

KÖNIG GALERIE

KATHARINA GROSSE

AT 30 PACES SHE COULD SPLIT A PLAYING CARD

30 OCTOBER – 18 DECEMBER 2020

ST. AGNES | NAVE

It is with great pleasure that KÖNIG GALERIE presents *At 30 paces she could split a playing card*, an exhibition featuring new works by Katharina Grosse in the NAVE of St. Agnes. It is the artist's third solo show in our gallery. On display are new, large-format works on canvas and plywood, which were created in Berlin and New Zealand.

Katharina Grosse's painting maintains a position outside the categories of representation and abstraction: it operates in reality and on reality. To this end, it employs a directed haze of tiny droplets of paint so as to leave traces of paint and colour even over a distance and to move with ease across the borders of things. Grosse has stated that painting can precipitate everywhere and anywhere (in the real world) – on any surface and any object that sprayed paint can reach. Thus, places on which painting can be seen function as surfaces for deposits of colour that can also show up elsewhere: every work realized is a fragment. As fragments, the individual paintings establish a connection with yet more expansive painting that would potentially dissolve all the conventional subdivisions of the real world. This painting cannot itself be seen, known, or described – but it is the source from which the colour precipitation derives its being.

On display in the current exhibition are large and less large rectangular canvas formats alongside paintings on irregularly delimited supports constructed out of several partly overlapping plywood panels. Grosse painted the canvasses in her Berlin studio and the works on plywood in her studio in New Zealand. These different locations are reflected in differing manners of painting and, on the aesthetic plane, in differing family resemblances: the Berlin works are marked by broad, transparent swathes of colour blended into one another and by a certain prevailing chromaticity, whereas in the pictures from New Zealand the reserved multi-coloured quality of the sharply separated paint slashes are juxtaposed with a largely black portion. In each case, the paint has been sprayed onto the support in more or less uniform swinging movements. This readily legible dynamism of the repetitive painting process produces, however, effects in colour space that remain unreal since the temporal build-up process of the overlaid traces of colour cannot be reconstructed by the human gaze. Thus, these works combine elements of immediate and accustomed plausibility with elements of irrationality and bemusement, calling into question the connection between cause and effect.

All that can be seen is pervaded by the presence of colour that has been covered over and has become invisible: what remains visible is the uppermost layer of a sediment that has, in the course of a process over time, buried other layers of colour beneath it. A specific piece of evidence for this co-ordinated deposition of colour is a linear, erratically moved disturbance produced by twigs or lengths of twisted plastic material that were attached to the painting support before the start of the spraying process and were finally (in most cases) removed again. At the same time, nothing can be seen except that part of the painting that settled on the

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transportable surfaces, while the complete precipitation of paint clearly extends far beyond the limits of the flat picture supports. An unknown part of the painting – whose existence can, however, be deduced – has fallen outside the plywood panels or canvasses, on the floor or wall of the studios in New Zealand or Berlin. It is not the painting that is adjusted to fit the given support, but the support's form and placing that determines the picture: had the spatial disposition of the painting's support been different, a different picture would have been registered.

Hence the individual works in the exhibition can be understood as repeatedly shifted, changed, and exchanged projection surfaces, which in each case allow to be seen what other projection surfaces exclude from sight. As with the works sprayed in situ, the works exhibited here in the NAVE of St. Agnes pose first and foremost the question as to location: where is the painting?

Each individual work in the exhibition bears the imprint of the painting that it does not show under the condition of included time and excluded space. Thus the ambition of Grosse's painting is to make the deficiency of the individual work into its actual subject-matter. If a painting succeeds in linking up with that part of painting that cannot be seen, then the potentiality of painting is brought to the fore. This results in curious paradoxes: a picture is the stronger the less it presents itself as a concluded and completed realization. Conversely, it requires such a realization to accord significance to what the picture lacks.

At 30 paces she could split a playing card is a phrase originally used to characterize the American sharpshooter Annie Oakley, who performed from 1885 onwards in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

Text: Ulrich Loock
Translation: Richard Humphrey

Since more than twentyfive years, the artist **Katharina Grosse** (b. 1961, Freiburg im Breisgau) has been internationally present in the art world. Recent institutional exhibitions and in situ paintings include *psychylustro*, for the Philadelphia Mural Arts Programme (2014); *yes no why later* at Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2015); *Seven Hours, Eight Voices, Three Trees* at Museum Wiesbaden (2015); *Untitled Trumpet* for the 56th Biennale di Venezia (2015); *Katharina Grosse* at Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden (2016); *Rockaway* for MoMA PS1's *Rockaway!* programme in Fort Tilden, New York (2016); *Asphalt Air and Hair* at AROS Triennial, Aarhus (2017); *This Drove My Mother up the Wall* at the South London Gallery, UK (2017); *The Horse Trotted Another Couple of Metres, Then It Stopped* at Carriageworks, Sydney (2018); *Wunderbild* at the National Gallery in Prague (2018/2019); *Mumbling Mud* at chi K11 art museum in Shanghai (2018/2019) and at chi K11 art space in Guangzhou (2019); *Mural: Jackson Pollock I Katharina Grosse* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2019/2020). Currently two shows are on view: *Is It You?* at the Baltimore Museum of Art and *It Wasn't Us* at Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart - Berlin. The artist lives and works in Berlin and New Zealand.

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