinuity... a suspended gesturality, ... conflicting graphic impulses, all simultaneously executed and present in constellations*”... “*Richter’s voiding of intention and*

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expression, of motivation and circumscription, of definition and of plan, as much as the simultaneous dismissal of a drawing of random mark making processes in the lineage of emphatic insertion on an artist subject's presence, all come together eventually to generate the peculiar simultaneity of conflicting impulses and conventions...We discover an empathic assimilation of the fractured remnants of the promises that drawing had once been able to make and to deliver even in a not too distant past."

The *Aladin* works (2010) represent a series from the broader three year period (2010-2013) of paint on glass works. In these, lacquer paint is poured and then manipulated by the artist through its flow onto a Plexiglas plate. Relying on aleatory impulses also prevalent in the *Strip* works, Richter again abolishes gesture and facture altogether, continuing his investigation of non-pictorial procedures for painting.

The overpainted works, which have been intermittently produced since 1986 and here are represented in a group from 2014-15, begin from Richter's own everyday photographs and create a nexus between the representational and non-representational that have always marked his work. These small format works permit an intimate space and autobiographical element in his work, allowing for random gestures in an artist otherwise known for meticulously built up layers in the larger painted works. *"Painting over an existing image can be an anarchic gesture, a retaliation. But it can also be a magical act arising from a primitive awe in the face of captured images. It would be possible to tear the photograph up, in order to ward off the treacherous presence of what has been. But we do not like tearing photographs up – the old magic is still at work in this inhibition: a remnant has survived of the curse that made the shy savage resist being photographed. The photograph steals the soul. Overpainting rescinds that...The reproduction is the painter's support material, the act of painting puts an end to duplication. It takes us back to the unique image."* (Botho Strauss, *Gerhard Richter: Overpainted Photographs*, p. 204)

Gerhard Richter was born in Dresden in 1932, where he lived until 1961, studying first at the Kunstakademie, Dresden from 1951-1956, and then at the Kunstakademie in Dusseldorf, from 1961-1963. He has been the recipient of numerous distinguished awards, including the Staatspreis of the State Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf, in 2000; the Praemium Imperiale Award, Japan, 1997; the Golden Lion of the 47th Biennale, Venice, 1997; the Kaiserring Prize der Stadt Goslar, Germany, 1988; and the Oskar Kokoschka Prize, Vienna, 1985.

Gerhard Richter has been the subject of numerous important solo exhibitions, most recently at the Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany (through May 29, 2016); the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany (2015); the Foundation Beyeler, Basel, Switzerland (2014); the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland (2014); and the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany (2013). Since the 1960s he has shown internationally and has had a number of traveling retrospective shows including most recently *Panorama* at the Tate Modern, London, the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, and the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2011-2012). An upcoming solo exhibition will open in the fall of 2016 at Bozar in Brussels, Belgium.

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