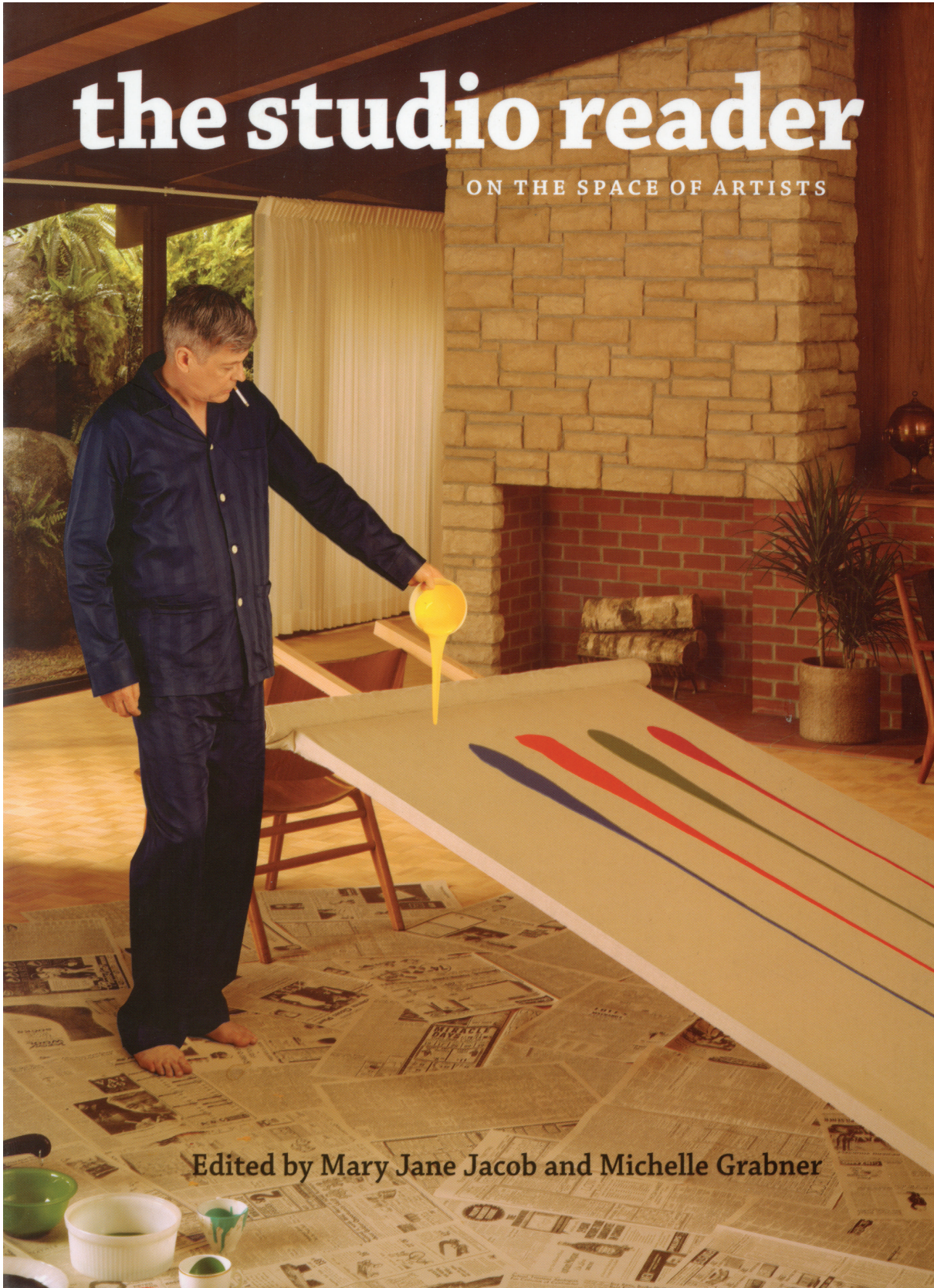


the studio reader

ON THE SPACE OF ARTISTS



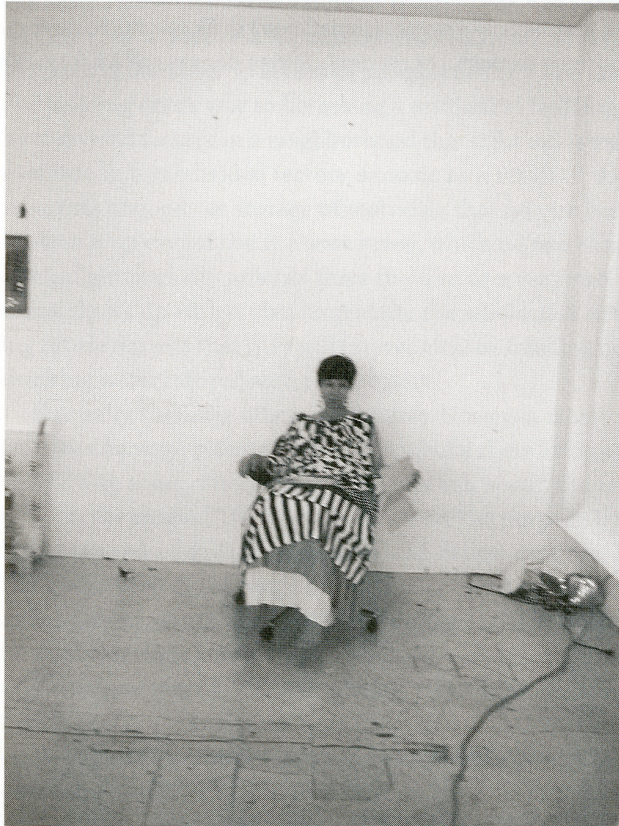
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Frances Stark

Recently I was asked, by someone who was somewhat familiar with my studio, if I would let a museum group visit. I warned him that I had just finished a show, so there probably wouldn't be much work around. "Let's schedule it for a different time," he said. "We wouldn't want them to think Frances Stark is a bad artist because there's nothing in her studio."



Frances Stark in her studio, 2009.

This reaffirms for me the idea that a studio is often expected to be a site of display, offering, at the very least, some captivating evidence of a process. There is nothing photogenic or charming about the way I do what I do, and there's no special atmosphere created by doing it. I tried to take some pictures of it to see what my so-called studio is like, but achieving a representative image proved difficult. I am starting to think that, for me, being an artist *in the studio* is a complete fantasy.

Actually, I have two "studios." I needed to expand, and the only practical solution was to rent the space one door down from my current unit. Now every time I shuttle between the officelike place with the calendar and the couch and the messy place with all the paper scraps and mismanaged shelves, I pass by an architect's office. In the past I have been critical of artists' studios modeled after architects' offices, but there are days when I pass by, look in at my neighbor, and envy the focus that seems so apparent in that one functional room. There the architect produces real houses with actual flushing toilets that people are happily crapping into. Don't get me wrong, I believe in what I do, and I even love what eventually goes out my door, but my methods have yet to form a place that feels like home. Sometimes I think my studio says as little about my work as a basketful of my dirty clothes conveys what I look like.