

## KEYNOTE BY ARTHUR C. DANTO

Few funerals have been as indecorous as the one held for painting in the early '80s. Was the deceased truly dead, and, if so, in whose name could the death certificate be signed? Or was this a burial without a corpse, another instance of the ritual interments that seemed to recur throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as Arthur C. Danto suggests in his keynote statement? Artforum convened the roundtable that follows to offer our own reexamination of the Death of Painting debate and its legacy throughout the decade. In the April issue, a second group led by Robert Storr considers the afterlife of painting in the '80s and beyond.

In recalling a period of severe depression he underwent in the "melancholy winter of 1826–27," John Stuart Mill wrote, in a famous passage of his autobiography, that he had been "seriously tormented by the thought of the exhaustibility of musical combinations." Sooner or later, all the possibilities would have been used up, and music would be over with. There was no sense in Mill that this had already taken place, but the thought that it could or would deepened his distress. No composer of Mill's time had, for instance, presented monotone works—a single note sustained for a substantial interval—nor would it have occurred to someone to do so.

When the end of painting was discussed in the 1980s, however, not only was there the sense that all combinations had been tried, but monochrome painting had also been an art-historical reality for more than sixty years. Douglas Crimp, whose writing on the end of painting expressed the overall mood of the time, cites the all-black paintings of Ad Reinhardt—what the artist called "just the last paintings anyone can make"—as well as the uninflected all-white paintings of Robert Rauschenberg and the sullen iterated striped paintings of Daniel Buren as evidence that painting had reached the end of the road. It is but a matter of time, he wrote, before "painting will be understood as the 'pure idiocy' that it is." And that would be that.

The "death of painting" had come up too frequently in the course of twentieth-century art merely to have been a cranky inference based on the theory of mathematical permutations. Easel painting in particular was repudiated by Soviet painters as having no place in a socialist society. The Mexican muralists condemned it as antirevolutionary. And so one suspects that the appearance of the death of painting as a theory in the '80s must have had some comparable sort of political subtext. What Crimp found objectionable in the kind of painting defended by those he criticizes in his well-known polemic was less that "it had all been done" than that the medium was prized by its enthusiasts for the painter's touch—that the paint was laid down by hand. One cannot but

## THE MOURNING AFTER: A ROUNDTABLE

David Joselit, moderator, Yve-Alain Bois, Thierry de Duve, Isabelle Graw, David Reed, Elisabeth Sussman



DAVID JOSELIT: Arthur's citation of Mill's worry regarding the limited permutations of a particular aesthetic practice such as music (or painting) brings to mind Yve-Alain's discussion of game theory in "Painting: The Task of Mourning" [Endgame: Reference and Simulation in Recent Painting and Sculpture exh. cat., 1986]. Drawing on Hubert Damisch, Yve-Alain distinguishes between one specific game and the rules that determine the game as such. In these terms, Mill's fear corresponds to the intuition that a particular game is about to end, but he doesn't either bemoan or call for a change in the rules altogether. If the "Death of Painting" of the '80s corresponded to the death of the game called "Modern Painting" (and this is by no means self-evident), then is this death also potentially a birth of a different kind of game?

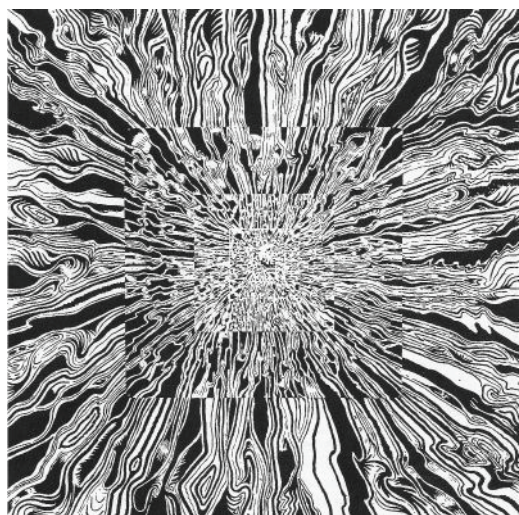
I'm formulating this question along Barthesian lines because in Barthes's canonical text, which was widely read in the '80s, the Death of the Author was one and the same as the Birth of the Reader. Perhaps the "new rules," which allow new painterly permutations to emerge, codify such a displacement from the writerly to the readerly. Tactics of appropriation, which I regard as closely linked to postmodern painting, certainly fit within this category.

ARTHUR C. DANTO: Mill had no conception of changing the rules in music ("The octave consists only of five tones and two semi-tones, which can be put together in only a limited number of ways . . ."). And he must have thought of performance as a fairly straightforward translation of notes into sounds, for

otherwise it might have occurred to him that there need be no limit on the number of interpretations of a piece of music. The composer-performer distinction could bring music into line with the author-reader distinction, and hence with Barthes's strategy of displacing the writer with the reader—or the painter with the critic. That would mean that the death of painting opened things for the unrestrained will to power of the critic, and the unlimited freedom of interpretation that went with it. "The painter is dead. Long live the critic!" pretty much encapsulates the reversal that was ushered in by poststructuralist theory. And that is changing the rules with a vengeance!

DAVID JOSELIT: Well, somewhat painfully for those of us in this discussion, "theory" (however this entity might be defined) achieved a certain celebrity in the American art world of the '80s, and somehow this glamour of intellection participated in the aura (I use the word advisedly) that cloaked the "reborn" painters of the '80s. Indeed, my insistence on bending "death" back onto itself as "birth" is in part a response to the empirical dimension of painting's reception in the '80s. For during this decade the resurgence of painting as a viable commodity was paradoxically hailed through proclamations of its death. This is a textbook case of ideological reversal, but that doesn't mean that it can be explained away easily. Not since the '60s had painters enjoyed such celebrity status and such brisk markets. No one who participated in the art world of the time can forget photo shoots of Julian Schnabel in his T-shirt, or David Salle's loft, the epitome of retro-chic. Perhaps it is time, however, to

distinguish this moment of manic celebrity from that of the '60s. These guys and their European counterparts were no Warhols!



Mike Kelley, *Infinite Expansion*, 1983, synthetic polymer on paper, 11 1/8 x 11 1/8». From the installation "The Sublime."

ELISABETH SUSSMAN: What is troubling me is the tendency to refer to the '80s, the decade, in a monolithic way. I wouldn't, for instance, lump Salle with Schnabel or link them to the "end of painting" theorization. Both painters were called neo-expressionists and saw painting as a kind of pastiche, but Schnabel seemed to herald a "rebirth," as he bought into scale, materiality, heroic rhetoric, and so on. Salle seemed much more concerned with received styles, representation of meaning, cancellation of communication, signification of color, and high/low form. However, neither of those painters has much to do with the shift to theory-driven work and to the use of the "endgame" as we floated it.

ISABELLE GRAW: As a German critic who was based in Cologne at the time, to my mind, the discussion about the "end of painting" was happening mainly among intellectuals in New York. There are two main problems I have with the arguments of the period. First, the claim that painting was exhausted, or finished, implies that the problem lies in the medium *per se*, a rather essentialist view. Isn't it rather a particular use that can be called problematic? It is interesting to observe that terms like "obsolescence" or "anachronism," for instance, had only negative connotations in a critical discourse that condemned the return to painting. Think of Benjamin Buchloh's seminal 1981 text "Figures of Authority, Ciphers of Regression." The idea that a painter might use painting as a seemingly obsolete mode was not very present in the general discussions.

Second, and, Elisabeth, I think you are right on this point, there was an astonishing lack of differentiation by critics: "Neo-expressionism" covered all kinds of practices, from Schnabel to Salomé, from Baselitz to Kippenberger. In fact, the situation in Germany was rather conflicted. There were regional differences between, say, Berlin and Cologne. And inside Cologne there were two "packs": the Mülheimer Freiheit, a group that played with calculated regression; and the more interesting, loose formation of artists around Galerie Max Hetzler, including Albert Oehlen, Wer-

ner Büttner, and Martin Kippenberger. The latter were highly aware of painting's overdetermination, and used it as a tool while benefiting from its authority—yet their work turned out to be, as often as not, rather painterly. Neither Oehlen nor Kippenberger was interested in authentic expression, however; the expressive subject is, at most, a retroactive effect of these deliberate expressive gestures.

I wouldn't say that the "Death of Painting" thesis was irrelevant in Germany, but fewer people were questioning the legitimacy of "neo-expressionism." One example for this would be the book *Hunger nach Bildern* (Hunger for paintings), 1982—a very popular, totally supportive, and, at the same time, oversimplistic book written by Wolfgang Max Faust and Gerd de Vries. This book functioned like a promotion machine. In retrospect, a connection between Germany seeking a "zero hour," a new national identity, and the desire for painting that qualified as German has to be drawn. (Nevertheless, I would question the assumption that both developments—the artistic one and the national one—run parallel, or that one mirrors the other. Obviously, there is a tie—in America, the painterly "backlash" was often linked to the Reagan era—but the field of art is specific and cannot be seen as a simple analogy to general political developments.) If something served an analogous purpose, though, it was the concept of "bad painting," which was popularized by a Marcia Tucker-curated show in 1978 at the New Museum and became a winged word—understood as a license for a deliberately unskilled way of painting. Nothing was more despised by artists like Lüpertz and Baselitz than talent. Interestingly, this fight against talent was conducted mostly by male artists. The Mülheimer Freiheit, for instance, called for freedom from painterly restrictions in its name, but no women artists took part in this endeavor.

DAVID JOSELIT: Well, if we can accept that the "death" of genius was also a "birth" of spectatorship, both in the person of the artist and in the person of the viewer, then we must, it is true, attend to the gendering of this polarity, on the level of theory (which aligns "genius" with masculinity, and its witnessing with femininity) and in the dimension of practice (given that the '80s were a moment when women gained a much higher profile in the art world).

DAVID REED: I am very happy to see this brought up. While women artists in the '80s gained recognition, the prejudice (in price, credibility, and importance) remains strong today, especially against women who practice painting, and worst against the women of my generation. I am convinced that one reason that the innovations of '70s painting were unrecognized is that four of the leading practitioners were women: Lee Lozano, Jo Baer, Dorothea Rockburne, and Ree Morton. It's very strange that the history of painting could be thought to end just as women were beginning to make their contributions. Perhaps, instead, it's only the idea of the heroic male genius that has died.

ELISABETH SUSSMAN: The erasure of women painters of the '70s is a poignant and complicated subject. How it relates to the discussion we're having about the mid-'80s and the death of painting is an intricate matter. We would have to talk about the waves of feminism, about Douglas Crimp's "Pictures" show, about dance, performance, video, and photo-

detect here the influence of two figures that loomed large in Crimp's universe—Duchamp, with his contempt for the artist's hand and eye; and Walter Benjamin, with his ruminations on art and mechanical reproduction. For Crimp was promoting a "phenomenon from which painting has been in retreat since the mid-nineteenth century"—namely, photography. And he somehow felt photography carried wide political implications that meant among other things the end of the museum, an institution to which he objected on grounds of its elitism.



Clockwise from top left: Arthur C. Danto. Photo: Arthur F. Rubio. Isabelle Graw. Thierry de Duve. David Joselit. Photo: Beaty Reynolds. Elisabeth Sussman. David Reed. Yve-Alain Bois. Photo: Hans Dieter Huber.

My sense is that the death of painting was a heavily overdetermined thesis, having less by far to do with the state of the art circa 1980—let us not forget that the return of painting was what was making headlines in those years—than with a heavy atmosphere of postmodern theory. This included leftover injunctions to aesthetic cleansing, as in Greenberg; injunctions to the cleansing of class and privilege, as in Marxo-Leninism; the satirical treatment of certain myths of the artistic genius, as in Duchamp and radical feminism; and pronouncements of the death of the author, the death of man, and the death of the real, as in Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, and Baudrillard. "Whether celebratory (what I will call manic) or melancholy," Yve-Alain Bois wrote in his essay for the 1986 exhibition "Endgame," which took place at Boston's ICA, "one hears endless diagnoses of death."



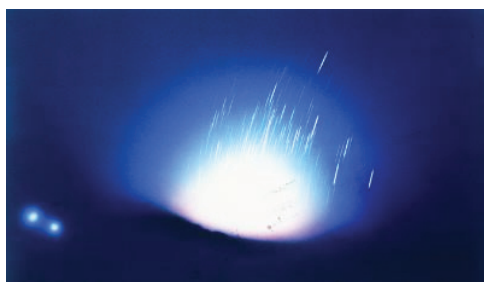
Peter Halley, *Glowing and Burnt-out Cells with Conduit*, 1982, acrylic and Roll-a-Tex on canvas, 64 x 96».

The death of painting as it was discussed in the pages of art journals was a distant corollary of all this. It was easy to proclaim and difficult to argue with, given the battery of the-



oretical artillery that carried so much prestige in the culture of the '80s. Appropriation, to be sure, was licit, perhaps because it conceded the point that there was nothing left to do. There was the thought, advanced by Thomas Lawson, that one could paint one's way outre tombe—but this must have sounded like special pleading.

No one today especially believes that painting is dead. But Artforum has invited Bois, Thierry de Duve, Isabelle Graw, David Reed, and "Endgame" curators David Joselit and Elisabeth Sussman to join me in revisiting and reconsidering the issues of that curious moment when, in an art world swimming in pigment, some theorists standing on the shore believed they were witnessing the death throes of a drowning art.



Jack Goldstein, *Untitled*, 1983, acrylic on canvas, 7 x 12.

graphy, as well as painting. But, to be specific to the discussion at hand, was Sherrie Levine's (on occasion) capturing and recycling male abstraction not an act of insertion into a male-dominated painting tradition?

ISABELLE GRAW: Historically, the situation was very different. There have been women artists involved in movements defined around painting (think of the number of women artists taking part in "Abstract Expressionism"), but when it comes to the status of the work in the marketplace, the principle of the "exceptional woman" operates. In other words, that there is perhaps one woman per artistic movement who gains the institutional and economic recognition equal to that of the very successful male artists of the same movement. This changed in the beginning of the '80s in the wake of appropriation art. Women artists were the leading figures—but, with the exception of Levine, as Elisabeth points out, they deliberately didn't paint, because it would have been too easy to exclude their work with arbitrary references to "quality." This happened in Germany with many women painters who were pushed to the margins of the "junge Wilden" and never arrived at the "center" until today. One of the few exceptions was Rosemarie Trockel, but again, she deliberately decided not to paint.

DAVID JOSELIT: But there's another dimension to the problem, which leads back to my feeling that we might want to rise to Elisabeth's challenge and get a bit more specific with regard to particular painterly practices. For instance, both Levine and Philip Taaffe (to name only two of many possible examples) position their images "in the shadow" of modernist conventions. Levine does so by coming "after" in the sense of "in the tradition of" as well as "belatedly," while in his complicated process of printmaking Taaffe dilates the moment of reproduction (of Op, Still, or Newman, for instance) into its own positive materiality rather than allowing it to pass as "instantaneous" as photography leads one to assume.

ELISABETH SUSSMAN: Generally, though, many '80s artists saw painting as media, white noise, part of the spectacle—downgraded from heroic rhetoric, kitsch, reusable. They were drawn to psychedelia and to Op art as degraded abstraction taken up in mass-market graphic and interior design. The '60s were the time of these artists' childhood, and the modern, as they encountered it, was by then a consumer product. What is interesting is how their painting somehow stayed elegant. It did not appear as vulgar lampoon, which is what Mike Kelley achieved when he began to use abstraction as a degraded language—making objects as critique, yes, but a critique that took form as an object or a painting with the aura of a crude joke, rather than an object or painting with the presence and often the scale of the work it was commenting upon.

THIERRY DE DUVE: It is both amusing and pathetic that about once every five years the death of painting is announced, invariably followed by the news of its resurrection. This doesn't mean there isn't a certain truth hidden in this swinging of the pendulum—otherwise the phenomenon would have ceased long ago. Is it not symptomatic that just shortly after the invention of photography, Paul Delaroche prophesied the death of painting for the first time? This certainly

ly points toward one of the causes, not of the actual death of painting—there is no such thing—but rather of the feeling that painting was under threat. This feeling is as old as modernity, and as Arthur pointed out it was expressed periodically all along the history of modern painting. It is still with us.

What is also amusing and maybe pathetic, in any case ironic, is that, starting with Delaroche, it was very often painters who boldly claimed that painting was dead, the better to clear the way for their own brand of it. Take Barnett Newman: "Painting was dead a quarter of a century before God even realized it existed." Or Kasimir Malevich: "Painting has long run its course, and the painter himself is a prejudice from the past." David is right in suggesting that those painters were also hoping to change the rules of the game. To what extent they succeeded is a question for the historians of the future. I am wary of multiplying "paradigm shifts" simply because we lack the historical distance. Somewhere along the line between medieval and Renaissance painting, the rules of the game have changed; that much is sure. But the extent to which they changed between, say, Giotto and Masaccio is debatable. Same thing between Malevich and Newman, despite what Newman himself thought.

Interestingly enough, and this is a typically modern phenomenon, it was often by changing the name of the game that the modernists reclaimed the game for themselves. So Malevich: "The surface-plane is alive, it was just born." They failed, though. No one would dream of calling Malevich a "surface-plane artist"; he is a painter. Obviously the issue of the name, and of its denial, gained momentum in the period between the '60s and the '80s. Witness Don Judd's "Specific Objects" from 1965, which included, among other works Judd claimed were neither painting nor sculpture, Frank Stella's "Black Paintings"! Or Crimp's "Pictures" show from 1977, which included under this deliberately nonspecific title bona fide painters such as Jack Goldstein. The denial of the name seems to me a much more challenging issue for today's historians than death and rebirth. And speaking of rebirth, whether the '80s witnessed the "birth of spectatorship," as David suggests in his Barthesian reading, seems to me shortsighted. I, for one, would credit Manet with it.

YVE-ALAIN BOIS: I hope it does not sound too self-centered to enter this debate with some personal recollection, but it will help explain why I feel closer to Isabelle and Thierry than to the other participants. I arrived in America in 1983 and was immediately struck by the strangely hypertrophied hold that what was then called "French theory" already had in academic discussions and was beginning to have in the art world. The same was true of "poststructuralism," a word that I had never heard before. What was striking was the lumping together of a whole array of writers—from Derrida to Foucault, Lacan to Barthes, Kristeva to Deleuze, Althusser to Lyotard—who had shared a universe of references but were by no means speaking the same tongue or even agreeing on a lot. I was amazed by the gross misconceptions surrounding the so-called poststructuralist corpus, which I immediately witnessed in graduate seminars. The fashion-driven pressure to transform complex texts into sound bites was so strong that even the best translation could not have prevented the hodgepodge that became the lingua franca of the art world for a few seasons.

In this context, the “death of painting” emerged. I was immediately baffled by its recurrence (one of the very first pieces of art criticism I had ever read was a 1966 essay by Jean Clay entitled “La peinture est finie”). It seemed to me so . . . ’60s. But obviously people were taking the issue seriously, so I began to read the various arguments proposed. What struck me again, in the most sophisticated essays of the time, was the use being made of “poststructuralist” texts: Barthes’s “Death of the Author” was read as a plea for appropriation in art; Foucault was seen as the apologist of Buren. These alignments seemed eminently dubious to me. When Elisabeth Sussman asked me to write about “the new abstraction,” a working label she was using for the show that would eventually be titled “Endgame,” I had no idea what she was talking about. I went with her (and David Joselit and Tom Crow) to several artists’ studios and was not overwhelmed. (I remember visiting the studios of Ashley Bickerton, Sherrie Levine, and Haim Steinbach, meeting Peter Halley in a gallery where he was installing a show, and being shown material on other artists such as Ross Bleckner and Philip Taaffe.) Most of the artists seemed to be dancing on the corpse of painting. It was so programmatic, and, furthermore, the shouts of victory seemed so premature! It is only after Elisabeth told me that I could write precisely this that I accepted her invitation to contribute to the catalogue.

ELISABETH SUSSMAN: Yve-Alain, our question was: How were the critics associated with postmodernism relating (or not relating, as the case may be) to the art we thought we should show as curators devoted to keeping our public up-to-date and engaged in debates and arguments? My invitation to you to write included, as I recall, a definite request that you visit studios—that is, look at the art we were going to show and talk to the artists. In retrospect, I am very pleased that I urged you to say what you thought about the artists we were showing. The usual thing would have been to reject an article that wasn’t supportive. But, in the best sense, I think your “painting as mourning” was supportive because it opened up a space in the ’80s for critical theory and so-called market-driven art to coexist, for critics to write without having to promote.

YVE-ALAIN BOIS: The odd thing is that very few people read my essay as a plea for painting—or, at least, as an affirmation that it was at best naive to bury it, since it was not yet a corpse. Some readers saw it as a defense of the artists in the show, such as Halley or Taaffe, even though I called them “manic mourners,” a pathological condition that is not particularly enviable (at least in the sense given to it by Melanie Klein). Others thought that I, too, was claiming that “painting was dead.” Basically, the argument I was making is very similar to that of Thierry: The death of painting has been on order since Manet, and the task of every modern artist is to try to achieve it. That is what modernism as I know it is all about. This might, actually, bring in another issue, which is not the death but the abortion of so-called postmodernism: Not a single argument has ever convinced me that such a thing actually exists.

ARTHUR C. DANTO: Let me jump back to Isabelle’s discussion of the German situation, which I find especially enlightening. The decision to be a “bad pain-

ter” is in its own way a corollary to appropriationism, with both understood as how to go on painting after the great achievements of modernism, and the sense that Picasso and Matisse had done it all. Bad painting went with the anti-elitism that was so much a part of the politics of those years, and it served as a way of repudiating the image of the Great Painter, which both feminism and, later, multiculturalism found so distasteful. Conceptual art, along with appropriation and bad painting, made it possible to be an artist without being a painter, and I remember hearing young Conceptual artists saying how glad they were not to be painters. It is surprising that no one attempted to write up a “paragone”: a comparison between painting and Conceptual art, along the lines of those Renaissance texts that contrast painting and sculpture. Duchamp’s negative remarks about painting have some of the quality of a paragone.

DAVID JOSELIT: Yve-Alain, while I agree that the history of modern art is the history of working through its successive “deaths” and that it is very difficult to distinguish definitively the “modern” from the “postmodern,” I don’t think this lets us off the hook regarding the painting of the ’80s. In fact, according to your overall argument, especially in the original “Endgame” essay, there is no reason why the ’80s moment of mourning is not as “worthy” as that of Mondrian. The question of the artist-becoming-machine is one that characterized modern painting throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but should we elide the different modulations of this condition from Courbet to Manet to Seurat to Breton to Warhol? Clearly, the answer is no! Therefore, if the mourning in the ’80s has to do with the loss and recovery of the “culinary” ingredients of painting (temporarily rendered “obsolete” in the ’70s), and with the becoming-photographic of vision in an unprecedented way, then how did painters conduct their deaths under these conditions? Since you also bring up the important and vexed questions of the misreadings of French theory in the American art world, I think we have to put Baudrillard on the table. For better or worse, “simulation” was what everyone talked about in the ’80s. From the perspective of Sherrie Levine’s blank stripe paintings, the simulated could mean, to use Yve-Alain’s striking term, an “aborted” relation to painting in which the representation was cut off from any mimetic or evolutionary-historical host. In other words, this kind of painting both cited and severed or refused its position in the grand scheme of art history. But there is another, more affirmative mode of simulation that was effective in the ’80s—the logolike paintings of Halley, who, as T.J. Clark’s Manet had done for Haussmann’s Paris one hundred years earlier, articulated the spatial and social contradictions of its information-saturated, merger and acquisition-happy Manhattan.

ELISABETH SUSSMAN: Although, in a sense, writers and curators were responsible for creating a critical niche for them, painters (Halley, Bleckner, Taaffe, and Levine, in particular) were also orchestrating their own deaths. Their negation was strength, a willful, if you like, rejection of predominately male heroics of originality David Reed spoke of earlier. The artists of the ’80s did not see their painting as failure at all.

DAVID REED: We should not get too far afield in



Albert Oehlen, *Self-Portrait with Paint Brush*, 1984, oil on canvas, 75 x 51».





David Salle, *B.A.M.F.V.*, 1983, oil on canvas with satin and cement, 8' 5" x 12' 1/2".

our discussion, but I worry about viewing these problems from too limited a categorization and definition of painting. I think we all agree that painting isn't just defined by its literal materials. Painting continues to have possibilities exactly because it is so hard to define. Painting is the most impure and the most debased of the art forms because its greatest virtue is its ease at absorbing outside influences. It has had a symbiotic relationship with various belief systems, religious and political. Now, it can have just as rich a relationship with technologies of mechanical reproduction like photography and film, as well as the other fields Elisabeth has mentioned—performance, dance, architecture, sculpture, and installation. We can see how it has also absorbed architecture, sculpture, and installation, for example.

Thierry de Duve, you addressed how the relationship between painting and photography sparked one of the initial claims to the death of painting. Rather than initiating the death of painting, as was expected, photography and other media of mechanical reproduction have been like a vampire's kiss that makes painting immortal. Painting is the enthralled before the cold eye of mechanical reproduction and can stare back in the same way.

DAVID JOSELYN: David's remarks bring to mind one of the central claims leading to the death of painting: its various types of encounters with the readymade. Thierry, Arthur, and Yve-Alain have all written about this in sustained and fundamental ways. I'd love to have their further comments.

THIERRY DE DUVE: I think that the fashion for "bad painting," along with the repudiation of the "Great Painter," has harmed serious painters because it has intimidated people into believing that there are no aesthetic hierarchies anymore. "Bad painting" has apparently made it impossible to call a painting

bad, period. Isabelle is quite right in underlining the fact that women painters did not participate in "bad painting." Irony and cynicism are not yet the order of the day when you simply don't qualify for the title of great painter (not capitalized) because of your gender. By the way (and in tune with what David Reed said), many of the painters having emerged in the '80s, like them or not—Sue Williams, Fiona Rae, Lydia Dona, Cecily Brown—are women. And I'm not even speaking of Marthe Wéry, who is to my eyes a major painter with a formidable oeuvre behind her—and who at the age of seventy-two has no career of international significance, which is a shame.

Thank you, Arthur, for provoking us to take up the "paragone" issue. The provocation is irresistible. You suggest a comparison between painting and Conceptual art, but I suspect what you really have in mind is a competition between painting and "theory" (which is what hard-core Conceptual art claimed to be, anyway). I agree with you that "the death of painting opened things for the unrestrained will to power of the critic." That's an understatement, actually. The critics put the issue on the agenda because it fostered their will to power—which is still a major problem today. But when you say "the critic," you mean the critic as theorist, not the critic of "taste." Painters in the '80s were collateral casualties of the Greenberg-bashing that was the ruling dogma—and still is, for many. We should be reminded that the one thing all art theories in fashion in the '80s had in common was a ban on aesthetics, on feelings, and on qualitative judgments.

ELISABETH SUSSMAN: Does the rise of the reputation of Gerhard Richter, at the end of the '80s and in relation to the end-of-painting arguments, have a bearing on our discussion? How do we account for the recent reworking of Richter, who has changed his own arguments around his painting, denying that it was critique and insisting on its pleasure?

THIERRY DE DUVE: Elisabeth, Richter has never changed his arguments. You only need to reread Buchloh's 1986 interview with Richter in light of what Arthur said of the critic's will to power to convince yourself of this. The interview is the epitome of the '80s paragone. Knowing that "theory" won the paragone for too many of its original readers should not prevent you from judging on your own with the distance we have, and then bursting into laughter. For it's all on the record. It is an intolerable mystery for Buchloh that Richter should be a great artist while being a great painter, and not despite the fact that he paints. From Buchloh's neo-Adornian point of view, painting ought to be dead, and he requests from the painter—repeatedly and quite aggressively—that the painter justify his contradiction. Here is Richter's answer: "But that's not a contradiction. That's just the normal state of things. Call it our normal misery if you want."

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## Rolle und Rille – Nonentität.

Das historische Auftreten der Konzeptkunst, welches Henry Flynt gegen Yoko Ono für sich reklamiert wie der Verfasser im Archiv Solmi, Stuttgart, entdeckte, als er im Sommer 2010 von HHH dorthin mitgenommen wurde, ist gleichzusetzen mit der Einführung der Compact Disc. Und ähnlich wie die Malerei sich selbst wieder erfindet, "was für eine Lüge – wir haben heute doch von Jutta graumann, oder: in genau diesem Moment, erscheint das Vinylmanifest „Aural Sculpture“ als wirkliches Manifest. Die Strangler waren damals die Reaktionen, die eine Wahrheit als Gewürzlochen, nachfüllbar, erzählt haben.

Schallplatte und Malerei – ob „Medien“ oder nicht, sie haben gemeinsam, dass sie einen Standard bestreiten, ein set von preliminaries, und dass sie innerhalb dieses Standards alles Mögliche möglich gemacht haben bis zum Aufschlitzen, shaped canvas und Braten. Die picture die entspricht dem klingen Bild von.

Wir sagen Malerei, aber wir meinen eigentlich sagen: Tableaux. Denn die Malerei liegt in der Regel nicht in der Vinne, wie bei Haffers „Bild und Träger“-Ausstellung in Potsdam, sondern sie wird in der Verkälen gemalt (nur wenn die Farbe tropft in das andere und in der Verkälen hängt). Sie wird auch nicht schief gehängt, sondern mit der Wasservase, also mit einem industriellen Apparat auf den Gleichgewichtssinn und auf den optischen Sinn des Betrachters ausgerichtet.

Sie wird in einen irgendwie harmonischen oder kalkuliert disharmonischen, diagrammatischen, in jedem Fall scharf kalkulierten Bezug zu anderer Malerei im Raum und in Bezug zu einer ganz anderen Kunst, der Architektur gesetzt. „Hängung“. Sie wird auf weißer Depressionsfarbe gehängt, außer der Saal oder der Salon ist vom Museumsdirektor

oder vom Maître in einer anderen Farbe gewünscht.

Die Malerei hat, ist, stiftet eine Struktur.

Ebenso die Schallplatte: die Rille ist spiralförmig wie die Rille Leinwand. Sie ist vierseitig in der Umwelt auf und wird ebenso in mit Wasservasen ersetzten architektonischen Gebäuden im Lager, im Schaufenster des Second Hand Records in Stuttgart und in der Wohnung – also im Display – aufbewahrt, verpackt. Die Schallplatte selbst ist leistungsfähig mit gleichzeitiger Information besetzt, aber ihre Hülle hat eine Vorder- und eine Rückseite, wie der bespannte Korbrahmen. Die Gestaltung der Vorderseite des „Albums“ ist im besten Sinne, also im Sinne der Informationstheorie (der von Kurt Alben etwa oder der Luhmann/Habermas'schen Information: ein Resultat aus Redundanz – Bekanntheit, Wiederholung in bedruckter Pappe verpackt) und Neuheit ein anderes Motiv als die andere Schallplattenhülle. Als die Platten noch Alben hießen. Hierfür ist die Literaturtheorie zuständig.

Und so weiter, wir können hier nicht weiter, und sagen auch nicht: Malerei ist quasi-industriell. Die sogenannte industrielle Malerei der Simultanisten hat das schon klargemacht.

Ein Standard wie Korbrahmen/Leinwand/Nagel (zu dem die Wasservase ebenso gehört wie der Verputz, der Stein und die Dispersionsfarbe und das Licht ist schon Dispositiv/Disorder) genug. Von Pinsel und Farbe, auch den von modernen Malern selbstgemachten, schweigen wir hier.

Aber wenn es denn sein muss, ist dann der Pinselstich, weil er von der Malerei, von der ich hier sprechen soll, nur

ablenkt, ein „ready made“, wie Butler sagt: „Lichtstrahlens „brush stroke“ – ihn würden wir als den zweiten historischen Diskussionsbeitrag (neben der industriellen Malerei) entnehmen wollen. Als Bienen. Diese sind Kritik der Malerei mit den Mitteln der Naturwissenschaft in den Baumkronen.

An Dispositiv Malerei hängt aber noch was dran: das Stigma „Maler“ oder schlimmer „Malerei“.

Zu sagen „Malerei“ reduziert beispielhaft das der Malerei Wesentliche in gleicher Weise, wie es das Interesse am Pinselstich tut. Malerei ist keine Entität.

Der zeitliche Abstand zwischen dem Erfindungsjahr der Grammophonplatte und der Konzeptkunst?

Die „Platte“ ist älter!

Remediation? Ist der Aufzeichnungsspekt zu la Kinder an der Malerei eine gelesene Theorie? Kaum und wenn, dann nicht allein.

Für Malerei muss immer erst eingekehrt werden. Uns wird mit der Faust gehoben: „Friedhof oder Kirche?“, „Besen oder Greiner?“ – entspricht das „Microdot“ oder „Apple“? Die Gemeinschaftsprüfung.

Mit Malerei kann man Kunst machen. Aber mit Kunst kann man Ideologie machen. Wir müsst du die Struktur der Malerei?

Michael Dreyer