

Press kit

Studio Paintings  
1988—2022

# Katharina Grosse

3.3.—25.6.2023

**KUNST  
MUSEUM  
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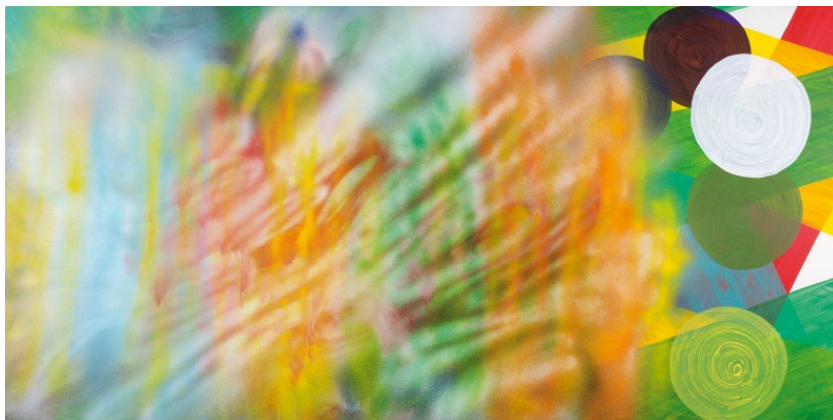


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### **Katharina Grosse Studio Paintings, 1988–2022**

**Between 3 March and 25 June 2023 the Kunstmuseum Bern is showing a major exhibition devoted to Katharina Grosse. It is the first exhibition in Switzerland to focus on Grosse's studio works. The large-format, vibrantly coloured paintings from the 1980s until the present clearly show the importance of the works on canvas in the German artist's oeuvre as a whole.**

Since the 1990s Katharina Grosse (born 1961) has developed a body of work marked by an interest in performativity and mediality. Of central importance to Grosse's practice is colour: she experiments with its physical presence and its sensory and socio-political potential. Grosse uses paint in order to break down conventional relationships between foreground, background and under-ground – both on the canvas and beyond it. The exhibition addresses the canvas paintings that Katharina Grosse made in her studio between the late 1980s and the present.

In this large survey exhibition, the Kunstmuseum Bern is showing 43 paintings from all phases of her work, and three new room-sized photographic prints on fabric. The exhibition was conceived by the Mildred Lane Kemper Museum in St Louis and reimaged in collaboration with the artist for the galleries of the Kunstmuseum Bern.

### **Studio works as a new perspective**

Katharina Grosse already began working on her first studio works while studying at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf between 1986 and 1990. Based on these works the German artist achieved a breakthrough in the 1990s: in the Kunsthalle Bern in 1998 she made her very first spray-paint intervention – a method for which she is now internationally famous. With the three large-format photographic prints on fabric, the exhibition in the Kunstmuseum Bern 25 years later shows yet again a site-related installation by Katharina Grosse and sheds new light on the artist's work, always moving along the boundaries of current ideas of painting, from the viewpoint of her studio works.

### **Returns, revisions, inventions**

Like Grosse's artistic process, the exhibition is divided into two thematic chapters, in which paintings from different phases of the artist's work confront one another. In the first chapter *Returns, Revisions, Inventions* the artistic process is laid bare in all its revisions and new inventions. The juxtaposition of paintings from different decades reveals the ways in which Katharina Grosse returns to previous moments in her own oeuvre and develops them further with new inventions. Colours and forms, materials and working methods appear, then reappear transformed. For example Grosse has recurrently experimented with the course of a line, whether painted, with a brush, sprayed from a gun or both at once.

The second chapter *Fissures and Ruptures* expands on this approach, and highlights the various methods Grosse uses to break up the homogenous surface of the image in order to question its autonomy and connect it to the spaces of the everyday. Since 1998 Grosse has painted not only with brushes but also with industrial spray-gun that allow her to paint – without any physical contact with the surface – across the edges of the canvas into built space. Throughout the 2010s she also started interrupting her painting process with stencils. By using cardboard, studio waste and materials alien to painting such as piles of earth, she covers parts of the painting and in this way confuses foreground and background in the painting. This approach reached a radical climax in 2020 when Grosse began to slash her paintings and in this way make the wall behind the canvas part of the painting.

### **Colour play for the senses**

The element of colour is of central importance in the interplay of references and ruptures in Grosse's painting. The artist assigns an immediate resonance to colour, which hits the viewer before one has fully grasped it:

'Colour is so important to me because it creates an immediate resonance within you. Before you know it, you have a visceral reaction to it, like a voice in a performance that hits you before you can even discern words or lyrics.'

The pure, strong colours that Grosse uses reveal their full effect in the large-format paintings, and plunge viewers into a sensual play of colours. With constantly new variations and unfamiliar minglings of foreground, background and surrounding space, the works invite the viewer to discover diversity and adopt different perspectives – an approach that reflects not only sensory but in many respects socio-political potential.

### **Digital Guide**

The digital guide is being used to its full extent for the first time with this exhibition. In the web application, you can both get an overview of the exhibition and dive into background information with your smartphone. Using image recognition, you can also quickly and easily obtain information on each work thanks to a trained model.



### Opening

The opening of the exhibition will take place on **Thursday, 2 March 2023, from 6.30 pm**. Admission to the exhibition is free on this evening. Speakers: Nina Zimmer, Director Kunstmuseum Bern – Zentrum Paul Klee and Kathleen Bühler, Head Curator Kunstmuseum Bern. **The artist will be present at the opening and will talk to curator Kathleen Bühler about her Studio Paintings, the development of her working process and the limits of painting.**

### Collaboration

The exhibition has been organised by the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum (Washington University in St. Louis, USA) in cooperation with the Kunstmuseum Bern. It has been curated by Dr. Sabine Eckmann, William T. Kemper Director and Chief Curator; the presentation at the Kunstmuseum Bern has been curated by Dr. Kathleen Bühler, Chief Curator Kunstmuseum Bern. A bilingual catalogue in English and German has been published by Hatje Cantz and the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum.

### With the support of

Kanton Bern, Credit Suisse, Burgergemeinde Bern, Stiftung GegenwART, UNIQA Fine Art Insurance, Ursula Wirz-Stiftung, Ruth & Arthur Scherbarth-Stiftung

### Exhibition venues

Mildred Lane  
**Kemper Art Museum** 23.9.2022–23.1.2023



3.3.–25.6.2023



25.4.–1.9.2024

### Media preview

We cordially invite you to the media preview with Kathleen Bühler, Chief Curator Kunstmuseum Bern and curator of the exhibition, on Wednesday, 1 March 2023 at 10 am at the Kunstmuseum Bern. The artist will be present at the preview and will be available for interviews.

Please register for the media preview and if interested in an interview via [press@kunstmuseumbern.ch](mailto:press@kunstmuseumbern.ch).

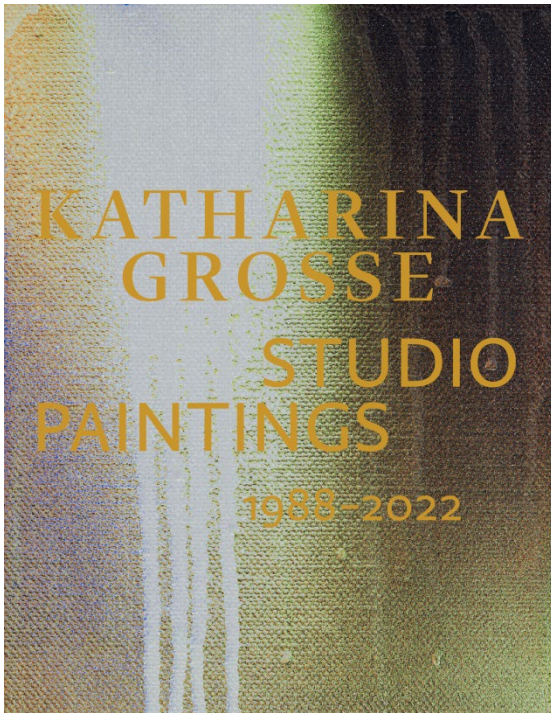
### Contact

Anne-Cécile Foulon, Head of Communication & Marketing Kunstmuseum Bern – Zentrum Paul Klee  
[press@zpk.org](mailto:press@zpk.org), +41 31 328 09 93

### Individual visit of the exhibition



We are looking forward to your individual visit to the exhibition. Admission to all exhibitions at the Kunstmuseum Bern is free for media representatives with a valid press card. Please fill in the digital accreditation form which you can either access via [kunstmuseumbern.ch/media](https://kunstmuseumbern.ch/media) or by screening the QR-Code before your visit.



## Exhibition catalogue

### **Katharina Grosse Studio Paintings 1988–2022 Returns, Revisions, Inventions**

Published by Sabine Eckmann, texts by Graham Bader, Stephan Berg, Kathleen Bühler, Sabine Eckmann, Gregory H. Williams

312 pages

Publication in German and English

Hatje Cantz, ISBN 978-3-7757-5338-8, CHF 45

Catalogue:



## **Public Guided Tour in English**

### **Katharina Grosse. Studio Paintings, 1988-2022**

Sunday **2 April 2023** 11:30am

Tuesday **23 May 2023** 7:30pm

Duration: 1 hour

Cost: Entrance fee exhibitions + CHF 5

Online Tickets:

<https://t1p.de/zjmj1>

## **Background information Q&A**

### **What role does the imagination play in your painting?**

**Katharina Grosse:** There is no boundary between reality and imagination. To imagine is to realise. My pictures are prototypes of this recognition; they try out – and dramatically compress – the characteristics of reality. I build prototypes of the imagination so that they can be re-enacted and applied to other fields of endeavour.

What I ask myself every day is, what would prototypes of possible realities look like if they didn't reduce complexity in the least, but instead celebrated the complexity of simultaneities? I want to show that it is always possible – not only for me, but for everyone – to also view and experience reality differently, not only where I show it, but everywhere. Always. Here. Now. It is simple but powerful, to experience that constant change is natural. Embracing uncertainty in such a way could influence how we look at gender, race, society, and politics.

With my painting I seek to compress emotions and incite agitation. I want us to be so disturbed, positively or negatively, that we develop the desire to change something – preferably immediately and repeatedly.

### **How did you arrive at painting as your chosen medium?**

**Katharina Grosse:** I came to painting because I thought it was the most direct medium. It doesn't require a technical apparatus like a camera or a computer to process images. I thought it was the most tactile, visceral, and essential, and I wanted to work in an area that doesn't use language or photography. I wanted to work in an area where something exists before you start to think in language. That's how I discovered that colour is also so vital for me.

My bodily intelligence responds better to a tactile surface. I think there are so many images in our lives that come from homogeneous surfaces: from the screen, from photography, from our phones. I think tactile images or multi-layer images like painting provide a different kind of knowledge, maybe one that is even more authentic.

Another reason is that painting is nonlinear; it has a very unique conception of time. Unlike any other medium it allows us to see different moments in time at once. There is no consecutive, linear movement in painting. All the layers on a coloured surface generate a cluster of time. One could also reverse the sequence of past, present, future to the point of nullifying them.

### **How do you conceive of colour in your work?**

**Katharina Grosse:** Colour is so important to me because it creates an immediate resonance within you. Before you know it, you have a visceral reaction to it, like a voice in a performance that hits you before you can even discern words or lyrics.

Colour can appear anywhere. It is independent from any location; therefore, it has the power to sever usual connections and trespass on territories, anticipated content, beloved preferences, and fixed hierarchies. Colour gets to you like how noise, a scent, or taste affects you.

### **And your palette choice?**

**Katharina Grosse:** I'd say that the most defining aspects of my palette are probably the saturation and artificiality of the colours, which for the most part are straight from the palette of the supplier I buy them from. For many years

now I haven't even mixed them. I use maybe three yellows, three reds, three greens, three blues, and a couple of in betweens – mostly to shift between cold and warm, opaque and translucent – and white. That's basically all.

I prefer to use artificial colours without any clear reference to either site or object. I want to infuse a certain energy or attention or transformational aspect into a situation or space.

The choice of colour always has to do with what else is around it, as colours are relational elements; they look a certain way only in relation to something else. But there's no hierarchy. A colour can enhance a space or an object in such a multifaceted way. It can turn in any direction at any moment.

### **How is the exhibition structured?**

**Kathleen Bühler:** The exhibition is organised in two sections, each with a thematic focus. *Returns, Revisions, Inventions* on the upper floor comprises a broad range of paintings executed since the late 1980s and highlights the cyclical approach in which colours, paint, and shapes appear in flux as they emerge, then return on different canvases, only to transform yet again as new images. Through this process-based method the artist entangles past, present, and future so that distinct notions of narrated, lived, and envisioned time are inseparable in an instantaneous perceptual experience.

The second section, *Fissures and Ruptures*, on the ground floor of the Atelier 5-building continues this exploration by concentrating on the various ways the artist ruptures the medium of painting (or what is left of it) to question its autonomy, especially the long-standing connection between painter and painted mark, to ultimately make space for the everyday. This involves the use of stencils, which create voids on the canvas that inhabit a terrain of their own; the inclusion of elemental materials such as earth and tree branches; a collage-like approach through which the artist creates paintings within paintings; and the use of slashed canvases—all of which emphasise fragmentation and disorientation rather than unifying and contained structures.

The two chapters are linked by the new prints on artificial silk, which enlarge photographs from the painting process onto mural format and thus question the status of painting as original or copy as well as image on the wall, or image in space.

## About Katharina Grosse

Born in Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany) in 1961, Katharina Grosse held professorships at Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin (2000–09) und Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (2010–18). Grosse lives and works in Berlin and New Zealand.

## Solo Exhibitions (Selection)

- 2022 *Canyon*, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France (permanent)  
*Studio Paintings, 1988–2022: Returns, Revisions, Inventions*, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, USA (travelling to Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland and Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany)  
Destroy Me Once, Destroy Me Twice, Roskilde Festival, Denmark  
*Apollo, Apollo*, Espace Louis Vuitton, Venice (accompanying the 59th Biennale di Venezia), Italy  
Wolke in Form eines Schwertes / Cloud in the Form of a Sword, Saarlandmuseum – Moderne Galerie, Saarbrücken, Germany  
*Chill Seeping*, SCAD – Museum of Art, Savannah, USA
- 2021 *Als mein Vater Sand war / When My Father Was Sand*, Y8 Kunstraum + Yoga e.V., Hamburg, Germany  
*Chill Seeping from the Walls Gets between Us*, HAM – Helsinki Art Museum, Finland
- 2020 *It Wasn't Us*, Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin, Germany  
*Is it you?*, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD, USA
- 2019 *Mural: Jackson Pollock / Katharina Grosse*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, USA (two-person show with Jackson Pollock)  
*Katharina Grosse x Gotthard Graubner. Farbe absolut x Absolute Color*, MKM Museum Küppersmühle für Moderne Kunst, Duisburg, Germany (two-person show with Gotthard Graubner)  
*Mumbling Mud*, chi K11 art space, Guangzhou, China
- 2018 *Mumbling Mud*, chi K11 art museum, Shanghai, China  
*Wunderbild*, National Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic  
*Le numerose irregolarità: Katharina Grosse / Tatiana Trouvé*, Villa Medici, Rome, Italy (two-person show with Tatiana Trouvé)
- 2017 *This Drove My Mother up the Wall*, South London Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2016 *Katharina Grosse*, MoMA PS1's *Rockaway!* series, New York, NY, USA  
*Katharina Grosse*, Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany
- 2015 *Seven Hours, Eight Rooms, Three Trees*, Museum Wiesbaden, Germany (including permanent indoor installation)  
*yes no why later*, Garage – Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia
- 2014 *psychylustro*, City of Philadelphia Mural Arts, Philadelphia, PA, USA  
*Who, I? Whom, you?*, Kunstmuseum Graz, Austria

- Inside the Speaker*, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2013 *Two younger women come in and pull out a table*, De Pont Museum, Tilburg, The Netherlands
- WUNDERBLOCK*, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX, USA
- Just Two of Us*, Public Art Fund, New York, NY, USA
- 2012 *Third Man Begins Digging Through Her Pockets*, MOCA – Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, OH, USA
- 2010 *One Floor Up More Highly*, MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA, USA
- 2009 *Shadowbox*, Temporäre Kunsthalle, Berlin, Germany
- Hello Little Butterfly I Love You What's Your Name, ARKEN Museum for Moderne Kunst, Ishøj, Denmark
- 2008 *Another Man Who Has Dropped His Paintbrush*, Galleria Civica di Modena, Modena, Italy
- 2007 *Atoms Outside Eggs*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto, Portugal
- Atoms Inside Ballons*, Renaissance Society, Chicago, IL, USA
- Picture Park*, Queensland Art Gallery South Bank, Brisbane, Australia
- 2006 *Holey Residue*, De Appel, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 2005 *Constructions à cru*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- Something Leadlight*, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway
- 2004 *Infinite Logic Conference*, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden
- Double Floor Painting*, Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, Odense, Denmark
- Perspectives 143: Katharina Grosse*, CAMH – Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, TX, USA
- 2002 *Der weisse Saal trifft sich im Wald*, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland
- Cool Puppen*, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, Germany
- Cool Puppen*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, United Kingdom
- 2001 *Katharina Grosse*, UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 1998 *Katharina Grosse*, Project Space, Kunsthalle Bern, Bern, Switzerland

### **Prizes**

- 1992 Villa Romana Stipend, Florence
- 1993 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff Stipend
- 2003 Fred Thieler Prize
- 2014 Oskar Schlemmer Prize

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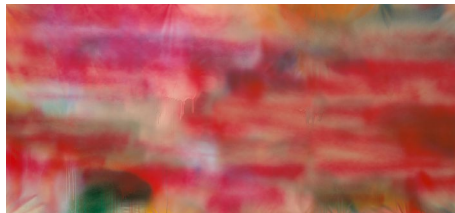
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Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 1991  
Oil on canvas  
200 x 300 cm  
© 2023, ProLitteris, Zurich



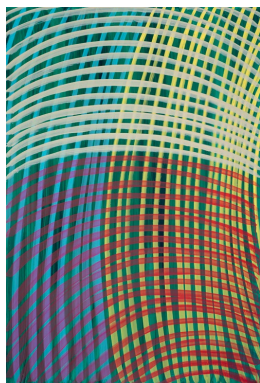
02  
Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 1993  
Oil on canvas  
130 x 170 cm  
Photo: Sebastian Schobbert  
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03  
Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 1998  
Oil and acrylic on canvas  
200 x 295 cm  
Photo: Jens Ziehe  
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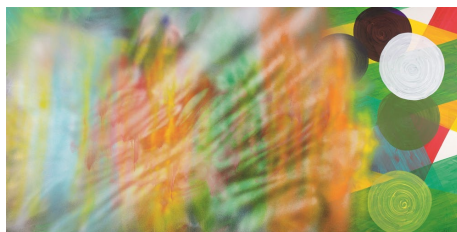
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Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 2001  
Acrylic on canvas  
203 x 435 cm  
Courtesy: Silard Isaak Collection  
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05  
Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 2001  
Acrylic on canvas  
250 x 170 cm  
Photo: Olaf Bergmann  
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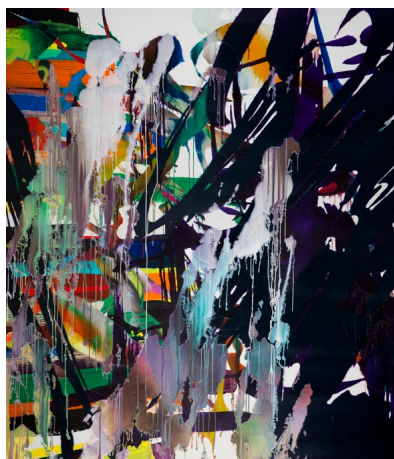
**06**  
Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 2005  
Acrylic on canvas  
299 x 602 cm  
Kunstmuseum Bern, Donation by Ms  
Marlies Kornfeld, Bern, for the Con-  
temporary Art Collection  
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**07**  
Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 2008  
Acrylic and soil on canvas  
ø 240 cm  
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**08**  
Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 2009  
Acrylic and soil on canvas  
201 x 135 cm  
Photo: Olaf Bergmann  
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**09**  
Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 2013  
Acrylic on canvas  
300 x 257 cm  
Museo Helga de Alvear, Cáceres, Spain  
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**10**  
Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 2020  
Acrylic on canvas and wood  
299 x 605 cm  
Photo: Jens Ziehe  
Courtesy: Galerie nächst. St. Stephan  
Rosemarie Schwarzwälder, Wien,  
Österreich  
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**11**  
Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 2021  
Acrylic on canvas  
354 x 266 x 66 cm  
Photo: Jens Ziehe  
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**12**  
Katharina Grosse  
*Untitled*, 2021  
Acrylic on canvas and wood  
349 x 248 x 80 cm  
Photo: Jens Ziehe  
Courtesy: Gagosian  
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**13**  
Katharina Grosse, 2022  
  
Photo: © Aman Shakya/SCAD Savannah College of Art and Design

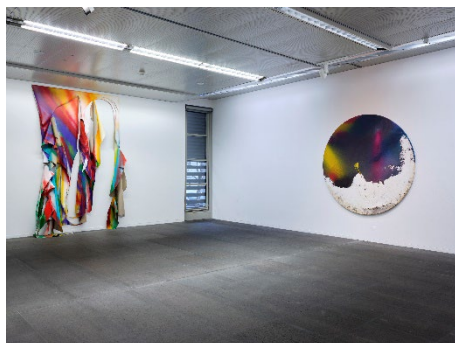
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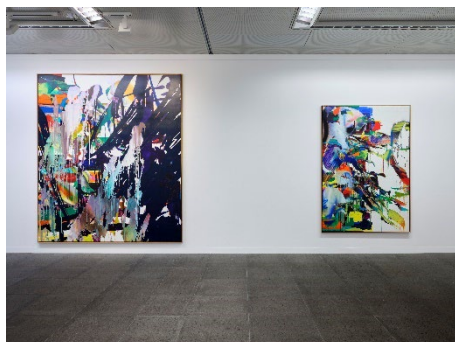
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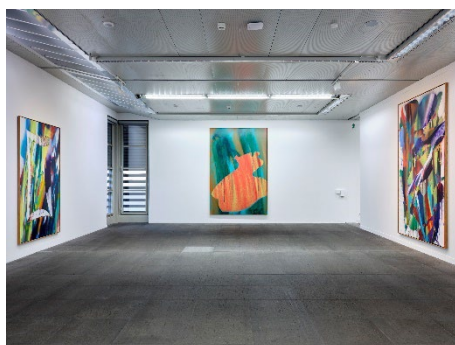
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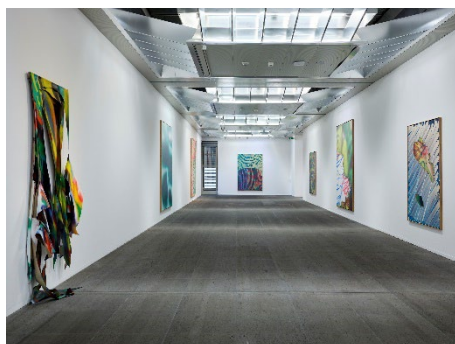
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Kunstmuseum Bern



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Photo: © Rolf Siegenthaler /  
Kunstmuseum Bern



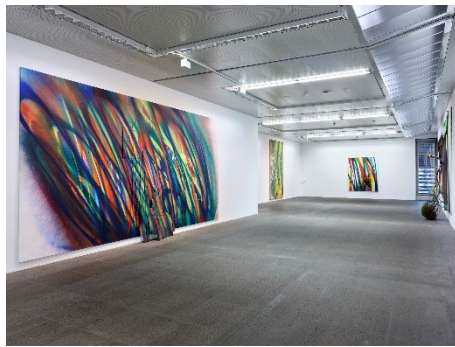
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Photo: © Rolf Siegenthaler /  
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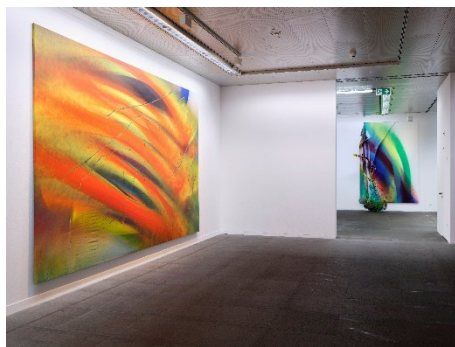
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Photo: © Rolf Siegenthaler /  
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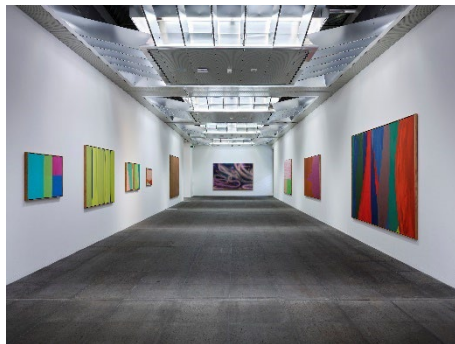
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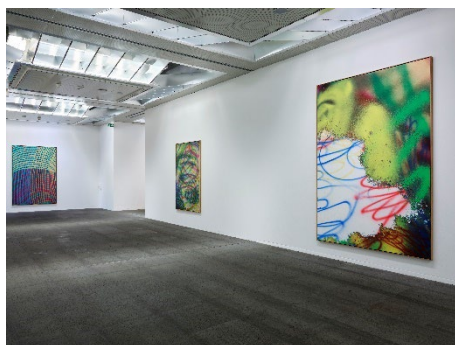
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