

PAINTING ON THREE-DIMENSIONAL SUPPORTS

Ulrich Loock: Already in your early works one senses that your main concern is the question of the location of painting. The place that is formed when paint is applied somewhere.

Katharina Grosse: My assumption was initially that paint has to be voluminous if it is to achieve presence. So I began casting lumps on a small scale and placing them on the picture surfaces in order to form planes and plateaus.

UL: Looking quickly through your work, what I see in the pieces from the late 1980s onwards is materialised colour, or colour as material, that is applied to a particular support, in this case a canvas. Following on from that you began to paint very thinly and to draw lines with the brush, which are generally aligned to the geometry of the picture support, so at first they ran vertically and horizontally. At some point diagonals and arcs were added. So, basically, a disposition of the paint that depended on the shape of the picture support and later the wall. After that came the spray pieces, where it is also of central importance that the paint finds its location. But the properties of the support, of the architecture or the object are no longer obeyed as regard their geometry. The paint extends out over their boundaries, which we see as givens and formulate as such in our speech, and which for us are practical and functional. And then there appears to be an (as yet) final step: strangely cut objects made of styrofoam, for instance, whose angular forms recall Chinese scholar rocks that have had paint applied to them - where once again the paint seems to be identified in a curious manner with the object and the whole to be independent of the spatial situation. It is, as if, in some radical way, the colour body brought its own space with it. Works of this kind seem to float in space, without any attachment to the architectural room. Your central theme is the location of painting, although you free it increasingly from any ties to a place.

KG: Yes, this idea of the doubled location is essential. This disengagement from the architectural space became clearer with my first spray piece for the Projektraum at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1998, which was curated back then by Roman Kurzmeier. The visual field of the painting allows an illusionistic location to be established, whose material manifestation only first becomes visible in the three-dimensional surface of the room. This location within the painting contravenes the laws of the architectural space and seems to dissolve it visually. The simultaneity of the two systems of orientation generates a new locus for the painting, in the painting and through painting, whose properties (goal) is the greatest possible autonomy from this space and from the influences of the institutional structures.

UL: Modernism is strongly predicated on the autonomy of painting. But there is also a current in Modernism that has been against making painting autonomous and against liberating it from the duties which to some extent it has performed for centuries. The Bauhaus, De Stijl and the Russian Constructivists all attempted to transform painting into a factor of production and to combine it with architecture, or to use colour and painting in an architectural way. The curious thing is that you and your work are in this tradition, but turn the tradition around. You introduce your work into the architecture and eliminate all of the picture supports that would ensure

the art is transportable and thus sellable. At the same time you claim you are wresting an autonomous reality from the painting, or from its connection with the architecture.

KG: The parameters of autonomy constantly change. My declaration of independence is made visible by the contradiction, by overwriting the existing picture receptacle. My activity, regardless what I am doing at the time, is extremely non-site-specific, even anti-site-specific, and in that way highlights the intellectual aspects of its pictorial value, i.e. its fragile, ever-mutable qualities and its independence from the material outcome.

UL: Your painting is highly specific when it comes to its aesthetic presence. In the beginning you focused on the Where. The paint had to be massive and paste-like, so that it was in fact perceived as material and not merely as colouring. And the material had to have a location, and the location is the pictorial field. So I would say the theme of this painting is its own location. But in appearance it has something coarse, patchy about it, and something that could easily go in the direction of being unpleasant or unaesthetic. What distinguishes such an aesthetic? A lot of new music is set in very curious pitches, especially high ones, overblown, because that is where one can arrive at hitherto unknown sonic experiences. So when one resorts to somewhat unlikely paint materials, is this perhaps accompanied by an interest in opening up aesthetic vistas that are as yet uncharted?

KG: On the one hand my understanding of painting is informed by my studies of high art in museums. The consequences that derive from this are overlapped by my everyday aesthetic perception of urban surroundings, which are pretty vulgar.

UL: Should this penchant for vulgarity be seen as directed against high art and as solidarity with our everyday surroundings?

KG: I have deliberately regarded the aesthetics of vulgarity as a means of establishing everyday experiences within this knowledge of high art, without having recourse to implants from photography, film or pop culture. They would also have been possible ways of manifesting contemporariness in my work.

UL: One cannot say you take vulgarity to the extreme. You don't look especially for something repulsive or truly revolting. Your liking of vulgarity does not strike me as wishing to provoke.

KG: That is certainly not my intention. A picture cannot share the reality from which it comes. If vulgarity is a starting point for me to devise an aesthetic formula, ultimately it has to be abandoned again once I have come up with my image.

UL: But why?

KG: Because I think that otherwise the image is not independent enough, not only from the process of its manufacture but also from the initial idea and the theory that surrounds it. A problem can rarely be solved on the same level as that on which it arises.

UL: And what does the image gain through this independence?

KG: It can allow a mode of existence to manifest that cannot be conceived of in the everyday context.

UL: What would you say, how far is your painting linked with yourself? With you as a person with a particular biography, with your own wishes and

desires, difficulties and problems, your will to express and your background. How do you construe this relationship?

KG: On the one hand a lot of the decisions are reached from an inner desire and the necessity of satisfying certain needs. But personality or biography are also constructs that get constantly changed and altered according to the situation. There are different ways of saying that a work is coloured by a personality or a biography, and that is not an obvious feature in my work. It would be interesting to develop a way of thinking that had enormous plasticity and was quite unfamiliar with the notion of habit.

UL: How do you respond to your own painting? I can roughly imagine how it is done, and that above all it entails an appreciable amount of physical effort. It also looks gestural. I can imagine you yourself are astonished by what comes out of your doing. How familiar or alien is what you see when the wraps are removed?

KG: It is rare that I identify with the outcome of my work.

UL: You often say that a new work comes from the one before. That makes me think of a mental space that is filled with painting, and enlarged step by step.

KG: Yes, that describes it very well. My painting comes to me more readily when I draw on the reservoir stored in my mind.

UL: That means your works don't develop as visual responses to foregoing actions, but rather within a space belonging to mind and memory.

KG: ...to the mind and also to the way I proceed. A lot emerges while working. I get an immediate feedback, and that prompts the next step. I often work on lots of pieces at once in my studio.

UL: Does that mean you identify ways of proceeding or certain dispositions during the process of painting, which you then decide whether you will continue to develop or correct in another work?

KG: I'll go and do it somewhere else on a larger scale or in different colours. When I work in my studio, I leave as many possibilities open as I can. When I work on site I obviously have to channel myself and work more in one direction, so that it gains a clarity that has more than what one could have envisaged.

UL: It sounds as though you work by experimenting and groping your way forward.

KG: Yes, my approach is strongly coloured by a way of thinking that regards painting as an activity that takes place in its own time. I do not have an operational approach to artistic production in which something is optimised at the outset and then carried out like on an industrial production line.

UL: When you say "thinking", does this way of thinking relate to technical processes, to sequences of events, methods and structures, or is it a way of thinking that relates perhaps to the cosmos, our existence, time, to human or abstract themes?

KG: It might even be more than both of these dimensions together. Successively and simultaneously. As I see it we are moving in an infinite field and there is something that we are not really able to define in terms of magnitude. That which becomes visible as visual material or a particle of an image gives partial information about a larger entity, without being in any way an excerpt or fragment. Which means that questions about composition

or order have to be put quite differently. That's the point I've reached right now. When I ask myself which structure is referred to by what we see in a painting, sooner or later the question will arise as to the kind of spatiality my own existence has.

UL: Is this kind of painting a metaphor for something else, or is it part of a larger context? The colours in Gothic cathedrals are refractions of the white, all-embracing divine light that has to be filtered through the stained glass in order to be visible to us humans.

KG: I think there's a mental faculty with which I can find that in my work. Which explains my distance to the vulgar and everyday when it comes to settling on an image. This everyday connection draws the painting into the physical space, which also brings together the other major factors we otherwise communicate with, such as spatial and temporal sequences, which are consecutive and causal. In painting as in no other medium, simultaneity and successiveness can occur within the structure of the same image.

UL: Different temporal planes are brought together, so that things from the past are linked with things from the present. As for instance a painting that has already been painted, and is then painted over again, thus collapsing various temporalities into one another. Is this something you have tried out because it somehow seems interesting, or are we looking here at an all-embracing idea that already existed beforehand?

KG: The two cannot be separated. The current concept is based on experiments in the studio and is constantly modified and directly enlarged on while painting. Time during the construction of a painting is not only conceivable as a simultaneity of different dimensions, but also as a section going in other directions. The negative space I introduced by means of empty spaces and the possibilities this gives of amplifying the presence of what is missing is all connected with that experience.

UL: You have talked of a work's "potential for meaning". Can one say what meaning it contains? I can understand this on a rather abstract level, inasmuch as the things are not assigned a permanent location but are subjected to time and again to displacement. So the painting cannot assume a position in one place. The painting's place changes, empty spaces emerge, and a context is created from unceasing and perhaps circular displacement. But "potential for meaning" sounds more concrete and less abstract.

KG: You have described it absolutely correctly. What I think of in that connection is the possibility of inscribing a work with a wide variety of information - that word is certainly more apt than "meaning" - which is to say elements are brought together that engender the work, and these elements must be capable of opening up gaps when an attempt is being made to translate into the customary language.

UL: One noticeable aspect is that your painting¹ spreads out over functionally distinct elements of the facade, such as windows and walls - which we also distinguish from one another linguistically - without any regard to the established differences. How do you see the relationship between painting and a reality that is defined conceptually and functionally in different terms?

KG: Boundaries are erased and objects that border on one another point suddenly to a mutual colour surface. Although things exist in their own specific ways, they are simultaneously divided up into new fields. Mutually exclusive levels can be linked synchronously with one another.

1) *Untitled*, 2003,
Berlinische
Galerie, Berlin

UL: The bounds of space are not really dissolved. They continue to exist and we also continue to recognise them. But where painting spreads to encompass differing elements the linguistic identity of the elements is questioned, or this linguistically identified connection is linked with its alternative. I see a window, I see a coping on a wall, and at the same time I see a shade of pink that links the two... to which I say it is a pink shade, without making any more distinctions between the window and the coping. I regard all of these alternating possibilities as equally valid.

KG: It's true that the boundaries are not dissolved. It is important to me that two incompatible systems mutually engage.

UL: Does that mean that you are less interested in the aspect of "crossing out"? That would also take us to associations with graffiti - as well as to the fact that graffiti is justified by saying it allows members of minority groups to raise their voices against the majority culture. This sort of aspects appears to play less of a role in your work.

KG: Graffiti is a declaration of the author's presence and power. They are very distinct calligrams that mark a territory. The more innocuous versions are a kind of graphic design in public space. This feeling of an aggressive occupation of a place gets complicated in my work because the method of temporal interweaving, which comes from painting, undermines clear-cut hierarchical relationships.

UL: Talking of aggressiveness in your work, one could say perhaps that aggression is necessary in order to question the one-dimensional linguistic system, to expand it or add alternatives. Linguistic unambiguousness is a very expedient means for functional sequences, and you dissolve it through your work.

KG: This "expediency" allows the establishment of one-dimensional hierarchical systems that are very useful for what is supposed to be. The possibility of circumventing these hierarchical connections, however, is strongly anchored in the language of painting. The fusion of incompatible systems leads to a confrontation with quite different mental processes than those one is trained for in everyday life, where there is only one answer to a question.

2) *Untitled*, 2003,
Galerie Conrads,
Düsseldorf

UL: A bookcase has been incorporated into the work². Your painting creates connections that do not otherwise exist. The pillar is linked with the bookcase and then both of them with the wall. That has a similar effect perhaps to photography: One of the functions of photography is putting things on a common level.

KG: The difference is that painting always remains present in its materiality. When I look at a waistcoat that Goya painted using dashes of ochre, in that context they are golden buttons, but they are also oil paint. This simultaneity of materiality and illusion is a phenomenon unique to painting. It is precisely this that is levelled in photography. The elements that give body to thinly sprayed paint are something quite different to this uniform surface. Individual particles that are identified as jotters or books. And conversely, returning to the illusion created in a classical painting, a dollop of oil becomes a pimple on a woman's nose. There is an area of colour that soars through the space, and when I look carefully it is books, a pane of glass and a radiator.

3) *Untitled*, 2004,
Düsseldorf

UL: Can you explain why you insist on using household items for your objects, such as clothes, a bed or a bookcase? You don't use articles from supermarkets, or cars or other consumer objects.

KG: Initially the bookcase made sense because it is very similar to the surface of a painting and makes the idea of a bodily surface very present. The bed was added when I painted my bedroom in Düsseldorf. And with that came a whole wealth of objects such as clothes and money.

UL: What was the impulse behind spraying your bedroom?³

KG: I really wanted to do a small piece that was not tied to any schedule and wasn't for an exhibition. I wanted to see how it would be if I sprayed paint all over my personal belongings.

UL: So the symbolic dimension of the bed and the belongings does play a role. Along with this intimate dimension, the garments that belong to you, the bed you lie in, the money you carry around in your purse, and so on.

KG: I wanted to experiment and see how the symbolic dimension behaves in the procedure I had developed in my painting. The fact that I travel so much meant my bed had the most familiar and important function in my life. Apart from that I live in hotels, and have scarcely any furniture. I have established that it is a matter of total indifference to me whether they are my things or not. I was simply fascinated by the difference in how the paint acts on the bed sheet, the pillows, the floor etc.

UL: So painting didn't particularly change the intimate and personal quality these objects had?

KG: The personal is raised to a more general level through painting.

UL: What I also noticed is the way the sprayed paints ran and trickled.

KG: A clear-cut line emerges from the paint trail, like a clue to crime. Proof is furnished that the picture surface has been summoned.

UL: Which brings us to an enormous history of the drip in art. All of the new fauves let their paints drip because it allowed them to express spontaneity, authenticity and immediacy. Also Pollock's painting is termed "dripping".

KG: It's a kind of indicator of temporality: it might have just been painted, may not even be dry. Perhaps the mingling of colours also gives the idea that control is no longer exerted. It has the look of inability.

UL: The term "inability" links up with the aspect of vulgarity and points towards a lack of experience.

KG: ...that there is no history that one can fall back on.

UL: One of the truly outstanding qualities of your works is that they do not require any indication that they are art, regardless whether they are inside or outside of a museum. Your painting is always present and perceptible and doesn't require any signpost. Your works are so visual and so understandable that they work under any circumstances.

KG: Everyone knows what a bed is and what experiences are involved in leaving it. The moment I get up and touch the floor, a great deal of imaginary spatiality has gone. That's interesting, because then at some point or other the majority of people will also find painting accessible.

UL: Your painting has something gestural about it and for that reason is linked with you as a person. As if an intimate gesture was being put before the public and that is slightly questionable. And yet your vocabulary is not personal, but consists of general, almost archaic gestures, which is to

say of the scrawls that all of us have done as children. This means a depersonalisation. Although you come in contact with the aspect of transporting intimate gestures into the public arena, at the same time you withdraw the personal side of it through this scrawl.

KG: I could also imagine that it is precisely this transportation into the public realm that leads to the withdrawal of the personal side. I don't think my painting is so gestural. Or everything is gestural, even what is lying there, how I move my hand, or how I walk.

UL: When you use commodity items they often look untidy, as though they have simply been thrown there. There's an element of negligence, neglect and forlornness.

KG: They are like particles which on the one hand are engulfed by the visual form as it establishes itself, and simultaneously are resistances that disturb its pictorial value. I transpose something that is not quite palpable into something three-dimensional, and attempt all the while to maintain the state of disorderliness for as long as possible.

UL: The aspect of a scrawl that spreads out over precious walls is very strong. Which has two implications. Firstly, that something which is rooted in history and thus has a certain value - this palace - is in a way attacked. That has something offensive about it. The other aspect is that the shifts in dimensions come across more effectively here than they do in some other pieces. The walls are clearly defined in size, while the painting is not defined by that dimension. I cannot be certain whether this is the scrawl of a giant, or the result of gigantic movements executed by a small person.

KG: You can see how the changes to the surface of the ceiling and walls, which sometimes loom out and sometimes are set back, set off the physicality of the architecture far more than they would with a very smooth space. That made it clearer to me that I wanted these inner volumes, this three-dimensional space inside of a large plastic structure as my substrate, and not simply some surface on which one then paints a picture. That is an important aspect that also led me to leave objects lying on the floor. I wanted to continue this plasticity on the floor.

4) *Untitled*, 2003,
Union, London

I did this piece⁴ in an exhibition space beneath the Underground in London. The structure of the space is dictated by the vault of the Underground. You get the impression you are looking at something jagged and broken, a painting in shreds, torn apart. There is no longer a coherent overall surface.

UL: Are you talking about the plastic form of the space or the painting itself?

KG: About the painting. There were also a variety of surfaces there, such as corrugated iron and plasterboard walls. Which meant the paint did not react the same on all the different surfaces. Experiences like this have prompted me to use additional objects which alter the surface for the paint ever more.

UL: Do you have the impression that in this work, the incoherence of the space had an influence on the incoherence of the painting? Was there an analogy?

KG: At any rate it presented the chance for that.

UL: And the coloration comes about during the process of painting? You don't work with a colour concept?

KG: There are no prior concepts, and very rarely a model. I only make them when I work with moveable objects.

UL: The painterly gesture is also reflected in the arrangement of the objects. At one point in the work at Palais de Tokyo, you shifted a picture panel and then made sure that it stood there at an angle.

KG: Yes, I staged the moment in which it quasi falls from the wall and is only hanging on at one point, the dramatic instant in which it detaches itself from the wall.

UL: You seem to be trying to fight geometry.

KG: Unless I discard the geometrical restrictions I cannot produce mutually contradictory systems. And then the idea of the simultaneity of incompatibles no longer works. That's why I need things that are crooked and can't be measured.

UL: And the theatricality of it doesn't bother you?

KG: No. This theatrical aspect is necessary in order to highlight particular experiences, and the Palais de Tokyo had this very theatrical space with a wall that ended in a long curve like at the back of a stage. At de Appel in Amsterdam I was able to formulate the individual steps of the staging with a lot more clarity.

UL: In Amsterdam the displacements were more complex, weren't they?

KG: Yes, I had seven individual spaces, which meant I could develop a kind of visual form that was set in motion from one to the next.

UL: You have transposed that somewhat intimate bookcase from the gallery into a wall full of bookshelves.⁵ Unlike the way perhaps the bed was transposed, there is a change of dimension here in the inserted element.

KG: There is also a jump in category here from intimate to public. One can distinguish a set of bookshelves from Montana, a leading Danish manufacturer that is the quintessence of Danish living. The space was divided up like a living room, just that it was far too big for that. I had planned to overpaint two very large paintings of mine that I had done in the past. That was new for me. And in addition I put up a wall of bookshelves that echoes the format of the paintings. The hall was also fitted with an extra floor covering, and then I painted over it all. That was shortly after I did the bed at my home. The point was that I not only paint over shelves that have been put there especially in a public space, but also over my own works.

UL: That is a process in which you keep on going, further and further, and keep on questioning the categorical tangibility or intangibility of realities: your own paintings, your own bed and then this designer furniture. Going from the window and cornice, the movement is now towards intimacy and to personal and symbolic value. The circle of categories is undergoing an expansion in various directions.

KG: Yes, I keep on checking which directions one can expand in. Because all of the additional elements that are introduced must be able to tie in on the information level with my favourite questions about painting.

UL: The fact that you first painted the books white is presumably because you are less interested in their social and concrete role as objects. It makes no difference whether for instance the Complete Works of Freud are there. You are more interested in their plastic presence, which has, however, the social and concrete as an echo space behind it.

5) *Double Floor*
Painting, 2004,
Kunsthallen Brandts
Klædefabrik, Odense

KG: Yes, exactly, like priming a canvas.

UL: I mentioned that your paintings convey a gestural impression, and you rather dismissed that. But the paintings look as though they have been done with sweeps of the arm. What is the actual speed involved in your painting?

KG: I move quickly. Sometimes I am filmed while I am working, and that proves difficult because I move too fast. But it is not merely a question of sweeping your arm, you also have to walk. Your whole body is in motion, and there are situations involving staircases or tallosopes in which your body is artificially enlarged. That has a large bearing on the dimensions that the work can assume.

UL: When you're standing on a scaffolding you can neither reach out to the whole of the painting, nor can you in fact see it.

KG: That's right. The decisions have to be based on your imagination and on your recollections of what has been done up till then, without any visual comparison with what's already there. So you need a variety of forms of movement that go beyond the purely gestural. Which means the painting exists "completely" on a mental level before works commences.

UL: Could one say it's a picture of gesturalism?

KG: The activity by which the hand makes the motion so that the paint appears on the wall is transcended, leading to the state that I would call "image value". That for me is central, and not so much the gesture.

UL: In some ways that is unique. All of your early works are extremely material and have a strong physicality to them. After that you entered into the space, which could also be grasped as a movement, in order to gain physicality. But that is not the case with you right at the moment.

KG: Physicality is the starting point, and by moving into the spatial volumes there's a guarantee that everything is rooted in negotiable reality. It is then transformed, which results in the image value. I can only first develop the image by leaving this physicality. That is why the medium of spraying has become so important. It is less physical than with a brush, where one touches the substrate and there is a feedback in your body when the paint marks the spot on the canvas. Initially I was always interested in works in which this feedback could clearly be seen, as for instance in the works of Matisse from his Fauve period, where one still sees the canvas in the background.

UL: But doubtless spurred by a conscious or unconscious interest in asking where in fact painting can be. By the problematic question of the location of painting.

KG: Yes, and also by its meaning for the visibility of the image value, which only exists in the mental realm. So what is the specific thing about my work is that this value is not something fixed, that it is actually prior to the point of being constructed.

UL: You bring together aspects in your painting that don't actually belong together: different temporal aspects, categorically differing aspects. One could describe that as a synthetic procedure. And in connection with that there is a procedure that can be designated by the term displacement, where the things are taken apart or broken up and pitted against one another. So more of an analytic procedure.

KG: That's right, and it is even more evident in the rather more complicated constructions.

UL: That fits my theory that with time, you come up with more and more methods for creating displacement, for creating incongruence, not least in the way that in recent years various elements have emerged that are inserted between the architecture - which initially is taken as the natural ground for the painting - and the painting itself... In this particular case we are talking about a floor piece with hen's eggs scattered about it in a fairly random way. And sprayed all over with more or less cold colours.

KG: That is an excerpt from a larger floor piece that I did for the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston. The floor was a bit greasy, so the paint behaved differently there; it formed drops. Which meant that larger spots formed in the various shades. And then I had money on the floor, which was the next size up from these spots, and then I thought it would be great to have another size in between the money and the garments, something with a regular form. I started looking around for something that corresponded with the spots that I do with the spray gun. Like converting something into three-dimensions that has actually come into being during the process of painting, so actually a reintroduction of illusionism into a three-dimensional world. I always found eggs great, because they have such a small resting point and nevertheless have a relatively large volume. I was also interested in how fragile they are. People walking through them have to pay attention so as not to crush the eggs underfoot. Later I developed this into the large circular, spherical and egg shapes, which I combined into clusters.

UL: These simple stereometric objects raise the paint from the architecture, or from the floor on which it has landed during painting. They concentrate it, give it focus.

KG: One could view these additional objects as magnifiers. The picture is once again detached at these points. The film of paint is once again given a substrate. Serralves will be the first time that spheres and eggs are insinuated into a floor piece, which continues onwards up the walls and spans different floor levels.

UL: In some ways we are talking about a forced kind of stratification. Normally your painting is organised in such a way that you apply layers of paint on top of one another, and then this layering happens once again with the objects we've mentioned, albeit in a specifically materialised form.

KG: What also interests me about an egg or a sphere is that the surface has neither a beginning nor an end. That's why I found it more interesting to pick up on this form rather than to stick to the objects I had been using till then, the books, the beds or the garments. I am working in Álvaro Siza's building on the inner surfaces, while simultaneously negotiating the outer surfaces of objects as substrates for the same visual structure.

UL: So that the viewers will find themselves between an inside and an outside. If one thinks that through, one is also displaced as a viewer.

KG: Your perception of your own size is shaken.⁶ The panels are displaced. The painting that has been set upright had previously been in the space now occupied by the picture with the two dots. The dot picture is smaller than the space, and the canvas is so clean that the dots stand out like objects. At the same time, the space is so open that it is capable of extending across all the rest of the white room. The dot painting is resting on the ground. Depending on which relationship you set out from, from the ground to

6) *The poise of the Head und die anderen folgen*, 2004, raumfürraum, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf/Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf

the large picture or from the ground to the dot picture, the proportions between the ground and your own body constantly shift. Viewed from the gallery, it looked very much like a landscape. As a result of the white underpainting extending down to the grey floor, one gets the impression that the heap of earth is floating.

UL: In this instance the painting has quietened down enormously; the strokes are almost vertical and executed side by side, all in the same width. When the large painting is placed upright, it adds a horizontal to the verticals. Is there any special reason for this uncustomary quietness?

KG: Here, for the first time, I have combined elements that expand the basic properties of painting, that project them into the volume and make them part of the support. So the image layer that is placed over it as the closest, co-existing system is played down in favour of the underlying elements.

UL: Would you say that this is a piece that reflects more on the nature of painting than others?

KG: It reflects on the way that painting can be shown. I have brought two canvases into the situation, into my displacement loop, which for its part teases out the components in my theme, such as light, volume, representational depiction, the canvas and the space behind, as well as the field of colour upon it. The staging can only gain in importance in subsequent works.

UL: In terms of status, spray-painting is more enveloping than painting on canvas, or even the other objects.

KG: The canvases seem slightly at a remove. They have another structure.

UL: But they are not substitutes or vehicles for the idea "picture" or "painting", but are indeed paintings. And a picture like that won't get painted over?

KG: It could happen. I intentionally avoided that here. I have been thinking about how to exhibit such pictures, and have created a kind of fictive private space. The exhibition space was divided into two, the one half rather small and the other large. A small space is often used for smaller works, like drawings, but I wanted to give it a history.

This is a machine room at a university in Richmond⁷, close to Washington. The piece here was very elaborate. The space sucked up an incredible amount of energy. You had to do an enormous amount before anything even became visible, before any kind of picture could emerge.

UL: You've left a gap here.

KG: Yes, I created a gap so as to give sharpness to the space. I organised some strips of plywood, placed them in front of the wall, and painted them. Then we leaned these pieces of plywood upright against the wall in a second space.

7) *Untitled*, 2005,
Solvent Space,
Richmond, Virginia