

Foreword

Gerhard Richter has been working intermittently but astonishingly productively on the overpainted photographs series since 1989. The small-format artists book *Sils*, featuring forty-eight examples from this complex of works, was published in 1992, after Richter started including the earlier works in the Atlas. Then the *Firenze* series followed (1999/2000), published by Dietmar Elger in 2001 and containing one hundred overpainted photographs. And finally in 2002 the Contempoartensemble brought out their *Gerhard Richter: City Life* book in 2002, containing the 118 overpainted photographs of the *Firenze* Edition (2000). With rare exceptions, the large number of over one thousand works that originated outside these two series and the Edition remained unpublished and mentioned only in scattered marginal notes in the literature. So the present catalogue offers a first representative survey of the many techniques, motifs, and intentions appearing in the overpainted photographs.

Gerhard Richter approaches central questions from his oeuvre in a new and surprising way in this group of works. In the smallest possible format—as a rule the overpainted works are based on commercial 10 x 15 centimeter photographic prints—the artist is addressing the theme of chance in a concentrated form, the state of tension between the “two realities” (Gerhard Richter) in photography and painting, questions about the presentation of his works, and ultimately about their reception. Furthermore, the motifs in the photographs show Richter’s extraordinarily private point of view, as gained from the basic material for the overpainting, drawn from surplus items among the photographs he produces incessantly.

The catalogue shows four hundred overpainted photographs and sixty-two selected examples from seven Editions for which Richter overpainted either photographs or offset prints based on photographs. From the earliest works dating from 1989 and a 1986 predecessor up to the most recent overpaintings created in June 2008, every phase, technique, and group of motifs is copiously represented.

Gerhard Richter himself has loaned numerous works from his own collection for the exhibition, and has taken a keen interest in both the exhibition and the catalogue as they have emerged. We would like to thank him for his extremely generous support and the extraordinary levels of enthusiasm and delight we have been able to share with him.

Fred Jahn, through whose Munich gallery many overpainted photographs have found their way into private collections, has rendered outstanding service to this exhibition. We are very grateful to him for all the efforts he has made in approaching the many lenders and securing works from them; they loaned their valuable pieces without exception. The overwhelming generosity of the many private collectors, but also of the public lenders, forms the basis for our project, alongside the artist’s own extensive set of works. We would therefore like to thank the following lenders who have parted with their works, as fragile as they are valuable, for a lengthy period of time: Artinsights Inc. Collections; Collection