

# THE LOVE OF PAINTING

ISABELLE  
GRAW

GENEALOGY OF  
A SUCCESS MEDIUM

*Sternberg* Press 

# Painting in a Different Light

A Conversation with  
Jutta Koether about  
Joan Mitchell

**Jutta Koether:** I'd like to start with a question that's fundamental and, to my mind, very topical today. Seeing the Joan Mitchell exhibition last year at Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin,<sup>79</sup> with my students, I began to wonder about why and how we look at her paintings today. We might connect Mitchell's current relevance to the observation that, in recent years, artists who had more or less been forgotten or consigned to minor positions have reemerged in art-historical appraisals, which then lead certain galleries to take a fresh interest in them. It usually starts with a small survey exhibition that's then suddenly followed by retrospectives. I wonder what the reason behind this might be. Does the reconsideration of these works have effects or repercussions relevant to current theories and discourses around painting?

**Isabelle Graw:** It is extremely important to understand the current relevance of Mitchell's work and the way it connects to certain discourses. You've brought up the logic of the market, which over time appropriates even those supposedly rather marginal women artists who have been members of hegemonic artist groups (in this instance, the second-generation artists of Abstract Expressionism). Now it's Mitchell's turn—this is also a ramification of one of the structural laws of the commercial sphere, which assimilates those figures that insiders treasure as so-called artists' artists as well. There are additional aspects to her painting that are of interest at the moment in the way they align with current theoretical debates around painting.

**J.K.** Let me rephrase my question and be more specific. There are these laws of the market that we might question on a fundamental level. We're confronted with these waves, and suddenly a certain issue is on the agenda. Is it nevertheless possible to still make discoveries that transcend the market logic, that go beyond previous readings of her work?

**I.G.** One could explain the current interest in Mitchell's paintings by pointing to patterns of reception and certain theoretical conjectures that her work suddenly fits into. Her early work, in particular, caters to the resurgent desire for painterly gestures and composition. Literature on her work has repeatedly pointed out that her early pictures aren't Abstract Expressionist allover paintings but in fact retain the idea of composition and figure-ground relations.<sup>79</sup>

The clumps of paint placed centrally in her paintings of the 1960s might in fact be perceived as something rather figurative—because all the forces within the paintings drive toward these central clumps in a manner that could be described as centrifugal. Her paintings seem to become further animated by the density of the paint and the variety of brushstrokes, the apparently calligraphic lines around them forming a kind of background. As described in a recent essay by Mark Godfrey in *Artforum*, this holding on to compositional devices sits well with the rehabilitation of composition in recent painting theory.<sup>80</sup> Godfrey praises painters like Amy Sillman and Charline von Heyl for painting in new and unforeseen ways,<sup>81</sup> arguing that non-compositional procedures, such as aleatory procedures, have long been exhausted and overcome.

J.K. I take a somewhat different view. I don't think this desire for composition, also in Godfrey's sense, is perceptible in Mitchell. Even if a compositional element briefly emerges in her work, it subsequently dissolves again. Mitchell isn't hesitant, but she's very skeptical of these compositional marks: her practice is geared toward them but doesn't end with them. You're right, there are these clumps in her paintings, but if you compare them with the agglomerations in Philip Guston's work, they're rather frayed and soft—they positively dissipate along the edges.

I.G. Yes, they also look internally frayed, forming delicate and nervous mesh structures ...

J.K. Mitchell's clumps are always fractured and their coloring is never unequivocal. The more her work evolves and develops, the more process-based it becomes. When I recently had the opportunity to revisit her large-scale paintings, I was struck by both: there were the stripes or vertical gestures that could be seen as something entirely compositional, as series or figural formations, but as soon as you've decided to read them in a certain way, she immediately shatters that interpretation. Incomplete and hesitant elements always remain, although the gesture, the manner in which she employs the brush, is invariably very powerful. There's an intensity but also a tremulous vibrancy, as if she were never finished.

I.G. The intensity of her paintings has something planned and conceptual about it. There's the impression of the painter descending

into chaos in places, only to then distance herself from her imagery and take a conceptual approach. Perhaps it's this alternation between impulsive action and a considered approach that's of interest to us today in relation to a model of "conceptual expression," as I've called it with regard to Martin Kippenberger's paintings?<sup>82</sup>

J.K. I wouldn't necessarily draw that comparison. After all, conceptual expression, even if it's present here, is based on completely different premises. It's always bound up with social spaces such as the gallery. During the visit to the Mitchell exhibition I've mentioned, another visitor asked if we would mind if the lights were switched off so that we could all view the works in natural light. It was as if the stage lights had been turned off—we had to read the paintings all over again. This was solely about the relation between work, space, and artist—everything else was irrelevant. And yet the paintings register something "external"—like a sentence on a piece of paper, manifesting above all the artist's explicit will to be a painter.

I.G. The feminist art historian Linda Nochlin has convincingly argued that Mitchell's early work attests to what she calls a rage.<sup>83</sup> I should add, however, that this was never the authentic rage of the artist herself, but rather an aggressive energy that's not gendered. The insignia of clichéd femininity is absent from Mitchell's paintings. Although they look extremely vitalistic, they don't transmit any signs that could be read as typically feminine.

J.K. I've also recently reread this essay by Nochlin, and it occurred to me that Mitchell conceptualizes this "rage" in the sense that she translates it into her own painterly language. She works through it by recruiting the help of other "rage-ists," such as when she seizes Vincent van Gogh's *Sunflowers* (1887)—a high-intensity painting—for her own *Sunflower III* (1969), extracting that extremely harsh yellow. In this approach, she's basically employing the same language she also uses to process a Monet painting, which is to say, her rage has found its own signature or painterly language that wrests elements from these male role models, transforming them into her own gestures. This doesn't just involve feelings of kinship or affinity with the role models but also, paradoxically, an assertion of her claim to autonomy, idiosyncrasy, and her own gestural style.

I.G. Her paintings actually testify to a headstrong power, which is especially apparent in her works from the 1980s, when her positing of the brush grows bolder and bolder. And there's nothing to suggest that this is the force of someone who occupies the social position to which women are assigned.

J.K. The power has become uncoupled from her gender. The things she had said during her lifetime would in fact suggest that she distanced herself from other women. She's hardly alone—many women of her generation, like Jo Baer or Lee Krasner, for example, displayed a similar lack of solidarity with other female artists.



Joan Mitchell, *Sunflower III*, 1969

I.G. Helen Frankenthaler would be another artist with this sort of self-image—she, too, wanted to be “one of the boys,” embracing the role of the exceptional woman among the Abstract Expressionists. In Mitchell’s case, this desire for equality with her male colleagues even extended to her everyday habits—according to her biographers, she drank just as much as the other painters at the Cedar Street Tavern in New York and could be just as acerbic and cruel. Nevertheless she later permitted herself to come into contact with feminist art history; for example, Marcia Tucker curated her first retrospective at the Whitney Museum in New York in 1974, and she also exchanged letters with Noguchi.

J.K. Other women artists have such alliances: the collaboration between Isa Genzken and the curator Sabine Breitwieser is one example that comes to mind. On the surface, there’s a distinct distancing from, or refusal to negotiate, certain issues that the artist doesn’t want to address in her work (or life). But out of a kind of will to survive—and this also has to do with artistic instinct—she nonetheless forges alliances when the opportunity presents itself. Even more important, of course, are the people with whom there’s an intellectual connection.

I.G. Another interesting factor in Mitchell is the interplay between proximity and distance that I explored in an early essay: her work spans two geographical poles and draws its tension from that.<sup>84</sup> Arriving in New York in the late 1940s, she rather purposefully sought out the group of artists who dominated the scene at the time, making friends with painters such as Franz Kline and Willem de Kooning and becoming a member of the Eighth Street Club, which was extremely significant in enabling her to participate in the relevant discussions and intellectual exchanges. In 1951 she rented a studio in close proximity to Guston’s, and her study of his approach to painting is apparent in her work. But by the mid-1950s, she went into self-imposed exile—as the curator Jane Livingston has called it—in Paris, though she didn’t give up her studio in New York and traveled back and forth. She had numerous exhibitions in New York, but for personal reasons—she’d become involved with the painter Jean-Paul Riopelle—she lived in Paris, continuing to work in completely different social surroundings that, at the time, weren’t the center of art-historical attention. Having spent the 1960s between New York and Paris, she eventually settled in Vétheuil.

I.G. Exactly. She worked in Vétheuil, the Parisian suburb where Monet had once lived and worked too—it is pretty out of the way. When considering Mitchell's career, I can't help thinking of your own history and your own work spanning two poles—initially between New York and Cologne, and now New York and Berlin. By now you're also in the position of having two studios and making distinct kinds of art in each. If I remember correctly, you left Cologne in the early 1990s just as the local art scene was becoming professionalized and experiencing the first signs of institutional recognition. Even though you found an equally interesting situation in New York, you were in a sense distancing yourself from the environment that had originally forged you, and this also entailed developing a different formal language. We might almost argue that your situation was similar to Mitchell's—just as Mitchell's pictures became more translucent in Paris, as she applied the paint more thinly, your own paintings immediately after your move to New York show a similar tendency, as seen, for example, at your first Pat Hearn exhibition, where you showed extremely translucent surfaces with a pastel sheen. This development was probably only made possible by the distance you put between yourself and Cologne.



Jutta Koether, *Freud Broodthaers #1, 2016*

J.K. We might view this as a second stage of the rage we previously discussed, which becomes reformatted as something productive. It's renegotiated, as it were, using the means of artistic expression. Dissatisfaction and personal issues also play into such reformatting. You can feel that the scene surrounding you is about to change, and you don't want to be part of a change that's both inevitable and would confine you within a prescribed role. Mitchell, too, played a specific part in New York and had made some progress, but then this period of productive friction came to an end and she left.

I.G. In New York, she was cast in a particular role, which was that of the exceptional woman among the second-generation Abstract Expressionists—she'd conquered that position, but then she became stuck in it. It's interesting, in this context, that her early work engages with the formal language of some rather marginal figures associated with Abstract Expressionism, such as Arshile Gorky and Roberto Matta, as if in doing so she intended to claim a particular position—one that was just slightly off—for herself. So there was only one way for her to escape her prescribed role, and that was to abandon it for a new social universe where she could reinvent herself.

J.K. She reinvented herself, but was also forced to renegotiate the way she encountered the world and develop a painterly language appropriate for such an undertaking. In the history of painting, an artist's actions can't be disentangled from his or her awareness of that larger history. But the cultural context and the perspective informed by it will be different depending on whether you're in Europe or America, in a rural or urban environment, an expat or an involuntary exile. These factors result in changes to your self-awareness, your identity, your relationship with language, and so on.

Other artists, such as Cy Twombly and Jo Baer, also semi-consciously chose to become solitaires. Of course, the solitary figure exists in other cultural areas as well. When I was very young, I once got Mitchell mixed up with Patricia Highsmith! I'd also include Ingeborg Bachmann in this class. But making such decisions isn't altogether unproblematic—you pay a high price for them. You may well be very lonely at times. Mitchell too lived through very dark periods and struggled with alcoholism.

I.G. Until 1956, she presented shows in yearly intervals at the prestigious Stable Gallery in New York, but in France, where there

was very little interest in her work, her exhibitions grew more infrequent. That would change dramatically with the “Grande Vallée” series of paintings in the 1980s. These paintings produced in France could probably not have been made in New York—for example, she did Abstract Expressionist allovers and permitted herself an extremely feisty, self-confident use of color; her palette became more impressionistic, richer, and more nuanced.

J.K. She didn’t feel she had to restrain herself anymore. It was no longer about showing off the new big thing or a fresh idea once a year, as it had been in New York. She also sidestepped the emerging momentum of Pop art and the trend toward non-painterly production. In New York she’d played a particular part and had come a long way, but suddenly all that was left to do for everyone involved was to divvy up the spoils. The period of productive engagement was over. Her exile in France enabled her to turn toward a more experimental and even more process-based approach, which in time also developed in terms of the formats she used. Her technique became broader in range, and she now began making multipart paintings. At the same time she seems to have heard an inner rallying cry, “Stop delivering the goods!” It wasn’t supposed to be about routine business anymore, but about the bigger picture, about something beyond.

I.G. I’ve read these multi-panel paintings, such as *Clearing* (1973), as a literal expression of the urge to expand. Her vision grows to encompass several canvases, as if she were unstoppable. It’s also interesting that, from the outset and throughout her career, she worked in large formats, laying claim to a grand and meaningful kind of painting.

J.K. This challenge, of how to be physically dominant, to present yourself, to step into the limelight, but without your work becoming a megalomaniacal production—you can see in Mitchell how it can be done, especially if you turn off the gallery lighting.

I.G. In her last tondos, too, you get the impression that she was now taking all liberties, loosening the reins, even if she was restricting herself at the same time by using an unusual format.

J.K. The tondo in particular is an extremely overdetermined and difficult form. That’s why I see Mitchell’s move to this format

## *Death of the Author*

as a radical step. In these paintings there's a complete dissolution or deindividualization—they tear open an abyss that no longer has anything to do with her biography, reflecting more of a universal delirium. It becomes clear in these paintings that she didn't have too much time left and was trying to make a statement through her decisions relating to painting—by means of format, composition, and gesture. I'm profoundly impressed by how she persevered to the end in order to articulate herself one last time.

I.G. What makes Mitchell so relevant today is also the way in which her pictures invoke the trope of painting's self-action. She herself repeatedly stressed in interviews that she wasn't in control of the painterly process. She called this situation "no hands"—to paint like riding a bike with no hands,<sup>85</sup> the bicycle riding itself, with no one steering. But at the same time she also spoke, like many other painters, of the painting telling her what to do. To the degree that she abandoned control, her status as subject devolved upon the painting. What's interesting about Mitchell is how this myth of the subject-like, "living" painting takes on the character of an experimental setup. The process can be traced in the paintings themselves—the way the artist-subject backs off, pauses, considers, and deliberately attempts to eliminate itself, permitting the painting to become subject-like. The painter becomes the catalyst for this mythical experiment.

J.K. That's a good point you've described very well. In Mitchell, abstract painting becomes open to renegotiation in interesting ways. At the same time, her work also presents problems. The older she gets and the more she invests in these experimental setups, the more her work becomes limited to the studio. Nothing external is permitted to enter in a visible manner. Of course that was a conscious decision on her part, but to my mind it also raises new questions. Would it have been possible to admit any kind of outside, beyond the work of other painters—in her case, that Monet/Giverny story? You can tell she obsessively studied Monet, but she no longer engaged with the (art) world out there. Instead she explored the topography of her surroundings, nature, and Monet, who had gone through the same processes in the same place.

I.G. You're right—there's something claustrophobic about it. Before you mentioned Monet, I thought the outside of these paintings was painting itself. This was already true of the series displaying lumps of

paint of the 1960s, which, even though they communicate morphologically with Guston, ultimately evoke remnants of paint on a palette. The lump of paint stands for painting in the picture, and in the final analysis it declares only one thing: that this is painting. There were certainly sociological and biographical reasons that made such a declaration necessary—instead of opening up her paintings to social conditions, she was forced to stand her ground as a painter.

But the literature on Mitchell also mentions how she created her own social environment at her house in Vétheuil, where she accommodated assistants and a continual flow of guests. It seems to me that there were limits to this openness—she only let those into her world that she wanted to. Unforeseen encounters no longer occurred. Perhaps she had to maintain her project at a certain remove from the art world, in order to pursue it in its consistency and radicalness. In her lifetime, of course, she never received the institutional (and commercial) recognition her work deserved. That always makes me wonder: Why was the institutional art world, along with the commercial sphere, so hesitant when it came to placing the trust in her that her work required for success in institutional and economic terms?

J.K. That's a reasonable question to ask, of course, although some of Mitchell's contemporaries, such as Guston, also needed a long time.



Jutta Koether, *Bond Freud National Gallery, 2016*

I.G. But in Guston's case it had to do with the rupture in his work,~~Y~~ his turn to figuration, which was initially met with rejection.

J.K. In Mitchell, too, it had something to do with her painting. Even though there was no harsh discontinuity as there was in Guston, there were still a number of smaller breaks. For example, she left her home turf—that was the first considerable break. She became autonomous and she abandoned the language and the role or position she'd been cast in, also in terms of painting. She no longer maintained the same determination or relentlessness, as I already mentioned in the beginning. Moving away, an artist also deliberately cuts off or vitiates social and cultural biotopes. He or she departs on an emotional voyage and endeavors to devise a painterly expression for it. The work evolves accordingly—no more refining of arguments or further highlights.

I.G. What exactly do you mean by that? That Mitchell's painting didn't receive the recognition it was due because it provided no further highlights that could be marketed like a product? That she tended to work in more of a quiet, ongoing process?

J.K. It's an ongoing process that has its dramatic moments, but it's not an enactment of the popular drama. There are no drastic highs or lows in the painting, neither for reasons of desperation nor for purposes of entertainment. At the time she was leaving New York, Pop art, for example, was on the rise—completely different types of art suddenly became interesting, and nobody was expecting anything interesting from painting. At this point, Mitchell wasn't trying to hog the limelight or saying anything particularly radical or incisive. At that time, which painter was? Except for Picasso, who kept trying into old age.

I.G. Well, in the early 1950s there was de Kooning with his "Women" series. And the 1960s saw the rise of the media society in which the person behind the product became ever more important. The Pop artists, and of course Andy Warhol above all, understood this very well. And at this moment Mitchell withdrew to France—this was after New York had stolen the idea of modern art from Paris. I think that it was difficult for people at the time to make sense of the work of a painter who'd moved to a suburb of Paris and studied Monet and such. Today, it would also be unthinkable to defy the networking imperative, though it wasn't quite as pronounced then, as Mitchell did.

J.K. It would actually be completely unthinkable.

I.G. And there lies the source of Mitchell's fascination—that she pursued options that would be unthinkable today.

J.K. It's also her "product" that's unthinkable—that's why everyone's all over it today. People are incredulous precisely because it seems hardly credible, and that's why it elicits such boundless desire. Mitchell's paintings present a challenge—because you want to understand it and share in it, it's a craving for the unattainable. Mitchell represents something outrageous today: the possibility of an autonomous life.

I.G. We should remember at this point that being independently wealthy enabled her to afford her autonomous life.

J.K. That was the prerequisite for her artistic life, in which she very deliberately explored something unknown and took real risks.

I.G. The product "Mitchell," however, not only involves her decision to withdraw from an artistic movement and to risk becoming a solitary figure. The original bohemian milieu of New York, including the creative exchange with such artists as Yves Klein, de Kooning, Guston, has left its mark on the product as well. The early New York period is a decisive subtext to her work's fascination. Moreover, Mitchell also made some personal sacrifices by choosing not to have children/family so that she could focus on her work.

J.K. Yes, it's an approach you have to be able to afford in psychological terms as well! Such decisions can be harrowing—they always also involve hurting others and yourself. They're life-changing decisions few of us are prepared to make. Still, there's a kind of appeal to them.

I.G. Mitchell's paintings also witness to her awareness of the emblematic nature of painterly language. Drips and runs function differently in her paintings than they do in, say, Jackson Pollock's Action painting. Greenberg once criticized the second-generation Abstract Expressionists for their "Tenth Street touch," arguing that their distressed brushstrokes, speckled, streaked, and dripped, were ultimately just a kind of mannerism.<sup>86</sup>

J.K. That sounds about right!

I.G. Yes, only that in Mitchell I have the impression the drips were a consciously employed mannerism. It's made clear that we're not dealing with the authentic traces of her actions but with a vocabulary that has long been mannered and that she deploys quite deliberately.

J.K. And then also overdoes. But when you deliberately adopt a mannered approach, you also abandon the prevailing discourse. You consent to your own marginalization. The behaviors that her paintings register—her abandonments, her distrust of membership, her perseverance, and all the psychological contingencies—she consolidated in particular forms. For starters, there's the allover dabbing, then the loops, then there are the straight lines, similar to the broad, long lines; she was always employing specific marks.

I.G. The fascinating thing about these marks is that they constantly refer to their physical nature. Mitchell's work powerfully reminds us that painting is a language whose signifiers primarily refer to their physical materiality. These are the things that come to the fore in Mitchell, not the painter who applied the marks.

J.K. All of that is much more prominent in Mitchell than people, bodies with heads, a woman, or anything else to do with the world. These are things of complete indifference and only present in traces. In fact, nothing is present. It's basically a kind of self-deploying mechanism that's applied in a similar way to Agnes Martin's grids. Martin also introduces variation into her grids, a different but nevertheless structurally similar formal language; in both cases certain fixed elements are being deployed.

I.G. Nevertheless Mitchell's paintings, in contrast to Martin's, nourish the vitalistic projection of the absent painter as a ghostly presence. They seem to have been painted in full awareness of their vitalistic projective force.

J.K. Looking at Mitchell's paintings always turns into a kind of session.<sup>87</sup> There's no getting inside this art because there isn't any *inside*. Its impenetrability is part of her concept, since everything initially points to the opposite: gesture, staging, and the painting's

## Notes

1. See Hans Balung and Christiane Kraus, *Die Opiniones des Gemüdes: Das «deichmäßige Gemüte» der niederländischen Maler* (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 1994), 11. “Boundary-defying” may seem an unconvincing choice of terms, suggesting an unmet boundary that has been crossed. In fact, however, it captures an interesting movement where new boundaries have been drawn and new boundaries have been established. However, it captures an important truth: the expansive gesture of realist painting that was implicit in the adoption of increasingly heterogeneous media.
2. *Editing Texte zur Kunst*, I regularly had discussions with critics who preferred to defend their colleagues they regarded as special cases. It came to discussing painterly practices.
3. Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. Rocco Sinigaglia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For further citations of the book refer to the edition.
4. See Louis Marin, *De l'entretien* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1997), 33–34.
5. See Stefan Germer, *Kunst-Macht-Diskurs*. Die intellektuelle Karriere des André Felblin im Frankreich von Louis XIV (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1998).
6. See André Felblin, *Entretiens sur l'art et sur les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes*, 2 vols. (Paris: Chez S. Marbre-Carré, 1685–88), n.p.
7. See my essay, “Cooperate 'til You Drop: Art between the Mass Culture and Celebrity Culture,” trans. Nicholas Sternberg Press, 2009).
8. See Michel Foucault, “The Political Philosophy of the Intellectual,” *Radical Philosophy* no. 17 (Summer 1977): 12–14.
9. See the editor's introduction in John Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. John Pope-Hennessy (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1956), 15.
10. See Germer, *Kunst-Macht-Diskurs*, 11. See Peter Bexte, epilogue to “Diderot's Schrift ‘Widerspruch’ in Denis Diderot, *Den Kunsten*” in Denis Diderot, *Widerspruch*: Diderots Schrift über die Kunst (Berlin: Philo Fine Arts, 1993).
11. See Merlin Carpenter, “The Wagging Dog: A Lecture for Pasadena, Not Delivered,” in

scale ensure an immersive character. They challenge the viewer to delve into them, but this immersion doesn't really work. As a result, you're sucked into her psychological model.

I.G. A psychological model in which the external remains outside; the door stays closed and the world is kept at a distance.

J.K. That strikes me as an interesting model to work with. It may be a cliché, but the power of these paintings only unfolds when you're in a space full of them. That's why I've developed the paradigm of the “room full of paintings,” since it doesn't work with just one painting—a single work is precisely not the work.<sup>88</sup> However much energy you put into something you then present as the latest masterpiece, this dependence of one picture on the other nevertheless comes into play, there's a constant negotiation and communication between the paintings themselves. It's not about experiencing one painting, but about experiencing the entire space.

I.G. Mitchell's multipart panels are also interesting in this perspective—because they insist on internal affiliations between their canvases. They're constructed like a piece of music and, similar to a score, maintain a cross-referencing between the individual elements. You become enveloped by them as if there was no outside.

J.K. At bottom it's utterly perverse. Because on the one hand the space filled with Mitchell's paintings is a shelter, on the other hand, it's also a torture chamber: it's both.

## Notes

- 1 See Hans Belting and Christiane Kruse, *Die Erfindung des Gemäldes: Das erste Jahrhundert der niederländischen Malerei* (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 1994), 11.
- 2 "Boundary-defying" may seem an unfortunate choice of terms, suggesting an expansive movement where new boundaries have in fact been drawn and new conventions established. However, it captures a genuine truth: the expansive gesture of reaching out toward life that was implicit in art's adoption of increasingly heterogeneous media.
- 3 Editing *Texte zur Kunst*, I regularly dealt with critics who preferred to defer to colleagues they regarded as specialists when it came to discussing painterly practices.
- 4 Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, ed. and trans. Rocco Sinigaglia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). All further citations of the book refer to this edition.
- 5 See Louis Marin, *De l'entretien* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1997), 33–34.
- 6 See Stefan Germer, *Kunst–Macht–Diskurs: Die intellektuelle Karriere des André Félibien im Frankreich von Louis XIV* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1997), 463.
- 7 See André Félibien, *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellens peintres anciens et modernes*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Paris: Chez S. Marbre-Cramoisy, 1685–88), n.p.
- 8 See my essay, "Cooperate 'til You Drop," in *High Price: Art between the Market and Celebrity Culture*, trans. Nicholas Grindell (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2009), 105–8.
- 9 See Michel Foucault, "The Political Function of the Intellectual," *Radical Philosophy*, no. 17 (Summer 1977): 12–14.
- 10 See the editor's introduction in Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. John R. Spencer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1956), 15.
- 11 See Germer, *Kunst–Macht–Diskurs*, 499.
- 12 See Peter Bexte, epilogue to "Sinne im Widerspruch: Diderots Schriften zur bildenden Kunst," in Denis Diderot, *Schriften zur Kunst* (Berlin: Philo Fine Arts, 2005), 300.
- 13 See Merlin Carpenter, "'The Tail That Wags the Dog': A Lecture for Art Center in Pasadena, Not Delivered," in *Canvases and Careers Today: Criticism and Its Markets*, ed. Daniel Birnbaum and Isabelle Graw (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2008), 75–88.
- 14 See Branden W. Joseph, *Beyond the Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage* (New York: Zone Books, 2008).
- 15 See my essay, "Market Reflexivity after the Bioeconomic Turn: Andrea Fraser and Merlin Carpenter," in *High Price*, 214–17.
- 16 Marin, *De l'entretien*, 73.
- 17 Alberti, *On Painting*, 75.
- 18 See Helmut Draxler, "Painting as Apparatus: Twelve Theses," *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 77 (March 2010): 108–11. Draxler says that "art is identified with painting where painting is conceived as art 'proper'" (108).
- 19 See Marin, *De l'entretien*, 32.
- 20 See Martin Warnke, *The Court Artist: On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist*, trans. David McLintock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 252.
- 21 Warnke, 151.
- 22 See, for example, Hubert Damisch, *La peinture en écharpe* (Brussels: Yves Gevaert, 2001).
- 23 Louis Marin, *To Destroy Painting*, trans. Mette Hjort (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 34.
- 24 Werner Busch, *Das unklassische Bild: Von Tizian bis Constable und Turner* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2009), 52.
- 25 Alberti, *On Painting*, 48.
- 26 Winfried Menninghaus, "Ein Gefühl der Beförderung des Lebens": Kants Reformulierung des Topos 'lebhafter Vorstellung,'" in *Vita aesthetica: Szenarien ästhetischer Lebendigkeit*, ed. Armen Avanessian, Winfried Menninghaus, and Jan Völker (Zurich: diaphanes, 2009), 77.
- 27 See the editors' preface in Sabeth Buchmann, Helmut Draxler, and Stefan Geene, eds., *Film, Avantgarde, Biopolitik* (Vienna: Schlebrügge Editor, 2009), 6–7.
- 28 Sabeth Buchmann, "Im Innen und Außen des Films," in *Film, Avantgarde, Biopolitik*, 23.
- 29 Georges Didi-Huberman, *La peinture incarnée, suivi de Le chef-d'œuvre inconnu* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1985), 37.
- 30 T. J. Clark, *The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 85.
- 31 Marin, *To Destroy Painting*, 1.
- 32 Clark, *Sight of Death*, 84.

33 See "There Is No Such Thing as 'Painting': A Conversation between Isabelle Graw and Achim Hochdörfer," *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 77 (March 2010): 112–17.

34 Alberti, *On Painting*, 46.

35 Alberti, 43.

36 Alberti, 47.

37 Alberti, 45.

38 For the Renaissance trope of the artist as quasi divine, see the introduction to Fredrika H. Jacobs, *The Living Image in Renaissance Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7.

39 Alberti, *On Painting*, 45–46.

40 Carol Armstrong recently pointed out how painting became stronger from the process of its hybridization. See Carol Armstrong, "Painting Photography Painting: Timelines and Medium Specificities," in *Painting beyond Itself: The Medium in the Post-medium Condition*, ed. Isabelle Graw and Ewa Lajer-Burcharth (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), 123–43.

41 Alberti, *On Painting*, 75.

42 Leonardo da Vinci, *On Painting*, ed. Martin Kemp (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 5.

43 See Louis Marin, "Die Malerei im 17. Jahrhundert," in *Die französische Malerei* (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 1983), 74.

44 Marin, 39.

45 Daniel Arasse, "Le tableau préféré," in *Histoires de peintures* (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 2004), 26.

46 René Démoris, "About the Practice of Painting in France (1660–1770)," in Graw and Lajer-Burcharth, *Painting beyond Itself*, 210.

47 Denis Diderot, "Notes on Painting," in *Diderot on Art*, vol. 1, *The Salon of 1765 and Notes on Painting*, ed. John Goodman (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 198.

48 G. W. F. Hegel, "Die romantische Kunstrform," in *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, vol. 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), 17.

49 Hegel, 17.

50 Hegel, 17.

51 Hegel, 25.

52 See Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Continuum, 2004), 220–21.

53 Adorno, 52.

54 Louis Marin, "Das Sein des Bildes und seine Wirksamkeit," in *Das Bild ist der König: Repräsentation nach Louis Marin*, ed. Vera Beyer, Jutta Voorhoeven, and Anselm Haverkamp (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag 2006), 15.

55 Horst Bredekamp, *Theorie des Bildakts* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2010), 47.

56 Marin, *To Destroy Painting*, 7.

57 Marin, 7.

58 See David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988).

59 Kathrin Rottmann, "Polke in Context: A Chronology," in *Alibis: Sigmar Polke 1963–2010*, ed. Kathy Halbreich, Mark Godfrey, Lanka Tattersall, and Magnus Schaefer, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 29.

60 See Albert Oehlen, interview by Eva Karcher, *Süddeutsche Zeitung am Wochenende*, October 9–10, 2010, 2 and 8.

61 Charline von Heyl, "Painting Paradox," by Christopher Turner and Claire Barlant, July 7, 2009, *blouin artinfo*, <http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/31577/painting-paradox#>.

62 See Daniel Arasse, *Vermeer: Faith in Painting* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 70.

63 Clement Greenberg, "The New Sculpture" (1949), in *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 2, *Arrogant Purpose, 1945–1949*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988), 314.

64 Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (1960), in *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 4, *Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957–1960*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), 89.

65 See Martin Saar, "New Spirit of Criticism? The Biopolitical Turn in Perspective: Introduction," trans. Karl Hoffmann, *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 81 (March 2011): 131–33.

66 See Alain Ehrenberg, *La société du malaise* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010), 226.

67 See Peter Geimer, "Manet in Paris: Kann ein Mann die Moderne erfinden?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 14, 2011, 31.

68 From T. J. Clark's legendary history of the reception of his oeuvre, which first enabled readers to truly grasp the scandal around *Olympia* (1863), to Carol Armstrong's brilliant study of the connections between Manet's painting, the construction of identity, and the crucial techniques on which this identity rests, such as *maquillage*

and fashionable self-staging. See T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986); and Carol Armstrong, *Manet Manette* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).

69 See Beth Archer Brombert, *Édouard Manet: Rebel in a Frock Coat* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 139.

70 Michel Foucault was the first to observe this "game of verticals and horizontals" in Manet, but read it very differently, as a "closing of space." To my mind, the decisive aspect of these grid structures is that they point beyond the edge of the picture. See Michel Foucault, *Manet and the Object of Painting*, trans. Matthew Barr (London: Tate Publishing, 2011), 38, 44.

71 See Jacques Derrida, "The Parergon," in *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 15–148.

72 See Clark, *Painting of Modern Life*, 5.

73 See Michael Fried, *Manet's Modernism: Or, the Face of the Painting in the 1860s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

74 Antonin Proust, *Édouard Manet: Souvenirs* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1913), 31.

75 See Barbara Wittmann, "Anti-Pygmalion: Zur Krise der Lebendigkeit in der realistischen Malerei, 1860–1880," in Avanessian, Menninghaus, and Völker, *Vita aesthetica*, 177–91.

76 See Stéphane Guégan, "Manet en vue, Manet à vue," in *Manet inventeur du Moderne*, exh. cat., ed. Stéphane Guégan (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2011), 33.

77 Quoted in Archer Brombert, *Rebel in a Frock Coat*, 131: "Before the exhibition of the refusés, we could not imagine what a bad painting could be. Now we know."

78 Rosalind E. Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-medium Condition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999).

79 See Jane Livingston, "The Paintings of Joan Mitchell," in *The Paintings of Joan Mitchell*, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2002), 23: "She often needed the old fashioned 'figure-ground' convention."

80 Mark Godfrey, "Statement of Intent: On the Art of Jacqueline Humphries, Laura Owens, Amy Sillman and Charline von Heyl," *Artforum*, May 2014, 294–303.

81 Amy Sillman (b. 1955), Charline von Heyl (b. 1960).

82 See my essay, "Conceptual Expression: On Conceptual Gestures in Allegedly Expressive Painting, Traces of Expression in Proto-Conceptual Works and the Significance of Artistic Procedures," in *Art after Conceptual Art*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Sabeth Buchmann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 119–34.

83 See Linda Nochlin, "Joan Mitchell: A Rage to Paint," in *Paintings of Joan Mitchell*, 49–59.

84 See my essay, "Nähe aus Distanz," *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 35 (September 1999): 164–72.

85 See Joan Mitchell, "Conversations with Joan Mitchell, January 12, 1986," by Yves Michaud, in *Joan Mitchell: New Paintings*, exh. cat. (New York: Xavier Fourcade Gallery, 1986), n.p.

86 Greenberg, "Post-painterly Abstraction," in *Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 4, 192–97.

87 Compare Koether's exhibition "Double Session" at Campoli Presti, London, in May 2013. The show was based on a literal as much as painterly engagement with the concept of the session as elaborated by Jacques Derrida in his book *Dissemination* (London: Athlone Press, 1993).

88 "Room Full of Paintings" was Koether's working title for her exhibition "Champrovent" at Reena Spaulings Fine Art, New York, in 2014. This was a deployment of painting in the pursuit of a post-installation and post-site-and-social-specific exhibition concept. Alterations to the gallery were dispensed with, and the lighting was kept to a minimum. The paintings surrendered to these economic conditions as pure quantity in a "whatever showroom": they formed a "room full of paintings."