

Gary Stephan

how things happen – a fountain / they are and we can / king of the pumpkins / painting of paintings (light corners) / the future of reading

Gary Stephan

mit einem Text von / with an essay by
Klaus Merkel



The Desire of Ages, 1977



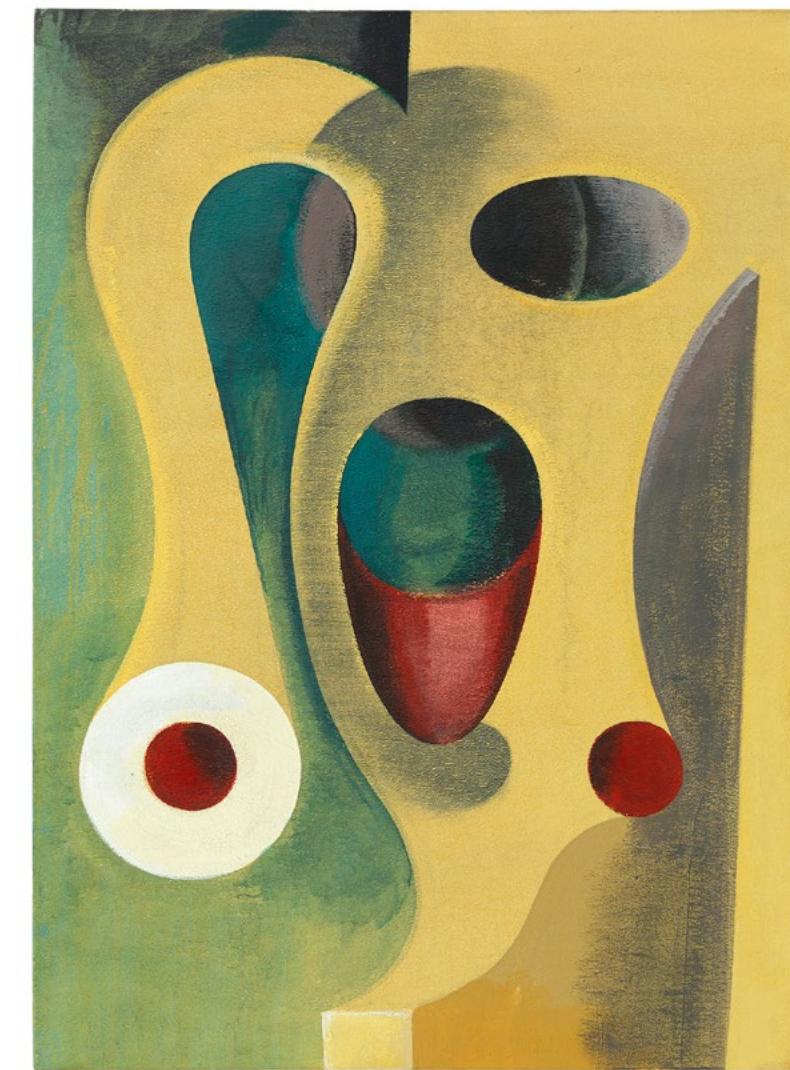
Agosto, 1978



How Things Happen – A Fountain, 1978



Untitled, 1985



From This to Himself, 1987/88



Untitled, 1989



Untitled, 1988

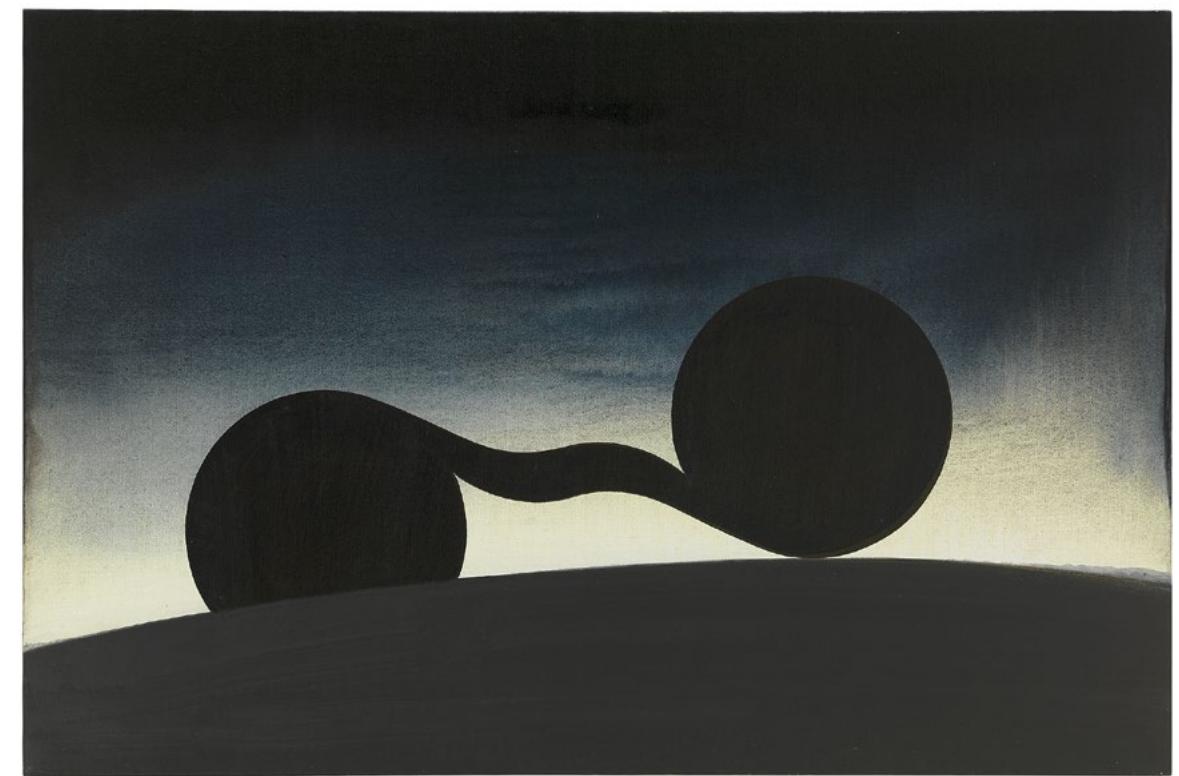


They Are and We Can, 1988



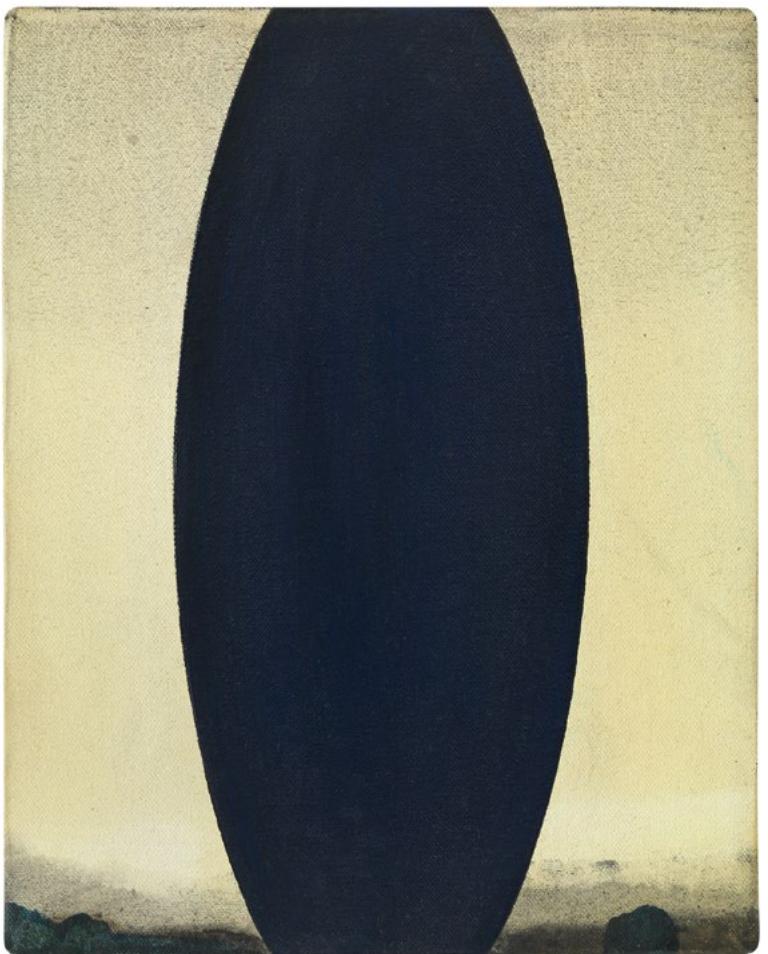
14

The Fiction of Property, 1988



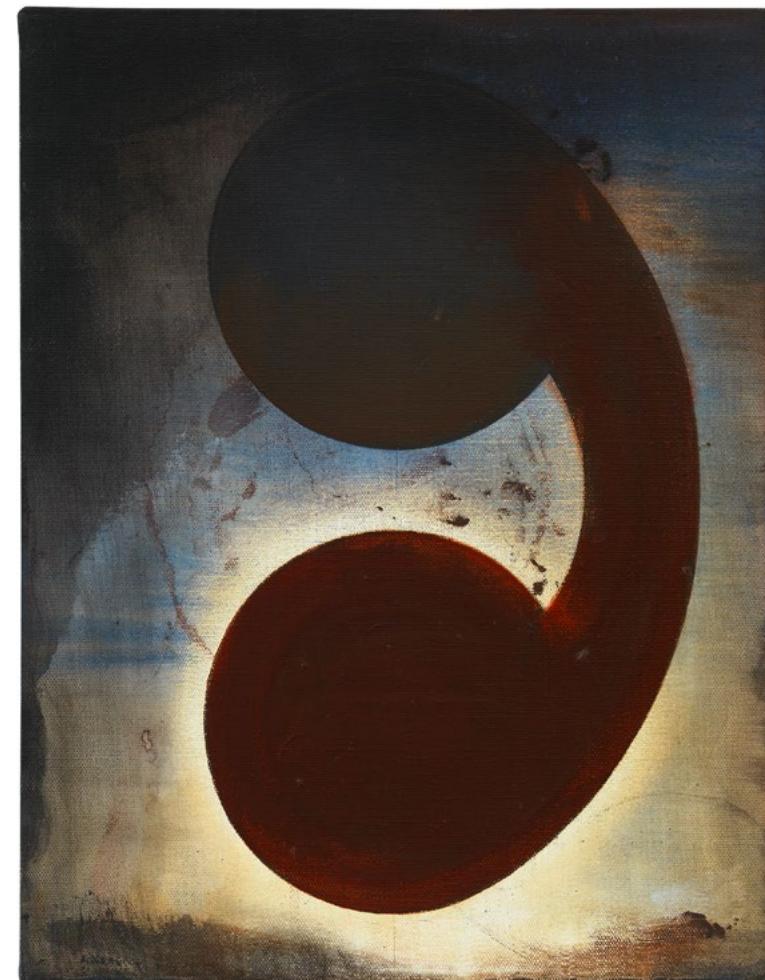
15

Untitled, 1987



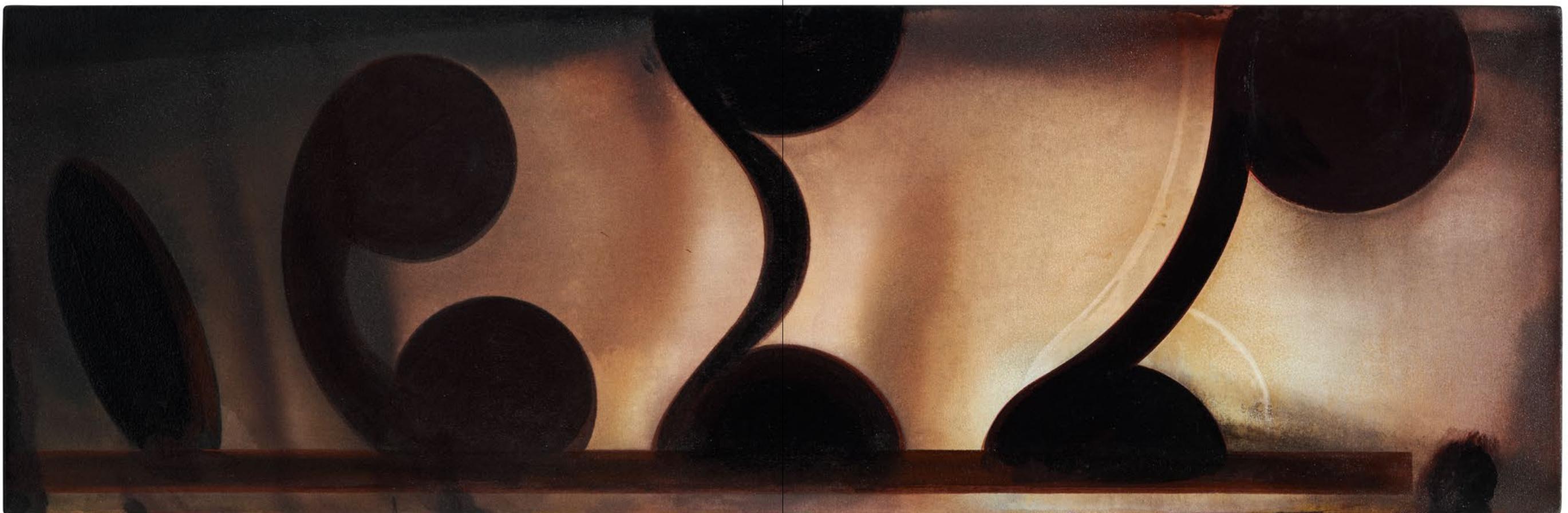
16

Untitled, 1991

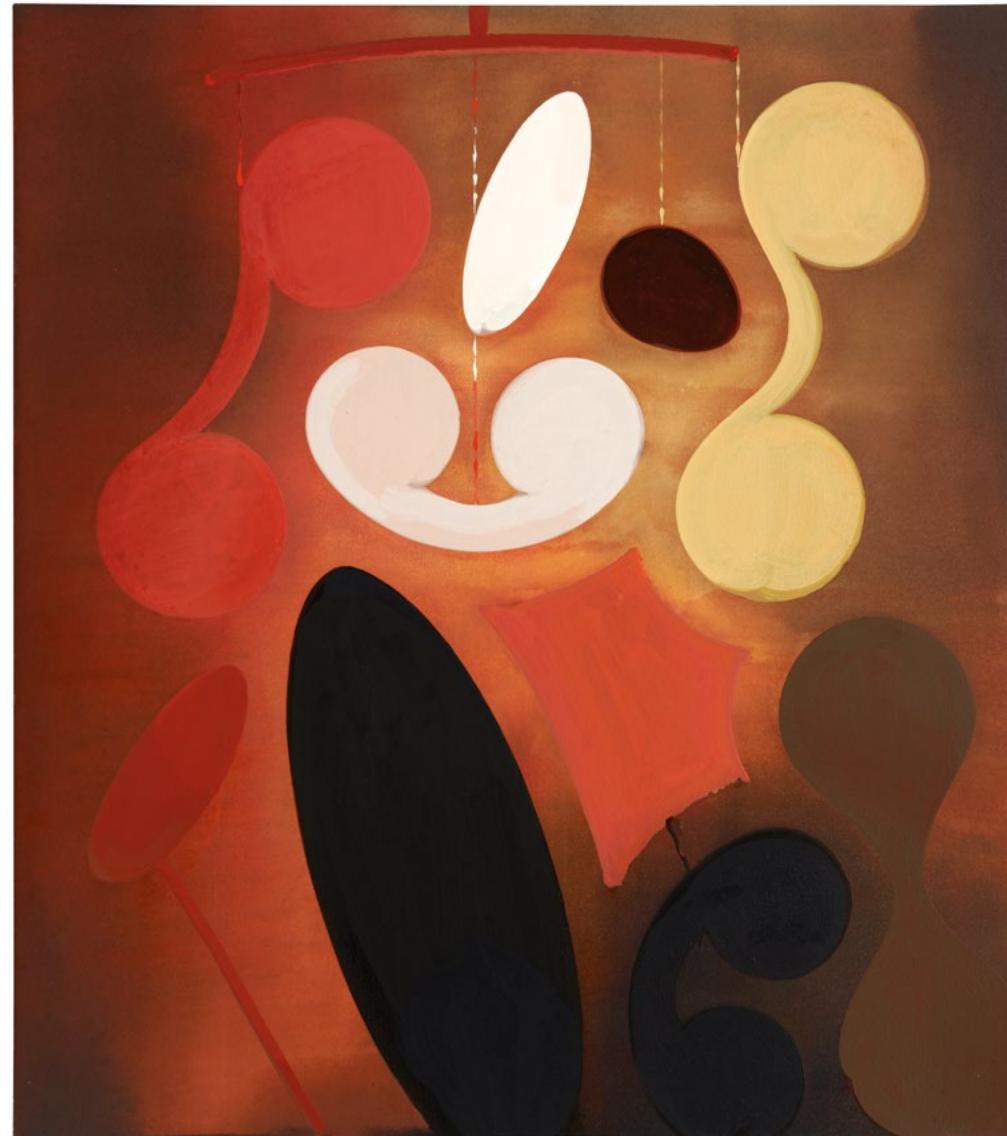


17

Four on a Shelf, 1990



The Third Drink, 1992



20

King of The Pumpkins, 1995



21

Painting for a Haunted House, 1997



22

Untitled, 1998



23

Untitled, 1998



24

Untitled, 2004



25



Untitled, 2005



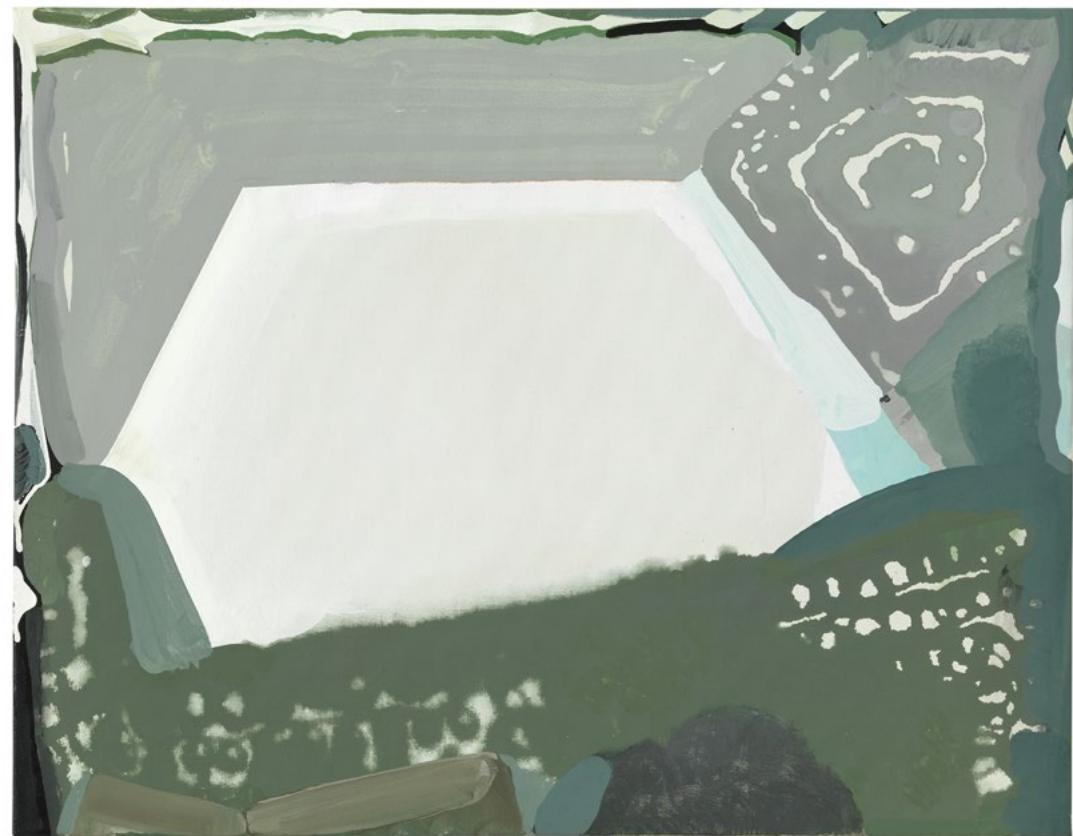
28

Untitled, 2006



29

Untitled, 2005



Untitled, 2007-2008

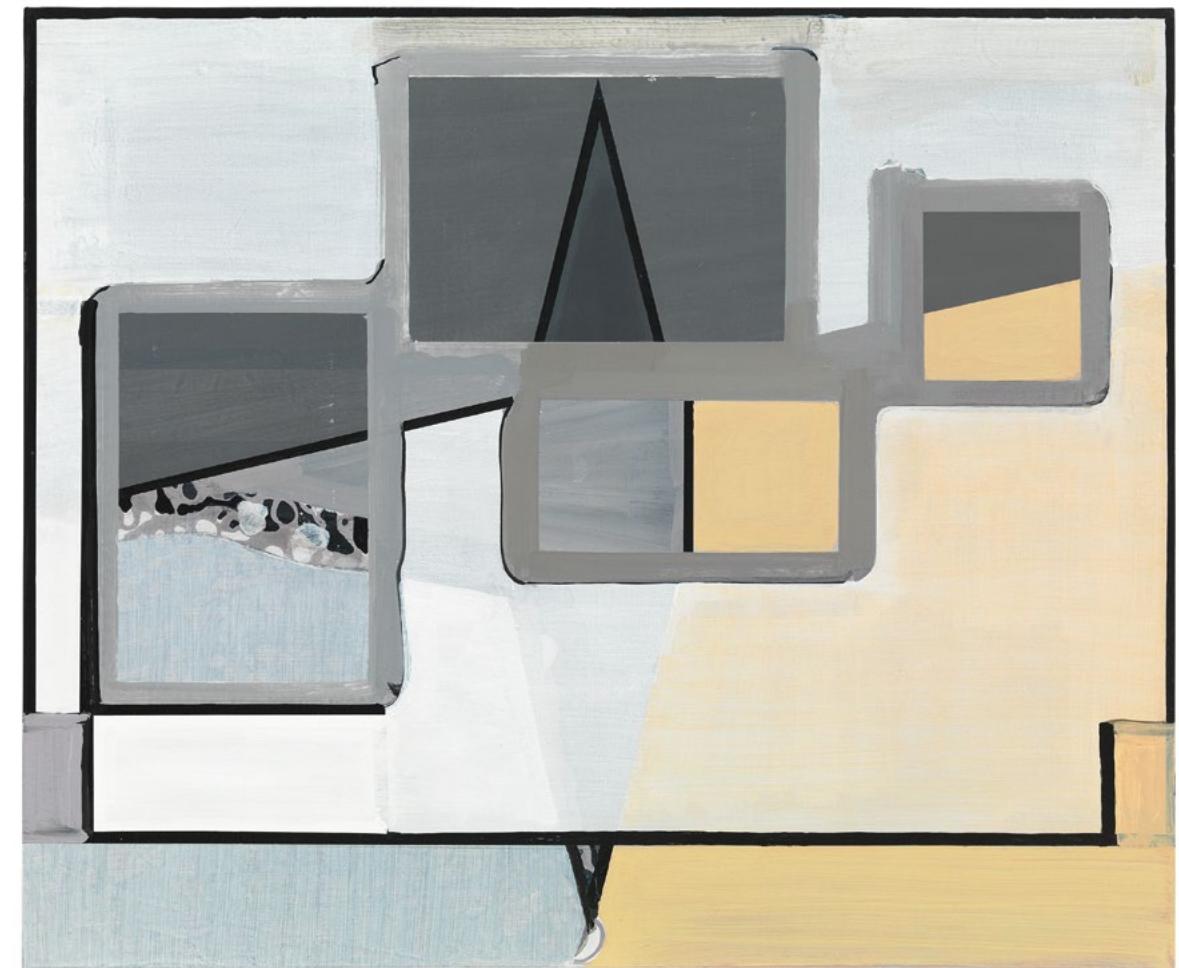


Untitled, 1988-2007



32

Dorm, 2007-2009

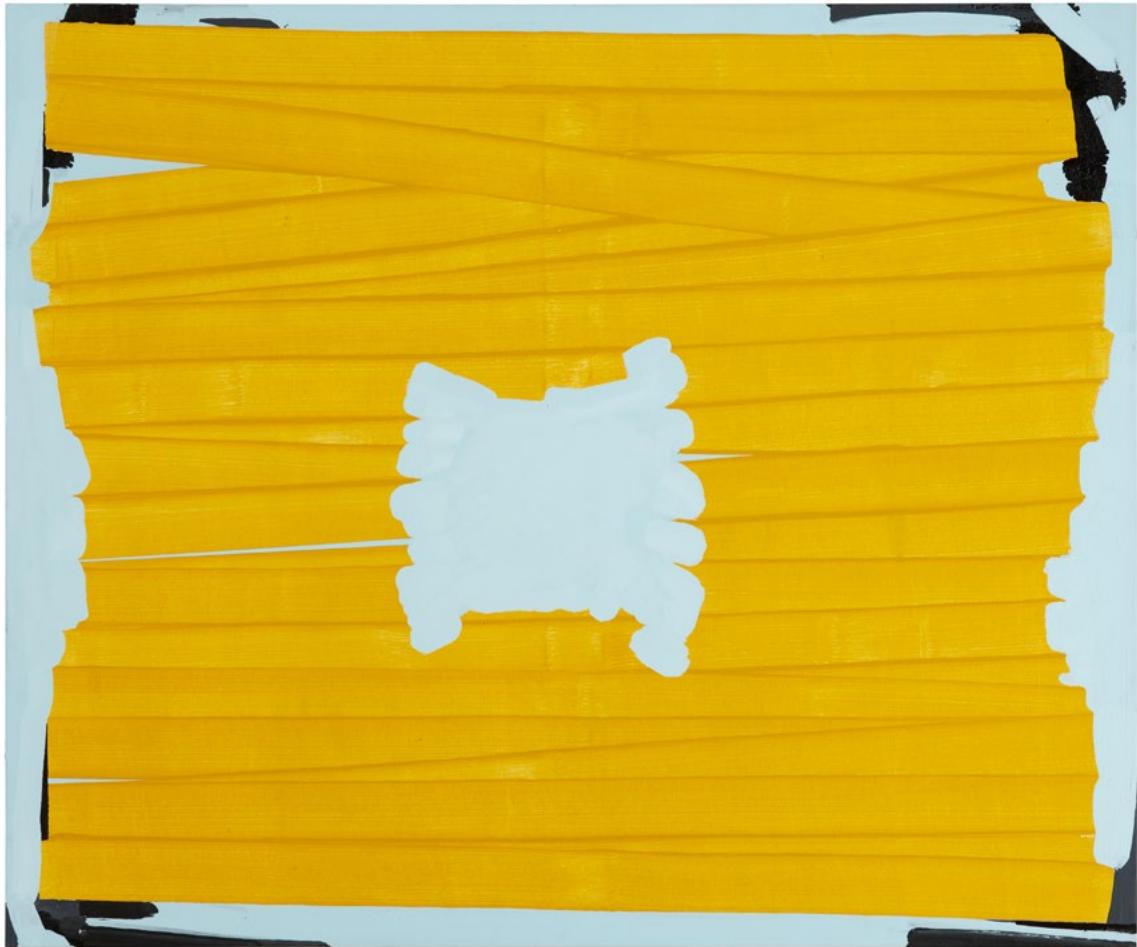


33

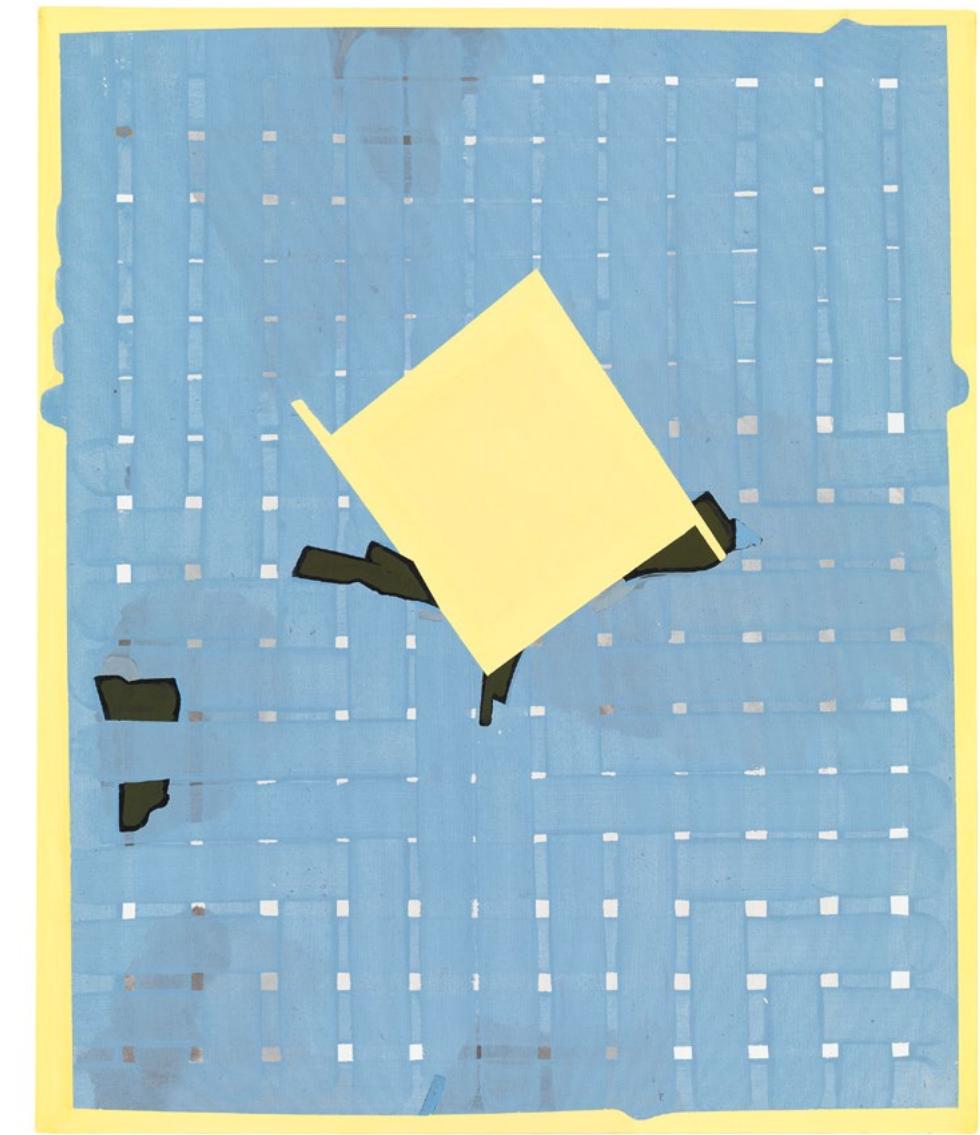
Painting of Paintings (light corners), 2009

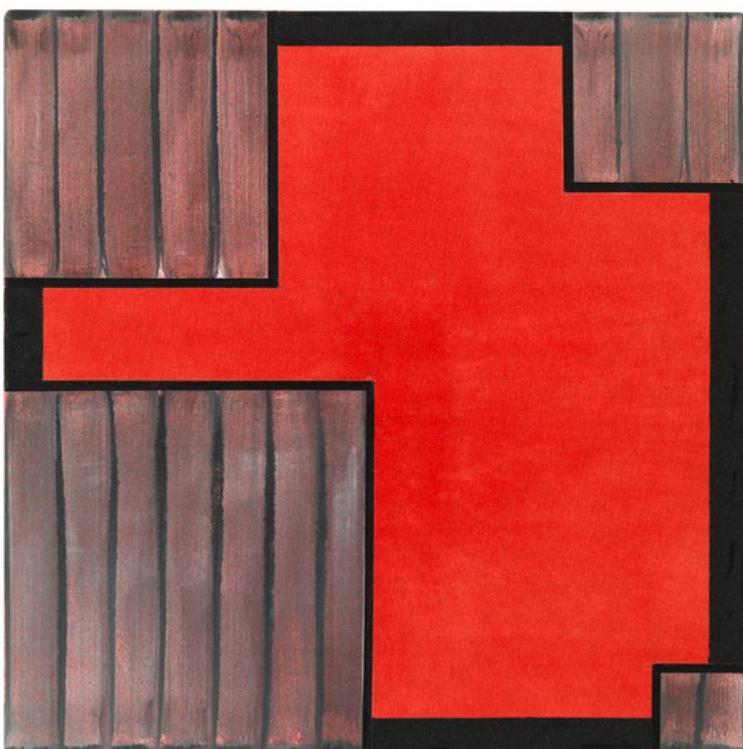


The Future of Reading, 2011



Untitled, 2012





05	<i>Untitled</i> 1973 Acryl auf Holz Acrylic on wood 81×79 cm 32×31 inches Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin	06	<i>The Desire of Ages</i> 1977 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 203×152,5 cm 80×60 inches Privatsammlung, Süddeutschland	07	<i>Agosto</i> 1978 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 183,5×137 cm 72 1/4×54 inches Privatsammlung, Süddeutschland
08	<i>How Things Happen – A Fountain</i> , 1978 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 183,5×121,3 cm 72 1/4×47 3/4 inches Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin	09	<i>Untitled</i> 1985 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 114,3×81,3 cm 45×32 inches Sammlung Joelson, Winterthur	11	<i>From This to Himself</i> 1987/88 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 120×240 cm 47 1/4×94 1/2 inches Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin
12	<i>Untitled</i> 1989 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 93,5×68,5 cm 36 3/4×27 inches Privatsammlung, Süddeutschland	13	<i>Untitled</i> 1988 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 91,5×61 cm 36×24 inches Privatsammlung, Süddeutschland	14	<i>They Are and We Can</i> 1988 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 90,5×61 cm 35 1/2×24 inches Privatsammlung, Süddeutschland
15	<i>The Fiction of Property</i> 1988 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on Canvas 61×91,5 cm 24×36 inches Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin	16	<i>Untitled</i> 1987 Öl auf Leinwand Oil on canvas 25×29 cm 10×8 inches Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin	17	<i>Untitled</i> 1991 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 46×35 cm 18×13 3/4 inches Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin
19	<i>Four on a Shelf</i> 1990 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 42×132 cm 16 1/2×52 inches Kienzle Art Foundation, Berlin	20	<i>The Third Drink</i> 1992 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 132×117 cm 52×46 inches Kienzle Art Foundation, Berlin	21	<i>King of The Pumpkins</i> 1995 Acryl auf Leinwand Acrylic on canvas 97×81,5 cm 38 1/4×32 inches Privatsammlung, Süddeutschland

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>22 <i>Painting for a Haunted House</i>, 1997
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$132 \times 117 \text{ cm}$
$52 \times 46 \text{ inches}$
Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin</p> <p>23 <i>Untitled</i>
1998
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$50 \times 60 \text{ cm}$
$19 \frac{3}{4} \times 23 \frac{3}{4} \text{ inches}$
Privatsammlung, Süddeutschland</p> <p>24 <i>Untitled</i>
1998
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$71 \times 55,5 \text{ cm}$
$28 \times 22 \text{ inches}$
Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin</p> | <p>25 <i>Untitled</i>
2004
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$50 \times 61 \text{ cm}$
$19 \frac{3}{4} \times 24 \text{ inches}$
Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin</p> <p>27 <i>From the Photo of the burned Temple</i>, 2005
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$184 \times 207 \text{ cm}$
$72 \frac{3}{4} \times 81 \frac{1}{2} \text{ inches}$
Kienzle Art Foundation, Berlin</p> <p>28 <i>Untitled</i>
2005
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$56 \times 71 \text{ cm}$
$22 \times 28 \text{ inches}$
Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin</p> |
| <p>29 <i>Untitled</i>
2006
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$101 \times 121 \text{ cm}$
$39 \frac{3}{4} \times 47 \frac{3}{4} \text{ inches}$
Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin</p> <p>30 <i>Untitled</i>
2005
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$55 \times 70,5 \text{ cm}$
$21 \frac{3}{4} \times 27 \frac{3}{4} \text{ inches}$
Privatsammlung, Süddeutschland</p> <p>31 <i>Untitled</i>
2007–2008
Öl auf Hartfaser
Oil on hard fiber
$30 \times 30 \text{ cm}$
$11 \frac{3}{4} \times 11 \frac{3}{4} \text{ inches}$
Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin</p> | <p>32 <i>Untitled</i>
1988–2007
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$73,5 \times 73,5 \text{ cm}$
$29 \times 29 \text{ inches}$
Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin</p> <p>33 <i>Dorm</i>
2007–2009
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$101,5 \times 122 \text{ cm}$
$40 \times 48 \text{ inches}$
Privatsammlung, Süddeutschland</p> <p>35 <i>Painting of Paintings (light corners)</i>, 2009
Öl, Acryl auf Leinwand
Oil, acrylic on canvas
$260 \times 210 \text{ cm}$
$102 \frac{1}{4} \times 82 \frac{3}{4} \text{ inches}$
Sammlung Jochen Kienzle, Berlin</p> |
| <p>36 <i>The Future of Reading</i>
2011
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$101,5 \times 122 \text{ cm}$
$40 \times 48 \text{ inches}$
Kienzle Art Foundation, Berlin</p> <p>37 <i>Untitled</i>
2012
Öl, Acryl auf Leinwand
Oil, acrylic on canvas
$122 \times 101,5 \text{ cm}$
$48 \times 40 \text{ inches}$
Courtesy Grölle Pass Projects, Wuppertal</p> <p>38 <i>CN7</i>
2015
Acryl auf Leinwand
Acrylic on canvas
$51 \times 51 \text{ cm}$
$20 \times 20 \text{ inches}$
Privatsammlung, Süddeutschland</p> | |

how things
happen -
a fountain

For a long time now, the Kienzle Art Foundation and the Städtische Galerie Waldkraiburg have been following with great interest the development of a style of painting that even after the “end of painting” has successfully asserted the autonomy and relevance of the painted picture. The breach of painterly conventions along with the examination and expansion of the conditions of painting have given rise to specific forms of painting production since the late 1960s that are still valid today. In 2007, in the exhibition *Short Distance to Now: Paintings from New York 1967–1975*, which was devoted specifically to the New York painting scene with its new and independent approach, Gary Stephan was represented in the Kienzle & Gmeiner gallery, the precursor of today’s Kienzle Art Foundation. That same year, with *Unlikely*, the Städtische Galerie Waldkraiburg inspired a first collaboration of the two institutions. Pictures by Gary Stephan also occupied a prominent place in this group exhibition of current painterly positions. Already there arose an intense desire to confront the work of this outstanding artist, who since the 1970s has been one of the internationally important painters in New York. The present exhibition *The Future of Reading* begins with this period and pursues Gary Stephan’s works to the present day. It draws largely on the extensive stocks of the Kienzle Art Foundation, supplemented by further loans from the collection of an artist, who also contributed relevant works. Although as a result a basic selection – supported by an idiosyncratic collector’s view – was defined as the basis of the narrative in advance, the exhibition nevertheless succeeds, in a kind of time-lapse sequence, in presenting a representative view of the artist’s most important phases. In contrast to the catalog, the exhibition displays the images not chronologically, but in an equal, temporally independent context. This exhibition project, and above all the catalogue, thus lay the foundation for the comprehensive reception of an œuvre that has constantly re-formatted itself and is more convincing today than ever.

Many people were necessary for the completion of this catalogue and exhibition project, and we would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of this venture: First of all, our thanks go to Gary Stephan, who accompanied the project from New York, for his sustained support during the preparation of the exhibition and the catalogue. Also, our special thanks go to Klaus Merkel for his basic essay on the work of the artist, which makes visible essentials in an elegant and profound way. Thanks are also due to Claudia Kugler for the idea-rich graphic realization of the catalogue, as well as to Gudrun Leser and Harry Joelson for their diverse hints and helpful suggestions.

Schon lange verfolgen die Kienzle Art Foundation in Berlin und die Städtische Galerie Waldkraiburg mit großem Interesse die Entwicklung einer ungegenständlichen Malerei, die auch nach dem „Ende der Malerei“ die Eigenständigkeit und Relevanz des gemalten Bildes erfolgreich behauptet. Der Verstoß gegen malerische Konventionen sowie die Untersuchung und Erweiterung der Bedingungen von Malerei, begründen seit den späten 1960er Jahren spezifische Formen der Malereiproduktion, die bis heute gültig sind. Bereits in der 2007 stattfindenden Ausstellung *Short Distance to Now: Paintings from New York 1967–1975*, die sich speziell der New Yorker Malereiszene jener Zeit mit ihrem neuen und unabhängigen Zugriff widmete, war Gary Stephan in der Galerie Kienzle & Gmeiner, dem Vorläufer der heutigen Kienzle Art Foundation, vertreten. Im gleichen Jahr dann, regte die Städtische Galerie Waldkraiburg mit *Unlikely* eine erste Zusammenarbeit der beiden Institutionen an. Auch in dieser Gruppenausstellung zu aktuellen Malereipositionen, waren Bilder von Gary Stephan prominent zu sehen. Schon damals entstand der Wunsch, sich intensiv auf das Werk dieses herausragenden Künstlers einzulassen, der seit den 1970er Jahren zu den international wichtigen Malern in New York zählt. Die Ausstellung *Gary Stephan, The Future of Reading* setzt nun in dieser Zeit an und verfolgt Gary Stephan’s Arbeiten bis heute. Sie speist sich im Wesentlichen aus dem umfangreichen Bestand der Kienzle Art Foundation ergänzt um weitere Leihgaben aus einer Künstlersammlung, die ebenfalls relevante Arbeiten beiträgt. Obwohl damit von vorne herein eine Grundauswahl – jeweils getragen vom eigenwilligen Sammlerblick – als Basis der Erzählung definiert war, gelingt es hier dennoch, in einer Art „Zeitraffer“ die wichtigsten Werkphasen des Künstlers exemplarisch zu zeigen, wobei die Ausstellung – im Unterschied zum Katalog – die Bilder nicht chronologisch sondern in einem gleichberechtigten, zeitunabhängigen Kontext zur Anschauung bringt. Damit legt dieses Ausstellungsprojekt und vor allem der Katalog einen Grundstein für die umfassende Rezeption eines Werkes, das sich immer wieder neu formatiert hat und heute mehr denn je überzeugt.

Wie immer ist auch dieses Katalog- und Ausstellungsprojekt nur durch die Zusammenarbeit und Unterstützung vieler Zustände gekommen. Daher geht unser Dank an alle, die zum Gelingen dieser Unternehmung beigetragen haben: An erster Stelle danken wir ganz besonders Gary Stephan, der das Projekt von New York aus begleitet hat, für seine nachhaltige Unterstützung bei der Vorbereitung von Ausstellung und Katalog. Ebenso gilt unser besonderer Dank Klaus Merkel für seinen grundlegenden Text zum Werk des Künstlers, der auf elegante wie profunde Weise Wesentliches benennt und sichtbar macht. Claudia Kugler danken wir sehr herzlich für die ideenreiche grafische Umsetzung des Katalogs sowie Gudrun Leser und Harry Joelson für ihre vielfältigen Anregungen und Hinweise beim Lektorat.

Jochen Kienzle
Kienzle Art Foundation, Berlin

Elke Keiper
Städtische Galerie Waldkraiburg

they are
and we
can

1967 kehrt Gary Stephan mit dem Master des San Francisco Art Institute nach New York zurück – der heute 50 Jahre währende Lauf begann damals Schwung aufzunehmen: „What is this thing I’m making?“ (1) wird er in künstlerischer Praxis immer wieder neu beantwortbar machen und aus dem Dualismus Bild/Objekt produktive Kräftefelder ableiten – seine konstruierten Bildräume verhandeln immer noch diese Spannung.

Noch im selben Jahr zieht er zusammen mit anderen Künstlern in die 76 Jefferson Street (2) – Netzwerke entstehen, er wird Assistent von Jasper Johns (3), irgendwo nennt er ihn eine intellektuelle Vaterfigur, der Kontakt zum Galeristen David Whitney verläuft gut, seine erste Solo-Show ist ausverkauft. In Köln und Hamburg zeigt die Galerie Hans Neuendorf zwei Einzelausstellungen – eine erfolgreiche Zusammenarbeit mit der angesagten Bykert Galerie – Beteiligungen an Whitney Biennalen 1969, 1971 und 1973 – all das veranlasste Roberta Smith zum Statement: Gary Stephans Arbeit zählt zu den am stärksten beachteten Entwicklungen der frühen 70er Jahre. (4) Er schöpft aus dem Vollen.

(1) Gary Stephan/interview by Ned Rifkin, in: *Early Work. Lynda Benglis, Joan Brown, Luis Jiminez, Gary Stephan, Lawrence Weiner*, New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1982, S. 32–44, S. 35.

(2) Dort kommt es zur Kooperation mit Neil Jenney. Gary Stephan zeichnet technisch exakt zwei Düsenkampfjets in eine Version der Bilder *Them and Us*. Im Gespräch mit Klaus Merkel. Der Stil Jenneys macht bald als *Bad Painting* Furore. Dazu Roberta Smith in der *New York Times* (March 30, 2001): In 1969/70 „Mr. Jenney helped put representational painting on a new course and established precedents for the art of the 1970’s, 80’s and 90’s in ways that have yet to be fully recognized.“

(3) Gary Stephan assistiert bei MAP, (1967–1971), einem der zentralen Großformate von Jasper Johns, heute im Sammlungsbestand Museum Ludwig, Köln.

(4) Roberta Smith, „Painting in the heady days, after it was proclaimed dead“, in: *New York Times*, Feb. 16, 2007 (review of the exhibition *High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting, 1967–1975*): „Gary Stephan, whose efforts [...] were among the most closely watched developments of the early ‘70s.“ Roberta Smith beklagt mit diesen Worten Gary Stephans Absenz in dieser Show – wohingegen die Galerie Kienzle & Gmeiner in ihrer Version der Ausstellung *Short Distance to Now: Paintings from New York 1967–1975* im Spätsommer

How Things Happen – A Fountain

Bevor er 1975 mit Bildern des *Garden Cycle* die Tools der Malereigeschichte geschultert hatte (5), musste er seine bisherige Arbeitshaltung hinter sich lassen: seine Schnitte in das Material, in PVC, Latex, die gesägten Masonitplatten, Assemblagen aus bemaltem Holz, seine offen gestückelten Konstruktionen mit den gesetzten Formen und deren Negative: alles in allem, er musste die minimalistischen Operationen – die Verschmelzung von Farbe, Material und Wand zum Objekt – beenden.

Drei Gemälde, in schwerer Malerei, zeugen von diesem Neuanfang. *The Desire of Ages*, Agosto und *How Things Happen – A Fountain* führen ihre fast schmerzend zu nennende Konstruktion in dickem Impasto mit sich. (6) Sie markieren seinen Übergang der späten 70er in die 80er Jahre, bilden das Fundament dieser Ausstellung in der Kienzle Art Foundation und der Städtischen Galerie Waldkraiburg und eröffnen den Argumentationsraum. Mit dieser Herausforderung einer Beschränkung auf die Regelwerke traditioneller Tafelbildmalerei zielt er auf Vergleichbarkeit; d.h. Gary Stephan begibt sich in Augenhöhe zu anderen Malern und positioniert sich so im aufgekratzten Klima der New Yorker Kunstwelt. Die Aufnahme in den Stamm der zur Legende werdenden Mary Boone Gallery bestätigt seine Position; 1979 waren dort auch Julian Schnabel, David Salle, Matt Mullican, Ross Bleckner u.a. mit im Boot und Malerei groß geschrieben. Im rauen Gegensatz dazu war mit Gründung von Metro Pictures (7) eine vielversprechende

2007 dieses Leck schloss und die Arbeit *Untitled* (1967, bemaltes Latex, Gewebematte, 109×248 cm), in Berlin zeigte.

(5) Since the *Garden Cycle* of paintings „I’ve really begun self-consciously to take on historical baggage as a content of the work“ – „to resurrect painting’s function [...] to make it an instrument for transcendence.“ – „By setting up an object that has paradoxes built into it, insolvable painting problems, like how you seamlessly get from a space to a thing, that is to say, from a sky to a bottle.“ Interview mit Ned Rifkin, in: *Early Work* (vgl. Fußnote 1), S. 40f, 43.

(6) „The *Garden Cycle* paintings [...] re-engaged figure-ground questions, but in a considerably more personalized way. In each of them, thin washes of evocative color define a puzzling shape in a surrounding field. The centralized, oddly geometric form touches the painting’s edge at some point, grounding the image and breaking its confinement. That the series title alludes to a geographic locale suggests that they are best read as cartographic images – about enclosure,

territorial definition, and the transgression of boundaries.“ Richard Armstrong, *Five Painters in New York*, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1984, S. 62.

Die Bildgenese startet oft im Inneren von einer Ecke aus und verändert sich stufenweise, gelangt vom Plan zum Aufriss und kommt am atmosphärisch dichtest aufgeladenen Punkt zur Ruhe, dort wo Malerei und Bild sich fast berühren und den Gary Stephan bis heute den Diskurs über Bild/Malerei nennt. Gary Stephan zu Arbeiten aus seinem *Garden Cycle* von 1974, der diesen drei Bildern direkt inhaltlich vorausgeht und formal nahesteht. Vgl. *Plane/Figure, Amerikanische Kunst in Schweizer Privatsammlungen und aus dem Kunstmuseum Winterthur*, Kunstmuseum Winterthur, 2006, S. 143.

(7) [...] there was a real bifurcation in sensibilities between the two galleries. Boone represented big dollars – cherries dipped in chocolate and champagne – while Metro represented integrity and hard work [...] Mary Boone offered money and stipends and was able to pull a lot of people away.“ Jack Goldstein,

Programmgalerie angetreten und ihr als Pictures-Generation gelabeltes Künstler- und Künstlerinnenaufgebot schoss schnell aus der Startposition ins Zentrum des Kunstgeschehens: Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, Jack Goldstein, Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman, Robert Longo u.a. – stark geprägt vom CalArts Institute um John Baldessari, machen sie mediales Bildmaterial zum Ausgangspunkt ihrer Kunst. Der Input der Pictures-Generation reklamiert Grundsätzliches, die Produktion und Rezeption von Bildern wird als ideologisch erkannt, der Umgang mit Bildern wird allerorts diskutiert, analysiert – Konzeptkunst, Appropriation, Postmoderne sind beherrschende Themen, Präsentationsformen und Simulation bestimmen den Diskurs neben und um Malereifragen. Überhaupt wird der Status des Bildes in Frage gestellt. In diesem spannungsgeladenen Klima bewegen sich manche Malerinnen und Maler daher um so entschiedener wieder ins Bild, schlagen die überkommene Abstraktion aus, setzen unverbrauchte Bezüge zur Kunstgeschichte und suchen deutlich subjektiv-narrative Ansätze. (8) Der Kunstmarkt brodelt.

In diesem New York setzen sich die Arbeiten des 37-jährigen Gary Stephan durch und bringen ihm internationale Anerkennung. Zwischen den neo-abstrakten Malerstars und der medial geprägten Bilderszene hatte sich ein neuer Malereidiskurs etabliert. Hierher gehört auch das Genre des Künstlerstatements, das sich manchmal in veritable Essays auffaltet; dabei wird auch ausgeteilt; wo Unterschiede und Zugehörigkeiten entschieden werden sollen, fallen Späne. (9)

„Helene Winer: Artists Space and Metro Pictures“, in: Richard Hertz, *Jack Goldstein and the CalArts Mafia*, Ojai, Calif.: *Minneola Press*, 2003, S. 101.

[...] the competitive spirit throughout that decade was strong and often brutal, with people caring little about anything but themselves and making lots of money.“ Ebd. S. 126.

„The competition raged between the two galleries and their artists. I remember being at art openings where if you were spotted talking

with an artist from Metro Pictures, you'd get the cold shoulder from the Boone brigade, and vice versa.“ Ebd. S. 127.

(8) „They were unafraid to explore gesture, improvisation, relational compositions, allusions to figuration and landscape, as well as art historical and cultural allusions, high and low.“ Press Release, *Reinventing Abstraction*, New York: Chaim & Read Gallery, 2013.

(9) Im *Artforum* Oktober 1981 erscheinen zwei auf Differenz abzielende Artikel. Last

Fact & Fiction war eine kleine aber wirkungsvolle Ausstellung in der Galerie Tibor de Nagy, die 1984 die Gemälde von Jonathan Lasker, Tom Nozkowski und Gary Stephan in eine Front stellte. Die Idee dieser Ausstellung zielt programmatisch auf eine neuartige Verhandlung des Figur-Grund-Verhältnisses. Carter Ratcliffs Essay in dem schmalen Katalog legt dar, warum Bilder Umwege brauchen, um sich als gut zu definieren. Es gäbe zu viele gelungene Bilder, Maler sollten sich die Aufgabe stellen, den harten Weg zum guten Bild zu finden, nicht den einfachen. Das Sehen, bzw. Wahrnehmen, könne über eingebaute Hindernisse gestartet werden – das genau hatte er bereits 13 Jahre zuvor in den Bildern Gary Stephans konstatiert. (10)

Auch Tricia Collins und Richard Milazzo waren zwei unüberhörbare Wortführer und zudem erste unabhängige Kuratoren, die in kommerziellen Galerien Ausstellungen machten, ein Novum. Ihre Schriften in dichter, manierierter oder philosophischer Sprache, eine Art Theorie-Prosa, und ihre Gruppen-Ausstellungen befeuern die Szene und vernetzen sie neu. Theoriekontexte gewinnen überhaupt an Einfluss, mit ihren Begriffen Neo-Conceptualism und Post-Appropriation erringen sie Definitionsmacht. Entgegen Neo-Expressionismus aber auch gegen Douglas Crimps Picture-Theorie schaffen sie ein anderes Differenzierungsfeld, speziell für Malerei. Im Frühjahr 1985 ist Gary Stephan in ihrer Gruppenshow *Paravision* bei Postmasters Gallery u.a. mit Ross Bleckner, Peter Halley, Jeff Koons, Jonathan Lasker, Robert Longo, Olivier Mosset und Philip Taaffe ausgestellt. In diesem Kontext beschreiben sie das Werk Stephans als neo-konzeptionell. Im *Kunstforum International* 84/1986 führen sie den Maler mit dem Artikel „Transzendentale Übereinkünfte“ ausführlich der deutschen Kunstoffentlichkeit vor. (11)

Exit Painting von dem Maler Thomas Lawson und Klaus Kertess, *Painting Metaphorically: the Recent Work of Gary Stephan, Stephen Mueller and Bill Jensen*. Lawson kritisiert z.B. scharf die Show *American Painting: The Eighties* von 1979, an der auch Gary Stephan teilnahm, um schließlich auf seine und die Abbildungen von Troy Brauntuch und Jack Goldstein abzuheben. Kertess erwidert Lawsons Prämisse: „painting should concern itself with the critique of representation“, eine These, die bis heute von größtem Belang blieb. (Vgl. auch Raphael Rubinstein, *Reinventing abstraction: New York painting in the 1980s*, New York: Chaim & Read, 2013.)

(10) „Late in 1971, when Stephan was pouring his images from pigmented mixtures of polyvinyl chloride, I said that he ‘presents impediments to the eye.’ This was meant as favorable comment, for I believed then, as I still do,

that ‘vision starts with impediments.’“ Carter Ratcliff, *Fact & Fiction, Abstract paintings by Jonathan Lasker, Tom Nozkowski, Gary Stephan*, New York: Tibor de Nagy Gallery, 1984.

Einen ersten Eindruck von den aktuellen Malereidiskursen in New York hat mir 1984 Jonathan Lasker vermittelt. Seine Arbeiten waren in meiner damaligen Galerie Annette Gmeiner in Kirchzarten bei Freiburg erstmals in Deutschland zu sehen. Mit ihm diskutierte ich den Katalog und die Ausstellung *Fact & Fiction*. Gary Stephans Arbeit hatte ich seither durch Publikationen immer im Blick. 2001 lernte ich den Maler in New York persönlich kennen, als ich für das Apex Art Residency Program eingeladen war. Wir sind im Gespräch und im Austausch geblieben. Klaus Merkel.

(11) Collins, Tricia und Richard Milazzo, „Transzendentale Übereinkünfte: Gary Stephan“, in: *Kunstforum International* 84/1986, S. 240–251.

Seine Bilder seien mit einem Verlust, einer formalen Negation ausgestattet und würden eine nicht sichtbare oder ausgesparte Negativform in ihrem Zentrum bergen. Zweck seiner Abstraktion sei weniger, eine Entschlüsselungsmöglichkeit vorzuschlagen, als vielmehr einen Leerraum anzubieten. Damit sind die Bilder der frühen 80er Jahre gemeint, die mit einfachen Formen, trockenen Farben und Vexierhaftigkeit an der Wahrnehmung zerren. Nach Gary Stephan muss Wahrnehmung konstruiert werden. Eine gemalte Form beginnt sich vor unseren Augen zu morphen, um Hintergrund zu werden, während der Hintergrund versucht, nach vorn zu kommen, um zentrale Figur zu werden. Ein optischer Flächentausch, eine Verkehrung, die ständig im Kippen begriffen ist.

They Are and We Can

Die Dekade nach 1985 verlangt von Gary Stephan weiter hohe Produktivität. Jährlich finden Soloshows und mehrere Gruppenausstellungen statt. Seiner kritischen Malereibefragung antwortet er mit einer formalen Entscheidung, er beginnt mit Schablonen Schablonenhaftes ins Bild zu bringen. Er setzt diese Formen wie Figuren ein, die immer Modelle von Weltrepräsentation sein sollen. Dunkle Schattenrisse, vignettenartige ornamentale Zierstücke, gestanzte Kürzel, die zusätzlich durch ihre schwarz lackierten Oberflächen Kräfte entfalten und vor allem aus aktiven Vordergrundfiguren Umstülpungen in ihr Gegenteil evozieren: Spalte, Schlitz, Loch in die Landschaftstapete gestanzt. In *Four on a Shelf* sind solche schwarzen Elemente auf einen Sims, einen Balken in den Landschaftsraum gesetzt. In der Folgezeit hängt er sie dann in die Luft als Girlanden und verknüpft sie zu Mobiles, wobei auf diesem Nebenweg Dinge fallen, lehnen, hängen oder stehen können und so das Arsenal der installativen Möglichkeiten im Bild als „Ding im Raum“ generell paraphrasieren. Je offener diese Verwendung wird, um so mehr setzt er das Bildgeschehen der Animation gleich. Das Bild wird Bühne und Arrangement, untergräbt die Kriterien der Komposition und damit die tradierten Regeln eines abstrakten Bildaufbaus. So wird ein Bild in Stephans Sinn realistisch.

Nach 1990 spricht er in seinem Werk von „Migration der Formen“, d.h. Bildmotive oder vorbereitende Zeichnungen wandern in die Bilder ein und sollen das Bild von innen her lösen. Gary Stephan sieht in der repräsentativen Malerei einen unbewussten und einen gesteuerten Anteil. Während die eine Hälfte loslegt, nimmt die andere Hälfte das, was die Welt hergibt. Stephan geht in jedes Bild mit einer bestimmten Menge Welt, er spricht von der gewöhnlichen Welt (12), die er malen will, ausmalt, überdeckt, in die er etwas hinzufügt

(12) Gary Stephan an Klaus Merkel, email vom 13. März 2017: „the background for the figure was to create a form that had more of a charge than pure geometry but less than a knife. I liked the comparison to Biedermeier furniture where the form language has associations that are weaker than earlier languages where animal and plant forms were

the source. The purpose was to place this loosely suggestive form into the emotionally charged space of Caspar David Friedrich to both create a distance from, and exploration of, this expressive language. The first one, the oval, was made in 1986.“ „I wanted to paint the world in general. I don't want to paint the knife or the fire. They are

oder projiziert, sodass das Gemälde am Ende mehr über seine Repräsentation Auskunft geben kann, denn über die Mechanik des So-gemacht-Seins. Konsequent teilt er abstrakte Maler in zwei Typen: die einen sind Objektemacher und die anderen Welten-Bauer. Die Objektemacher konstruieren permanent Argumente im und um das Rechteck des Bildes und wollen zeigen, was alles Interessantes damit angestellt werden kann; die anderen geben dem Objekt keinen besonderen Status und lassen den Betrachter psychologisch-physisch und emotional regelrecht ins Bild fallen. Ein Dilemma, denn je mehr ein Künstler ein Objekt baut, desto weniger Welt verträgt es – je mehr Welt aber angesteuert wird, desto weniger objekthaft wird das Bild. Stephans Bilder sind gebaute Welt und bleiben Objekt und es ist ein Weg angelegt auf dem der Blick das Bild betreten kann. (13)

King of the Pumpkins

Dass die 90er Jahre schwierig würden, haben Amplituden in Gesellschaft und Politik angekündigt: Börsencrash 1987, 1989 Fall der Berliner Mauer – Bruch der politischen Gefäße, Zerfall der Sowjetunion. Galeriensterben. In der Kunst starke Wende zu politischen und sozialen Themen, zu Prozesshaftem und Performativem. Verschärzte Kontextkunstfragen verdrängen die Fragestellungen der 80er Jahre. Umorientierung: Gary Stephan reagiert in seinem Werk. Die Gemälde verlassen den Kosmos der simulierten Landschafts- und Figur-Darstellung, werden nervös und greifen Farbigkeiten seiner ganz frühen Palette wieder auf. Alles wird aufs Spiel gesetzt, aufgelöst und radikaler zusammengesetzt als je zuvor. Stephans Mobiles haben seine Figur-Erfindungen nun ganz ins Theatralische verfrachtet.

too charged (too featureful). In the sexual sense they are too genital, the energy is too focused. On the other hand, pure form won't carry much of a charge. There is a middle ground. Real enough to pull the world in so I can make things the way Eakins or Rembrandt

made things. So they can have that quality of realness.“ Gary Stephan interviewed by Giles Lyon, in: *PAJ, a Journal of Performance and Art*, #66, September 2000, „Forms of discontent“, S.19–37, S. 33.
(13) Ebd., S. 26f.

Die vertrauten Formen werden im Bild in närrische Statisten verwandelt, hinter Vorhänge versteckt, auf Fahnen appliziert oder einfach an andere Dinge angehängt. Die Gemälde zeigen jetzt den Bühnenraum ganz real an. Alles darin ist verkettet, in eine gefährlich-illustre Partyzone gepresst, die aber draußen auf dem Land abzugehen scheint. Überall sind Breughel'sche Vogelbäume zu sehen, Schaukeln, Sitzstangen, Seile, Ketten, Sitzbrettchen, Gestänge für Raubvögel. Vögel trainieren so ihren Gleichgewichtssinn. Bodenlosigkeiten. Schaukeln evozieren Seitenblicke auf Fragonard. Es sind Puppenbühnen, die Unschuld und Verhängnis untrennbar zusammenklittern. Sogar die bisherige Materialität der Leinwand wird von Gary Stephan zugunsten eines dünnen Seidenstoffs verlassen. Als sei alles in Seidenbatik erstellt, mäandern die Figuren im Raum. Alles Feste ist aus den Bildern gewichen und die Farben sind in Aufruhr. Glänzendes Schwarz weicht verblasstem Rot, als würden Farbfilter in Orange und Gelb zum Einsatz gebracht. Kürbisfarbene, bäuerliche Welt. In diesem Aufbruch ist plötzlich wieder alles möglich. Gary Stephan verliert seinen Wiedererkennungswert, hat seinen Personal Style verlassen. „What is that!“ ruft ihm damals fassungslos seine Galeristin Mary Boone zu. (14) 1993 trennen sich ihre Wege. Die 80er Jahre waren definitiv vorbei.

Die Zeit ist keine Linie sondern eine Fläche, konstatiert Arno Schmidt. Darauf rekurriert Max Bense mit dem Begriff der Zeitfläche als dem Ort, auf dem sich die Montage der Zeitalter vollzieht. (15) Die moderne Welt versammelt ihre wichtigsten Objekte und Erfahrungen auf Oberflächen. Geist scheint eine Angelegenheit der Horizonte geworden zu sein, nicht mehr der Tiefe. Einer sich ständig wandelnden Oberfläche korrespondiert ein Denken, das sich der Technik der Montage bedient.

(14) „Then all the things I was afraid of happened. [...] I remember telling my wife, Suzanne, after I was pretty clear Mary Boone couldn't continue to hack the work. This is literally like living a nightmare. I never could have imagined this would happen to me“ [...] After I actually lived through my greatest fear, I came out the other side and thought, ‚You know, that's about as bad as it gets and it's not

as bad as I thought it would be.‘ I realized that I was still fully three-dimensional, my wife still loved me, I still had my work, [...] but now that I've gone through it, I like what I know about myself on the other side.“ Ebd., S. 22.

(15) Vgl. Harry Walther, „Die Radikalisierung der Oberfläche“, in: *Neue Rundschau* 4/2002 S. 9–22, S. 14.

Vielleicht lässt sich so eine Umkehr im Konzept Gary Stephans erklären. Vor 2001 gibt es keine Überschneidung oder Übermalung in seinen Bildern, jetzt beendet er dieses eigene Regelwerk. (16) Bis dahin definierte die Distanz zwischen den Dingen den gesamten Bildraum, nie aber deren Überlagerung. Jetzt werden alle Elemente im Bild um jeden Preis überlagert, montiert. Schon früh ist seine Bereitschaft zu Radikalität festgehalten: „Ich entdecke zu meinem Bedauern, dass, wenn ich alles rauslasse, es zu viel sein wird. Ich arbeite bis zum Anschlag. Ich mache alles was ich will, denke was ich tun kann, um ein Bild wirklich überzeugend zu machen. Es kann furchtbar aussehen und bis ins Mark hässlich, aber sogar das ist interessant.“ (17)

Painting of Paintings (light corners)

Mit der Befreiung der Form geht auch eine Lösung von Weltrepräsentation einher. Das ungebundene, jetzt aufgemachte Regelwerk wird einzig von gelebter Geschichte und eigenem Erfahrungsraum gesteuert, hat gewissermaßen Zuschreibung und Einbettung in Theorie hinter sich. Nach 2001 kann man Stephans Hand regelrecht beim Malen zusehen, der Pinsel kreist vermeintlich ziellos in Pinselschwüngen, malt durchbrochene Struktur in tanzender Lasur wie Spitzendeckchen, aleatorische Bewegungen bauen sich zum ungeplanten Kontingenzzgewebe auf und formen ornamentale Übersichtsplateaus. Landschaftliches in Vogelperspektive, zaunähnliche Strukturen, unsystematische Gitter und Zonen. Allerdings folgen solche architektonischen Anmutungen eben nicht einer gewollten Konstruktion, sondern sind ganz dem Malprozess verdankt. Ausgrabungen gleich, scheinen die Bildschichten aufgerissen und übereinander getürmt zu sein. Dazu hat er in seinem Atelier eine Mechanik entwickelt, mit der das in Arbeit befindliche Bild gedreht werden kann und es dadurch beim Malen ortlos erscheint. Gary Stephan übermalt permanent.

Diese losen Bilder brauchen eine Fassung, um nicht am Bildformat gestoppt zu werden. Der Rand, oder besser, die Auseinandersetzung mit der Bildbegrenzung führt zur Frage, ob der Rand ein Rahmen ist, wie und wie weit er in die Bilder einwandert, was er ausschneidet und was freigestellt dem Blick zugänglich bleiben soll. Nicht länger die Figur, sondern die Konstitution des Bildes und seine materielle Fassung sind jetzt und von nun an sein inhaltlicher Gegenstand. *Painting of Paintings (light corners)* von 2009 mag hier einen Höhepunkt markieren. Eine im Negativ erscheinende

(16) Gary Stephan in einer e-mail-Korrespondenz mit Klaus Merkel, Dezember 2016.

(17) Interview mit Ned Rifkin, in: *Early Work* (vgl. Fußnote 1), S. 44.

Malteserkreuzform, Bildquadrate, verschiedenartigste Formen bauen sich vor unseren Augen auf. In *Dorm* wird ein kompletter Fensterablauf, eine unabhängig durchlaufende Struktur als Fassung für insertierte Bilder im Gemälde installiert. Überhaupt wird der Gedanke der Installation im Bild auffällig und auch die Rolle des tiefen Schwarz kehrt wieder. Im Gegensatz zu einer schmutzig-trockenen oder blassen, dem realen Außen entlehnten Farbpalette, sind die Lineaturen im Bild hier mit Glanz gezogen, strukturieren den mechanisch wirkenden Bildablauf und setzen den Bildrand ganz präzise gegen den matt gemalten Rest ab.

The Future of Reading

Immer wieder wird im Werk von Gary Stephan von Vokabeln und Grammatik gesprochen. In seinen jüngsten Bildern ist diese Beobachtung besonders zutreffend, weil mit der Frage des Randes und des Rahmens ein eigener Kosmos wiederbelebt wird, den er bereits in seinem Frühwerk um 1967 eingeführt hatte und jetzt extensiv ausbaut: das Band oder eine Bänderung, eine aus einer Pinselbreite entwickelte Malspur, die gleichsam gemalte Spur als auch Gewebe evoziert; in Wiederholung gezogene halbtransparente Farbbahnen in vertikaler, horizontaler oder diagonaler Fahrt. Flächengitter, Lattenzaungebilde ähnlich, die komplett über die Leinwand geführt sind und damit den Keilrahmen aufrufen, der Träger des Bildes ist und das Gewebe der Leinwand doppeln. John Yau beschreibt die Wirkung dieser visuellen Spannung als Gegensatzpaare wie: Struktur und Oberfläche, Konstruktion und Fassade, bedeckt und unbedeckt. Stephan hat körperähnliche, fragmentierte Ausstülpungen in diese Struktur eingeflochten, als hätten sich schwarze Partikel im Netz verfangen. Der Maler schlägt simultane Lesearten von Oberflächen vor, eine Interaktion von Verbindungen, die Bildoberfläche, Fassade und Körper gleichzeitig in ihren jeweiligen Bedeutungsebenen aufrufen und kalkulierte Verwirrung stiften. Die Bänder überkreuzen sich ja ganz real, stellen aber auch Überkreuzungen dar, sind im Bild eingewobene Fragestellungen über Fakt und Fiktion. (18)

(18) Vgl. John Yau, „Gary Stephan’s Paradoxes“, im Katalog der Tspace-Ausstellung

20. Juli – 24. August 2013, Rhinebeck, NY: Tspace, 2013.

Gary Stephans Arbeit ist ohne die frühe und konstante Auseinandersetzung mit dem Bild als eigene Realität nicht zu verstehen, weder sein eingearbeiteter Begriff der Leere, seine vorgeführten Twists im Bildraum, noch die Insertierung von Realität im Bild, das daraus abgeleitete Rollenspiel der Wiedererkennbarkeit und die dazugehörige Bildoperation.

„Serving Two Masters“ ist eine von Stephan beliebte Metapher, die den Konflikt zwischen flachem Objekt, welches das Bild ist und fiktivem Raum, der im Bild malerisch erzeugt wird, umschreibt. (19)

Ein dritter Master, ein echt Beteiligter in seiner Bildkonzeption, ist der Betrachter. Dieser macht die Triade komplett. Der Betrachter ist ständig angesprochen; seine Mitarbeit, Aktivität von Kopf und Auge, wird beim Zusammensetzen und Auseinandernehmen der Bildflächen permanent eingefordert. In Parallelfahrt mit Neuen Medien und damit neuen Blickregimes verhandelt der Künstler fortwährend sein Genre im Vertrauen darauf, dass Betrachterkompetenzen wachsen, Blicke dehnbarer und beweglicher und zur Dekonstruktion fähig werden: „So I like the idea that my paintings as you get up to them return to that kind of humility, that they are valuable only at the level of the construction in the viewer and that that’s where the value lies – they are not fetish objects.“ (20)

Klaus Merkel

(19) „I think that the reason Cézanne was so interested in trying to get things to sit correctly in space is because he wasn’t very good at it. The problematics of my position is that it doesn’t work well. Serving the two masters of the flat object and fictive space, which I accept as the fundamental question about the nature of objects and images.“ Gary Stephan

in conversation with Phong Bui, *Brooklyn Rail*, September 3, 2012. <http://brooklynrail.org/2012/09/art/gary-stephan-with-phong-bui> (abgerufen am 11. Juni 2017).

(20) A lecture by artist Gary Stephan, presented by MFA Fine Arts Department Lecture Series 2013. SVA School of Visual Arts New York. <https://vimeo.com/82229789>

King of
the
pumpkins

Gary Stephan returned to New York in 1967 with a master's degree from the San Francisco Art Institute in his pocket. His career, which has now lasted some fifty years, began gaining momentum at that time. The question "What is this thing I'm making?" would cause him to devote his artistic practice to "expanding the experience of picture space", which he realized through the stimulating dualism of image and object. (1)

That same year he moved to 76 Jefferson Street together with other artists. (2) Networks are founded; he becomes an assistant to Jasper Johns, (3) whom he describes somewhere as an intellectual father figure; the contact to the dealer David Whitney is going well; his first solo show is sold out. In a successful collaboration with the fashionable Bykert Gallery, the Galerie Hans Neuendorf puts on two solo exhibitions in Cologne and Hamburg. He participates in the 1969, 1971 and 1973 Whitney Biennials. All of this occasioned Roberta Smith to declare that Gary Stephan's "efforts [...] were among the most closely watched developments of the early '70s." (4) He lives his art to the fullest.

(1) Gary Stephan/interview by Ned Rifkin, in: *Early Work. Lynda Benglis, Joan Brown, Luis Jimenez, Gary Stephan, Lawrence Weiner*, New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1982, pp. 32–44, quotation p. 35.

(2) He collaborates with Neil Jenney there. Gary Stephan draws two technically exact fighter aircraft in a version of the *Them and Us* paintings. In conversation with Klaus Merkel. Jenney's style soon causes a furor as Bad Painting. See Roberta Smith, "And when he was bad, he certainly was busy", *New York Times*, March 30, 2001: "1969/70 [...] Mr. Jenney helped put representational painting on a new course and established precedents for the art

of the 1970's, 80's and 90's in ways that have yet to be fully recognized."

(3) Gary Stephan assisted in the production of *MAP*, (1967–1971), one of the central large-format works by Jasper Johns, now in the collection of the Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

(4) Roberta Smith, "Painting in the heady days, after it was proclaimed dead", in: *New York Times*, Feb. 16, 2007 (review of the exhibition *High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting, 1967–1975*): "Gary Stephan, whose efforts [...] were among the most closely watched developments of the early '70s." Roberta Smith lamented with these words Gary Stephan's absence in this show; the gap was closed in

How Things Happen – A Fountain

Before shouldering the tools from the history of painting in 1975 with his *Garden Cycle*, (5) Stephan had to give up the approaches he had previously taken: the cuts he made in the material, in PVC, Latex, the sawed Masonite panels, the assemblages made from painted wood, his open fragmented constructions with the positioned forms and their negatives: all things considered, he had to end minimalist operations – the consolidation of color, material and wall into an object.

Three pictures, weightily painted, testify to this fresh start. *The Desire of Ages*, *Agosto* and *How Things Happen – A Fountain* bear their almost painful impasto construction. (6) These works, which mark his transition from the late nineteen seventies to the nineteen eighties, make up the foundation of the present exhibition and open up the argumentative framework. With this challenge of limiting himself to the guidelines of traditional panel painting, his was aiming at comparability, meaning that Gary Stephan was putting himself on equal footing with other painters, thus positioning himself in the high-spirited climate of New York's art world.

His rank was confirmed when he became one of the house artists of the Mary Boone Gallery, which was then in the process of attaining its legendary status; Julian Schnabel, David Salle, Matt Mullican and Ross Bleckner, among others, were also on board in 1979 and painting was big time. In coarse contrast, Metro Pictures (7) entered the fray with a promising program gallery whose stable of

the version of the exhibition *Short Distance to Now: Paintings from New York 1967–1975* shown at the Galerie Kienzle & Gmeiner, Berlin, in late summer 2007, which showed the piece *Untitled* (1967, painted latex, fabric mat, 109 × 248 cm).

(5) Since the *Garden Cycle* of paintings "I've really begun self-consciously to take on historical baggage as a content of the work" – "to resurrect painting's function [...] to make it an instrument for transcendence." – "By setting up an object that has paradoxes built into it, insolvable painting problems, like how you seamlessly get from a space to a thing, that is to say, from a sky to a bottle." Interview by Ned Rifkin, in: *Early Work* (cf. footnote 1), pp. 40f, 43.

(6) "The Garden Cycle paintings [...] re-engaged figure-ground questions, but in a considerably more personalized way. In each of them, thin washes of evocative color define a puzzling shape in a surrounding field. The centralized, oddly geometric form touches the painting's edge at some point,

grounding the image and breaking its confinement. That the series title alludes to a geographic locale suggests that they are best read as cartographic images – about enclosure, territorial definition, and the transgression of boundaries." Richard Armstrong, *Five Painters in New York*, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1984, p. 62.

This pictorial genesis often proceeds from one corner in the interior and changes progressively, moves from plan to elevation and finally comes to rest in the atmospherically most charged point, there, where painting and image almost touch and which Gary Stephan still today calls the discourse on Image/Painting. Gary Stephan on works from his 1975 *Garden Cycle* that directly precedes these three paintings in terms of content and is close as regards forms. See *Plane/Figure, Amerikanische Kunst in Schweizer Privatsammlungen und aus dem Kunstmuseum Winterthur*, Kunstmuseum Winterthur, 2006, p. 143.

(7) "[...] there was a real bifurcation in sensibilities between the two galleries. Boone

Pictures Generation artists got off to a fast start in the race to the center of art world. Including figures who were strongly influenced by the CalArts group around John Baldessari, such as Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, Jack Goldstein, Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman and Robert Longo, they made media-oriented picture material the starting point of the art. The input of the Pictures Generation lays claim to fundamentals; the production and reception of pictures are acknowledged to be ideological, while the dealing with pictures is discussed and analyzed everywhere – dominating themes are Concept Art, Appropriation, Postmodernism; presentation forms and simulation determine the discourse on and accompanying questions concerning painting. The status of the picture in general is called into question. In this tension-filled climate, some painters return to the picture ever more resolutely, reject traditional abstraction, make fresh connections to art history and seek distinct subjective narrative approaches. (8) The art market seethes.

The works by the 37-year-old Gary Stephan assert themselves in this New York, bringing him international recognition. A new discourse on painting establishes itself between the Neo-Abstract painting stars and the media-oriented picture scene. This includes the genre of the artist statement that sometimes manifests itself in veritable essays; blows are also dealt in the process; eggshells are broken where differences and affiliations had to be decided. (9)

represented big dollars – cherries dipped in chocolate and champagne – while Metro represented integrity and hard work [...] Mary offered money and stipends and was able to pull a lot of people away." Jack Goldstein, "Helene Winer: Artists Space and Metro Pictures", in: Richard Hertz, *Jack Goldstein and the CalArts Mafia*, Ojai, Calif.: Minneola Press, 2003, quotation p. 101.
" [...] the competitive spirit throughout that decade was strong and often brutal, with people caring little about anything but themselves and making lots of money." Ibid, p.126.
"The competition raged between the two galleries and their artists. I remember being at

art openings where if you were spotted talking with an artist from Metro Pictures, you'd get the cold shoulder from the Boone brigade, and vice versa." Ibid, p.127.

(8) "They were unafraid to explore gesture, improvisation, relational compositions, allusions to figuration and landscape, as well as art historical and cultural allusions, high and low." Press Release, *Reinventing Abstraction*, New York: Chaim & Read Gallery, 2013.

(9) Two articles targeted at presenting different opinions appeared in the October 1981 issue of *Artforum*. "Last Exit: Painting" by the painter Thomas Lawson and Klaus Kertess, "Painting Metaphorically: the Recent Work

Fact & Fiction was a small but effectual 1984 exhibition at the Gallery Tibor de Nagy, which presented paintings by Jonathan Lasker, Tom Nozkowski and Gary Stephan in a front. The programmatic idea behind this exhibition was aimed at an innovative negotiation of the figure-ground relationship. Carter Ratcliff's essay in the slender catalogue explains why pictures need detours in order to be defined as good. There are just too many good pictures out there and painters face the task of taking the hard route to a good picture instead of the easy one. Seeing and/or perceiving can be started via built-in obstacles, which is exactly what he had detected thirteen years earlier in Gary Stephan's pictures. (10)

Tricia Collins and Richard Milazzo were two unmistakable spokespersons and moreover the first independent curators who organized exhibitions in commercial galleries: a novelty. Their writings, composed in a dense, mannered or philosophical language, a kind of theory prose, and their group exhibitions refueled and newly networked the scene. Theory contexts generally gain in influence, attaining definatory control with their terms Neo-Conceptualism and Post-Appropriation. Contrary to Neo-Expressionism, but also against Douglas Crimp's Picture Theory, they create an alternative differential field, especially for painting. In early 1985, Gary Stephan takes part in their group show *Paravision* at the Postmasters Gallery with a list of artists including Ross Bleckner, Peter Halley, Jeff Koons, Jonathan Lasker, Robert Longo, Olivier Mosset and Philip Taaffe. In this context they describe Stephan's work as Neo-Conceptual. They present the artist to the German art public in an extensive essay for *Kunstforum International* 84/1986 that bears the title "Transzendentale Übereinkünfte" ("Transcendental Agreements"). (11)

of Gary Stephan, Stephen Mueller, and Bill Jensen". Lawson was for example very critical about the 1979 show *American Painting: The Eighties*, in which Gary Stephan also participated, only to praise his own and the reproductions of works by Troy Brauntuch and Jack Goldstein. Kertess's subsequent remarks sounds like a response to Lawson's premise that painting should concern itself with the critique of representation, a thesis that is still a major concern today. (See also Raphael Rubinstein, *Reinventing abstraction: New York painting in the 1980s*, New York: Chaim & Read, 2013.)

(10) "Late in 1971, when Stephan was pouring his images from pigmented mixtures of polyvinyl chloride, I said that he 'presents impediments to the eye.' This was meant as favorable comment, for I believed then, as I still do,

that 'vision starts with impediments'." Carter Ratcliff, *Fact & Fiction, Abstract paintings by Jonathan Lasker, Tom Nozkowski, Gary Stephan*, New York: Tibor de Nagy Gallery, 1984.

In 1984, Jonathan Lasker gave me for the first time an impression of the then current painting discourse in New York. His works were first exhibited in Germany at my former Galerie Annette Gmeiner in Kirchzarten near Freiburg. I discussed the *Fact & Fiction* catalogue and exhibition with him. After that I kept an eye on Gary Stephan's work in publications and met the artist personally in New York in 2001, when I was invited to the Apex Art Residency Program. We have remained in touch ever since then. Klaus Merkel.

(11) Collins, Tricia und Richard Milazzo, "Transzendentale Übereinkünfte: Gary Stephan", in: *Kunstforum International* 84/1986, S. 240–251.

They say that his pictures are furnished with a loss, a formal negation, containing an invisible or blank negative form in the middle. The purpose of his abstraction is less to suggest a decoding possibility than to present a void. This references the paintings from the early nineteen eighties, which distort perception with simple forms, dry colors and a puzzle-like quality. According to Gary Stephan, perception must be construed. A painted form begins to morph before our eyes in order to become the background, while the background attempts to move forward in order to become a central figure. It is an optical surface exchange, a reversal, that is constantly in the process of tilting.

They Are and We Can

The decade after 1985 continues to see a high level of productivity from Gary Stephan. Numerous solo and group exhibitions take place every year. He responds to his critical questioning of painting with a formal decision, using templates to apply nearly figurative elements that are intended as models of world representation to the picture. Dark silhouettes, vignette-like ornamental decorative objects, punched abbreviations that unfold powers through their black lacquered surfaces and evoke conversions into their opposite from active foreground figures: Crevice, slash and hole punched into the landscape tapestry. Such black elements are placed on a ledge, a beam in the landscape space in *Four on a Shelf*. He subsequently hangs them in the air as garlands and ties them into mobiles, although things can fall, lean, hang or stand on this byway, thus paraphrasing the arsenal of installation possibilities in the picture as a "thing in space". The more open this deployment becomes, the more he equates the pictorial occurrence with animation. The picture becomes stage and arrangement, undermining the pictorial composition and hence its abstract principles. A picture thus becomes realistic in Stephan's sense.

After 1990, he speaks in his work of a "migration of forms", pictorial motifs or preparatory drawings that wander into the pictures with the intention of resolving the picture from the inside. Gary Stephan sees an unconscious and a controlled component in representative painting. While the one half gets going, the other half takes what the world has to give. Stephan enters each picture with a certain amount of world; he speaks of the conventional world (12) that he wants

(12) Gary Stephan, e-mail to Klaus Merkel, March 13, 2017: "the background for the figure was to create a form that had more of a charge than pure geometry but less than a knife. I liked the comparison to Biedermeier furniture where the form language has associations that are weaker than earlier languages where animal and plant forms were the

source. The purpose was to place this loosely suggestive form into the emotionally charged space of Caspar David Friedrich to both create a distance from, and exploration of, this expressive language. The first one, the oval, was made in 1986."

"I wanted to paint the world in general. I don't want to paint the knife or the fire. They are too

to paint, paint in, cover, in which he adds or projects something so that in the end the painting can provide more information about its representation than about the mechanics of the "made-in-this-way." He consequently divides abstract painters into two types: object makers and world builders. The object makers construe permanent arguments in and around the rectangle of the picture plane and want to show all the interesting things that can be done with it; the other lend the object a special status, literally allowing the viewer to fall into the picture in a psychologically physical and emotional manner. This is a dilemma, because the more an artist builds an object, the less world it tolerates – but the more world one is heading for, the less object-like the picture becomes. Stephan's paintings are constructed worlds and remain object, arranged as a path on which sight can access the painting. (13)

King of the Pumpkins

Amplitudes in society and politics heralded the fact that the nineteen-nineties were going to be a difficult time: results of the stock market crash 1987, fall of the Berlin Wall 1989 – the breaking of political crockery, the collapse of the Soviet Union. Dying art galleries. In art, there was a widespread turn to political and social themes, to process and performance. Exacerbated art context questions superseded the questions of the nineteen-eighties. Reorientation: Gary Stephan responds in his work. The paintings depart the cosmos of the simulated depiction of the landscape and figure, become nervous and again take up the full spectrum of his earlier use of color. Everything is risked, dissolved and assembled more radically than ever before. Stephan's mobiles have transported his figural inventions completely into the realm of the theatrical. Familiar forms are transformed in the picture into clownish supernumeraries, concealed behind curtains, applied to banners or simply attached to other things.

charged (too featureful). In the sexual sense they are too genital, the energy is too focused. On the other hand, pure form won't carry much of a charge. There is a middle ground. Real enough to pull the world in so I can make things the way Eakins or Rembrandt made

things. So they can have that quality of realness." "Forms of discontent", Gary Stephan interviewed by Giles Lyon, in: *PAJ, a Journal of Performance and Art*, #66, September 2000, pp. 19–37, quotation p. 33.
(13) Ibid., p. 26f.

The paintings now show the stage area almost realistically. Everything in it is chained, pressed into a dangerously illustrative party zone that, however, is seemingly taking place out in the countryside. Breughelian bird trees can be seen everywhere, swings, perches, ropes, chains, perch boards, and rods for birds of prey. Birds train their sense of equilibrium in this way. Bottomlessness. Swings evoke side views at Fragonard. They are dollhouses that inextricably piece innocence and catastrophe together. Gary Stephan even takes leave of the previous materiality of the canvas in favor of a thin silk fabric. The figures meander through the space as if everything were rendered in silk batik. Everything firm has given way in the pictures and the colors are in revolt. Shiny black makes space for faded red, as if an orange and yellow color filter had been deployed, opening up a pumpkin-colored rustic world. Everything is suddenly possible again in this upheaval. Gary Stephan loses his recognition value, has given up his personal style. "What's that!" his dealer Mary Boone calls out to him incomprehensively at that time. (14) In 1993, their paths separate. The nineteen eighties are definitely over.

Time is not a line but an area, Arno Schmidt noted. Max Bense takes recourse in this with the concept of the time area as the place where the montage of the era is fulfilled. (15) The modern world collects its most important objects and experiences on surfaces. The mind seems to have become a matter of the horizon, no longer the depths. An idea employing the montage technique corresponds to a constantly changing surface.

Perhaps such a reversal in Gary Stephan's concept can be explained. Before 2001, there was no overlapping or overpainting in

(14) "Then, all the things I was afraid of happened. [...] I remember telling my wife, Suzanne, after it was pretty clear Mary Boone couldn't continue to hack the work, 'This is literally like living a nightmare. I never could have imagined this would happen to me.' [...] After I actually lived through my greatest fear, I came out the other side and thought, 'You know, that's about as bad as it gets and it's not

as bad as I thought it would be.' I realized that I was still fully three-dimensional, my wife still loved me, I still had my work, [...] but now that I've gone through it, I like what I know about myself on the other side." Ibid., p.22.

(15) See Harry Walther, "Die Radikalisierung der Oberfläche", in *Neue Rundschau* 4/2002, p. 9–22, here 14.

his pictures – now he abandoned his own previous guidelines. (16) Until then, the distance between the things defined the entire pictorial space, but never its overlapping. Now, all the elements in the picture overlap, are mounted on top of each other, at all costs. An early statement reveals his willingness for radical solutions: "I'm now discovering, much to my sadness, that [holding back is] not enough. [...] I'm working full tilt now. I'm doing everything I can think to do in a picture to make it really compelling. It may be shy of the mark but even that's interesting." (17)

Painting of Paintings (light corners)

The liberation of form is also accompanied by a release from world representation. The unbound, now open guidelines are controlled solely by personally experienced history and space, having moved beyond attribution and embedding in theory to a certain extent. After 2001, one can virtually watch the painter at work, his brush circling in seemingly aimless curved strokes, painting openwork structures in dancing glazes like lace doilies; aleatoric movements come together to construct an unplanned texture of contingencies and form ornamental panoramic plateaus. Landscape elements seen from a bird's-eye-view, fence-like structures, unsystematic grids and zones. Such architectonic impressions, however, do not simply follow a deliberate construction; they are a result of the painting process. Resembling excavations, the pictorial layers seem to have been torn open and piled up on top of each other. To this end, he develops a mechanism in his studio, with which he can rotate the picture he is working on, making it appear placeless while painting. Gary Stephan is always overpainting.

These individual pictures require a setting in order to not be limited by the picture format. The edge, or perhaps better the investigation of the picture boundary, leads to the question whether the edge is a frame, how and to what extent it can wander into the picture and if what it cuts out and what it isolates should remain accessible to one's gaze. Not the figure, but the constitution of the picture and its material setting make up its content, now and from now on. *Painting of Paintings (light corners)* from 2009 might mark a peak in this regard. The form of a Maltese cross appears as a negative; pictorial squares, the wide range of different types of form are constructed before our eyes. In *Dorm*, a complete window cycle, an autonomously operating structure is installed as a setting for

(16) Gary Stephan, e-mail correspondence with Klaus Merkel, December 2016.

(17) Interview by Ned Rifkin, in: *Early Work* (cf. footnote 1), p. 44.

pictures inserted into the painting. The idea of the installation in the picture is in itself conspicuous and also the role of deep black returns here. As opposed to a dirty dry or faded color palette derived from the real exterior, the lines in the picture are drawn brilliantly, structuring the mechanically appearing pictorial cycle and very precisely contrasting the picture with the remainder that is painted with a dull finish.

The Future of Reading

The terms “vocabulary” and “grammar” are often used in the context of Gary Stephan’s work. This observation is particularly apt in respect to his most recent pictures, because a separate cosmos is reanimated with the question of the edge and the frame, which he already introduced into his work as a young artist in 1967 and now expands extensively: the ribbon or stripe, the trace of painting developed from the brush width, the painted trace as it were, which is also evoked as fabric; repeatedly drawn semitransparent bands of paint running vertically, horizontally or diagonally. Lattice-like structures that run across the entire canvas and thus invoke the stretcher that simultaneously supports the picture and mimics the canvas fabric. John Yau describes the impact of this visual tension as contrasting pairs: structure and surface, construction and façade, covered and uncovered. Stephan interlaces fragmented body-like protrusions into this structure, as if black particles got caught up in a net. The painter suggests simultaneous interpretations of surfaces, an interaction of connections that at the same time invoke pictorial surface, façade and body in their respective layers of meaning, creating calculated confusion. The bands cross each other in reality and also represent crossings, are questions concerning fact and fiction woven into the picture. (18)

(18) See John Yau, “Gary Stephan’s Paradoxes”, July 20 – August 24, 2013, Rhinebeck, NY: in the catalogue of the exhibition at T space, Tspace, 2013.

Gary Stephan’s work is incomprehensible without the early and continuous dealings with the picture as a separate reality, neither his incorporated concept of the void, his performed twists in the pictorial space nor the insertion of reality in the picture, the role play of recognizability deriving from it and the associated pictorial operation.

“Serving two masters” is one of Stephan’s favorite metaphors. It describes the conflict between the flat object, which is the painting, and the fictional space that is generated, the picture by means of painting. (19)

A third master, the viewer, is a true participant in his pictorial concept. He completes the triad. The viewer is constantly addressed; collaboration as activity of head and eye is in permanent demand during the assembly and disassembly of the picture surface. Riding in parallel with digital media and thus the new sight regime, the artist continuously negotiates his genre, confident that as viewer competencies grow, sight expands and becomes more flexible and capable of deconstruction: “So I like the idea that my paintings as you get up to them return to that kind of humility, that they are valuable only at the level of the construction in the viewer and that that’s where the value lies – they are not fetish objects.” (20)

Klaus Merkel

(19) “I think that the reason Cézanne was so interested in trying to get things to sit correctly in space is because he wasn’t very good at it. The problematics of my position is that it doesn’t work well. Serving the two masters of the flat object and fictive space, which I accept as the fundamental question about the nature of objects and images.” Gary Stephan

in conversation with Phong Bui, *Brooklyn Rail*, September 3, 2012. <http://brooklynrail.org/2012/09/art/gary-stephan-with-phong-bui> (June 11, 2017).

(20) A lecture by artist Gary Stephan, presented by MFA Fine Arts Department Lecture Series 2013. SVA School of Visual Arts New York. <https://vimeo.com/82229789>

painting of
paintings
(light
corners)

Gary Stephan

1942 born in Brooklyn, NY
1961 Arts Students League
Parsons School of Design, NYC
1964 Pratt Institute, NYC
1967 San Francisco Art Institute, M.F.A.

lives in New York City and Stone Ridge, NY

Selected Solo Shows

1970 David Whitney Gallery, New York
1971 Quay Gallery, San Francisco
David Whitney Gallery, New York
1972 Galerie Hans Neuendorf, Köln; Hamburg
1973 Texas Gallery, Houston
Galleri Ostergren, Malmö
Galleri Fabian Carlsson, Göteborg
Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco
1974 Bykert Gallery, New York
1975 Bykert Gallery, New York
Texas Gallery, Houston
Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco
1976 Texas Gallery, Houston
Bykert Gallery, New York
1977 Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco
1978 Mary Boone Gallery, New York
Texas Gallery, Houston
1979 Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles
Mary Boone Gallery, New York
1980 Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles
Mary Boone Gallery, New York
1981 Mary Boone Gallery, New York
Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles
1982 Mary Boone Gallery, New York
Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco
Ronald Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis, MO
1983 Mary Boone Gallery, New York
The Texas Gallery, Houston
Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles
1984 Marlborough Gallery, New York
Portico Row Gallery, Philadelphia
1985 Mary Boone Gallery, New York
1986 Dart Gallery, Chicago
Galleria Lia Rumma, Napoli
Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles
Diane Brown Gallery, New York
Mary Boone Gallery, New York

1988 Galerie Gabrielle Maubrie, Paris
New Abstract Paintings, Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York
1989 Galeria Lino Silverstein, Barcelona
1990 Mary Boone Gallery, New York
Baumgartner Galleries, Washington
1991 Galeria Fernand Alcolea, Barcelona
1992 Baumgartner Galleries, Washington
1993 Mary Boone Gallery, New York
Architetture Senza Archeologia, Galleria in Arco, Torino
1995 Galeria Fernando Alcolea, Barcelona
Galeria Siboney, Santander
1998 Baumgartner Gallery, New York
10 Year Survey, Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH
1999 *Same Body, Different Day*, University of Maine, Museum of Art, Orono, ME
2001 Baumgartner Gallery, New York
Nine Paintings, Emily Davis Gallery, Myers School of Art, University of Akron, Akron, OH
2009 *The Art of Reading*, Galerie Kienzle & Gmeiner, Berlin
2010 Eisbox, Brooklyn, NY
Gary Stephan – Painting and, The Kleinert / James Arts Centre, Woodstock, NY
2012 *The Story of What Happens*, Devening Projects, Chicago
2013 Tspace, Rhinebeck, NY
2014 Susan Inglett Gallery, New York
Philip Stein Gallery, St. Louis, MO
2015 *Selected Painting*, George Lawson Gallery, San Francisco
2017 *Gary Stephan, The Future of Reading*, Kienzle Art Foundation, Berlin
2018 *Gary Stephan, The Future of Reading*, Städtische Galerie Waldkirch

Selected Group Shows

1965 *Systematic Art*, Emanuel Walter Gallery, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco
1968 *Paintings and sculpture by Peter Gourfain, Steve Conley, Gary Stephan, Phil Wofford, Richard Van Buren*, Bykert Gallery, New York
1969 Richard Feigen Gallery, New York
The Whitney Biennial, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
1970 *Young American Artists*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH
1971 *The Whitney Biennial*, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
1972 *John Baldessari, Francis Barth, Richard Jackson, Barbara Munger, Gary Stephan*, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston
Robert Mapplethorpe, Paul Mogensen, Robert Polidori, Bill Springer, Gary Stephan, Bykert Gallery, New York
1973 *The Whitney Biennial*, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
1974 *71st American Exhibition*, The Art Institute of Chicago
Bykert Gallery (Robert Mangold, Gary Stephan), New York
1975 *Painting, Drawing and Sculpture of the '60s and '70s from the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel collection*, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH; The Clocktower, New York
76 Jefferson Street, Museum of Modern Art, New York
Bykert Gallery, New York
1976 Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN

1977	Holly Solomon Gallery, New York <i>Painting</i> (Chris Darton, Neil Jenney, Gary Stephan, Alan Uglow, Joe Zucker), Hal Bromm Gallery, New York <i>A Painting Show</i> , P.S.1, New York	1994	<i>Positions – Attitudes & Arrangements</i> , Four Walls, Brooklyn, NY <i>Le costanti nell’arte</i> , Galleria Lia Rumma, Napoli <i>Actual Painting</i> , Pierogi 2000, New York
1978	Mary Boone Gallery, New York	1995	Bravin Post Lee, New York
1979	<i>The 1970s: New American Painting</i> , New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York: traveled to Italy, Denmark and Eastern Europe (organized by Allan Schwartzman, Kathleen Thomas, and Marcia Tucker)	1996	<i>Stux</i> Gallery, New York <i>Prints</i> , The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
	Mary Boone Gallery, New York <i>American Painting – The Eighties</i> , Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Grey Art Gallery, New York University, New York		<i>Champions of Modernism I – Art of Tomorrow – Art of Today</i> , The Castle Gallery, College of New Rochelle, New Rochelle, NY; Mary Washington College Galleries, Fredericksburg, VA; Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, SC; Sunrise Museum, Charleston, WV; Brevard Museum of Art and Science, Melbourne, FL
1981	<i>Drawings</i> , Leo Castelli Gallery, New York Mary Boone Gallery, New York	1998	<i>12 Years After – Jonathan Lasker, Thomas Nozkowski, Gary Stephan</i> , Baumgartner Galleries, Washington, DC <i>Evergreen Review Exhibition</i> (curated by Richard Milazzo), New York
	Mattingly-Baker Gallery (David Salle, Gary Stephan), Dallas	1999	<i>Hey, You Never Know</i> (curated by Kenny Schachter), newNYart, New York
1982	<i>The Abstract Image</i> , Hamilton Gallery, New York <i>Early Work</i> , New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York	2002	<i>Xthetic</i> (curated by Giles Lyon), Angstrom Gallery, Dallas; Stefanelli Exhibition Space, New York
	Mary Boone Gallery, New York <i>Postminimalism</i> , The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT	2005	<i>Kugelkopf – die Sammlung als Bild</i> , Kunstverein Neuhausen <i>After all that can be said</i> (Gary Stephan, Klaus Merkel, John Miller), Galerie Kienzle & Gmeiner, Berlin
1983	<i>Artist-Critic</i> , White Columns, New York <i>Mary Boone and Her Artists</i> , Siebu Museum, Tokyo	2006	<i>Plane/Figure – Amerikanische Kunst aus Schweizer Sammlungen</i> , Kunstmuseum Winterthur
	<i>Language, Drama, Source and Vision</i> , New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York	2007	<i>Ways to make things</i> (Gary Stephan, Klaus Merkel), Cynthia Broan Gallery, New York <i>Unfathom</i> (curated by Aaron Williams, Stuart Krimko), Max Protetch Gallery, New York
1984	<i>Fact & Fiction</i> (Jonathan Lasker, Tom Nozkowski, Gary Stephan), Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York <i>Five Painters in New York</i> , The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York		<i>The Recognitions</i> (curated by David Salle), The Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY
	<i>An International Survey of Painting and Sculpture</i> , The Museum of Modern Art, New York		<i>Short Distance To Now – Painting from New York 1967–1975</i> , Galerie Kienzle & Gmeiner, Berlin; Galerie Thomas Flor, Düsseldorf
1985	<i>Paravision</i> , Postmasters Gallery, New York <i>Recent Abstract Painting</i> , John Good Gallery, New York		<i>Unlikely</i> , Galerie Kienzle & Gmeiner, Berlin; Städtische Galerie Waldkraiburg; W139, Amsterdam; Kunstverein Konstanz
1986	<i>An American Renaissance – Painting and Sculpture since 1940</i> , Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, FL <i>Time After Time</i> , Diane Brown Gallery, New York	2008	<i>Out of Line</i> , Galerie Kienzle & Gmeiner, Berlin
	<i>Group Show</i> , Donald Young Gallery, Chicago	2009	<i>CA.BU.+BA.D.AL.MO</i> , Galerie Thomas Flor, Düsseldorf <i>To Have It About You</i> , The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection, Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, MN
1987	<i>Amenoff, McLaughlin, Stephan</i> , Michael Lord Gallery, Milwaukee, WI <i>The Antique Future</i> , Massimo Audиello Gallery, New York	2011	<i>False Friends</i> (curated by Gerrit Gohlke), Kienzle Art Foundation, Berlin; Brandenburgischer Kunstverein, Potsdam
	<i>Post-Abstract-Abstraction</i> , The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT	2012	<i>Alien – unheimliche Wesen aus einer fremden Welt</i> (curated by Gerrit Gohlke), Brandenburgischer Kunstverein, Potsdam
	<i>Ironische Erhabenheit, The Ironic Sublime</i> (curated by Tricia Collins und Richard Milazzo), Galerie Albrecht, München	2013	<i>Broken/Window/Plane</i> (curated by John Yau), Tracy Williams Ltd., New York
	<i>Lead</i> , Hirschl and Adler Modern, New York		<i>I Surrender</i> , Devening Projects, Chicago
1988	<i>The Image of Abstraction</i> , Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles		<i>Works of the Jenney Archive</i> , Gagosian Gallery, New York
1989	<i>Land Scope</i> , Vrej Baghoomian Gallery, New York <i>Collapsing Light</i> , Laurie Rubin Gallery, New York		<i>Reinventing Abstraction</i> (curated by Raphael Rubinstein), Cheim&Read Gallery, New York
	<i>Imagenes de la Abstracciон (Fatal Abstraction)</i> , Fernando Alcolea Galeria d’Art, Barcelona		<i>Malerei – Aktion – Konzept, die Sammlung Jochen Kienzle</i> , Klostermuseum Kloster Unser Lieben Frauen, Magdeburg
	<i>The Silent Baroque</i> , Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg	2015	<i>Full tilt</i> (curated by John Yau), Novella Gallery, New York
	<i>A Decade of American Painting 1980–89</i> , Daniel Weinberg Gallery, Santa Monica, CA		<i>E. 1027</i> , Joe Sheftel Gallery, New York
1990	<i>Spellbound</i> , Marc Richards Gallery, Santa Monica, CA		<i>The Thing Itself</i> (curated by John Yau), The Center for Contemporary Art, Bedminster
	<i>Token Gestures</i> , Scott Hanson Gallery, New York		<i>How to be Unique</i> , Kienzle Art Foundation, Berlin
	<i>The Last Decade: American Artists of the 80’s</i> , Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York		<i>Nice Weather</i> , Skarstedt Gallery, New York
	<i>Vertigo</i> , Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris		<i>This and Something Else</i> (Dan Devening, Gary Stephan), Grölle Pass Projects, Wuppertal
1991	<i>The Figure in the Landscape</i> , Baumgartner Galleries, Washington		
	<i>Figuring Abstraction</i> , Vrej Baghoomian Gallery, New York		
	<i>Vertigo – The Remake</i> , Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg		
	<i>Rope</i> , Fernando Alcolea Gallery, Barcelona		
	<i>La Metafisica Della Lee</i> , John Good Gallery, New York		
1992	<i>Intimate Universe</i> , Michael Walls Gallery, New York		
1993	<i>The Single Frame</i> , John Good Gallery, New York		
	<i>The Return of The Exquisite Cadaver</i> , The Drawing Center, New York		

Selected Museum Collections and Institutions

Kienzle Art Foundation, Berlin
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn
The Art Institute of Chicago
Contemporary Museum of Art, Cincinnati, OH
Museum of Contemporary Art, Kiasma, Helsinki
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
The Los Angeles County Museum of Art
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
The Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica, CA
Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC
Kunstmuseum Winterthur

Awards and Honors

American Academy of Arts and Letters
John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship
National Endowment for the Arts
The New York Arts Foundation

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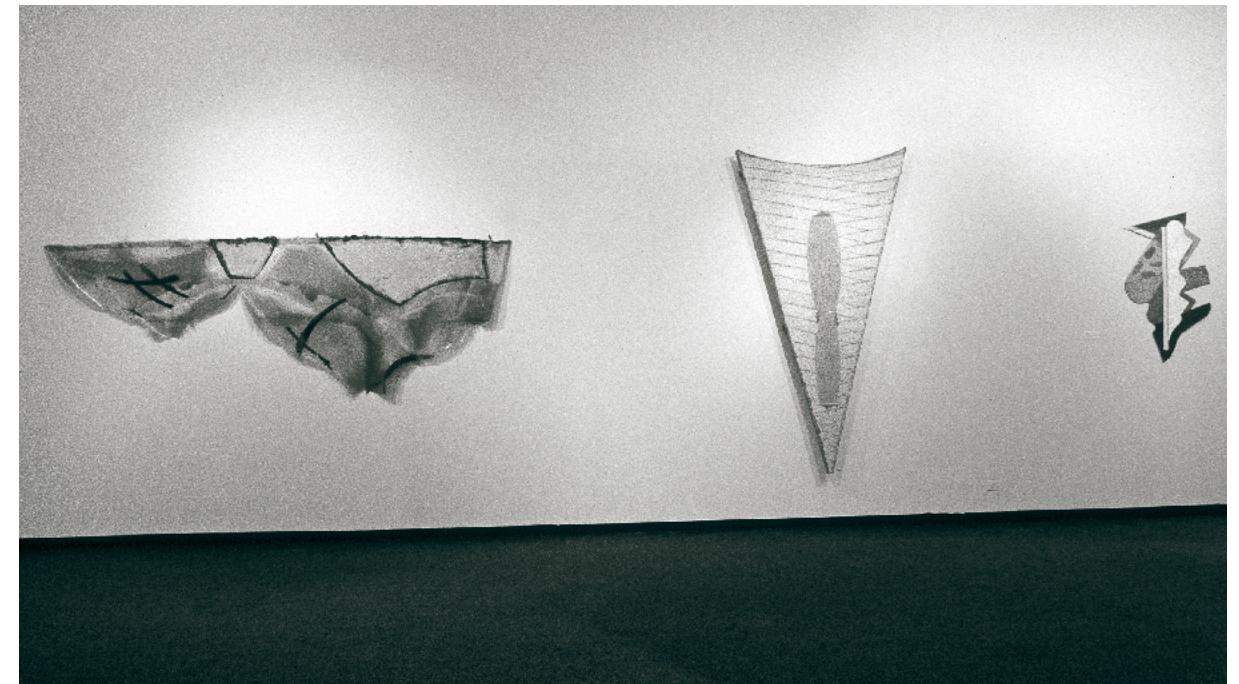


In The Odeon: From left to right:
David Salle, Matt Mullican, Michael McClard,
Mary Boone, Troy Brauntuch, Ross Bleckner,
Michael Tracy. Front: Gary Stephan.
(New York Magazine, April 19, 1982)



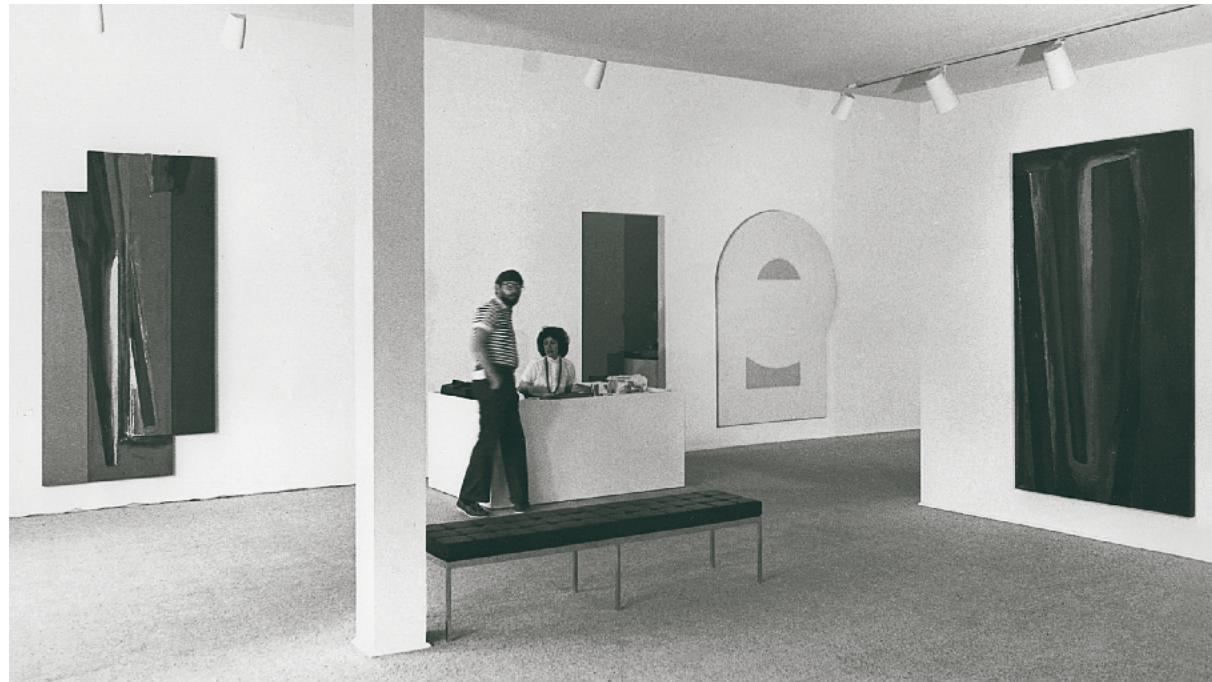
Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco, 1977
Mary Boone Gallery, New York, 1980

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Early Work, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 1982
Ronald Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis, 1982

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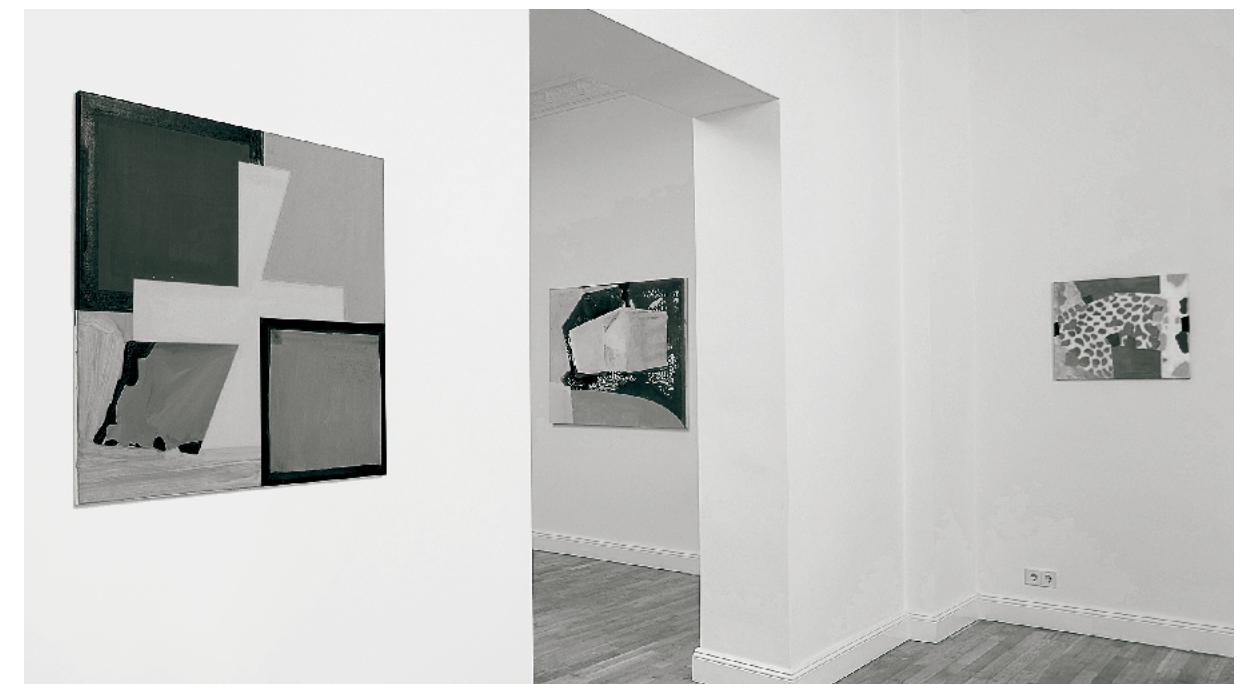


Ronald Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis, 1982
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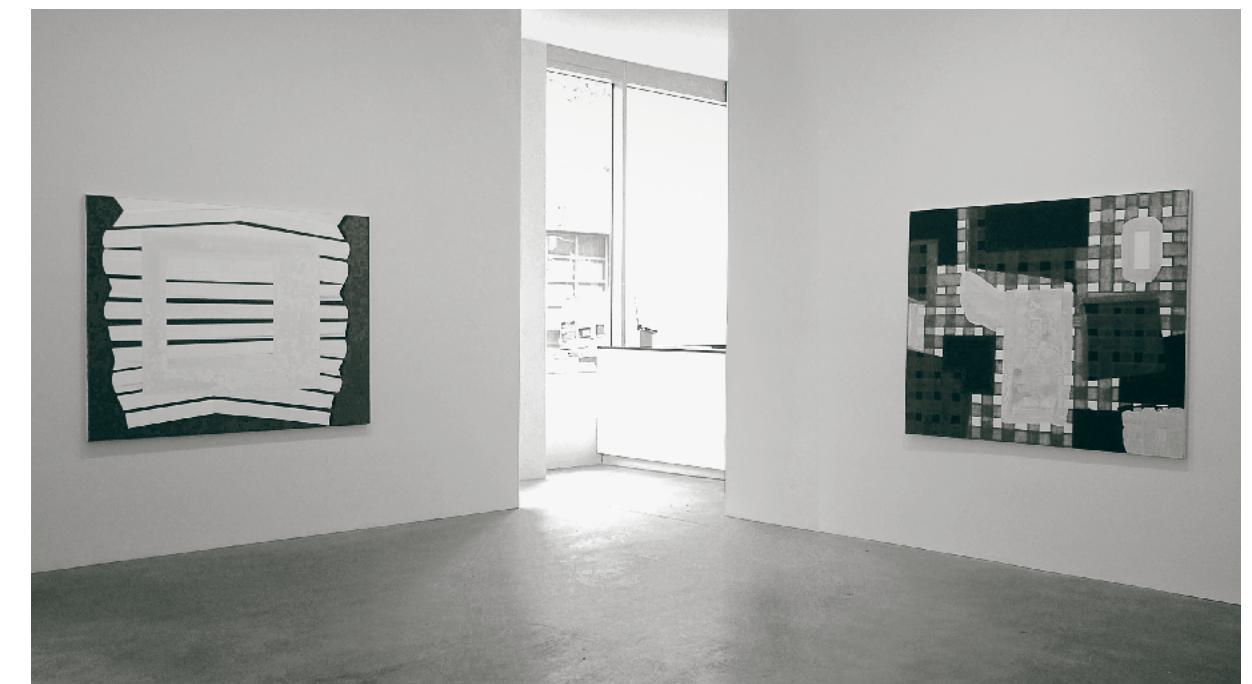


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The Story of What Happens, Devening Projects, Chicago, 2012
Tspace, Rhinebeck, 2013

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Philip Stein Gallery, St. Louis, 2014
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Susan Inglett Gallery, New York, 2014
Susan Inglett Gallery, New York, 2016

The Future of Reading, Kienzle Art Foundation, Berlin, 2017
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