

Jutta Koether

Jutta Koether's unique approach to painting can best be described as multipurpose. Through her more than twenty-years investigation of the language, history, and relevance of this medium, Koether has continuously crossed into other fields of expertise to challenge, layer, extend, and revisit gestures on canvas.

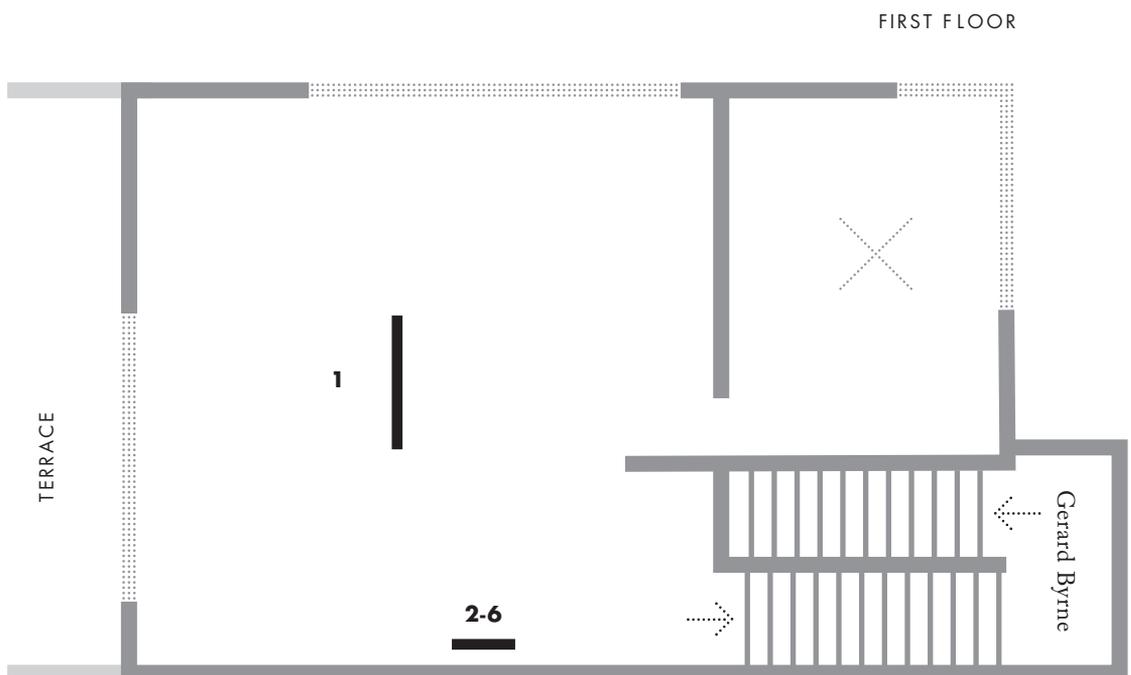
Koether's exhibition cycle spanning the autumn at PRAXES, entitled "The Double Session, Reloaded," is a recast of her 2013 triptych previously exhibited under the title "The Double Session," drawing on Derrida's eponymous 1969 lecture. On the upper floor of PRAXES, the triptych's three works – *Viktoria*, *Luise*, and *Isabelle* – are presented successively, allowing for their different qualities to become the impetus of a speculative dossier, reaching into Koether's vast practice.

In the third, culminating component of Koether's exhibition cycle, the framed, deep-hued *Isabelle* commands the stage. A pink and orange phallus painted in the quickly-drying "instant" medium of gouache, *Isabelle* appears not so much as an emblem of patriarchy and fetishism, but is rather a disruptive, fluid force – a *jouissance* with the power to even shape its own frame. Evoking a rich history of works investigating the phallus as parody, pun, and pose (Louise Bourgeois' *Fillette*, Marcel Duchamp's *Objet-Dard*, and Yayoi Kusama's *Infinity Mirror Room – Phalli's Field (or Floor Show)* come to mind, all produced in the 1950-60s), the phallus of *Isabelle* is an action-ready, self-possessed, reliably magical object. No longer part of a male body but with a female name, adorned with testicles resembling breasts (and the apples in another work occasionally on display in this exhibition), *Isabelle* could be seen as what Kleinian psychologists might call a combined parent figure – a hybrid or unity of opposites that is less sweetly erotic than frighteningly self-generative. Considering Koether's distinct vocabulary of materials and transitory exhibition display, both at PRAXES and at large, her turn to gouache and presenting the work with its back exposed, dangling on thin metal wires between mirrors and shelves, reads as another layer of radical speed and exposure, almost as if to counter or contain the drives at work in the painting itself.

Isabelle is occasionally joined by one of five small-scale paintings spanning from 1990 to 2013. All five works enjoy a particular transitory status in Koether's practice; they are sketches and studies, tests and presents, experimental repetitions belonging to no particular series or body of work. Coming to us through different motifs, media and (art) histories visited and revisited over a long span of time, they attest to a persistent engagement with *Isabelle*'s particular mode of staged disruption.

JUTTA KOETHER has exhibited extensively, including venues such as Tate Modern, London, the Whitney and São Paulo Biennials, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, and latest a touring show at Dundee Contemporary Arts and Arnolfini, Bristol, 2013. Koether lives in Berlin and New York and works as a professor at the Hochschule für bildende Künste (HfbK) in Hamburg.

- 1** *Isabelle*, 2013. Gouache on paper, framed.
- 2** *Isabelle*, 2005. Acrylic, cold glaze, gold paillettes on canvas.
- 3** *Untitled*, 1990–1991. Oil on canvas.
- 4** *Untitled*, 1990–1991. Oil on canvas.
- 5** *Untitled*, 2013. Acrylic on canvas.
- 6** *Untitled*, 2013. Oil on canvas.



CYCLE 1: JUTTA KOETHER

31 August – 6 October: Viktoria

12 October – 3 November: Luise

7 November – 14 December: Isabelle