

HAMBURG

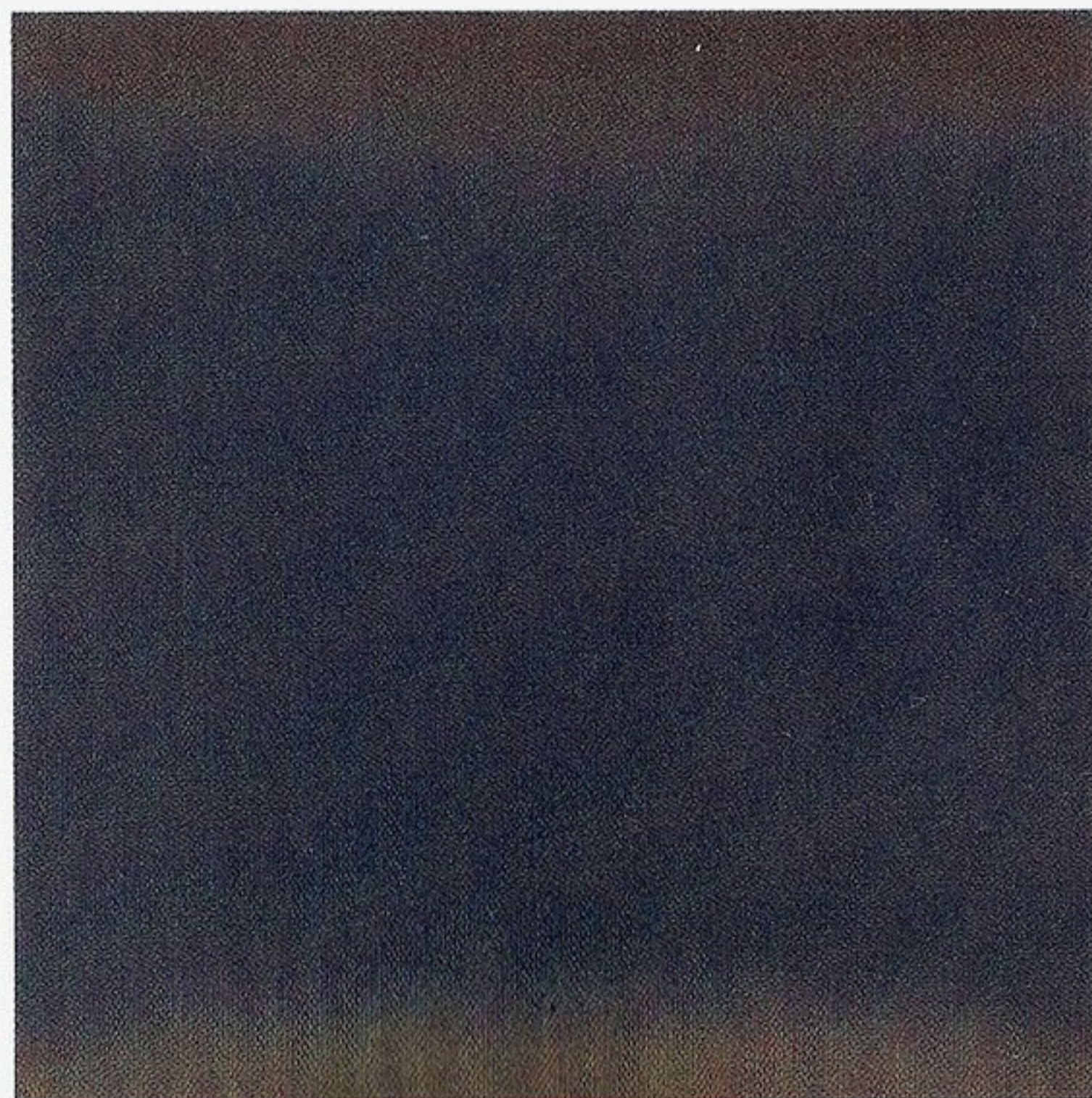
Inge Krause

GALERIE MATHIAS GÜNTNER

The exhibition's title is prosaic, even a bit curt: "Something to Look At"—nothing more, nothing less. But taken at its word, it is quite apposite: To look at Inge Krause's pictures is to experience a sort of purified vision. Her nonrepresentational painting focuses the gaze on a concentrated phenomenology of nuanced color. For this show, she has juxtaposed two older works—*Ohne Titel (Farbverlauf)* (untitled [Color Sequence]), 2002–2007, and *Ohne Titel (Farbverlauf)*, 2002)—with pieces created in 2015. This illuminating juxtaposition revealed the constancy of her engagement with color as a theme and phenomenal quality while showing that her painterly techniques have changed significantly over time.

The earlier pictures dated from a period when Krause worked by pouring transparent acrylic binder mixed with pigment, usually in small quantities, over a canvas set at an angle, producing an even film. She repeated this process over the course of several weeks, adding coat after coat of paint, varying the pigment

Inge Krause, *Untitled*, 2015, pastel chalk on canvas, 11 3/4 × 11 3/4".



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admixture and occasionally intercalating a completely colorless layer in order to give subtly inflected color fields a certain translucent depth effect. This process allowed for some control of the outcome, but what was done could not be undone. Each new color, each added layer, would alter the tonality and brightness of the whole. It might enhance the richness of the chromatic space, effecting surprising revelations and engendering an intangible vibrancy—yet a single layer too many could also blunt and, as it were, silence the picture. The specific phenomenal quality of color this technique yields ultimately eludes methodical planning; the process requires a finely tuned sensibility and expert skill, both of which were evident in the two pictures the artist selected from this group.

In the recent works (all *Untitled*, 2015), a similar sensation of weightless color results from a very different procedure. Krause now works without binder, dusting the unprimed canvas with pastel powders or rubbing them in by hand. The fabric is stretched on a frame and reinforced in the back with an aluminum composite panel for a flat and stable support. This technique allows her to avoid the edges or indentations that might otherwise appear in the picture as traces of its manufacture. As a result, the pigment powder that adheres to the fabric derives its rhythmical structure solely from the medium's texture. A single, almost unvaried hue prevails in most pieces, though many are framed by lighter zones along the top and bottom edges; to achieve the washed-out look of these areas, Krause ablated some of the paint with a dry brush or applied a different color to contrast with the main tone, creating understated correspondences and transitions. Luminous blues dominate in this exhibition, complemented by siennas and, in an ensemble of three small vertical pieces, shades of grayish green; two pictures blending cerulean blue and soft pink almost look like clouds. In some works of this type, Krause merely applied a fixative to the pastel pigments for a matte and somewhat fragile look, while others are coated with several thin layers of transparent lacquer, unleashing a stunningly intense chromatic depth effect. The arrangement of the works plays on such differences, with matte and glossy pictures sometimes combined in groupings. Despite the similar layouts, each piece is an individual compositional solution, not an element in a series—something the mixed hanging brought out. The result is a rhythmical syntax in which chromatic affinities and gradations of color depth interact to vibrant effect.

—Jens Asthoff

Translated from German by Gerrit Jackson.