

**From: Silvia Gertsch, Xerxes Ach: Sinnesreize hrsg. Kunstmuseum Bern und Kathleen Bühler, 2015**

## **Foreword and Acknowledgments**

**Matthias Frehner**

When Silvia Gertsch paints, she stands in front of an upright pane of glass, applying paint to the back of it with an outstretched arm in what for outsiders appears to be a very uncomfortable pose. She, and all who view her work, look at the backside of the image through a pane of glass as thick as a showcase window. The reflecting glass leaves no doubt: we are outside. I know of no one other than Gertsch who paints in such a complicated, circuitous, elaborate, and physically exhausting way. Xerxes Ach, on the contrary, takes a "classical" approach. The picture lies in front of him, and he applies layer after layer of paint, with extreme care and control, so that they overlap, flow into one another, and blend in complex gradations. For Gertsch, paint appears as matter; her images are composed of splotches, which Cézanne called taches. Ach, on the contrary, makes "immaterial" paint, which he applies either wet or dry, allowing atmospheric elements to surface: as fog, haze, or areas of color. Gertsch transfers reality into painting via photographs and video stills that she has taken herself. She condenses the copy, repeals its temporality, renders it idyllic, magical, and uncanny. A master of allusions and ambiguities, her images never offer certainty. We gaze at magical landscapes and into mysterious interiors, in which past and future are equally present. The artist arrives at these charged atmospheres by means of extremely subtle color constellations, which are as rich and wonderful as the wings of exotic butterflies. The artist couple meets in their openness to suggestive color effects. Atmosphere is shared, not form. Or put another way: the two arrive at the same goal from opposite starting points: Gertsch from realism, Ach from abstract color field painting. Their mutual research is devoted to the poetic, nonverbal language of color, whose immaterial spheres of influence they find themselves in.

It is not easy task to make this essential, shared aspect comprehensible in an exhibition; upon first glance the two paths could not be any more different. Through long talks with the artist couple, our curator, Kathleen Bühler, developed a presentation strategy that respects the diversity of the paths, yet nonetheless allows common ground to emerge. I congratulate her for cogently achieving this very difficult task, also in the publication.

The Kunstmuseum Bern would like to thank its partner of many years, Credit Suisse, for the realization of this extensive exhibition. The bank Credit Suisse has declared its corporate identity as a vehicle for artistic expression and provides essential support for our exhibition activity. The foundation board and the museum direction extend their deepest appreciation. A second cornerstone of our engagement in the area of contemporary art is our patron Dr. h. c. Hansjörg Wyss' Stiftung GegenwART. Once again, his foundation generously supported the exhibition and accompanying publication. We would like to thank him, as well as the Burgergemeinde Bern, which continually supports art projects in Bern. The Kunstmuseum Bern received additional support, mainly for the realization of the artist's book, from the Hans-Eugen und Margrit Stucki-Liechti Stiftung, as well as contributions from numerous individuals. The collectors, who also provided generous financial support from the start, include Bernhard Bratschi, Karin and Peter Haas, Stiftung Paulina for Margrit and Paul Hahnloser, Richard and Maria Hahnloser, Hess Art collection, Bern, Eberhard Kornfeld, Jobst Wagner, and Alex Wassmer. The Kunstmuseum Bern would like to especially thank the award-winning graphic designer Anna Haas for her well-founded conception of the beautiful artist's book. Last but not least, we thank Silvia Gertsch and Xerxes Ach, their

**KUNSTMUSEUM BERN**

MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE BERNE  
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BERNE

HODLERSTRASSE 8 -12 CH-3000 BERN 7  
T +41 31 328 09 44 F +41 31 328 09 55

INFO@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH WWW.KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

**MEDIEN-SERVICE**

SERVICE DE PRESSE / PRESS OFFICE  
T +41 31 328 09 19/44

PRESS@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

**Media Documentation**

Foreword and Acknowledgments from the  
publication "Embracing Sensation" from  
Matthias Frehner

**Silvia Gertsch, Xerxes Ach:**

**Embracing Sensation**

Oct. 23, 2015 – Feb. 21, 2016

gallerists, collectors, the Swiss art museums, and the friends of the Kunstmuseum Bern for trusting us with their works for the duration of the exhibition. Finally, many thanks go to my team for their professional realization of the exhibition. Special thanks here to Sarah Merten, who not only assisted the curator, but also acted as author and oversaw the realization of the book.

**KUNSTMUSEUM BERN**  
MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE BERNE  
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BERNE

HODLERSTRASSE 8 – 12 CH-3000 BERN 7  
T +41 31 328 09 44 F +41 31 328 09 55  
INFO@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH WWW.KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

**MEDIEN-SERVICE**  
**SERVICE DE PRESSE / PRESS OFFICE**  
T +41 31 328 09 19/44  
PRESS@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH