

Serpentine Gallery

Press Release

Serpentine Gallery presents major new work by Gerhard Richter: *4900 Colours: Version II*

23 September – 16 November 2008

Gerhard Richter is one of the world's greatest living artists. Since the early 1960s, he has tirelessly explored the medium of painting at a time when many were heralding its death. He has produced a remarkably varied body of work, including photography-based portrait, landscape and still-life paintings; gestural and monochrome abstractions; and colour chart grid paintings.

The Serpentine Gallery presents *4900 Colours*, a major new work comprising bright monochrome squares randomly arranged in a grid formation to create stunning sheets of kaleidoscopic colour. The 196 square panels of 25 coloured squares can be re-configured in a number of variations, from one large-scale piece to multiple, smaller paintings. Richter has developed a version comprised of 49 paintings especially for the Serpentine Gallery.

4900 Colours is parallel to Richter's design for the south transept window of Cologne Cathedral, which replaced the stained glass that was destroyed in World War II. The window, unveiled in August 2007, comprises 11,500 hand-blown squares of glass in 72 colours that are derived from the palette of the original Medieval glazing. The seemingly arbitrary distribution of colours was generated using a specially developed computer programme and this renewed interest in using chance to define composition led the artist to develop the concept for *4900 Colours*.

Richter produced the first in his series of grid paintings in 1966 in which he replicated, in large scale, industrial colour charts produced by paint manufacturers. As with his photo-paintings, the use of found material as a source removed the subjective compositional preferences of the artist, however, the *Colour Chart Paintings* took this a step further, eradicating any hierarchy of subject or representational intent, and focusing on colour to create an egalitarian language of art.

Since 1964, Richter has had more than 100 solo exhibitions worldwide. He represented Germany at the 36th Venice Biennale in 1972 and was the subject of a major touring retrospective, *Forty Years of Painting*, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2002.

The Serpentine Gallery exhibition is curated by Gallery director Julia Peyton-Jones, co-director Hans Ulrich Obrist, and exhibition curator Rebecca Morrill. It precedes two other major presentations of the artist's work in the UK in 2008 and 2009: at the National Gallery Complex, Edinburgh from 8 November 2008 and at the National Portrait Gallery, London from 26 February 2009.

Images: www.serpentinegallery.org/press. For press information contact: Rose Dempsey, 020 7298 1520, rosed@serpentinegallery.org Fleur Treglown, 020 7298 1528, fleur@serpentinegallery.org

Serpentine Gallery
Kensington Gardens
London W2 3XA

Telephone

020 7402 6075

Facsimile

020 7402 4103

Website

www.serpentinegallery.org

The Serpentine Trust is a limited company registered in England under no. 2150221. It is an Educational Charity, which is funded by Arts Council England and Westminster City Council. Registered charity no. 298809. VAT no. 466 5881 01.

Gerhard Richter
4900 Colours: Version II

Sponsored by

THE NOD.com

and

La Fondation Louis Vuitton pour la création

and

LVMH
HERMÈS • LOUIS VUITTON

Media Partners

Art Review

London Review
OF BOOKS