

GALERIE NÄCHST ST. STEPHAN

ROSEMARIE SCHWARZWÄLDER

KATHARINA GROSSE Blut baut das Herz

September 12 to November 7, 2009

Katharina Grosse's painting is first and foremost an intensive but also unsettling color experience. The industrial colors, which she applies in wide brushstrokes and with the help of a spray gun, create ambivalent, contradictory, or even dissonant pictorial surfaces. Wide sweeps of diaphanous paint applied layer upon layer or circular forms visible through multiple layers of color are gestures that point beyond the bounds of the painting itself. The image space that is partially, opaquely sprayed over in greater or lesser density vacillates between illusory depth and factual surface, becoming completely ambivalent.

"The manifestation of an artwork can have many surfaces" (KG). Katharina Grosse's paintings flood canvases, pouring into exhibition spaces and beyond. They manifest themselves directly on the walls, in corners, intermediate spaces, stairwells, on the façades of buildings, integrating enormous balloons, piles of earth, Styrofoam surfaces as they go. Fugacity is part of the equation.

Katharina Grosse studied painting with Norbert Tadeusz and Johannes Brus in Münster and completed the master class with Gotthard Graubner in Düsseldorf. In 1992 she won the Villa-Romana Prize, which entailed a scholarship to spend several months in Florence, giving her the chance to absorb and be inspired by the ubiquitous Italian Renaissance frescos.

Katharina Grosse's painting is a risk-taking, performance-oriented act. It suspends the borders of objects. Her art is risk-taking in the sense that "as opposed to conceptual thinking, my painting has no preconceived form. (...) There is something absurd about flooding paintings with color; it doesn't leave much margin for considering whether the work will be successful or be able to stand the test of time." In this sense, Katharina Grosse's painting is fundamentally democratic, uncalculated, non-hierarchical; it orients itself on the strategies of soccer and uses its scope of action as a metaphor: "Meaning the movements on the field. (...) Yes, of course. The division of space, the zones – the sense of space and distance."

Her in-situ pieces, which have as spatial works in museum exhibitions caused quite an international stir in recent years, influence her studio works and vice-versa. The "portable" paintings, whether rectangular, circular ("Tondi"), or concave-elliptical (recently on display at the Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin), are "neither clearly pictorially autonomous nor exclusively situational. (...) On canvas I am starting to find an equivalent for the spatial reproductions of my in-situ works." This exhibition presents a new work series that integrates soil/earth as a material in the application of color. In this way Katharina Grosse incorporates the materiality of her spatial pieces into her painting.

On the square in front of the Neues Museum Nürnberg Katharina Grosse's pilot project will be on display until September 13. Entitled "stuntweed," the nearly 6-meter-high fissured sculpture (acrylic on laminated polystyrene) makes reference with expressive verve to the scattered sculptures visible through the glass façade of the museum behind it.

Quotes excerpted from K. G., "Ich male wahrscheinlich blind" [I Probably Paint Blindly], interview: Axel Hecht and Michael Jürgs, in: Tagesspiegel, 04/05/2009, and an unpublished text, 2006.

1961 born in Freiburg/Breisgau, lives and works in Berlin. Since 2000 professorship at the Berlin Weissensee School of Art. 1999 scholarship from the Chinati Foundation Marfa, Texas. 2003 Fred Thieler Prize.

Solo exhibitions (selection): **2009** Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin; Neues Museum, Nuremberg; Arken – Museum for Moderne Kunst, Copenhagen **2008** FRAC Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand; Galleria Civica di Modena, Modena **2007** Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves; Renaissance Society, Chicago; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane 2006 De Appel, Amsterdam; Solvent Space, Richmond **2005** Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen **2004** Magasin 3, Stockholm; Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, Odense, Denmark; SAFN, Reykjavik; Contemporary Arts Museum Houston