

GAGOSIAN



GERHARD RICHTER

Cage Paintings

April 19–June 26, 2021
541 West 24th Street, New York

Gerhard Richter working on one of his *Cage* paintings, Cologne, Germany, 2006. Artwork © Gerhard Richter 2020 (05102020).
Photo: © Hubert Becker

March 29, 2021

One can see, or rather hear, a great example in John Cage's work of how extensively, cleverly, and sensitively he treats coincidence in order to make music out of it.

—Gerhard Richter

Gagosian is pleased to present Gerhard Richter's *Cage* paintings, which were shown at Gagosian Beverly Hills in an exhibition that opened in December 2020. The series was a highlight of the artist's recent retrospective, *Gerhard Richter: Painting After All*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Throughout his career, Richter has navigated between naturalism and abstraction, painting and photography, exploring the conceptual, historical, and material implications of various mediums without ideological restraint. In paintings he produced while studying at the Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany, in the early 1960s, his imagery derived from magazine and

newspaper photographs; he has continued this exploration throughout his career, manipulating it in ways that have inspired subsequent generations of painters. Richter approaches the concept of abstraction with similar rigor, employing varying combinations of process, expressiveness, and chance. The resultant works range from austere monochromes and mirrors to dynamic, layered, and richly chromatic compositions.

Characterized by their large scale and concentrated materiality, the six *Cage* paintings (2006) are constructed from intersecting lines, fields, and swaths of color applied with a broad squeegee. By varying the force with which he dragged this tool across the canvas, Richter added and, crucially, removed areas of paint to generate a highly unpredictable surface. The paintings are titled after influential composer, artist, and philosopher John Cage (1912–1992), whose music Richter was listening to when he produced the series. Cage’s pursuit of indeterminacy in music, reflected in his use of the *I Ching* and other chance operations as compositional tools, has always resonated with Richter, who has compared his own process to the act of arranging musical notes into a score.

Shown in conjunction with the *Cage* paintings is a group of abstract drawings Richter made in a single, characteristically intensive working session during the summer of 2020. Richter’s drawings function as autonomous works and have always been an important part of his oeuvre. In the compositions on view, he makes clear use of an eraser to help direct the graphite, emphasizing the self-reflexive nature of drawing, and echoing, perhaps, the subtractive strategy that the creation of the *Cage* paintings entails.

A catalogue, including an introduction by Larry Gagosian and a conversation between the artist and Hans Ulrich Obrist, artistic director of the Serpentine Galleries in London, will be published to coincide with the exhibition.

A forthcoming episode of Gagosian Premieres will celebrate the exhibition with Obrist, featuring a musical performance by Patti Smith and new choreography created and performed by Rashaun Mitchell + Silas Riener in response to the work.

Gerhard Richter was born in Dresden, Germany, in 1932, and lives and works in Cologne, Germany. His work resides in museum collections throughout the world. Major solo exhibitions include *Forty Years of Painting*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2002, traveled to Art Institute of Chicago; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC); *Portraits*, National Portrait Gallery, London (2009); *Panorama*, Tate Modern, London (2011–12, traveled to Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, and Centre Pompidou, Paris); *ATLAS*, Kunsthalle im Lipsiusbau, Dresden, Germany (2012); *Drawings and Watercolors 1957–2008*, Musée du Louvre, Paris (2012); *Streifen & Glas*, Galerie Neue Meister, Albertinum, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany (2013–14, traveled to Kunst Museum Winterthur, Switzerland); Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Switzerland (2014); *Birkenau*, Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany (2016); *New Paintings*, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany (2017); National Gallery, Prague (2017); *The Life of Images*, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia (2017–18); *Over Schilderen*, Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium (2017); *Abstraktion*, Museum Barberini, Potsdam, Germany (2018); *Seascapes*, Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain (2019); *Painting After All*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2020); and *100 Selbstbildnisse*, Kunst Museum Winterthur, Switzerland (2020).

#GerhardRichter

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