

Bortolami is pleased to announce the opening of *Trinity: Present*, the second phase of Jutta Koether/Philadelphia, and the fourth of the gallery's Artist/City programming initiative. The exhibition takes place in a trinity house, a type of small, three-story home that once housed the working class of the city's more affluent areas and an architectural typology specific to the city of Philadelphia. Using the idea of the Trinity as its organizing principle, the exhibition develops in three parts: Past, Present, and Future. The previous phase, *Trinity: Past*, focused on the paintings Koether made from 1995 onward, evincing her identity as a German artist who moved frequently between her homeland and the U.S., specifically the distinct Cologne and New York City art scenes.

*Trinity: Present* comprises a succinct survey of Jutta Koether's black paintings from 2001 to present. Koether's *Volume* paintings, a series of works she made in 2001, some of her earliest experimentations with black paint, are dispersed throughout the house. These works began as studies in various notebooks and evolved into richly layered canvases composed with acrylic paint and metallic pen that appear at times sensitive and at other times violent.

Made in the short span of fourteen days, these thirteen paintings exhibit a diaristic quality and a degree of emotional urgency. Koether made *Volumes* in the wake of 9/11, and following the death of her dear friend and gallerist, Pat Hearn, at a time when she had just moved out of her studio and began working in her home. These works, while referencing both Barnett Newman's cycle of fourteen paintings, *Stations of the Cross*, as well as Joseph Beuys's blackboard drawings, also materialize a visual translation of "black noise," that came out of her collaboration with her friend, fellow musician, and painter Steven Parrino (their music performance duo was called *Electrophilia*, which Koether describes as, "extreme noise music").

Koether's work exhibits a porous relationship between painting and music, with aesthetic concerns seeping through both of her artistic outputs. While *Serinettes*, a suite of three black heart-shaped canvases, refer to the Baroque period of music, *Data Corrupter (3)* and *Data Corrupter (4)*, address more contemporary music production. Data corrupters are a type of guitar pedal used to modulate and manipulate the tonality and harmonization of the instrument. In these aptly named paintings, Koether applies various types of acrylics to the painted surface, deeming them "crusty", in order to distort the image plane and the viewer's experience of it.

Koether's small black paintings have been a consistent part of her practice since the turn of the millennium, and present moments of catharsis. Made in 2006, the same year Parrino's sudden and unexpected death, *Untitled (Eagle, Chimes)*, installed on the first floor, features frenetic, gestural brushstrokes of inky acrylic paint. She typically coats these diminutive works with resin, what she

calls “liquid glass,” sometimes extending the material beyond the edges of the panels and allowing it to creep onto the wall behind. As in *Untitled (Eagle, Chimes)*, the resin acts simultaneously as a shield and a container for the painted surface beneath. A set of chimes dangles from the bottom of the canvas, a reference to Koether and Parrino’s musicianship, creating “a silence processed through noise,” in Koether’s words.

More small, dark paintings in myriad shapes are installed throughout the exhibition. The triangle motif, repeated frequently throughout Koether’s work, comes out of her interest in the occult and numerology, the upside-down triangle often symbolizing feminine energy. She will often hang groups of paintings in pyramidal form, or use the shape in even less expected ways, such as a floating pair of underpants in the 1995 painting *Roots in the Rhineland*, exhibited in *Trinity: Past*.

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