



GERHARD RICHTER

10TH OCTOBER 1999 - 9TH JANUARY 2000

Project and exhibition by Bruno Corà
Setting design by Massimo Martino, Guest Curator

The exhibition is promoted by:
Comune di Prato - Assessorato alla Cultura, Unione Industriale Pratese, Cariprato S.p.a.,
Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Prato, Famiglia Pecci

With the support of:
Orlando Franchi di Luigi Filippo Radice Fossati & C. S.a.s., Prato

The Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci dedicates a great exhibition to the pictorial genius **GERHARD RICHTER**, who is considered one of the most important artists of the second half of our century.

THE EXHIBITION, curated by the Director Bruno Corà and organised with the collaboration of other museums and international institutions, such as the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus in Munich, the Museums Ludwig in Vienna and Budapest, the Czech Museum of Fine Arts in Prague, the Fine Arts & Projects in Mendrisio, the Astrup Fearnley Collection in Oslo, some French museums and FRAC, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington and other private collections, represents the biggest anthology dedicated to the German artist in Italy.

The exhibition, open from 10th October 1999 to 9th January 2000, is a unique occasion to get thoroughly the work of one of the greatest characters on the international art scene.

In addition to *Atlas*, (the encyclopaedic work composed of more than 600 photos, collages, sketches, and drawings) the exhibition presents a wide range of paintings belonging to the pictorial cycles performed by the artist from 1960 until now: portraits, nudes, cities, landscapes, mountains, clouds, greys, colour charts and abstract paintings.

Atlas is a personal collection of images 'in progress', organised in medium-size panels which include materials grouped in the form of thematic albums, such as private scenes, special and formal experiments, landscapes, seen city areas, houses, coloured cards, colour proofs, abstractions, etc. where he is constantly searching for pictorial results. In fact, from this series of images Gerhard Richter takes themes and motives for his paintings, as the numerous pictorial works, exposed in parallel to *Atlas*, point out.

For the occasion a new edition has been published, which includes the catalogue of *Atlas*, edited by the Lenbachhaus in Munich with the critical contribution of Helmut Friedl, and the complete **CATALOGUE** of the exhibited works, curated by Bruno Corà and edited by Museo Pecci / Gli Ori, with critical essays by Benjamin Buchloch, Jean François Chevrier and Bruno Corà.

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GERHARD RICHTER has been working on photographs since 1962, as this was considered the perfect means for the objective reproduction of reality. In this sense, he considers photos taken from newspapers, advertising dépliants and old albums. The 'photographic portraits' of *Prinz Sturdza* (1963), *Onkel Rudi* (1965), and *Frau Nippenberg* (1965), the 'reproductions' of published images, such as *Große Sphinx von Giseh* (1964), *Turmspringerin* (1965), and *Acht Lernschwwestern* (1966), or banal subjects such as *Klorolle* (1965) and *Fenstergitter* (1968), the nude of *Spanische Akte* (1967), the urban landscape with the original air views of cities, *Stadtbild M1* (1968), *Stadtbild SL* and *Sa* (1969) were born like this.

The 'analytical' phase is followed by a more 'introspective' phase, defined by the artist himself: "sentimental romantic". He paints mountains, *Himalaja* (1968) and *Alpen-Stimmung* (1969); rural landscapes, *Korsika* (1968), *Landschaft mit Kleiner Brücke* (1969), *Grosse Teyde-Landschaft* (1971) and *Das Parkstück* (1971); seascapes, *Seestück-Welle* (1969), *Seestück-Morgenstimmung* (1969), *Seestück* (1975); clouds, *Wolken* (1970) and the rainbow, *Regenbogen* (1970), *I Vesuv* (1976).

At the same time he investigates thoroughly the analysis of the basic elements of painting. With the series of paintings taken from Tiziano, *Verkündigung nach Tizian* (1973), Richter looks at the history of art and represents the change from a 'photographic', reverent view of reality to the 'abstract' self-reverent view of painting. The superimposed double portrait of the artists *Gilbert & George* (1975) belongs to this period.

He works contemporaneously at coloured painted background and grey monochromes.

The 'abstractions' such as *Ausschnitt-Kreutz* (1971), *Rot-Blau-Gelb* (1973), *Fiktion-4* (1975); the greys on canvas, *Grau* (1973, 1974, 1976), or on glass, *Doppelglasscheibe* (1977) and the second sampling series (the first is dated 1966) of enamel colours such as *256 Farben* (1974) belong to this period.

At the end of the '70s his research on greys stops and his painting tends towards free abstraction. Technically, his starting point is no longer photography, like in the '60s; it is the photographed and enlarged pictorial sketch. He then produces a series of paintings entitled *Abstraktes Bild* (1977, 1981, 1987), and pictures such as *Marian* (1983), *Athen* (1985), *Wand* (1994) and the three *River* (1995).

Richter never stops alternating his paintings performed in a mechanical or gestural form and the free abstractions of the last years, with the reproductions of reality based on a photographic model, such as the 'still lives' *Kerze* (1982), *Zwei Kerzen* (1983), *Schädel* (1983), the portraits of *I. G.* (1993) and the landscape of *Jerusalem* (1995).

Through the continuous exploration of all possibilities in painting, Richter casts doubt on the idea of 'style'. According to him, concepts like 'realism', 'abstraction', 'figuration' can be considered non-exclusive procedures.

He stated: "It seems to me that the invention of the Readymade was the invention of reality. It was the crucial discovery that what counts is reality, not any world-view whatever. Since then, painting has never represented reality; it has 'been' reality (creating itself). And sooner or later the value of this reality will have to be denied, in order (as usual) to set up pictures of a better world." [G. R., 30.5.90]