

KATHARINA GROSSE

10 APR – 29 MAY 2021

Wolke in Form eines Schwertes

Opening: April 10, 2021, 11 am – 5 pm
Introduction: Prof. Dr. Klaus Albrecht Schröder
Director General of the Albertina Museum

Katharina Grosse is one of the defining and seminal artists of her generation. Her vividly impressive artistic output has exerted a substantial and significant influence on contemporary discourse and debate in the art world. Grosse's spectacular projects such as those displayed in her recent solo exhibitions in the Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin, the Baltimore Museum of Art or the chi K11 art space in Shanghai are expressions of a powerfully expansive and multi-dimensional painting style. With their sweeping gesture and exuberant vitality her works transcend spatial and cognitive boundaries alike and call for a new culture of reception.

In her sixth solo exhibition *Wolke in Form eines Schwertes* [Cloud in the Form of a Sword] in our Gallery, we present eight ground-breaking works, which for the first time bring together the artist's various modes of working: painting on canvas, as produced in her studio, is now conjoined with elements of her *in situ* work practices. Branches, twigs and driftwood are incorporated into the classic support or substrate and grow together to form complex, straddling structures.

In conjunction with the exhibition an approx. 100-page booklet will be published in May 2021 with articles by the philosopher Ludger Schwarte and the art historian Luca Cerizza.

KATHARINA GROSSE, born in Freiburg/Breisgau in 1961, lives and works in Berlin und New Zealand. She was awarded in 2003 the Fred-Thieler-Prize, in 2014 the Oskar-Schlemmer-Prize/the Grand State Prize of Baden-Württemberg and in 2015 the Otto-Ritschl-Prize.

Katharina Grosse participated in the biennials respectively triennials of Sydney (1998), Taipei (2006), New Orleans (2008), Venice (2015), Aarhus (2017) and will be represented at his year's first Helsinki biennial (2021).

Solo exhibitions (selection):

HAM Helsinki Art Museum (2021), Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin (2020), Baltimore Museum of Art (2020), MFA Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2019), chi K11 art museum, Shanghai (2018), National Gallery/Trade Fair Palace, Prague (2018), Carriageworks, Sidney (2018), South London Gallery, London (2017), public project commissioned by MoMA PS1, New York City (2016), Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden (2016), Museum Wiesbaden (2015), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2015), Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf (2014), Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz (2014), Public Art Fund, Metro Tech Center, New York (2013), Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2013), De Pont Museum of Contemporary Art, Tilburg (2013), Kunstmuseum Bonn (2011), MASS MoCA, Massachusetts (2010), Renaissance Society, Chicago (2007), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2005)

Works in museum collections (selection):

Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; Centre Pompidou, Paris; MAXXI – Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome; Kunsthaus Zürich; Kunstmuseum Bonn; Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich; Museu Serralves, Porto; The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna; Arken Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen; De Pont Museum, Tilburg; Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, New York; Berezdivin Collection, Puerto Rico; Foundation Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden; Hall Art Foundation, Vermont; Hoffmann Collection, Berlin; Istanbul Modern, Istanbul; K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong; Kunstmuseum Bern; Kunstmuseum Stuttgart; Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf; Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Missouri; MoMA – Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf; Pérez Art Museum Miami, Florida; Sammlung Goetz, Munich; KiCo Collection, Bonn; Sammlung Mondstudio, Germany; Sammlung Richterich, Switzerland; Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

Ludger Schwarte

In her boundary-transgressing work enacted in an extended space of paint and color, Katharina Grosse has repeatedly transformed both interiors and exteriors – beds, walls and entire exhibition spaces; or stretches of beach, trees, buildings and technological infrastructures, along with their specially constructed image supports, be they canvases, soil, latex or blocks of plastic – into polychrome, immersive and, in many respects, temporary color environments.

In this transformation, something as delicate as paint or color, which in the philosophy of art has always been considered to be secondary and subordinate, suddenly becomes extremely powerful. This effect, however, cannot be ascribed to any individual color, nor to any color command, any system of colors or any structure or function of color material. Nor is it the sheer colorfulness, the extreme presence and wilfulness of the colors, that makes Katharina Grosse's works so unmistakable. Rather, the reason why a haze of sprayed paint upturns and overthrows the hierarchies in which we approach and encounter things, and through which we take possession of the world, must be sought in other qualities of these works – qualities that emerge only through the painterly process, through the works' combinations, transitions, gradients and dimensions, through their edges and unfinished nature, and through the visibility of their supports and conditions of production. This occurs firstly within the realm of semblance – just as raindrops evaporate, conglomerate and, seemingly by chance, become a cloud formation that resembles a sword. It is not an unbreakable sword, yet it is part of a battle. The semblance becomes part of a movement which can unfurl immense energy.

The title "Cloud in the Form of a Sword" is derived from a text by Antonio Negri originally intended for the theatre, in which the latter reflects on swarms: on the power and intelligence of swarms, which can be attributed to their formations and to the fact that, on account of their multifariousness, they are almost indestructible and ineradicable. They emerge, form associations and disappear. Swarms are the expression of Negri's hope that "general intellect", which constitutes itself through the innumerable nodal points of a networked society, can suddenly be converted into a political transformation. Fahim Amir has taken up Negri's – still highly anthropocentric vision – and extended it to non-human actors such as mosquitos, termites, or pigs.

Now Katharina Grosse is staging a further insurrection, shifting painterly substrates, preconditions and after-lives into the presence of the image, counteracting the emerging dominance of color, and so bursting open the closed color space – the trace of the painter in the painting. She interweaves human artificiality and the organic growth of flora and fauna with what is yet to be, with fragments of a forthcoming event. She confronts what bears the paint and color, what they live from, what has brought them forth, what holds and disseminates them, with what they are dissociated from and into which they jut out, almost in an act of encroachment – with what the colors, even together, cannot achieve: the pieces of wood, the planks, branches and twigs introduced into or invading the paintings are caught and entangled by the tentacles of the slashed-open, sawn-out, sculpted canvas.

The paint laps around this, responds to it, holds it together, but it does not order or dominate it. What is brought into being is a precarious and ephemeral association, an amalgamation of colors and forms, of gaps and materials, a plurality, a swarm that goes beyond the systems in which canvases, frames, colors, knots and branches fulfil functions, play roles and bear meaning. In comparison with other works by Grosse, those presented here are almost miniatures and thought experiments, in which new interior and exterior relationships, entanglements and protrusions, surfaces and bodies, boundary shifts and balancing acts are tried out and rehearsed.

LUDGER SCHWARTE is Professor of Philosophy at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany, his major interests and specialisms being in Aesthetics, Political Philosophy, the Philosophy of Culture and the History of Science. Following his doctorate in 1997 and his habilitation in Philosophy in 2007, he held an assistant professorship at the University of Basle and a professorship in Aesthetic Theory at the Zurich University of the Arts. Among his many publications are *Philosophie der Architektur* [Philosophy of Architecture] (2009), *Vom Urteilen* [On Judgement] (2012), *Notate für eine künftige Kunst* [Notes towards an Art of the Future] (2016) and *Denken in Farbe, Zur Epistemologie des Malens* (2020).