

New Edition
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Update section
expanded Chronology



Luc Tuymans

PHAIDON

Luc Tuymans is a Belgian artist who emerged in the late 1980s. Tuymans is one of the world's most prominent figures in contemporary painting although he has also worked in other media. His work fuses the traditions of Old Master Flemish and Spanish genre painting with ideas and images drawn from recent history. Tuymans' monochromatic palette and choice of subject matter – domestic interiors, commonplace objects, the margins of history or family portraits – link painting with filmmaking, photojournalism and amateur photography. The source of his imagery, however, some of which derives from documentation of Nazi atrocities, gives his canvases a brooding violence. Modest in scale and sensitive in execution, this work is powerful in its haunting evocation of lost lives and repressed histories. Tuymans' work has featured in many key surveys of contemporary painting, such as 'Examining Pictures', Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, and tour, 1999; 'Trouble Spot. Painting' (which he also curated), Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerp, 1999; and 'Dear Painter, Paint Me', Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2002, among others.

Ulrich Loock, curator of the artist's exhibition at the Kunsthalle Bern (1992) and author of influential texts on recent European art, uses Tuymans' installation of exhibitions as a way of mapping key themes. **Juan Vicente Aliaga**, critic for *frieze* and *Artforum*, reveals sources and motivations through his dialogue with the artist, whilst curator and critic **Nancy Spector**, whose writings have been published in *Artforum* and *Parkett*, explores the narrative possibilities of one painting, *Pillows* (1994). Tuymans selects *Chevengur* (1928), a primitivist, magical tale by Russian author **Andrei Platonov**, and gives a fascinating account of his work in the essay 'Disenchantment' (1991). Bern-based critic **Hans Rudolf Reust** surveys Tuymans' works from 1996 to the present including the artist's important cycle of works 'Mwana Kitoko', a critical look at Belgium's colonial past.

Dedicated to my parents Lisa and Antoon Tuymans and my wife Carla Arocha.

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2002
Oil on canvas
30 × 24 cm

cover, back, **The Heritage V** (detail)
1996
Oil on canvas
53.5 × 75 cm

page 4, **Die Zeit 4/4** (detail)
1988
Collage and oil on cardboard
41 × 40 cm

page 6, **Luc Tuymans**
1989

page 32, **Tracing** (detail)
1994
Oil on canvas
101 × 82 cm

page 94, **Pillows** (detail)
1994
Oil on canvas
54.5 × 67 cm

page 102, **Luc Tuymans**
1966

page 148, **Pink Glasses** (detail)
2001
Oil on canvas
95 × 59 cm
Collection San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

page 240, **Luc Tuymans' studio**
1996

Ulrich Loock Juan Vicente Aliaga Nancy Spector Hans Rudolf Reust

Luc Tuymans





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Ulrich Loock On layers of sign-relations, in the light of mechanically reproduced pictures, from ten years of exhibitions,

page 32. **Focus** Nancy Spector The Unforgiving Trace, page 94. **Artist's Choice**

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Survey

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Focus Nancy Spector: The Untold Story, page 16.

Artist's Choice

Artist's Choice: The Untold Story, page 16.

Artist's Writings Luc Tuymans

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Update

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Chronology page 202 & 203

Juan Vicente Aliaga Very little is known about the inception of your work and I think beginnings are always meaningful. Can you tell me how you started out?

Luc Tuymans I made my first oil painting when I was sixteen or seventeen years old. The idea of becoming a painter, of doing something within a certain type of visuality, was always there from the start, ever since I was five or six years old. A lot of my earlier work has been destroyed. From the beginning I had this idea about painting as sort of antique. There's one painting that is significant: my first self-portrait which won me a prize in a contest among several Belgian academies. Along with the prize money I was also given a book on James Ensor in which there was a self-portrait he had done at my same age, eighteen. Although the paintings were formally different, there was a similarity in meaning. I had worked on my painting for more than three months; I thought I had made something original, and then discovered that it was impossible. The idea of the original faded away and after a short crisis that gave me a new idea: all you can do is make an authentic forgery. I wanted the paintings to look old from the start, which is important because they are about memory. My best painting from that period is the portrait of my mother's brother, who got killed in the war. It was made from an old painting.

Aliaga Is that *G. Dam*?

Tuymans Yes. My grandparents' house burned down and all the photographs were burnt. Strangely enough an old painting of my uncle was saved in which he was seen not the way I would have painted him but with his face turned to the side. In this painting I turned him to face front. That was my first 'important'

G. Dam
1978
Oil on canvas
70 x 60 cm



August Sander
Farm Girls, Westerwald
1928
Black and white photograph
24.7 x 17.5 cm



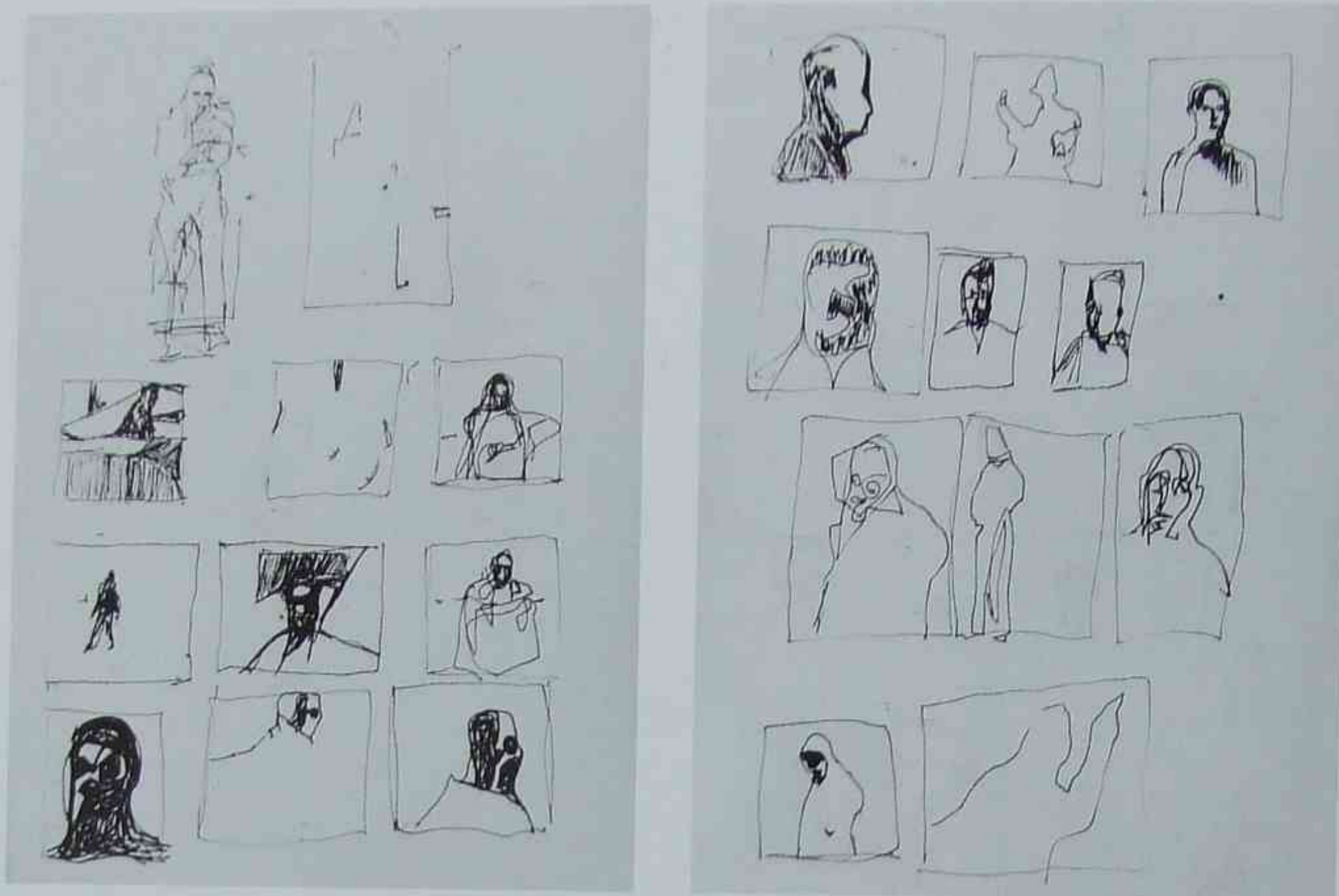
right, **Self-Portrait**
1978
Oil on cardboard
52,5 x 39 cm

opposite, **Self-Portrait (detail)**
1977
Oil on canvas
100 x 80 cm



painting, from 1975, when I was still studying at the academy. At that time I was very interested in the work of August Sander.

Aliaga Some of your paintings recall the use of cinematic and photographic procedures: enlargements, blow-ups, croppings, close-ups. You in fact worked with a cameraman in 1982 and have made some experimental films on Super 8, 16, and 35 mm film which you call 'stories with no end'. Could you explain your connection with the cinema?



Tuymans In 1982 I didn't see any point in going on with painting, I had a sort of crisis. Coincidentally I got a Super 8 camera with which I could shoot in black and white without much light. Strangely enough, although I could never take a photograph, I could make films. There's something similar about filming and painting. In order to approach the image you have to go through the process of creating it. The first films were not about anything; they were just everyday images which struck me. I had an enormous amount of material. I cut and cut until the cutting became even more important than the film itself. It gave me a lot of ideas about framing. My first painting after two years was *The Correspondence* (1985, see page 120): my first conceptual painting with a story behind it. This is the first painting in which you can see lines cropping up. Other paintings derived directly from the idea of filming are *Antichamber* (1985, see page 46) and *Encounter* (1985, see page 49).

Aliaga There is always a grid in these paintings.

Tuymans Yes. But there's also the framing and the drawing. First I painted the background and then I worked toward the front. Film is about projecting images, and I wanted to 'project' that onto the painting also. I needed to have a background colour to start from.

Aliaga Were you aware at the time of Eisenstein's ideas about montage and editing?

Tuymans Yes, I had read some books about montage, especially Eisenstein's. I had read that in the course he taught in Moscow, he would explain framing using a painting, a portrait that he cut up into little parts, like framings, to get different meanings from them.

Aliaga There is a recent painting, *Resentment* (1995), which is also inspired by cinema, particularly the fade-out.

Resentment

1995

Oil on canvas

94.5 × 63.5 cm

Collection Museum of Modern Art,

Stadsgalerij, Heerlen, The

Netherlands

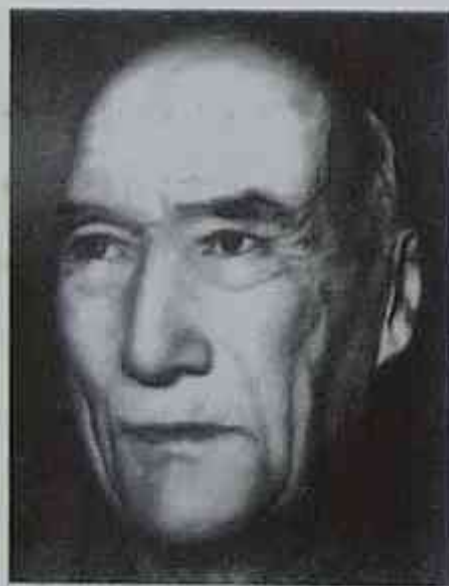


Tuymans Yes, it is based on photography. In the 1970s there was this trend to combine nature and human faces, it was a sort of romantic thing. In this painting I just show the eyes, not the whole face. It's very cinematic because it looks as if it is fading away.

Aliaga It gives you the feeling of someone appearing and disappearing ...

Tuymans For my generation, television is very important. There's a huge amount of visual information which can never be experienced but which can be seen, and its impact is enormous. I think it's almost impossible to make a universal image. One can only make bits of images. Existence looks edited. For an artist like Gerhard Richter, the fight of true painting against photography was very important; for me it's much more interesting to think in terms of films, because on a psychological level, films are more decisive. After seeing a film I try to figure out which single image is the one with which I can remember all the moving images of the movie. Painting does the opposite; a good painting to me denounces its own ties so that you are unable to remember it correctly. Thus it generates other images. One shouldn't be able to remember the real size of a painting because that's the very core of its power. Before I paint, the image already exists; sometimes it's an image which is memorized and so there's a mimetic element, which could also be very filmic.

Gerhard Richter
Forty-Eight Portraits (detail)
1972
48 black and white photographs
70 x 55 cm each



Aliaga Which contemporary artists were relevant to you when you started out?

Tuymans Among contemporary artists, no one interested me. I started out in extreme isolation, for instance I only got to know Gerhard Richter's work much later. The most important experience was seeing the work of El Greco in the flesh. I was sixteen or seventeen, and for the first time I realized what painting really meant. El Greco showed me that painting should appear, confront the viewer and then disappear, like a kind of retraction. In El Greco there was a sort of deconstruction going on within the imagery; he left out the middle part of the painting. I couldn't remember the whole image.

Aliaga In El Greco's paintings there is a sort of artificial light, something unreal. I thought your work was more linked to Velázquez and other seventeenth-century Spanish still life painters, like Zurbarán, or even Ribera, because of the roughness and dryness in their work. El Greco to me is completely different, kind of theatrical, artificial due to the light effects and the colours – those pale blues and yellowish hues making figures look like cadavers ...

El Greco
El Espolio
1577-79
Oil on canvas
285 x 173 cm



Tuymans What really shook me up was that the light was always cool; the warmth is removed from the imagery, which makes it more powerful. The first time I saw El Greco's paintings in a book, I disliked his mannerism, but when I saw it in the flesh, I realized that what I had taken for mannerism was actually very rigorous rationality. There was a structure; the whole thing was carefully constructed. There are all these misunderstandings within the image, so that when you look at it on an intellectual level it becomes very interesting.

Aliaga Maybe there is something else in El Greco that you were attracted to. There's a lack of flesh, a lack of solidity. Bodies look as though they're disappearing; they have no consistency somehow.

Tuymans No, I think there is a consistency. El Greco, it is assumed, was a very tall man, he was a thin character with a long head. There is a resemblance between his paintings and his being. You always project your own physicality upon the image. But then I also saw in El Greco a sort of detachment.

Aliaga I think that even today most contemporary Belgian art is considered to be somehow related to the Surrealist tradition, the absurdity in Magritte, Marcel Mariën and Marcel Broodthaers. The materialistic aspect of Belgian surreal art is also linked to the use of puns and the derision of moral and patriotic values. This art accentuates irony, sarcasm, and is flippant, nasty. Do you feel you are a part of that tradition?

Tuymans You must remember that the first documentary ever made was done in Belgium in 1913. The idea of reality is very important for Belgians. If you go back to Jan van Eyck you find this same sense of realism, which is very Belgian. It's also in Magritte, who didn't regard himself as a Surrealist. Most of the elements I paint exist in a sort of vacuum. Most of my pictures depict rooms; everything has been taken out of the image. I am fed up with associating Belgian art with Surrealism and the grotesque. I feel much closer to Spilliaert, who was a loner and a greater intellectual than Ensor. So was Magritte in comparison to Broodthaers. But I am opposed to the idea of tradition. One should never mix the idea of tradition with that of one's origins; they are two different things. The only thing you can say about Belgian art is that groups were never possible. The Belgian art world has only ever provided individuals.

Aliaga One thing that struck me in your oeuvre is the unpretentious side of it, the modesty of the sizes, the sheer simplicity of it all. Do you think that this austere restraint, this kind of monastic approach to painting, connects you to Spilliaert?

Tuymans I think so, yes. I feel a link with him but also with Caspar David Friedrich, who was the first artist who turned the landscape into a mental image. He applied the first restrictions, in terms of the imagery, and then kept reducing. Spilliaert did it, de Chirico did it too. The work has to be painted in a very pragmatic way. Everything tends to go towards a sort of extreme image. You have to reduce in order to be clear, but it doesn't have to be obvious. My work is born from isolation, although compared



opposite: *Hands*

1978

Oil on canvas

100 x 80 cm

right: Léon Spilliaert

Self-Portrait in the Mirror

1907

Watercolour on paper

66 x 50 cm



to someone like Spilliaert, it's less tormented. My work is much more rationalized, it revolves around the notion of indifference. This could, however, be connected to Spilliaert, since he too, in my view, had a very detached view of reality.

Aliaga I have the impression that you paint in a half-hearted way, as though you do not want to make it precious. Some of your paintings can even look shoddy, like *The Nape* (1987, see page 128).

Tuymans *The Nape* comes from the idea that if somebody turns his back on you it's offensive. It's like a shield, a shield for the personality. The individual is blinded; there is no possible contact. It's a very austere image, and violent too. *The Nape* was a painting about intensity. What you actually see is a framing within the image. I outlined the figure and gradually the grease of the paint entered the image. Because it's a very violent image I deliberately stigmatized it by punching holes into it ...

Aliaga In your work there's a kind of reluctance to portray human images. It's not that they don't exist; they do, but they are defaced, erased, as if deprived of identity. Take *Heillicht* (1991, see page 83), which shows a doctor's face covered by a mask, or *The Conversation* (1987), in which two men are portrayed as two monsters, their faces smeared. In *DDR* (1990, see page 136) the left panel also shows someone's face daubed or smeared. The seated figure in *Hands*, the piece you have lost from 1978, has no face, or at least not a distinguishable face. Another work I like very much, *Nr. 3* (1978), shows four half-naked figures, their faces kind of covered. *Angel* (1992) depicts a faceless angel playing the harp. All these works seem to speak of camouflage – you've even painted a piece entitled *Camouflage*. And finally *Nr. 6* (1978) depicts a sort of hooded, masked man. Why this insistence on a blurred or hidden identity?

Nr. 6

1978

Oil on canvas

115 x 85 cm



Tuymans *Nr. 6* and *Hands* are very old pieces, about the idea of isolation. I still work in isolation, in a very small room with a big mirror. If you look very intensely at your face your traits disappear and you see only a black hole, leaving only the background. I had the idea of surrounding myself with fake figures or, worse, fake personalities that you can only see as different self-portraits. I destroyed a lot of those portraits. In *Nr. 6* the face was painted afterwards on paper and glued with paint on top where the face should be. These are very existential images, and from a very existential level they grew into something very rationalized. I don't want to make portraits on a psychological level. I take all the ideas out of individuality and just leave the shell, the body. To make a portrait of someone on a psychological level, for me, is an impossibility; I am much more interested in the idea of masks, of creating a blindfolded space of mirrors.

Aliaga Not only do you erase the faces, but sometimes you cast off the heads as well.

Tuymans It's again the idea of blocking out identity. Take *Body* (1990); there is no head, no genitals either. A Spanish guy was looking at it at Documenta and he said it reminded him of the *Infanta Margherita* by Velázquez. In *Las Meninas*, Velázquez got a kick out of painting the clothes instead of the infantas' faces, as if the faces had been added later.

Tarso
1993
Oil on canvas
49.5 x 39 cm

right, **Diego Velázquez**
Infanta Margherita
1654
Oil on canvas
128 x 99.5 cm

far right, **Body**
1990
Oil on canvas
49 x 35 cm
Collection Museum of
Contemporary Art, Ghent



Aliaga They don't look real; they look like dolls, or dead bodies.

Tuymans Right.

Aliaga And your piece *Body* is like a puppet, somehow.

Tuymans Yes, it's stuffed. In *Body*, the two lines create the impression that the body is opening up. One painting which does the opposite is *Silence*. It's a sick child, but the body has faded away. Only the head is left.

Aliaga Some of your paintings focus on the representation of childhood. This period of human life is not conjured up in your work by the presence of children's games or by a sense of laughter or happiness, or even by innocence. On the contrary, some details induce the viewer to think about childhood as fraught with horror, with unease, open to torment, abuse, ailment. *Silence* (1991) is a very significant piece. The baby's face – he or she, we don't know – shows a closed mouth; the eyes too are closed and covered by a kind of sickly orange and green brushstroke. The rest of the body, as you said, is not even drawn.

Tuymans The idea of fear is pretty much embedded in my personality. Constant fear and constant uneasiness. A constant restlessness. My childhood memories are not happy ones, although I wouldn't go so far as to call them traumatic. *The Nape* (1987, see page 128) and *Geese* relate to that: fear of the dark, of physical mutilation, which were instilled very early on in me.

Aliaga *Child Abuse* (1989, see page 131) is a puzzling work. Different objects are displayed: a bed (or something similar), dots ... It's hard to work it out.





opposite, **Silent Music**

1993

Oil on canvas

83 x 70 cm

Collection Stedelijk Museum,
Amsterdam

right, **Silence**

1991

Oil on canvas

86 x 78.5 cm

Collection Kunstmuseum, Bern



Tuymans That painting was made in a single afternoon and stems from my fascination with advertising. I get all these magazines in my letter box with advertisements. What you actually see is a stylized head, which reminds you of a cat or a toy, or a sort of stylized tulip with a price on top. The box in the painting is like a cat box. The two little blocks are images of a lawn and the dots are there just to keep the attention going. When my wife saw this painting she was struck by its violence. It was a painting about consumerism but it made her think of child abuse, that's why I gave it that title.

Aliaga There's another piece dealing with childhood called *Silent Music* (1992). It's a fairly large picture showing an interior packed with furniture. There is a sense of *malaise*, maybe due to the pastel colours, and the stifling atmosphere. The space is too crowded.

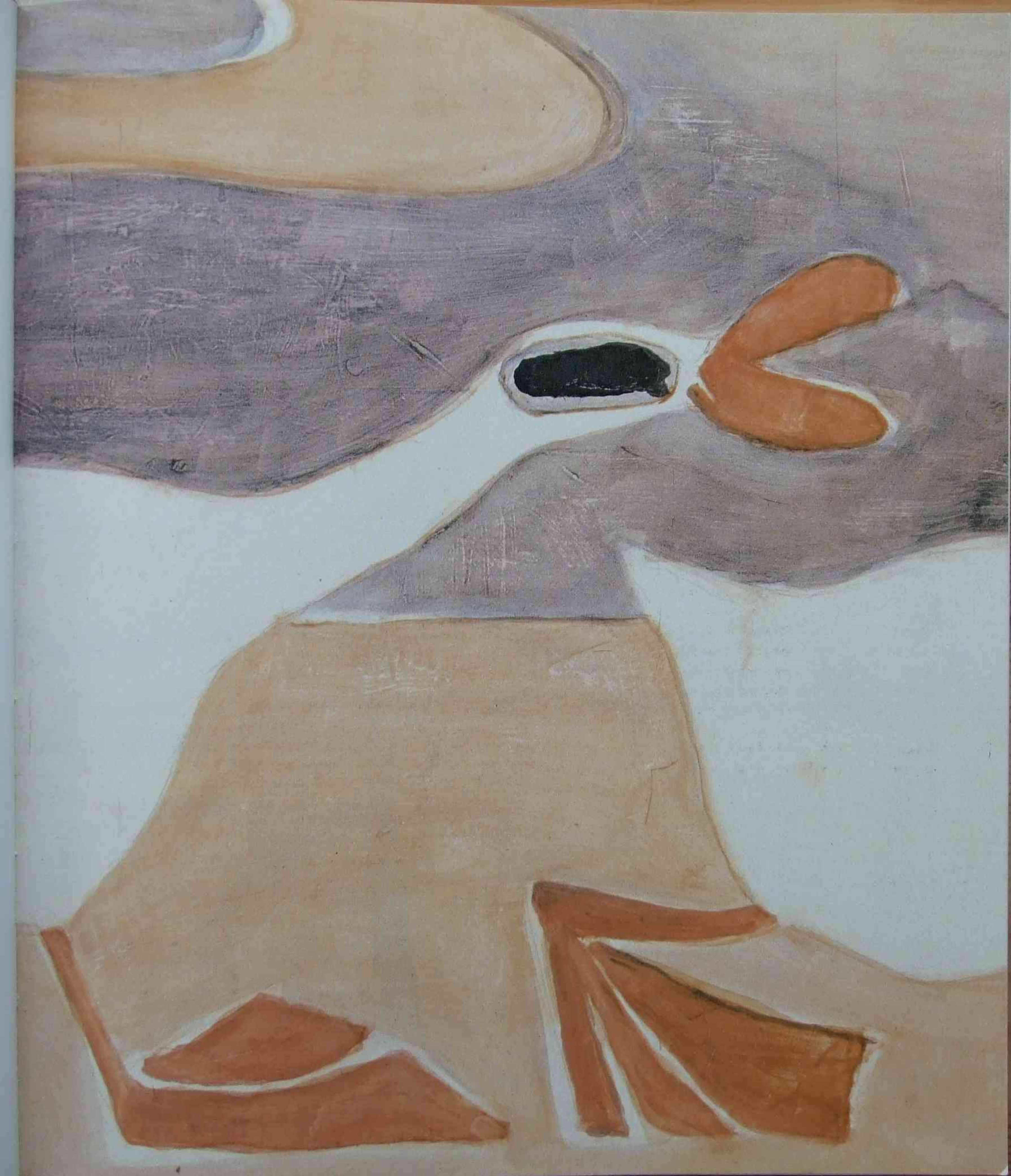
Tuymans But at the same time it is empty. The bed is unmade; the chair empty; the cupboard closed. The light source is unclear. You have the sense that you're peering in through an open door. And pink and blue are typically children's colours, for a child's room that someone else has prepared for you. In that sense it's horrific. If you look carefully at the image you realize that the chair is bigger than life-size; it couldn't be for a child. It is not my room but a sort of universal kid's room, turned into a prison, a cell. The objects are things you need to survive: a bed, a table, a chair, a cupboard. The colours are meant to be friendly and yet there's a sense of claustrophobia. A lot of my imagery has a sense of coziness which is turned into something terrifying. Anything banal can be transformed into horror. Violence is the only structure underlying my work. It's both physical and detached at the same time.

The title is correct because the painting reminded me of silent music. The title itself is the heart of the image and can never be depicted: the missing image. *Gas Chamber* is another work that might look warm, but when you read the title it becomes threatening, the whole image changes. And *Silent Music* is similar on a poetic level. The title is too big for the picture. You can read my pieces as ironic if you want.

Aliaga In *Geese* (1987), one of the pair is headless, cut off by the right edge of the painting. I read that a similar picture used to hang in your room as a child

Geese
1987
Oil on canvas
80 x 120 cm
Collection Provincial Museum of
Modern Art, Ostend





and that it frightened you. You also mentioned that when you were seven years old, you experienced the film *Snow White* as something terrifying.

Tuymans It's the idea of animation which is terrifying. When I first saw *Snow White* I was shocked to see an animated image move in an almost human way. Illusion became reality; it was very scary. In *Geese* I was frightened by the black hole in the goose's eye. It's not really an eye, it's more like a black dot. It's an element through which you can disappear, through which you could be displaced or swallowed. In a painting there is always a weak spot; a painting should always have an entrance or hole through which you can enter. Even if it is not visible to the spectator, it is always visible to me.

Aliaga Considering that much fin-de-siècle art deals with the representation of the body, often focusing on the body's innards, it is interesting that on the contrary you work on the body's lack of corporeality or materiality. In America, for example, the body is often represented in a very crude and direct way, while in your work, the body is there and not there. In *Body*, despite its title, what we see is a nobody. We see only the garments that cover it, which become more significant than the body itself, which is amputated, almost lifeless. In *Torso* the central image is more an armour than a real body.

Tuymans For me it's to do with the idea of a form that has turned into something soft, which is why clothes are more emphasized than the body itself. When I thought about trying to paint the sexual act for example, I came to the conclusion that it was impossible to depict, because it is timeless. It is a timeless repetition.

Aliaga In a series of works entitled *Der diagnostische Blick* (1992, see pages 68-75) the body is present by means of the gaze. It's the largest series (ten works) you've ever made. In it you depict all kinds of people, mostly men, middle-aged. But the common denominator lies in the way they look, their vacant eyes, the sickness in their eyes.

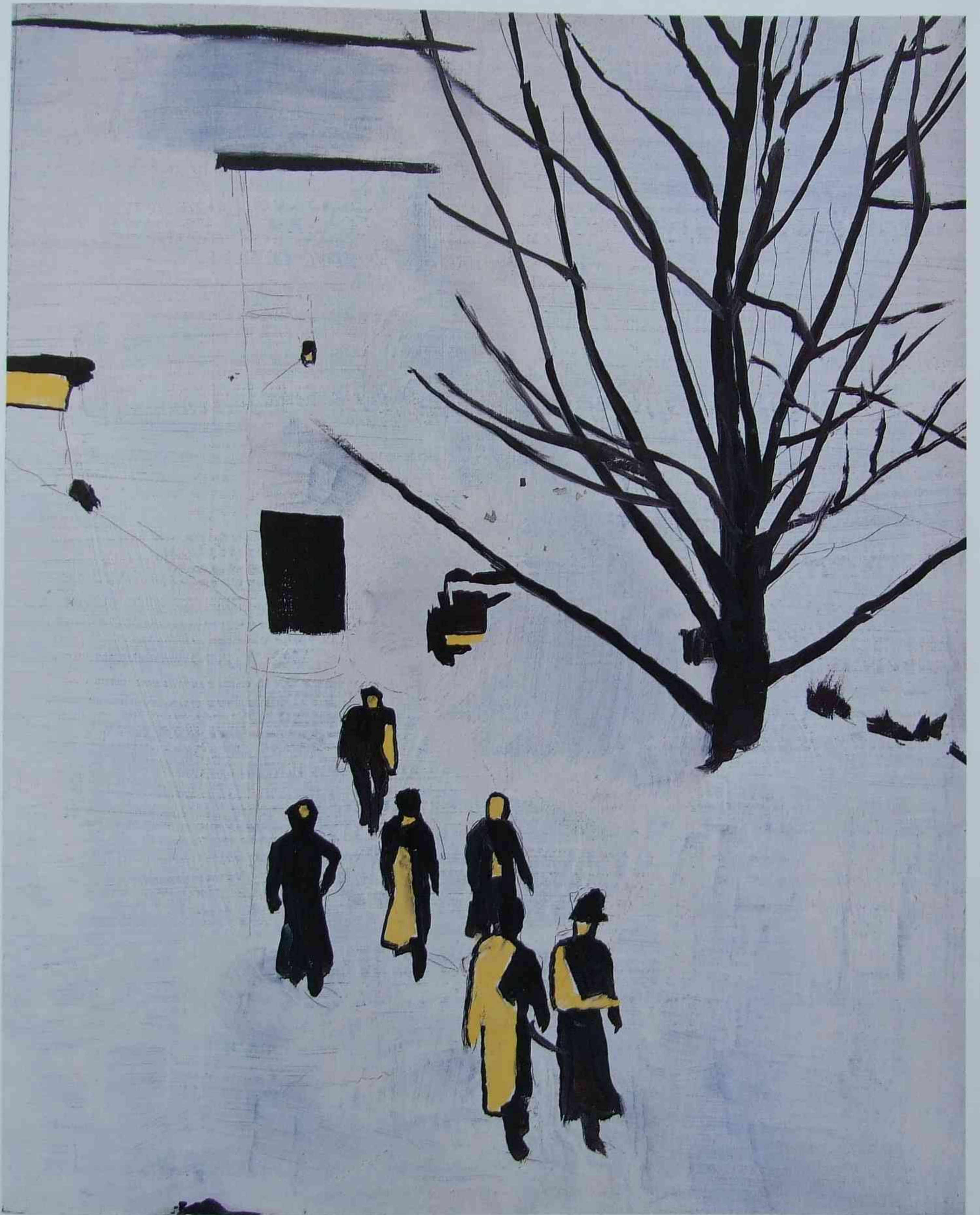
Tuymans No, the sickness is in the spectator. I was interested in showing medical photographs because the people portrayed in them are real people who later died. It was like using people. These paintings were the most physical point I have ever reached, and they are my hardest paintings. All the works were painted in the same manner, at the same speed. Most eyes in medical books look straight into the lens; I changed that. There was a sort of compassion, and I took that out by making the eyes look askance. The ultimate idea of reality is to be confronted with hardness and the impossibility of psychological penetration. I wanted to depict sickness not in its obviousness. Sickness should appear in the way the painting is made, and have it throw that sickness back at the viewer.

The title is very important because it's about diagnosing an image. This reminds me of my earlier paintings showing toys and little figurines. I have always liked Edward Hopper because he didn't paint real figures. To me they are like puppets. I regard Hopper's work as though it were a toy, not a painting. As for the people in *Der diagnostische Blick*, for me they are more objects than people; these individuals are portrayed as elements. They are monumental and confrontational images.



above, Caspar David Friedrich
The Snowbound Hut
1827
Oil on canvas
31 × 25 cm

opposite, *Walking*
1989
Oil on canvas
70 × 55 cm



Aliaga *Heilicht* (1991, see page 83) is another work dealing with the ailing body. In this case there is a figure, an erect male figure, whose features are partially erased or blurred, examining a half-naked patient. Despite the colour, which is brighter than other works, I wouldn't say it's a warm painting.

Tuymans No, it isn't. It's an illustration of a picture. There is a white vertical line on the left-hand side next to the painted image. It reduces the whole thing to the idea of illustration and gives you the impression that the image came out of a book.

Aliaga It is hard not to think of *Bloodstains* (1993) in terms of AIDS. Today there is a sort of awareness about medical details which we were not familiar with years ago.



Bloodstains
1993
Oil on canvas
57.5 x 47.5 cm

Tuymans I wasn't thinking of AIDS. It was a microscopic image which actually multiplied the image of blood into stains. It is not something I thought about, although I acknowledge that, given the idea of decomposition and the reddish colour, there might have been some subconscious relationship. This image is more a pure abstraction, but at the same time there's an enormous amount of physicality in it. The drops are isolated and are constantly moving. When you hang this painting on the wall it grows ...

Aliaga You mean it's animated somehow.

Tuymans Yes, it has an animated element to it. Because it is so close-up it produces an unreal effect. It is understandable that the viewer relates it to the body, to blood in the veins ...

Aliaga From sickness let's move towards death. Some of your paintings allude in an indirect or vicarious way to the scene of death, although death itself is never enacted. *Gas Chamber* (1986, see pages 52-53) is one of your more harrowing paintings. It presents a room spattered with dark blotches, and there is a sort of drain in the floor which conjures up the notion of a residue produced by the body.

The Green Room
1994
Oil on canvas
52 x 63.5 cm



Tuymans There seems to be a kind of logic in what you are asking me. First we have the bloodstains and the virus. The idea of stains in the body relate to what I was saying before about the entrance to the painting. In *Bloodstains*, because the frame is crooked the image is distorted. There is no real depth or perspective. These stains or blots are similar to the drains in *Gas Chamber*. Also the stains in the ceiling describe showers. If you didn't know about the gas chamber you would think this was a normal bathroom or just a basement. But I wanted to make a warm painting about something horrific. The title sometimes is more important than the image itself. Once a German collector wanted to buy the painting because he was moved by it. He asked me what it was, and when I told him he was blocked and petrified. He had felt the warmth in it but the title put him off. The space had to be depicted like a skin because human beings were killed there. It is a space that never ends, a space that goes beyond the image itself. There is another picture similar to this called *The Green Room*, from 1994. It's a room with no ceiling, so it seems to expand upwards in space. In *Gas Chamber* the narrowness of the ceiling and the floor stress the depth of it all. The edges of the picture look filthy, or dark, and that gives the viewer the idea of sweat, even steam, something physical. *Our New Quarters* (1986, see page 54) was more important than *Gas Chamber*. It is more a statement than a painting, a reminder of the idea of war. It's a sort of metaphor of violence. Western culture, I think, is one of the few cultures that, in order to progress, has incorporated destruction. There is a link between annihilation, hygiene, consumerism, production and propaganda. When you think about hygiene sometimes it can be connected to ethnic cleansing. This can appear as an economical and rational perspective. The final solution is something hidden, and I want to integrate that into the cultural discourse. It could be seen as a metaphor for the culture we live in. I see it as something that might happen again, as a possibility. I don't want to take a moral stance, but I want to oppose the taboo aspect of it. The biggest reaction against the war in former

Yugoslavia came when people saw prisoners behind barbed wire fences. The perversity of the image made people react, triggered our collective memory of the Nazi camps.

Aliaga One cannot take your paintings on face value. For instance, *Apple* (1993, see page 101), which was shown in 'Indelible Evidence'. What we see is a close up of a partially bitten apple. What the painting hides is that the image was inspired by a police archive photograph of an apple left by the killer at the scene of a murder. The teeth marks eventually identified the murderer. When I first saw it I thought it was a skull standing on its base, but this actually is the horizon line.

Superstition
1994
Oil on canvas
46.7 x 41.7 cm

Tuymans I was amazed when I saw the apple for the first time on British TV. They have a TV show called 'Indelible Evidence', like my show. It was mainly about forensic science and what they find through stupid, banal things. The banality of elements can be very meaningful.

Aliaga The combination of banality and *humour noir* recurs in your work. In *Candycontainer* (1992) we see a pear containing a roundish, childlike face that is screaming. Inside a trivial object - a fruit, in this case - lies horror.

Tuymans The candycontainer depicted is of a reusable type used in the States at Christmas time. I wanted to show the effect of something bottled up that cannot get out. The pear from the States usually smiles; mine screams. Christmas for me has something horrific about it.

Aliaga You paint in a very uniform way and treat serious topics or banal things in the same way. It's like you're equating everyday objects with, say, the memory of war.

Tuymans There is a sort of indifference in my paintings which makes them more violent, because any objects in them are as if erased, cancelled. I am not a material painter, I mean I don't use a lot of paint.

Most of my paintings are not painted on a stretcher. They are painted on a piece of canvas or on a piece of board. When the image is finished I just paint a white ribbon around it to focus it. That's the last thing I do when the painting is finished. It gives me the chance to alter the size of the image. None of my paintings are the same size. Every painting differs, even if only by a millimetre. When the painting is framed it evens itself out. The visibility drops and a kind of gloominess appears on the painting, a sort of second skin. That gives people the impression that the paintings are similar.

There is a continuity in the way I approach painting. The notion of contrast, of outline and shadow, is very significant in my work. I have made a group of pieces about shadows and mirrors because they create immaterial spaces. It's hard to depict them, it's challenging especially for someone like me who thinks that painting is only about precision. It has nothing to do with virtuosity; it's a necessity. Most of my work could at first look clumsy, deprived of aesthetic elements. I am not into aesthetics; I am into meaning and necessity. Folk art works in a similar way. It's about anonymous elements, something that is not owned by anybody in particular. It's a collective thing, it's precise, it may look banal at first but it isn't. Take for instance my piece



Superstition. It's about poltergeists. It comes towards you and at the same time sucks you in. The insect depicted is dark and is placed in front of the body, in front of the genitals. The body is just an outline. You do not know for sure whether this dark form is coming towards you or is receding. The notion of danger, of a threat, is there. It's a small painting but it takes up a lot of space. It works on an enormous scale. *Superstition* could be a *nom de plume* for art. Art that transgresses, that transmits. The insect in *Superstition* sucks you in; it's almost shamanistic.

Aliaga I see your work as deprived of sex. I have been looking for traces of sexual activity in your work and have been unable to find many.

Tuymans When something is not depicted it makes it more meaningful, more sexually loaded not in terms of the figures but in the physicality of the painting itself. Caressing the painting, flattening it out. Painting wet on wet. I wouldn't say that every act derives from sexuality but a lot is triggered by it.

Aliaga Is sexuality based upon the structure of violence?

Tuymans I would say that if you look carefully at my paintings there is also pleasure, which may not be apparent but is there in the making of the painting.

Aliaga It's hard to think of your paintings in terms of pleasure.

Tuymans I know. But there's pleasure when I paint. The act of painting itself is so concentrated. There is a sort of ease when I work, a directness. Every painting is made in one day, never more than that. In long or short sessions, it depends. Four hours, eight hours ... it can go up to thirteen hours or more but it has to be finished in one day.

Aliaga Why?

Tuymans I cannot work otherwise. It's about truly focusing, and that is sexually loaded. It's true concentration, true intensity. When I fail to reach that breaking point it is not accurate and it never will be. That's why it is very sexual. It's another type of arousal.

Aliaga I would like to ask you whether the notions of tedium or boredom are in your work. It sometimes reminds me of Walter Sickert's painting *Ennui*, with a woman and a man in a room, both with vacant expressions and paying no attention to each other. The objects are more communicative than the people. I think of the array of objects you have painted: lamps, curtains, flowers, bathroom tiles ...

Tuymans It could be anything. It's just that there's the element of someone using the object in its portrayal. The physicality of the painting as an object is important, whereas I don't think the depiction of psychological states can give the same impact, the same strangeness, the same directness – or indirectness. It's more photographic this way. Objects enable me to create a message not on a moral level but on an instantaneous level. Paintings have a long life span which turns them into very abstract elements. Paintings were

A Flemish Intellectual
1995
Oil on canvas
89.5 x 65.5 cm
Collection Musée des Beaux-Arts
de Nantes



the first transmitters. No matter how long they are hung in a museum, three years or 400 years, they still give you something. Every image has this disconcerting element of going further in time, into magical time. Some may think it is naive to think that by depicting something you capture its soul or that you have control over things. But it really does have something to do with that.

Aliaga I am interested to know more about your recent series *Heimat*, shown in Nantes in La Salle Blanche at the Musée des Beaux-Arts. This is a difficult word to translate from German. Homeland? Fatherland? Motherland? Native land? In some way these eight paintings try to deconstruct and analyze the rise and the strength of neo-Fascism in Europe and the danger it represents,



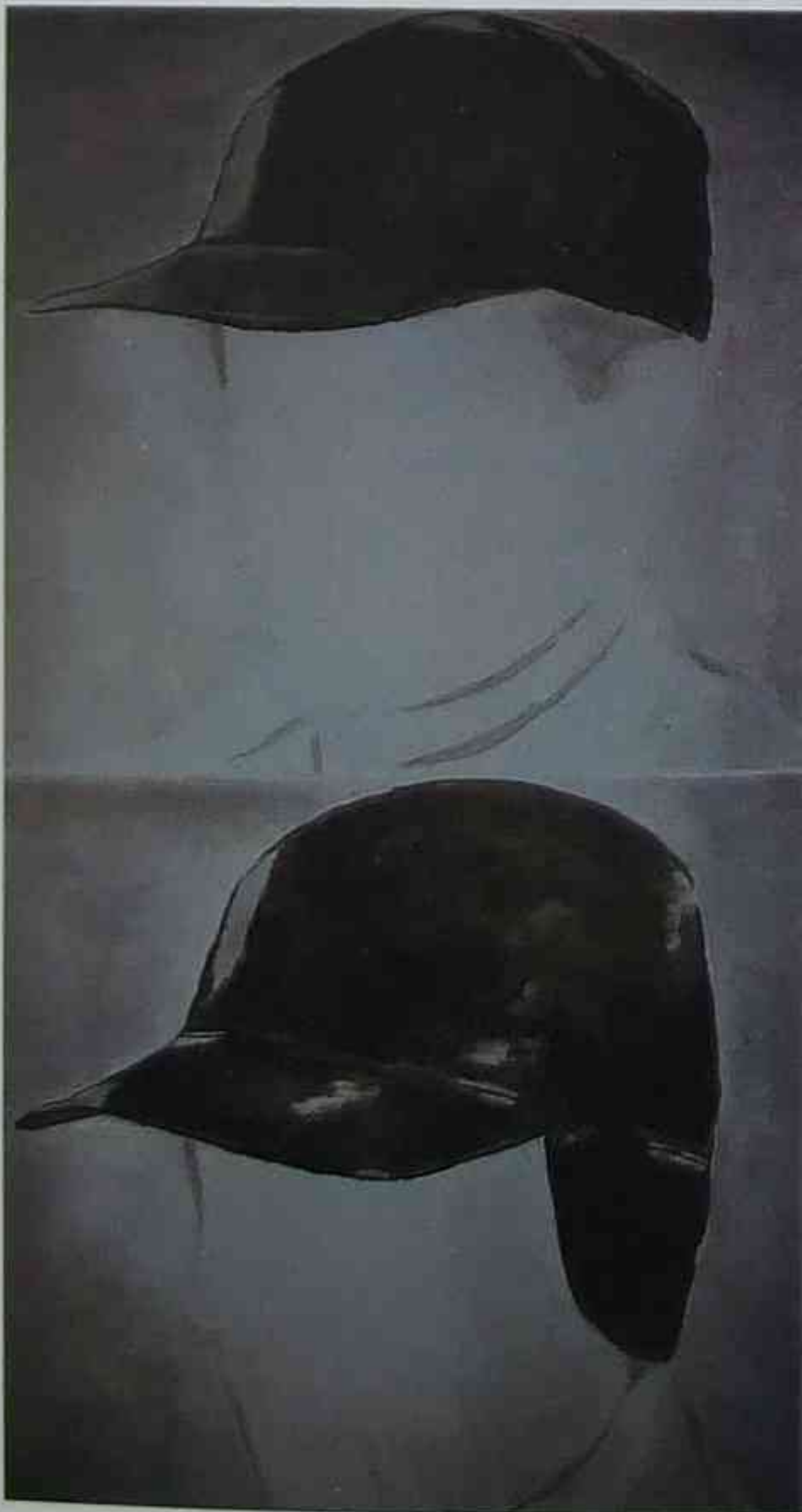
left, The Heritage II
1995
Oil on canvas
165 x 65 cm

opposite, The Heritage I
1995
Oil on canvas
165 x 65 cm

especially in Antwerp, where you live and where it's really on the rise. I was struck to see the evenness, the uniformity of the images, like your early pieces on concentration camps.

Tuymans I have tried to rebel against a certain identity which is pretty strong in my country, this Flemish idea of a mythical, fixed identity. It is not only political but cultural as well. Fascism also has a cultural basis. It goes beyond politics, because politics is about compromises, about life. Nationalism is uncompromising. All forms of nationalism remove the qualities of real life and create a uniformity out of individual differences. I wanted to show the relics of the Flemish movement, for instance the *Yzer-tower* (1995, see page 91), built after the First World War as a homage to the fallen Flemish soldiers. Or the portrait of the regional writer, Ernest Claes, in *A Flemish Intellectual*, who had been recently commemorated on a postage stamp. I have depicted him as though he is lacking in identity. The face is not really a face; it is more like a masked image. Nationalism for me is like a mask: unmovable, and quite hollow.

Take the idea of *The Flag* (1995, see page 89), for instance. I depicted it in such a way that the colours are denied and it looks like a pile of white dust, hanging on the wall — not waving in the sky. The whole thing was about emphasizing the hollowness of their symbols. The Flemish movement wants to enhance the idea of 'art for everybody', so I made this series very typical and popular, but there is also something nauseating about it, even violent.



Aliaga So there is a clear critique of Fascism in this series. And neo-Fascism is spreading all over the world not just in Belgium. I know you have started a new series of paintings entitled *The Heritage* which you will be showing in the States and that you will be using American symbols. Is there a link between *Heimat* and *The Heritage*?

Tuymans Well, it's going to be a completely different show. I have finished five paintings up to now. It would be interesting to see both series of works together, because there is a new velocity in this new series. The works for *Heimat* are much more stable and motionless. They are almost fading away. It's a backward velocity, it goes back in time, whereas in *The Heritage* I depicted symbols like the American flag as if it were a neon sign, or I painted baseball caps that take the place of faces, one on top of the other. I don't want to show a single face, something individualistic. I am showing symbols deprived of any personal attachment. I want something icy, but at the same time a type of abstraction and monumentality. They will produce a constant uneasiness, like a constant noise. My first show in the States was about superstition, so *The Heritage* is the logical follow-up. The titles of my shows are really relevant. If you list them you can see a sort of guiding line across my work.

Aliaga 'Disenchantment', 'Indelible Evidence', 'Heimat' ...

Tuymans Also 'Embitterment'. Different elements, with images which as a matter of fact were never really painted.



Interview *Jean-Marie Adgey in conversation with Leo Tolstoy*, page 6

Survey

Ulrich Looch *On layers of sign-relations, in the light of mechanically reproduced pictures, from ten years of exhibitions,*

page 32. Focus *Henry Specter: The photograph that...*, page 33

Artist's Choice

August Prosenka *Chromogenic prints, 1971*, page 132. Artist's Writings *Leo Tolstoy*

Supplement, 1971, page 133. Update *How Robert Rauschenberg's "The Forest" was reproduced (1976-1981),*

page 134. Chronology *page 140 & bibliography, page 232.*

Belgian Art Review Joséfine n'est pas ma femme
Zimmer Frei A Place in the Sun Suspended
Disenchantment Embitterment Der diagnostische
Blick Repulsion Silent Music Intolerance Indelible
Evidence Superstition At Random Heimat

Born in 1958, Luc Tuymans had his first exhibition in 1985; prior to that he had not even taken part in a single group show. The mid 1980s marked a period of economic boom and unprecedented profits on the stock exchange, an expanding, highly speculative art market and the triumphal international establishment of many different takes and variations on 'New Painting'. The year 1985 saw the exhibition 'Initiatief' in St. Pieters Abdij in Ghent, where three foreign curators (Kasper König, Jean-Hubert Martin and Gosse Osterhoff) were commissioned to stage an exhibition of contemporary Belgian art. The organizers' declared aim – and one which was largely achieved – was to improve the weak national art market, and bring the new Belgian art to the attention of the international public, not least in preparation for Documenta 8, which was being planned for 1987.

For his own exhibition, 'Belgian Art Review' (drawn from the name of a fictional company), Tuymans hired the old swimming pool of the elegant Ostende Hotel Palais des Termes for a day. Some 16 paintings were shown on the tiled ledge of the empty pool and the walls surrounding it. Tuymans had sent invitations to over one thousand addresses, but his one-man initiative went unrewarded: not a single visitor attended show. At the end of the day, he was nevertheless convinced that he was heading in the right direction.¹

A Historical Challenge to Painting

Tuymans' works are all, without any question, paintings. They are the very kind that, for example, in the 1960s Donald Judd opposed with a kind of production which would be 'neither painting nor sculpture', since 'the main thing wrong with painting is that it is a rectangular plane placed flat against the wall'.² Tuymans' paintings hardly ever measure more than one metre square, generally less; they are painted with oil on primed canvas and framed on a stretcher, fastened with nails in the old-fashioned manner; and they are figurative. All of this appears to be completely traditional. Tuymans responds to Minimalism's challenge – a challenge that only radicalizes abstract painting's challenge to painting – with an evasive manoeuvre. He denies from the very start the historical legitimacy of his own practice, calls painting antiquarian and, in his own words, nurtures the sense that his paintings are 40 years old right from the start, coating some of them with a carefully produced *craquelé*. In this way Tuymans places a temporal distance between the producer and his work, a primal and irrevocable alienation which, it has occasionally been said, is expressed in an attitude of indifference.

It may reasonably be argued that modern painting (i.e., Malevich, Mondrian) aimed from the start at constituting its own end, and that this inevitable consequence and the continuing *mise en oeuvre* of its end (not necessarily its *ending*) was the only historical legitimation for contemporary painting. Where abstract painting is concerned, its own history commits it to deconstructing the elements of resistance against the

Drops
1995
Oil on canvas
81.5 x 52.5 cm





opposite, *Nose*
1993
Oil on canvas
47.5 x 55 cm

fundamental threat to painting from mechanical reproduction (photography), as well as from its commodity character and fetishization – the brush-stroke, the trace of manual labour on the one hand, and the ideology of the new, the surprising and the shocking, on the other. In this view, it is painting's mission to perform the task of mourning.³

The Appearance of Belatedness; the 'Authentic Forgery'

Tuymans, however, seems simply to deny the dimension of the new as a demand of modernist painting by employing the past perfect as the tense of his work. Accordingly, when asked to name art-historical references, he identifies a vacuum in Belgian painting since the 1920s, 'after Ensor, after Spilliaert'.⁴ Tuymans locates his own work in this vacuum as an attempt 'to fill the gap'. He locates it as outmoded, superfluous, superannuated, even valueless – indeed valueless in terms of a market kept alive by the production of novelties ... as if his work had been passed over by the innovative history of modernism and left behind unnoticed.

He expressly denies the possibility of original production. Everything already exists, painting is irrevocably belated and thus survives only beneath the sign of shame and deceit. Tuymans explains that as an eighteen year-old art student he was awarded a cash prize and a James Ensor book for an impressionistic self-portrait he was especially proud of. In the book Tuymans saw a self-portrait of James Ensor 'identical in content' to his own, and understood in that moment the impossibility of making an original. All that remained was the

possibility of an 'authentic forgery' and in fact, almost all of Tuymans' works derive from already existing pictures.

By locating his works within the temporal distance of the obsolete, Tuymans puts himself, the producer, in the position of the recipient, overlaying the function of the artist with that of the historian. But it is important to see Tuymans' connection to a retrograde and regional moment in history as a fiction which enables him to free his practice strategically from the apparent compulsion through history for authentic contemporariness. It would be wrong to see this construction as evidence of a restorative or reactionary painting practice. It does not amount to a *retour à l'ordre*; it is not a sign of postmodern conservatism. Past models of painting are not picked up and pitted against the deconstructive *mise en oeuvre* of the end of painting.⁵ The past of painting, which has already come into being – superficially at least – is



right, *Christmas Revisited*
1993
Oil on canvas
39.5 x 50.5 cm

admitted in a melancholy fashion and sought, but is not built into a position of power. The belatedness with which Tuymans enters the contemporary art stage may be a premise but also a consequence of this attitude.

An Appearance of Painterly Clumsiness

With the appearance of belatedness, Tuymans links a painterly method ostensibly not far removed from technical unprofessionalism, one which presents itself as emphatically inartistic. Barnett Newman, in contrast, declared, 'If we could describe the art of this, the first half of the twentieth century, in a sentence, it would read as the search for something to paint; just as, were we to do the same for modern art as a whole, it must read as the critical preoccupation of artists with solving the *technical* problems of the painting medium. Here is the dividing line of the history of art'.⁶ Tuymans gives his work the appearance of being not at all concerned with this – an appearance which does not exclude admiration for the elaborate manner in which it is produced. Tuymans acknowledges that already as an art student he broke with the painterly virtuosity that he had learned at the fine arts academy, which was still resolutely committed as late as the mid 1970s to a classical, technical training in painting. In fact he relates that he painted his works from 1978-80, shown five years later in 'Belgian Art Review', late at night during his student days, because independent work which deviated from the rules was not officially permitted. The early paintings are all blue, he explains, because they were painted by artificial light.

Tuymans usually paints with short brush-

strokes which at first tend to follow the outline of the form, and in later works, particularly in the series *Der diagnostische Blick*, can be independent of the motif, running horizontally and blocking the depth of the picture. There is never a grand, liberated, painterly gesture. Instead, it appears as though the brushstroke is the trace of a constitutional inhibition, as if the hesitancy of the autodidact had been replaced by a routine of carefulness: 'Painting like a habit, but not blind to one's surroundings', in Tuymans' words. The colour is bleached and muddied, the drawing often rigid and undefined, seemingly uncertain and occasionally distorted, the modelling flat. Compositions are simple, almost always restricted to the depiction of a single, frontal, figurative object standing out against the ground. In flagrant disregard of all conceptions of Modernism, Tuymans reaffirms the idea that the meaning is more important than the picture.

With the appearance of belatedness and painterly clumsiness in his painting, Tuymans apparently frees his work from any modernist commitment to the category of the new and the problems of the medium itself. He claims not to be affected in the slightest by the fundamental challenge of industrialization to the individual, non-alienated, craft-like production and uniqueness of the art work. He appears to be seeking an escape from the compulsory discourse of modernism, as if the works have their place somewhere else entirely, in the sphere of Sunday painting or folk art.⁷ He assumes an attitude of disinterest; the paintings are coded with signs of simplicity and inconsequentiality.

The Arena
1978
Mixed media
60.5 × 78.5 cm

Representation of Representation;

Three Sign-functions, Icon, Index and Symbol

Tuymans' work is a work of representation; generally, however, while no significant painterly distinction is made from one painting to the next, the representation of pictorial models is derived from different media and different sources. Source images are borrowed for a kind of painting which interrogates pictorial representation. In *The Arena*, 1978, one of the works in 'Belgian Art Review', a kind of veiling appears like a metaphor for Tuymans' painting, programmatically isolated and materialized. Semi-transparent tracing paper is stretched

over the flat relief of an assembly of doll-like figures, allowing the actual three-dimensional representation to appear shadowy and flat. The representation of representation, however (a reflex of the modernist verdict against pictorial reproduction: you can only reproduce what has already been reproduced), conserves the images as if on ice, images upon which Modernism has cast a spell equivalent to a psychological repression.

The 1985 exhibition featured, among other things, a strange diptych with the title *Amnesia*, 1980. One of the two juxtaposed horizontal formats contains, framed in an oval, a simple landscape



Amnesia
1980
Oil on canvas
diptych, 50 x 70 cm each



失憶証



Annexa
2002
Oil on canvas
Water, 52 x 70 cm each



失憶証



with a river, sky, a tree and a water-mill which Tuymans has painted in a conventional manner, complete and self-contained, producing a naturalistic and apparently transparent depiction of the subject matter. The Chinese characters beneath the oval spell out the title of the work. The second panel shows, in the same oval shape as the landscape next to it, a black lacquered surface in which the viewer can see his or her own faint reflection. Here the landscape is missing, as though erased by the thick layer of lacquer, and in place of its reproduction, vague and shadowy, is the image of the viewer him/herself, a substitute, a repression. The juxtaposition of the two panels can be read as a pointed competition between two forms of pictorial reference. According to C. S. Peirce's theory of signs, the reflection, like the shadow – or, for Roland Barthes, the photograph – should be considered, first of all, as an index. These are pictures in which an object presents itself in an uncoded form, and which are in direct relationship with the object itself. Thus they serve to prove the object's factuality. The coloured landscape painting in contrast is an icon, defined by a relationship of similarity (isomorphy) to the object represented; the acceptance of similarity requires the knowledge of a code regulating the relation of the icon to its referent, whose status as reality remains indeterminate. Finally, the third symbolic sign function is apparent in the written characters, which synthesizes the indexical and the iconic, and gives the work its overall meaning.

With the title (the caption), the meaning of the parts of the work is completely fixed in a final, exhaustive form otherwise inapplicable to

the meaning of a work of art. The writing behaves like the lemma or auxiliary proposition in an allegory, and the two parts of the picture, the pictorial representation (the re-imagining of something absent) and its absence in favour of the shadowy reproduction are like an illustration of the concept of amnesia. The specific visualization finally becomes plausible if one introduces the concept of a 'blackout'. On the other hand the meaning of memory-loss is not self-evident in the two panels themselves. It is transferred to the picture-signs and captured in writing in order to exclude the possibility of misunderstandings or deviant interpretations.

As with many other works, Tuymans has complemented the allegorical title of the work *Amnesia* with an external explanation; in other cases he often steers the exegesis of third parties with his own discourse. The depiction is based on a Chinese postcard, and the place probably no longer exists, he says. This prompted the idea of memory loss.⁸ Here Tuymans explains amnesia as a subjective reflex of the objective relationship of representation, given that representation fundamentally implies the absence of the object represented, and can hardly dispel the uncertainty of whether that which is depicted ever existed. Thus Tuymans also explains that, with the interfering reflection of the viewer (in fact, of the painter), the narcissistic character of that re-evaluation is reflected. In the case of this work – and even more so in others – Tuymans' supplementary discourse, which adds otherwise inaccessible information to the pictures and which traces complicated sequences of ideas, is



a sign of the shortcomings of indexical and iconic representation, an indication of the symbolic incompleteness of Tuymans' works, and is thus structurally necessary for them to be completed.

Amnesia can be seen as the allegorical harbinger of a painterly programme based on an interrogation of representation in its aspects of iconic, indexical and symbolic sign-functions.

The Painting of Memory

G. Dam (see page 9) is the only picture from the period before 1980 which Tuymans included in various other exhibitions after the show in the Palais des Termes. It is important for him for reasons of personal biography, but also because this was the work in which he first expressly connected painting with memory.⁹ In this sense *G. Dam* is the counterpart to *Amnesia*. With my memory I try to maintain something from the past in the present. Compared to the original, memory is secondary, a repetition. It is easily connected with the sensation of inadequacy: the connection between memory and its object is so indeterminate that a memory can erase all the actuality and verifiability of the thing remembered, and take its place. At the other extreme it can be so weak that it threatens to lose its object completely. One might almost say that where memory is concerned, its failure (in the sense of a loss of its object) forms its very basis. With the idea of a 'painting of memory', Tuymans returns to his concept of the 'authentic forgery' as a condition of painting. Since painting, like memory, is fundamentally belated, it is false in its relationship towards its past object, but authentic as its inadequate – and

thus autonomous – representation.

Other works in the exhibition 'Belgian Art Review' were *Window*, 1979, and the three-part *Refri Bel*, 1980, both representations of highly isolated architectural details, distantly rooted in models of magic realism; *Nr. 3*, 1978, a series of doll-like, saluting SS men, as if drawn from paper cut-outs; and *Milch*, 1978, an image taken from the magazine *Signal* (a Nazi propaganda magazine), which also relates to Tuymans' interest in the Second World War. Often he has thematized this interest indirectly through images of unobtrusively everyday objects and events. Schematic, simplified, the painting *Auschwitz*, 1979, shows the arched shape of the opening through which bodies were thrown into the gas ovens and represents a piece of the death-camp equipment employed in the greatest atrocities of the Nazi period. But the representation is done in shorthand, in such a way that terror and helplessness in the face of historical reality are doubled by the poverty of painting and the failure of its tendency towards abstraction in the face of what is demanded from an image.

Film

Around the same period of these works Tuymans also painted *The Parc*, 1981, a bridge shown as if in a film sequence in three images one above the other, 'like a film stuck in the projector'. Curiously, Tuymans has never shown this painting, but it seems to herald his practice over the next few years. From 1982-85 he abandoned painting in favour of film. In retrospect, however, he also says that the paintings made prior to that interruption already contained all the elements that fed into his

later painting. In line with earlier analyses and in no particular order, these principally include the use of models; the adoption of painting in order to obscure pictorial representation and an understanding of it as belatedness; the 'authentic forgery'; anachronism; the concept of a painting of memory; personal biography and the history of the Second World War as subject matter; the isolation of details; the analytical presentation of the three fundamental sign relations. But in 1982 he entered a crisis and no longer knew what to paint, how to go on.

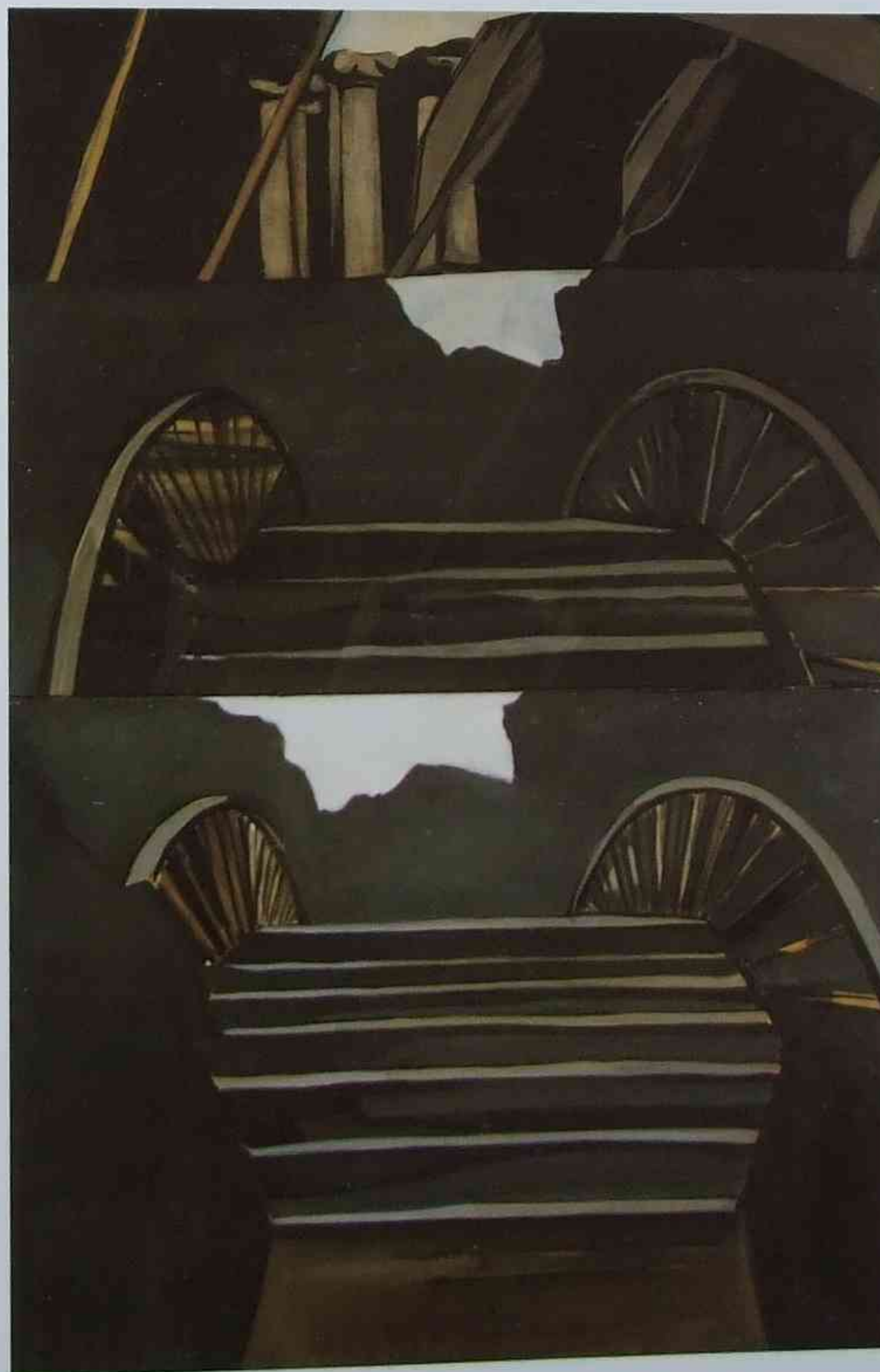
On the subject of his film work, which he began as a way out of this dilemma, Tuymans says he filmed as one jots things down in diaries, but the actual work only came later, in the edit. Montage served to free the images from narrative obligations. Tuymans has said that he was interested in pictures that did not visualize anything that actually existed. He also attempted to make a 35 mm film with a professional crew and a properly written script, although this project had to be abandoned soon after shooting began. What remains, however, are the preparatory drawings for the individual frames.

Contingency of the Film Image Conditioning Painting; Ground Zero of Meaning

The ways in which Tuymans' thoughts about painting had changed until 1985 can be traced in the new works on view at the 'Belgian Art Review'. *Antichamber*, 1985, the most recent painting at the time of the exhibition, is a linear, schematic representation of space with two overlaid graphic systems in different colours, blue and black, against

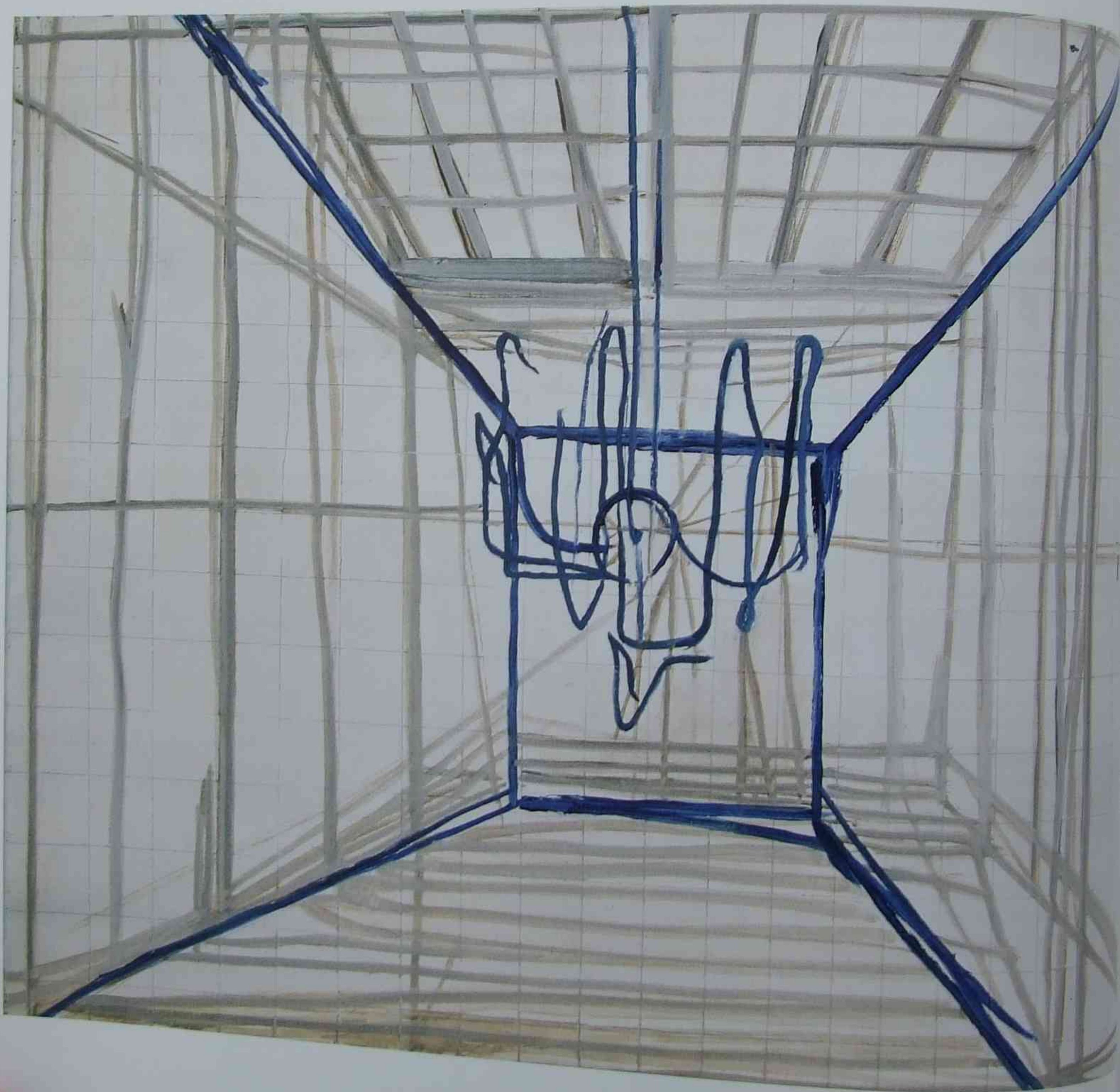
a uniform, light-coloured ground. For this work, Tuymans transferred preliminary drawings for his film into painting. So while *The Parc* seems to herald the abandonment of painting in favour of film, *Antichamber* records the first steps from filmmaking to painting.

Since Tuymans had placed montage at the centre of his film work, he must have understood the extent to which the meaning of the individual film still depends on its connection with the images



The Parc
1979
Oil on canvas
diptych, 80 × 110 cm each

Antichamber
1985
Oil on canvas
65 x 72 cm
Collection Museum of
Contemporary Art, Antwerp



that precede and follow it. The film still stands for the total 'momentization' of a temporal sequence, the atomization of a narrative context: its meaning lies where it is not. Outside the pictorial sequence where it properly belongs, it adopts the appearance of randomness and arbitrariness. In *Antichamber* the model of a sequence of images is activated but no story is generated by overlapping a drawing of the empty space and the same space with a chandelier. Much to the contrary, the twofold depiction serves to underline the film still's fundamental need for completion while depriving it of its context. Each individual image, on the other hand, tends inevitably, through its singularity, to suggest a symbolic unity. It might be speculated that it is this inherently symbolic tendency of the individual image which caused Tuymans to turn to film and which made it impossible for him to replace painting with photography. Any isolated film image constitutes an absolute contextual break. In fact, this contingency and insufficiency may be the very things which constitute the exemplary value of the film image, which Tuymans finds in his preliminary drawings and seeks to transfer to his painting.

But in this key image – and it is a key image by virtue of *Antichamber's* place within the development of his oeuvre – he is not using a real film still as a model, but the preliminary drawing for a shot. Tuymans transposes his painting into the after-image of a drawing, replacing a film image. In this sense it might be said that, using painting, he is making film with other means. Once again, his painting begins at the point when Modernism formulated itself as the destruction of the three

representative functions of painting,¹⁰ imposing in psychoanalytic terminology a repression. With the carefully staged obsolescence of his painting, Tuymans forges a temporal proximity to these instances of destruction in Modernism, and, in the form of painting, he reworks those images which, considered inadmissible in Modernism, could never be erased and insistently return as an uncanny and intangible threat.¹¹

Tuymans' painting does not counter the modernist discourse of destruction and deconstruction with the regressive security of a return to pre-modern modes of representation, but takes up pictures at the point where Modernism had ruled them out. His paintings are – not always, not exclusively, but essentially – reproductions (of representations) governed by contingency. By the standards of the mechanical image, or more precisely of the film still, they are representations, freed from their meaning, alibis: the meaning of the representation does not reside in the picture. Thus the picture is not a 'visualization', i.e., the symbolic possession of the object. Representation is transposed to the ground zero of meaning. The contingency of the mechanical image, applied to painting, dominates a work which is constructed as a challenge to pictorial representation, but from the perspective of supplying images. The explicitly anachronistic appearance of Tuymans' pictures, however, enables him to avoid the mechanization of painting itself. Unlike, say, Gerhard Richter's photo-paintings, he is concerned with challenging representation in all three of its sign-relations, not with replacing one (the iconic) with another (the indexical).



Installation, 'Blow Up', De Pont, Tilburg, The Netherlands, 1995
l. to r., *Antichamber*, 1985;
Yellow, 1987; *Sealed Rooms*, 1990

Encounter
1985
Oil on canvas
75 x 90 cm

If we compare the older and the more recent works in the exhibition 'Belgian Art Review' we can see that Tuymans used the experience of his film work so as to re-evaluate the metaphorical condensation of the fragment of an object in painting as the contingency of a detail: metaphorically speaking, the interrupted film rather than the charged moment.

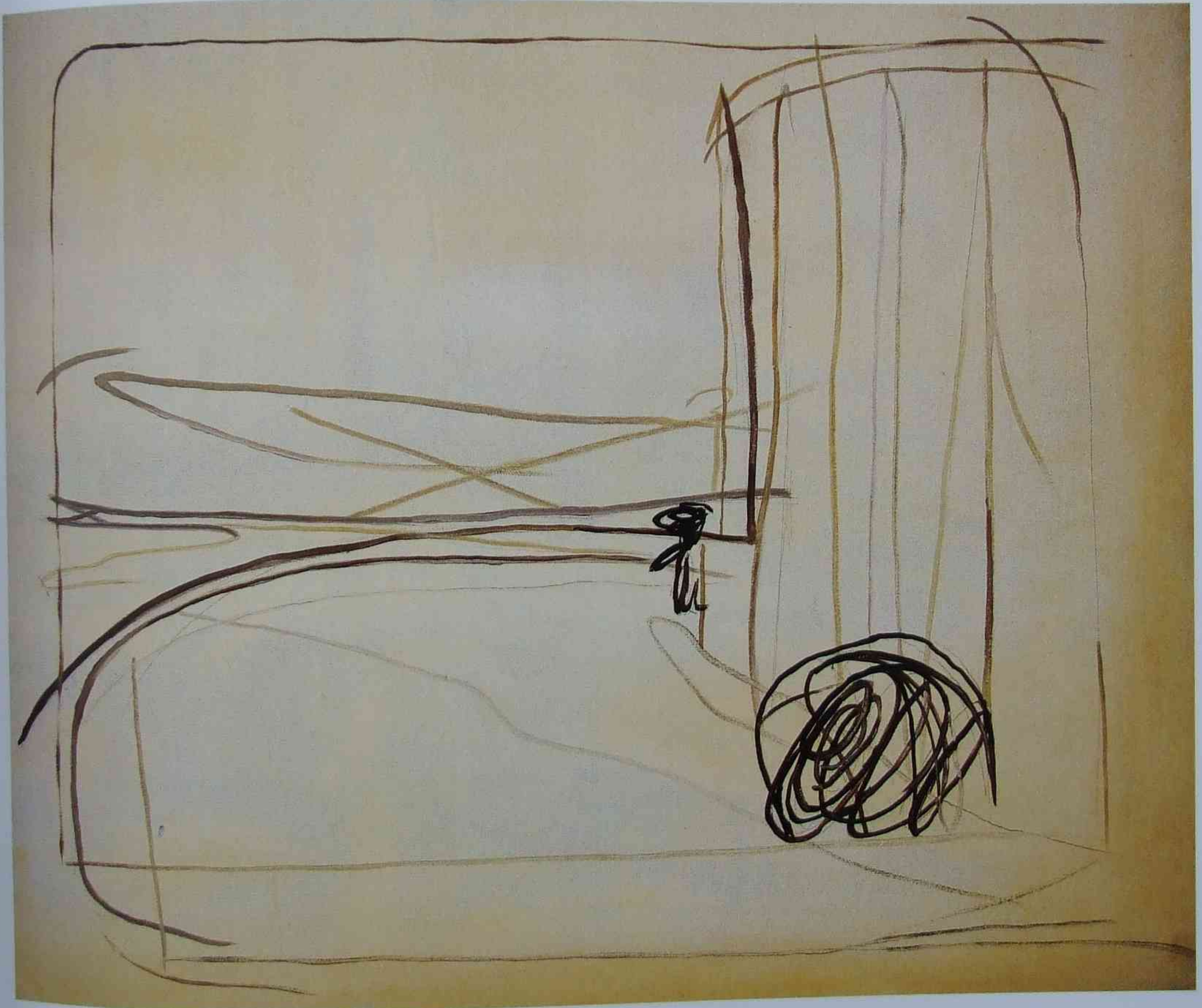
The Failure of Representation: Metonymy

The second exhibition, comprising 14 paintings, was entitled 'Joséphine n'est pas ma femme', and was held in 1988 in the Antwerp gallery Ruimte Morguen. Tuymans had still not taken part in any group shows, and his work was as yet not even part of the local art scene. The paintings *Nr. 3*, *G. Dam*, *Amnesia*, *The Correspondence* and *Antichamber* were being shown for the second time. Even the most recent works in this exhibition were with one exception already at least two years old. *Portholes* and *Encounter*, both from 1985, were painted following the same principle as *Antichamber*, although they are not based on the overlapping of the two drawings.

Also dominated by linearity is *Schwarzheide* (Black heath, 1986). On a light-coloured, unprimed canvas with regular vertical lines, shadowy, blue-black treetops are painted with fairly broad brushstrokes; inserted into a strict triangular composition are spruces or firs – impossible to identify them further than that. It is a schematic picture, cut off strangely at the bottom as though the image had slipped. Unsettling, so dark is the depiction of the forest, its trees withered, even though no bare branches can be seen; unsettling

also since the rudimentary means of naturalism are used for a perfectly unnatural depiction. The upward gaze is not a gaze into the sky but onto a lined background, a ground divided and obstructed by lines.

Only the title of the painting, that is, only the painter's extra-painterly discourse (or an extraordinarily knowledgeable viewer) provides a further clue – a clue that does not, however, dispel the profoundly unsettling character of the work, which provides no relief when used in the decoding. Schwarzheide was a concentration camp where, as Tuymans explains, inmates secretly made drawings which were divided up, each of them taking a strip; the survivors would then piece them back together. Could Tuymans' picture be the picture of a reassembled drawing? Nothing can allay the fear, it provides no such consolation. It's more likely that the drawing was never divided, it had been discovered, and thus certainly spelled the death of the draughtsman. But Tuymans has not based his painting on an existing drawing. He says that none of the buildings of Schwarzheide are still standing. He painted what he saw: treetops. He painted what he saw when he saw nothing. As a representation of the forest, Tuymans' painting is the metonymic representation of something which, because levelled to the ground, is inaccessible: the concentration camp. Thus it is a representation which misses its object. For *Schwarzheide* Tuymans reproduces what might have been an inmate's drawing, the view of the trees, the sign of the hope of survival, but also the cause of fatal disappointment. In a sense he takes the place of the inmate, to reproduce a substitute of something (trees)





Schwarzheide
1986
Oil on canvas
60 x 70 cm

which he cannot reproduce (the concentration camp, death). The representation – hope-filled, fatal – of the other, who is oneself, is connected with the failure of the artist's own representation. In Tuymans' work, a work of reproduction, the failure of painterly representation is overlaid with the acknowledgement of guilt – the fatal representation – in the disaster that the representation is incapable of picturing.

The Failure of Representation: Aesthetic Disguise

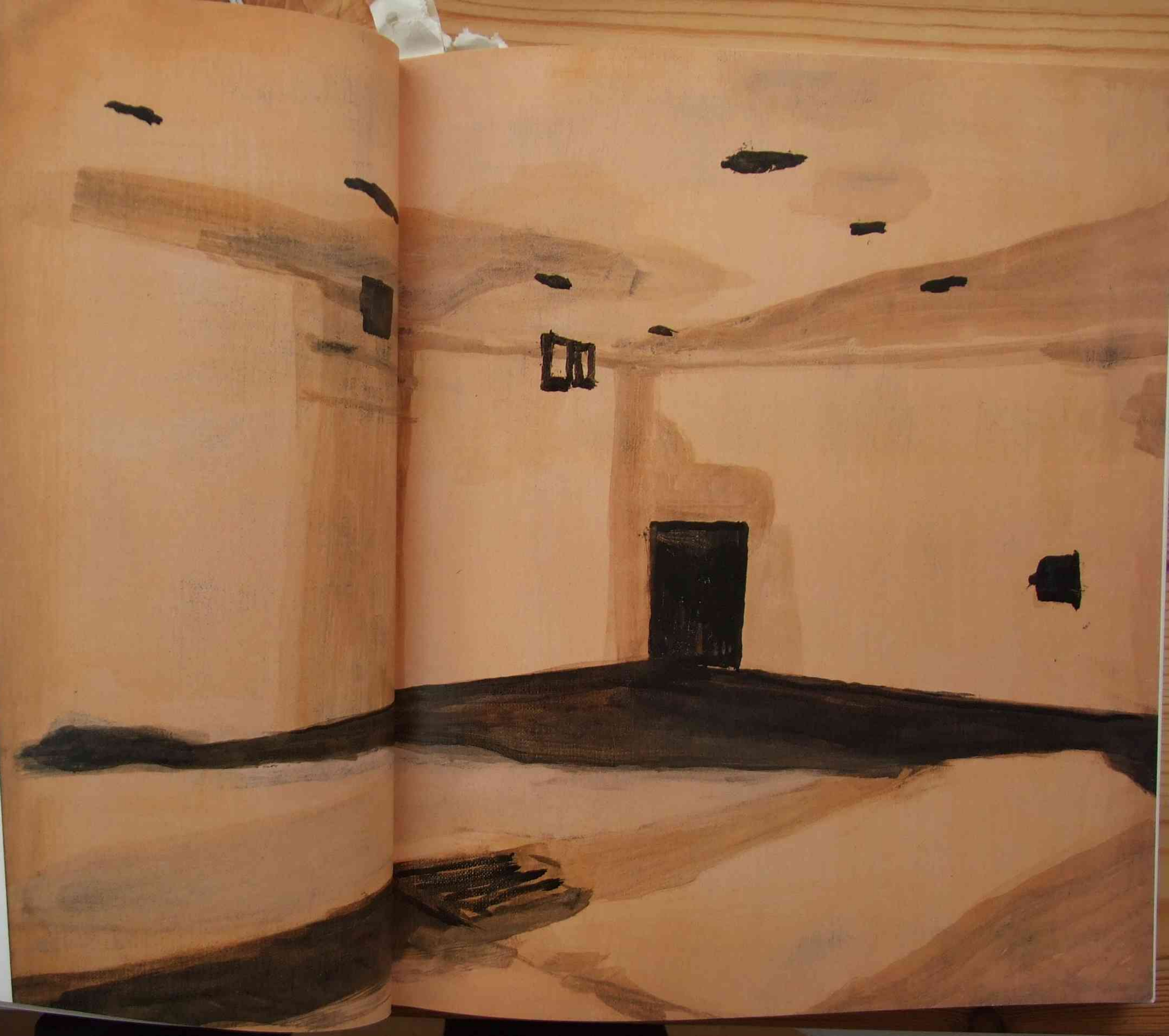
With the paintings in the exhibition 'Joséphine n'est pas ma femme', which contrast with the rather more formal works such as *Portholes* or *Encounter*, it becomes clear that Tuymans' 'painting of memory' relates to the most painful and horrendous moments in twentieth century European history, a collective trauma and not merely personal biography. Like most of Tuymans' works before 1990, *Gas Chamber* and *Our New Quarters* also rely on external discourse, at least in their titles, in order to make sense. Particularly instructive in this respect is Gregory Salzman's detailed commentary on the painting *Gas Chamber*.²² Salzman says the painting produces a sense of queasiness because it lacks solid points of reference. Materially, he says, it resembles a putrefying organic substance emitting noxious vapours. It is easy to share this perception, but at the same time there can hardly be a doubt that Salzman is turning the painting into a screen for his own imagination and sensations, which may not contradict the painting but which certainly would not have emerged had its thematic reference been unknown to the author. The spatial relations,

however, are fairly clear: this is a space opened up and pressed flat – floor flapped down, ceiling flapped up, rendered inaccessible although opened so far forward as to become limitless. It is not a place for anybody but a space from which all are excluded, an absolute non-place, made more unsettling by its mysterious details.

But *Gas Chamber* is also a picture whose spatial dimensions and objective details, whose tonal colour forms a balanced, potentially satisfying pictorial context. Tuymans himself mentions that many people considered the painting beautiful because there was a beauty to the colour.²³ Tuymans says, however, that 'the picture, its aesthetic character, is the disguise of something that is absolutely inaccessible if it is not disguised'.²⁴ Contrary to Salzman's commentary, it should be insisted that a painting like *Gas Chamber* fails irreversibly in its task of providing any kind of accurate picture of its object, as this object itself is deprived of any possibility of representation. It is the formulation of this failure which, unlike *Schwarzeide*, is stressed by the production of an aesthetic appearance. The disguise is impenetrable, allowing a painting such as *Gas Chamber* to preserve the image of the gas chamber.

Tuymans' view that the meaning is more important than the picture deserves to be taken seriously. For him there is no autonomy of painting, no symbolic value of painting itself. It is deployed, used. Overall, however, his statements must be correctly understood. His works make it plain that it can only ever be a question of failed meaning. The picture is relieved of repression, brought indelibly into memory. But the repression can

Gas Chamber
1946
Oil on canvas
50 x 70 cm
Collection Museum Overholand,
Amsterdam



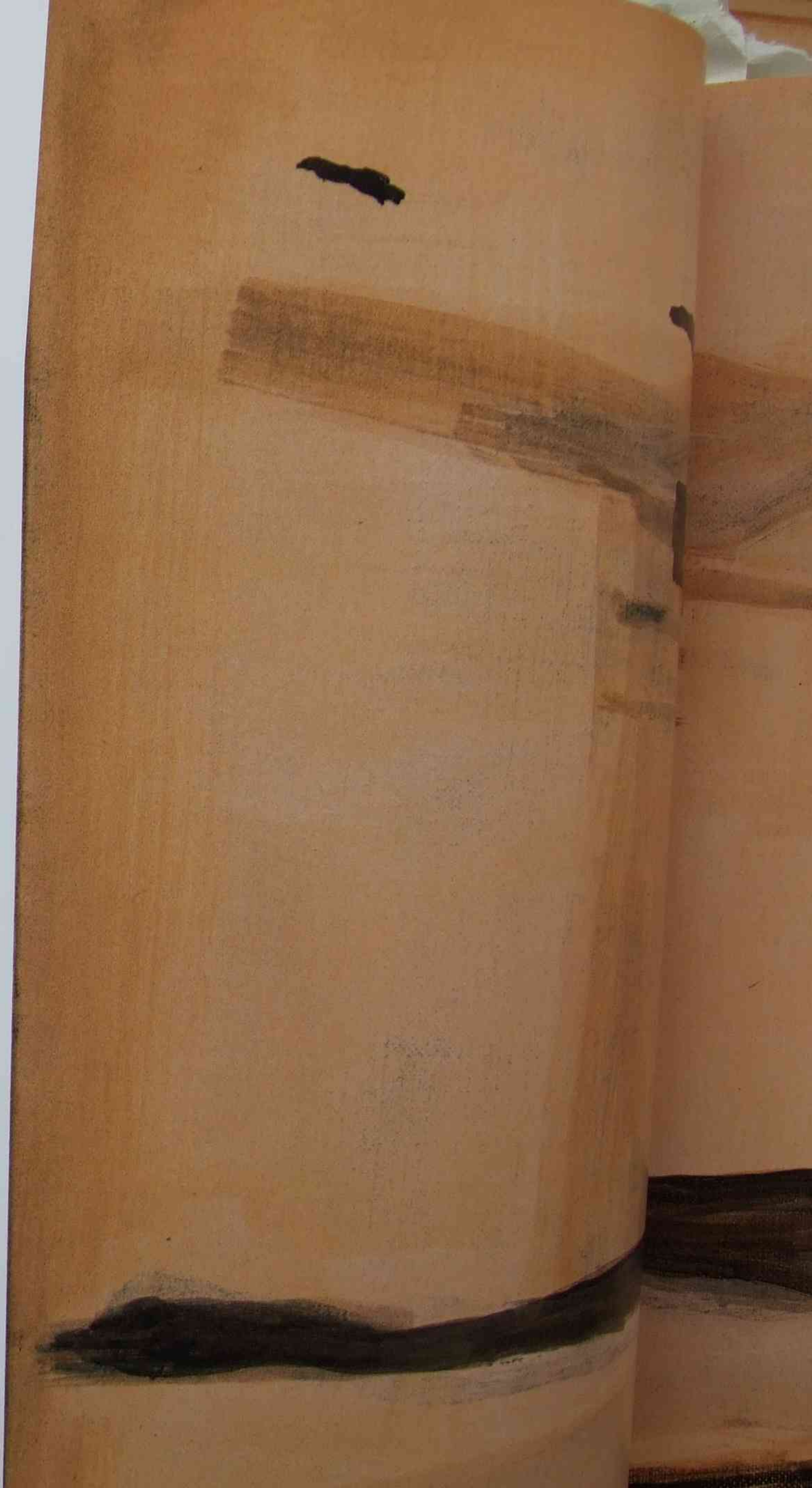
Gas Chamber

1986

Oil on canvas

50 × 70 cm

Collection Museum Overholland,
Amsterdam



Gas Chamber

1986

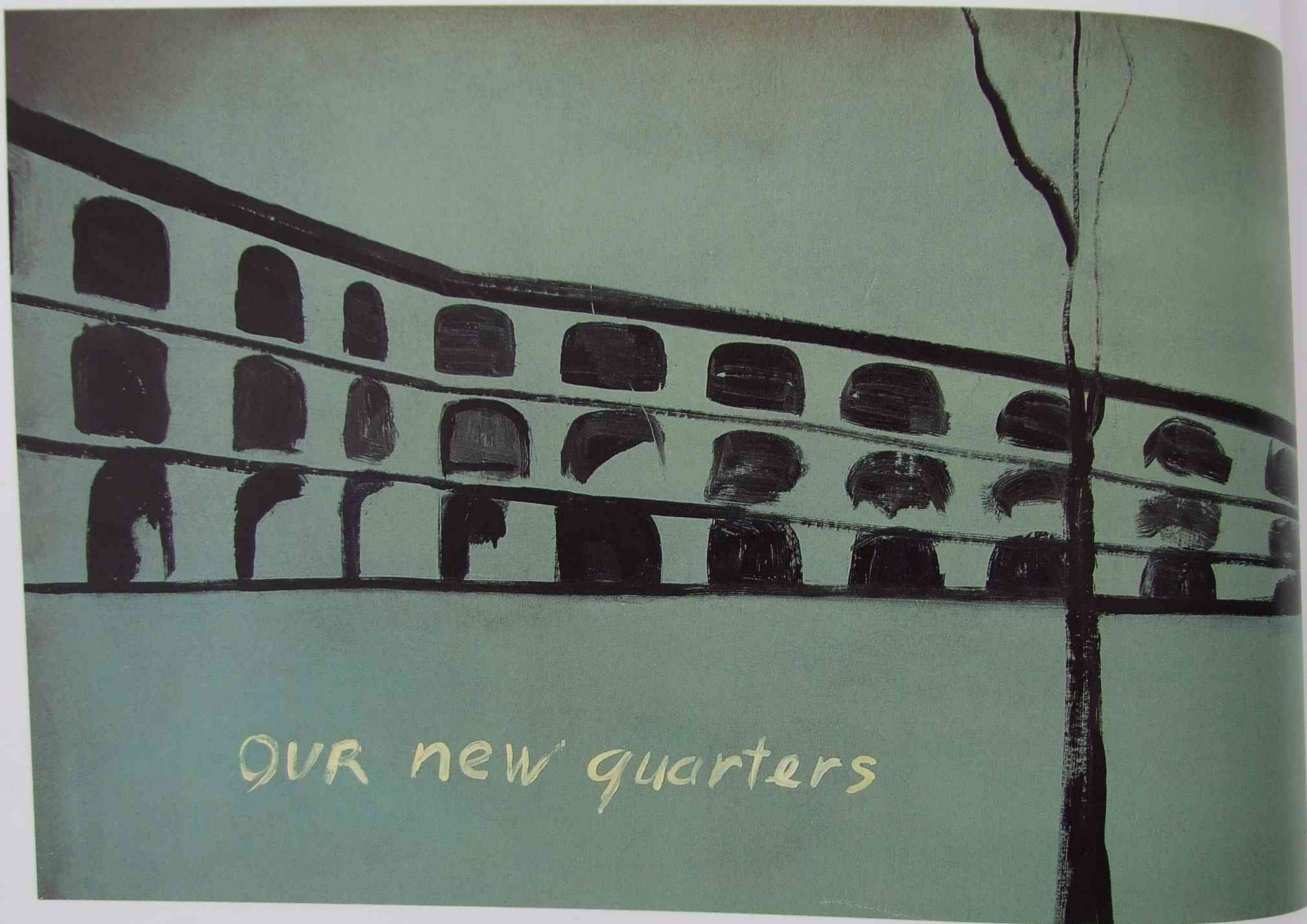
Oil on canvas

50 x 70 cm

Collection Museum Overholland,

Amsterdam





Our New Quarters

1986

Oil on canvas

80 × 120 cm

Collection Museum of Modern Art,

Frankfurt

never be eradicated and the memory can never be complete. The picture is the formalization of a loss of memory. Such memory will never remove the trauma; it will persist, but we will have an inkling of the insurmountable remoteness of part of our own world, we will be exposed in full consciousness to a constant injury.

If, in *Schwarzheide* and *Gas Chamber*, two different rhetorical gestures — metonymic and metaphorical representation — are used in the task of representation but also fail to preserve what would have been presented, the latter of the two is irrevocably contaminated by aesthetic gloss. The different gestures may be motivated by the missing object of reproduction. Unlike the buildings of *Schwarzheide*, the gas chamber of Auschwitz has been preserved, and can be visited. Tuymans has based his painting on a photograph. He had at his disposal a picture of what he wanted to paint, and he had to paint it, since the photograph — according to Roland Barthes, essentially an affirmation of the *ça a été*, the *it was so*,¹⁵ and hence, as far as the concentration camp is concerned, profoundly deceptive in prioritizing the indexical — can carry an element of truth only if painted only as an absolute failure.

The Failure of Representation: Textualization

Different yet again from *Schwarzheide* and *Gas Chamber* is the situation in another exhibited painting on the same subject, *Our New Quarters*. Its three elements are the greyish-green, muddy-looking ground, the abbreviated depiction, rudimentary drawing in black and the pale yellow script. More succinctly than in all the other

pictures, more clearly even than in *Schwarzheide*, the reproduction of the building and the withered tree is merely an inscription in the ground, not at all apt in generating a particular space, or a sense of space in general. Tuymans himself links this picture with works from drawings for films, in so far as the background, which refers back to drawing paper, stands out in a particular way, he says. He emphasized this reference by comparing the ground colour with a military colour, calling it dead, a non-colour. He describes not the actual depiction but the background (which is not a background in the conventional sense, since the painting has no foreground) as depressing. With their almost total loss of space, the inscriptions turn this picture overall into a work of writing; the drawing of the tree and the building yields no more of a picture than the words 'our new quarters'. The words are inadequate in explaining the drawing and thus in creating or even broadening meaning in the relationship between drawing and words, as there is no tension, no contrast between the two elements. The drawing, so sparse, so general, represents little more than nothing. The pictorial elements of this work appear as an inscription of its background, its description, and thus the text 'our new quarters' actually comes to denote a total loss of space, a total hopelessness.

Our New Quarters reveals the transformation of the picture into writing as an additional means of questioning representation. One may wonder whether and to what degree the different pictorial premises involve different examples of the failure of pictorial reproduction. The painting *Our New Quarters* dates back to the memory of a postcard

from Theresienstadt which Tuymans saw illustrated in a book. Theresienstadt was not a death camp but was used by the Nazis to deceive outside observers, such as Red Cross commissions, about the reality of the concentration camps. The inmates received postcards which they could send to their relations. On the card showing a Theresienstadt courtyard the sender had written these words in Czech. Here Tuymans is interested in an illustration to which a marker, a caption has been added, and which thus lays particular claim to meaning. The transfer of the model to painting then acts as an evacuation of the meaning it may have had. 'Textualization' is a way of producing a vacuum of meaning. As in other works, meaning is re-generated only by the commentary, which also excludes inappropriate meanings. In a discussion of the 1988 exhibition, for example, Tuymans' visit to Theresienstadt is still mentioned as a source of inspiration for a work including the depiction of a 'tenement block' called *Our New Quarters*.¹⁶

Melancholy

The focus of the exhibition 'Joséphine n'est pas ma femme' – and critics noticed this even at the time – is on works relating to concentration camps. Almost all the works show pictures of spaces structuring states of existence. They are pictures of empty rooms, of isolated things, pictures of a world that is frozen beneath the gaze, shattered, deathly still. Walter Benjamin defines the gaze wherein the world appears as a collection of dead fragments as the gaze of the melancholic. The representational form of his world is allegory, which Benjamin compares with the symbol. He resists traditional

and inadequate definitions of allegory, seeing it only as an exemplification, a picture to be deciphered for its concept, a hieroglyph. 'While in the symbol, with the transfiguration of decline, the transfigured face of nature fleetingly reveals itself in the light of salvation, in the allegory the *facies hippocratica* of history lies beneath the eyes of the viewer as a petrified primal landscape. The history and everything about it that is untimely, sorrowful or doomed forms itself into a face – no, a skull'.¹⁷ In many respects Tuymans' pictures correspond to this definition of allegory, and the naturalization of the historical is particularly clear in landscape paintings such as *Clouds*, 1986, or *Landscape*, 1975, which Tuymans himself describes as referring to people: 'The painting *Landscape* shows the inner space that plays a part in the portrait *G. Dam* ...'.¹⁸ In particular, Tuymans' cropping connects the picture to a moment which, removed from a (potential) sequence of moments, remains a moment and is not symbolically transfigured. For this reason the picture is dependent, needy and exposed to attributions of meaning which the artist supplies with his titles and, even more, with his own inexhaustible discourse. The paintings have, and Tuymans himself refers to this, the weakness of an after-image, and even the mostly faded colours, the inordinate use of white in wet-on-wet painting, contribute to this.

The picture *Our New Quarters* can be seen as a transformation of the picture into writing. Walter Benjamin says: 'In his [the allegorist's] hand the thing becomes something else. He speaks through it of something else, and for him it turns into a key to the sphere of hidden knowledge, as the emblem

with which he honours it. It is this that constitutes the written character of the allegory'.¹⁹ But further specification is necessary with reference to Tuymans' work in order to establish the sharp difference between his concept of representation and the allegorical concept as presented by Walter Benjamin. If his paintings are indeed allegorical, they are allegories for the irreversible withdrawal of things, allegories of a memory which loses its object for ever. Tuymans' infinitely repetitive discourse addresses this, and only this. When he supplements inadequate images verbally, he does so only to confirm their failure in the task of depiction, to underline that this cannot be rectified and is thus desirable. The pictorial formulation of the failure of images reiterates in the space of the ungraspable what remains inaccessible to them.

Of the emotional disposition of the melancholic, Benjamin writes, 'Grief is the cast of mind in which one revives the emptied world so as to take a mysterious pleasure in its sight'.²⁰ Tuymans' mourning consists in creating, with pictures of empty rooms and isolated things, the incommensurable insufficiency of pictures, in order to do justice to something that must remain outside our grasp. Tuymans' work is mourning in two interrelated respects: in the face of the absolute catastrophe of industrialized mass murder, and in the face of a kind of painting which, as suggested earlier, must be brought to an end a reaction to its threatened industrialization. Tuymans' work is representation conditioned by the undermining of representation with the means of cinematic contingency, aesthetic disguise, transformation

into writing, metonymic failure. It is an allegory in that it constructs the insufficiency of painting. It achieves a redefinition of painterly representation by emphatically applying important modalities of mechanical image production to painting, picking up on what threatens it, but without taking photographic possession of the world. Redefined by such a deconstructive process, the historical obsolescence of painterly representation, its anachronism, is the medium with which the reproduction of absolute horror is irrevocably destined for failure. Memory is made forever more inadequate, and yet the claim to preserve the past against all requests



Clouds
1986
Oil on canvas
25 x 30 cm
Collection Provincial Museum of
Modern Art, Ostend

to forget is nevertheless maintained. When, inversely, Tuymans turns his attention to a reality which innately resists pictorial reproduction, then it is the medium which causes representation to fail, to bring painting-as-reproduction to an end.

Toys as Models; Painting People

One crucial modification in the approach towards representation occurred in paintings from 1989-90 in an exhibition entitled 'Suspended', at the Zeno X Gallery in Antwerp, 1990. It can be seen as a segue to 'Joséfine n'est pas ma femme', in which the counterpart itself provides a more precise view of its predecessor. Until 1989 Tuymans' sites of horror were devoid of people. Painting people in their suffering is impossible; the inevitable voyeurism of a gaze that cannot be returned would be unbearable.²¹

'Suspended' is an exhibition of pictures showing everyday scenes with people in a friendly setting, by the swimming pool, in front of a house, near a bus, and so on, in an atmosphere of middle-class affluence and a carefree, suburban existence. The figuration is no longer set on a largely undifferentiated ground; the composition is more varied; the paintings have more colour than ever before. Yet the people are as if petrified, they display gestures of passivity and unconnectedness. The colours can be unnaturally, inappropriately bright. Even where a path or a flight of stairs leads into the depth of the image, they do not open up a space, so that figures look as though they have been pushed out of the picture, placeless, while in other paintings they seem to be standing against stage-sets. In some there are harsh contrasts in



Rear Mirror

1986

Oil on canvas

64 × 190 cm

the painterly execution of figure and ground or surrounding, and inordinate differences in size; the paintings are defined by great differences in distance from the viewer (either too close or too far away) along with extreme croppings and apparently random, disturbing combinations of objects. The representations of suburban idylls are immersed in signs of unnaturalness, of dislocation, of impotence, forlornness. According to Tuymans the first eight paintings in the exhibition were painted in the following order: *The Swimming Pool*, *The Cry*, *The Murderer*, *Suspended* in 1989, *The Servant*, *Waiting*, *Solitude*, *Birdwatching* in 1990. The list of titles refers to elements of threat and disaster; harmlessness and peace are deceptive, imbued with a sense of a menacing catastrophe, or of a catastrophe that has already occurred unnoticed. Edward Hopper has rightly been named as a major point of reference behind the conception of these paintings.

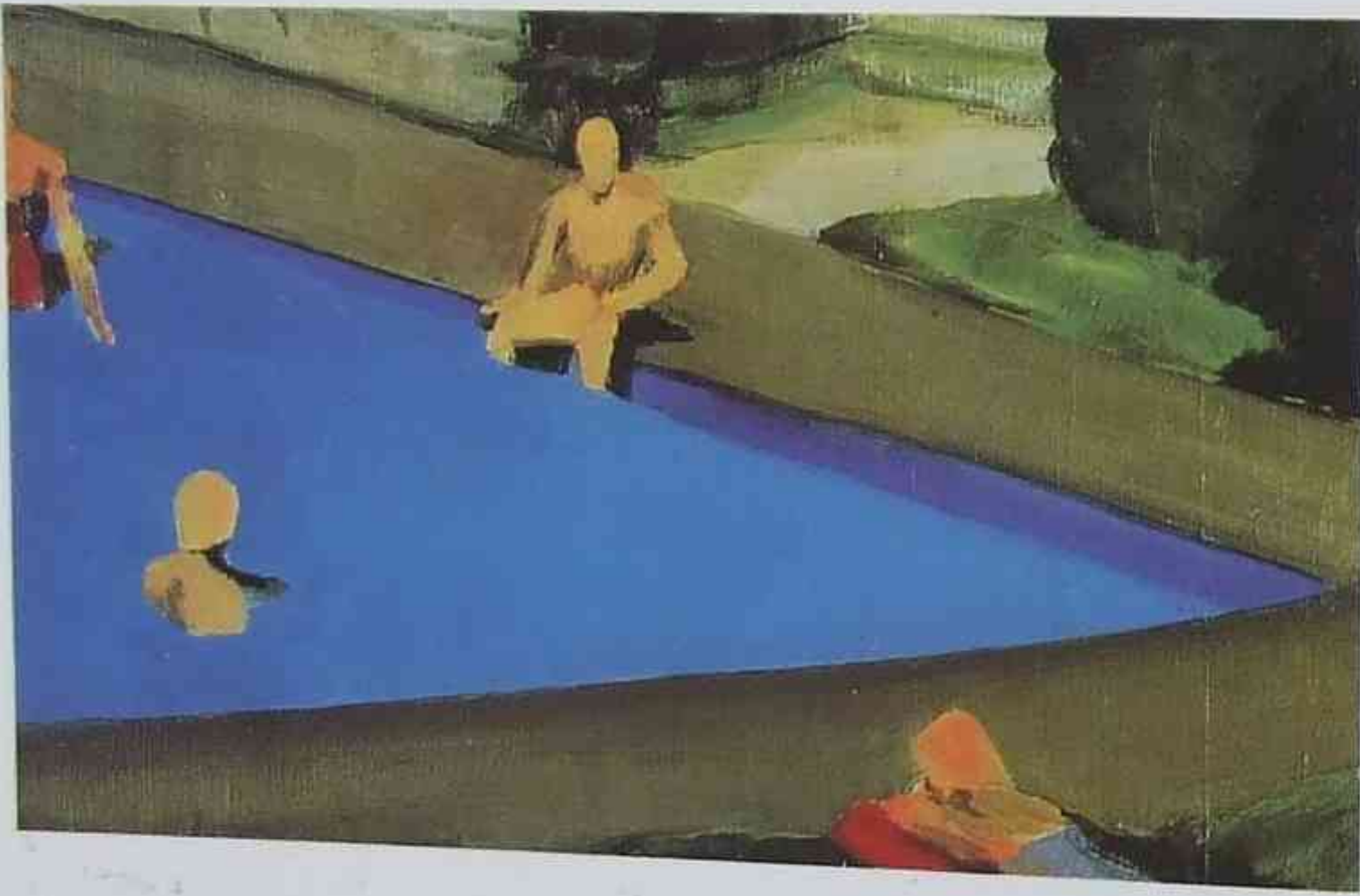
Tuymans has copied figures and buildings like the ones that children use to make their model railways look more natural, and this explains the source of many elements of unnaturalness in these paintings without, however, coming any closer to the origin of the specific pictorial conception. Painting scenes with people in them, impossible in the works depicting concentration camps and other abandoned worlds, is only possible if the model consists of inactive figures; simulacra of people existing as available objects with which to enact infantile fantasies of omnipotence. This strategy anticipates the objectifying view of the world which finds expression in practices of representation. Painting scenes of toys, undertaking

the reproduction of reproduction, frees the painter from the responsibility of original reproduction.

The five remaining works in the exhibition *Suspended*, which were painted after these, complete the self-reflection of the artist's working method and establish a link with the earlier Nazi subject matter. The focus is on the puppet itself. *Body*, 1990, is a figure cut off above the shoulders and beneath the groin, with strangely limp, damaged arms, in faded colours, semi-transparent, a figure that has both characteristics of a living body and those of a doll.²² *Secrets*, 1990, appears more clearly to be the portrait of a uniformed person with closed eyes, but has also been given the features of a doll, with signs of lifelessness. It is the portrait of Albert Speer, the willing architect whose job it was to translate Adolf Hitler's mad notions into architectural form. In a sense, the fantasies of Fascist architecture are reflected in a utopia which explicates its own latent threat.

Fetishistic Character

With regard to the works in the exhibition 'Suspended', Tuymans himself has referred to the fetishistic character of the painting which links it to the availability of the toy. Fascinated by the paintings of Edward Hopper, he wanted to own one of his works, as a child wants to possess a toy. It is as though Tuymans, to fulfil his desire, has painted some Hoppers for himself, and thus the representation of the toy is also a representation of the fetishistic painting. The self-reflexivity of pictorial representation comes full circle. The painting depicts a scene with figures; yet the

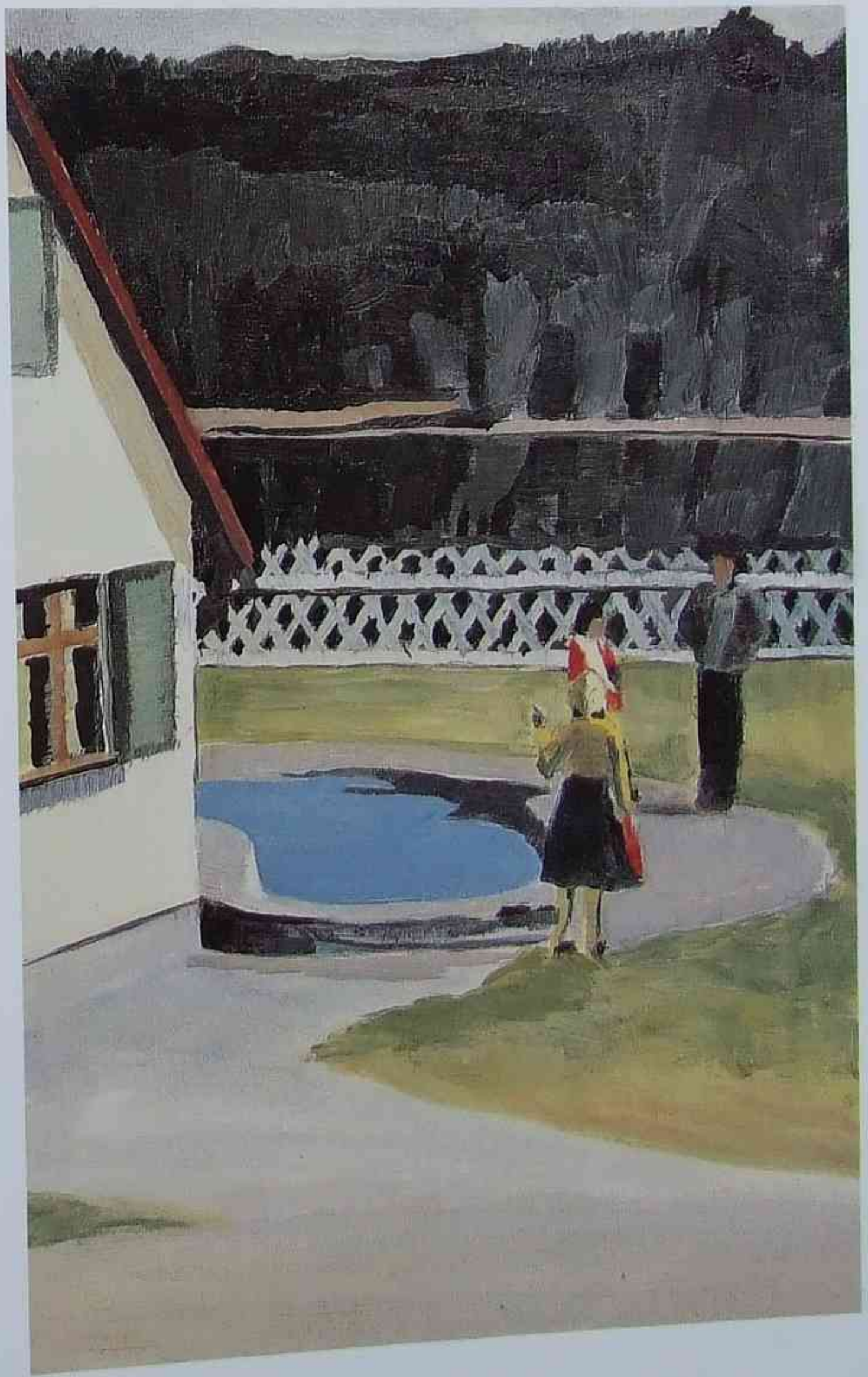
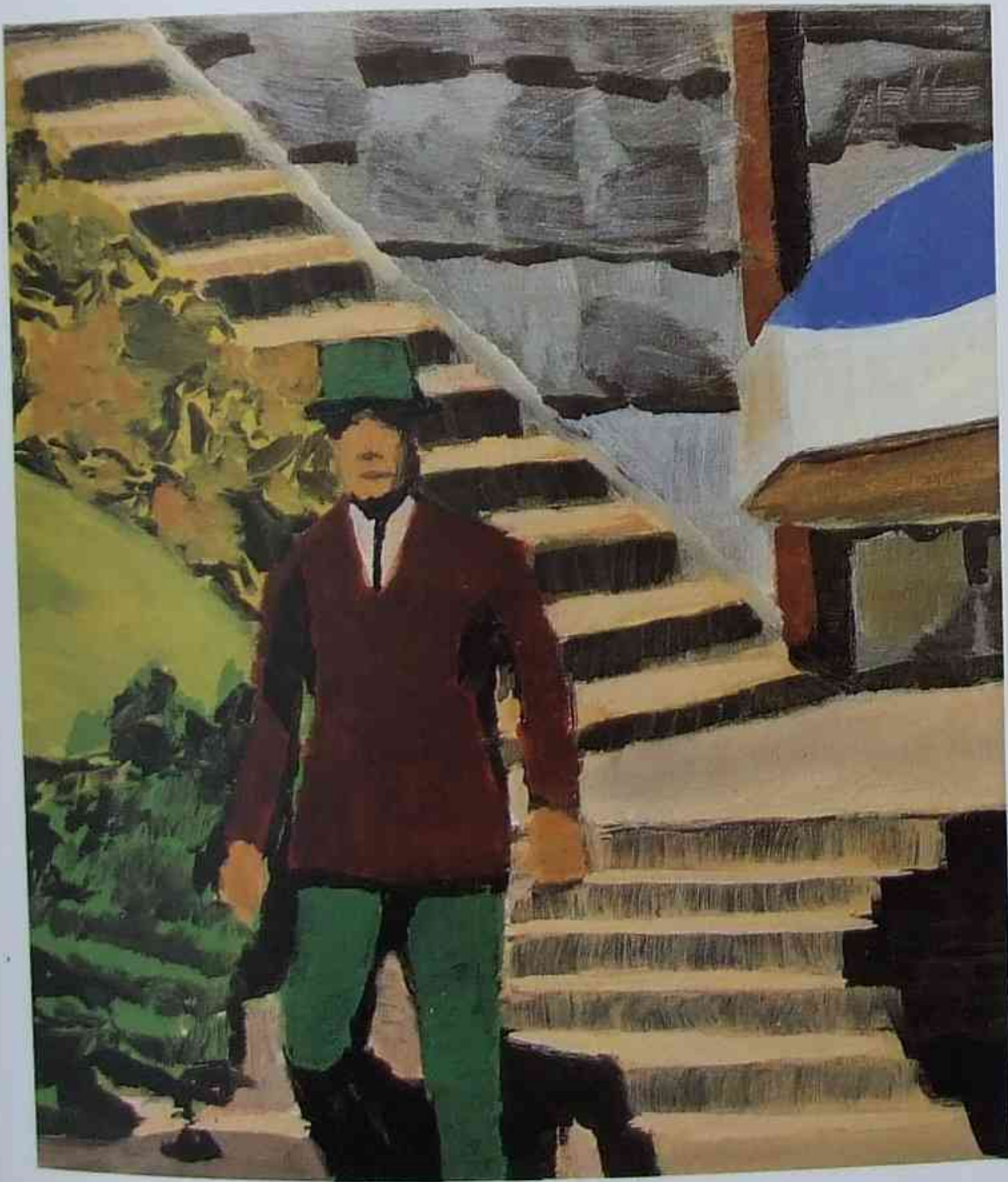


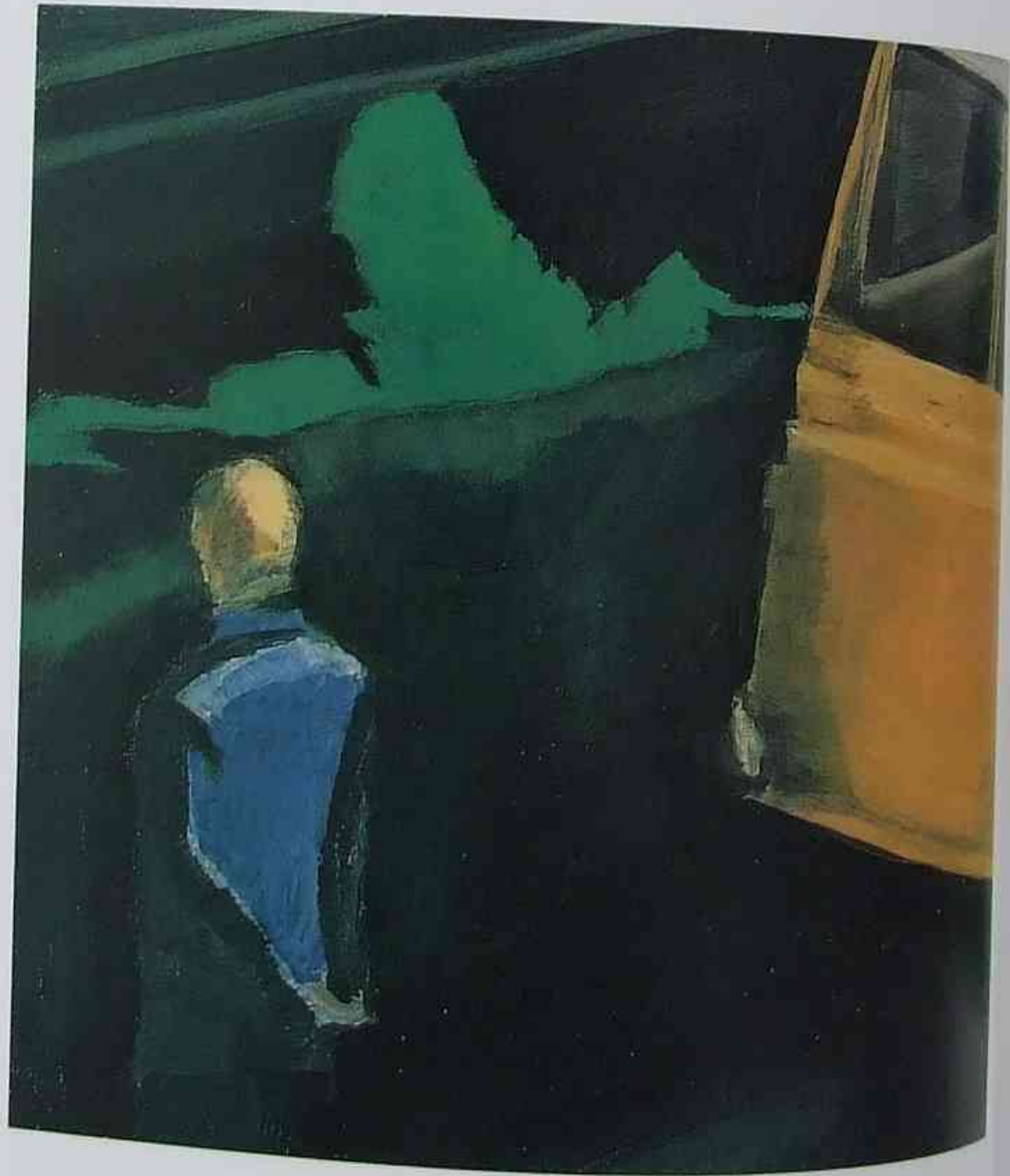
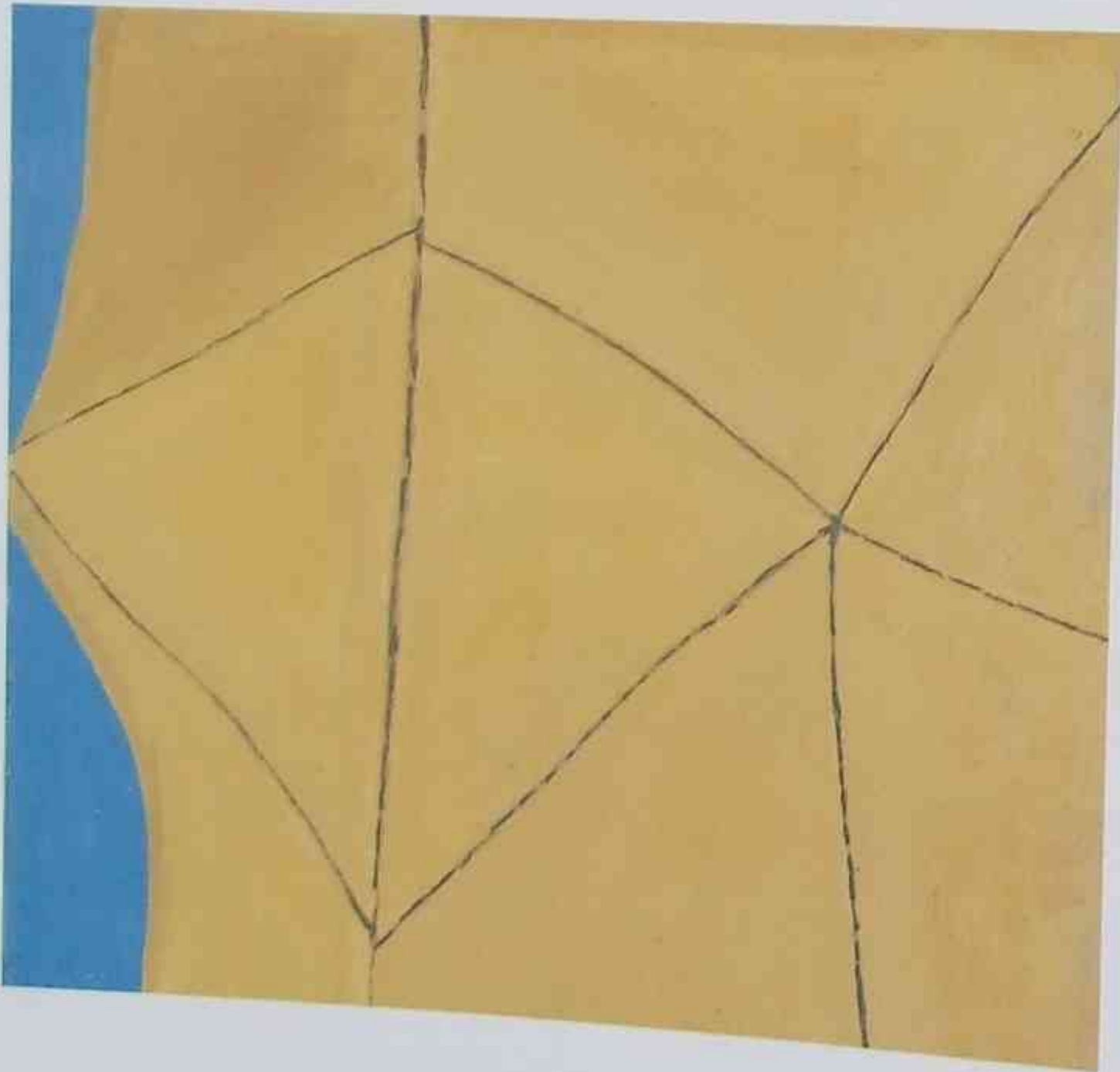
L. to r.,
The Swimming Pool
 1989
 Oil on canvas
 37.5 x 61 cm
 Collection Museum of
 Contemporary Art, Ghent

The Cry
 1989
 Oil on canvas
 37 x 45 cm

The Murderer
 1989
 Oil on canvas
 32 x 28 cm

Suspended
 1989
 Oil on canvas
 60 x 40 cm







L. to: r.,
Sybille
1990
Oil on canvas
36,5 × 42 cm

Solitude
1990
Oil on canvas
35 × 34 cm

The Servant
1990
Oil on canvas
50,5 × 53 cm

Birdwatching
1990
Oil on canvas
39,5 × 47 cm



Käthe GrüBe
1990
Oil on canvas
triptych, 36 x 34.5 cm; 36 x
35.5 cm; 37 x 35 cm



Les yeux sans visage
1990
Collage on paper
22.5 x 23 cm



Survey

figures are themselves substitutes, toys, rendering the scene uncanny. Just as the model figures inhabit the realm of the fetish so does their representation.

In constructing these pictures as fetishistic objects, and turning the substitute object into the object of representation, Tuymans subjects his work to the conditions of industrialization's second central challenge to painting: the transformation of the artwork into a commodity; to which Modernism reacts with the ideology of the new, the theory of the shock. As in the infiltration of painting with practices of mechanical reproduction, which also played a part in the exhibition 'Suspended', the fetishization of painting (reflected in and through the work itself) contributes to the deconstruction of representation, which is stripped of its power to re-visualize while preserving the pictures from repression, from their temporary

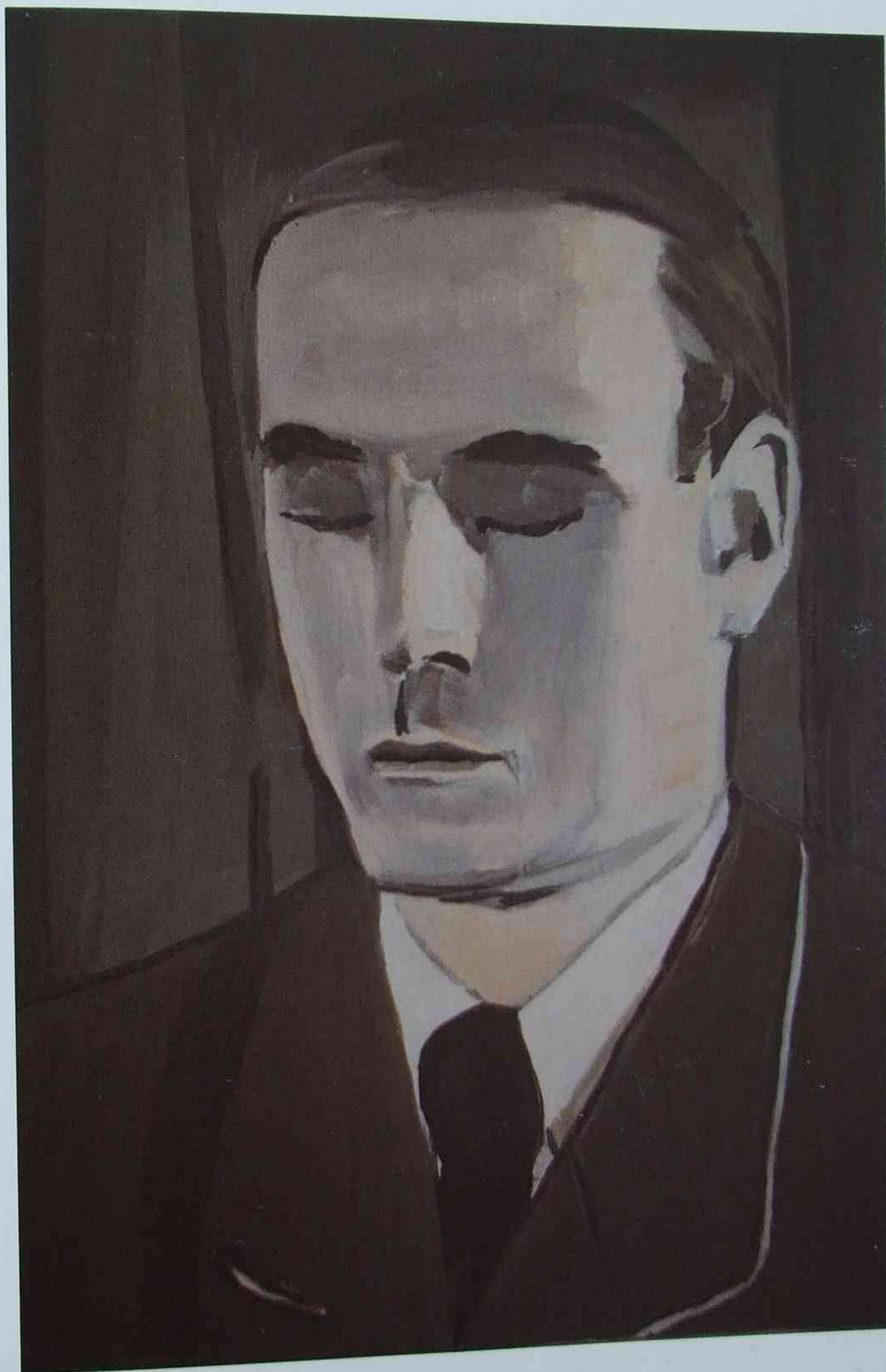
(or permanent) extinction. Thus 'Suspended' may be considered not only as a counterpart to images of empty spaces of horror ('Joséphine n'est pas ma femme'); comparison between the two exhibitions also reveals how Tuymans responds to the twofold challenge of industrialization to painting with a double deconstruction of representation - protected by the appearance of belatedness and painterly clumsiness from the compulsory modernist discourses of painting's very destruction. What he manages to do is to preserve the referential character of painting on the condition of the referent's ungraspability in a reproduction.

'Der diagnostische Blick'; Index

'Der diagnostische Blick' (The diagnostic view), an exhibition Tuymans presented at the Zeno X Gallery in 1992, is also of central importance. Indeed 'Der diagnostische Blick' can be as a single work in text

parts. This view is additionally supported by the fact that, with few exceptions, the paintings (following their Roman numeral sequence but not their hanging in the gallery) seem to form a progressive enlargement, only slightly interrupted in its continuity, from half-length portrait to skin detail – in cinematic language, a zoom represented by a sequence of stills. In this respect, 'Der diagnostische Blick' is the most strongly cinematic exhibition of all, although it does not have a greater degree of narrative content. A continuous zoom can certainly be constructed from the works, but its object changes from still to still – as far as one can tell from the actual close-ups. The size of the individual pictures themselves also varies. The contextualization of the paintings in terms of their sequence does not add to the information provided in any individual picture. Rather the cinematic sequence in these works refers to a sequentiality which bestows meaning, and at the same time excludes it, once again underlining the fundamental contingency of the individual film image.

The pictures in the series 'Der diagnostische Blick' are – along with his very early, 'realistic' works – most strongly influenced by photographic realism. In the past, Tuymans had painted a great deal from photographs. But these ten paintings are more 'naturalistic' than any before. Apparently this 'change of style' was noted with considerable disappointment among admirers of his work at the time of the exhibition. But we shall not concern ourselves with judging Tuymans' stylistic decisions; we shall try to set aside judgements of taste in favour of an analysis based on the logic and



Secrets
1990
Oil on canvas
52 x 37 cm



meaning of aesthetic decisions. In fact it becomes apparent that the photographic realism of these works has a logical place within the work as a whole (which is not, however, to postulate a logic which would enable us to predict developments in his work).

The paintings are made from illustrations in a medical handbook entitled 'Der diagnostische Blick' and alter the status of the photographic in Tuymans' work. Authors such as Peirce and others regard photography as an indexical sign, in so far as celluloid does nothing but record the light that falls upon it, without any form of translation, any imposition of compositional order referring to something beyond the image. The photograph is characterized by the same absence of symbolic order as nature itself.²³

With the works from 'Der diagnostische Blick', Tuymans makes signs or pictures which are themselves definable as indices the subjects of his paintings. The illustrations that he uses as models show symptoms from which the doctor can diagnose an illness. The symptom is the trace of the illness. It may not always be easy for the doctor to diagnose a cause accurately from a particular symptom; relations may not be as clear and unambiguous as they are in photography itself. But the direct physical relation (and co-dependency) between illness and visually realized symptoms, where the eye is the organ of their examination, is quite apparent.

Tuymans has stated that however much he might have wished to he was unable to paint portraits for a long time. If five or six portraits are painted now, frontally, open-eyed, portraits of

gazes, the difference between these and works such as *Secrets* becomes apparent. In this portrait of Albert Speer, Speer's eyes are not only closed but appear to be painted out; they will never open again. This definitive closure, the blinding of the figure in the portrait, also corresponds to the withdrawal from perception that is indicated by the title of the painting. Tuymans asserts that in order to paint portraits he needed illness as a pretext. Illness means that he does not have to paint the portrait for its own sake, as the expression of a personality or the re-visualization of a memory (as he attempted in *G. Dam*), which would lead once more to the failure of representation, but instead can turn to a medical function of representation, which promises an uncoded image given the natural relationship between signifier and signified. The curious air of indifference in the faces of the characters in the portraits, the complete passivity of their expressions, derive from the fact that the portraits are not about the people themselves, but about their illnesses.

Roland Barthes' noted book *Camera Lucida* contains his often quoted definition of photography, '... it is the absolute PARTICULAR, unlimited, blind and, so to speak, simple-minded CONTINGENCE, it is the CERTAIN (a certain photography, not *the* photography), in short, TYCHE, the CHANCE, COINCIDENCE, the REAL in its inexhaustible expression'.²⁴ The photograph is given the sign function of a trace, an unmistakable, uncoded indication of the presence of the real object which left the trace. It is interesting, however, that Lacan, to whose remarks in his seminar *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*



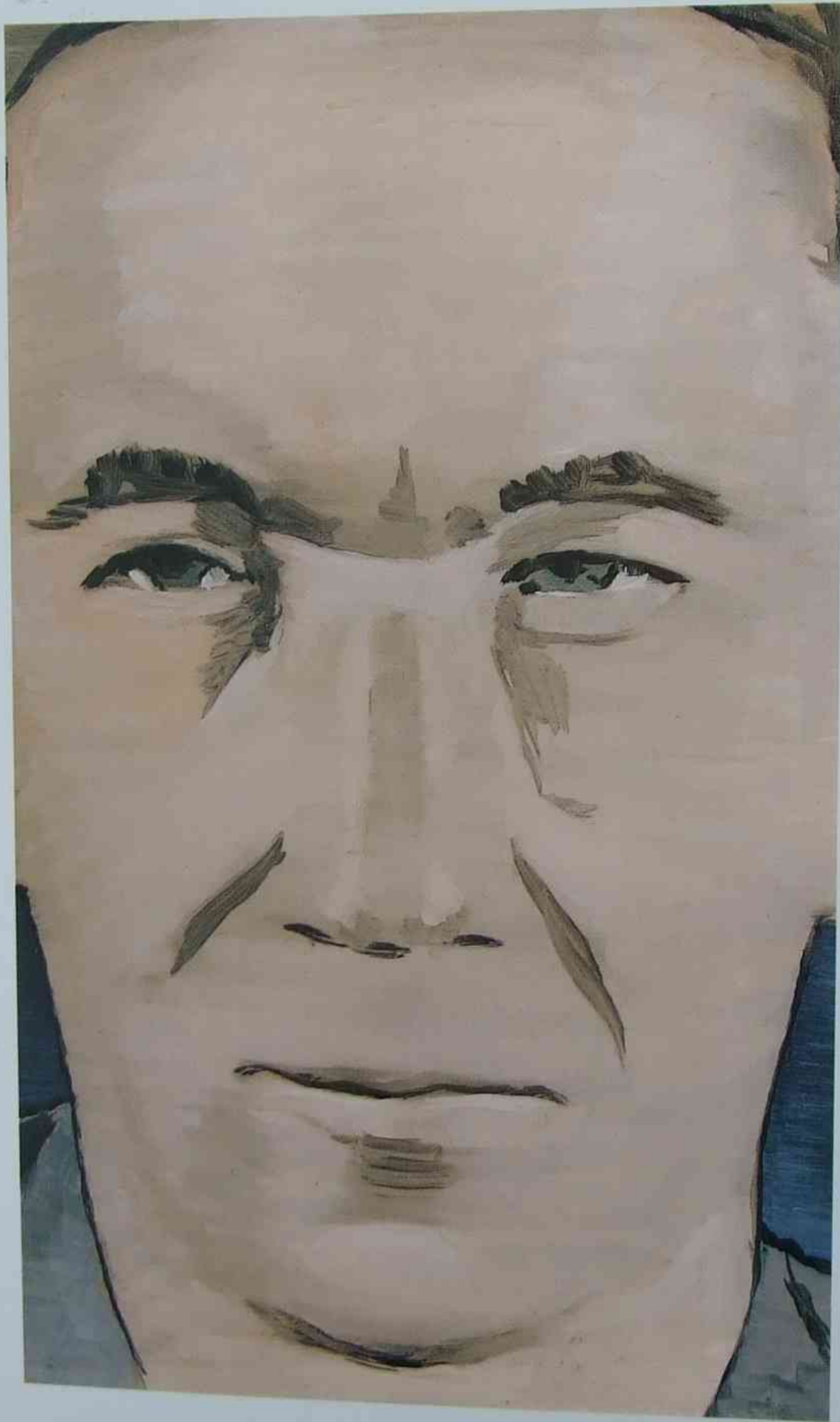
opposite, Der diagnostische
Blick I

1992
Oil on canvas
53 x 48 cm

Der diagnostische Blick II

1992
Oil on canvas
58.5 x 39 cm
Collection Kaiser Wilhelm
Museum, Krefeld





Der diagnostische Blick

1992

Oil on canvas

62 x 40 cm

opposite, Der diagnostische

Blick V

1992

Oil on canvas

58 x 42 cm





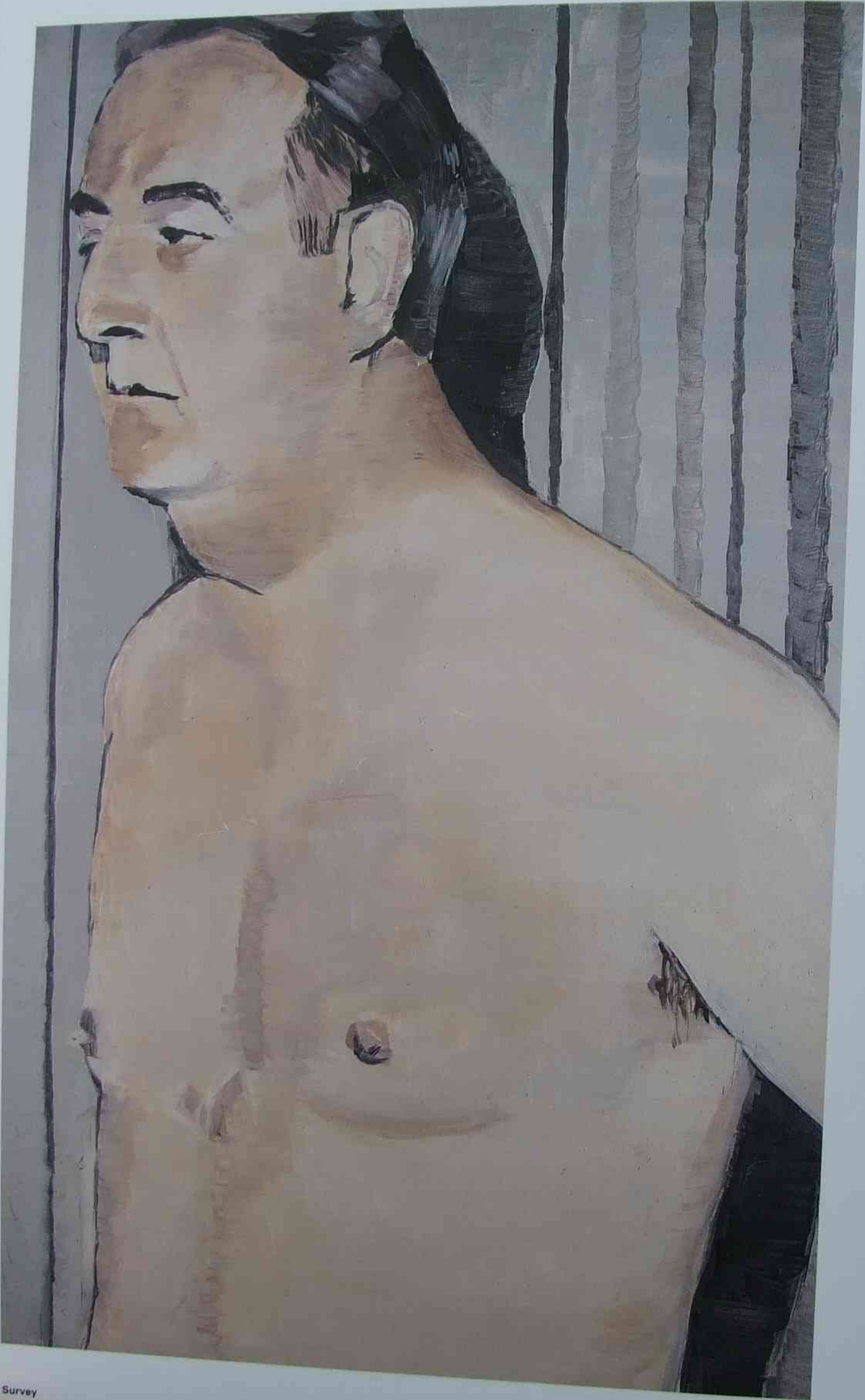
Der diagnostische
1992

Oil on canvas
57 x 38 cm

opposite, Der diagnosti-
VII

1992
Oil on canvas
65.5 x 45.5 cm





opposite, Der diagnostische Blick

1992
Oil on canvas
75 x 48 cm



right, above, Der diagnostische Blick IX

1992
Oil on canvas
49 x 57 cm



right, below, Der diagnostische Blick X

1992
Oil on canvas
49 x 55.5 cm



Barthes expressly refers, also perceives the real as being missed in the encounter, *Tyche*: 'It is a remarkable fact that the real shows itself at the origin of experience as something *unassimilable* – in the form of the trauma which will be defining for the further development'.²⁵

Missing the Real

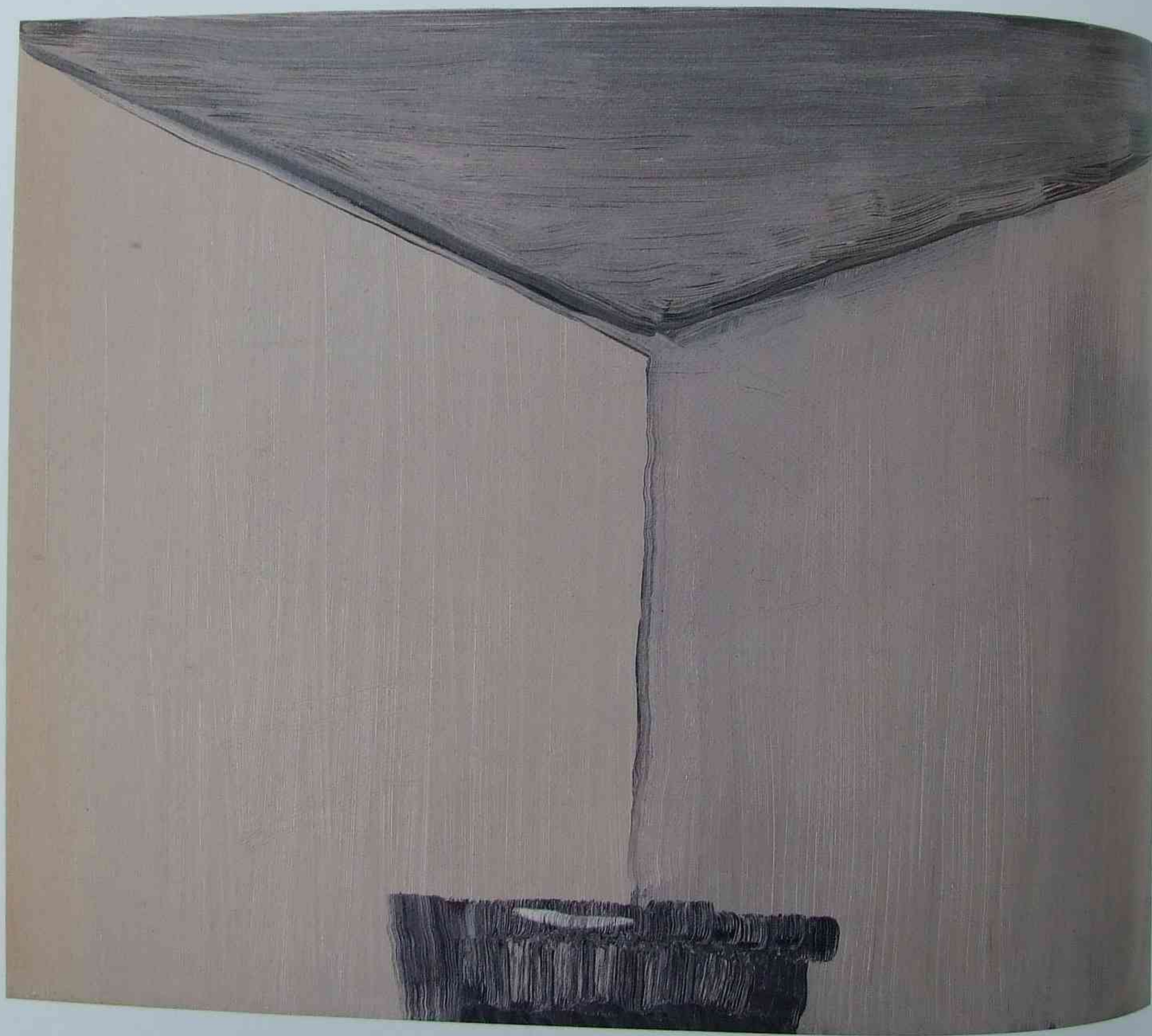
In explicitly referring to a visual index, the symptom, Tuymans gives the appearance of seeking the encounter with the real, even if it is illness, which his iconic paintings necessarily lack. In this connection we might recall two key articles by Rosalind Krauss in which she shows the central importance that indexical practices assumed in the 1970s.²⁶ Through the operations of the index, pictorial conventions are rendered inactive, and truth becomes a matter of clues. It is no longer a function of logic, as it appeared to be in the works of the 1960s which were devoted to the examination of pictorial codes. But in Tuymans' work the very thing that would have turned the representation into an encounter with the real is also a medium for missing it and focusing on symptoms. The series of paintings was not called 'symptoms', for example. Tuymans does not paint the signs that indicate a particular illness so as to grasp the reality of illness; he does not paint the way they (the signs and the illness) change an organism, but paints what the diagnostic view achieves: the people diagnosed are left behind as empty shells. At this point we might recall Walter Benjamin's definition of allegory, quoted above. In fact the diagnostic view forces the portraits to freeze into masks, depersonalized facades. And it is hardly

more surprising to note the degree to which close-ups of pathological changes in the skin assume the appearance of a landscape. Tuymans' painting turns the search for an encounter with the real into a failure.

In contrast to his usual practice, in these paintings Tuymans draws the brushstrokes horizontally across the picture field, largely independent of the outlines of the object – a practice of closure against the object of his depiction, intensifying the autonomy of the painterly. Tuymans suggests we view his paintings themselves as symptoms of an illness. In a movement structurally similar to that apparent in 'Suspended', the depiction of something becomes the reality of the picture itself. With *Der diagnostische Blick*, the representation of indexical signs becomes the index of an illness of the picture itself. The illness of the picture is it overlooks reality: the picture is constructed as a trauma.

This trauma of the real is asserted in his pictures from the same period shown at the Galerie Isabella Kacprzak in Cologne, also in 1992. The title of the exhibition is taken from the Roman Polanski film, *Repulsion*, which explores an interior's potential to induce paranoia. Half of the twelve works on show are – as their titles confirm – representations of classic visual indices: *Mirror I-III* and *Shadow I-III*. There are no shadows without bodies to cast them, and the mirror is the one medium which, without any question, indicates the presence of the reflected body. Characteristically, Tuymans has painted at least some of these pictures 'from nature', without interposing any illustration. To paint *Mirror I* he

Lamproom
1992
Oil on canvas
48.5 x 55.7 cm



Ceiling

1992

Oil on canvas

43 x 34.5 cm

Collection Kaiser Wilhelm
Museum, Krefeld

had to keep running back and forth from his bathroom mirror to his studio, and for *Shadow II* he copied his own shadow. But what he is painting is the reflected bit of toothpaste on the bathroom mirror, not his own image, which he must have seen along with the toothpaste stain, and his own shadow is hardly recognizable as the shadow of a person, let alone that of an individual. The same is true of the shadow of a nose and that of a girl's body, made from sketches and watercolours with which Tuymans had captured earlier impressions.

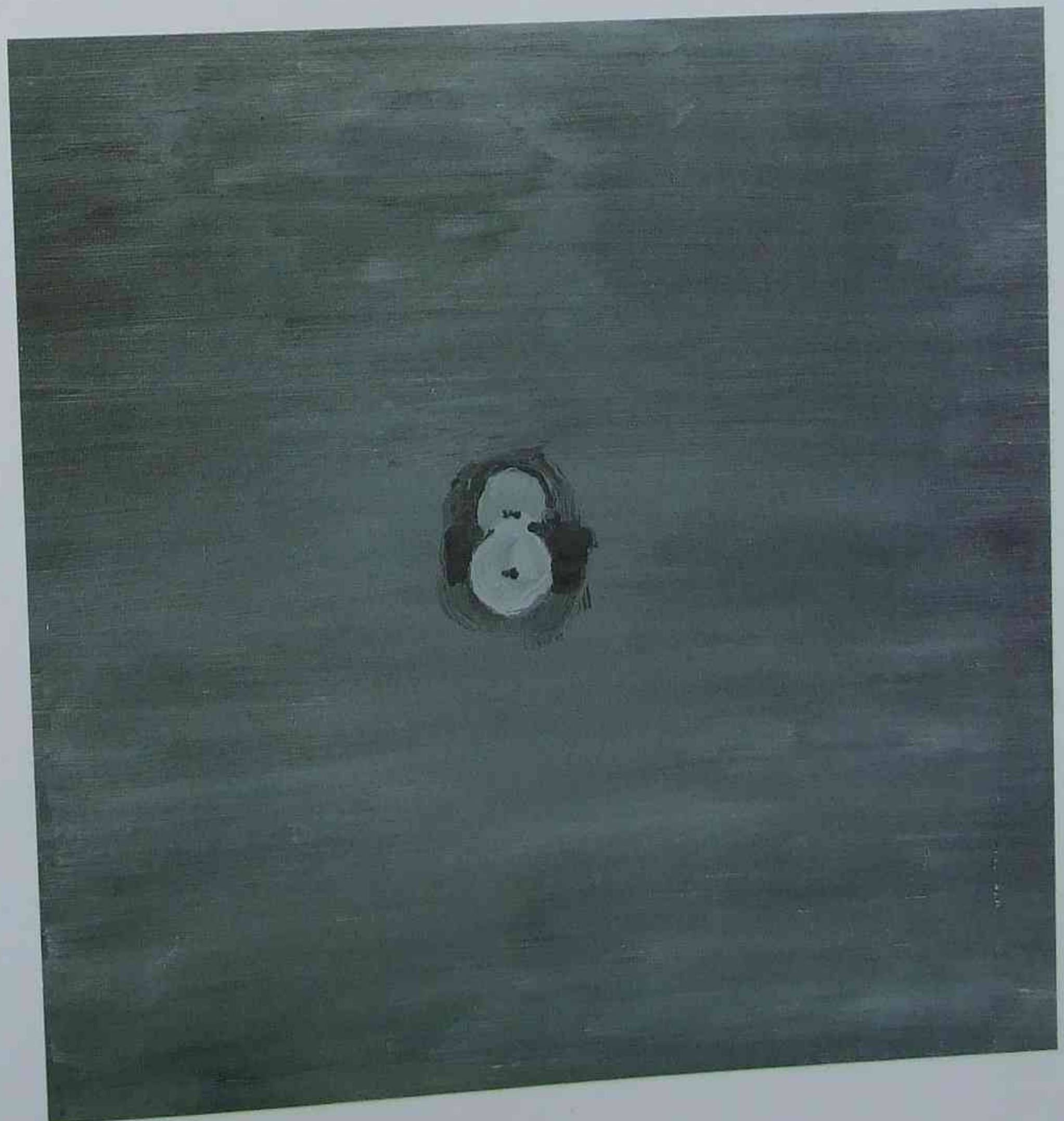
The mirrors are (almost) empty, the shadows are nothing but obscurations, dark silhouettes, which can hardly vouch for the presence of a person. Shadows and mirrors indicate the absence of a person, while indicating the factuality of a human body is their usual capacity and function. One helpful commentary in this respect is Tuymans' own description of his painting practice in the interview with Juan Vicente Aliaga. The artist connects the long gaze into the mirror with the loss of self-image and the emergence of the surroundings. He also mentions the figure of an angel (which appears in the exhibition 'Repulsion') which Freud discusses in his study of the uncanny, when he deals with the association of doubles 'with reflections in mirrors, with shadows, with guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and with the fear of death'.²⁷ Shadows and mirrors in these pictures are indicators of self-loss, of death: what is really missing from them is the self.

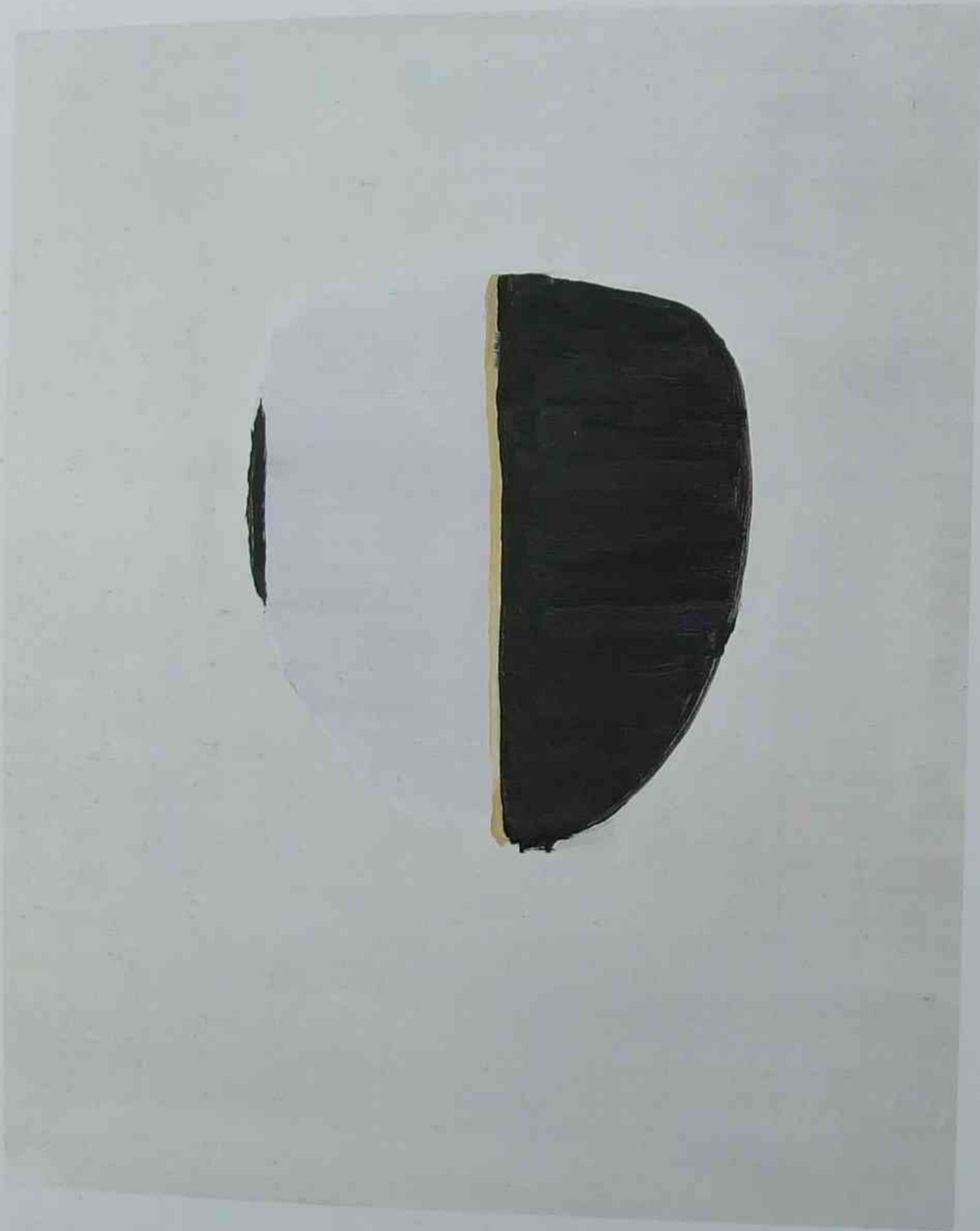
First of all these pictures are representations of empty mirrors and barely identifiable shadows, and as in other works, the title is crucial in helping the viewer to see in this way. As representations,

however, the paintings have become almost completely empty and dark – particularly in *Mirror II* and *Shadow III*. They seem on the verge of becoming their own depicted reality, assuming the emptiness of the mirror in one case and the darkness of the shadow in the other. These works successfully deconstruct representation in its indexical aspect as 'blind paintings'.

What Tuymans achieves with his works until 1993 through clearly differentiated, individual major exhibitions is the deconstruction of painterly representation in its iconic and indexical aspects. Once again he begins where modernist painting

Mirror I
1992
Oil on canvas
49,4 × 48,2 cm
Collection Kaiser Wilhelm
Museum, Krefeld





Mirror III

1992

Oil on canvas

70 x 60 cm

opposite, Shafiq

1994

Oil on canvas

57.5 x 39.5 cm

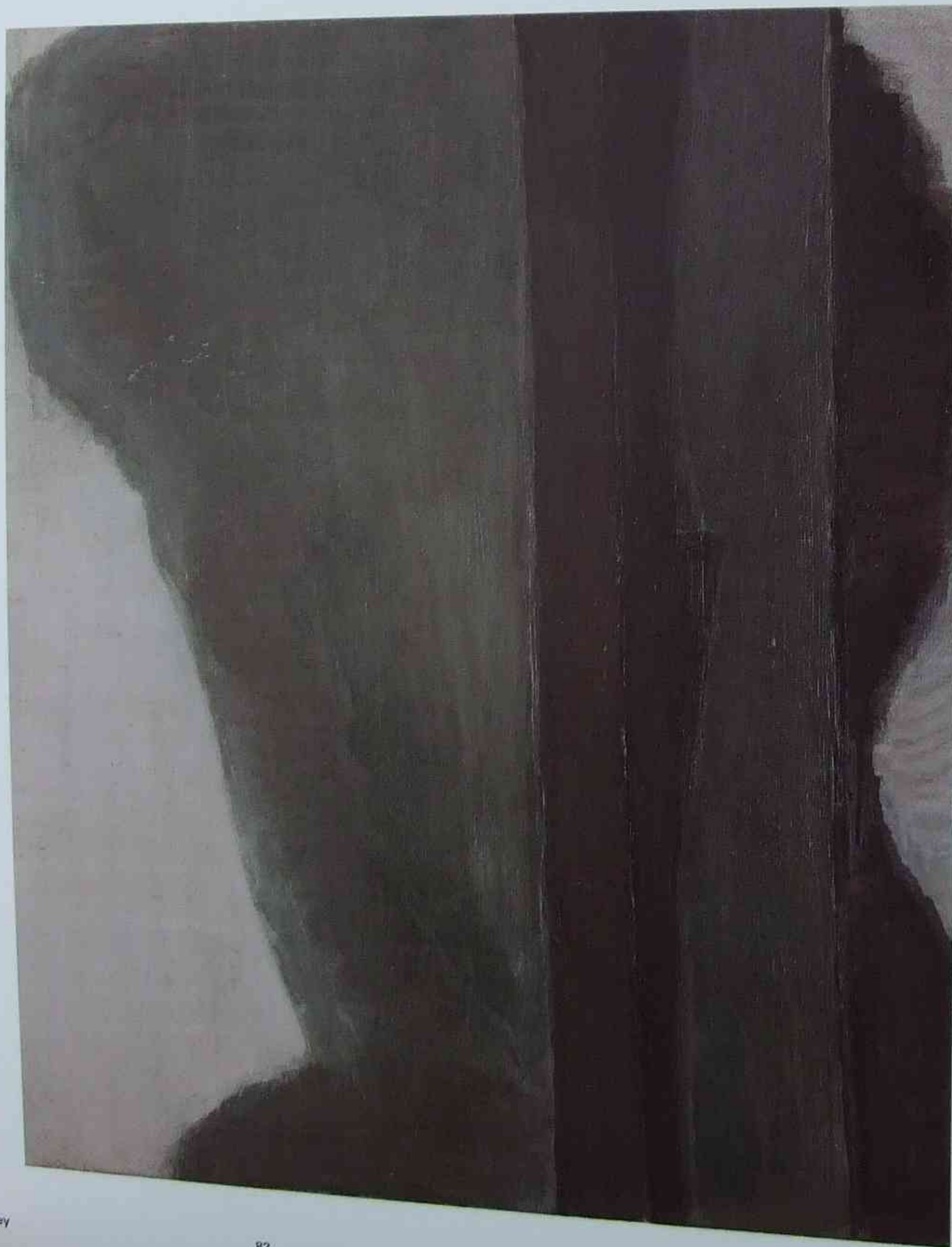


made its fundamental gestures of destruction. For this reason he has to keep himself out of the ensuing, dominant discourse which carries out the task of mourning by realizing the end of painting (without ending it) in the form of successive attempts at deconstructing abstract painting. His mourning recommences with painterly represen-

tation itself, setting about to bring it to an end, constructing its failure. This raises the question of how the symbolic aspect of representation is being addressed.

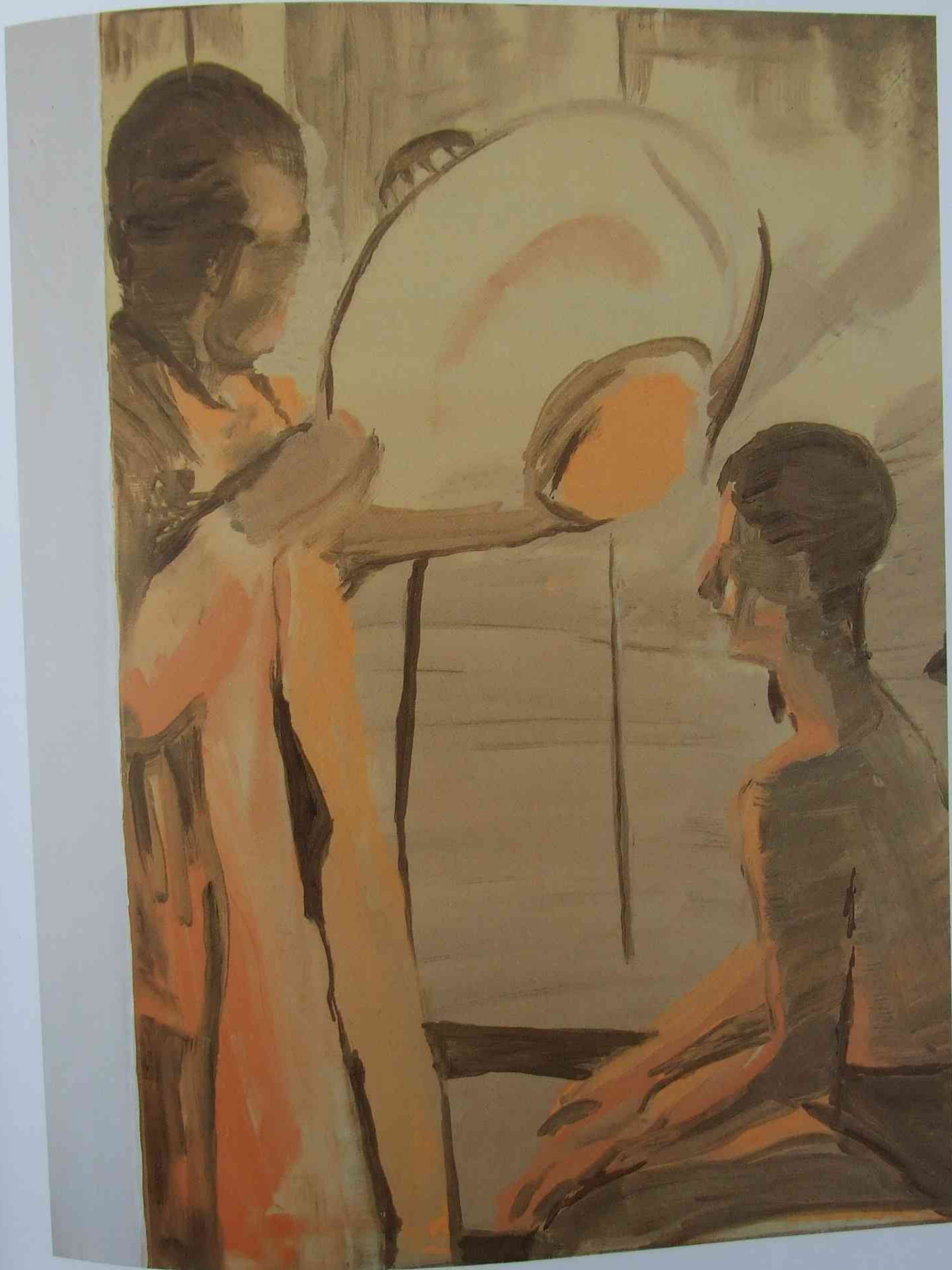
Symbolic Representation in the Light of the Electronic Image

The exhibition 'At Random', 1994, at the Zeno X Gallery included a number of works whose exceptional quality lay in a new kind of light: television light. Iconographically, the lamp may be the most frequently recurring motif in Tuymans' work from the late 1970s onwards. But hitherto they had been lamps, lights which emit no light, illuminate nothing; metaphorically speaking, they are signs of absent enlightenment. Even the sun in *A Place in the Sun*, 1989, does not shine. Sometimes light is indicated by shadows, rather than painted as itself. Only in a few paintings, such as *Heillicht*, 1991, *The Walk*, 1993, or *Silent Music*, 1993, is light actually painted; but it is an illumination that eerily coats the bodies as if it were an unnatural glowing material. In 'At Random', *The Rabbit*, 1994 is particularly curious. Light appears to emanate from the rabbit itself, a radiance which in a sense drains its own form. This quality of light is familiar from the television image. While the photograph, itself a 'light-picture' in the literal sense, requires external lighting in order to be looked at, and light from a light source passes through film images and thus projects them on the screen, the television picture generates its own light. No other light source is required for it to be seen. In *Blacklight*, 1994, the scene of a crime, the table lamp is extinguished and replaced by a television set.



below, *Shadow II*
1992
Oil on canvas
60 x 50 cm

opposite, *Heillicht*
1991
Oil on canvas
50 x 40 cm





opposite: St. Valentine

1994

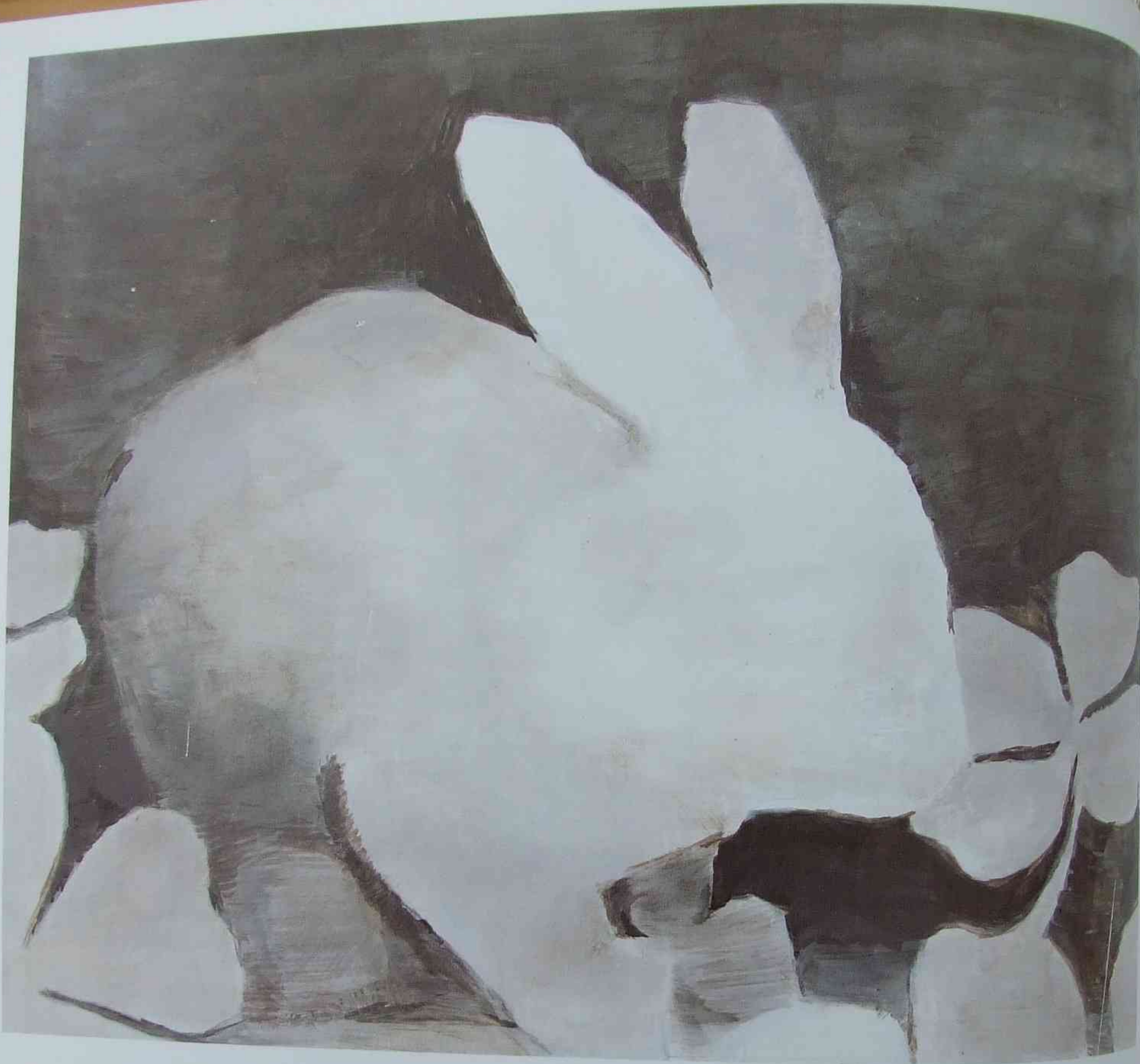
Oil on canvas
47 x 40.5 cm

Blacklight

1994

Oil on canvas
55 x 82 cm





The exhibition 'Heimat' held in the Zeno X Gallery in 1995, is Tuymans' first exhibition to feature a symbolic iconography, the iconography of Flemish nationalism: the Flemish flag is painted hanging from the wall, the lion almost disappearing in the folds of the limp cloth (*The Flag*). An iron tower is depicted (*Yzer-tower*), a well-known symbol of the nationalist movement with a changing history: erected as a monument to the Flemish fallen of the First World War, the tower, with the cruciform inscription 'A.V.V./V.V.K.' (*Alles voor Vlanderen/Vlanderen voor Kristus*) was at first a pacifist symbol; it was later appropriated by Flemish nationalists between the wars, only to be blown up after the Second World War in another symbolic gesture against Flemish collaboration with Fascism. Today the tower has once again become a place of pilgrimage for the right-wing nationalist movement, and is currently the object of violent political controversies.

Bosom shows, in close-up, a pregnant woman in rural garb; *Flemish Village*, painted as depicted in an existing oil painting, shows the typical Flemish village; *A Flemish Intellectual* is the portrait of the well-known 'Heimat' poet Ernest Claes. The symbolic meaning, a common set of themes, is immediately apparent in the 'Heimat' paintings. They suggest their own interpretation. They cannot be seen as paintings of the formation of nationalist identity, but are without a doubt a bitter, if not despairing, ironic version thereof. Painterly means familiar from earlier works are now used to take up a position towards the objects represented: the (apparent) use of miniature architecture as a model (*Flemish Village*, *Yzer-*

tower); the metonymic representation of a greatly enlarged detail of the body and ambivalence in doll-like figures (*Fingers*, *Bosom*); the cinematic technique of superimposition (*Resentment*). All of these are used as a means of dismantling the symbolic claims to power. *The Flag*, painted from the Polaroid photograph of a watercolour, and *A Flemish Intellectual* look bleached; the iron tower in *Yzer-tower* is shadowy to the point of disappearing; and *Fingers*, the suggestive close-up of two digits, is almost impossible to integrate thematically with the rest of the exhibition although it injects an element of barely concealed obscenity. Finally the painting of a face disappearing into water or emerging from it in *Resentment* superimposes two images which Tuymans associates not only with disgust and revulsion, but also with the resentment of nationalism.

'Heimat' takes up symbols of Flemish nationalism and dismantles them through various pictorial means on the symbolic level of painting, including those which Tuymans had developed or deployed for the deconstruction of iconic and indexical representation. Techniques of deconstruction are applied so as to turn paintings of symbolic representation into bearers of social commitment; one based on the critical, political assessment of the contemporary phenomena. In the process, Tuymans appears to abandon the deconstructive procedure with which he had previously turned the representational functions of painting against themselves and thus addressed the end of painting as representation. It is as though the new light of the television picture (the exhibition also includes the work *Television*,

Fingers
 1995
 Oil on canvas
 37.5 x 32.5 cm
 Collection Musée des Beaux-Arts
 de Nantes



a largely empty, striped bright surface) indicates a fundamental change of concept. As long as 'light-writings' are used as his principal models, as long as painting is to a certain degree conditioned by cinematic and photographic pictures, the reference to a factual premise of representation is guaranteed. Indeed the factual is emphatically confirmed by the media of indexical reproduction themselves – an imperative precondition for the

The Flag
 1995
 Oil on canvas
 138 x 78 cm

deconstruction of representation which vouches for the fact that (historical) reality cannot be grasped in pictures, but its ungraspability is preserved in pictures.

But television pictures are characterized by their virtuality. The electronically produced, broadcast pictures no longer provide the certainty of the *ça a été*. By their very nature the factual eludes them, they are disconnected from it. This fundamental definition holds regardless of whether the individual image is recorded with the camera or manufactured entirely synthetically. The relationship between the television picture and a referent is not one of representation, but of simulation. When the simulation of the electronic image is gone, there is no challenge to painting on the part of the technical reproducibility of the image, so well described by Walter Benjamin. At the same time painting is stripped of the task of dealing with its end by deconstructing representation. Its end has been anticipated, there is no more labour of mourning to be done. It is as if the paradigm of the television picture implies the loss of the *raison d'être* of Tuijman's conception of painting. 'Heimat' can thus seem as if everything that Tuijman had sought to avoid in his previous work had now been achieved or regained: the production, on the level of the symbolic, of referential paintings, in this case, paintings which are critical and committed. And yet we cannot say that the deconstructive impulse of the earlier work has now broken down. When Tuijman immerses the symbolic representation of the 'Heimat' paintings in the light of the electronic image, he realizes it clearly as a reflex. The representation of symbols





Flemish Village
1995
Oil on canvas
110,5 x 144,5 cm
Collection Flemish Community,
Brussels

and the implicit dismantling of their ideology occurs alongside an absolute lack of any fundament, any possible controlling authority of reality. Tuymans himself sees this as analogous to the hollowness of nationalism.

With these new works Tuymans takes the next logical step on from the deconstruction of iconic and indexical representation on the one hand; and conditioning by the electronic image on the other. It is now hard to see mourning at the end of painting. But this is not a weakness on the part of the painter or the painterly conception. It is the clear-sighted admission of a historical situation which makes it increasingly difficult for the artist to linger with his work in a sphere of negativity, refusing simply to abandon the objects of his negation, of his mourning, to let them be taken away without further ado.

If it is beyond question that every attempt to predict the further development of an artistic oeuvre is condemned to failure from the outset, I should nonetheless like to voice the suspicion that Tuymans will strike a path in his painting between Scylla and Charybdis, between the more or less comfortable setting in the field of simulation and the definitive, simple abandonment of painting. The fact that he risks this danger at all in his work, and has succeeded in enduring it until now, contributes its importance.

Translated from German by Shaun Whiteside



Yzer-Tower
1995
Oil on canvas
115.5 x 75.5 cm
Collection Flemish Community,
Brussels

The Doll
1994
Oil on canvas
37.8 x 33.4 cm



- 1 Interview with Mark Ruyters, 'Het zelfbewuste debuut van een Talent', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 12 February 1989
 - 2 Donald Judd, 'Specific Objects', *Arts Yearbook VIII*, New York, 1965, reprinted in his *Complete Writings 1959-1975*, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, 1975, p. 181.
 - 3 Yve-Alain Bois, 'Painting: The Task of Mourning', *Painting as Model*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, 1990, p. 229 ff.
 - 4 All statements by Luc Tuymans not otherwise footnoted are from a conversation with the author, January 1996. It is interesting to note that in numerous interviews over the years, Tuymans has repeated certain statements almost word for word. Some reflections and formulations appear 'petrified' – as if to protect against the random interpretability of a weakly codified work.
 - 5 On the repeated regressive movements in twentieth century art, see Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, 'Figures of Authority, Ciphers of Regression', *October* No. 1, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Spring 1981
 - 6 Bois, *op. cit.*, p. 232
 - 7 See in this volume the interview with Juan Vicente Aliaga, p. 26
 - 8 Luc Tuymans, 'Disenchantment', *Luc Tuymans*, Kunsthalle Bern, 1992, in this volume p. 141
 - 9 *Ibid.*, in this volume p. 122
 - 10 Bois, *op. cit.*, who in the work of Duchamp, Rodchenko and Mondrian recognized the destruction of painting in its imaginary, real and symbolic aspects.
 - 11 Gregory Salzman, *Luc Tuymans*, Art Gallery of York University, Toronto, Ontario, 1994, p. 22, in reference to Sigmund Freud's essay 'The Uncanny'. It is the return of the repressed that yields the uncanny.
 - 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18
 - 13 Tuymans, *op. cit.*, p. 23, in this volume p. 130
 - 14 Tuymans, *op. cit.*, p. 24, in this volume p. 133
 - 15 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1982, trans. Richard Howard
 - 16 Marc Ruyters, 'Tuymans', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 24 April 1988
 - 17 Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, Vol. I, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Frankfurt, 1980, p. 343. In English, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, NLB, London, 1977, trans. John Osborne
 - 18 Tuymans, *op. cit.*, p. 17, in this volume p. 122
 - 19 Walter Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 359
 - 20 Walter Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 318
 - 21 In the 1960s, Gerhard Richter selected a series of existing photographs of inmates and victims of the concentration camps and placed them in his *Atlas*, without ever finding it possible to paint them. Gerhard Richter, *Atlas*, Fred Jahn, Munich 1989, p. 29 ff.
 - 22 See Salzman's reference to Freud's analysis of the uncanny, which refers to the profoundly unsettling effect when faced with the uncertainty of whether a figure is among the living or the dead. Gregory Salzman, *op. cit.*, p. 24 ff.
 - 23 This allows the marginal possibility that the photographic reality is manipulated in such a way that the image appears composed. Furthermore, there is no question that details, motifs and so on can be deliberately selected in such a way that perception is strongly steered in a particular direction. And finally, nothing stands in the way of reading the contingency of a photograph in a symbolic way. For this reason Umberto Eco calls the photograph an 'iconic sign'. But the necessarily direct relationship between the photograph and the object depicted, conveyed by light, is also indisputable.
 - 24 Roland Barthes, *op. cit.*
 - 25 Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, Penguin, London, 1973, trans. Aman Sheridan
 - 26 Rosalind Krauss, 'Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America', *October* No. 3, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1977, p. 68ff.; and 'Part 2', *October* No. 4, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1977, p. 58ff.
 - 27 Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', *The Pelican Freud Library*, vol. 14, Viking Penguin, London, 1985, reference from Gregory Salzman, *op. cit.*, p. 22
- Thanks to Frank Demaegd and the Zeno X Gallery for their indispensable help; critic Hans Rudolf Reust for sharing his knowledge and insights; and the artist, for participating in my reflections, opening up a range of ideas about art which I would otherwise have found only with great difficulty.



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She lit a cigarette and stretched out on the bed. He had just left, as usual, hurrying away before the late afternoon sun cast shadows in the room. Another woman was waiting. Dinner at six, always. That way the children can do their homework before bedtime. She was tired of hearing about it. Sighing, she crossed her long legs. The red polish on her toenails was chipped. A string of bruises ran up her thigh: small black-and-blue marks the size of finger tips. Traces of passion or brutality? She didn't know anymore, nor did she really care. Once again, she promised herself that this was the last time.

Luc Tuymans' painting *Pillows* (1994) demands such a narrative, any narrative, even though it is devoid of any explicit human presence. This modest image of cushions arrayed across a double bed shifts in and out of view as the paint itself glides between representational marking and chromatic abstraction. When it coheres as a recognizable picture, the painting exceeds its function as still-life, emerging more as a stage set, a *mise-en-scène* waiting for the dramatic action to unfold. The slight indentations apparent in the pillows indicate an immediate past, a moment just prior to this scene, when the bed was occupied. A cinematic eye might compare this image to a film still, seeing the empty bed and its cluster of pillows as a 'freeze frame', a suspended interlude in the plot. Something has just happened, and something will again. In the shadow world defined by Tuymans' vision, it is in the muted space between such moments where meaning seems to lie.

As in all of Tuymans' paintings, the motif in *Pillows* is derived from a preexisting picture – the memory of a photograph – rather than from an empirical or even imaginary source. Reared on television and motion pictures, Tuymans embraces his generation's easy relationship to the mediated image. Exploiting his own cinematic sensibility and reliance on photography, the artist cultivates an unsettling sensation of detachment in his paintings. The views offered are not second-hand, as would be the case with painting from 'life', but rather, are third- or fourth-hand from their point of origin. *Pillows* is derived from a reproduction found in a cheap porn magazine. Tuymans was struck at the time by the inherently abstract nature of pornography in that it is not actual flesh that arouses but rather the carefully constructed photograph. The voyeuristic pleasure associated with pornographic imagery depends on one's willingness to believe in passion enacted for the camera, in illusory sex, in people faking it. Underscoring the gaps between reality and representation, memory and fantasy, visuality and tactility, Tuymans presents an uninhabited 'porno-

Peter
1994
Oil on canvas
53 x 75 cm

graphic' picture. All he retains are indented pillows and a somewhat queasy palette that suggests the off-register printing of a trashy, smut magazine.

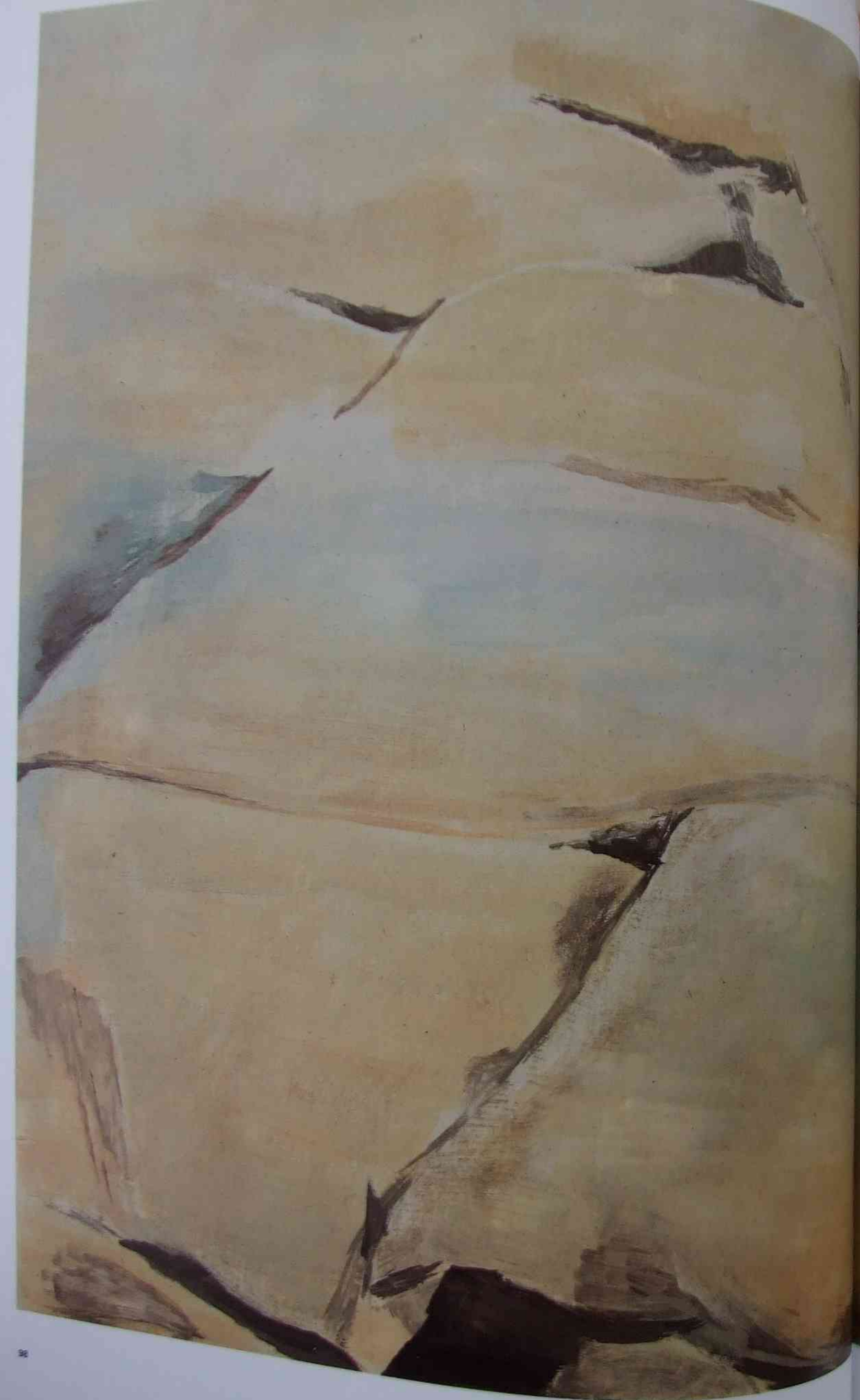


The absence of people from many of Tuymans' paintings – particularly his renditions of domestic interiors and close-up views of household objects, such as dishware, curtains, towels, lamps and mirrors – does not preclude the presence of distinct anthropomorphic undertones. According to Tuymans, the still life and the portrait are utterly interchangeable; depictions of people and things can tell the same story, as long as the tone is equally hushed, the perspective equally skewed, the cropping equally

extreme. A painting from 1994 entitled *Peter*, for instance, is quite simply a grisaille rendering of a coffeepot, saucepan and skillet. The artist's rigid economy of formal means compels each viewer to bring his or her own imagination to bear on the imagery provided. Projected fantasies are always invited, and veracity is rarely the goal.

While Tuymans' paintings do solicit storytelling, offering just enough clues to insinuate an actual plot, narrative resolution is less significant than the specific mood imparted. It is the deliberate lack of closure that makes these works so disturbing and, ultimately, so memorable. Tuymans orchestrates more deletions from his compositions than inclusions. A master of understatement, he seems to undo each painting as it unfolds on the canvas. He even makes intentional 'mistakes' along the way, planning subtle lapses in the construction of each motif by making the paint dissolve into radical abstraction at unexpected points in the composition. *Pillows*, for instance, seems at first glance to be a landscape painting in the Cézannesque tradition of shifting and shimmering planes of colour. The title of the work helps to bring its theme into perspective but, even then, portions of the image read as nothing more than pools of delicately brushed pigment. The viewer is left disoriented, yet enticed by these elusive moments; Tuymans refers to such deliberate suspensions of visual logic as 'points of entry' into the paintings.

What then is the underlying temperament of these reticent pictures? What mood is elicited upon their viewing? Despite the simplicity of their subject matter, Tuymans'



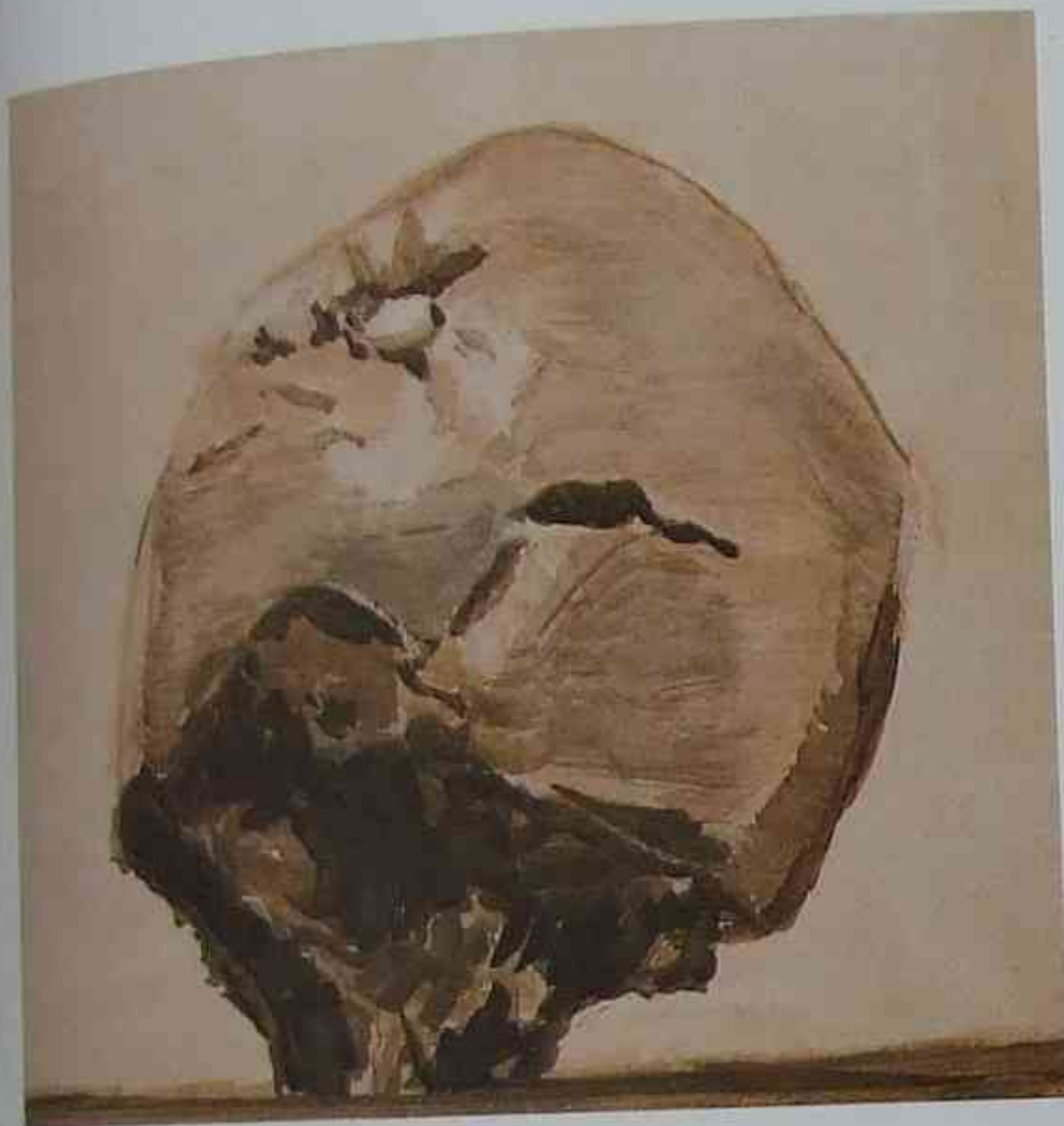
paintings have an undeniably threatening tenor. There is an ominous air throughout the oeuvre; a sense of foreboding resonates from every motif, even the ones that are most familiar. In the case of *Pillows*, Tuymans effects an estrangement of the everyday object. Items associated with comfort become suspect here: something has just happened, and something will happen again. It has been said that Tuymans illustrates the scene of a crime over and over again in his paintings; guilt is encoded in every canvas. This pervasive aura of violence is intimated in the past tense. The clues provided in Tuymans' phantom world of after-images – such as the bodily impressions in the pillows – operate retroactively. They evidence previous traumas and transgressions – whether psychological, physical or spiritual – without necessarily revealing the 'how' or the 'why' of such incidents. The narratives suggested, therefore, are more about our efforts to decipher the insinuations proffered than any particular wrongs enacted.

As in any good detective story, Tuymans' painterly clues function as indexical signs – physical traces of what previously transpired, indicators of things past that serve to activate the narrative. The index itself is a very specific form of signification; it is bound to its referent by a distinct and directly contiguous connection to the empirical world. An index is, thus, the physical mark caused by a certain event which, in turn, becomes the sign for that event. The index has many visible manifestations: smoke is an index for fire; dust for the accumulation of time; scars for a wound; symptoms for a disease; lightning for a storm; footprints for passage; and cast shadows for presence, to cite just a few and various instances. In *Pillows*, the indentations in the cushions indexically suggest the prior presence of people. Whether they were two clandestine lovers, a husband and wife, or assailant and victim remains a tantalizing mystery.

The presence of the physical trace, the index or clue reverberates throughout Tuymans' work, the theoretical implications of which constitute a fundamental component of his ongoing project. In one particularly chilling example, the physical symptoms of illness – considered as indexical signs in medical science – are portrayed by Tuymans in a series of ten paintings from 1992 collectively entitled *Der diagnostische Blick*. Derived from photographs found in a medical textbook – one purportedly compiled by doctors working in German concentration camps during World War II – the paintings depict discrete body parts, such as a leg or breast, and an occasional face, which exhibit signs of unspecified diseases.

Apple
1993
Oil on paper
25,5 x 26,5 cm
Collection Museum Overholst
Amsterdam

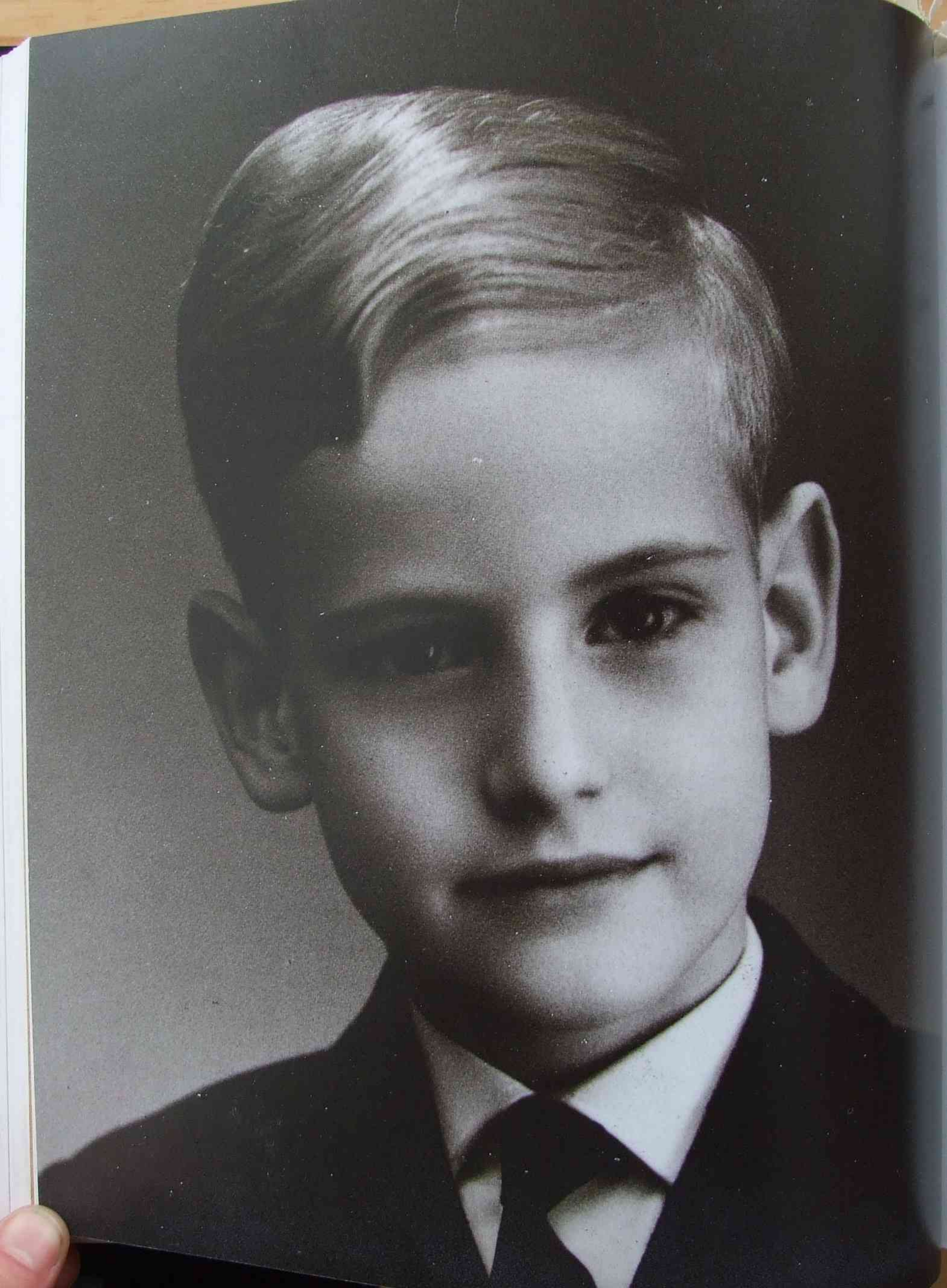
The indexical aspect of the symptoms lies not in their subjective experience by the suffering patient, however, but rather in their performance as empirical data used by physicians to detect disease. The fact that the source for such indexical imagery was a Nazi manual on ethnic 'types' and their maladies adds a diabolical inflection to this already troubling commentary on the way the medical industry abstracts the afflicted body.



Another instance of the index in Tuymans' image repertoire emerges in a 1993 painting that features a single and partially eaten apple, shown from a disarming close perspective. Skull-like in appearance and scale, this image of a decaying apple was taken from an archival police photograph of a murder scene. Evidently the killer had dropped the half-eaten apple upon fleeing, leaving the inspectors with a perfect dental imprint from which to reconstruct his countenance and thus apprehend him. The vanitas theme alluded to in this painting – as a still-life of rotting fruit, a veiled rendering of a skull and evidence of a homicide – is not at all foreign to the concept of the index. As a visual

sign, the index operates solely in the past tense, implicating a gesture, an event, a life that once was, but no longer is. The passage of time and all that accompanies it – absence, loss, memory and death – are inseparable from the signifying role of the index and its intrinsically melancholic nature. This reality is the sinister truth captured in Tuymans' paintings. Such experience of life's evanescence has traditionally been associated with a loss of innocence – the proverbial fall from grace, as it were. Since it appears that innocence is entirely lacking in Tuymans' work, perhaps his painting of a lustfully bitten apple has even more tales to tell. But, as is the case with the painting *Pillows*, conjecture prevails over clarification, and we are left wondering 'What breach of conduct transpired and what were the consequences?' Suspicion looms, and questions are never answered. In *Pillows*, the empty, ruffled bed can only whisper its dirty secrets.

Comments attributed to Luc Tuymans are from a discussion with the author on January 29, 1996. For readings on the index, see Philippe Dubois, *L'acte photographique*, Nathan and Labor, Paris and Brussels, 1983, in particular chapter 2, 'L'acte photographique: Pragmatique de l'index et effets d'absence', pp. 55-108; Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1993, pp. 252-53, 259-60; Christian Metz, 'Photography and Fetishism', in *The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography*, ed. Carol Squiers, Bay Press, Seattle, 1990, pp. 157-64; and Nancy Spector, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1995, in particular chapter 3, 'The Trace', pp. 89-137.



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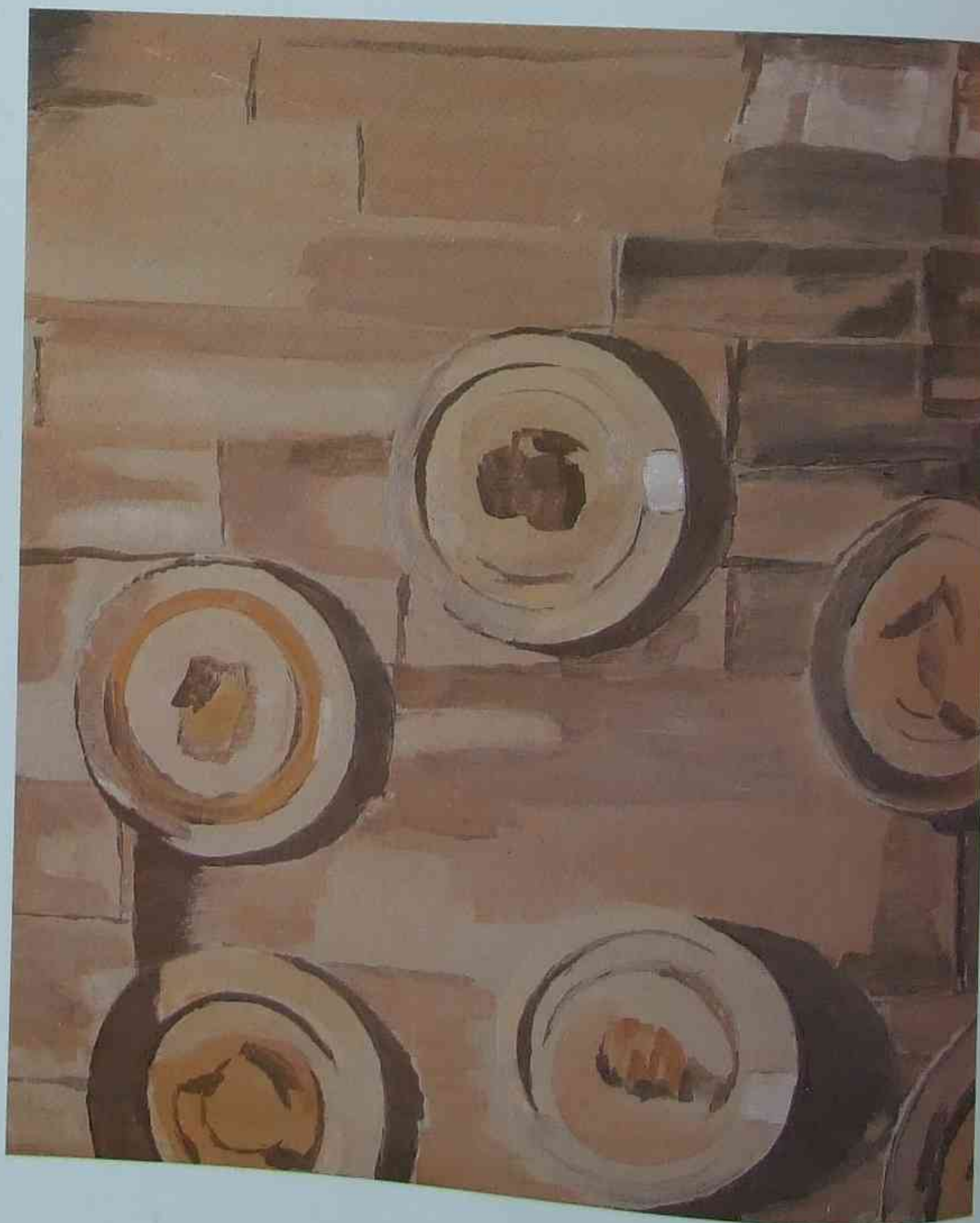
Chronology

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There are fringes of decay around old provincial towns where people come to live straight from the wilderness out of nature. One such man appeared, his piercing face exhausted to the point of melancholy. He was able to fix or equip any manner of thing, but himself lived life unequipped. Nothing, from frying pan to alarm clock, had failed in its time to pass through the hands of this man. Nor had he ever refused to resole shoes, cast wolf shot, or stamp out phony medals to sell at old-fashioned country bazaars. But for himself he had never made anything, neither family nor dwelling. In summer he simply lived in nature, carrying his tools in a sack and using the sack as a pillow, more for the safekeeping of his tools than for softness. He protected himself from the early morning sun by sticking burdock on his eyes in the evening. In winter he lived on the remnants of his summer earnings and paid the church watchman for a room by ringing the night hours. He was interested not in people nor in nature, but mechanical things of all sorts. Because of this he regarded people and fields with indifferent tenderness, not infringing upon the interests of either. On winter evenings he occasionally made unnecessary things such as towers of wire, ships cut from pieces of roofing tin, paper dirigibles and so on, purely for his own pleasure. It often happened that he even delayed carrying out a chance commission, so that, for example, when he was given a vat to fix with new handles, he spent the time instead building a wooden clock which he intended to run without works, powered just by the rotation of the earth.

These unpaid activities did not please the church watchman. 'You'll go begging in your old age, Zakhar Palych! That vat there's been standing all day and all you do about it is bang the ground with a hunk of wood ... and no way of knowing for what!'

Zakhar Pavlovich remained silent. The human word was for him the same as the whispers of a forest for its inhabitants, something which was no longer heard. The watchman smoked and calmly looked into the distance. He did not believe in God after so many worship services, but he knew for certain that nothing would come of Zakhar Pavlovich's work. People have been living in the world for a long time and have already invented everything. However, Zakhar Pavlovich thought just the opposite: as long as any natural raw material goes untouched by human hands, people are far from having invented everything.



right, **Plates**

1993

Oil on canvas

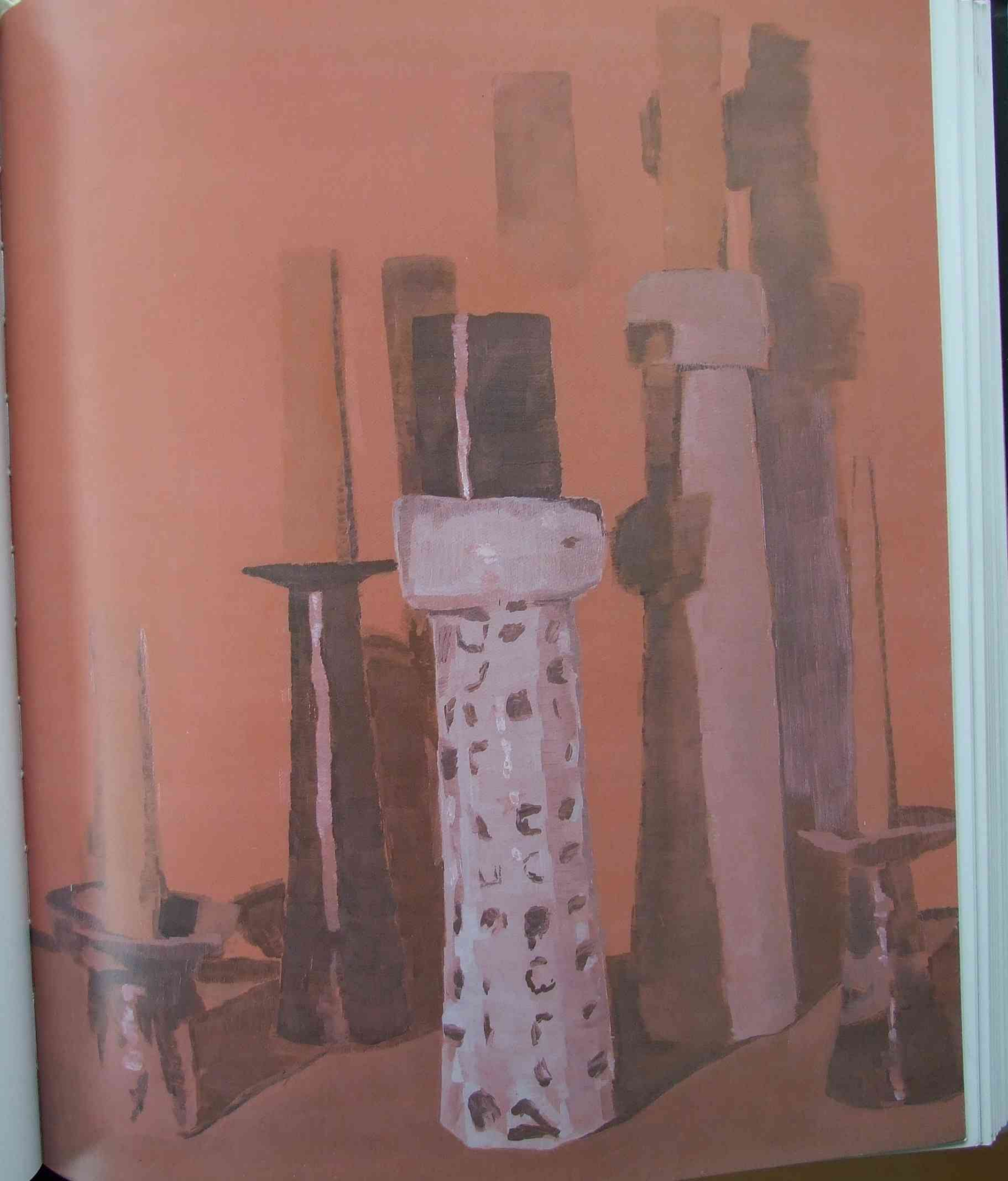
74 x 63.5 cm

opposite, **Intolerance**

1993

Oil on canvas

80 x 70 cm



These unpaid activities did not please the artist.
"You'll go begging in your old age, Zakhar Palychi! That vat
there's been standing all day and all you do about it is bang the
ground with a hunk of wood ... and no way of knowing for what!"

right, *Plates*

1993

Oil on canvas

74 x 63.5 cm

opposite, *Intolerance*

1993

Oil on canvas

80 x 70 cm

Artist's Choice



opposite: Reinard de Vos
1993
Oil on canvas
77 x 65 cm
right: Buttonhole
1991
Oil on canvas
43.7 x 38 cm

Every fifth year crop failures forced half the village to leave for the mines and the cities and the other half for the forest. It was known that even in dry years, grass, vegetables and grain ripened well in the forest clearings, and the half of the village that stayed threw themselves on these clearings to save their crops from being snatched away by floods of greedy wanderers. This time, though, the drought repeated itself for a second year. The village locked its huts and went out on the highroad in two detachments, one to beg its way to Kiev, the other to Lugansk to work. A few villagers returned to the forest and the overgrown gulches and went wild, eating raw grass, clay and bark. Virtually all who left were adults; the children had either died or had run away to become beggars. Mothers who were nursing gradually tormented their infants to death by not allowing them to nurse their fill.

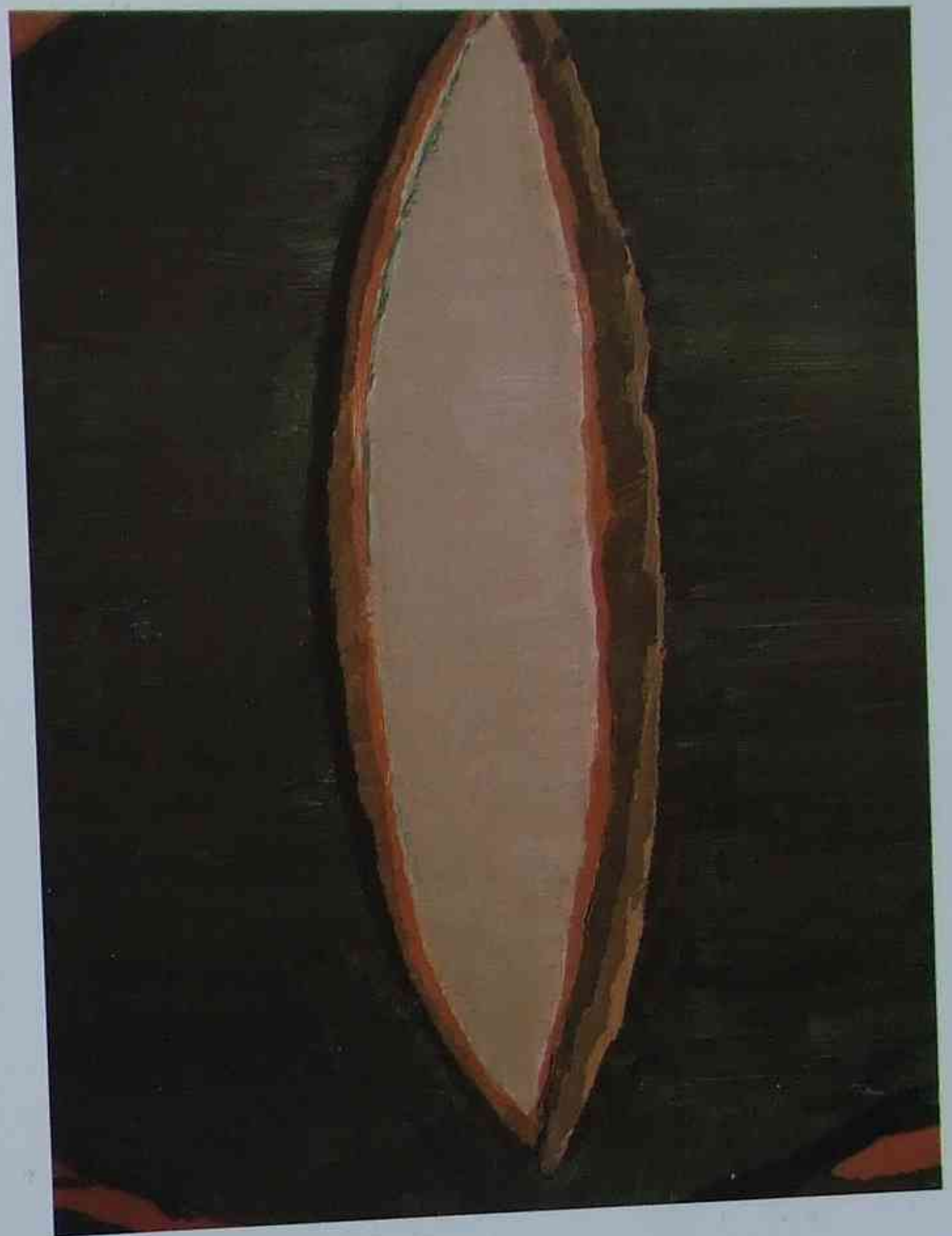
There was an old woman, Ignatevna, who cured children of hunger. She gave them a potion of mushrooms cut with sweet grass and the children died peacefully away, dry foam flecked on their lips. The mother would kiss the child on its aged, wrinkled forehead and whisper, 'He's through suffering, praise God!'

Ignatevna stood there and said, 'He passed on, the quiet little thing ... He's better off than the living, lying there like that ... now he's listening to the silver winds in heaven ...'

The mother admired her child, believing his sad lot to be cured. 'Here, take my old skirt for yourself, Ignatevna. I've got nothing else to give. And thank you ...'

Ignatevna spread the skirt out to the light and said, 'Cry a bit, Mitrevna, you really should ... This skirt though ... it's worn clear through. Throw in a scarf at least, or maybe give me your iron'.

Zakhar Pavlovich remained in the village alone. He liked deserted places. Nevertheless, he also spent time in the forest with a hermit. The hermit had a dugout and they ate boiled grass, the benefits of which the hermit had learned.



In order to forget his hunger, Zakhar Pavlovich worked all the time. He taught himself how to make in wood everything he had once made in metal. The hermit, however, had done nothing his entire life, and now even more so. Until he turned fifty he did nothing but look around, to see how and what things were, waiting to see what would come of the general fuss in the end. He felt he would be able to act, as soon as the world had calmed down and been explained. He was not affected by the world, so he had not lifted a hand, not to the business of getting married, nor to any generally useful activity. Startled at birth and lived so into old age, have blue eyes on his youthful face. When Zakhar Pavlovich carved an oak frying pan the hermit was astounded, since nothing could be fried in it. Zakhar Pavlovich, though, poured water into the wooden frying pan and succeeded in bringing the water to boil over a slow fire without burning the pan. The hermit was spellbound. 'A remarkable business ... I ask you, how did you figure that out? ...' The mysteries of the universe incapacitated the hermit. Not once had anyone explained to him the simplest of events; or perhaps after all he was slow-witted. When Zakhar Pavlovich tried to tell him why the wind blows, instead of concentrating, the hermit was even more amazed understanding nothing, even though he could feel the wind coming up.

opposite, Reinard de Vos

1993

Oil on canvas

77 × 65 cm

right, Buttonhole

1991

Oil on canvas

47.7 × 38 cm

Every fifth year crop failures forced half the village to leave for the mines and the cities and the other half for the forest. It was known that even in dry years, grass, vegetables and grain ripened well in the forest clearings, and the half of the village that stayed threw themselves on these clearings to save their crops from being snatched away by floods of greedy wanderers. This time, though, the drought repeated itself for a second year. The village locked its huts and went out on the highroad in two detachments, one to beg its way to Kiev, the other to Lugansk to work. A few villagers returned to the forest and the overgrown gulches and went wild, eating raw grass, clay and bark. Virtually all who left were adults; the children had either died or had run away to become beggars. Mothers who were nursing gradually tormented their infants to death by not allowing them to nurse their fill.

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'No, really? So, tell me ... the sun's overcooking? A pretty business!' Zakhar Pavlovich explained that overcooking was not a pretty business, but simply heat. 'Heat?!' The hermit was astounded. 'Says you, you witch!'

The recluse's amazement flitted from one thing to another, but nothing in his consciousness was transformed. Instead of a mind, he lived with a feeling of trusting respect.

During the summer Zakhar Pavlovich remade in wood all the objects he had ever known. The countryside became scattered with the items of Zakhar Pavlovich's technological art – a full assortment of agricultural tools, machines, instruments and household devices, all made completely out of wood. It was strange that there was not a single item which repeated nature, such as horses, wheels or the like. And yet not one item represented the natural world.

One August the recluse went into the shade, lay belly down and said, 'Zakhar Pavlovich, I'm dying. Yesterday I ate a lizard. I brought you two mushrooms, but fried the lizard for myself. Wave some burdocks over me'. Zakhar Pavlovich waved the burdocks, brought water, and helped the dying man drink. 'You aren't going to die after all – it only seems that way to you'. 'I'll die, I swear to God I'll die, Zakhar Pavlovich'. The recluse was afraid to tell a lie. 'My innards won't hold anything ... an enormous worm is living in me, he's drunk up all my blood ... ' The recluse turned onto his back.

'What do you think, should I be afraid or not?' 'Don't be afraid', answered Zakhar Pavlovich positively. 'I'd die right now, myself, but you know how it is, when you're working on different things ...'

The recluse was glad for the sympathy, and towards evening died without fear. Zakhar Pavlovich was bathing in the spring, and returned to find the hermit already dead.

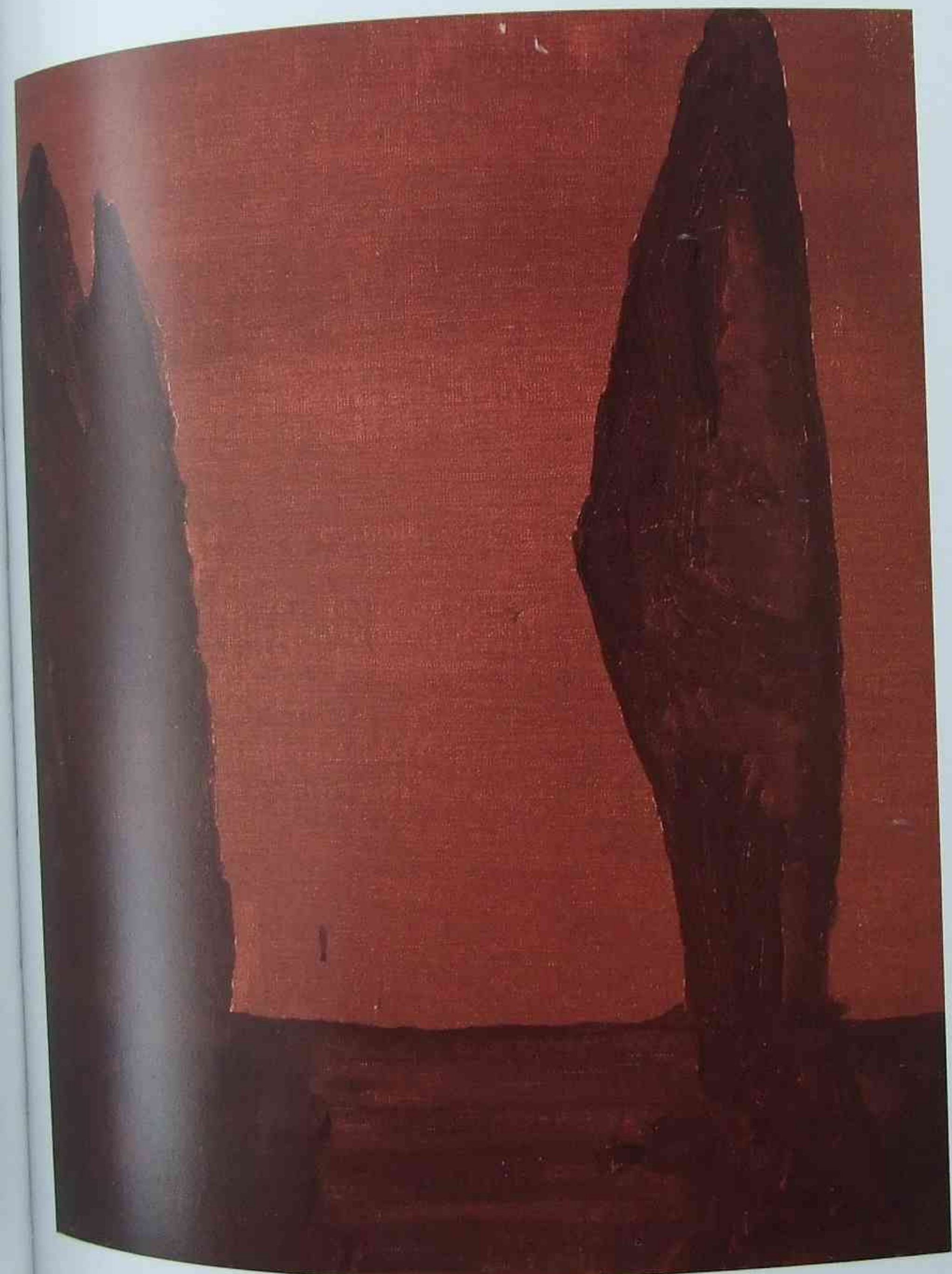
Zakhar Pavlovich woke up in the night and listened to the rain. It was the second rain since April. 'The recluse would surely be surprised', thought Zakhar Pavlovich. The recluse, however, was soaking by himself in the darkness of the streams pouring evenly from heaven.

Something sad and muffled began to sing through the sleepy windless rain, so far away that where it sang, it sounded so far away that where it sang was probably another day, where there was no rain. Zakhar Pavlovich immediately forgot the recluse and the rain and the hunger, and got up. The noise was a faraway machine, a living, labouring steam locomotive. Zakhar Pavlovich went outside and stood in the damp of the warm rain, the rain which sang of a peaceful life, of the breadth of the long earth. The dark trees stood upright and dozed, embraced by the caresses of the peaceful wind. They felt so good that they became relaxed, and rustled their branches without the slightest wind.

Zakhar Pavlovich paid no attention to the joy of nature, for he was excited by the unknown, now-silent locomotive. When he again lay down to sleep he thought to himself, 'The rain and that thing are acting, while you sleep and hide in the forest and do nothing. The recluse died, and so will you. In his entire three score and ten he hadn't gotten a single thing ready – he looked everything over and adapted to it, amazed by everything; he saw a magical business in every simple thing, and couldn't raise a hand to prevent something from being spoiled. He just grubbed up mushrooms, and didn't even know how to find those very well. He just up and died, never taking anything from nature'.

In the morning there was a big sun, and the forest sang with all the fullness of its voice, letting the morning wind pass beneath its underleaves. Zakhar Pavlovich didn't so much notice the morning as a change of rhythms – the commotion of the wind (was) raised the rain, and ruffled the trees. The grass and the bushes began to mumble, and even the rain, not resting, once again got to its feet and, aroused by the tickling warmth, formed its body into clouds.

Burial
1987
Oil on canvas
60 x 50 cm



Zakhar Pavlovich put as many of his wooden implements as he could into his sack and went off into the distance along the women's mushroom path. He didn't look at the recluse – the dead are unprepossessing, although Zakhar Pavlovich had known one man, a fisherman from Lake Mutevo, who had questioned many people about death, and was tormented by his curiosity. Most of all this fisherman loved fish, not as food, but as special beings that definitely knew the secret of death. He would show Zakhar Pavlovich the eyes of a dead fish and say, 'Look – there's wisdom! A fish stands between life and death, so that he's dumb and expressionless. I mean even a calf thinks, but a fish, no. It already knows everything'. Contemplating the lake through the years, the fisherman thought always about the same thing, about the interest of death. Zakhar Pavlovich tried to talk him out of it, saying, 'There's nothing special there, just something tight'. After a year the fisherman couldn't stand it any more and threw himself into the lake from his boat, after tying his feet with a rope so that he wouldn't accidentally float. Secretly he didn't even believe in death. The important thing was that he wanted to look at what it was like – perhaps it was more interesting than living in a village or on the shores of a lake. He saw death as another province, located under the reflected heavens at the bottom of the cool water, and it attracted him. Some of the muzhiks that the fisherman talked with about his intention to live awhile with death and then to return, tried to talk him out of it, but others agreed with him.

'What the hell, Mitry Ivanich, nothing ventured, nothing gained. Try it, then come back and tell us'. Dmitry Ivanich tried – they dragged him from the lake after three days and buried him near the fence of the village graveyard.

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Interview John Burt Foster III, *The Book of David*, page 1 Survey

1998-2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

page 20 **Focus** John Burt Foster III, *The Book of David*, page 1 **Artist's Choice**

John Burt Foster III, *The Book of David*, page 1 **Artist's Writings** Lee Taylor

Renascence, 1991, page 110 **Update** John Burt Foster III, *The Book of David*, page 1

page 20 **Chronology** page 20 & 200-201, page 20

Installation, 'Disenchantment',
Kunsthalle Bern, 1992
below, l. to r., *Our New Quarters*,
1986; *Schwarzheide*, 1986
bottom, *Die Zeit*, 1988

The small gap between the explanation of a picture and a picture itself provides the only possible perspective on painting. My comments refer only to its ambiguity. Behind some pictures there are ten other paintings from different years. I can't project myself completely into the picture; if I did that I wouldn't be detached enough to paint it. Explanations come later. Thinking and feeling and working out feelings are different elements, each with a rhetoric of its own. A memory-free zone arises between conception and execution.

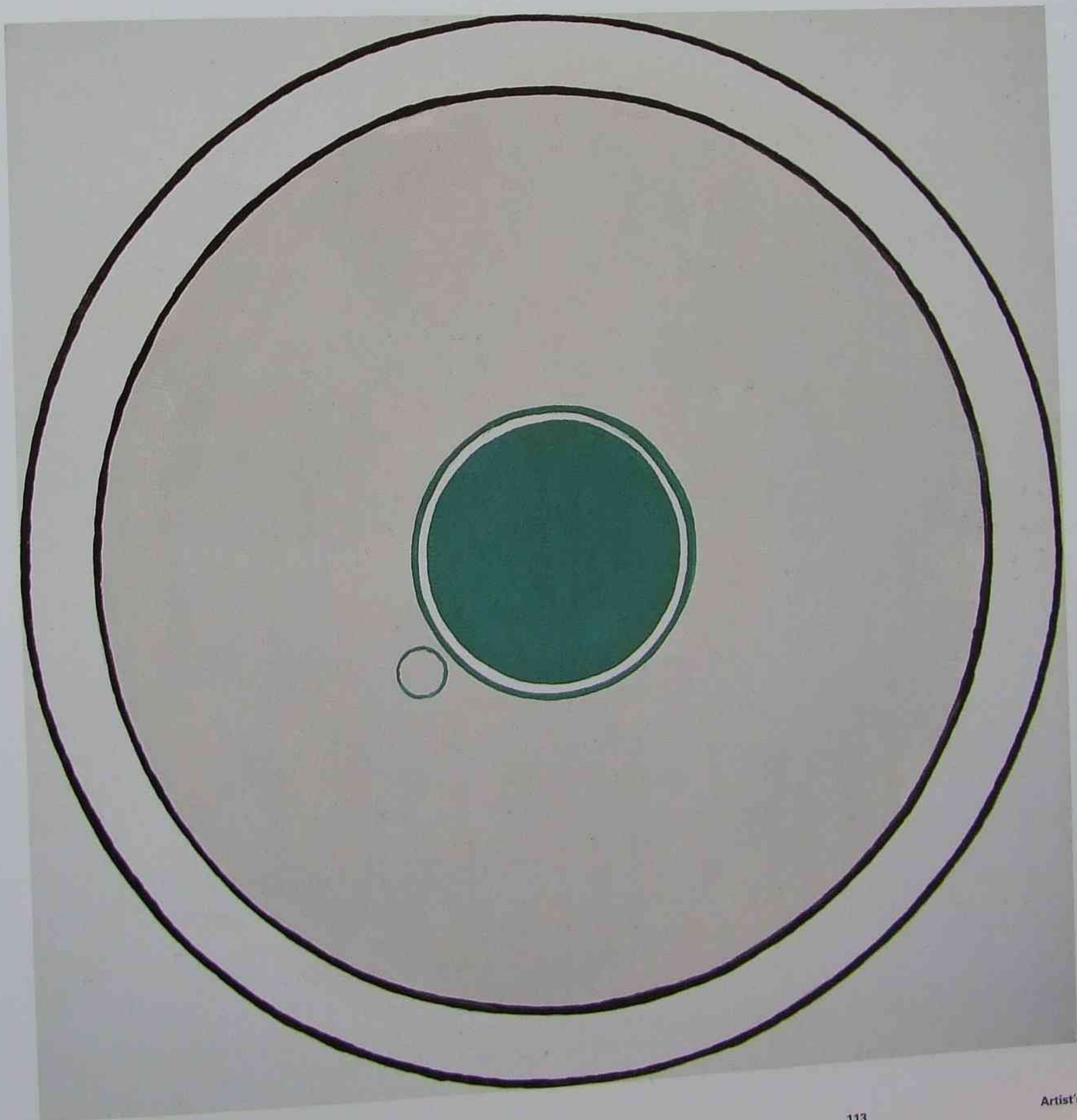
THE LOSS OF THE PAINTING

The model for the painting *Our New Quarters* was a photograph of the courtyard of Theresienstadt, beneath which a prisoner had written 'Our New Quarters'. When I saw the picture, a building like a barracks, just one tree and the title beneath it, I had a sense of apathy, something that radiates only the absence of life. Because in the picture the



writing is very bright on the dark background; there is an impression of illumination, a transparency, like an image from a documentary film. There is also a statement accompanying the image. This statement does not apportion blame, but deals with a situation which doesn't change, which constantly disorients, limiting the space. Anyone who enters the painting is imprisoned behind the writing. The picture and the sentence are two pictures that go against one another. They do not support one another. The picture destroys the word and the word destroys the picture. The destruction is projected into the picture, although we do not see the destruction. The new thing in the phrase 'Our New Quarters' was actually false hope. The picture is impossible, as one cannot deal with it as an individual. There is an idea of memory that is neither personal nor collective; it's just a picture of memory, a non-picture. The work develops an idea of loss and an idea of beauty. Beauty exists only as a perversion. It is calming. This is complete failure, complete terror. But it's also the right dimension. One does not win, one is not powerful, but the power of depicting something produces nothing but helplessness.

Disenchantment
1990
Oil on canvas
84 x 84 cm



Die Zeit 1/4

1988

Oil on cardboard

30 x 40 cm

Die Zeit 2/4

1988

Oil on cardboard

39 x 40 cm

Die Zeit 3/4

1988

Oil on cardboard

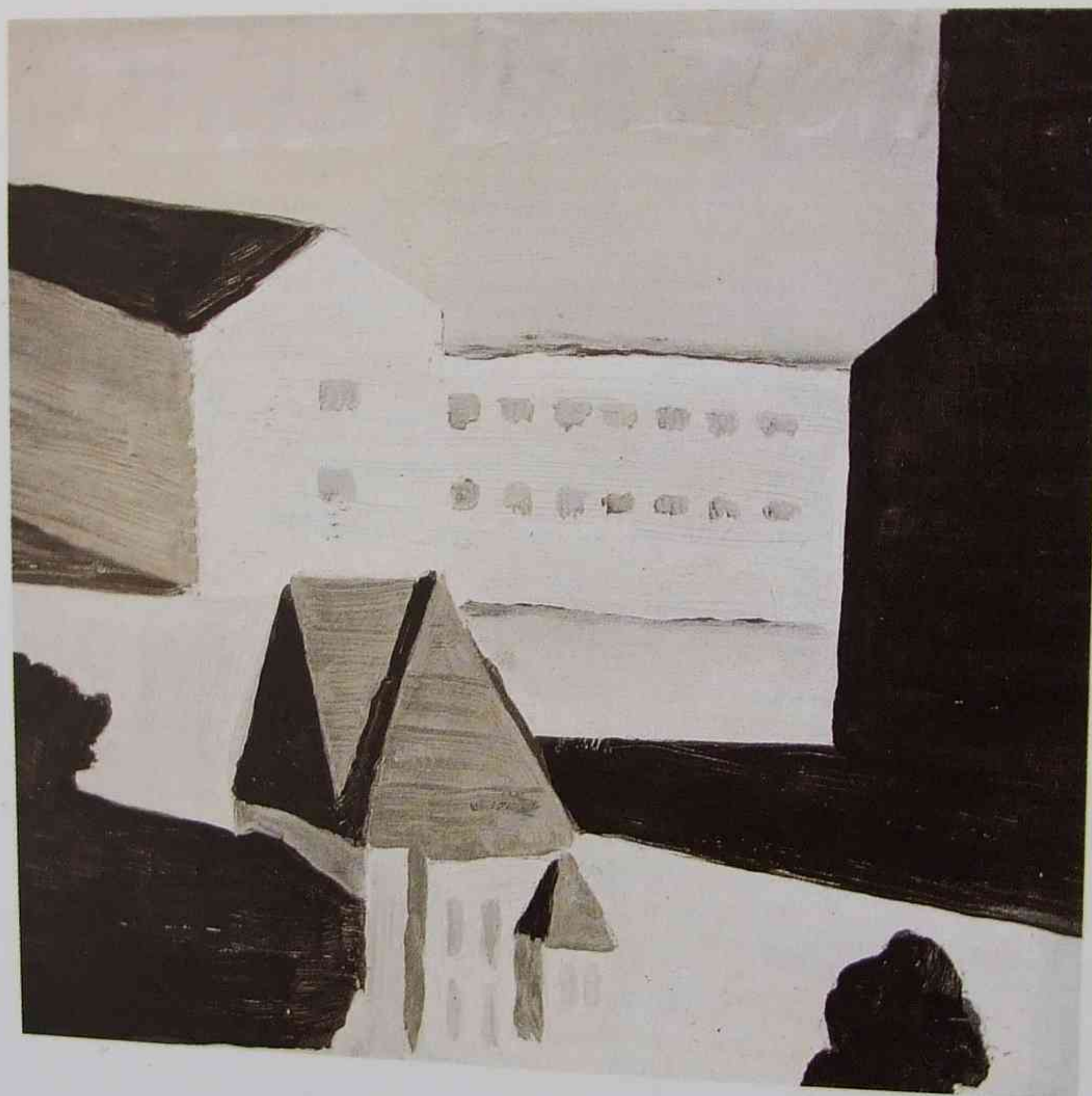
37 x 40 cm

Die Zeit 4/4

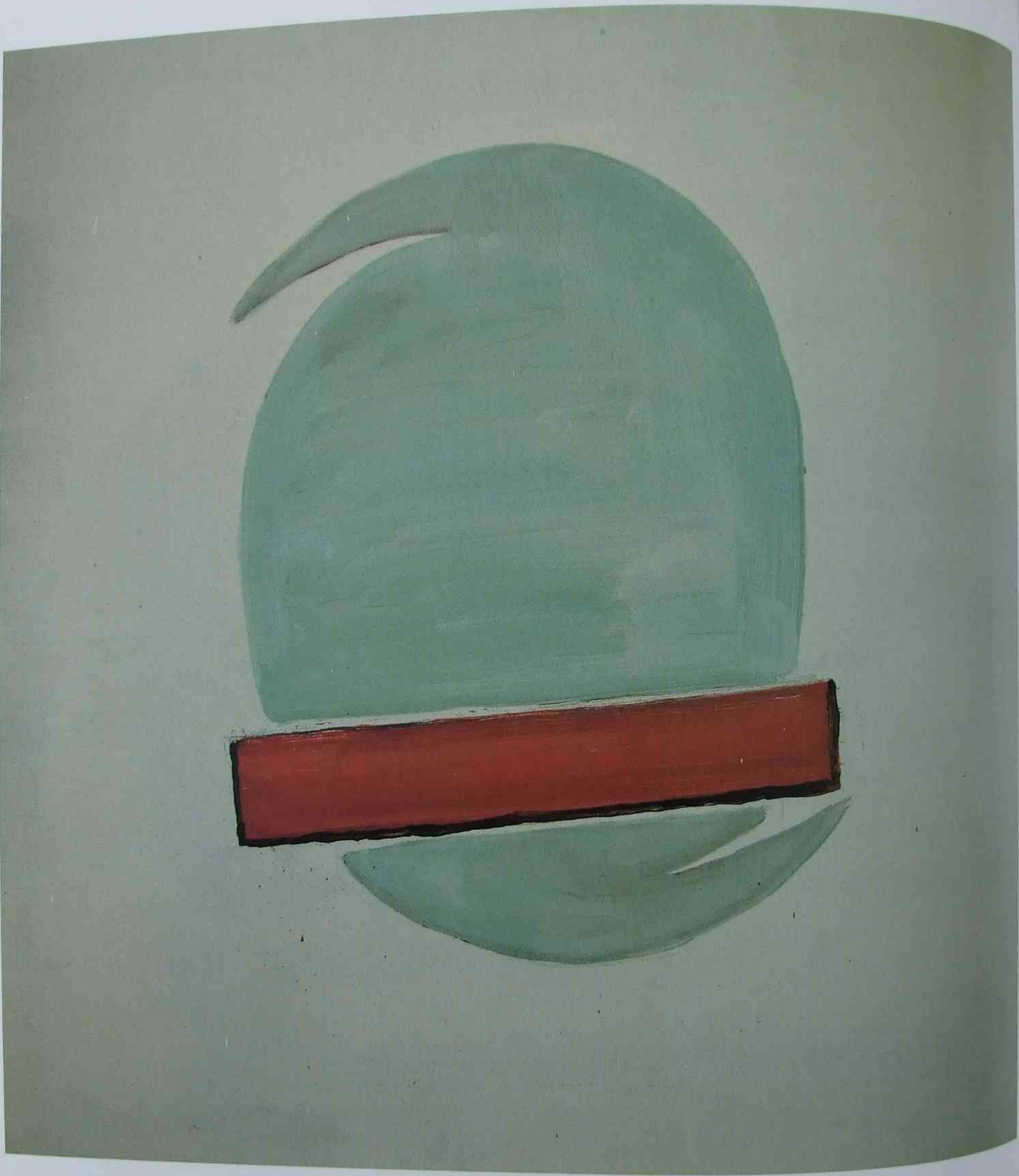
1988

Collage and oil on cardboard

41 x 40 cm







Cif
1988
Oil on canvas
60 x 60 cm
Collection Museum of Modern Art,
Frankfurt

PLACE. In the camps there were prisoners who made drawings. Afraid of discovery, they divided the drawings into strips, and each prisoner took a strip. The survivors later met and put the strips back together. Many of the pictures were incomplete. The place where that happened no longer exists. In the painting *Schwarzheide* (Black Heath, see page 50) I showed the trees surrounding the camp on an ungrounded canvas. The strips are suggested by vertical lines that divide up the picture. They enlarge it; it is a complete picture. It is a picture that has been left behind, it contains a kind of naturalization of death.

TIME. Four pictures together make a single work, *Die Zeit* (Time). The first picture is based on the idea of a village or an urban situation. In the background there is a building like a barracks. It is the outside world, but also the inner world, an idyll that is not really there. You also think of a time of day – the afternoon, perhaps; you get a sense of time. The top of the picture bears the inscription '*Nichts in Sicht*' (Nothing in view). Everything is peaceful, the square is empty. The second picture shows a shop. Time has stopped. This picture could be a detail of the first one. It gives a sense of an uncompleted movement, only one part of which is shown. The third picture shows spinach tablets, which were developed in Germany during the Second World War. They look like innocuous shapes, like sweets. But they are placed on top of one another in such a way that a movement could occur, something could happen, something could be displaced. The last picture shows Reinhard Heydrich, Nazi deputy-chief of the Gestapo, but masked, with a painted-on pair of sunglasses. The head is cut from a contemporary newspaper. I wanted to put him in a possible context. At the same time I wanted him to have the same reality as a painting. So I put Heydrich in front of a wall of books. The last picture forms an end point, almost a medical one, like the vivisection of reality. If you compare it with the first picture, you see that the colours harmonize, that inner and outer reality are constantly interacting with one another. This creates an idea of time.

Cif is derived from advertising. What interested me about advertising was the fact that it doesn't make pictures, but negations of pictures. I left out the name of the product; this produced a void that I recognize in advertising. The product has no real meaning, but is made meaningful ... a movement that is not a movement. With the defamiliarization of the various colour tones you get a sense of rightness, the impression of a reality that has become so material that it can no longer be touched. And the speed with which the material is transformed makes it uncertain what the material is, what the material could be, how it could be used.



The Walk
1993
Oil on canvas
37 x 48 cm

TRANSPARENCY. *The Walk* contains a reminiscence of Caspar David Friedrich. The background looks like snow. As in snow-blindness, being dazzled. And I once saw a Japanese woodcut in which yellow and black produced the effect of illumination. I then wondered what you would get if you analyzed a Friedrich down to a single colour. The idea of keeping something, separating something out, until all you had was the essential mood. Then the picture is in relation to a picture of Hitler, leaving his house in Berchtesgaden and setting off on a walk with his escort. I was interested in the expression of the everyday, the boredom in the photograph. This is linked with the idea of snow-blindness, when you only see something in patches.

You might also think of the after-image you get if you look into the sun, and when very few colours remain, one of which dominates.

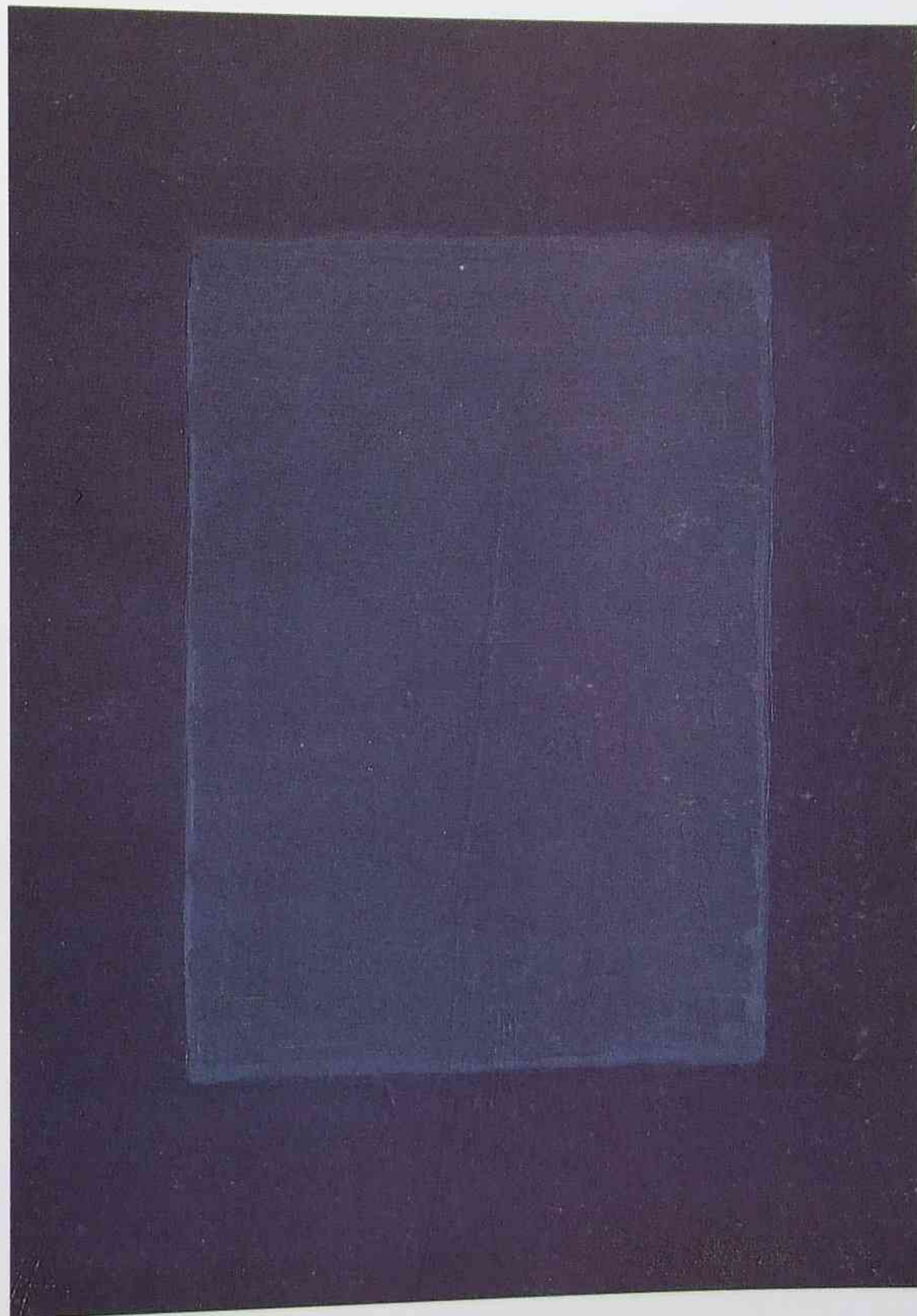
The picture *Green Clouds* comes out of the same fascination. It is the abstraction of a landscape, an almost transparent picture. You find the appearance and self-dissolution that shapes the idea of space, the idea of a landscape.

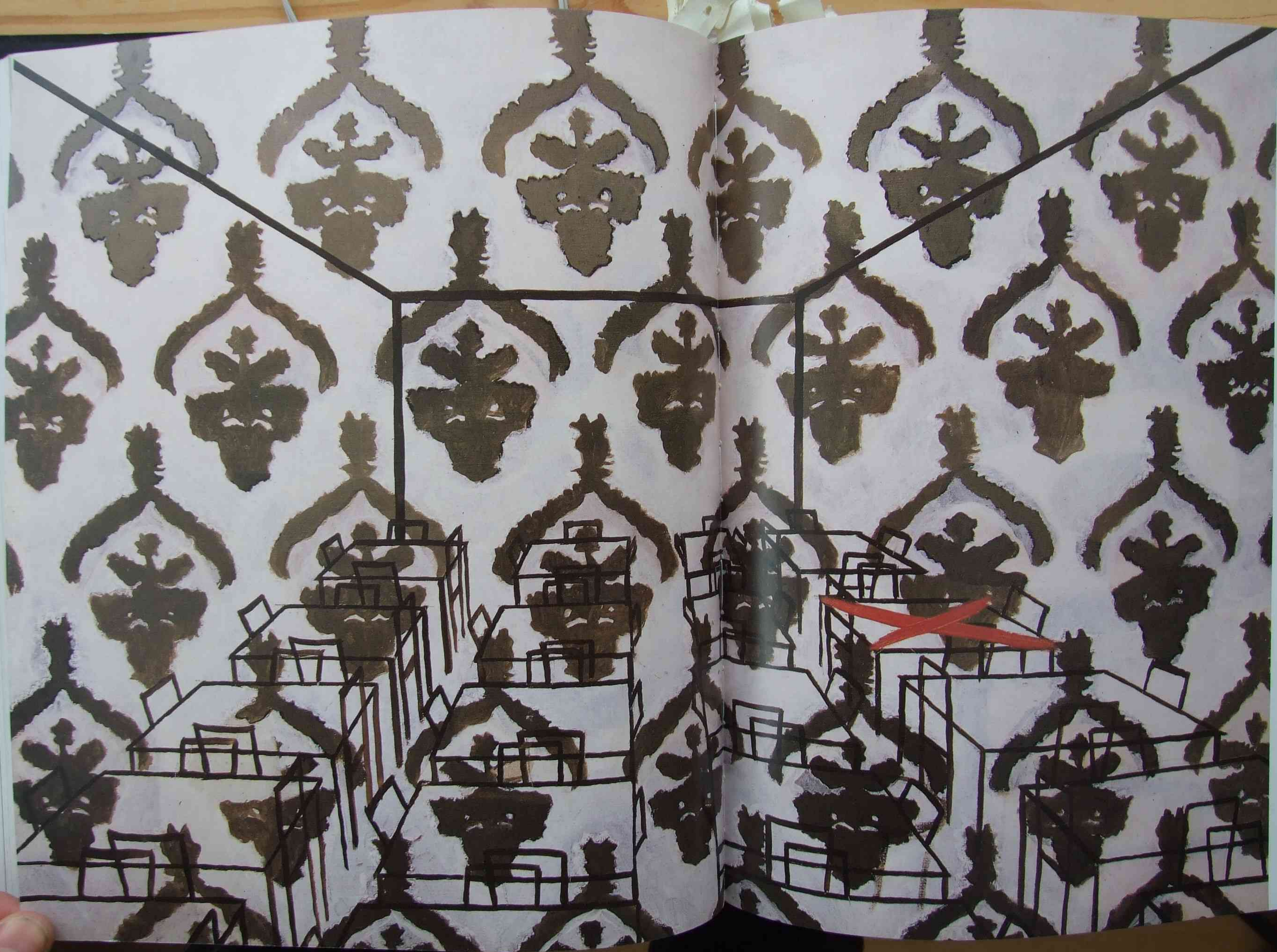
PRESENCE. Every day for five years, the Dutch author van Oudshoorn, who worked as an official at the Dutch Embassy in Berlin from 1905, bought a postcard of the restaurant where he had had his lunch, and with a red pencil marked with a cross the table where he had sat. He sent this card to his wife. *The Correspondence* is the picture of constant presence arising out of constant homesickness. A kind of complete hopelessness, connected with the feeling of security. The picture combines a wallpaper pattern with its associations with a secure, bourgeois lifestyle, with a very cold environment. It was important to me that one picture should hide the other, to explore the way the idea behind a painting come into the foreground.

Antichamber (see page 46) shows a room with a chandelier. The picture dates back to an older drawing, from which I enlarged a detail. A mental space emerged which is represented only with lines. They are not spontaneous, they are not dashed off but painted very rationally. The picture was an important opening: I was able to transform the figuration into a translation of my spatial experience and at the same time of feelings that develop in the spaces, such as the feeling of the threat of a room ... In a picture that was only the enlargement of a detail of the drawn picture, the picture of a picture, a kind of reproduction of the picture, something that goes on reproducing itself in time and in space.

Into the Night 1/2
1991
Oil on canvas
45 x 34 cm

Into the Night 2/2
1991
Oil on canvas
45 x 34 cm







The Correspondence

1985

Oil on canvas

80 × 120 cm

VANITAS

ANECDOTE. *G. Dam* (see page 8) is for me one of my most important paintings. It's the portrait of a family member, my mother's late brother. It's based not on a photograph, but on another painting showing the sitter in three-quarters profile. I could have had no real human feeling for this person without having a picture of him. I exaggerated this picture: his shoulders look unreal, and his head looks as though it's emerging from the canvas. At fairs they used to have big pictures that you could put your own head through. The head was actually isolated from the body, and all the intensity was concentrated in the eyes. Consequently the picture defines its whole surroundings. It remains a confrontation. Whichever way you look at the picture, the gaze is always completely present. This picture was the beginning, albeit unconsciously, of a painting of memory

... how a memory should look, but how you never remember it. It was the first step towards the picture of a picture.

The painting *Landscape* shows the inner space that plays a part in the portrait *G. Dam*. Its atmosphere is of transience, something that has died: a kind of abstracted landscape. The basic idea was to create a horizon, but also to show how the ground is split, open, to create a kind of space that does not go outwards, but backwards, completely into itself, a space in which the light comes not from outside but from inside. You can hardly look at the painting because the confrontation is too strong, hence the idea of weakening it. Thus the landscape was also a reaction to the constant presence of a picture and its claim to a real memory.

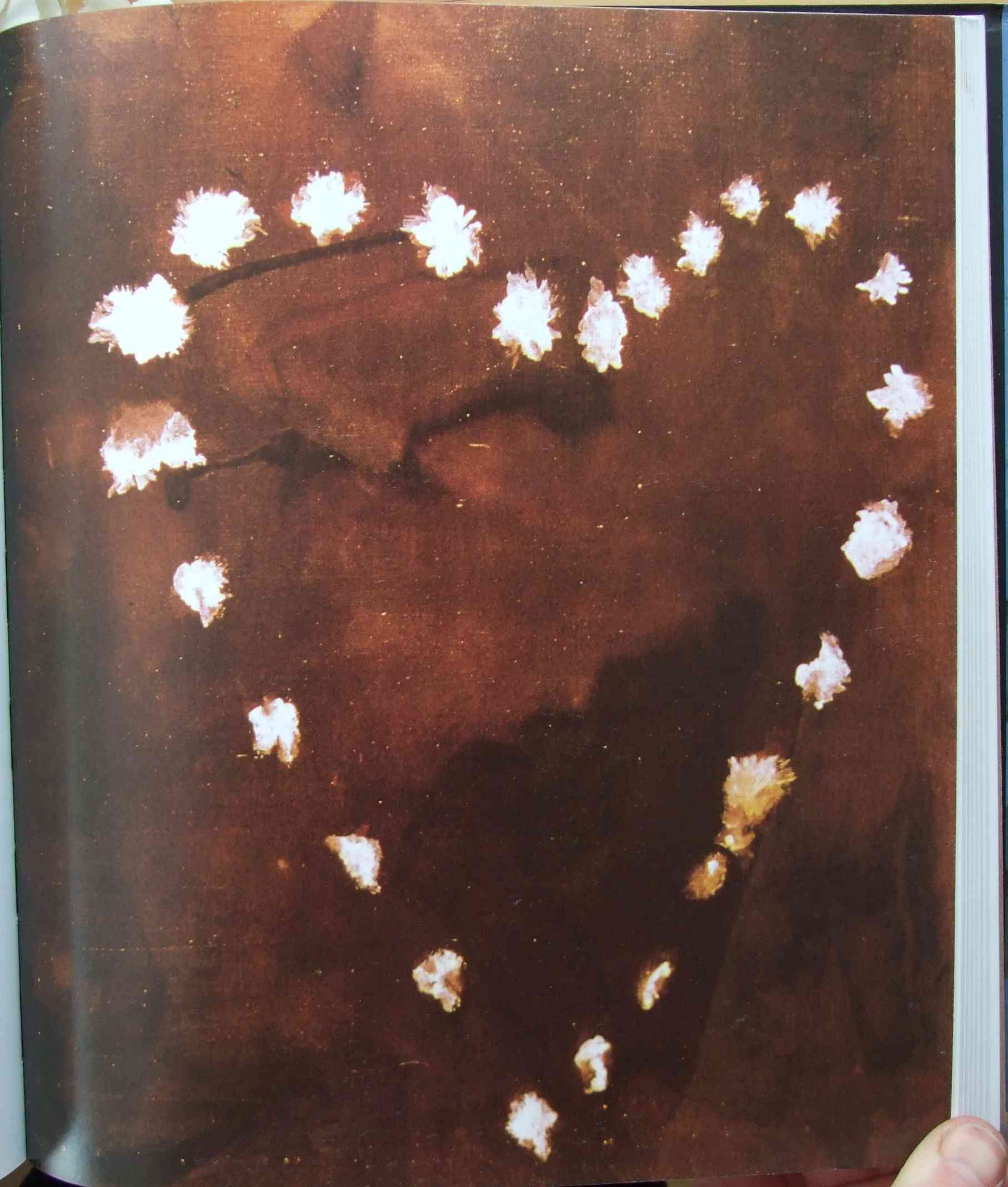
SYMBOLISM. In a flower shop I had seen a heart made out of dark purple branches, hung on a white wall. The heart can be the sign of love, but at the

same time, and I didn't know this, it can also be the sign of death. It gave me the idea that life is chance. In *Heart* I made the background similar to the tone of the heart, referring to chance by letting drops fall on the canvas. The picture is actually a synthesis of the two previous paintings.

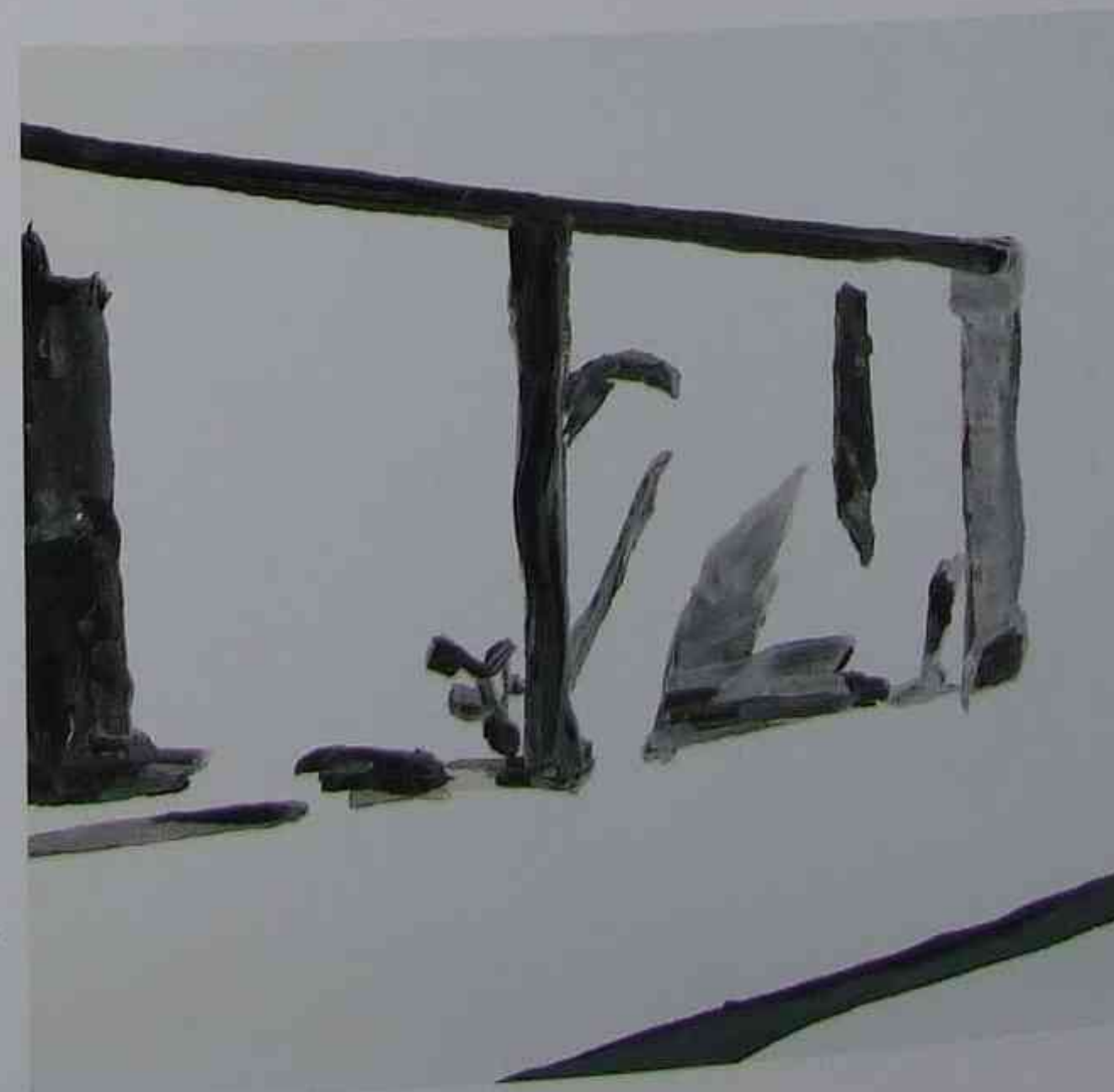


Flowers
1993
Oil on canvas
79.5 x 79.5 cm

Heart
1987
Oil on canvas
60 x 50 cm







Towel
1967
Oil on canvas
60 x 85 cm

Investigations 1/3
1969
Oil on canvas
42 x 42 cm

Investigations 2/3
1969
Oil on canvas
42 x 40 cm

Investigations 3/3
1969
Oil on canvas
40 x 45 cm

Toys
1994
Oil on canvas
64 x 78 cm



Yellow
1987
Oil on canvas
100 x 120 cm

Towel symbolizes everyday life. The intersecting lines produced a sense of space and at the same time a concrete, and hence modernist, painting. The reference to everyday life produces another meaning: that of a usable object. People laugh when they see the picture. It no longer works in the sense of tradition, of art, or as a usable object, but only something you remember from your youth, from your immediate surroundings in the past.

THE GENRE PAINTING. *Investigations* consists of three different pictures, and contains a memory of things I've seen. It evokes an idea of death after the manner of a still life, as a genre. In the first picture you see a lampshade on a glass table. In *Buchenwald I* saw lampshades made from human skin. Like the heart, the lampshade has a double meaning. A usable object emerges from death. This connection recurs later on, where a certain idea of fear contained in the toy becomes the object, becomes art, the viewer actually becoming a perpetrator. In the picture from *Investigations*, the lines and the black areas have become very important, so that it looks like a photocopied picture. The colours are so transparent that you don't actually see them, you just sense them. It is supposed to create the effect that the material is alive, not dead. The green of the glass table, the transparency, is present in all three pictures. In the middle picture what you see first is a death's-head. But it's actually an X-ray of a diseased tooth. The last picture represents a display-case I saw in Auschwitz, containing various fabrics made of human hair. Again, a material used in a form of cannibalism. You're reminded of the idea of a 'hunger for pictures'. How do you see a picture, why do you retain a picture in your mind? How is it that we only respect ugliness rather than beauty, why do we not wonder what beauty is or what it could be? We deal with reality because of a stimulus, with a conscience, a point of view. The picture has become urgent, gripping, unpleasant. I've always been interested in going for the extremes of a painting, to see how far you could go.

Geese (see page 20) is a picture based on a watercolour that hung in my bedroom when I was a child, and which then disappeared when we moved. I painted the picture like a watercolour with oil paint, and supplied the forms from memory. But I haven't





left. **The Nape**

1987

Oil on canvas

60 × 40 cm

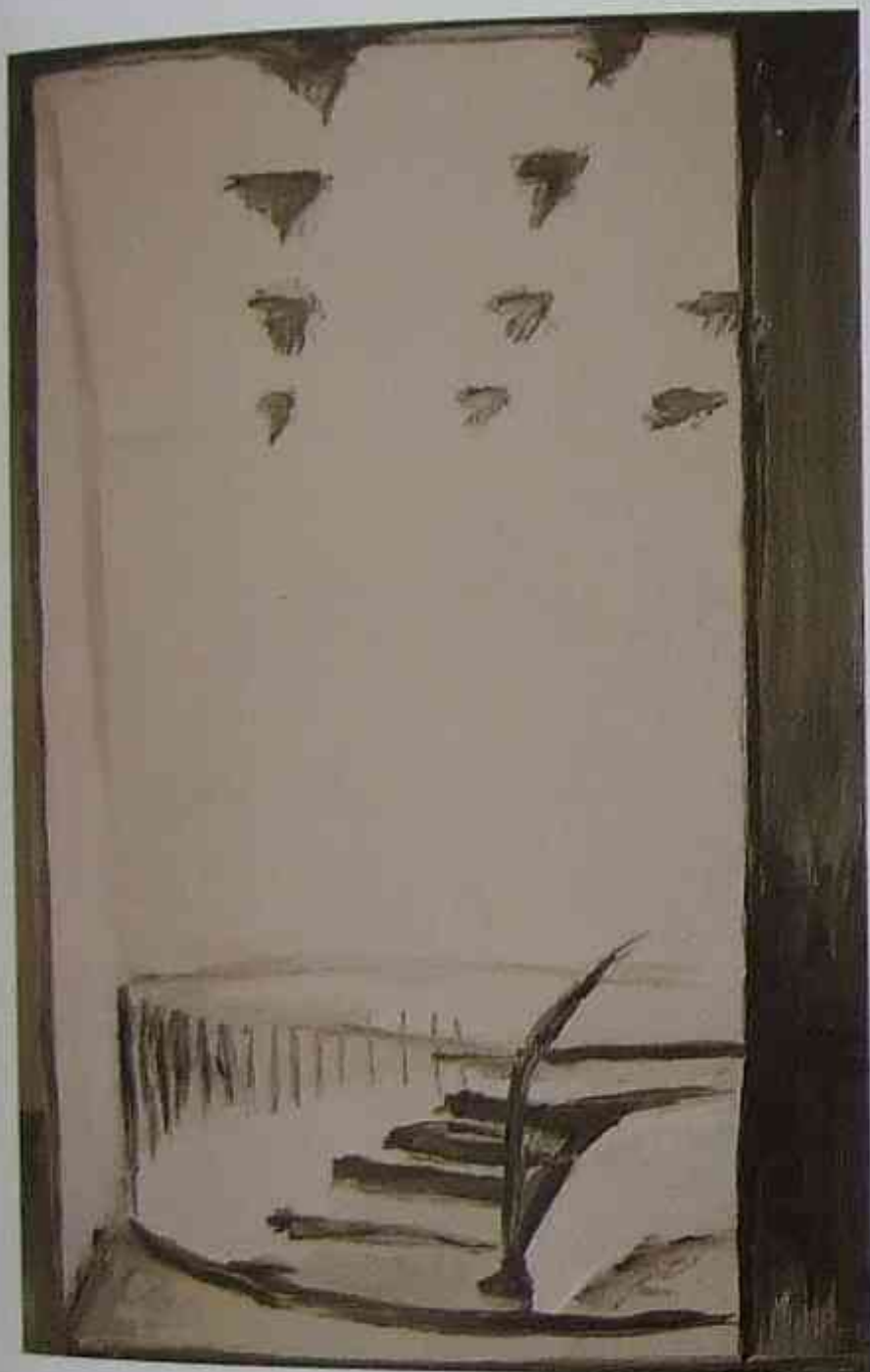
Collection Provincial Museum of
Modern Art, Ostend

opposite. **Hotel Lobby**

1991

Oil on canvas

43 × 32 cm



reproduced the picture precisely; I've only used a detail. Even as a child I was interested in the fact that the picture always frightened me. One of the two geese had a very black eye, like a hole. I had a feeling he was going to eat me. As in a fairy tale, the cottage in the distance gives a sense of security and fear simultaneously. It's a threat; like a children's cartoon. It has the same fear, the same coziness, it's a kind of reverse idyll. At any rate it's fear, a picture of the basic fear, an early fear, a fear of darkness, actually apparent in the goose's eye ... Fear of the Void, a purely existential fear. But this fear is, in turn, a fear which one has remembered, which one has quite deliberately sought out, which one wanted to experience again.

Hearth Fire depicts a greeting card from the year 1950. Originally two children sat on chairs by the fire. What struck me about the card was the golden outline of the fire, stressing its warmth and its coldness. Outside and inside are united here, there is a conviviality, a coziness which is not really present; it's as if reversed. The blue looks cold, like the night, it darkens the picture. Although it's a picture that's supposed to give warmth, it gives only an idea of warmth. I've left out the children to give an emptiness to the space, and also to take the kitschness further.

The Nape shows a figure formed by the backs and shadows of various people who are digging, digging graves. The colour is bluish, but warm. I was interested in the idea of fear, the fear that you have when you see someone you don't know from behind. You can't see their face, you don't rise to the challenge of physical presence. It is like a denial of contact. The shadows refer to people who are not present, but in thrall to the figure standing with its back to the viewer. Holes are cut into the picture with a knife, to make the threat even clearer. It's a picture that screens something, a shield.

Clouds reinforces the picture of the neck-figure. It's a detail of a sky; there's an atmosphere and it works as a resting point. It forms an opening.

A LOGIC OF ITS OWN

Child Abuse is another picture from advertising. But this time it's a much uglier picture, a picture about violence, and very different from the *Cif*, advertising the void. This picture shows danger. It is based on the combination of different colours designed for the aggression and the desire of buying, of destroying, of consuming. They have a certain vulgarity, they are used in such a way that they are just a stimulus, a hint. In this sense the colours are exaggerated, ugly. They glow dimly. The picture suggested the idea of a rape to me, the rape of a child. In the picture you can see a stylized flower inside which you're supposed to write the price. At the top you see the abstraction of a

window box in which the ground has gone yellow. Then there are two abstractions of photographs, and the grass, which looks like artificial turf. The two points are there to restrict the field of vision. I painted the picture quite unconsciously, and even I was shocked by the result. The combination arose on the spur of the moment. This is one of the few paintings to have been made in this way, and it has a logic of its own, independent of the feelings of its producer. A great distance arose. What is depicted has really become material; it has materialized. It is there, represented, a threat to the very person who made it as well as the person who looks at it. The idea of subversion, a perversity, becomes apparent in it.

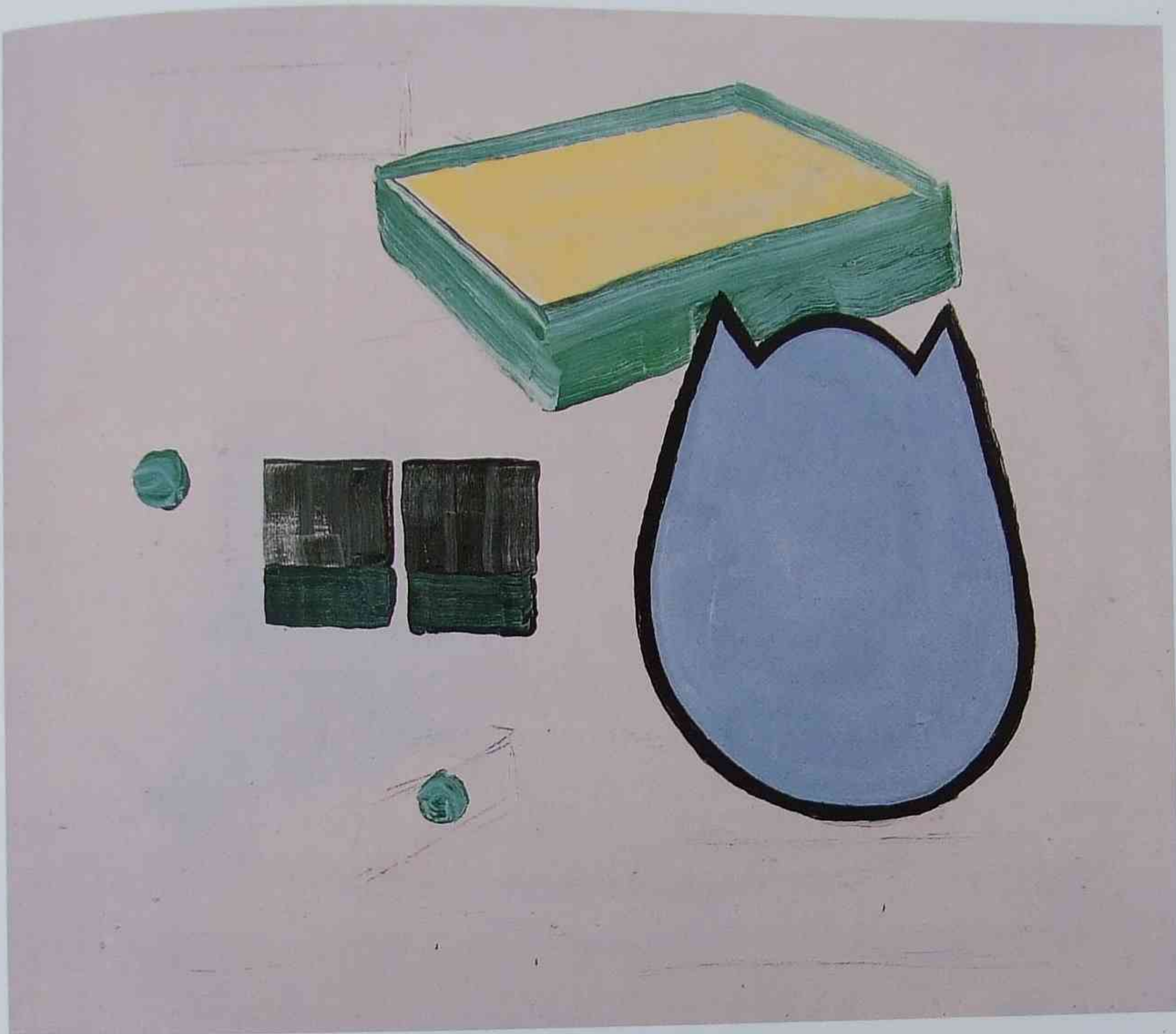
You only look at *Flowers* quite gently. It's like an idea that emerges out of the background, appears and then turns pale again. In turn this means a security, a conviviality, a coziness, that are not right, that you can't really touch, just as the flowers are only beautiful.



Hotel Room has been abandoned, or rather it's been left behind. This room has always been there, it has its own memories, its own attributes, its own order. This order cannot be disturbed by the guest; he or she is only there temporarily. The room remains, the furniture remains, the person goes away, another person comes. The person is transient, only present in a transitory space. The room is like a brain and a memory that knows this very well. The room defines whoever looks at it, gives him or her a feeling of security, but also the conviction that it resists presence; there is a sense of loneliness, that there is no contact between the space and someone entering the room, that you're allowed to use the room, but that you have to put it back together when you leave it.

Hotel Room
1987
Oil on canvas
50 x 60 cm
Collection Museum of
Contemporary Art, Antwerp

BETRAYAL. *Gas Chamber* (see pages 52-53) is the same colour as the hotel room. The picture shows a room with holes in the ceiling; it looks like the ordinary cellar of a house. Many people consider this picture beautiful because the colour has a beauty, because it is not a picture of grief. The picture radiates both fear and human warmth. That's actually its meaning. To approach the really terrible thing that cannot be depicted. You don't notice the destruction immediately, it's a betrayal, a masking, a dressing-up of the space. The room remains incredible to the end. Its purpose is



above, *Child Abuse*
1969
Oil on canvas
55 x 65 cm

right, *Flowers*
1987
Oil on canvas
52 x 57 cm



Die Wiedergutmachung 1/2

1989

Oil on canvas

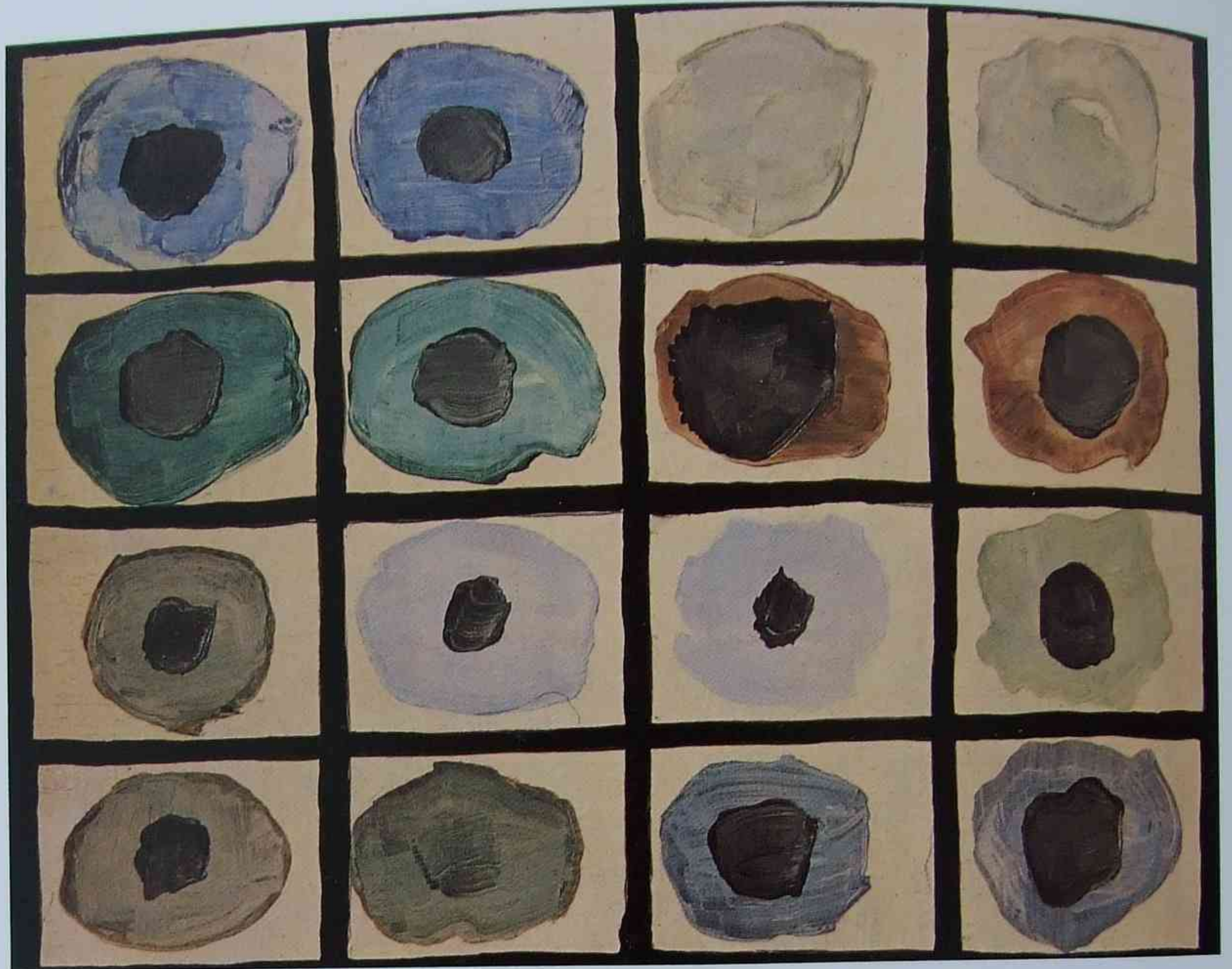
39 x 52 cm

Die Wiedergutmachung 2/2

1989

Oil on canvas

37 x 43 cm



deception. The room deceives, the objects deceive; the banality is not banality but an incredible reality. The picture, its aesthetic character, is the disguise of something that is absolutely inaccessible if it is not disguised.

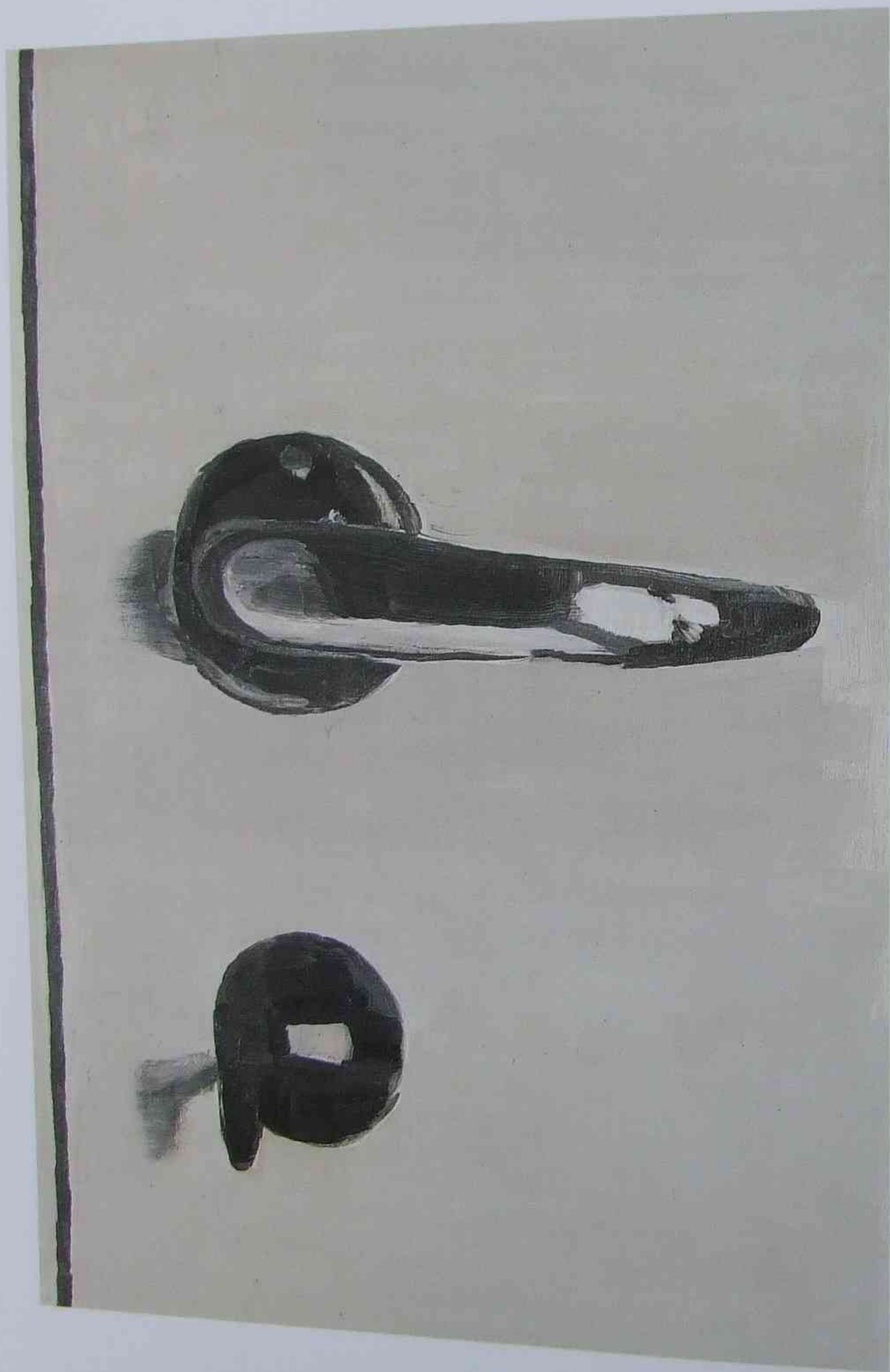
REPARATIONS. *Suspended* (see page 61) is a strong metaphor. It is the picture of a family that may be having an argument, you can't tell exactly. The house, which actually guarantees security, is not perfectly depicted. The swimming pool has become a square. The whole picture is mute, gloomy, petrified. You see it as if behind glass. Everything is compressed into a single moment, and everything could be gone in a moment. What begins, what ends, what happens, is unknown. As in the *Murderer* (see page 61) there is the idea of something you can play with. You know it doesn't really exist, but it does exist. The need to overcome something terrible. If the toy falls it will break.

Target Practice is the picture of a window-frame. Three different circles relate to points in the frame. They are enlargements showing the wooden joints. The picture is about how one sees, how one can see, but also how one cannot see. It is a question of what the material does, what kind of meaning it has, what effect it has on reality.

I saw a television documentary about monozygotic twins who had had experiments performed on them during the war. They were gypsy children, who never received compensation because the man responsible for awarding payment had himself worked as a doctor in a concentration camp. This doctor died in 1989, and in his desk they found photographs of hands and eyes that he had assembled in a grid to carry out some supposedly scientific research. *Die Wiedergutmachung* (Reparations) consists of two pictures. You see a picture-grid, with depictions of photographs of hands and eyes. Hands separated from bodies, eyes which no longer belong to anything, which are no longer in a head, which no longer form a face, which are expressionless ... The idea of expressionlessness, complete helplessness within these pictures, is humiliating. They are about the idea of science, the possibilities of genetics, the possibilities of forgery, how life has become an object, how the whole thing is marketed, and how the marketing is treated like a mystery.

THE GAP

Z.D.F. is a black-and-white painting, showing the testcard of the German television company Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen. It is a picture that actually reproduces the fear of information. It has the possibility of invading, bringing everything one doesn't know, everything unfamiliar, into the living room. The picture format is the same as that of a





Ice I

1992

Oil on canvas

52.5 × 37 cm

Collection Kunstmuseum, Bern

Ice II

1992

Oil on canvas

52 × 37 cm

Ice III

1992

Oil on canvas

52.5 × 37 cm



DDR
1990
Oil on canvas
diptych, 42 x 33 cm each.

normal television. The picture looks like a cross-section of a tree; the technical and the natural pictures merge. The age of the tree can be established from the annual rings, but here you don't know what you're supposed to think or feel. The picture includes its own decay. It's a baroque picture.

Church is the painting of a model. It's a painting of planned reality, a kind of architecture of illusion. It looks as though the representation has been carved in, so it looks like architecture. It's as though it is in three dimensions. Only the point of view determines the existence of the picture. You get the feeling it's a blind facade, a Potemkin village. The picture of a world free of objects. The picture has a clarity, a purity. The religious space is shown as it is in model buildings, as if made for a little world in which it represents religion, the church or faith.

Secrets is the picture of a person in a brown suit, shown with closed eyes. The figure looks enchanted. The lights suggests that it is in a very narrow space. The shadow falls not behind, but on the figure. It has taken on its own shadow: the shadow places an identity upon it. The person is there and not there. You can see that it is wearing a uniform jacket, that it represents an institution, that it lays claim to something. It looks like a mystery, completely closed; it looks like a picture of grief, and also of shame.

DISAPPOINTMENT

Eight is a very small picture, but its effect is monumental. It is very emotionally charged. Through the window of a hotel room in Budapest I saw a boy on a bicycle in the snow, he made a sign over the tram lines and then cycled on. Only this eight remained as the trace of an action that was lost, that was completely senseless, but in its senselessness it had made a very large motion representing infinity.

Insomnia returns to the patch that I saw on a not quite uniform ground, on the floor, and one of these patches had another patch below it, hiding it. It gave me the idea of a space between waking and dreaming, the idea of sleeplessness, the idea of a state in which the body has lost its feeling, in which all material loses its normal concreteness and floats in space, as if weightless. You might think of a mirror, in which the concrete is reflected by the non-concrete. The picture deceives the viewer. He or she has the possibility of entering a space and thus of imagining a movement whose meaning is formed by the viewer.

DDR, a two-part work based on stamps from the DDR, shows an athlete who was a resistance fighter under the Nazis, and who did not survive the war. First you see the portrait that is transformed into a universal portrait: the man is shown like an emblematic



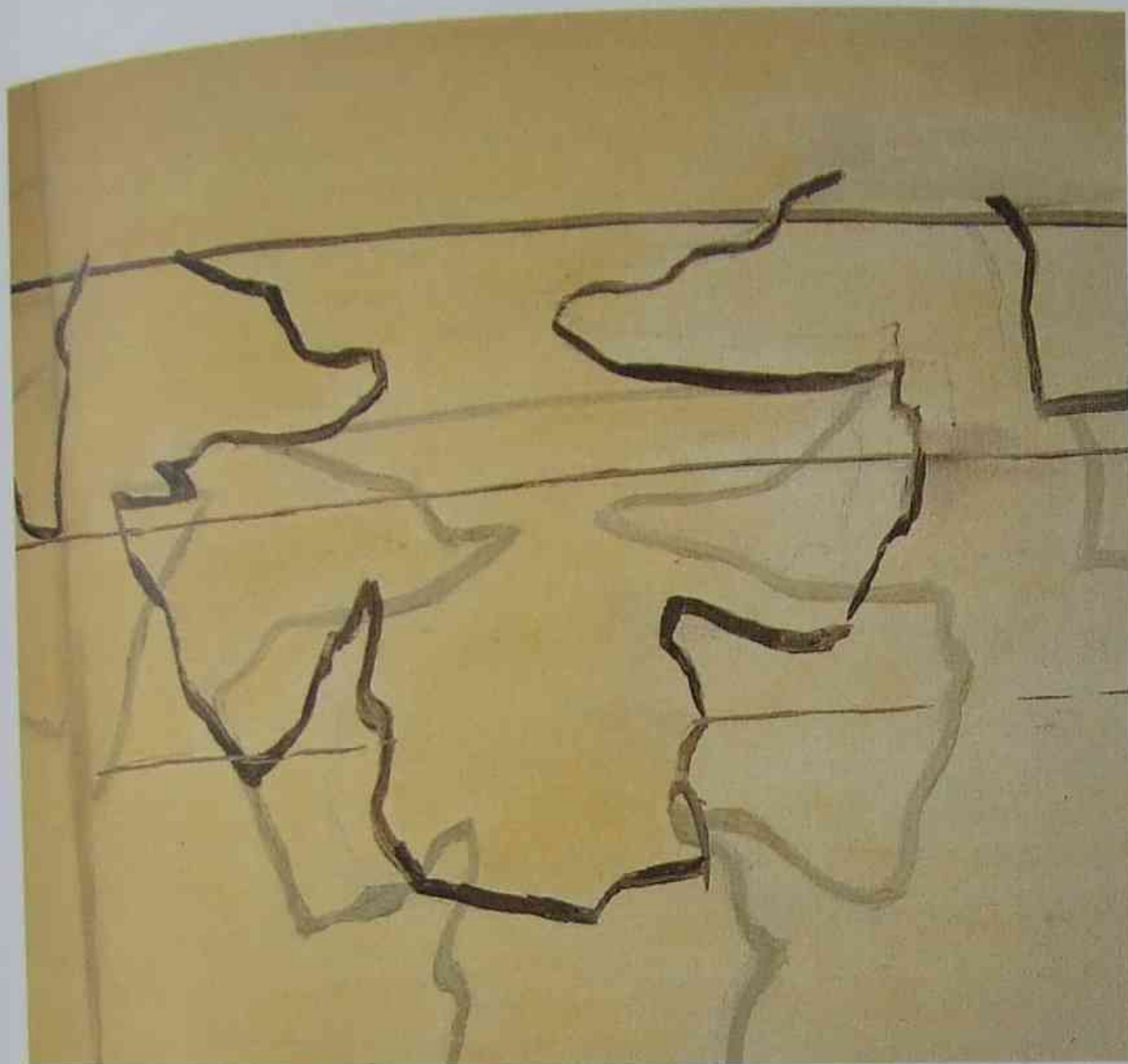
Memory

1991

Oil on canvas

37 x 24 cm





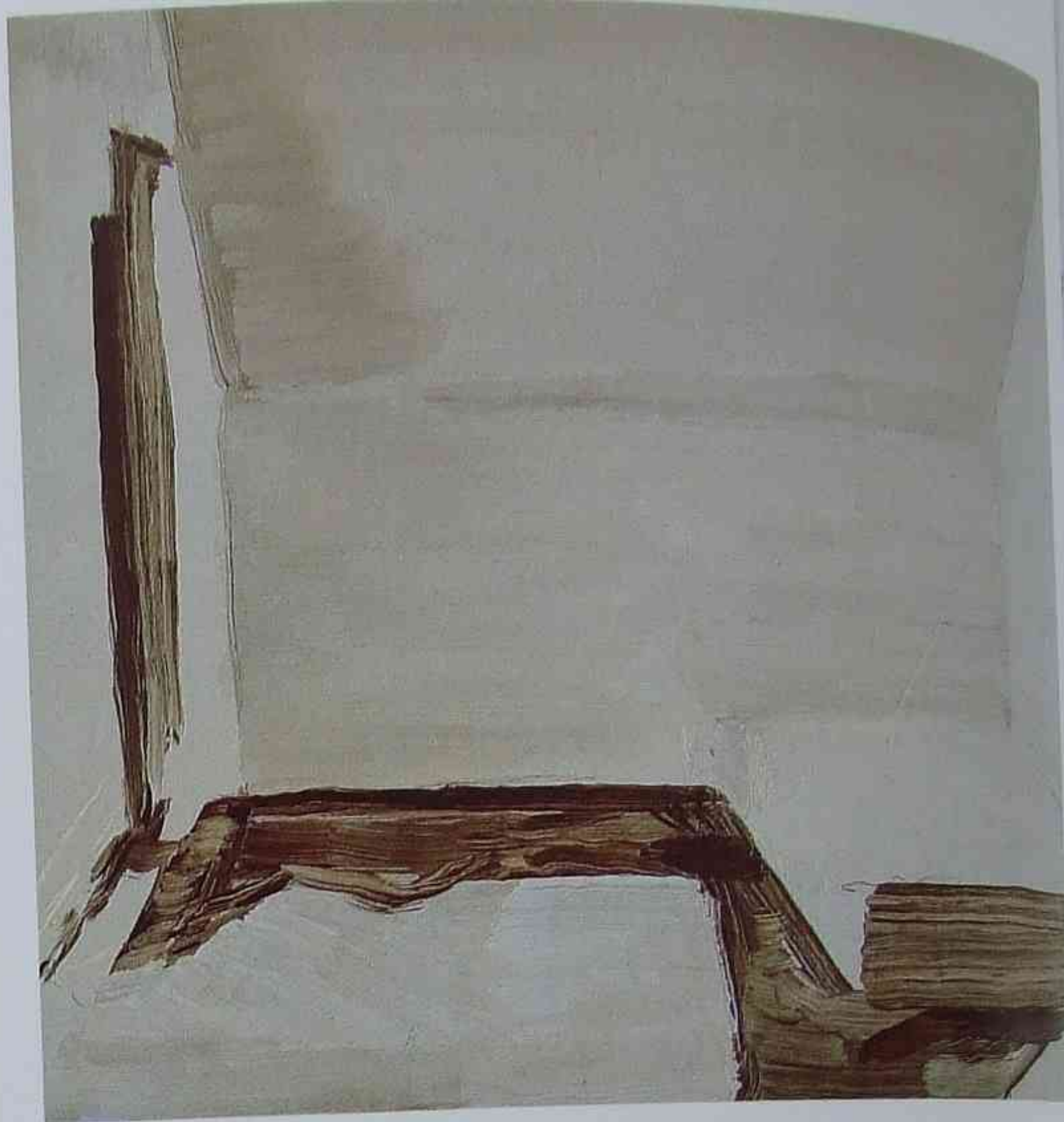
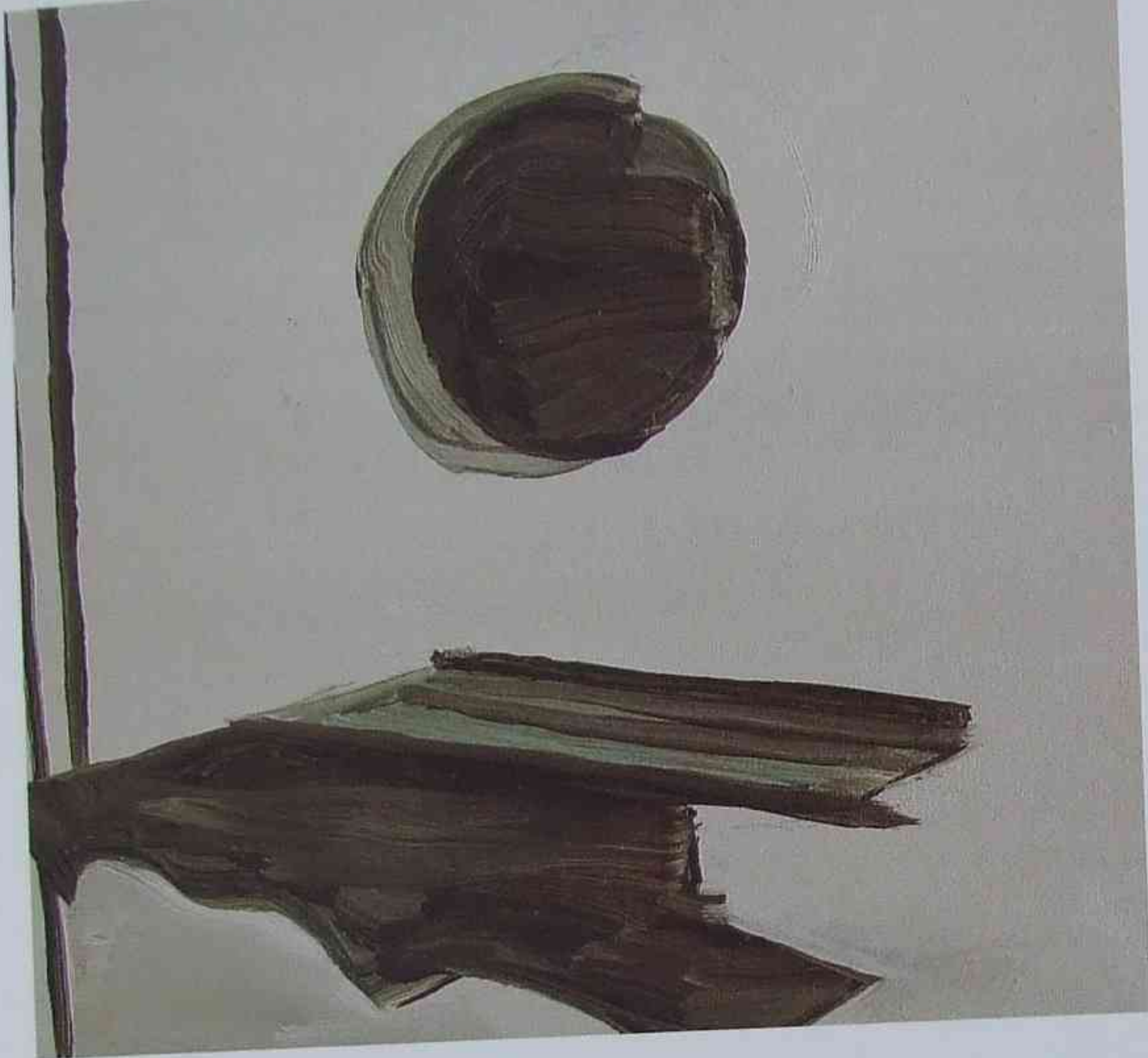
Twins
1990
Oil on canvas
45 x 54 cm

figure, mythologized by a halo, completely sexless. Next to the portrait is the depiction of the sport that the man had played. The picture is actually about the failure of a system and its heroes, and it also represents the dispensability of the hero. As the DDR no longer exists, the picture also has the meaning of a circle that is now closed. It is the picture of a completion for which it had never been destined. *L'ironie du sort*. ('The luck of the draw'.)

Twins is a transparent picture or a picture of transparency. A picture is shown twice, one figure laid over the other. The experience is like that of hypnosis. One has the idea of a further boundary, an infinite boundary. First of all it looks like transparency, but at the end it has become dense material. The picture is based on the wallpaper pattern that was used in *The Correspondence*.

I had originally wanted to realize *The Correspondence* in three dimensions, as an anamorphosis, so I copied the wallpaper motif with some tracing paper. Later I found this paper, completely yellowed. I used part of it for *Twins*.

RADIANCE. *Heillicht* is a three-part work comprising *Heillicht*, *Incest* and *Smell* whose elements did not originally belong together. Because of their colour, their brightness, their radiance, they later became one work. The first picture, *Smell*, is based on the deodorant blocks you find in toilets. It deals with smell, an abstraction. The large and small circles represent the diffusion of the smell. Smell has the property of having a particularly strong effect on the memory, without any need for pictures. The picture gives the impression of constantly growing, of denying the format. Each object bears within itself the possibility of such a diffusion. The picture is soundless. Although it has a rhythm, it isn't about a sound. The second picture is called *Heillicht*. A half-naked boy is being radiated with a lamp to cure him, to warm him and at the same time to let him feel the power of light. I am referring to the idea that science should change everything, that it's always capable of everything. Of the three pictures, the most strongly figurative is *Heillicht*. But a white strip at the edge breaks its illusory character. The strip creates the impression that the picture has been reconstructed, that it will repeatedly construct itself. The last picture, *Incest*, is the abstraction of a hand sticking through



something. It has to do with an intention. You just see the finger. The hand creates a sense of danger. At the same time there is an impression of something forbidden, something incestuous. The three pictures together produce the idea of a science which has become reality through a certain empiricism, but which does not concord with that reality ... a false investigation, an investigation that can only end in disappointment.

REPRESENTATION, FAILURE. *Sealed Rooms* consists of three pictures that do belong together. They represent three sealed rooms. The first room has a mirror, a kind of boudoir. The second room is a closed bedroom, and the third picture is a detail, like the first, of a half-opened kitchen cupboard. Together, the three works are based on the idea of something that one has left behind. But at the same time there's also the idea of something that still works properly. One thinks not of a room that one remembers, but of a place which is newly built and which no-one has ever entered, that has never been put to use. It is the representation of a failure. The rooms are also closed to one another. The two end pictures are depicted very strongly in detail, the way one suddenly sees a room in a mirror. The picture works like a mirror – what you see comes from somewhere else.


METAMORPHOSIS

Body (see page 66) is the painting of a bust, the torso of a doll, with a zip fastener in the middle so that you can open it up to put in stuffing and give it volume, a meaning, to make it alive or more alive. The whole thing is trimmed so that the head is missing, the identity of the body is absent. But the body has become more important. So you can hardly see that the body looks as if it is injured, suffering the effects of cruelty. The zip fastener acts like a wound, like a cut. As the head and the face are not in the picture, the zip fastener has become the head of the body. The picture itself is always trying to

Sealed Rooms 1/3
1990
Oil on canvas
triptych, 36 x 38 cm each

Sealed Rooms 2/3
1990
Oil on canvas
triptych, 36 x 38 cm each

Sealed Rooms 3/3
1990
Oil on canvas
triptych, 36 x 38 cm each



metamorphose, as if it constantly needed to overcome its own existence. It is a warning, it confronts the space. It looks like a relic, and refers to the votive character of memory, prompting a sense of amnesia.

Silence is a picture with a head showing a doll's head. But it is the head of a sick child. Beneath its closed eyes two colours appear, green and orange, which, taken together, form a superimposition. They indicate that the face is maimed from within, that it is ill. If you look at the picture from the side you get a sense that the child has already died. It is as though the child has been infected by a virus which has spread through its whole body. The painting corresponds to complete silence ... almost as if its existence had swallowed up its own boundaries. It no longer wishes to be present, but to disappear.

There is the painting of a curtain, *Sheer Curtains* – a radiance. It does not end at the edges of the painting, but continues into space. This makes its radiance possible. It contains the idea of purity, of clarity, of lucidity. Not the idea of transparency, but a very concrete clarity. Something that has such a direct effect on the viewer that he or she experiences only light and brilliance, radiance.

Cockeyed was also based on the idea of a doll. This time the viewer sees the doll's eyes, not the whole eyes, just the outlines that you normally draw. The nose is missing. As a result the middle has actually become more important than the two eyes. They are displaced to the edge of the picture, giving a sense that there is something wrong with the angle of view, as if the viewer, squinting, could only look at a point in the middle of the painting. At the same time there is a very strong sense of space and colour, as in *Insomnia*, for example. There's the hypnosis, the intensity, the power of the surface, an infinite size – the format of a picture has nothing to do with its real size, but everything to do with the meaning of the format in the space and with the object of the picture. The boundaries of the picture can be burst apart.

Sheer Curtains

1991

Oil on canvas

88 x 78.5 cm



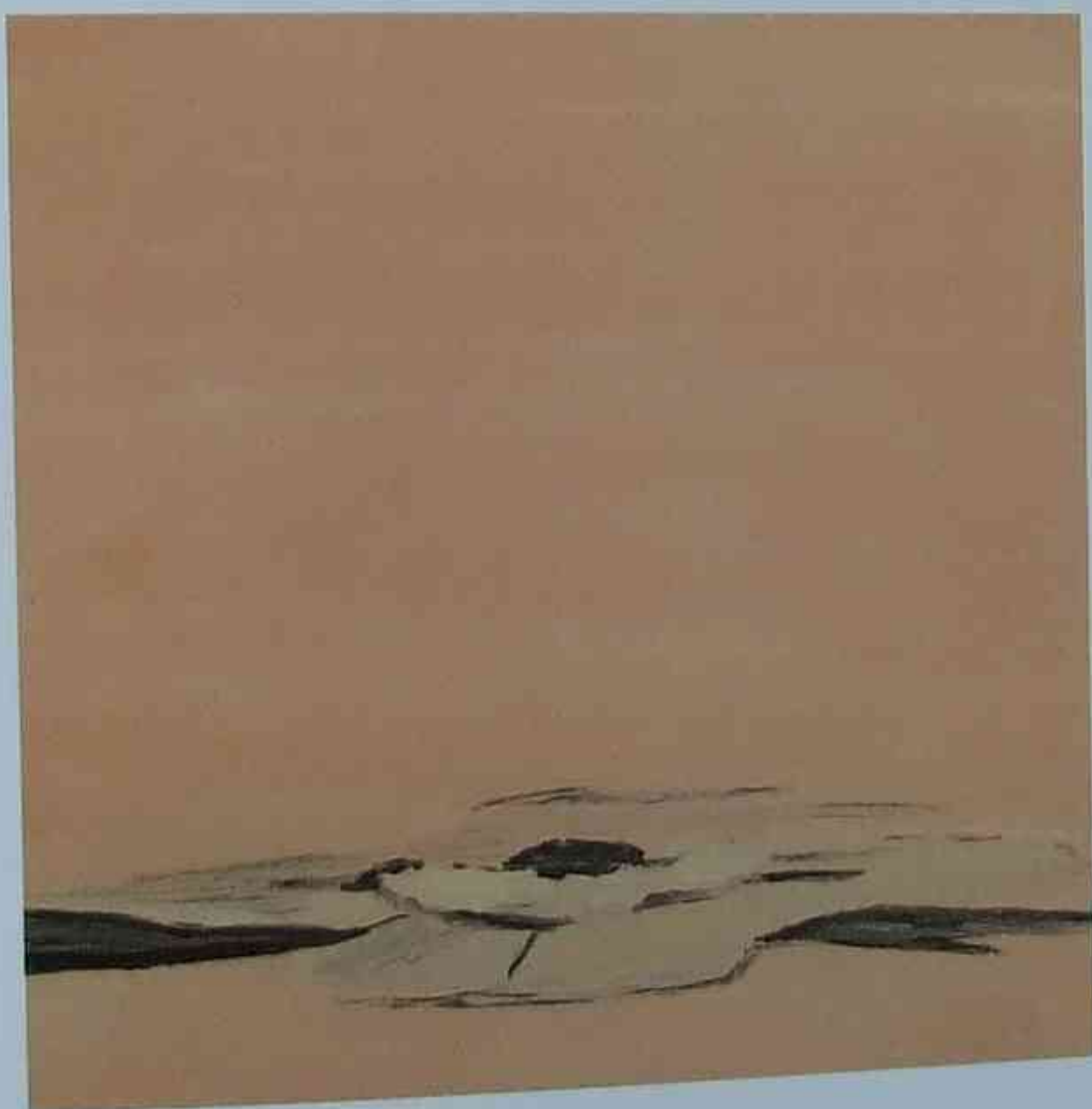
EMBITTERMENT

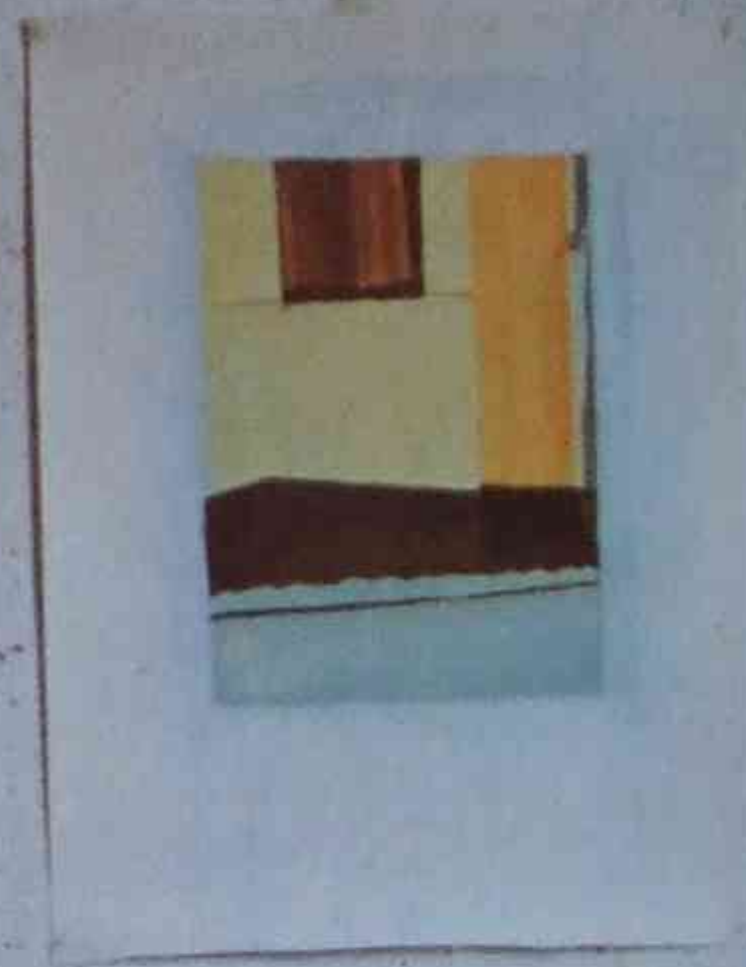
In *Embitterment* three paintings forming one work are hung above one another. The middle one is the most important, since it looks like an ornament. The middle passes through all three vertically arranged paintings, creating the impression of a spine – the three paintings seem to be connected into one. The colour is a radiant orange, very deep at the same time. They show embroidered flowers, lying flat. They give a sense of beauty and grief – something that has sunk very deep and continues to sink, something that could be a soul, a dark soul. This work gives an idea of embitterment. The three units of the picture should be considered as an emotional self-portrait that coincides with the body, showing the inside of the body. On the one hand beauty, the possibility of creating it, and on the other hand the impossibility of understanding it. The picture came out of a feeling of rage, and the feeling of being excluded from oneself, incapable of conveying this to anyone else. It was a kind of regression. In this sense it's a very existential work. It seems to me that the picture is painted to last, because it has changed from rage to grief. The form is completely determined by the intensity. It no longer represents, but only exists.

Elevator, like *Antichamber* (see page 46), belongs to the enlargements of earlier drawings for camera shots. It shows two lift doors closing. The picture has been painted because it looks like a piece of writing. It is a sign of something that is to take place.

The conversation is finished, leaving the viewer with the curiosity to know what was said. Whoever looks at the picture is a voyeur.

Enbittment
1971
Oil on canvas
trptych, 39 x 40.5 cm, 39 x 41
cm, 38 x 42.5 cm
Collection Museum of Modern Art,
New York





opposite: Luc Tuymans' studio
1993
Installation, Kursthal Bern, 1992
l. to r.
right: *Embitterment*, 1991; *Body*,
1990; *The Nape*, 1987; *Heart*, 1987;
Walking, 1989
bottom: *Z.O.F.*, 1988;
Embitterment, 1991; *Church*, 1990





left, *Repulsion*
1991
Oil on canvas
diptych, 42 x 41, 31 x 31 cm
opposite, *Wrapping*
1988
Oil on canvas
80 x 80 cm

DISGUST. *Repulsion* consists of two pictures. Flesh is represented in detailed enlargements, and there is a sense of illegitimate penetration. One of the pictures shows the knee of a girl, casting a shadow on the ground. You don't see that at first, since the whole thing looks like an abstraction. But unease, force or violence are suggested. Curiosity is aroused at the same time. I used to wonder why depictions of the sex act looked almost timeless to me, and because of this had become cliché – as if the sex act were too closely linked with life, too much of a necessity. So absolute a necessity that it would be impossible to reproduce it in a picture. But in order to deal with the subject you should enlarge it to such an extent that the picture becomes practically invisible. In the first picture in *Repulsion* the whole field of vision is taken up with a representation of skin that belongs to a formless world. The picture is about the closeness of things, it suffocates the viewer, who performs an act by seeing. The picture looks like a riddle that can never really be solved [...]

EGO ORNAMENT. *Wrapping Paper* is based on gift wrap and printed bags from the former DDR. The picture is the size of a person shown full-length, but hidden. Although it looks like a formal picture that isn't the effect you get. It's like a decision that was made before the painting was conceived, a feeling of embitterment, something that has come to an end and goes no further.

'Disenchantment', Kunsthalle Bern, 1992, pp. 11-36. Translated from German by Shaun Whiteside.

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Interview

2000 Twenty Things + Introduction with Lee Symons page 5

Survey

2001 The Art of the Interview: A Study of the Interview in the Twentieth Century page 10

Focus

2002 Focus: The Collaborative Process page 16

Artist's Choice

2003 Focus: The Collaborative Process page 16

Artist's Writings

Lee Symons

Update

2004 Focus: The Collaborative Process page 16

Chronology

page 200 & 201



Paul Cézanne
Still Life
c. 1900
Oil on canvas
75 x 100 cm

“There will be no mourning”; it was like an aphorism in a disaster at sea, a helpless sentence, left to itself. Even though the tense of the verb, “There will be no mourning”, is clearly future, nothing of what preceded this sentence and what followed it makes it possible to decide whether the grammar of this sentence indicates a description or an instruction. Nothing makes it possible to distinguish clearly between the prognosis of “this is how it will be” on the one hand (there will be no mourning, the mourning will not take place, above all it will not be planned, there will be no sign of mourning, no preparations for mourning) and the order or ban represented by an implicit imperative on the other hand, the instruction “this is how it is to be”, “no mourning will be permitted”, no sign of mourning and no organized mourning preparation, no institutionalized mindfulness, that is to say: not the normative wish of saying “it would be better if there were no mourning”. Would institutionalizing mourning not run the risk of putting a seal on forgetting? To protect us against memory, rather than preserving it?” – Jacques Derrida¹

‘Update’ – the word suggests the difficulty of capturing moments in a constantly developing oeuvre; it is like trying to choose frames from a running film. Making a commentary on any particular frame is problematic: it could be called into question, or even contradicted, by the next one. Luc Tuymans’ body of work is not separated by the recognizable breaks suggested by categorization according to periods. This Update is therefore a continuation rather than an appendix; the opening credits, perhaps.

First Frame: Documenta 11 – Still-life (2002), 347 x 500 cm, oil on canvas

Tuymans’ installation in Kassel is dominated by a large, intensely bright still life. Within the cramped stand it opens up an immense, white-grey space, only to close it again immediately. The eye cannot settle permanently on the glass water-carafe and the fruit that drift along next to each other as if on an ice floe. It gets lost in the gleaming expanse without finding a fixed point of repose, and then rapidly returns to the fleeting centre. The row of fruit is only tentatively a volume; despite the highlights, each seems two-dimensional, as if cut out of paper and stuck onto the composition. This rapidly executed oil painting is in fact based on a rough collage, which Tuymans’ constructed as a model. The elements of the still life are placed centrally and frontally within the composition, and yet they seem embossed and bottomless, as if seen in perspective from below. Tuymans called his 1999 exhibition at White Cube in London ‘Splendid Isolation’, and this phrase could also be applied to the objects in this compendium of loose, unconnected forms. The inner reticence of the fruit and carafe is reminiscent of Paul Cézanne’s still lifes. They also make deliberate allusion to the tradition of the autonomous panel picture, and thus to painting’s dominance before it came into competition with a large number of other media. In fact, this still life refers directly to a work by Cézanne in Oskar Reinhart’s collection in Winterthur.² Tuymans picks up the shade of the white lead, which has shifted towards blue over the decades, in the bluish grey-white tone of the expansive ground.

Still-life
2002
Oil on canvas
347 x 500 cm

This still life's apparent reticence in tackling social reality head-on makes a politically explosive image in quite another sense. It follows on from a series of earlier pictures with explicitly historical

connections, including works that have since become famous, like *Gas Chamber*, *Schwarzheide* and *Our New Quarters*, dating from 1986. There was an expectation that Tuymans' works in Documenta



Orchid
1998
Oil on canvas
99.5 × 76.5 cm

11 would also address suppressed historical issues, possibly including an allusion to 11 September 2001. With this still life, however, Tuymans thwarts these expectations. Here, painting's history of autonomy becomes a political issue in its own right. The pure forms of the fruit and the transparent carafe constitute a highly charged screen, onto which are projected longings for a blameless life that exists outside time. The historical vacuum emanating from these objects condenses all the unspoken fears of the excluded world, and awakens the terrors of concealment. To this extent, this work is also a paradigm of Tuymans' treatment of history, an approach he has repeatedly described as 'authentic forgery'. He never addresses concrete events directly. Instead, he refers to forgotten occurrences indirectly, on the basis of a clue, a document, a quotation from a text. Such events are therefore always recalled through the awareness of a shift and a necessary delay.³ By openly alluding to an old painting genre, *Still-life* suggests that the image has been postponed and is inevitably arriving too late. As Hegel put it, the Owl of Minerva first takes flight when twilight closes in⁴. At the same time, the deliberate recourse to Cézanne is refracted by a veil of light, like that which emanates from computer screens.⁵ Withdrawing the motif by dispersing it through light simultaneously heightens its presence as an after-image, as a constantly recurring memory that can be intensified to the point of paranoia for the observer.

Cézanne conducted a seemingly never-ending process of correction and rejection on the canvas

itself when seeking out his images. In Tuymans' case, this process takes place in the sketches, models, Polaroids and videos that precede the brief act of actual painting. With *Still-life* he operates against the background of history in a way that is similar to Cézanne's relationship with nature, as described by Gottfried Boehm: 'nature [turns out to be] a merely optical event, without a term for itself, or a name. It includes a kind of forgetting that Cézanne reverses again when the abundance of nature, of things and persons, emerges anew from the language of the autonomous image, of organised sensations, or, if one so wishes: is remembered again.'⁶ The eye is always 'in proportion with the brain'.⁷ In Tuymans' case, the analytical quality of the picture is revealed through a clearly visible painterly treatment. From the large area of homogeneous ground, *Still-life* condenses in its individual motifs the finest brushstrokes and dabs, applied in rapidly changing rhythms, lapping around the forms rather than fixing them.

One can identify in Tuymans' work a long trail of stiflingly cosy images like floral wallpaper patterns, still lifes, items of furniture, chandeliers. This begins with pictures such as *Goose and Heart* (both 1987), then moves via *Embitterment* (1991), *Lamproom* (1992), *Intolerance*, *Flowers*, the nursery in *Silent Music* (all 1993) or *Tracing* (1994) to *The Heritage IX* (1996), *Illegitimate I & II* (1997), *Orchid* (1998), *Embroidery*, *The Room* (both 1999) and the Kassel still life. In exhibitions Tuymans often includes a picture like this as an apparent zero sign, an active empty space, which interrogates the nature of the somewhat stronger



L. to r., **Illegitimate I**

1997

Oil on canvas

210 × 131 cm

Collection Tate Gallery, London

Illegitimate II

1997

Oil on canvas

113 × 77.5 cm





Illegitimate III
1997
Oil on canvas
161.5 × 137.5 cm
Collection Tate Gallery, London



Figure 1

1991

1992

1993

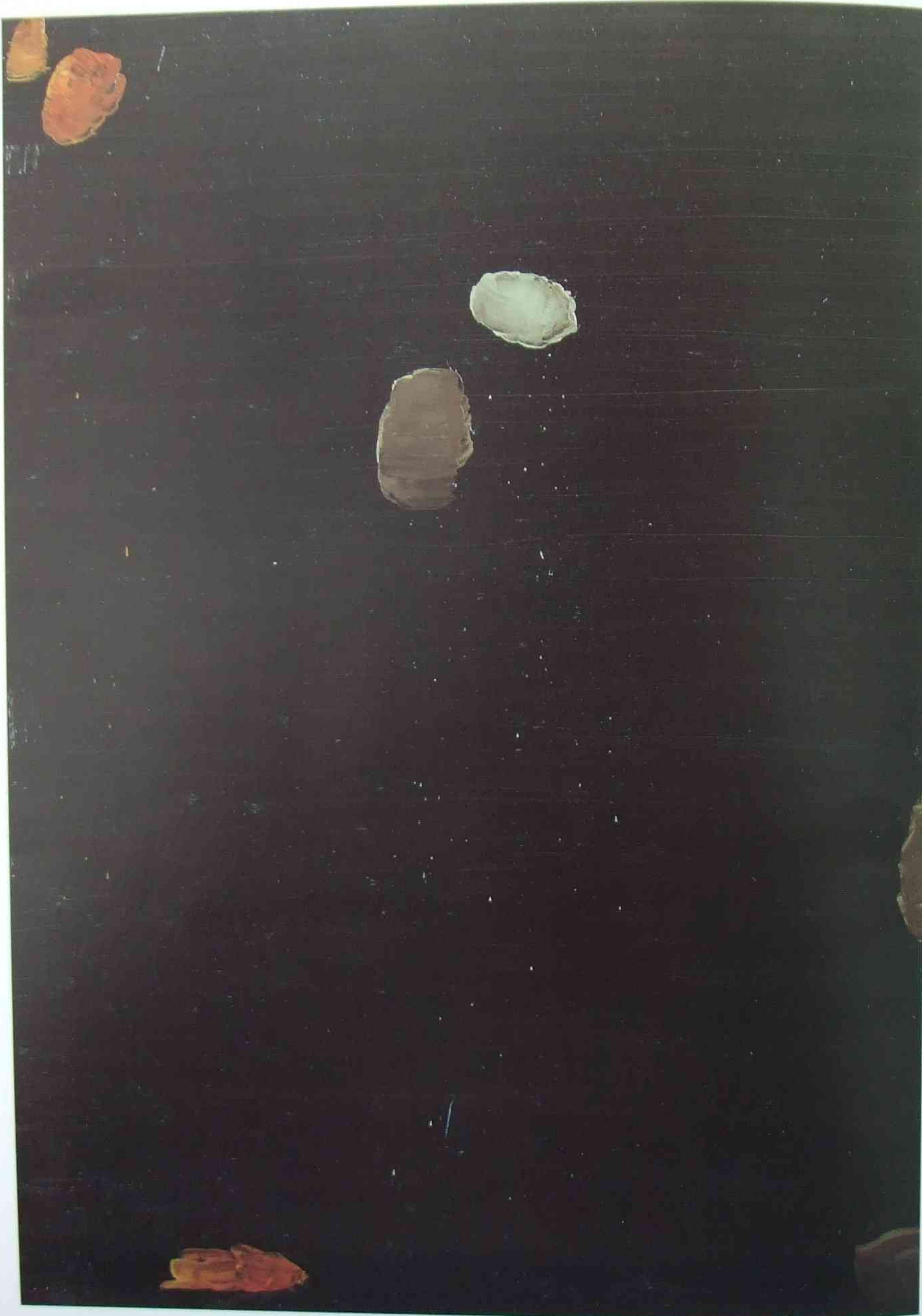
Figure 2

1991

1992

1993





opposite, illegitimate IX

1997

Oil on canvas
70 x 50 cm

below, Embroidery

1999

Oil on canvas
143.5 x 183.5 cm





left, *The Room*

1999

Oil on canvas

177 × 126 cm

opposite, *Portrait*

2000

Oil on canvas

67 × 39 cm

images, revealing their transience.

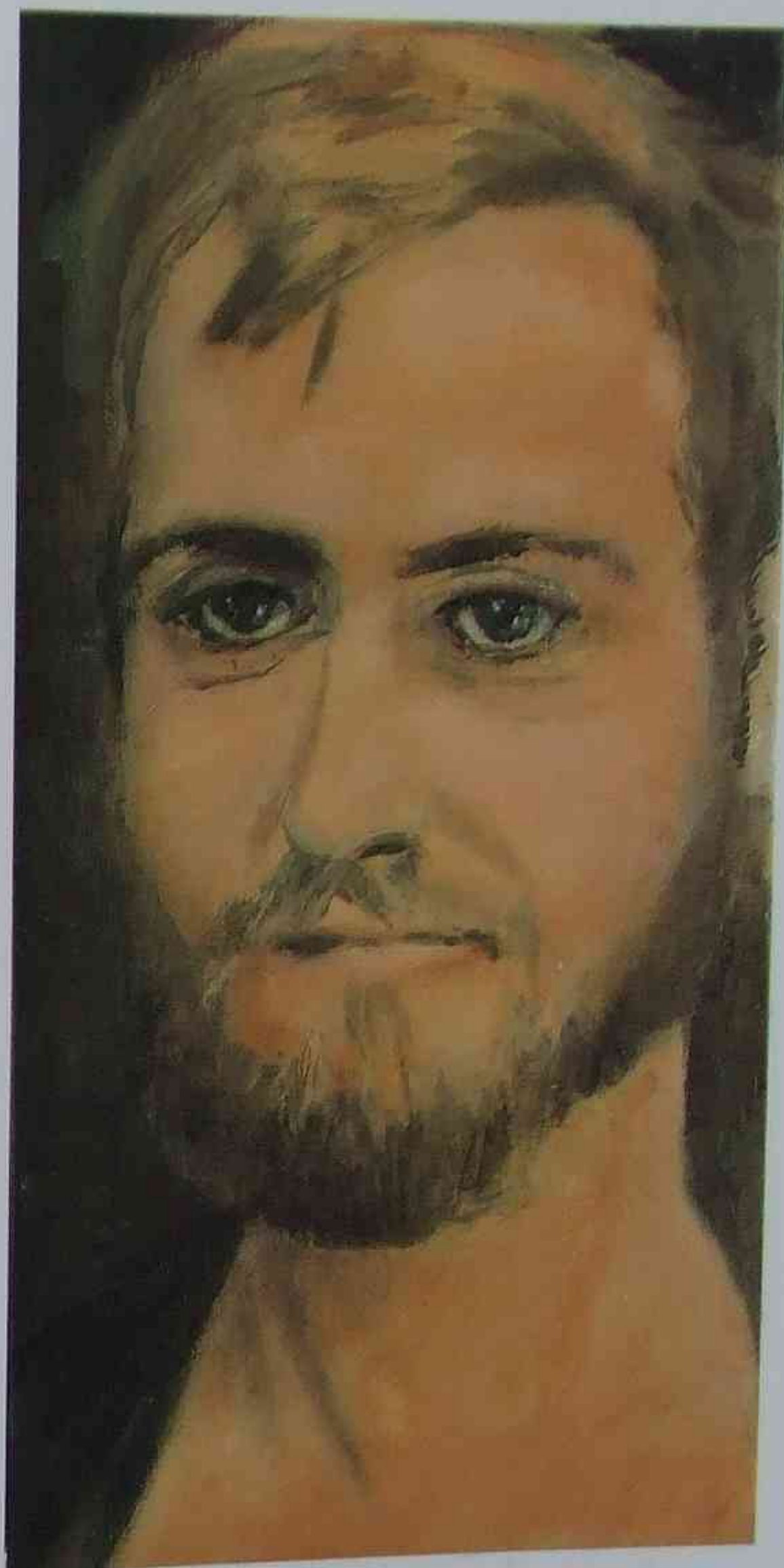
Tuymans' largest painting so far, *Still-life*, demonstrates the free handling of format that he has been developing since the late 1990s. Larger pictures started to appear for the first time in 1996, after a long period in which small images seemed to be a particular feature of his painting, something that has even been misinterpreted as 'pretentious humility'.⁹ The larger works clarify Tuymans' relationship with pictorial format: the experience of a 'paranoid' presence is generated in the imploding large formats just as much as in the small pictures, which make the space around them implode. While the motif is designed with a precise format in mind, the picture's presence and effect in the space begin to work independently of sheer size. In his exhibitions, Tuymans consciously plays with changing formats. In Kassel he exposes the *Still-life* to the little *Portrait* (2000, see page 213), which is only 56.5 x 30 cm. Here the image is centred by a sharply limited focus, which cuts into the right ear while at the same time showing large parts of the neck, as though a camera is taking a photograph too close to the face. The space around the picture becomes a space for moving towards the face. In *Still-life*, the objects lose themselves in a field that starts to spin out of control, no longer finding a fixed position in the space. In both cases the location of the image is precarious and not limited to the painted area.

Overview

In an overview of Tuymans' exhibitions from 1996 to 2002, one notes that the density and directness of the titles of Tuymans' solo shows are highly

appropriate to the effect of the individual images he displayed there. At the same time they outline, with self-analytical precision, the various fields in which painting, as a whole, has moved: threat, intensified to direct aggression, religion and ritual, taboo and understatement, political history and self-reflection: 'The Heritage' (David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 1996), 'Necklace' (Galerie Zeno X, Antwerp, 1996), 'Premonition' (Bern, Bordeaux, Berkeley, 1998), 'Der Architekt' (Galerie Gebauer, Berlin, 1998), 'Delayed' (Anders Tomberg Gallery, Lund, 1998), 'Privacy' (with Miroslav Balka, Fundação Serralves, Porto, 1998), 'Security' (David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 1998), 'The Passion' (Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, 1999), 'Splendid Isolation' (White Cube, London, 1999), 'The Purge' (Salzburger Kunstverein, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, 1999), 'The Promise' (Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, 2000), 'Undetermined' (Wako Works of Art, Tokyo, 2000), 'Sincerely' (Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo, 2000), 'Insolence' (Wako Works of Art, Tokyo, 2000), 'Signal' (Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2001), 'Mwana Kitoko', (David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2000, and Venice Biennale, 2001), 'The Rumour' (White Cube, London, 2001), 'Niks' (Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, 2002), and 'Mental Wrappings' (Kunstverein Hannover, 2003).

Tuymans has featured in many major painting exhibitions – including 'Examining Pictures' (Whitechapel Art Gallery, London 1999), 'Painting on the Move' (Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel 2002) – and in major shows like the Lyon Biennale (1997), Carnegie International (Pittsburgh 1999/2000), the Sydney Biennale (2000), twice



at the Venice Biennale (1999 and 2001) and at Documenta 11 (2002). Painting has always been central to his artistic practice, but he is increasingly exhibiting works in other media. In 'Premonition' (1998) the drawings were presented separately, comprehensively and independently for the first time. 'The Purge' (1999) included Polaroids and, in Wolfsburg, some excerpts from the early films. Temporary murals have appeared in various locations, some of them not specifically devoted to art. Tuymans records and comments on his painting in numerous interviews, essays, lectures and symposia, and as a permanent teacher at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Finally, he has often worked as curator of exhibitions and as co-founder of the NICC artists' initiative in Antwerp. In the late 1990s he increasingly combined the intimate practice of painting with the responsibilities of a public individual who is committed to the cultural-political debate in Flanders and beyond.

Missing the Real

Ulrich Loock's essay in this publication traces the development of Tuymans' work in the early years to 1995, identifying its operation in terms of the 'sign relations' of index, icon and symbol, and what he calls 'missing the real'. Loock states: *'What Tuymans achieves with his works until 1993 through clearly differentiated, individual major exhibitions is the deconstruction of painterly representation in its iconic and indexical aspects ... he begins where modernist painting made its fundamental gestures of destruction ... His mourning recommences with painterly representation itself, setting about to*

*bring it to an end, constructing its failure.'*⁹ Loock locates Tuymans' transition to the symbolic function as early as the exhibition 'Heimat' ('Home', 1995) at Zeno X Gallery in Antwerp, in which several works related directly to the prevalent Flemish nationalism. He also points out that symbolic representation no longer inevitably conveys social commitment. Here too, Loock sees the relationship to a historical 'reality' eroded by various painterly deconstruction processes, above all by the link with pure virtuality provided by the all-illuminating monitor image: *'The representation of symbols and the implicit dismantling of their ideology occurs alongside an absolute lack of any fundament, any possible controlling authority of reality. Tuymans himself sees this as analogous to the hollowness of nationalism.'*¹⁰

After the 'Heimat' exhibition the historical content becomes increasingly condensed. In large one-man shows like 'The Heritage' (1996), 'Mwana Kitoko' (2001) or 'Signal' (2001), Tuymans opens up complex political and historical ideas with intricate internal reference structures. This makes the 'missing the real' question all the more urgent.

Realizing History

Historical horror – and we are not referring only to the Holocaust – seems inexpressible. This would suggest that the picture has failed. Tuymans first attracted attention as an artist with his now famous pictures *Gas Chamber*, *Our New Quarters*, *Schwarzheide* (all 1986), and his portraits of Himmler and Heydrich. What was surprising was that he chose to address this perceived impossibility, especially since he had no direct

The Heritage IV
1996
Oil on canvas
200 x 125.5 cm
Collection The Museum of Modern
Art, New York



below, **The Heritage V**

1996

Oil on canvas

53.5 x 75 cm

opposite, **The Heritage VI**

1996

Oil on canvas

53 x 43.5 cm





Blessing
1996
Oil on canvas
143 x 187 cm
Collection Bonnefanten Museum,
Maastricht

autobiographical connection with the subject matter. To Tuymans, simply accepting the failure of the image had served only to suppress history further: *'the fascination here is actually that this theme is part of history and should not be banned from culture because people think the horror is too great and for this reason it would not be possible to come to terms with what happened.'*¹¹ In Tuymans' case, the deconstruction of the imitative function of painting cannot be resolved by mere self-reflectivity within the medium. For him, the image's failure does not end in the defeat of painting, or in permanent criticism of the medium. On the contrary, the real is still missing even now that painting has been confirmed and reinforced. The disturbing thing about his painterly approach is the possibility that strongly loaded content can still be addressed, even though imitation has failed. Ultimately, Tuymans' work does not concern itself with the failure of the painted image: he repeatedly takes the failure of memory and of current thinking about the unimaginable as far as he can. This does not happen by naively connecting up with the tradition of painting, but through a practice that constantly refracts painting through the experience of other media. Just as in *Gas Chamber* the yellowed paper of the drawing has become a central statement in distancing the painted picture, Tuymans' collaged photographic or filmic preparatory material, cardboard models or the luminosity of the computer monitor lead to new painterly solutions, like the extreme framing of the shots, which is

often due to the alternation of long shot and close-up in his camera settings.

In the case of the historically based works, it is not enough simply to talk about 'missing the real', however. It would be better to call it 'realizing' history under the conditions of the irredeemable. *'I see art as conscious personal perception'*, claimed Cézanne. *'I convert this perception into sensations (visual impressions) and require intelligence to shape these impressions into a work of art.'*¹² Cézanne's concept of 'realization' can also be applied to scenes from history, over and above the treatment of contemporary matters in still life, landscape and portrait. The image captures the past to the power of two, not as reality, but in a state of irrevocable and at the same time intolerable absence. The German word *Vergegenwärtigung* (recall) suggests something that is distant in memory as an event in the present (*Gegenwart*); in Tuymans' work, this eventful memory is constantly renewed, in unavoidable confrontation with the static image.

Metaphorically, formulated in linguistic terms, the unspeakable does not suspend speaking, but radicalizes the effort of outlining, encircling and indirectly determining the field of silence as sharply as possible. So Tuymans' images hit their mark through what is missing. They try 'to open up the conceptless with concepts, without making it equal to them', as Adorno formulated the utopia of cognition.¹³





opposite: Cindy
1996
Oil on canvas
179 x 164 cm
Collection Sammlung Goetz,
Munich

right: Dido
1996
Oil on canvas
69.5 x 43.5 cm
Collection Sammlung Goetz,
Munich



right, **Focus**

1996

Oil on canvas

147 × 76 cm

opposite, **G.I. Joe**

1996

Oil on canvas

68.5 × 62 cm

Collection Centre Georges

Pompidou, Paris







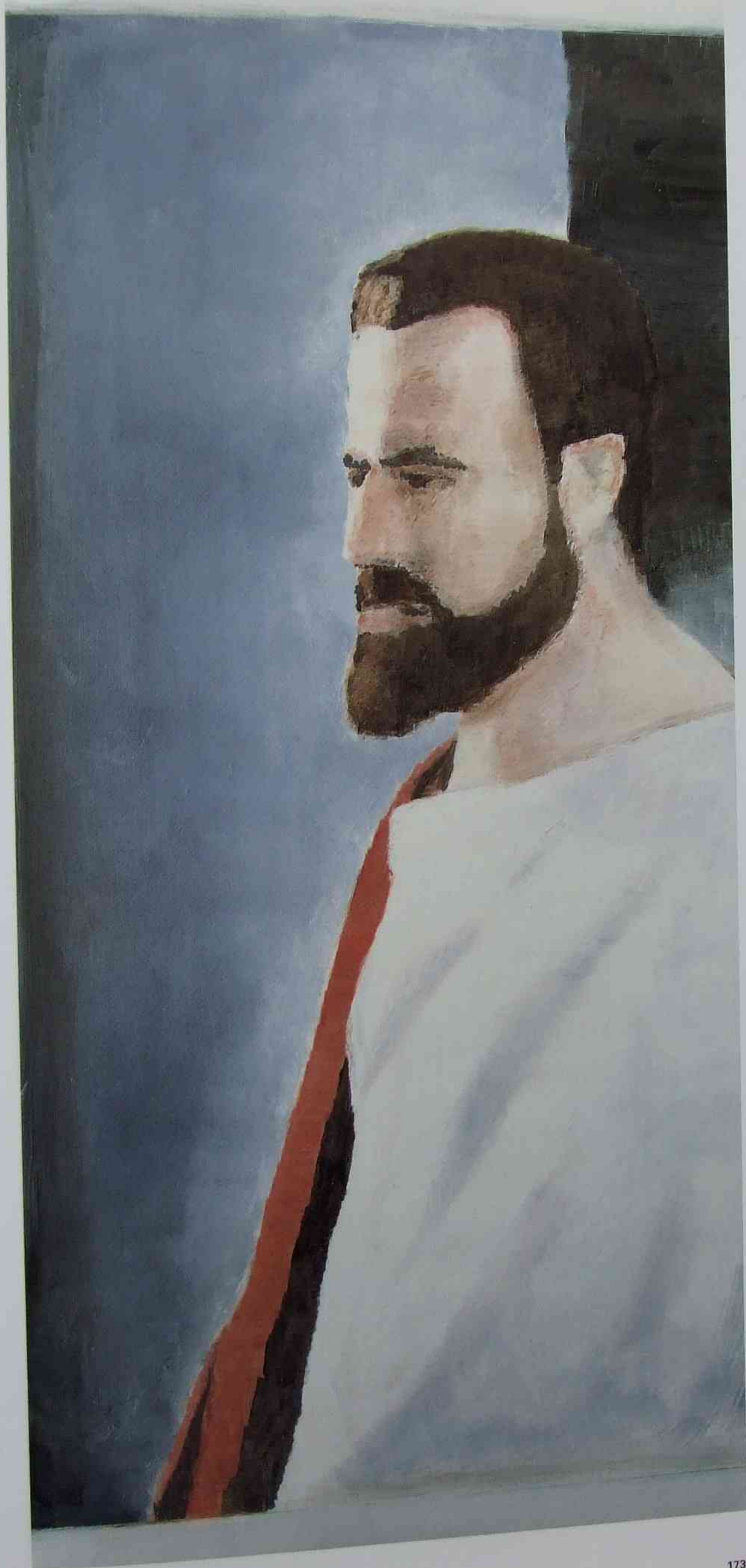
Mnemonic Images

Tuymans' painting condenses a comprehensive thought process. The crucial refraction of representation takes place even before the single image emerges by reflecting on facts relating to the content, which is always complex. His most elaborate work is not done in the act of painting itself, but in devising an image, which is chosen from countless models and developed further in a synthetic process, with analytical precision.

Tuymans does not realize history in terms of monumental, world-shaking scenes but rather in the traumatic – what Walter Benjamin called the 'lumpen' – details. Even the *Gas Chamber*, the epitome of the crime scene, shows nothing of the actual deed; it is the title that unexpectedly short-circuits the ordinariness of this view of a room with our knowledge of the horrors that took place there. The shock does not derive from what we actually see, but from that intolerable ambivalence between banality and horror that surrounds a terrible place of this kind.

Similarly, a series of works on the 360-year tradition of an Passion play in Oberammergau, Germany, included the portrait *Christ* (1998). The young man in three-quarter profile, with square-cut hair and beard, appears in an upright format, framed at the top and bottom by two white stripes that refer to the source of the image, a photograph from a book. The actor who plays Christ thus appears in an image that gives away its rhetorical background: as a document of the play. This conservative ritual with an unbroken tradition (held continually to this day, even under Fascism) is frozen in an actor's pose that could come from contemporary advertising. The image does not reflect the role of the protagonist, but the role in relation to the history of the ritual. As if to confirm this, suspended at the entrance to the exhibition 'The Passion' at Galerie Zeno X, Antwerp (1999) was a large black balloon with a panorama of the Oberammergau stage painted on it.

Apart from some single pictures, usually produced for gallery art fairs, each of the painted works is conceived in the context of a group of paintings, shown in a solo exhibition for a specific space. As a rule they are executed very quickly, usually in one day, but devising an exhibition can extend over months or years. Understanding the individual works in their primary context usually determines their reception. They are only detached from this original context in retrospective exhibitions, where they appear in new surroundings and thus acquire new layers of meaning. This interlinking and expansion of meaning can be examined against the background of the 'Signal' exhibition held at the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin in 2001.



opposite, Oberammergau
1899
Synthetic paint on polyester
sphere
D: 150 cm
right, Christ
1998
oil on canvas
122.5 x 58 cm

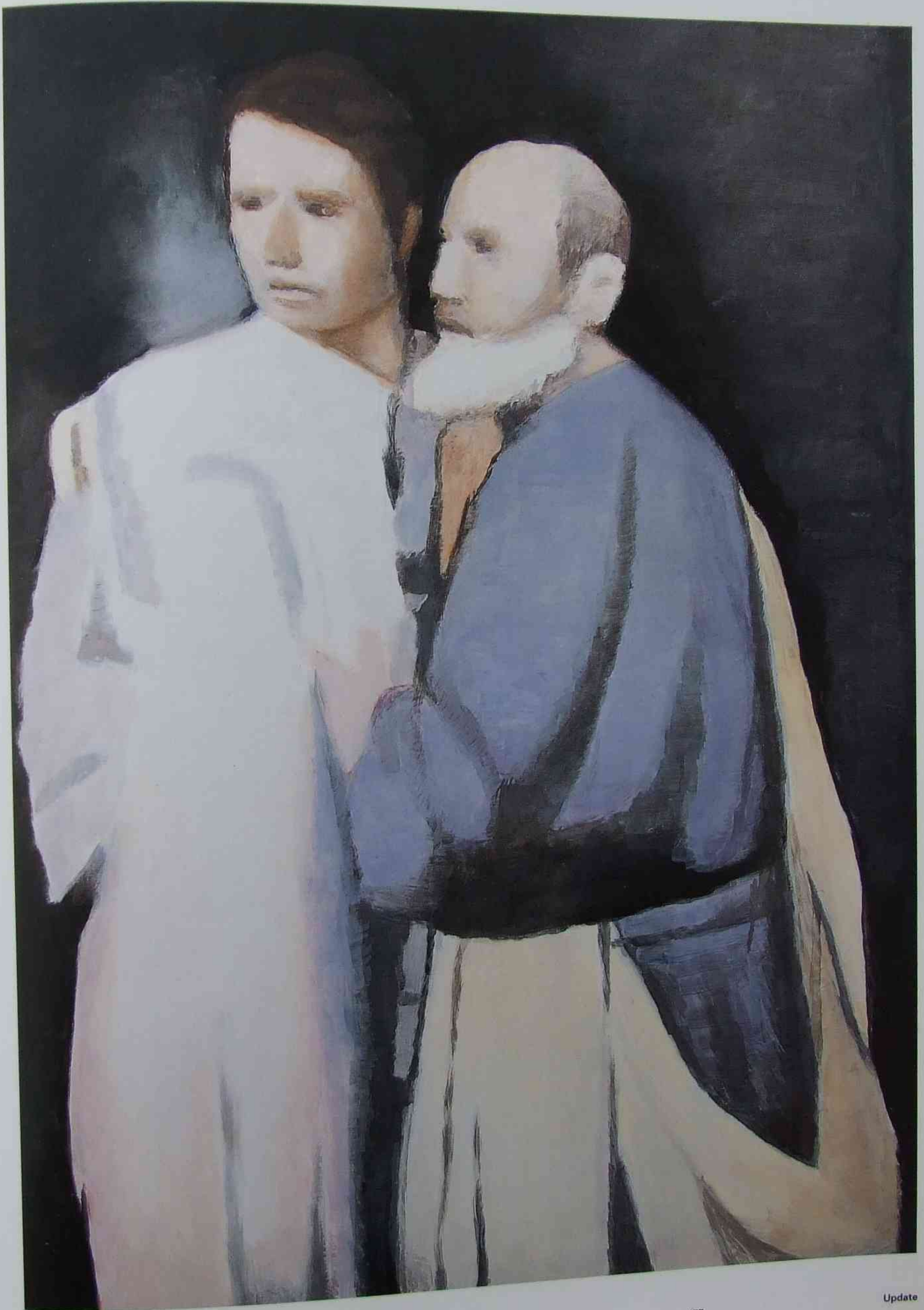


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right, Judas
1999
Oil on canvas
45 x 31.5 cm
Collection Louisiana Museum,
Humlebaek, Denmark

opposite, Gold
1999
Oil on canvas
187.5 x 90.5 cm





below, **The Architect**

1997

Oil on canvas

113 × 144.5 cm

Collection Staatliche

Kunstsammlungen, Dresden

opposite, **Himmler**

1998

Oil on canvas

51.5 × 36 cm

Collection Kunstmuseum,

Wolfsburg

Realizing History 1

'Signal' starts with *The Architect* (1997), originally shown in the exhibition of the same name held at the Galerie Gebauer in Berlin (1997). Painted from a still taken from a private film of Albert Speer, it shows the 'architect' having fallen over while skiing. His look back at the camera is masked by

a white patch placed over his face; this creates an empty space in the significance of the image, like a brighter opening within the excessive brightness of the gleaming snow. This tiny omission in the representation alone is enough to cause apparent harmlessness to tip into threat, initially with no recognizable reason. The banality of the situation







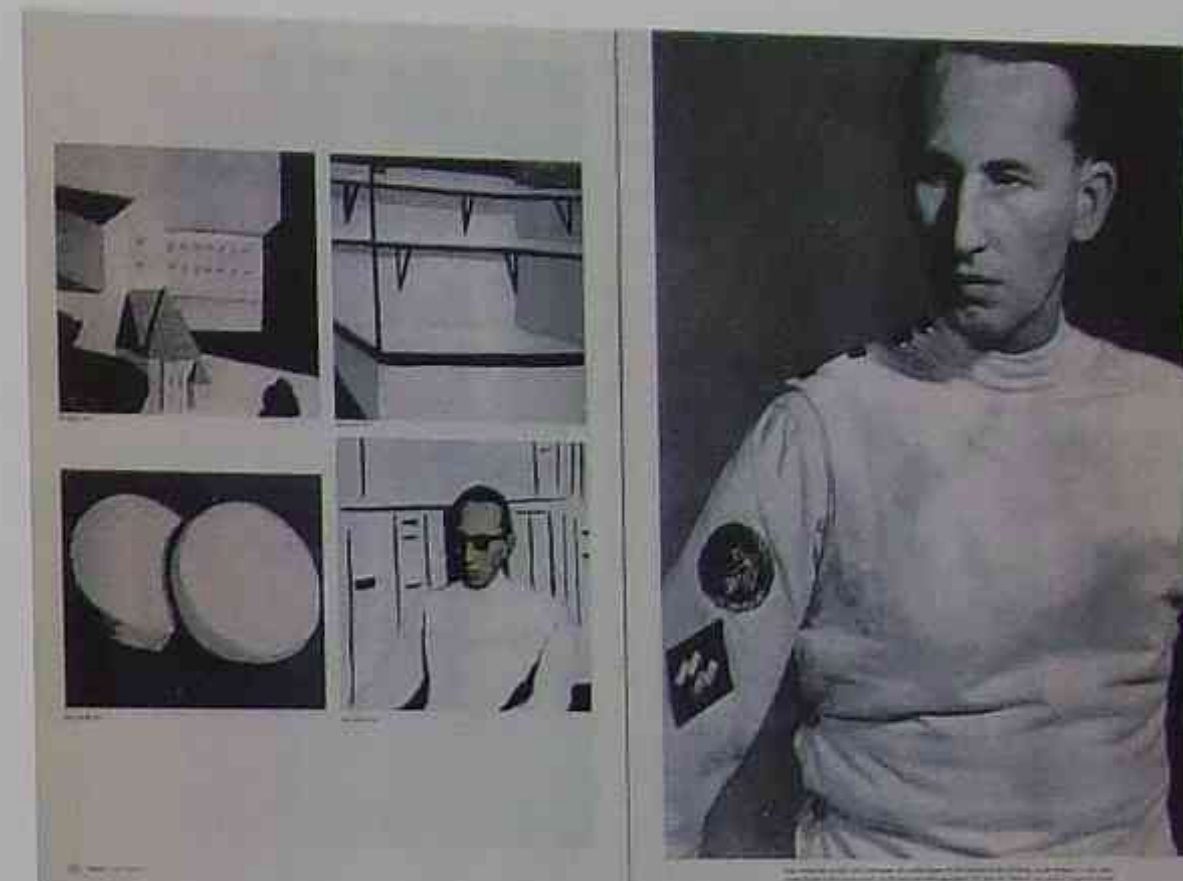
Maypole
2000
Oil on canvas
234 x 116 cm

– a skier, fallen over in the snow – is detached from its timelessness by its context, the picture's title and the other works in the exhibition. The individual image conveys its meaning in a state of latency, like an uneasy premonition. The meaning is unleashed when the discourse with the other works in the exhibition – a discussion that Tuymans often heightens with his oral and written commentaries – cuts across this relaxed, private scene from a winter holiday. *The Architect* is confronted by the shadowy figure of *Himmler* (1998) and is also connected with the collage portrait of Heydrich from the four-part series *Time IV* (1988), whose expression is switched off by the addition of a pair of sunglasses. Images like the very early work *Auschwitz* (1978), like *Gas Chamber*, *Schwarzheide*, *Our New Quarters*, *The Reparation* (1989), *Latrines* (1991), *Recherches* (1998) and *Maypole* (2000) relate directly to the Holocaust, while *Gold* (1999) or *Judas, Petrus & Paulus* from the Oberammergau Passion cycle (1999), linked with Flemish nationalism in *Ijzertoren* (1995), define a further and more current field of ideologies.

The grand design for the 'final solution' catches up with the author of the great Fascist architectural plan on his skiing holiday. The gleaming white that surrounds the slightly eccentrically placed figure of the architect loses its immaculate quality and burns into the image as an increasingly aggressive brightness. In Tuymans' picture the architect of the Nazis' showcase buildings returns to the former centre of their power like a phantom, plaguing those who were born later. The numerous press responses to the

exhibition addressed the difficulties of this confrontation. The alienating 'coldness and indifference in his painterly transformation of the models', as diagnosed in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*,¹⁴ evaluates the elements of painterly distancing in moral terms. However, the ethically explosive quality of Tuymans' images does not derive from their indifference, but from the ruthlessness with which they confront the ambivalence of fascination, horror and detestation aroused by systematic alienation. Handling this ambivalence requires more than the expected moral indignation. It impinges on taboo and insists that we examine our own readiness to be seduced by images. In the exhibition catalogue, Tuymans confronts his Heydrich portrait with a full-page photograph of the SS officer in an elegant white fencing suit. Here for once we do not have a repetition of the usual view of the ugly Nazi: the man's elegance is as breathtaking as his crimes. By painting a pair of black sunglasses onto the portrait, Tuymans exaggerates this modernity of appearance and at the same time alienates his look by adding an insect-like quality: 'the figure moves between seductive phantom and monster. Our fascination, always secret, with perpetrators goes hand in hand in our spectacle-ridden society, with "voyeurism" and an absurd interest in human suffering that presents itself like a modern form of cannibalism.'¹⁵

The catalogue borrows the format and layout of an issue of *Signal* magazine, printed in several languages and sold from 1942 to 1945 in 'friendly countries' by the National Socialists for propaganda purposes. The graphic design was



l. to r., Ecover

1998

Oil on canvas

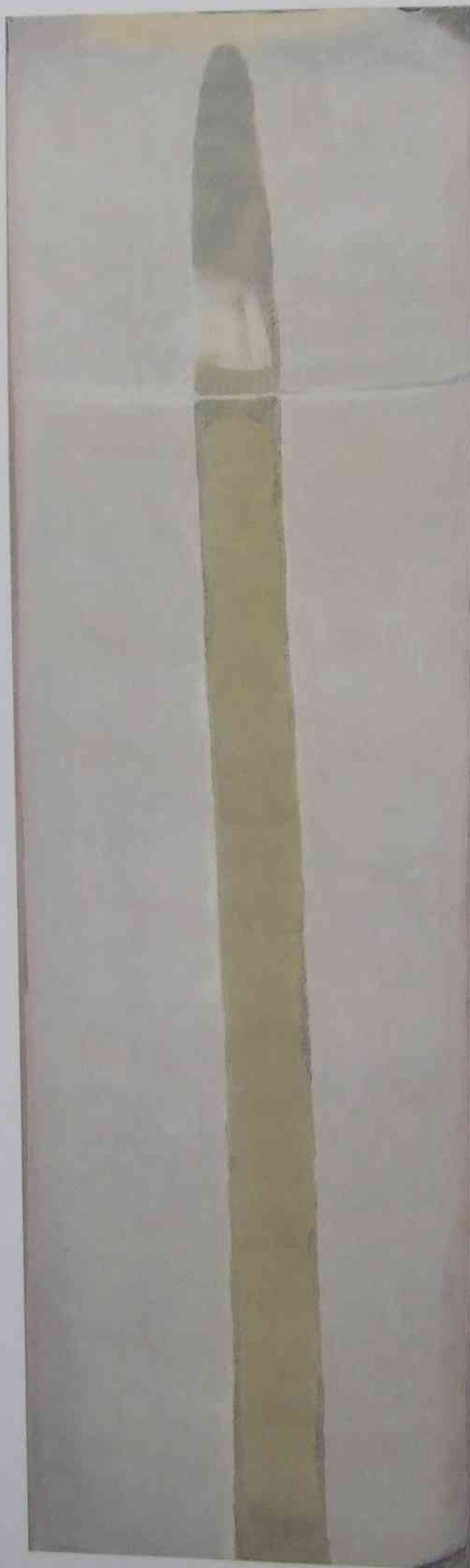
183 × 55 cm

Man Drinking

1998

Oil on canvas

61 × 46 cm



l. to r., Die Blaue Eiche

1998

Oil on canvas

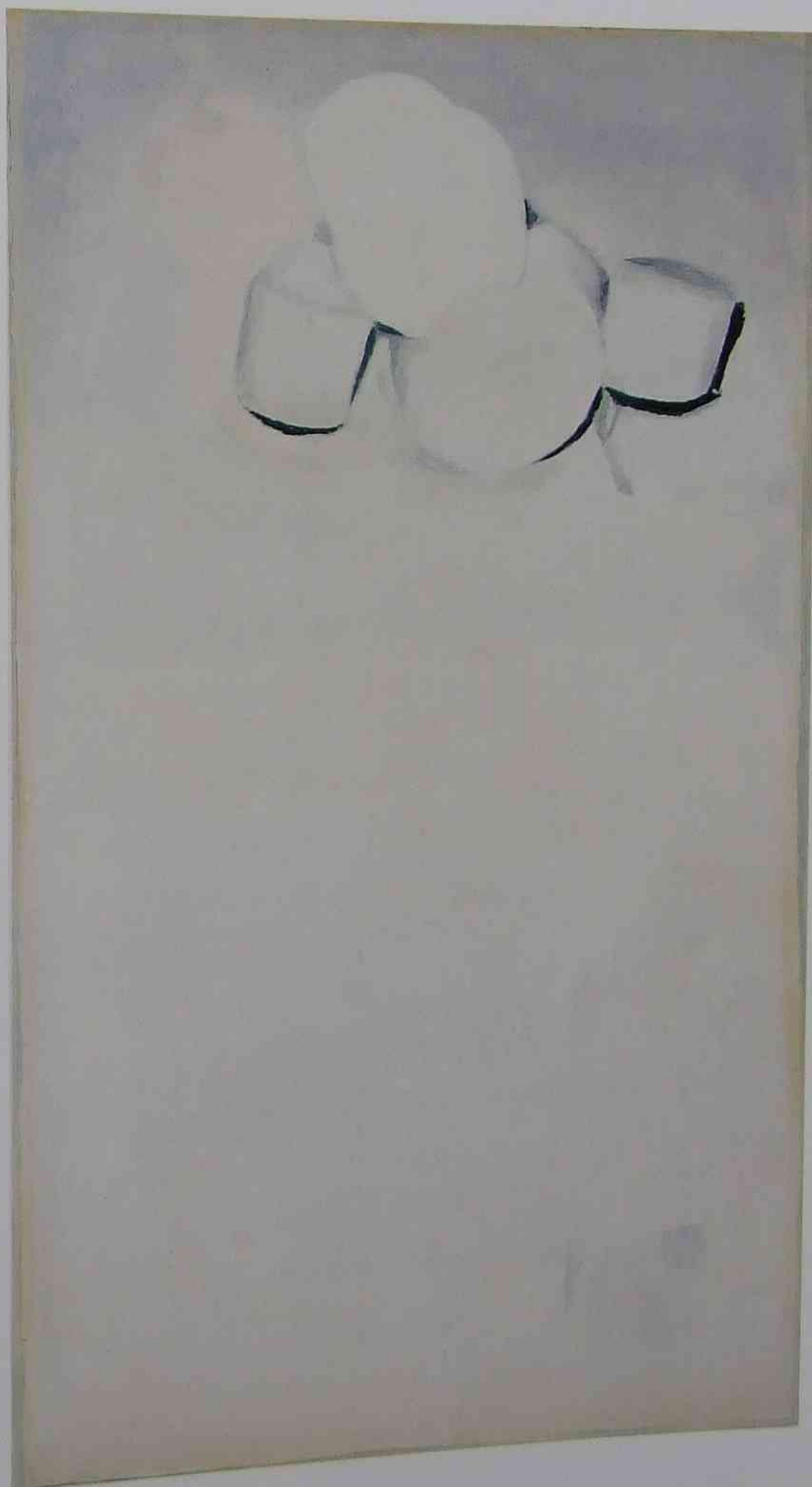
176.5 × 105 cm

Drumset

1998

Oil on canvas

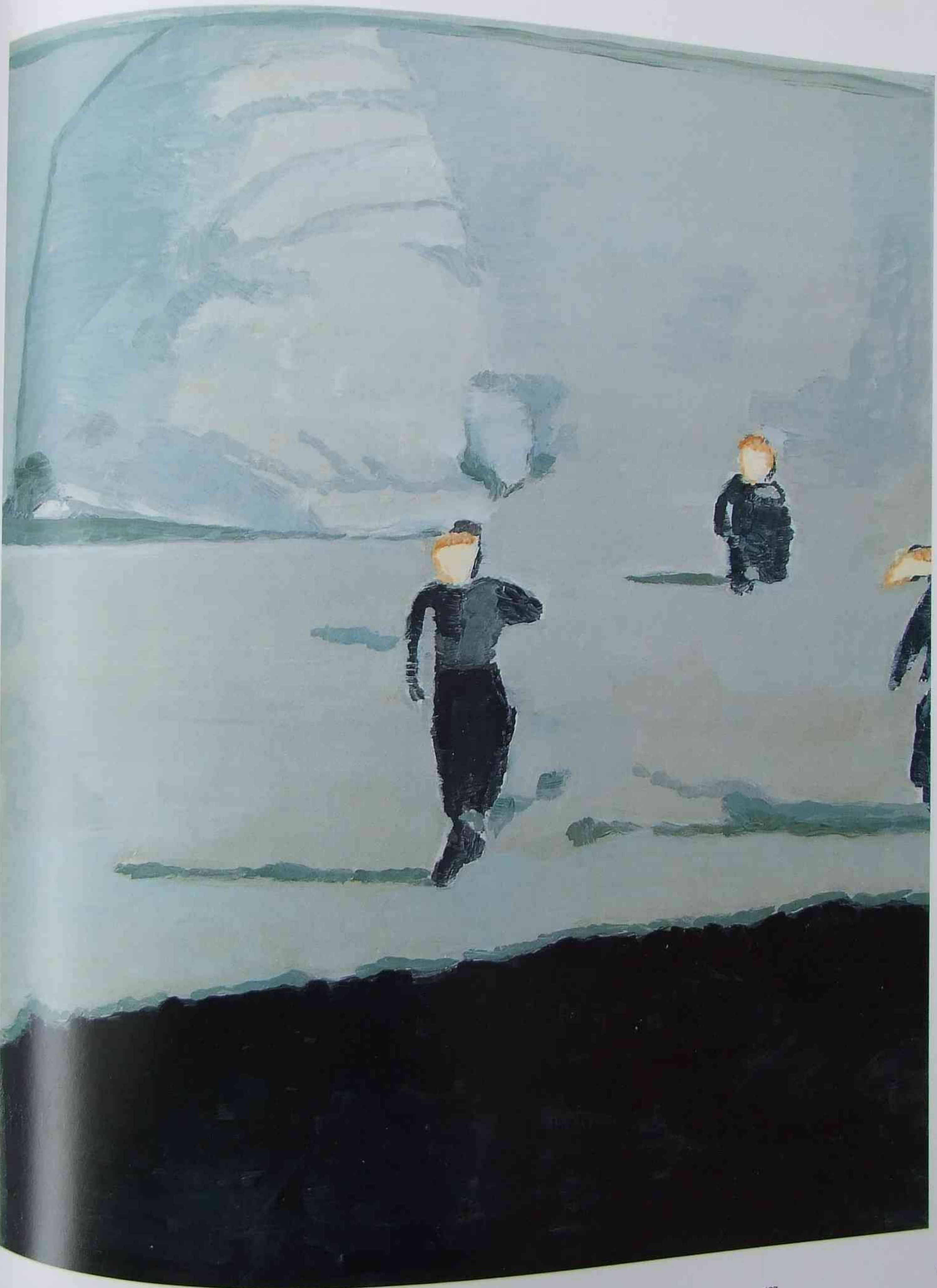
194.5 × 121.5 cm





left, Muur Witte
1998
Oil on canvas
134,5 x 102 cm
Collection Kunstmuseum,
Wolfsburg

opposite, Parachutisten
1998
Oil on canvas
61 x 50 cm
Collection Sammlung Goetz,
Munich



right, Passe-Partout

1998

Oil on canvas

203 × 72.5 cm

Collection Hirshhorn Museum and
Sculpture Garden, Washington

D.C.

opposite, Shirt

1999

Oil on canvas

116.5 × 101.5 cm







opposite, Soldier
1999
Oil on canvas
60 × 50 cm
Collection Art Institute, Chicago

left, Cosmetics
2000
Oil on canvas
85.5 × 59.5 cm







opposite, TV Set

1999

Oil on canvas

82.5 × 81 cm

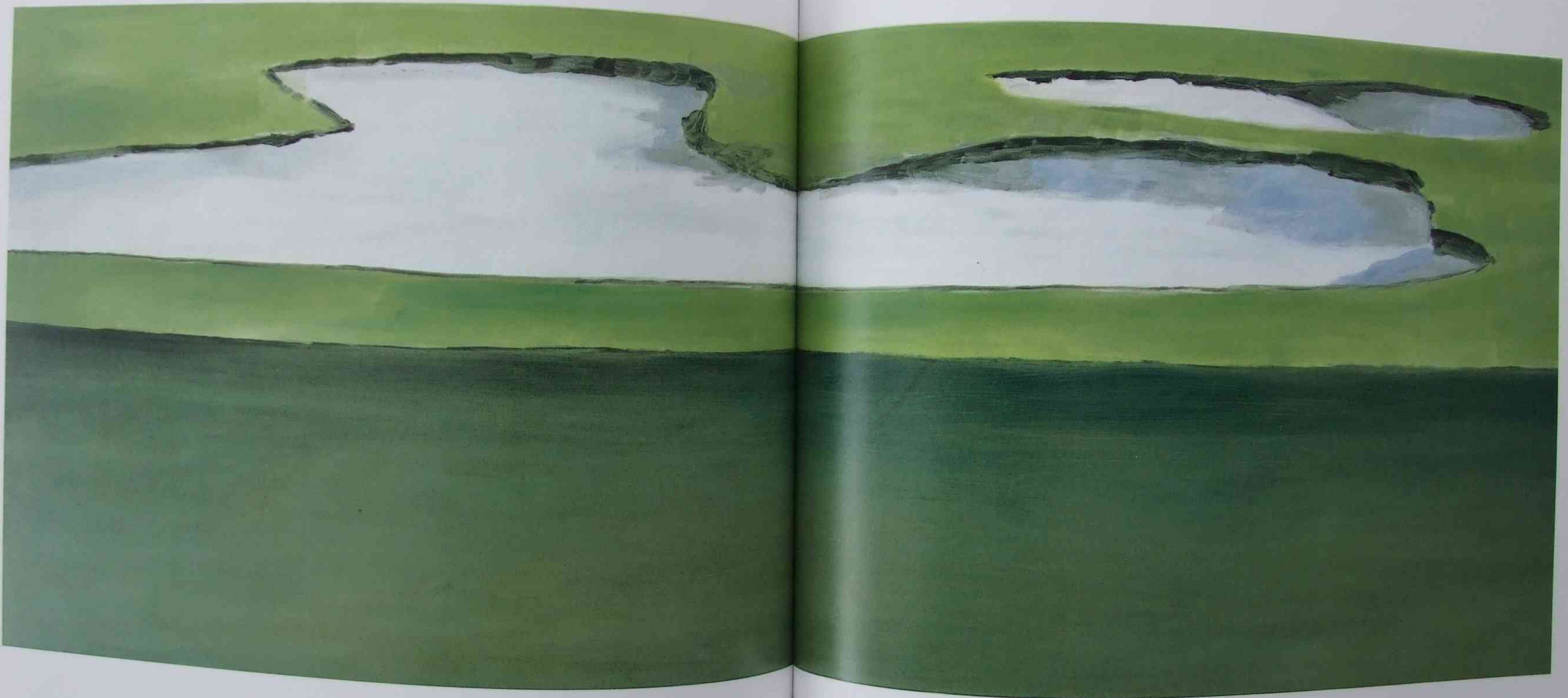
left, First Communion

1999

Oil on canvas

77 × 44.5 cm

Golf Court
1994
Oil on canvas
38 x 102 cm





Hans van Meegeren
Christ at Emmaus
1937
Oil on canvas
117 × 129 cm

highly up-to-date and borrowed from *Paris-Match* magazine. *Signal* was one of the first magazines to print photographs 'using the linotype process, in which the areas of colour are printed one on top of the other. All very elaborate and expensive, and so out of the question today. This process gives the images a very painterly quality.'¹⁶ Fitting Tuymans' own pictures into the layout of the Nazi magazine triggered a shattering examination of painterly aesthetics. The booklet for *Maypole* (2000), contained a reproduction of a painting that was originally illustrated in *Signal* magazine:¹⁷ a double dissolve of a German village idyll, cast in a subversive light through juxtaposition on a double page with the painted *Gold* (1999). Tuymans also addresses directly the relationship between National Socialism and high finance, by placing his *Judas* alongside historical newspaper advertisements for the Deutsche Bank, the motor industry and Siemens. By treating historical documents in the same way as paintings in the catalogue he demonstrates the anachronism of both pictorial worlds in their alarming topicality. At the same time the painting declares its specific difference from the document: painting is an autonomous realization of history with the status of the 'authentic fake'. In his foreword to the *Signal* catalogue, Tuymans also comments on the relationship of his picture *Petrus & Paulus* (1998) to the *Christ at Emmaus* (1937) by the forger Hans van Meegeren.¹⁸ Finally, Tuymans sees a relationship with the films of Hans Jürgen Syberberg in the treatment of the document; these were shown in the Hamburger Bahnhof to accompany the exhibition.

Tuymans originally planned to hang his Holocaust pictures in the conference room in the Villa am Wannsee, Berlin, where, in 1942, Heydrich had arrived at a consensus about 'the practical implementation of the final solution of the Jewish question' in a scant two hours. However this project was abandoned, and not solely on practical grounds: the presentation in the villa would have been an attempt to lend a new significance, through works of art, to the location of that historical decision. This would have been 'presumptuous, a delusion ... one interprets history as an artist, one does not write it oneself'.¹⁹ Additionally, dissolving the images visually into the historic site would have brought about a misunderstanding of the painting, which creates its own location as a 'realization' of history, and this can develop a more explosive quality in the specific art context of an urban museum.

In the end the historical location was included in the concept of the exhibition in the form of a colloquium²⁰ and with the publication of *Signal*. In the museum, new spaces are opened up to history, far from the scenes of the crimes, by painting that has overcome any sense of illusion about itself, in terms of spatial conception and in its irrevocable lateness vis-à-vis historical events.

The figure of Adolf Eichmann, who as head of the SS Reich Security Service was the pragmatic planner of the final solution, can be summoned here to constitute a link between the Wannsee conference and Tuymans' mnemonic images. As Hannah Arendt demonstrates impressively in her book on Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem, the most

frightening thing about him was his 'normality': 'But the disturbing thing about the person of Eichmann was precisely that he was like many others, and that these many others were and are neither perverse nor sadistic, but horribly and horrifyingly normal [...] On Eichmann's lips, terrible things did not even seem macabre any more, but markedly comical. Eichmann's heroic struggle with the German language, in which he regularly lost, is also comical.'²¹ The banality with which the 'final solution' was planned and implemented does not cancel out the fact that it is impossible to represent horror, but compels us to shift away from the mind-set of the absolute exception. The unimaginable came about through the offices of the normal, and is all the more disturbing for precisely that reason. This explains the ambivalence in many of Tuymans' works. In her final summing up against Eichmann, Arendt detaches the question of guilt from relativization by the circumstances and decides it on the basis of the deed: 'You have ... said that your role in the "final solution of the Jewish question" came about by chance and that scarcely anyone in your position would have acted differently, indeed that more or less any German could have been entrusted with the same task. This would lead to the conclusion that all Germans are as guilty as you are, and what you actually intended it to mean was naturally that where everyone, or almost everyone, is guilty, then no one is guilty. In fact this is a widely held opinion, and one that we are not prepared to accept ... Whatever chances of an internal or external nature may have placed you on the path that then made you a criminal – an unbridgeable gulf lies between

*what you actually did and what others might possibly have done under the same circumstances. All we are concerned with here are your actual actions, and not the possible non-criminal nature of your inner life and your motives, nor the possible criminal inclinations of the context in which you were.'*²²

Context 1: Luc Tuymans and *October 18, 1977* by Gerhard Richter

Gerhard Richter's outstanding position in the painting discourse of recent decades would seem to warrant a discussion of Tuymans' work in relation to his development. But work based on photographs or on painting's self-reflection alone are not sufficient to justify such an examination. However, the fifteen-part cycle *October 18, 1977* (1988), which occupies an important and completely independent position within Richter's oeuvre, does offer itself for comparison, since here Richter is similarly taking up a central and heavily charged theme in contemporary German art in order to expose it to his painterly doubts. Whether the deaths of the Red Army Faction leaders in Stammheim prison in Stuttgart – the subject of Richter's work – was suicide or judicial murder is still argued today, and the events shook and polarized Germany as few experiences had done since the end of the World War II. It can by no means be taken for granted that Richter should take on such politically and ideologically charged subject matter.²³ It is known that he considered painting concentration camp pictures based on photographic material, but finally decided they were unpaintable, 'and having decided this was so,

Gerhard Richter
Record Player (from the series
October 18, 1977)
1988
Oil on canvas
62 × 83 cm



L. to r., **Hair**

2000

Oil on canvas

142 x 74 cm

Collection Kunstmuseum

Wolfsburg

Hands

2000

Oil on canvas

62 x 53 cm



l. to r., Shower
2000
Oil on canvas
133 × 52 cm
Collection Museum für Moderne
Kunst, Frankfurt

Leopoldville
2000
Oil on canvas
55 × 84 cm





he pasted [the photographs] together with the pornography pictures as if one obscenity deserved another, except that the two groupings of images remain wholly incommensurable. Richter thus shockingly juxtaposes romping nudes and corpses – a juxtaposition he himself called “weird and seemingly cynical” – in a manner so disorienting that the viewer is forced to look at the “familiar” atrocities of the Holocaust with fresh eyes.²⁴ A shocking shift of viewpoint of this kind seems close to Tuymans’ practice. But it is crucial that Richter did not create this confrontation in painting. In his work, the painted image is subject to a comprehensive rhetoric of distancing, which does not seek to shock or fascinate, but to look for something that is more like contemplation. This is seen particularly clearly in the *October* cycle. When reformulated in paint, the deeply affecting police photographs become still, almost sublime images: ‘Perhaps I can describe the difference like this: in this particular case, I’d say the photograph provokes horror, and the painting – with the same motif – something more like grief. That comes very close to what I intended.’²⁵ And it is not just the recumbent corpses, even the record player is surrounded by an aura of unprevented – not necessarily unpreventable – tragedy. Robert Storr sees Richter in the role of Antigone, covering the corpse of her brother with ash, ‘but he has not presumed to remove from sight what it is not in his power to lay to rest. Quite the contrary: with his austere, perplexing, prodding, and relentless self-critical art, he has made them more visible.’²⁶

For Tuymans the October events are ‘a story that offers itself to be ill-treated ideologically.

I have a great deal of respect for this work by Gerhard Richter, precisely because he does not judge as a painter here, but makes himself incredibly positioned and open to attack by not positioning himself.’²⁷ Tuymans always places his own themes in a broad political context, and he too rejects any one-dimensional political message. ‘When you see Richter’s *October* series live, you realize that at a certain point the act of painting disappears for its author, that he cancels himself. Creating a series that closes up in itself like a vacuum is something that appeals to me very much. In several small sequences there is an exciting narration in slow motion that is more from the world of film than photography. But the first picture in particular has always astonished me: the cycle starts like a family album with a portrait of Ulrike Meinhof as a teenager. It is the beginning of this story, but it could also be the starting point for many other stories. In the family album, the material quality of photography is very important, the shiny surfaces, but also the idea of the intimate document. The record player is an icon of the private sphere – though a record player would never have this romantic quality for me, it would have to be some record player or other. One of the difficulties of Richter’s work perhaps lies in intimacy: the post-war generation’s terrorist response to Germany’s speechlessness after World War II and the middle-class fear of terrorism seem domesticated in the family context, even if there is also a certain sense of turning the recumbent corpses into heroes. But the *October* cycle is certainly Richter’s most existential work, thrown back late at the historical figures, like an image from memory, a copy.’²⁸



L. to r., *Mwana Kitoko*

2000

Oil on canvas

208 × 90 cm

Collection SMAK - Stedelijk

Museum voor Actuele Kunst,

Ghent

Sculpture

2000

Oil on canvas

155 × 64 cm

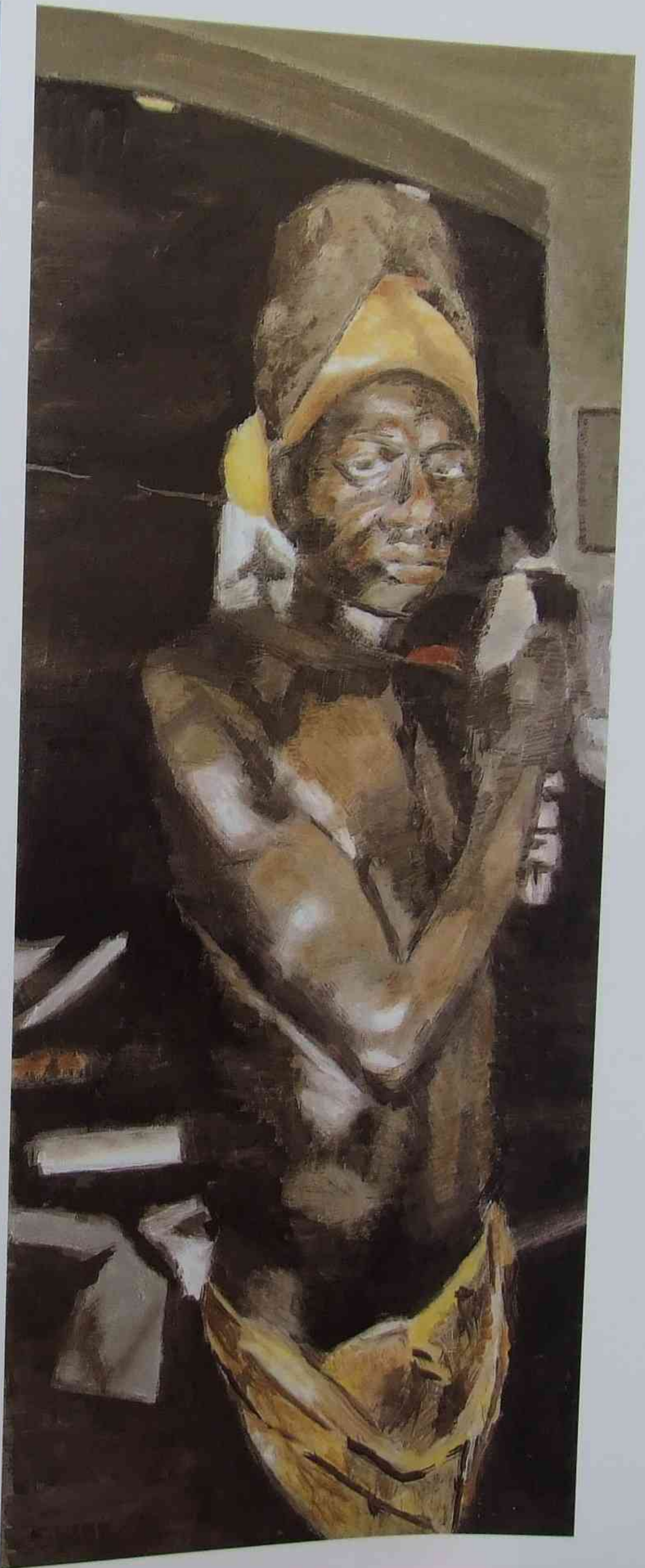
Richter takes the corpses directly from the photographs he has selected,²⁹ then hides them behind a finely unfocused veil, which rescues them again. The recumbent bodies open up a panoramic view like landscapes. In contrast with this, Tuymans' works with confrontation, with hard focus on detail; starting with clues and traces, he conducts a postmortem of selected historical moments. He deliberately introduces shocking elements to increase the viewer's distance from the picture and at the same time to cancel it out in a relationship of persistent fascination. Tuymans' way of painting is correspondingly rawer, more direct in its exchanges: *'There is something unashamed about the brushstrokes in my work. Everything is painted, while Gerhard Richter imposes form through painting. Richter's shadows are modelled, mine are painted as clear lines, very sharp. I am only trying to do what painting has always done, nothing extraordinary, I am pursuing a habit rather than an attitude. In my work the vanity of painting shows not least in the holes in the image, which are created by shortening the brushstrokes and the use of dots.'*³⁰

A sense of tragedy can creep into Tuymans' painting, as if the deed has not yet taken place, nor is fatefully imminent, but is happening again, in a contradictorily anachronistic process, through painting. The recycling of the pictorial content becomes a re-staging. In *Chalk* (2000), the murdered Patrice Lumumba³¹ appears only in the form of the two teeth that a Belgian secret service agent rescued with black gloves from the acid bath in which the corpse was being disposed of. This macabre gesture recommitting the crime; the

body reappears in the act of obliteration. The picture tells of a fetishistic relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, of whom every trace is to be eliminated for posterity, only to gain an even stronger, magical, obsessively attractive physical presence simply in the form of the two surviving teeth. In this context, Tuymans remembers Lumumba's farewell letter to his family. Here, he expresses a presentiment of death, mentioning that he is aware that his murder will make him an icon.³² Tuymans saw it as a challenge to his painting skills to turn this icon back into a picture.

Realizing History 2: The Topologies of Venice and Kassel

In Tuymans' exhibition 'Mwana Kitoko' for the Belgian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2001, the portrait *Lumumba* (2000), showing the lively but also extremely vulnerable face of the African intellectual above a black suit and tie,³³ was placed opposite the almost full-figure portrait of King Baudouin, *Mwana Kitoko* (Beautiful White Man, 2000). The king, in white naval uniform, stiffly clutching his sword, is getting out of his plane and entering his territory in the Congo in 1950. The face is concealed by a peaked cap and sunglasses, the masking anonymity of colonial power. A third body appears in *Sculpture* (2000), in the figure of a naked black man; painted from a wooden statue in an Antwerp restaurant, the expression becomes astonishingly lifelike, seen from slightly below and contrasting strangely with the artificial gleam of his wooden body. Frantz Fanon described this look back at the voyeur of the exotic in *Les damnés de la*

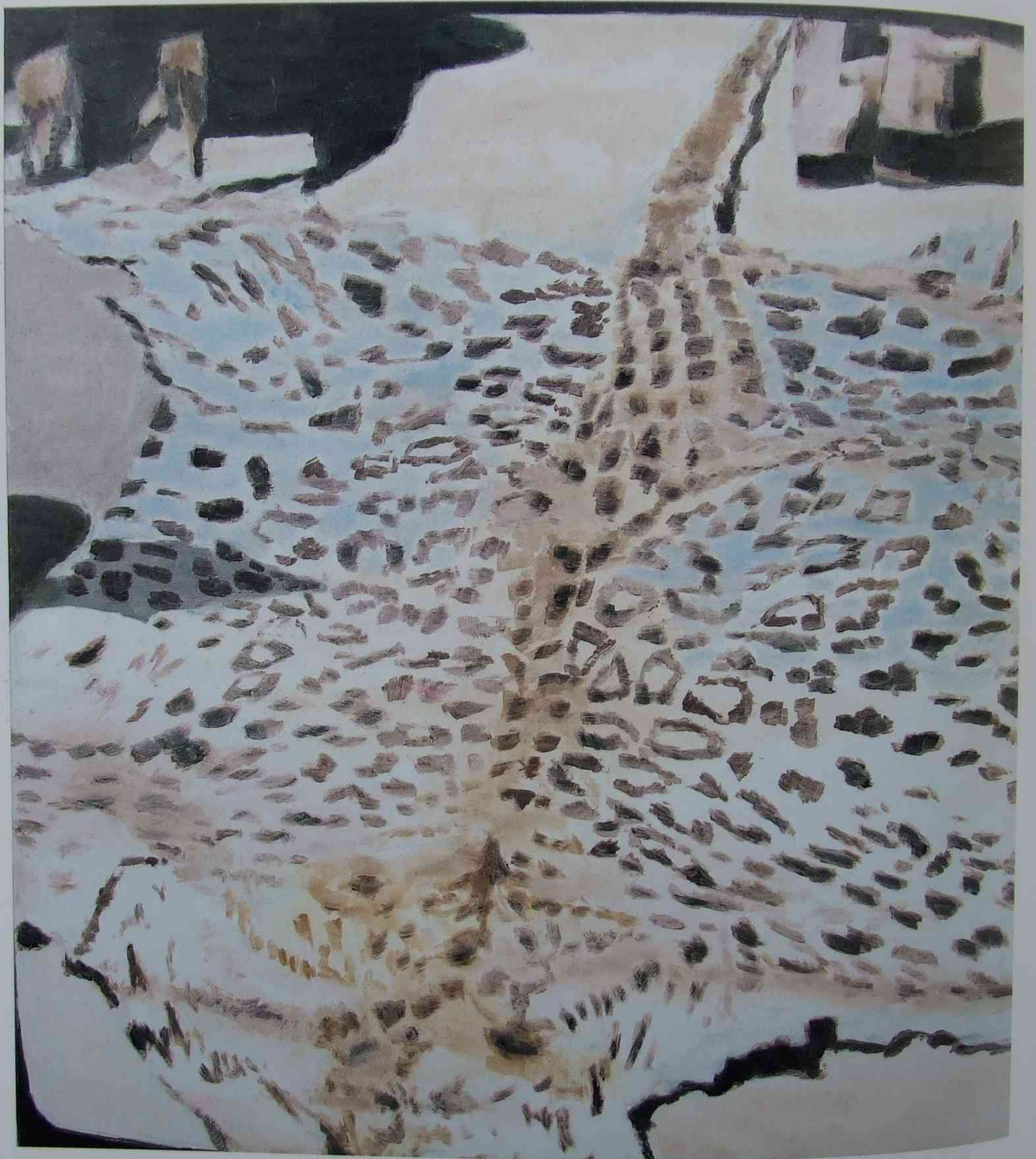






opposite, Lumumba
2000
Oil on canvas
62 x 46 cm
Collection The Museum of Modern
Art, New York

above, Tsjombe
2000
Oil on canvas
73 x 108 cm





opposite, Leopard
2000
Oil on canvas
142 × 129 cm
Collection Solomon R.
Guggenheim Museum, New York

above, l. to r., Chalk
2000
Oil on canvas
72.5 × 61.5 cm

Diorama
2001
Oil on canvas
296 × 285 cm

Lungs
1998
Oil on canvas
158 × 95.5 cm

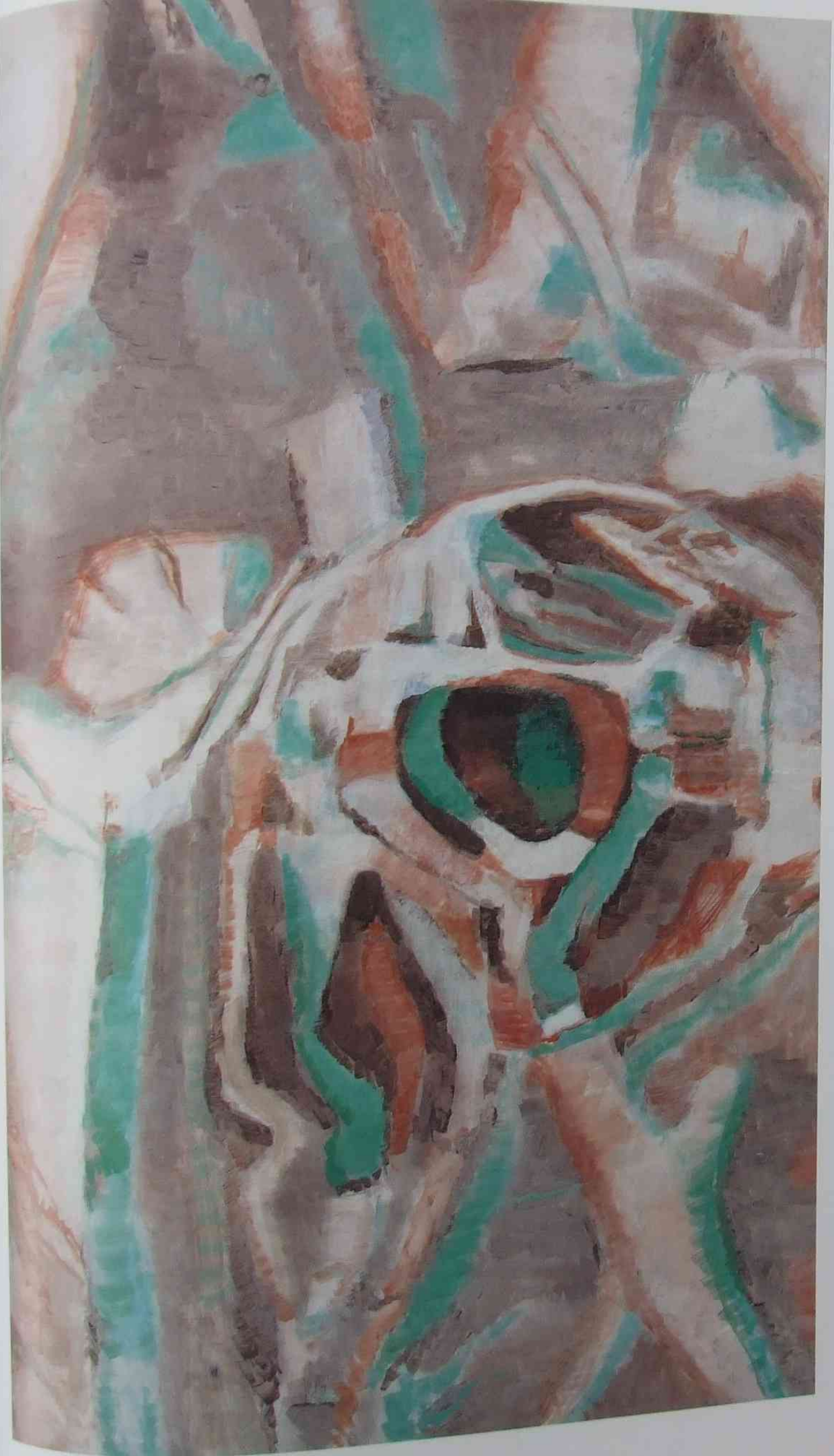
terre (1961): 'If, indeed, my life has the same weight as that of the colonist, its look does not strike me down any more. I am not disturbed in his presence any more. Practically, fuck him. Not only doesn't his presence obstruct me any more, but I am already preparing ambushes so that his only escape will be to take flight.'³⁴ In *Tjombe* (2002), Lumumba's murderers emerge as mere shadows, while in *Leopard* (2000), the spotted coat appears as both a symbol of rule in Africa and as an abstract painting field. Tuymans chose this still from a propaganda film of King Baudouin in which two hands are seen very close to the top edge of the image, ready to roll the skin up again as soon as the king has passed over it. Along with *Chalk*, these images open up an intellectual space between dazzling light and depths of shadow that refracts colonial power and black expression back to individual bodies and the body of the image.

Diorama (2001) was in the back room of the pavilion, simultaneously the end point and the starting point of the whole topology. An immense, darkly engulfing surface shows a rhinoceros indistinctly in the foreground, stepping out of the bush. This extends the exhibition space into the illusionistic depths of a diorama, into the dim twilight of a painted showcase. The viewer would have been reminded of the royal family's great trophy collection in The Royal Museum of Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium. This cultural document in a palace park on the outskirts of Brussels is also an incomparable monument to barbarism – the exotic theme park was set up in Tervuren with money from exploitative and brutal ivory and rubber production. Ultimately Tuymans'

contribution in Venice was undertaken in the context of a Parliamentary commission of enquiry investigating the co-responsibility of Belgian policies and the royal family for Lumumba's murder. This involvement has since been proved.

'Mwana Kitoko' is not a closed cycle, but a topology of ideas fragmented into individual images. A series of older works were arranged around the core of the Congo pictures at the Biennale, continuing among other things the idea of the body in different states of presence and withdrawal: *Body* (1990), *Silence* (1991), *Der diagnostische Blick IV* (1992), *Pillows*, *Superstition*, *The Leg* (all 1994), *Lungs* (1998), *Reuntgen* and *Portrait* (both 2000). This grouping does not make up a long shot; it is more like a set of corresponding close-ups. Ultimately Tuymans' growing oeuvre offers the whole range of possible meanings.

Returning to Documenta 11, *Still-life* has been discussed in detail above. *Portrait* (2000) and *Backyard* (2002) also make explicit reference to a traditional genre – the portrait and the landscape respectively – forming a discourse about painting, a medium that has for some time been freed from any illusion about its historical and anachronistic status amongst today's media. Tuymans uses this element of obvious belatedness subversively in order to show the panel picture as an icon of the intimate bourgeois ideal of art within the political process of globalization. *Dead Skull* (2002), based on a stone memorial tablet by the sixteenth-century Flemish painter Quentin Matsys at the entrance to Antwerp cathedral, refers to regional traditions, while *Animation* (2002) uses a Madonna and Child taken from a Mormon advertising film to



right, Reuntgen

2000

Oil on canvas

111 × 81 cm

opposite, Portrait

2000

Oil on canvas

56.5 × 30 cm





below, **Animation**

2002

Oil on canvas

174 × 250 cm

opposite, **Dead Skull**

2002

Oil on canvas

114 × 91 cm

Collection National Gallery of Art,

Smithsonian Institution,

Washington, DC







Sunset
2002
Oil on canvas
171 x 132.5 cm

and the aggressively formulated claims of religious fundamentalism originating in America, with the constructed space, an atmosphere of open threat condenses throughout the apparently unmissable motifs, right down to the haunting effect of the black and white *Sunset* (2002), and the warm smile of the woman portrayed in *Portrait*. There is an explosive political quality in

the range of thought contained in these pictures, where history is realized in its revealed absence. Even the most intimate space carries its traces, as in *Altar* (2002), where the bridal altar in a lounge in Salt Lake City is shown from the point of view of a surveillance camera. The intimacy of this small gallery of works heightened the political discourse present in *Documenta 11*.



Backyard

2002

Oil on canvas

139 x 114 cm

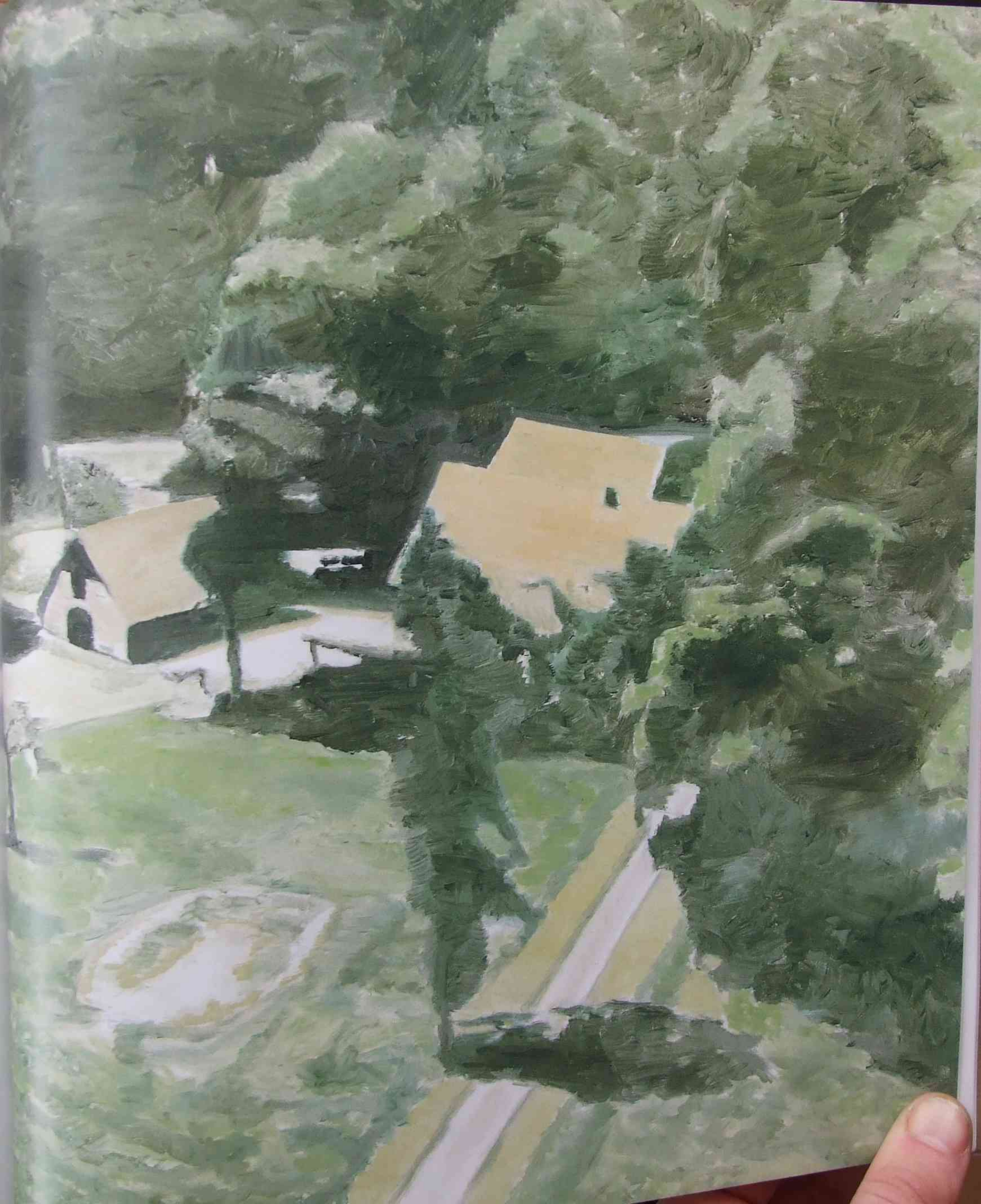
Collection Museum of

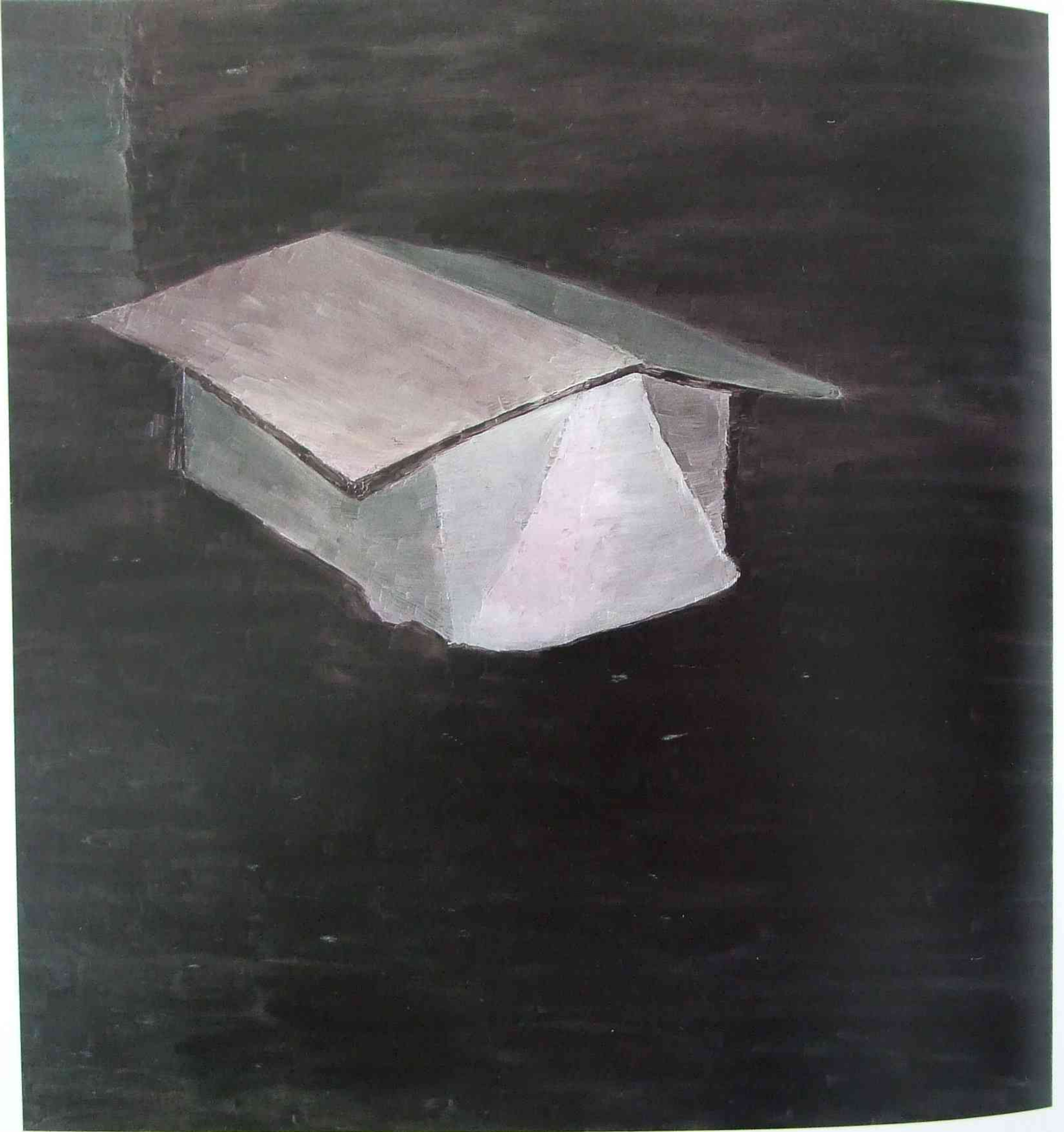
Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

Context 2: The Polylogue with Raoul de Keyser at SMAK, Ghent

In spring 2001 the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK) in Ghent showed Tuymans' work alongside that of Raoul de Keyser. The two artists quickly abandoned the original concept of two separate exhibitions of their, at first glance, very different approaches to painting in favour of a daringly mixed presentation. The direct, surprisingly complex confrontation of individual works from different eras clarifies differences and correspondences. A 'polylogue' unfolds amongst the works in the sequence of individual galleries. The four freely placed blue dots in de Keyser's upright-format, monochrome ochre *Dalton* (1990) define the corners of an imaginarily extended recumbent rectangle like four precise bullet holes. They confront the two horizontal black brushstrokes that define and bisect the torso of Tuymans' *Body* (1990), exhibited at eye level close by. The apparently obvious distinction between de Keyser's abstraction and Tuymans' figuration remains; but it also becomes clear that the use of dots and lines in both works leads to a highly defined composition that exerts a sense of vulnerability on the image. De Keyser's mutable constellations, constantly differing from each other and made up of areas, patches, lines, dots and punctures, often have a figurative origin in everyday objects and structures, in sequences of movement or the interplay of forces, of which the titles (*Aller – retour* [Go – Return], *Closerie* [Small Estate], *Bleu de Ciel* [Sky Blue], *La Pointe* [The Point]) sometimes give a further clue. While Tuymans precisely formulates his images before

starting to paint, de Keyser makes rapid, definitive interventions into the pictorial events right up to the last minute. And yet many of his compositions are based on an initial draft that changes and swirls around in multiple repetitions: *rondom de werkelijkheid* (Around the Real).³⁵ The great freedom of his painting lies in harnessing it to a pictorial concept that is not infrequently varied with a self-mocking gesture – as though there were humour in painting. Tuymans builds elements of resolution into the precise formulation of his pictorial concept. For both artists, painting is more about ascertaining than about certainty. Tuymans' realization of historical content always reflects the precarious status of the medium in order to undermine any auratic quality. Thus de Keyser's *Front* (1992) and Tuymans' *Portrait* (2000) can meet, an appropriate distance apart, on the same wall. In the former, the towering clouds of pink and the blobs of paint between them, dabbed on hard from the tube, do not seem to have found their fixed place in history any more than does the face of the old man in the latter, disappearing towards the right-hand bottom edge of the picture and held together only by the severe black lines of the spectacles he is wearing. A long wall connects de Keyser's *Untitled (Grenier 5)* (1991) and *Untitled (Suggestion)* 1995 with Tuymans' *Hut* (1998) and *Embroidery* (1999). With their forms dissolving into darkness or excessive brightness, these four pictures, so different in their format and subjects, all deal with the profound lack of focus in painting. Like no other medium, painting has come through a period both of self-criticism and of questioning by other media. Permanent awareness of its





anachronistic status throws the painted picture into a state of insecurity. Every picture is always looking for its place. In Tuymans' case, this lack of focus shows through in an undertow of uncanniness that surrounds the image, however familiar it may be, into which the realizations of history ultimately burn with remorseless sharpness: *'this uncanniness is really nothing new or strange, but something that is familiar from time immemorial in the life of the soul, that has only been alienated from it by the process of suppression.'*³⁶ In his pictures, formal dissolution serves to make content more precise, while formal sharpening imposes distance in reflection. Delineation and dissolution are not mutually exclusive. Tuymans follows a Flemish tradition by contradicting it: he takes up the extreme clarity of its founders, the van Eyck brothers, and combines it with the dissolved, hallucinatory grimaces and figures of James Ensor and the painted ideas of René Magritte.³⁷

In de Keyser's case, the fundamental lack of focus opens up new degrees of freedom for painting, supported by comprehensive doubt and slight self-mockery. Both artists share the characteristic of working against the repression of painting by revealing the lack of focus of the painted image with the optimum lucidity that they each have at their disposal.

Context 3: The Opening Field of Painting:

Trouble Spot. Painting

The periodically recurring discussion about the death of painting emerges from the specific conditions of the medium as defined by

Modernism: flatness, paint application, stasis and the format of the image. The major group exhibition 'Trouble Spot. Painting', which Tuymans organized with his artist colleague Narcisse Tordoïr at MUHKA and at the NICC artists' initiative in Antwerp in 1999 is based on an expanded perception of the medium. The practice of the panel painting is examined (Robert Ryman, Ellsworth Kelly, Yves Klein, Gerhard Richter, Marlene Dumas, René Daniels, Raoul de Keyser, Roger Raveel, John Currin, Kerry James Marshall, Michael Raedecker, Avery Preesman, Jukka Korkeila, et al.), but the exhibition also tests the water in the border areas between space and time. *Penetrable PN 1* by Hélio Oiticica, for example, a box that can be entered by visitors, develops the painted expanse in space until every frontal quality of the image is cancelled. In the television plays that Samuel Beckett wrote in the 1970s and 1980s for the BBC and the Süddeutscher Rundfunk, the moving image comes close to the statue, through repetition; something similar occurs in Diana Thater's *Five days in Claude Monet's Garden* (1992) or in the peaceful movement of Aleksandr Sokurov's *Humble Life* (1997), a film documenting the considerable amount of time that must be invested in making a kimono. The simultaneity of the painting and the reflection correspond in the early work of Michelangelo Pistoletto. The exhibition thus extends in numerous ways several of painting's fields of discourse: the material quality of the image, its frontality and corporeality, plasticity, the duration of the static image, narration, reflection on the support. 'Trouble Spot. Painting' thinks about painting in



Miss [Name]
[Address]
[City, State, Zip]
[Phone Number]



right, Rumour

2001

Oil on canvas

118 × 67 cm

opposite, Within

2001

Oil on canvas

223 × 243 cm







terms of colour, space, time, history and about how these elements can be taken from painting into other media, though it always leads us back to the panel picture.

Tuymans also comments on his own practice as a curator by placing his *Portrait G. Dam* (1978) in the context of a video portrait of Samuel Beckett, the sculptural work *Le grand ensemble de la guerre* (1976–83) by Gérard Gasiorowski and the work *Sonder Titel* (1976) by Narcisse Tordoïr. In this early work, Tordoïr confronts the isolated prints of a limited number of basic forms, made on a free-hanging canvas, with the corresponding three-dimensional originals, leaning against the wall underneath. Image and object are related to each other symmetrically, so that the copying condition of painting, the relationship between thing and trace, and the linguistic relationship between signifier and signified are simultaneously intelligible. Painting maintains its definition through two-dimensional surface and colour application in this semiotic model. At the same time, those two dimensions are placed in the space as real things, which therefore assert themselves as a deviation from two-dimensionality and even as different from spatiality. Meanwhile, the face in *Portrait G. Dam*, due to its frontality and abstract forms, seems to detach itself from the pictorial surface like a super-present memory.

This exhibition, which relates very recent to more familiar positions, seeks a great complexity of relationships in an open constellation, just as Tuymans does in his solo shows.

The Most Recent Pictures – and No Prospect

Tuymans continued his examination of the body in the exhibition 'Niks (Nothing)' at Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, at the same time showing the painterly surface as pure pictorial potential – as an empty projection screen – in the series *Slides # 1–3* (2002).



opposite, *The Nose*

2002

Oil on canvas

30 × 24 cm

below, *Bend Over*

2001

Oil on canvas

60 × 60 cm

Collection Tate Gallery, London

1911
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2025



Exhibits # 1-5 (2002) present five love scenes featuring apes, which are based on sex-education dioramas in a Japanese museum. The lascivious bodies are dissolved in the bright cones of the museum spotlights causing them to merge with moving, wedged-together forms on a uniform grey ground, alongside the bright, strictly geometrical

surface of an explanatory panel. The *Exhibits* do not look 'diagnostically' at the sick body, nor adopt a voyeuristic view of the lustful body, but present a mediated look into the museum showcase. The actual body, which shows itself frontally and openly, is the image itself. This is what distinguishes them from earlier works like



opposite, Exhibit # 2
2002
Oil on canvas
84 x 98 cm
Collection Hamburger Bahnhof,
Berlin

below, Exhibit # 3
2002
Oil on canvas
111 x 138 cm

Body (1990), which shows the body directly, or *Silence* (1991), which withdraws it (in a similar way to Robert Gober's sculptures), works that follow on from the images defined by electronic light identified by Loock.³⁸

The two forms of presentation adopted by *Slides* and *Exhibits* are related by the physical

presence of the image. The 'Niks' of the empty projection screen is the closed wound of creative representation whose scar is painting. Painting is a 'scar'³⁹ that develops from addressing colour in an extremely physical way. It closes the wound and holds it open in the memory at the same time. Tuymans increases the ambivalence of painting as





above, Studio

2002

206 × 300 cm

Oil on canvas

Collection Hamburger Bahnhof,
Berlin

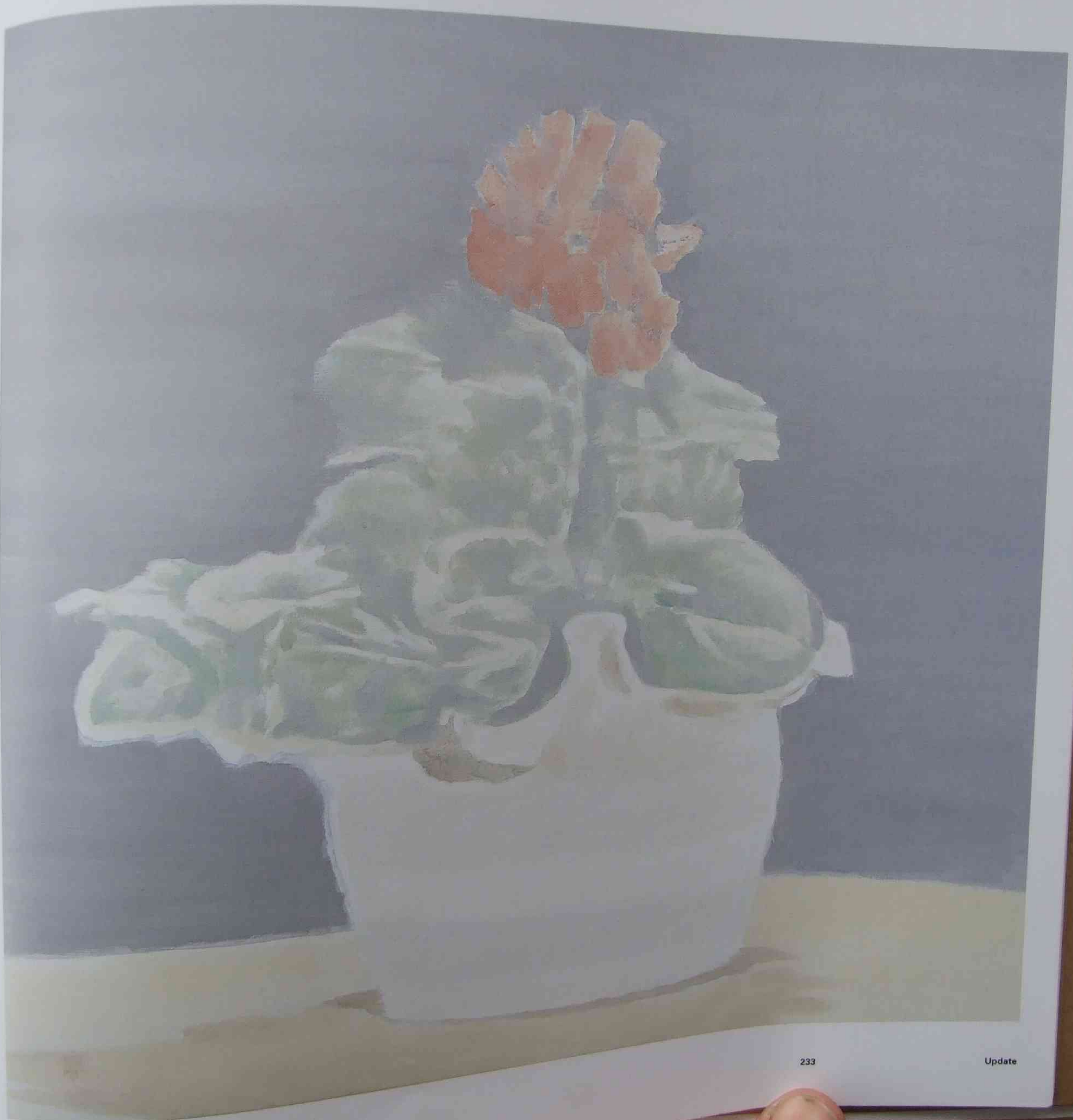
opposite, Niks

2002

109 × 113 cm

Oil on canvas

Collection Art Institute of Chicago





opposite, Eyes

2001

Oil on canvas

3 parts, 64 × 70 cm, 58 × 64 cm,

69 × 76 cm

below, Pigeons

2001

Oil on canvas

128 × 156 cm

a wound in the work *Eyes* (2001). Here, the eyes of birds taken from a pigeon-breeding manual are vulnerable and wounding at the same time. While breeders may see the bird's eye in the context of genetic material, for the painter the eye is the organ that is used to look at pictures, and thus the most vulnerable element of painting itself. Frontal, tightly framed within the image, the eye shows and sees itself in its dangerousness and as a source of danger. In the painted eye, the look comes back at the viewer: reflection begins in Tuymans' painting through the active mirror of a returned look.

In 1944 Horkheimer and Adorno showed in their 'philosophical fragment' *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that 'the cause of the relapse from enlightenment into mythology is not to be sought so much in the nationalistic, heathen and other modern mythologies devised expressly for the purpose of relapse, but in fear of enlightenment itself, paralysed in fear of the truth.'⁴⁰ Tuymans is helping, through the fragmentary thought topologies of his individual pictures and exhibitions, to re-enlighten the enlightenment project and to extricate it from its paralysis in the face of the unrepresentability of history.

'... and of course "no mourning", if taken for itself alone, could also mean the impossibility of any mourning, the inconsolable, the incurable, that no work of mourning can ever mollify.'

- Jacques Derrida⁴¹





Fortune
2003
251 x 235 cm
Oil on canvas

Translated from the German by Michael Robinson

- 1 Jacques Derrida, 'Lyotard et nous', in Dolorès Lyotard, Jean-Claude Milner, Gérald Sfez (eds), *Jean-François Lyotard: L'Exercice du différend*, Presses Universitaires de France (Librairie du Collège International de Philosophie), Paris, 2001, pp. 169–96.
- 2 Paul Cézanne, *Still Life*, c. 1900, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart, Römerholz, Winterthur. This still life with water-carafe, pears, lemon and apples on a plate at the edge of a table was never completed.
- 3 'Delayed' was the name given to an exhibition in the Anders Tomberg Gallery in Lund in 1998.
- 4 See Ulrich Loock in this volume, p. 82.
- 5 Hegel, G.W.F., 'Preface', *Philosophy of Right*, 1821
- 6 Gottfried Boehm, 'Prekäre Balance – Cézanne und das Unvollendete', *Cézanne, Vollendet – Unvollendet*, Kunsthaus Zürich, 2000, p. 34.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- 8 Roberta Smith, 'Luc Tuymans', *New York Times*, 11 October 1996.
- 9 Ulrich Loock, this volume, pp. 79–82.
- 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91.
- 11 Luc Tuymans in conversation with Silke Hennig, *Die Tageszeitung*, 18 April 2001.
- 12 Cézanne in conversation with Emile Bernard, quoted from Hershel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art, A Source Book by Artists and Critics*, Los Angeles and London, 1968, p. 13.
- 13 Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik*, Frankfurt, 1973, p. 21.
- 14 Ilona Lehnart, 'Lauter letzte Bilder', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 April 2001.
- 15 Luc Tuymans, 'Der Frühling kommt – Ideen, Fragen und Bemerkungen zum Konzept einer Ausstellung', *Signal*, Berlin, 2000, p. 3.
- 16 Luc Tuymans in Silke Hennig, *op. cit.*
- 17 There is also a collage version dating from 1987 in which two square openings were cut into the slightly frayed original side.
- 18 Luc Tuymans, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
- 19 Luc Tuymans, in an unpublished conversation with the author, Antwerp, 24 September 2002.
- 20 On 12 May 2001 Ulrich Loock (Chair), Luc Tuymans, Michael Maier (Editor-in-Chief of *net-zeitung*), Dr Eugen Blume (Curator of Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin), Nikola Lüttgenau (Deputy Director of Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora memorial), Annemaire Bonnet (Professor of Art History, Institut der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität, Bonn), Sigrid Sigurdsson (artist, Hamburg) and Norbert Kampe (Director of Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz, Berlin) discussed the question of whether the Holocaust could be represented.
- 21 Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, Ein Bericht von der Banalität des Bösen*, Piper, Munich, 1964/1986, p. 400/p. 124.
- 22 *Ibid.* p. 402ff.
- 23 Gerhard Richter, in conversation with Jan Thorn Prikker concerning the cycle *October 18, 1977* (1988), in *Gerhard Richter, The Daily Practice of Painting, Writings 1962–1993*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1995, p. 196: 'I have always shied away from so-called political themes, and from anything spectacular.'
- 24 Robert Storr, in *Gerhard Richter, October 18, 1977*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2000, p. 99ff.
- 25 Gerhard Richter, in Thorn Prikker, *op. cit.* p. 189.
- 26 Robert Storr, *op. cit.* p. 140.
- 27 Luc Tuymans in conversation with the author, Antwerp, 24 September 2002.
- 28 Luc Tuymans in conversation with the author, 22 September 2002.
- 29 Gerhard Richter, in Thorn Prikker, *op. cit.*, p. 189: 'I first paint the pictures very precisely from the photograph, sometimes more realistically than the originals. That comes with experience. And the result is, of course, an unendurable picture from every point of view.'
- 30 Luc Tuymans in conversation with the author, 22 September 2002.
- 31 Freely elected President after Congolese independence in 1960, Lumumba was murdered a year later by a group associated with Mobutu, with the assistance of the CIA and the knowledge of the Belgian government and royal family, as the most recent research

has established. Officials of the Belgian Secret Service were involved in disposing of his corpse.

- 32 'If Patrice were to disappear, in all the cities, the villages, the forests of the Congo, a whole people will continue to believe he is alive, to patiently await his return, for however long it takes, to deliver them from the neocolonialism working unceasingly on his ruin', quoted in Colette Braeckman, *Lumumba, Un crime d'Etat*, Brussels, 2002, p. 20.
- 33 'In his portrait, Tuymans does not so much try to depict an icon as to represent the problematical relationship between race, man, and the intellectual. The black intellectual, as a walking categorical error, forever at odds with his enforced stereotype. That is the price that had to be paid in a society of which the collective subconsciousness defined the "negro", in contrast to the white man, on the basis of regressive primitivistic fantasies.' Philippe Pirote, 'Mwana Kitoko, Beautiful White Man', in *Luc Tuymans: Mwana Kitoko Beautiful White Man*, Venice Biennale, 2001, p. 101.
- 34 Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, Gallimard, Paris 1961/91, p. 76.
- 35 Title of a 1970 touring exhibition in the museums of Groningen, Haarlem and Hertogenbosch.
- 36 Sigmund Freud, 'Das Unheimliche' (1919), in *Sigmund Freud, Studienausgabe, Psychologische Schriften*, vol. IV, p. 264.
- 37 As part of the symposium surrounding the exhibition 'Painting on the Move', held on 17 August 2002 in Basel, Tuymans identified his most important reference points in the history of painting, including these Flemish artists.
- 38 Ulrich Looek, this volume, p. 82.
- 39 Luc Tuymans in conversation with Franziska Bättig on Swiss radio DRS 2, 'Luc Tuymans, Maler', excerpts form a conversation between Luc Tuymans and Franziska Baetcke, 'Reflexe', Swiss Radio DRS2, 20 August, 2002.
- 40 Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung, Philosophische Fragmente*, Fischer Wissenschaft, Frankfurt, 1989, p. 3ff.
- 41 Jacques Derrida, op. cit.







opposite, L to r., Frozen
2003
101,5 × 70,5 cm
Oil on canvas

Tropical Institute
2003
157 × 139 cm
Oil on canvas

above, Mahen
2003
199 × 292 cm
Oil on canvas



Interview

Juan Vicente Allage in conversation with Luc Tuymans, page 8

Survey

Ulrich Coack On layers of sign-relations, in the light of mechanically reproduced pictures, from ten years of exhibitions, page 32

Focus

Nancy Spector The Unforgiving Trace, page 94

Artist's Choice

Andrei Platonov Cheyonguir (extract), 1978, page 102

Artist's Writings

Luc Tuymans

Disenchantment, 1997, page 110

Update

Hans Rudolf Reust The Pursuit Luc Tuymans - Update 1995-2003

page 148

Chronology

page 240 & Bibliography, page 259.

Selected exhibitions and projects

1976-90

1976-78

Studies fine art, Sint-Lukasinstituut, Brussels

1978-79

Studies painting, Hoger Instituut, Sint-Lukasinstituut, Brussels

1979-80

Studies painting, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels de la Cambre, Brussels

1980-82

Studies painting, Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen

1982-86

Studies art history, Vrije Universiteit, Brussels

1985

'Belgian Art Review', Palais des Thermes, Ostend, Belgium (solo)

1988

'Joséphine c'est pas ma femme', Ruimte Morguen, Antwerp (solo)

'Doodgewoon. Beelden van de dood in de actuele kunst, met een terugblik op Ensor en Rops',

Cultureel Centrum de Warande, Turnhout, Belgium (group)

Cat. *Doodgewoon. Beelden van de dood in de actuele kunst met een terugblik op Ensor en Rops*, Cultureel Centrum de Warande, Turnhout, Belgium, text Frank Vande Veire

1989

'Zimmer frei', Ruimte Morguen, Antwerp (solo)

'Wahrheit und Dichtung. 4 aus Antwerpen', Galerie Maerz, Cologne (group)

'A Place in the Sun',

Ruimte Morguen, Antwerp (solo)

1990

Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Ostend, Belgium (solo)

Cat. *Luc Tuymans*, Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Ostend, Belgium, text W. Van Den Bussche, Robert van Ruyseveldt and M. Schepers

RUIMTE MORGUEN

WAALSE KAAI 21 - 22 2000 ANTWERPEN
OPEN: WOENSDAG T/M ZATERDAG 14 / 18 U.
OF NA TELEF. AFSpraak 03 / 232.55.30

LUC TUYMANS

" JOSEFINE C' EST PAS MA FEMME "

19 MAART - 30 APRIL 1988
OPENING ZATERDAG 19 MAART 14 UUR

"ZIMMER FREI"

LUC TUYMANS

RUIMTE MORGUEN

WAALSE KAAI 21-22
2000 ANTWERPEN
OPEN WOENSDAG T/M ZATERDAG 14/18 U.
OF NA TELEF. AFSpraak 03/232.55.30

19 JANUARI - 26 FEBRUARI
OPENING DONSDAG 18 JANUARI - 17 UUR

Poster: Ontp. Luc Tuymans, 2000. Uitgeverij: Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Antwerpen

a place in the sun

LUC TUYMANS

RUIMTE MORGUEN

WAALSE KAAI 21-22
2000 ANTWERPEN
OPEN WOENSDAG T/M ZATERDAG 14/18 U.
OF NA TELEF. AFSpraak 03/232.55.30

14 OKTOBER - 18 NOVEMBER
OPENING DONSDAG 12 OKTOBER - 18 UUR

Poster: Ontp. Luc Tuymans, 2000. Uitgeverij: Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Antwerpen

Selected articles and interviews

1976-90

1988

Ruyters, Marc, 'Tuymans', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 24 April

'Doodgewoon. Beelden van de dood', *Stadskrant*, Turnhout, July

'De Warande toont doodgewone beelden van de dood', *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 1 July

'Lugubere tentoonstelling in De Warande in Turnhout. Het beeld van de dood', *Gazet Van Antwerpen*, 6 July

Ruyters, Marc, "'Beelden van de dood' in sombere Warande', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 12 July

Walgrave, J., 'Samenleving verhuult, maar kunstenaars tonen de dood', *De Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, Belgium, 25 July

1989

Ruyters, Marc, 'Het zelfbewuste debuut van een talent', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 12 February

'Abgezogene Haut. Vier Künstler aus Antwerpen bei maerz', *Stadt Anzeiger (Kölner Kulturberichte)*, 28 June

'The Fabulous Four from Antwerpen. Stefaan Vermuyten, Danny Devos, Luc Tuymans, Marc Schepers', *APEX. Ein Kunstmagazin / An Art Magazine*, Cologne, No 8, September

Ruyters, Marc, 'Luc Tuymans', *Kunst en Cultuur*, Brussels, November

Van De Sompel, Ronald, 'Luc Tuymans in Ruimte Morguen. Onblusbare Melancholie', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 21 October

1990

Brutin, H., 'Luc Tuymans', *Het Nieuwsblad*, Groot-Bijgaarden, Belgium, 2 March

Lambrecht, Luk, 'Obsessies', *Knack Weekend*, Brussels, 14 March

Ruyters, Marc, 'Geluidloze herinneringen', *Knack*, Brussels, 28 February

Van De Sompel, Ronald, 'Eenvoud en ontzaglijke monumentaliteit. De bekentenis van een verlies', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 3 March

maerz

Ausstellungen

lädt Sie und Ihre Freunde
zur Ausstellungsöffnung am
Freitag, dem 9. Juni
19.00 Uhr herzlich ein.

„Wahrheit und Dichtung“

4 aus Antwerpen:
Danny Devos, Marc Schepers,
Luc Tuymans, Stefaan Vermuyten

Ausstellungsdauer:
9. Juni bis 7. Juli 1989

maerz

Ausstellungen

Münster Str. 24, 5000 Köln (Tel. 02 21 / 1246 47)
Öffnungszeiten: Di-Fr 14-18 Uhr, Samstag 11-14 Uhr

Die Ausstellung wird unterstützt von
Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap
Nederlandse Kunst en Muziek

Selected exhibitions and projects
1990-92

'Vereniging voor het Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst',
Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent, Belgium
(solo)

'Paesmans, Schepers, Tuymans, Vermuyten',
Credac, Centre d'art contemporain, Ivry, France
(group)

'Kunswerken verworven door de Vlaamse
Gemeenschap 1988-1989',
Museum van Deinze en Leiestreek, Deinze, Belgium
(group)

'Works on paper',
Schouwburg Galerij, Rotterdam (solo)

'Suspended',
Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (solo)

'Schilderijen 1978-1989',
Plateau, Brussels (solo)

'Art Cologne',
Zeno X Gallery, Cologne (group)

1991
'Works on paper',
Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (group)

'Disenchantment',
Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (solo)

'Accrochage',
Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (group)

'Kunst in Vlaanderen Nu',
Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerp (group)

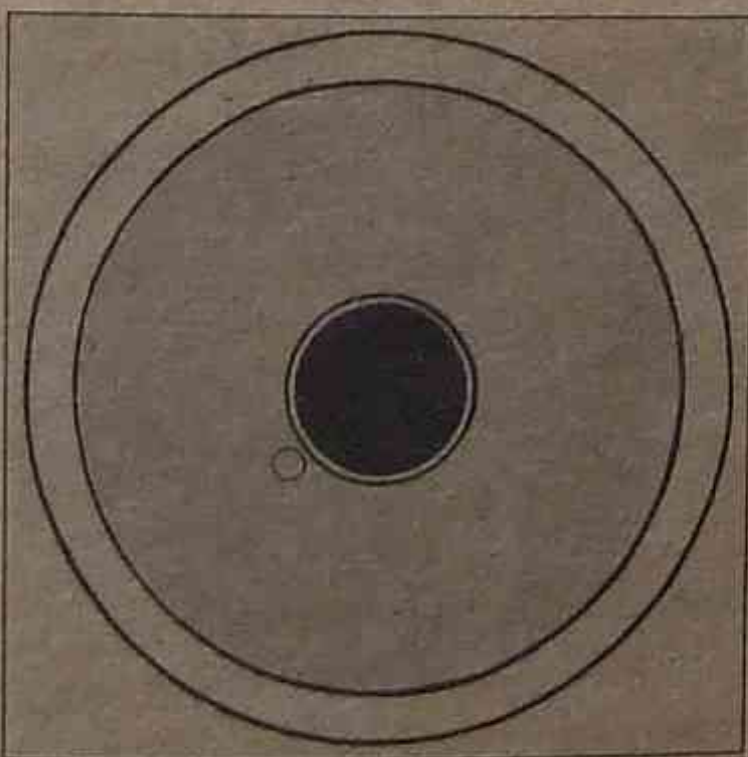
'Vis à Vis',
Gallery Sacré, Liège, Belgium (group)

Centre D'Art Contemporain, Thiers, France (solo)

1992
Kunsthalle, Bern (solo)
Cat. Luc Tuymans, Kunsthalle Bern, text Ulrich Loock
and Luc Tuymans

'Selectie Belgische Kunstenaars voor Documenta IX',
Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (group)
Cat. Selectie Belgische Kunstenaars voor Documenta IX.

**DIRK PAESMANS
MARC SCHEPERS
LUC TUYMANS
STEFAN VERMUYTEN
CLAUDE MONGRAIN
IGNACIO BARCIA
PEP DURAN ESTEVA
MARIA LUISA FERNANDEZ
FABRICE HYBERT
OLIVIER THOMÉ**



LUC TUYMANS

DISENCHANTMENT
ONTGOOCHELING

19 OKTOBER - 16 NOVEMBER 1991

Dooring zaterdag 19 oktober 1991
van 14.00 tot 18.00 uur

ZENO X GALLERY
Frank Demeugd

Leopold de Waelplaats 16 - 2000 Antwerpen 1
Tel: 03216 14 20 Fax: 03216 09 92
Open wo-do-za 14.00 - 18.00 uur

Selected articles and interviews
1990-92

De Keyser, L., 'Luc Tuymans. Geen Ontsnappen aan',
Het Nieuwsblad, Groot-Bijgaarden, Belgium, 13 March
Kuyken, Ilse, 'Luc Tuymans schildert doordacht en
logisch', *De Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, Belgium,
18 March

Van Ruyseveldt, Robert, 'Luc Tuymans', *Kunst Nu*,
Ghent, No 2

'Tuymans' Obsessies', *De Volkskrant*, Amsterdam,
29 September

Ruyters, Marc, 'Luc Tuymans', *Kunst & Cultuur*,
Brussels, December

Ruyters, Marc, 'De kracht van het idee', *Artsenkrant*,
Belgium, No 520, 14 December

1991

Heirmans, Frank, 'De ontgoocheling treft in elke lijn.
Antwerpse schilder Luc Tuymans naar Documenta',
Gazet van Antwerpen

Pas, Johan, 'Luc Tuymans. Disenchantment /
Ontgoocheling', *Artefactum*, Antwerp, No 42

Ruyters, Marc, 'Luc Tuymans', *Kunst & Cultuur*,
Brussels, November

1992

Bauwelinck, B., 'Momentopnamen uit het geheugen',
Gazet van Antwerpen, 28 April

Kuyken, Ilse, 'Honger en verlies', *Knack*, Brussels,
15 April

Mueller, Franziska, 'Diese Bilder bearbeiten das
Versagen', *Berner Zeitung*, 13 March

Wesseling, Janneke, 'Parasitaire verhoudingen in de
Belgische Kunst. Elf landgenoten van Jan Hoet in
Deurle', *NRC Handelsblad*, Amsterdam, 22 May 1992

LUC TUYMANS

SUSPENDED
29 NOVEMBER - 23 DECEMBER 1990

Opening donderdag 29 november
om 19.00 uur

ZENO X GALLERY

Frank Demeugd

Leopold de Waelplaats 16 - 2000 Antwerpen 1
Tel: 03216 14 20 Fax: 03216 09 92
Open wo-do-za 14.00 - 18.00 uur

KUNSTHALLE BERN



Anstellungen
vom 24. Januar
bis 21. Juni 1992

Selected exhibitions and projects

1992-93

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium, text Ulrich Look

'Accrochage'

Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (group)

'Documenta IX'

Kassel, Germany (group)

Cat. Documenta IX, Kassel, Germany, texts Jan Hoet, Denys Zacharopoulos, Pier Luigi Tazzi and Bart de Baere

'Modernism in Painting'

Provinciaal Museum, Ostend, Belgium (group)

Cat. Modernism in Painting, Provinciaal Museum, Ostend, Belgium, texts Achille Bonito Oliva, Hans Sizo, Florent Minne, Willem Elias, Bert Popelier and W. Van den Bossche

Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (solo)

'Repulsion'

Isabella Kacprzak, Cologne (solo)

'Last Exhibition'

Galerie Zwirner, Cologne (group)

1993

'Accrochage'

Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (group)

'Der Zerbrochene Spiegel. Positionen zur Malerei' ('The Broken Mirror')

Kunsthalle, Vienna: Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (group)

Cat. Der Zerbrochene Spiegel, Kunsthalle Vienna, texts Hans Ulrich Obrist, Kasper König and artists' statements

Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany (solo)

Cat. Luc Tuymans, Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany, text Julian Heynen

LUC TUYMANS

29 OKTOBER - 5 DECEMBER 1992

Opening donderdag 29 oktober
van 14 tot 21 uur

ZENO X GALLERY
Frank Deming

Leopold de Waelplaats 16 - B-2000 Antwerpen I
Tel. 33 216 1626 Fax 33 214 0932
Open wo-zaavonds 14.30 - 18.00 uur

Luc Tuymans

Van 29 oktober tot 5 december
aan de Waelplaats 16 van 14 tot 21 uur
tel. 33 216 1626 fax 33 214 0932
open wo-zaavonds 14.30 - 18.00 uur

Zeno X Gallery
Frank Deming

Leopold de Waelplaats 16 - B-2000 Antwerpen I
Tel. 33 216 1626 Fax 33 214 0932
Open wo-zaavonds 14.30 - 18.00 uur

Selected articles and interviews

1992-93

Ammann, Jean-Christophe, 'The Good News and the Bad News von der 9. Documenta', *Kunstbulletin*, Kriens, Switzerland, July

Geering, Let. 'Luc Tuymans', *Archis*, Rotterdam, 1992

Kuyken, Ilse, 'Belgien. Orte der Selbstironie und der Erinnerung', *Kunstforum*, Cologne, No 119

Kuyken, Ilse, 'Documenta IX', *Kunst & Museumjournal*, Amsterdam, No 6, 1992

Perxten, Stéphane, 'Les choses changent', *L'Annuel de l'Art / Jaarlijkse Kunstgids*, Brussels, 1993

Lambrecht, Luc, 'Luc Tuymans, Zeno X', *Flash Art*, Milan, No 168, January 1993

Lambrecht, Luk, 'Luc Tuymans: Schilderkunst over waarschijnlijkheden', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 27 November

Roos, Robert, 'Luc Tuymans', *Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 19 November

Ruyters, Marc, 'Zieke Mensen', *Knack Weekend*, Brussels, No 45, 18 November

Todts, Herwig, 'Luc Tuymans schildert zieken met koele deernis', *De Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, Belgium, 24 November

Vuegen, Christine, 'Luc Tuymans: Fascinatie voor het onmenselijke', *Kunstbeeld*, Amsterdam, November

Smolik, Noemi, 'Luc Tuymans - Galerie Isabella Kacprzak', *Artforum*, New York, March

Doove, Edith, 'Luc Tuymans', *Artefactum*, Antwerp, No 44, June

Leturcq, Armelle, 'Luc Tuymans', *Blocnotes. Art contemporain*, Paris, No 1

Van Den Boogerd, Dominic and Geerling, Let. 'Tussenposities. Ulrich Look, Marien Schouten en Luc Tuymans in gesprek over schilderkunst', *Metropolis M*, Utrecht, No 3, June

1993

Holthoof, Marc, 'Standpunten over Schilderkunst. Over "As long as it lasts" en "Der Zerbrochene Spiegel"', *De Witte Raaf*, Ghent, No 45, September

Searle, Adrian, 'The Broken Mirror', *frieze*, London, No 12, September

Bachetta, Véronique, 'La taille et le miroir. A propos de l'oeuvre de Luc Tuymans', *Faces. Journal d'architectures*, Geneva, No 28

LUC TUYMANS

JANUARI 1993

EINDELIJKE
PRETTAC 19 NOVEMBER 1992
OP WO 12 UUR

AANSLAAGPRIJZEN
50,00 DECEMBER 1992

GALERIE ISABELLA KACPRZAK
MARIA-TERESIA-STRASSE 17
5000 KÖLN 7
TEL. 49 212 3174-26
FAX 49 212 3174

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Selected exhibitions and projects

1993

'Het sublieme Gemis' ('The Sublime Void'),
Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten,
Antwerp (group)
Cat. *The Sublime Void*, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone
Kunsten, Antwerp, text Bart Cassiman, Greet Ramael
and Frank Vande Veire

'Look at the Window',
Het Kruithuis, Stedelijk Museum voor Hedendaagse
Kunst, Hertogenbosch (group)
Cat. *Look at the Window*, Het Kruithuis, Stedelijk
Museum voor Hedendaagse Kunst, Hertogenbosch,
text José Lebrero Stals

'Menschenwelt',
Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany; Castello di Rivara,
Turin, Italy; Norfolk Institute of Art and Design,
Norwich; Württembergischer Kunstverein,
Stuttgart, Germany; Westfälischer Kunstverein,
Münster (group)

'75 Jahre Kunsthalle-Bern. Bild des Monats im
Kunstmuseum',
Kunsthalle, Bern (group)
Cat. *75 Jahre Kunsthalle-Bern. Bild des Monats im
Kunstmuseum*, Kunsthalle, Bern, texts Julian Heynen
and H.R. Reust

'Backstage',
Kunstverein, Hamburg (group)
Cat. *Backstage*, Kunstverein, Hamburg, text Stephan
Schmidt-Wulffen

'Intolerance',
Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (solo)



LUC TUYMANS

INTOLERANCE

21 OKTOBER - 21 NOVEMBER 1993

Opening donderdag 21 oktober
om 19.00 uur

ZENO X GALLERY
Finken Dernaeght

Leopold de Waelplaats 16 B - 2000 Antwerpen 1
Tel. 03218 1826 Fax 03218 0992
Open wo-de-vr-zat 14.00 - 18.00 uur

Selected articles and interviews

1993

'Bilder haben 'angeschmutzte' Farbigkeit. Werke des
belgischen Maler Luc Tuymans sind erstmals in
Deutschland zu sehen', *Genzland*, Germany, 22 April
Bochynek, Martin, 'Gestörte Bilder. Luc Tuymans',
Maraba, Germany, No 6, June
Frese, Hans Martin, 'Malen als Diagnose. Luc Tuymans
im Krefelder Museum Haus Lange', *Rheinische Post*,
Krefeld, 30 April
Hahne, Heinrich, 'Diagnostischer Blick. Die Welt im
Spiegel eines Temperaments: Der belgische Maler Luc
Tuymans im Krefelder Haus Lange', *Frankfurter
Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16 June
Köhler, Barbara, 'Mit unbewaffneten Augen. Die
"Nachtbilder" des belgischen Malers Luc Tuymans',
Neue Bildende Kunst, Berlin, No 6
Pontzen, Rütger, 'Een verloren zaak. De Schilderijen
van Luc Tuymans', *Metropolis M*, Utrecht, No 4
Wesseling, Janneke, 'Nurkse, weerbarstige
schilderijtjes', *NRC Handelsblad*, Amsterdam, 16 June

Bracke, Eric, 'Met andere woorden. Hedendaagse kunst
in Antwerpen: "Het Sublieme Gemis"', *De Morgen*,
Brussels, 30 July
Groot, Paul, 'Het Sublieme Gemis', *De Witte Raaf*,
Ghent, No 45, September
Stegeman, Elly, 'Terugblik. Het Sublieme Gemis',
Kunst & Museumjournaal, Amsterdam, Vol 5, No 2

Den Hartog-Jager, Hans, 'De uitputting voorbij',
Metropolis M, Utrecht, No 5

Lambrecht, Luk, 'De kwade geur van de figuratieve
schilderkunst', *De Witte Raaf*, Ghent, No 4, November
Op De Coul, Fred, 'Kunst mag herkenbaar zijn. "Look
at the window" in Het Kruithuis: heldere visie op
realisme in de kunst', *Brabants Dagblad*, The
Netherlands, 14 September

Pieters, Pin, 'Bossche keuze van kunst overtuigt niet',
NRC Handelsblad, Amsterdam, October
Roos, Robert, 'Drama Alberola Past Perfect in De Pont',
Utrechts Nieuwsblad, 16 October
Wingen, Ed, 'Figuratie of abstractie is een
schijnprobleem. Schilders van de illusie in Het
Kruithuis', *De Telegraaf*, The Netherlands, 24
September

Aufferman, Verena, 'Triste Blicke. Eine ausstellung als
Sittenspiegel unseres Lebens: "Menschenwelt
(Interieur)"', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 27 August
Ernst, Ulrich, 'In Jürgens Augen. "Menschenwelt
(Interieur)" im Frankfurt Portikus', *fAZ*, Frankfurt, 7
September

Doove, Edith, 'Winkel met religieuze kunst',
Artsenkrant, Belgium, No 747, 19 November

Selected exhibitions and projects

1993-94

Galerie Paul Andriess, Amsterdam (solo)

'Andere Länder-ander Sitten. Zeichnungen aus dem Kunstmuseum Bern'

Nationalgalerie Praag, Palais Kinsky, Prague (group)

Cat. *Andere Länder-ander Sitten. Zeichnungen aus dem Kunstmuseum Bern*, Nationalgalerie Praag Palais Kinsky, Prague, text Josef Helfenstein

'Peintures Abstraites'

FRAC, Auvergne (group)

Kabinett für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremerhaven (solo)

'Art in Belgium. Cyclic Identity'

Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong (group)

Cat. *Art in Belgium. Cyclic Identity*, Hong Kong Arts Centre, text Frank Vande Vefre

UNBOUND
Possibilities in Painting
1 March - 31 May 1994

From Now
1 March - 31 May 1994
10am - 5pm
Admission free

Hayward Gallery
London
100 Whitehall, London SW1A 2TG
Tel: 01-922 6100 Fax: 01-922 6101

1994

'Indelible Evidence'

Galerie Erika & Otto Friedrich, Bern (solo)

Cat. *Indelible Evidence*, Galerie Erika & Otto Friedrich, Bern, text Hans Rudolf Reust

'Unbound: Possibilities in Painting'

Hayward Gallery, London (group)

Cat. *Unbound. Possibilities in Painting*, Hayward Gallery, London, text Adrian Searle and Adrian Dannatt

'Zeitgenossen'

Kunstmuseum, Bern (group)

Selected articles and interviews

1993-94

Ruyters, Marc, 'Schilders in Antwerpen', *Knack Weekend*, Brussels, No 45, 10 November

Pontzen, Rutger, 'Eik schilderij is een vergissing. De onschuldige interieurs van Luc Tuymans', *Vrij Nederland*, Amsterdam, 6 November

Van Houts, Catherine, 'In gevecht met de virtuositeit', *Het Parool*, The Netherlands, 27 October



Invitation card, Kabinett für Aktuelle Kunst

Blase, Christoph, 'Europäische Kunst. Alles Offen', *Vogue-Deutsch*, Munich, February

Milkers, Anne, 'Schilderijen die zichzelf verzegelen. Het werk van Luc Tuymans', *Ons Erfdeel*, Rekem, Belgium, Vol 36, No 4

Reust, Hans Rudolf, 'Silent Music. Confrontations with Lost Meaning. On the Paintings of Luc Tuymans', *Parkett*, Zurich, No 37,

Ruyters, Marc, 'Luc Tuymans. Zeno X', *L'Annuel de L'Art/Jaarljkse Kunstgids*, Brussels, Winter, 1993

Ruyters, Marc, Interview, 'Ik zoek naar een extreem punt', *Knack*, Brussels, No 51/52, 22 December

Van Duyn, Edna, 'Tangible Emptiness and Absence. On the Work of Luc Tuymans', *Kunst & Museumjournal*, Amsterdam, Vol 4, No 6

Van Duyn, Edna, 'Voelbaar leegte en afwezigheid. Over het werk van Luc Tuymans', *Kunst & Museumjournal*, Amsterdam, Vol 4, No 6

1994

Gerber, Elisabeth, 'Bern: Galerierundschau', *Kunstbulletin*, Kriens, Switzerland, January

Jolles, Claudia, 'Luc Tuymans. Galerie Erika & Otto Friedrich', *Artforum*, New York, April

Tobler, Konrad, 'Luc Tuymans. Leises Malen des Vermissten', *Berner Zeitung*, 19 February

Batchelor, David, 'Behind a Painted Smile', *frieze*, London, No 16, May

Dannatt, Adrian, 'London by Numbers. Three Painting Shows', *Flash Art*, Milan, No 177, Summer

Hilton, Tim, 'Every Which Way But Forwards', *The Independent*, London, 6 March

Januszczak, Waldemar, 'A State of Confusion', *The Sunday Times*, London, 13 March

Lillington, David, 'Zeitgeist', *Time Out*, London, 9 March

Tobler, Konrad, 'Wiedereröffnung mit Fragen der "Zeitgenossen"', *Kunstmuseum - Bern*, *Berner Zeitung*,

LUC TUYMANS

15 JANUARI - 26 FEBRUARI 1994

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TEL. 031-311 76 01 FAX 031-311 42

ES ERGEBT SICH EINE PUBLIKUMS

DO 15-20.00 FR 15-18.00 SA 11-16.00
UND NACH VEREINBARUNG

www.luc-tuymans.com

Selected exhibitions and projects

1994

'8 Rooms for Painting',
Gallery F15, Moss, Norway (group)

'Enigma. David Hodges, Francesca Llopis, Luc
Tuymans',
Sala Montcada de la Fundació "La Caixa", Barcelona
(group)

Cat. *Enigma. David Hodges, Francesca Llopis, Luc
Tuymans*, Sala Montcada de la Fundació "La Caixa",
Barcelona, text Juan Vicente Aliaga

'Superstition',
Portikus, Frankfurt (solo)

'This is the Show and the Show is Many Things',
Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent (group)
Cat. *This is the Show and the Show is Many Things*,
Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Belgium, text
Renate Puvogel

'Superstition',
Gallery David Zwirner, New York (solo)

'At Random',
Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (solo)

Art Gallery of York University, Toronto;
The Renaissance Society, Chicago; Institute of
Contemporary Arts, London; Goldie Paley Gallery,
Moore College of Art, Philadelphia (solo)
Cat. *Luc Tuymans*, Art Gallery of York University,
Toronto, texts Gregory Salzman, Peter Schjeldahl,
Robert Van Ruyseveldt, Luc Tuymans and Hans
Rudolf Reust



'In Extenso 1989-1992',
Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent, Belgium
(group)
Cat. *In Extenso 1989-1992*, Museum van Hedendaagse
Kunst, Ghent, Belgium, text Bart de Baere

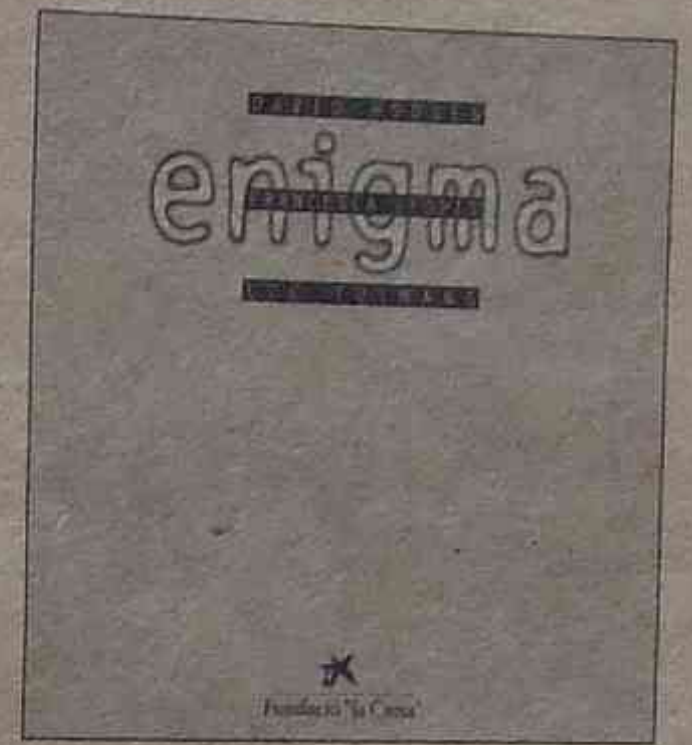
'The Institute of Cultural Anxiety: Works from the
Collection',
Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (group)
Cat. *The Institute of Cultural Anxiety: Works from the*

Selected articles and interviews

1994

8 April
Zaugg, Fred, 'Von Cézanne zu den Zeitgenossen',
Kunstmuseum Bern. Das Eigene zur Wiedereröffnung',
Der Bund, Bern, 8 April

Öhrner, Annika, 'Idag har filmen ersatt måleri',
Material, Stockholm, Vol 3, No 5



Puvogel, Renate, 'This is the Show and the Show is
Many Things', *Kunstforum*, Cologne, No 129,
January/April 1995

Ruyters, Marc, 'Speeltuin', *Knack*, Brussels, No 44, 2
November

Smith, Roberta, 'Luc Tuymans', *New York Times*,
4 November

Ruyters, Marc, 'Op goed geluk', *Knack Weekend*,
Brussels, 7 December

Artner, Alan G., 'Bucking the Trends. A Contemporary
Painter Who Knows the Limitations of his Medium',
Chicago Tribune, 19 February 1995

Glatt, Cara, 'Artist Finds Memory a Treacherous
Terrain', *hp Herald*, Chicago, 15 February 1995

Hilton, Tim, 'Backwards at Going Forwards', *The
Independent*, London, 19 March 1995

Larson, Nate, 'A Minimalist's Approach to (Our) Pain',
The Chicago Maroon, 27 January 1995

Manor, Dalia, 'Luc Tuymans at the ICA', *STUDIO - Art
Magazine*, London, No 63, June/July 1995

Morley, Simon, 'Luc Tuymans. ICA London', *Art
Monthly*, London, No 186, May 1995

Newman, Howard, 'Lest We Forget ...', *River North
News*, Chicago, 28 January 1995

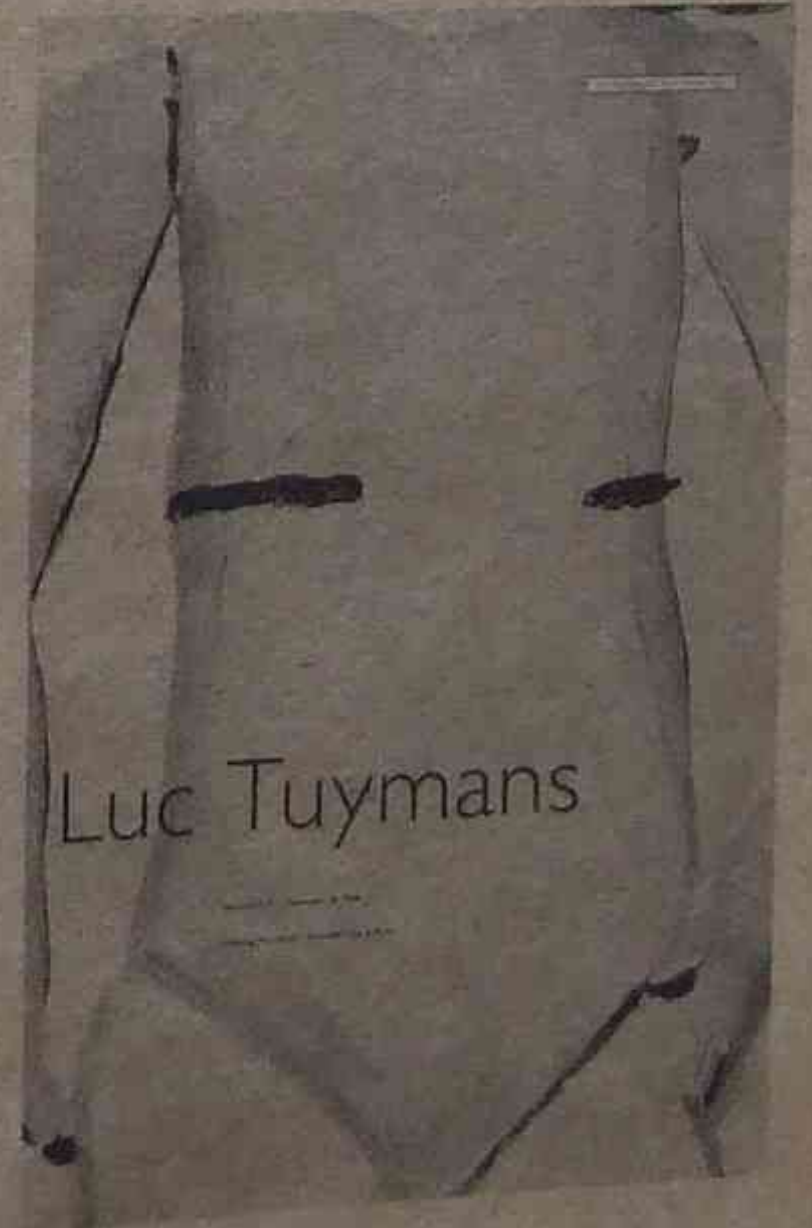
Samuelsen, Grant, 'Luc Tuymans. The Renaissance
Society', *The New Art Examiner*, Chicago, April 1995

Searle, Adrian, 'Art and the Aftermath', *The
Independent*, London, 1995

Sozanski, Edward, 'A Visual Search for Memory's
Elusive Form', *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 29 September

Walker, Hamza, 'Between Past and Future', *Newsletter
of The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago*,
Winter

Yood, James, 'Luc Tuymans. Renaissance Society',
Artforum, New York, Vol 23, No 8, April 1995



Morgan, Stuart, 'The Future's Not What It Used to Be',
frieze, London, February 1995
Searle, Adrian, 'Tense? Nervous? It Might be Art', *The
Independent*, London, 3 January 1995

Selected exhibitions and projects

1994-95

Collection, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London,
text Dr Francis McKee

1995

'Works on Paper',
Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (group)

'Hopeless',
Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow (group)

'Change of Scene VII',
Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (group)

'Ars 95',
Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki (group)
Cat. *Ars 95*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki,
text sTuula Arkio, Maaretta Jaukkuri, Jonathan
Friedman, Michael Glasmeier, et al.

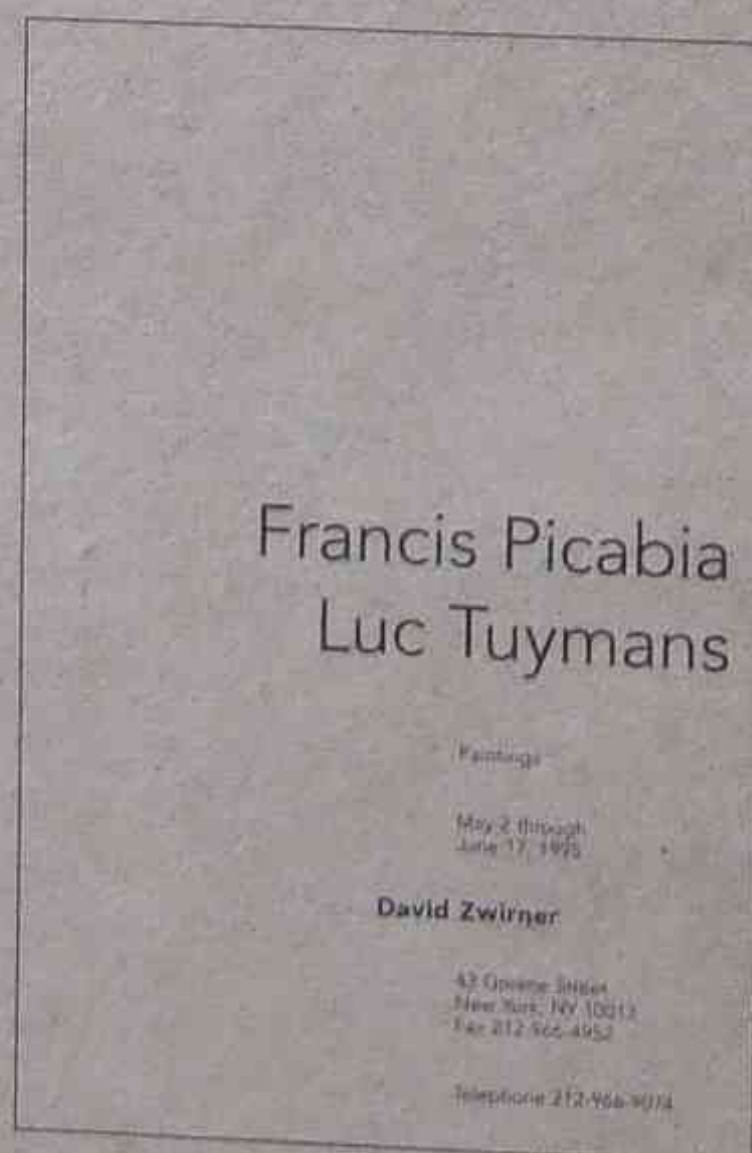
'Pour un couteau',
Le Creux de l'Enfer, Centre d'art Contemporain,
Thiers, France (group)

'Der Janustempel',
Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld, Germany (group)

'Menschenbilder',
Galerie Gebauer u. Günther, Berlin (group)

'Francis Picabia, Luc Tuymans',
David Zwirner Gallery, New York (group)

'Positionen',
Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany (group)
Cat. *Positionen*, Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany,
texts Jean-Christophe Ammann and Gerhard Finckh



Selected articles and interviews

1994-95

Asselberghs, Herman, 'Luc Tuymans. De stilte voor de storm. Opgetekende gedachten', *de Andere Sinema*, Antwerp, No 119

Bochyneck, Martin, 'Martin Bochyneck über Luc Tuymans', *Artist. Kunstmagazin*, Bremen, No 19, January

Lambrecht, Luk, 'Belgian Beat', *Flash Art*, Milan, March
Lauwaert, Dirk, 'Luc Tuymans of de breking', *De Witte Raaf*, Ghent, No 52, November

Ruyters, Marc, 'Schilder van de malaise', *Muziek & Woord*, Brussels, September

Searle, Adrian, 'False Memories. Adrian Searle on Luc Tuymans', *frieze*, London, No 17, June

1995

Auffermann, Verena, 'Ein Votum für die Malerei', *FR*, Germany, 4 February

Broos, Susanne, 'Mutter des Krieges', *Darmstadter Echo*, 2 February

Claver, Markus, 'Bilder für den zweiten Blick', *Die Rheinpfalz*, Germany, 28 January

Crüwell, Konstanze, 'Gegenwart und Erinnerung', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 29 January

Gropp, Rose-Maria, 'Erzähler im Raum', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21 February

Nilsson, John Peter, 'Världskonsten, som folkfest', *Aftonbladet*, Stockholm, 15 February

Blom, Ina, 'Dypdykk i det private', *Aftenposten*, Oslo, 27 February

Valjakka, Timo, 'Art to Finnish', *Artforum*, New York, Vol 23, No 9, May

Fricke, Harald, 'Verwischte Differenzen. "Menschenbilder" in der Galerie Gebauer u. Günther', *Neue Bildende Kunst*, Berlin, No 2, April/May

Drolet, Owen, 'Luc Tuymans. David Zwirner', *Flash Art*, Milan, Vol 28, No 182, June

Den Hartog Jager, Hans, 'Zoeken naar waar verfen illusie elkaar raken', *NRC Handelsblad*, Amsterdam, 21 July

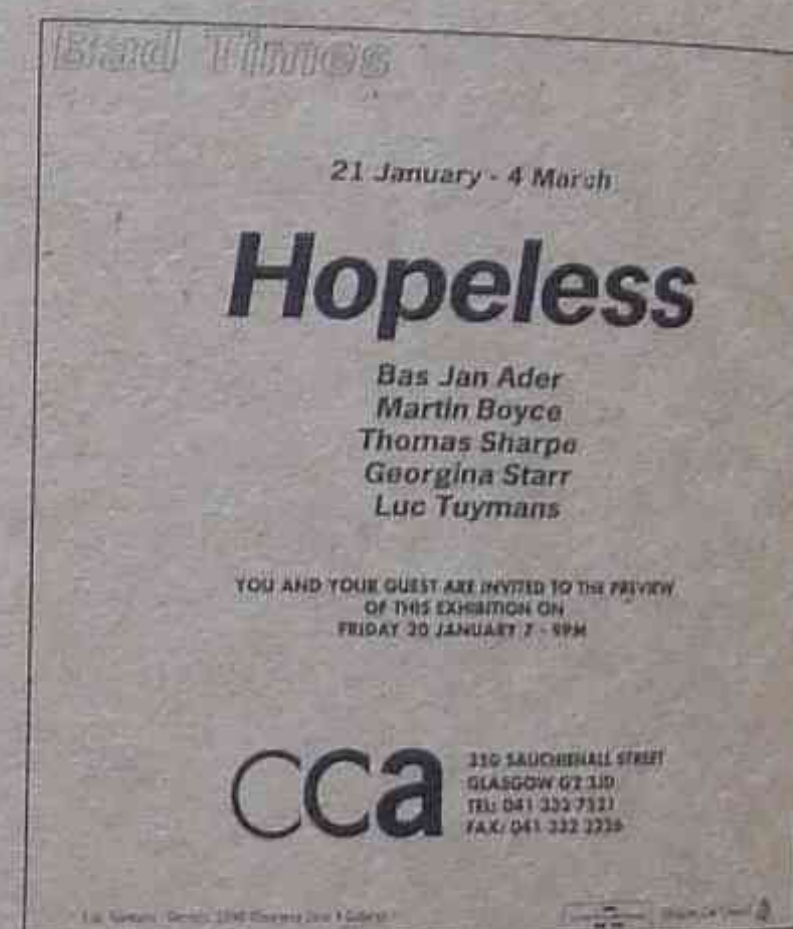
Kampmann, Matthias, 'An der Grenze des Mediums', *Westfälischer Anzeiger*, 5 July

Krause, Manfred, 'Meilensteine im Labyrinth der Malerei', *Westdeutsche Allgemeine*, Germany, 23 June

Krause, Manfred, 'Totgesagte leben länger', *Westdeutsche Allgemeine*, Germany, 4 July

Lüddemann, Stefan, 'Malen als kühle Artistik', *Osnabrücker Zeitung*, Osnabrück, 27 June

Müller, Sabine, 'Beobachtungen zum Stand der Malerei in den 90er Jahren: "Positionen" in Essen sowie ein



Selected exhibitions and projects
1995

'Le Verdici',
Centre Genevois de Gravure Contemporaine,
Geneva (solo)

'Des Limites du Tableau',
Musée Départemental de Rochechouart,
France (group)
Cat. *Des Limites du Tableau*, Musée Départemental de
Rochechouart, France, texts Jean-Marc Prevost and
Ann Hindry

'Ripple across the Water',
The Watari Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
(group)

'Blow Up', Luc Tuymans, Schilderijen/paintings
1985-1995

De Pont, Tilburg, The Netherlands (solo)
Cat. *Blow Up*, De Pont, Tilburg, The Netherlands, text
Dominic Van Den Boogerd



Heimat

'Heimat',
Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (solo)

Wij maken u graag attent op de tentoonstelling.
We would like to inform you of the exhibition.

Luc Tuymans

Schilderijen/paintings 1985-1995

3 september 1995 tot 14 januari 1996
September 3, 1995 through January 14, 1996

De Pont stichting voor hedendaagse kunst/
foundation for contemporary art
Wilhelmuspark 1, Tilburg, NL

LUC TUYMANS
July 1994
directed by Mark/Cliff de Groot
DE PONT stichting voor hedendaagse kunst/
foundation for contemporary art, Tilburg

Luc Tuymans

Heimat

14 September - 22 October 1995

Preview
Thursday 14 September
from 7 to 9 pm

Zeno X Gallery
Frank Demingo
Leopold De Waelplaats 16
2000 Antwerp 1, Belgium
Tel. 32 (0)3 7 216 16 26
Fax. 32 (0)3 7 216 09 92

Open: Wednesday until Saturday 2-6 pm
or by appointment

Selected articles and interviews
1995

Rückblick auf ein "Abenteuer" in Düsseldorf und
Stuttgart', *Köln Stadt-Anzeiger*, 20 July
Shah, Anita, 'Der Maler und seine Double', *Frankfurter
Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 July
Struck, Kristina, 'Beobachtungen zur Malerei heute',
Der Weg, Germany, 16 July
Willems, Sophia, 'Vom Mehrwert der Malerei',
Westdeutsche Zeitung, Krefeld, 12 July
Wintzenburg, Ludwig, 'Kunst- "Positionen" der
Beliebigkeit', *Neue Ruhr Zeitung*, Germany, 23 June

Nyffenegger, Françoise, 'Centre genevois de gravure
contemporaine', *VOIR*, Montreux, Switzerland, No 116,
June/August

Nyffenegger, Françoise, 'Luc Tuymans', *Kunstbulletin*,
Kriens, Switzerland, No 7/8, July/August 1995

Stigter, Bianca, 'Ik wil schilderen zonder deemoed',
NRC Handelsblad, Amsterdam, 1 September
Benschop, Jurriaan, 'Schilderijen van Luc Tuymans',
Kunstbeeld, Amsterdam, November
Benschop, Jurriaan, 'Schilderijen van Luc Tuymans',
Kunstbeeld, Amsterdam, November 1995
De Coninck, Frits, 'Karig van beeld, heftig van
betekenis', *De Stem*, The Netherlands, 8 September
Depondt, Paul, 'Ongrijpbaar als kringen in een
waterplas', *De Volkskrant*, Amsterdam, 8 September
Jansen, Bert, 'Schoonheid die de waarheid
verdoezelt', *Het Financieel Dagblad*, The Netherlands,
16 September

Müller, Robert-Jan, 'Luc Tuymans: Fragments of
Recollection', *Archis*, Rotterdam, No 1, January 1996

Müller, Robert-Jan, 'Luc Tuymans, fiarden van
herinnering', *Archis*, Rotterdam, No 1, January
Ruyters, Marc, 'Consumentengedrag blijft op
kunstmarkt drukken', *De Financieel-Economische Tijd*,
Berchem, 16 September

Tegenbosch, Pietje, 'De filmische blik van Tuymans',
Het Parool, Netherlands, 19 September

Van Der Burg, Anna, 'Niets is compleet bij Luc
Tuymans', *Brabants Dagblad*, The Netherlands,
2 September

Van Hove, Jan, 'Schilder van het stil geweld', *De
Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, Belgium, 6 September

Bracke, Eric, 'Het verdriet van Vlaanderen', *De Morgen*,
Brussels, 20 October

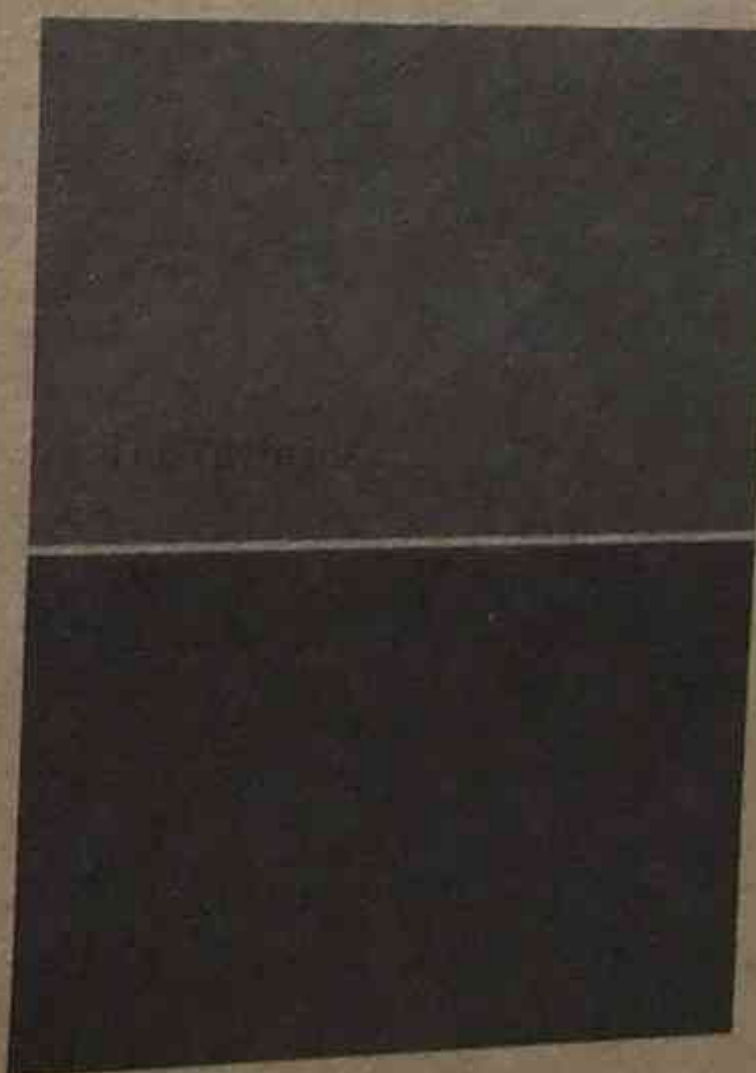
Heirman, Frank, 'De heimat volgens Luc Tuymans',
Gazet van Antwerpen, 22 September

Ruyters, Marc, 'Vlaams en goed', *Knack Weekend*,
Brussels, 4 October

Stappaerts, Dirk, 'De getarmenteerde ontleder van het
stille geweld', *Wij*, Brussels, 11 October

Van Den Bergh, Jos, 'Luc Tuymans', *Artforum*, New
York, May, 1996

Van Den Boogerd, Dominic, 'De Heimat als
herzenschim', *HP/De Tijd*, Amsterdam, 6 October



Selected exhibitions and projects

1995-96

'The Agony',

Galeria Foksal SBWA, Warsaw (solo)

Cat. *The Agony*, Galeria Foksal SBWA, Warsaw, texts

Julian Heynen and Adam Szymczyk

'Heimat',

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, France (solo)

Cat. *Heimat*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, France,

text Luc Tuymans

'Een actuele privé-verzameling',

Sint-Lukasgalerij, Brussels (group)

1996

Text, 'Over het beeld', *De Witte Raaf*, No 60, March-

April

'Accrochage',

Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (group)

'Hebben Wij Het Geweten?',

Provinciaal Museum, Hasselt (group)

Cat. *Hebben Wij Het Geweten?*, Provinciaal Museum,

Hasselt, text Kesenne Joannes

'Ver na Vermeer. Hedendaagse schilders in Nederland en Vlaanderen',

De Beyer, Breda (group)

'Contact prints',

Galeria Foksal, Warsaw (group)

'The Heritage',

David Zwirner Gallery, New York (solo)

'Painting: The Extended Field',

Rooseum, Centre for Contemporary Art, Malmö,

taored to Magasin 3 Konsthall, Stockholm (group)

Cat. *Painting: The Extended Field*, Rooseum, Center

for Contemporary Art, Malmö, texts Ulrika Levén, et

al.

'Kunstwerken verworven door de Vlaamse

Gemeenschap in 1994 en 1995',

Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerp (group)

Cat. *Kunstwerken verworven door de Vlaamse*

Gemeenschap in 1994 en 1995, Museum van

Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerp, text Leen De Backer

Richard Artschwager	Painting on television, television on painting. An exhibition inside of a show inside of an exhibition.	Laura Owens
John Currin		Jorge Fardo
Nicole Eisenman		Elizabeth Payton
Gaylen Garber		Lari Pittman
Peter Halley		Signal Pulke
Mary Heilmann		Richard Prince
Peter Hopkins		Gerhard Richter
Alex Katz		Matthew Rife
Ryan Kline		Alexis Rockman
Jutta Koehler		Gary Simmons
Bill Kromski		Nudolf Stingel
Udoessa Khameneh		Philip Teaffe
Jonathan Lasker		Luc Tuymans
Glenn Ligon		Chris Wilder
Alan McCallum		Sue Williams
John Miller	Christopher Wool	

Curated by Joshua Decker

January 19 to
February 24 1996

Opening Reception Friday, January 19, 1996 6:00pm till 8:00pm.
A limited-edition video catalogue of the exhibition is available.

Friedrich Petzel Gallery, 36 Wooster Street, New York, NY 10013, Tel (212) 534 9466

Selected articles and interviews

1995-96

Arnaudet, Didier, 'Luc Tuymans, Musée des Beaux-

Arts', *Artpress*, No 210, February, 1996

Arnaudet, Didier, 'Luc Tuymans, Musée des Beaux-Arts,

Artpress, Paris, February, No 210

Escolano, V., "'Je suis Belge, pas Flamand". Exposition

Luc Tuymans au Musée des Beaux-Arts', *Ouest-France*,

Nantes, 4 November

Braet, Jan, 'De schilder met het mes', interview in

Knack, Brussels, No 45, 8 November

Compere, Rita, 'Luc Tuymans. The Inadequacy of

Painting as an Art Form', *Flanders*, Brussels, No 28,

December

1996

Bracke, Eric, 'Hebben de beeldende kunstenaars het

geweten?', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 1 June

Braet, Jan, 'Spelen op het geweten', *Knack*, Antwerp, 5

June

Kesenne, Joannes, 'Hebben wij het geweten?', *Kunst &*

Cultuur, Brussels, July-August

Vuegen, Christine, 'Hebben wij het geweten?',

Kunstbeeld, Utrecht, July-August

Bracke, Eric, 'Oudere tijdgenoten in de hoek gedrukt.

'Ver na Vermeer', Vlaamse en Nederlandse

hedendaagse schilders in Breda', *De Morgen*, Brussels,

23 May

Avgikos, Jan, 'Luc Tuymans: David Zwirner Gallery',

Artforum, New York, January 1997

Mumford, Steve, 'Luc Tuymans', *Review*, New York, 15

October

Schjeldahl, Peter, 'Bad Thoughts', Luc Tuymans, *Village*

Voice, New York, 8 October

Smith, Roberta, 'Luc Tuymans', *New York Times*, 11

October

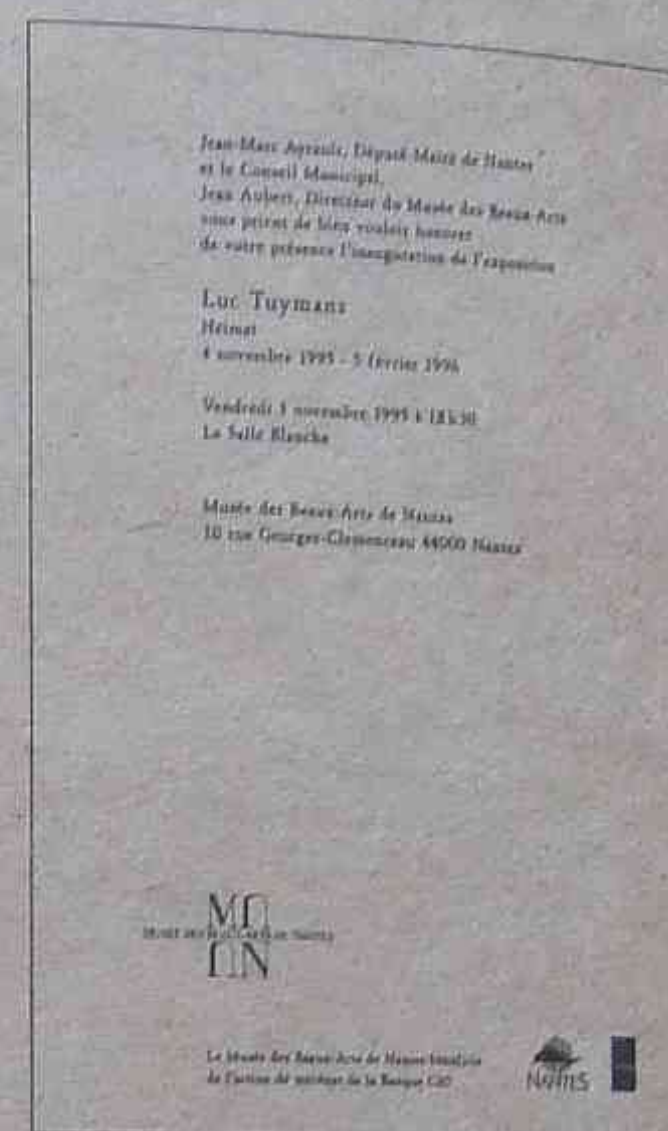
Birnbaum, Daniel, 'Painting: The Extended Field',

Artforum, New York, February

Willemsen, Paul, 'Vlaamse Gemeenschap koopt minder

maar sterkere kunst', *De Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden,

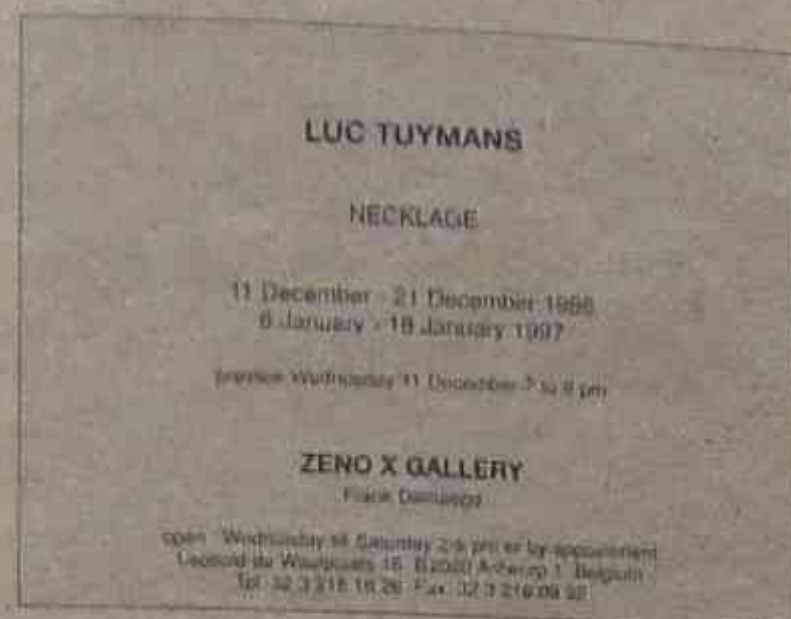
8 November



Selected exhibitions and projects

1996-97

'Necklace',
Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (solo)



'4x1 im Albertinum',
Gemäldegalerie, Dresden (group)
Cat. *4x1 im Albertinum*, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden,
text Ulrich Bischoff

'Face à l'Histoire',
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (group)
Cat. *Face à l'Histoire*, Éditions du Centre Pompidou,
Paris, texts Jean-Paul Ameline, et al.

1997

'10 jaar aankopen. Een selectie uit de collectie
moderne Nederlandse schilderkunst van de
Stadsgalerij Heerlen',
Stadsgalerij Heerlen, Heerlen (group)

'10 Jahre Stiftung Kunsthalle Bern',
Kunsthalle, Bern (group)
Cat. *10 Jahre Stiftung Kunsthalle Bern*, Kunsthalle
Bern, text Ulrich Loock

'Reality Revisited: Inbetween Walls',
World Economic Forum, Davos (group)

'La pittura fiamminga e olandese',
Palazzo Grassi, Venice (group)
Cat. *La pittura fiamminga e olandese*, Palazzo
Grassi, Venice, texts Rudi Fuchs, Jan Hoet, et al.

'Nature Morte',
Cultureel Centrum, Leuven (group)

'Premonition. Zeichnungen, Drawings',
Kunstmuseum, Bern, toured to University Art
Museum, Berkeley; *capc Musée d'art contemporain
de Bordeaux* (solo)
Cat. *Premonition. Zeichnungen, Drawings*,
Kunstmuseum Bern, texts Hans Rudolf Reust and
Lawrence Rinder

Selected articles and interviews

1996-97

Borka, Max, 'Beelden van onschuld in Oudtrouwtijd', *De
Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, 18 December
Borka, Max, 'Elk doek de perfecte moord. Luc Tuymans,
schilder van gedachten', *De Standaard der Letteren*,
Groot-Bijgaarden, 19 December
Hendrickx, Lot, 'Luc Tuymans', *Kultuurleven*, No 8,
Belgium, December
Lambrecht, Luk, 'Ijzingwekkend?', *De Morgen*,
Brussels, 27 December

Bekkers, Ludo, 'Luc Tuymans, au-delà de la mémoire',
Septentrion, June
Hirsch, Faye, 'Working Proof: Interview with Luc
Tuymans', *On Paper*, November-December
Labelle, Charles, 'Luc Tuymans: Back from the Death',
Art + Text, Sydney, May
Lambrecht, Luk, 'Luc Tuymans: Sowing the Seed of a
New Painting', *Flash Art*, Milan, May-June
Reust, Hans Rudolf; Tuymans, Luc, 'Das megalomane
Detail', *Kunstforum International*, Cologne, May-
September
Robert-Jan, Müller, 'Luc Tuymans: Fragments of
Recollection', *Archis*, Baarn, January
Van Laere, Frederik, *Luc Tuymans. Ontruchterd
schilderen*, thesis, University of Ghent

1997

Braet, Jan, 'De werkelijkheid was heel anders', *Knack*,
Antwerp, 29 January

Tobler, Konrad, 'Punkt, Komma, Strich: Da ist der
Killer', *Berner Zeitung*, Bern, 23 April

De Saint-Do, Valérie, 'Les Fantômes de Tuymans', *Sud-
ouest*, France, 14 February 1998
Helfenstein, Josef, 'Luc Tuymans: Premonition. Die
Zeichnungen', *Berner Kunstmitteilungen*, Bern, March-
April 1998
Griffin, Tim, 'Premonition Luc Tuymans Drawings', *On
Paper*, New York, January-February 1998

Selected exhibitions and projects

1997-98

'Ons Geluk' (one-year presentation by Luc Tuymans and Danny Devos),

Breydelstr. 5, Antwerp (solo)

'Future, Present, Past',

XLVII Venice Biennial (group)

Cat. *Passato Presente Futuro*, La Biennale di Venezia, texts Germano Celant, et al.

'John Currin, Elisabeth Peyton, Luc Tuymans',

The Museum of Modern Art, New York (group)

'4e Biennale de Lyon',

Halle Tony Garnier, Lyon (group)

Cat. *4e biennale de Lyon, l'autre*, Halle, Lyon, text Tony Garnier, Harald Szeemann

'Reality Revisited: The Memory as Longing',

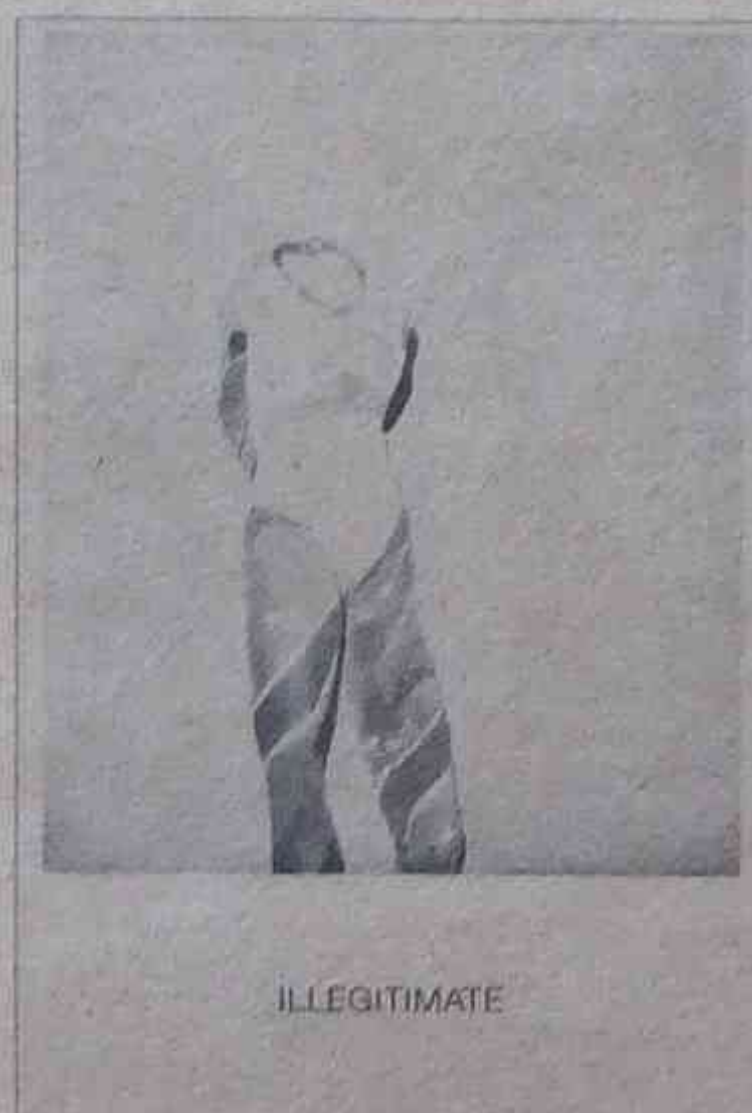
Sala Montcada de la Fundació 'La Caixa', Barcelona (group)

'été 97',

Centre genevois de gravure contemporaine, Geneva (group)

'Illegitimate',

Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (solo)



1998

'Five Years',

David Zwirner Gallery, New York (group)

'Der Architekt',

Galerie Gebauer, Berlin (solo)

'Vier Temperamenten',

Galerie Gabriël van de Weghe, Wortegem (group)

'Verzachtende omstandigheden',

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (group)

'Delayed',

Anders Tornberg Gallery, Lund (solo)

'58/98 The Fascinating Faces of Flanders through Art and Society',

Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon (group)

Cat. *58/98 The fascinating faces of Flanders through Art and Society*, Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon, text Hans Rudolf Reust

'Photographs and Filmstills',

Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (group)

Selected articles and interviews

1997-98

Vetrocq, Maria E., 'The 1997 Venice Biennale: A Space Odyssey', *Art in America*, New York, September

Popelier, Bert, 'Illegitimate', *Tijd Cultuur*, Belgium, 17 December

Lambrecht, Luc, 'Illegitimate', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 19 December

Mertens, Dirk, 'Successschilder Luc Tuymans puurt beelden uit tot nulpunt', *Gazet van Antwerpen*, Antwerp, 23 December

Holthof, Marc, 'Ongeoorloofde doeken', *Weekend Knack*, Antwerp, 24 December

1998

Lindner, Normen, 'Der Architekt', *Berliner Zeitung*, Berlin, 16 March

Fricke, Harald, 'Restbestände der Massenvernichtung', *Die Tageszeitung*, Berlin, 13 March

Castenfors, Märten, 'Visuell kommunikation som imonerar', *Svenska Dagbladet*, Sweden, 9 May

Håfström, Jan, 'Att måla är att utmana minnet', *Dagens Nyheter*, Sweden, 15 May

Zetterström, Jelena, 'De små mediens mästare', *Sydsvenskan*, Sweden, 16 May

Selected exhibitions and projects

1998-99

'Now and Forever: Part I',
Pat Hearn Gallery and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York (group)

'Privacy: Luc Tuymans, Miroslav Balka',
Fundação de Serralves, Porto (solo)
Cat. *Privacy: Luc Tuymans, Miroslav Balka*, Fundação de Serralves, Porto, texts Julian Heynen, Alexandre Melo, Vicente Todolí

'E+XXXI',
Limerick City Gallery of Art, Ireland (group)

'Security',
David Zwirner Gallery, New York (solo)

'Artist's Proof',
Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld, toured to
Kunsthalle, Nürnberg (group)
Cat. *Artist's Proof*, Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld,
text Gerhard Storck

'Twee uur breed of twee uur land. Over Kunst en
samenleving. Fascinerende facetten van Vlaanderen',
Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp
(group)

'Bildgewordene Wikkichkeiten',
Internationale Kunstzentrum Ostbelgien (group)

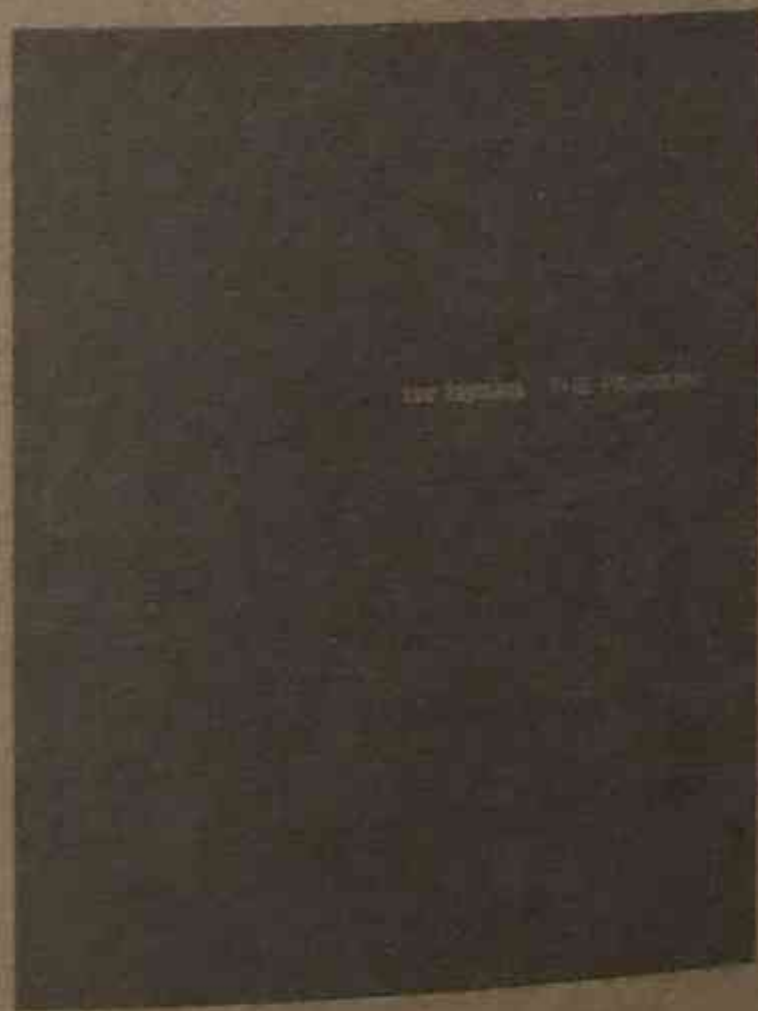
'Aspects de l'art actuel en Belgique',
Frac Nord-Pas de Calais (group)
Cat. *Aspects de l'art actuel en Belgique*, Frac Nord-
Pas de Calais, text Veerle Van Durme

1999

'The Passion',
Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, toured to Douglas Hyde
Gallery, Dublin (solo)
Cat. *The Passion*, Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, text
John Hutchinson

'Splendid Isolation',
White Cube, London (solo)

'La Consolation',
Magasin, Centre National d'Art Contemporain,
Grenoble (group)
Cat. *La Consolation*, Magasin, Centre National d'Art
Contemporain, Grenoble, texts Bart Verschaffel, Rudi
Lisermano and Yves Aupetitallot



Selected articles and interviews

1998-99

Faria, Oscar, 'Campos de Silencio', *Público*, Portugal,
24 September



James, Merlin, 'New York Winter Painting Exhibitions',
Burlington Magazine, London, February, 1999

Doove, Edith, 'Kerstshopping tussen de sterren', *De
Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, 18 December
Van Hove, Jan, 'Vlaamse Kunst in brokken', *De
standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, 18 December

Duncan, Sarah, *The Aesthetic of the Fragment*, MA
thesis, National College of Art & Design, Dublin, May
Flohic, Catherine, 'Luc Tuymans', *NINETY*, No 28,
Charenton Cedex
N., 'Interview with Luc Tuymans', *NINETY*, No 28,
Charenton Cedex

1999

Roelandt, Els, 'Het Passieverhaal van Luc Tuymans',
Tijd Cultuur, Belgium, 10 February
Doove, Edith, 'De Kitscherige Christus van Luc
Tuymans', *De Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, 17
February
Heirman, Frank, 'Luc Tuymans toont reeks The Passion
in Zeno X', *Gazet van Antwerpen*, Antwerp, 19 February
Braet, Jan, 'Het Grote Werk', *Knack*, Antwerp, 24
February
Wakefield, Neville, 'Luc Tuymans, Violence lurks
beneath the surface of Belgium's dark art', *Edé décor*,
London, April
Demeester, Ann, 'Tuymans' antwoord op Caravaggio',
De Morgen, Brussels, 6 March

Selected exhibitions and projects

1999-2000

'Zich ophouden bij...'

Brugse Hallen, Brugge (group)

'Examining Pictures: Exhibiting Paintings'

Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, toured to Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; UCLA at the Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Centre, Los Angeles (group)

Cat. *Examining Pictures: Exhibiting Paintings*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, texts Francesco Bonami and Judith Nesbitt

'Trouble Spot: Painting'

Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen/New International Culture Centre, Antwerp (group)

Cat. *Trouble Spot Painting*, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen/New International Culture Centre, Antwerp, texts Kurt Vanbelleghem and Tim Vermeulen

'De Opening'

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent (group)

'The Purge: Paintings 1991-1998'

Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, toured to Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg; Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (solo)

Cat. *The Purge: Paintings 1991-1998*, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, texts Paula van den Bosch and Annelie Lütgens

'Transmitter'

Kunstverein, Bonn (group)

Cat. *Transmitter*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, text Harald Uhr

'Carnegie International 1999/2000'

Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (group)

Cat. *CI:99, Carnegie International 1999/2000*, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, texts Madeleine Grynsztejn, et al.

2000

'Szenenwechsel/Change of Scene XVII'

Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (group)

'Undetermined'

Wako Works of Art, Tokyo (solo)

'The Promise'

Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (solo)

Cat. *The Promise*, Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

'The Oldest Possible Memory'

Sammlung Hauser und Wirth, St. Gallen (group)

Biennale of Sydney 2000 (group)

Cat. *12th Biennale of Sydney 2000*, Sydney, texts Nick Waterlow, et al.

Selected articles and interviews

1999-2000

Dewulf, Bernard, 'Schilder, Schilder', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 21 May

Pontzen, Rutger, 'Trouble Spot: Painting', *Vrij Nederland*, 29 May

Spaminks, Angelique, 'Doodgekeken Beelden', *Eindhovens Dagblad*, Eindhoven, 27 May

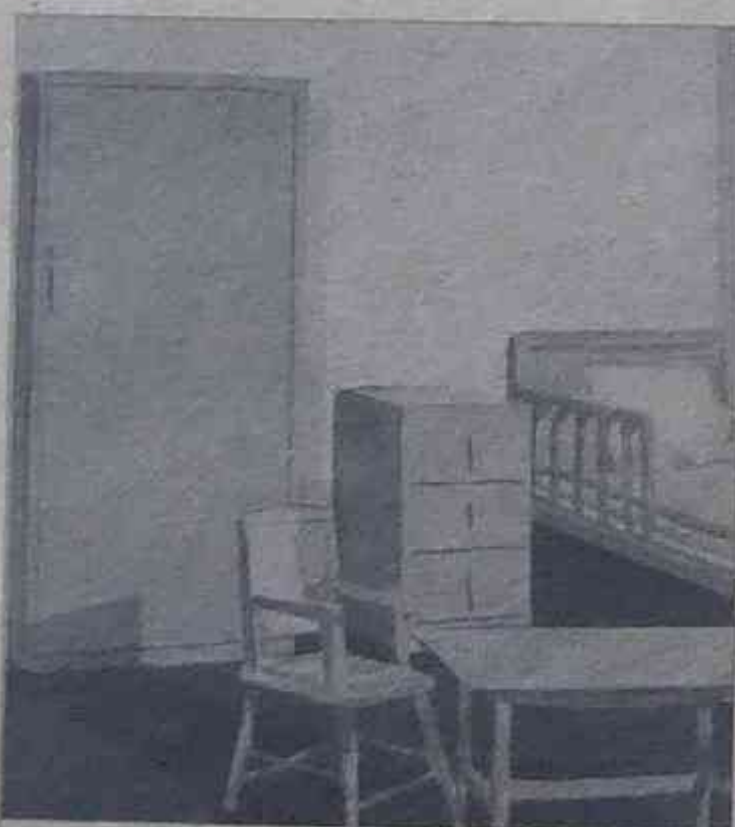
Braet, Jan, 'Sneeuw op komst', *Knack*, Antwerp, 26 May

De Boodt, Kurt, 'Trouble Ahead', *Kunst & Cultuur*, Brussels, June

Roelandt, Els, 'Luc Tuymans in Maastricht', *Tijd Cultuur*, Belgium, 2 June

Herstatt, Claudia, 'Luc Tuymans: The Purge. Bilder 1991-1998', *Kunstforum*, Cologne, February, 2000

Reust, Hans Rudolf, 'Salzburger Sätze / Salzburg Sentences', *Salzburger Kunstverein*, Salzburg, 2000



Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg
25.11.1999 - 31.01.2000
**LUC TUYMANS:
THE PURGE**
Bilder 1991-1998

Art at the Turn of the Millennium, Taschen Verlag, Cologne

Martens, Dirk, 'Saatchi gevaar voor kunst', *het Nieuwsblad/De Gentenaar*, 8 January

2000

Luc Tuymans
UNDETERMINED

2000.2.9 - 3.18

ワコウ・ワークス・オブ・アート
ZENO X GALLERY

料金別納
郵便

W
WAKO WORKS OF ART

Selected exhibitions and projects
2000-01

'The Vincent',
Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht (group)

'Premio Michetti 2000',
Museo Michetti, Chieti (group)
Cat. Premio Michetti 2000, Giancarlo Politi, Milan, texts
Gianni Romano, Martin Maloney, Wim Peters, Lane
Relyea and Barbara Casavecchia

'Eizzeit',
Kunstmuseum, Bern (group)

'Das Gedächtnis Der Malerei',
Aarguer Kunsthau, Aarau (group)

'Apocalypse: Beauty and Horror in Contemporary
Art',
Royal Academy of Arts, London (group)
Cat. Apocalypse, Royal Academy of Arts, London,
texts Michael Archer, Norman Rosenthal, et al.



'82.65% verf. Een keuze uit de aanwinsten 1991-
2000',
Stadsgalerij, Heerlen (group)

'Sincerely',
Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (solo)
Cat. Sincerely, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, texts
Wim Peeters

'Insolence',
Wako Works of Art, Tokyo (solo)
Cat. Insolence, Wako Works of Art, Tokyo

'Mwana Kitoko',
David Zwirner Gallery, New York (solo)
Cat. Mwana Kitoko, David Zwirner Gallery, New York,
text Philippe Pirotte

'Imperfektum',
Rogaland Kunstmuseum, Stavanger (group)

2001
'Luc Tuymans/Raoul De Keyser',
Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent (solo)
Cat. Raoul De Keyser/Luc Tuymans, Stedelijk Museum
voor Actuele Kunst, Gent, text Gregory Salzman

Selected articles and interviews
2000-01

Cooper, D., 'Best of 2000: Luc Tuymans In "Apocalypse:
Beauty and Horror in Contemporary Art"', *Artforum*,
New York, December

Glover, Michael, 'Behind the Scenes at the Museum',
The Independent, London, 20 September

Johnson, Daniel, 'How One Man Turned the RA into
Madame Tussaud's', *The Daily Telegraph*, London, 20
September

Parfrey, Adam, 'Four Artists of the Apocalypse', *Art
Review*, London, September

Pieters, Rudy, 'Breugel Revisited. Vijftien
hedendaagse kunstenaars peilen de afgrond in
"Apocalyps"', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 7 October

Davenport, Rhana, 'Luc Tuymans, Sincerely - Tokyo
Opera City Gallery, Tokyo', *Eyeline*, No 45

Halle, Howard, 'Art of Darkness. Luc Tuymans Paints
the Mistakes of his Native Belgium's Past', *Time Out
New York*, 14-28 December

Schwendener, M., 'Luc Tuymans: David Zwirner',
Artforum, New York, March, 2001

Heirman, Frank, 'Luc Tuymans neemt deel aan
Biennale van Venetië', *Gazet van Antwerpen*, November

Hoptman, L., 'Luc Tuymans: Mirrorman', *Parkett*, No
60, Zurich

Mosquera, Gerardo, 'Luc Tuymans: Painting on the
Edge', *Parkett*, No 60, Zurich

Reust, Hans Rudolf, 'In the Dark Regions of the World.
Luc Tuymans' Recent painting', *Parkett*, No 60, Zurich

2001
Fiers, Els, 'Luc Tuymans en Raoul De Keyser', *Focus
Knack*, Antwerp, 31 January

De Maesschalck, J., 'Getekend / Jan De Maesschalck.
Zaterdag opent de tentoonstelling "Raoul De Keyser -
Luc Tuymans"', *Tijd Cultuur*, Belgium, 31 January

Van Hove, Jan, 'De nood om te schilderen. Luc Tuymans

Return: The Museum, 2000
Oil on canvas, 11 x 11 inches

November 22 through
December 23, 2000

Luc Tuymans

Mwana Kitoko
beautiful white room

Reception
Tuesday, November 21
10am - 6pm

David Zwirner
43 Canal Street
New York, NY 10013
Tel: 212 366 4002

Telephone: 212 766 6204
E-mail: david@zwirner.com
www.davidzwirner.com

Selected exhibitions and projects

2001

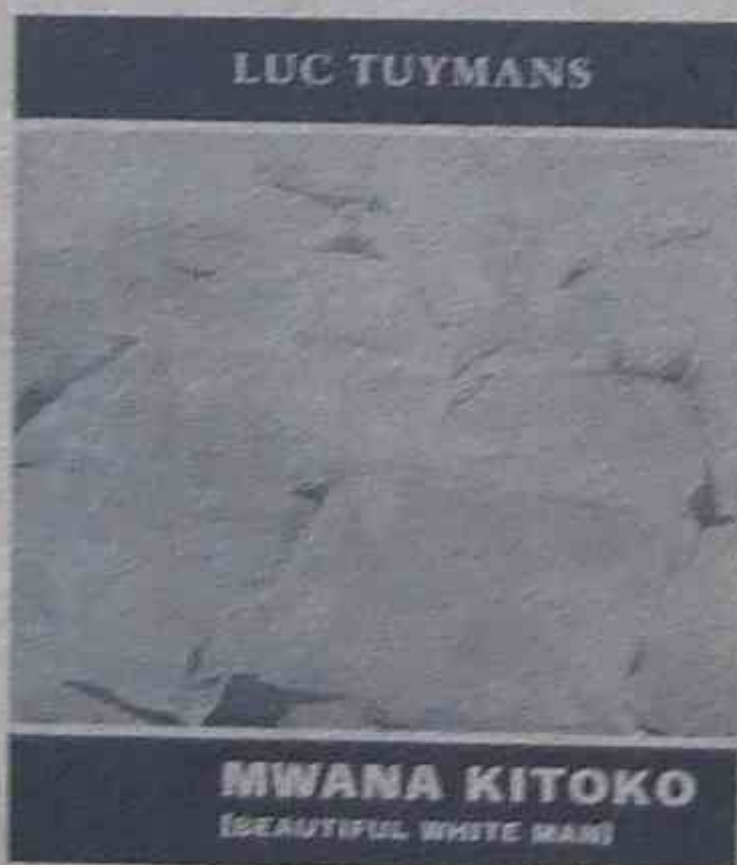
'Change of Scene XIX',
Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main
(group)

'Collaborations with Parkett (1984 to Now)',
The Museum of Modern Art, New York (group)

'Signal',
Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (solo)
Cat. *Signal*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, texts Luc
Tuymans, Vivian Lisak, Eugen Blume and Julian
Heynen



'Mwana Kitoko: Beautiful White Man',
Belgian Pavilion, 49th Venice Biennale (solo)
Cat. *Mwana Kitoko: Beautiful White Man*, Belgian
Pavilion, Giardini of Venice, texts Robert Storr,
Philippe Pirota, Jan Hoet
Cat. 49th Venice Biennale, La Biennale di Venezia,
texts Harald Szeemann, et al.



'Watou Proleksamer 2001 "Een lege plek om te
blijven"',
Various locations, Watou (group)

'The Dark',
Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg (group)

'The Rumour',
White Cube 2, London (solo)



Selected articles and interviews

2001

en Raoul De Keyser samen in het SMAK', *De Standaard*,
Groot-Bijgaarden, 3-4 February
Lux, 'Luc Tuymans en Raoul De Keyser in het SMAK.
Beroemd en miskend', *Het Nieuwsblad/De Gentenaar*, 8
February
I.K., 'Raoul De Keyser/Luc Tuymans', *De Witte Raaf*, No
90, Gent, March-April

Kuhn, Nicola, 'Rückkehr aus dem Schattenreich. Der
belgier Luc Tuymans wagt sich im Hamburger Bahnhof
Berlin an deutsche Geschichte', *Der Tagesspiegel*,
Berlin, 5 April

Lehnart, Ilona, 'Lauter letzte Bilder. Der Belgier Luc
Tuymans wagt im Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin eine
ungewöhnliche Ausstellung', *FAZ*, Berlin, 20 April
Orzesse, Arno, 'Das Schweigen der Bilder. Der
belgische Künstler Luc Tuymans beschäftigt die
Besucher im Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin mit
Transformationen historischer Fotos', *Der Süddeutsche
Zeitung*, Munich, 11 April

Schenk-Sorge, J., 'Luc Tuymans, Signal, Hamburger
Bahnhof', *Kunstforum International*, Cologne, June-
July

Van Hove, Jan, 'Luc Tuymans met nazi-werken in
Berlijn', *De Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, 12 April
Vogel, Sabine, 'Die endlösung der Vorstellungskraft.
Der Belgier Luc Tuymans malt Bilde über Täter und Orte
des Holocaust', *Berliner Zeitung*, Berlin, 7-8 April

Bekkers, Ludo, 'Luc Tuymans naar Biennale van
Venetië', *Kunstbeeld*, Utrecht, February

Boeckner, S., 'Biennalen. Pavillon Belgien',
Kunstforum International, Cologne, April-May

Braet, Jan, 'Een duik in diep water. De 49ste Biennale
van Venetië offreert een plateau om de mensheid in
ogenschouw te nemen. Het uitzicht is overweldigend,
maar zelden vrolijk', *Knoek*, Antwerp, 27 June
Conway Morris, R., 'Biennale Opens Its Portals to the
Past', *International Herald Tribune*, New York, 16-17
June

Fox, Dien, 'Venice in Peril', *frieze*, London, September
Georges, S., 'Luc Tuymans toont koloniale verleden in
Belgisch paviljoen', *Belang van Limburg*, Limburg, 8
June

Roelandt, Els; Ruyters, Marc, 'We Like the Man in
Uniform', *Tijd Cultuur*, Belgium, 6 June

Van Hove, Jan, 'Biennale van Venetië geeft prijzen aan
jong en oud. Duitlandt wint Gouden Leeuw', *De
Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, 11 June

Bishop, Claire, 'All of a Flatter: Luc Tuymans: The
Rumour', *Evening Standard*, London, 13 September
Buck, Louise, 'Artist's Interview', London: Luc Tuymans



Selected exhibitions and projects
2001-02

'The Contemporary face: From Pablo Picasso to Alex Katz',
Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (group)

'La natura della natura Morta',
Galeria Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Bologna (group)

'I Love New York: A Benefit to Raise Funds for the Families of the Victims of the WTC Disaster',
David Zwirner Gallery, New York (group)

'Het versluisde beeld',
Provinciaal Centrum voor Beeldende Kunsten - Begijnhof, Hasselt (group)
Cat. *Het wakende woord. literatuur, ethiek en politiek* voorbij, Provinciaal Centrum voor Beeldende Kunsten - Begijnhof, Hasselt, text Maurice Blanchot

2002
'The Unthought Known',
White Cube 2, London (group)

'Raum für Malerei - The Painting Room',
Museum Krefeld, Krefeld (group)

'Bandmalerei',
Künstlerverein Malkasten, Düsseldorf (solo)

'Painting on the Move',
Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel (group)

Documenta 11,
Binding - Bauerei, Kassel (group)
Cat. *Documenta 11, Platform 5*, Hatje Cantz,
Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany, texts Okwui Enwezor,
et al.

Selected articles and interviews
2001-02

'Pigeon Power', *The Art Newspaper*, London, September
Darwent, Charles, 'Bloody Pigeons Everywhere ...', *The Independent*, London, 9 September
Gayford, Martin, 'Luc Tuymans: White Cube', *The Sunday Telegraph*, London, 9 September
Herbert, Martin, 'Luc Tuymans: White Cube, London', *tama celeste*, Milan, November-December
Higgle, Jennifer, 'Luc Tuymans: White Cube, London', *frieze*, London, November-December
Hunt, Ian, 'The Unthought Known', *frieze*, London, June-August
Packer, William, 'Opaque Works Fade to Grey', *Financial Times*, London, 11 September
Roelandt, Els, "'The Rumour" over het machtsdenken', *De Financieel-Economische Tijd*, 15 September

Helfenstein, Josef, 'Eine Art von Bildterror', *Künstler*, Munich
Kähler, Herbert, 'Ästhetik der Traumata - Inversion des Allegorischen', *Künstler*, Munich

2002

Hafner, H.J., 'Painting on the Move', *Kunstforum International*, Bd. 162, November-December

Broucke, Nica, 'Documenta in beeld', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 8 June
Broucke, Nica, 'Jan Hoet over Documenta 11', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 13 June
Knöfel, Ulrike, 'Attacks der Kitsch-Rebellen', *Der Spiegel*, Hamburg, 15 June
Van Hove, Jan, 'Elfde Documenta getuigt van mondialisering in de kunst. Alle kleuren van de wereld', *De Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, 10 June
Braet, Jan, 'Thomas maakt zijn handen vuil. De politisering van de grootste internationale tentoonstelling van actuele kunst zet zich door. De Documenta 11 in Kassel presenteert zich als het beeldend geweten van de wereld', *KnoX*, Antwerp, 19 June



Selected exhibitions and projects

2002-03

'Dear Painter, Paint Me',
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, toured to
Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; Schirn Kunsthalle,
Frankfurt (group)

Cat. *Dear Painter, Paint Me*, Centre Georges Pompidou,
Paris, text Alison M. Gingeras

Text, 'Enquête sur l'image peinte/What the Painters
Say', *Art Press*, Paris, July-August

'The Limits of Perception',
Fundacion Miró, Barcelona (group)

'Ik of een ander: zelfportretten van Belgische
kunstenaars',

Passage 44, Brussels (group)

Cat. *Ik of een ander: Zelfportretten van Belgische
kunstenaars*, Dexia galerie, Passage 44, Brussels, texts
B. Verschaffel, K. van der Stighelen, A. Pickels, B.
Dewulf

'Pressing',
Objectif, Antwerp (group)

'Niks',
Bergerhout - Zeno X Storage, Antwerp (solo)

2003

'The Ambiguity of the Image',
Art Athina, Athens (group)

'Beaufort 2003: Marines in confrontation',
PHMK, Oostende (group)

David Zwirner Gallery, New York (solo)

'The Arena',
Kunstverein Hannover, toured to Pinakothek der
Moderne, Munich; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (solo)

Helsinki Kunsthalle (solo)

EASA, Centro de Arte de Salamanca, Spain (solo)

2004

Tate Modern, London (solo)



Selected articles and interviews

2002-03

Hendryckx, Michiel, En Jan Van Hove,
'Derdewereldkunst domineert eefde Documenta', *DSM
Magazine*, 21 June

Rios, Robbert, 'Documenta van Enwezor overtuigt',
Kunstbeeld, Utrecht, July-August

Schjeldahl, Peter, 'The Global Salon: European
extravaganzas', *The New Yorker*, New York, 1 July

Dewulf, Bernard, 'Figuratieve schilderkunst in het
Centre Pompidou. Uit een levendig hiernamaals', *De
Morgen*, Brussels, 10 August

Metzger, Rainer, "'Lieber Maler, male mir...'" Radikaler
Realismus nach Picabia', *Kunstforum International*,
Cologne, November-December

Lambrecht, Luk, 'Luc Tuymans in Zeno X Storage. Het is
niet niks', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 10 January 2003

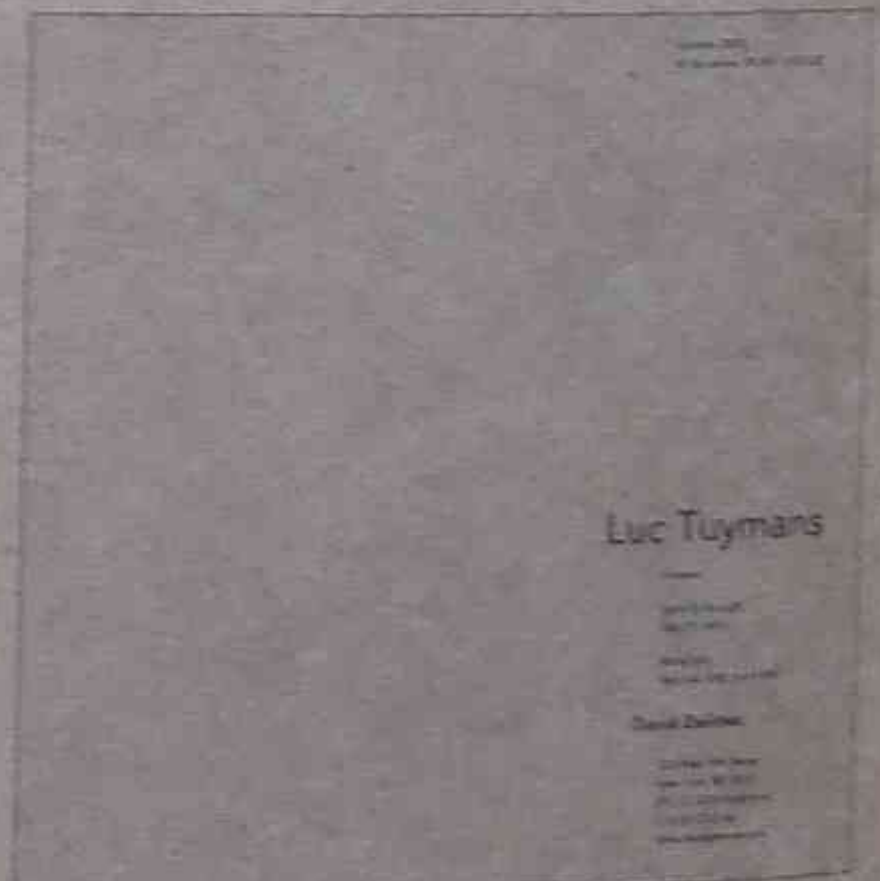
Martens, Dirk, 'Zeno X Storage toont "Niks" in nieuwe
serie. Het wit van Luc Tuymans', *De Standaard*, Groot-
Bijgaarden, 13 December

Amp, 'Hoe leg je het niks vast op doek? Niks - Luc
Tuymans, Zone 03, 11-17 December

Laureyns, Jeroen, "'Niks" van Luc Tuymans. Sprakeloze
beelden', *Tijd Cultuur*, 27 November

Gingeras, Alison M., 'Luc Tuymans', *VIZAMIZ P: New
Perspectives in Painting*, Phaidon Press, London

2003



- Allaga, Juan Vicente**, *Enigma. David Hockes, Francesca Llopis, Luc Tuymans, Sala Montcada de la Fundació "La Caixa"*, Barcelona, 1994
- Ammann, Jean-Christophe**, *Positionen*, Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany, 1995
- Asselberghs, Herman**, 'Luc Tuymans. De stilte voor de storm. Opgetekende gedachten', *de Andere Sinema*, Antwerp, No 119, 1994
- de Baere, Bart**, *Documenta IX*, Kassel, Germany, 1992
- de Baere, Bart**, *In Extenso 1989-1992*, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent, Belgium, 1994
- Bochyneck, Martin**, 'Martin Bochyneck über Luc Tuymans', *Artist. Kunstmagazin*, Bremen, No 19, January, 1994
- Blume, Eugen**, *Signal*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2001
- Cassiman, Bart**, *The Sublime Void*, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, 1993
- Dannatt, Adrian**, *Unbound. Possibilities in Painting*, Hayward Gallery, London, 1994
- Elias, Willem**, *Modernism in Painting*, Provinciaal Museum, Ostend, Belgium, 1992
- Finckh, Gerhard**, *Positionen*, Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany, 1995
- Flohic, Catherine**, 'Luc Tuymans', *NINETY*, No 28, Charenton Cedex, 1998
- Geerling, Let**, and Van Den Boogerd, Dominic, 'Tussenposities. Ulrich Loock, Marien Schouten en Luc Tuymans in gesprek over schilderkunst', *Metropolis M*, Utrecht, No 3, June, 1992
- Hahne, Heinrich**, 'Diagnostischer Blick. Die Welt im Spiegel eines Temperaments: Der belgische Maler Luc Tuymans im Krefelder Haus Lange', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16 June, 1993
- Heirmans, Frank**, 'De ontgoocheling treft in elke lijn. Antwerpse schilder Luc Tuymans naar Documenta', *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 1991
- Herstatt, Claudia**, 'Luc Tuymans: The Purge. Bilder 1991-1998', *Kunstforum*, Cologne, February, 2000
- Heynen, Julian**, *75 Jahre Kunsthalle-Bern. Bild des Monats im Kunstmuseum*, Kunsthalle, Bern, 1993
- Heynen, Julian, *The Agony*, Galeria Foksal SBWA, Warsaw, 1995
- Heynen, Julian, *Privacy: Luc Tuymans, Mirosław Balka*, Fundação de Serralves, Porto, 1998
- Heynen, Julian, *Signal*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2001
- Hindry, Ann**, *Des Limites du Tableau*, Musée Départemental de Rochechouart, France, 1995
- Hoet, Jan**, *Documenta IX*, Kassel, Germany, 1992
- Hoet, Jan, *Mwana Kitoko: Beautiful White Man*, Belgian Pavilion, Giardini of Venice, 2001
- Hoptman, L.**, 'Luc Tuymans: Mirrorman', *Parkett*, No 60, Zurich, 2000
- Hutchinson, John**, *The Passion*, Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, 1999
- Kuyken, Ilse**, 'Luc Tuymans schildert doordacht en logisch', *De Standaard*, Groot-Bijgaarden, Belgium, 18 March, 1990
- König, Kasper**, *Der Zerbrochene Spiegel*, Kunsthalle Vienna, 1993
- Labelle, Charles**, 'Luc Tuymans: Back from the Death', *Art + Text*, Sydney, May, 1996
- Lambrecht, Luk**, 'Obsessies', *Knack Weekend*, Brussels, 14 March, 1990
- Lambrecht, Luk, 'Luc Tuymans. Zeno X', *Flash Art*, Milan, No 168, January 1993
- Lambrecht, Luk, 'Luc Tuymans: Sowing the Seed of a New Painting', *Flash Art*, Milan, May-June, 1996
- Lauwaert, Dirk**, 'Luc Tuymans of de breking', *De Witte Raaf*, Ghent, No 52, November, 1994
- Liska, Vivian**, *Signal*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2001
- Lütgens, Annelie**, *The Purge: Paintings 1991-1998*, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, 1999
- Loock, Ulrich**, *Luc Tuymans*, Kunsthalle, Bern, 1992
- Loock, Ulrich, *Selectie Belgische Kunstenaars voor Documenta IX*, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium, 1992
- McKee, Dr Francis**, *The Institute of Cultural Anxiety: Works from the Collection*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1994
- Melo, Alexandre**, *Privacy: Luc Tuymans, Mirosław Balka*, Fundação de Serralves, Porto, 1998
- Minne, Florent**, *Modernism in Painting*, Provinciaal Museum, Ostend, Belgium, 1992
- Morley, Simon**, 'Luc Tuymans. ICA London', *Art Monthly*, London, No 186, May, 1995
- Mosquera, Gerardo**, 'Luc Tuymans: Painting on the Edge', *Parkett*, No 60, Zurich, 2000
- Mueller, Franziska**, 'Diese Bilder bearbeiten das Versagen', *Berner Zeitung*, 13 March, 1992
- Obrist, Hans Ulrich**, *Der Zerbrochene Spiegel*, Kunsthalle Vienna, 1993
- Oliva, Achille Bonito**, *Modernism in Painting*, Provinciaal Museum, Ostend, Belgium, 1992
- Pas, Johan**, 'Luc Tuymans. Disenchantment/Ontgoocheling', *Artefactum*, Antwerp, No 42, 1991
- Pirotte, Philippe**, *Mwana Kitoko*, David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2000
- Pirotte, Philippe, *Mwana Kitoko: Beautiful White Man*, Belgian Pavilion, Giardini of Venice, 2001
- Pontzen, Rutger**, 'Een verloren zaak. De Schilderijen van Luc Tuymans', *Metropolis M*, Utrecht, No 4, 1993
- Pontzen, Rutger, 'Elk schilderij is een vergissing. De onschuldige interieurs van Luc Tuymans', *Vrij Nederland*, Amsterdam, 6 November, 1993
- Popelier, Bert**, *Modernism in Painting*, Provinciaal Museum, Ostend, Belgium, 1992
- Prevost, Jean-Marc**, *Des Limites du Tableau*, Musée Départemental de Rochechouart, France, 1995
- Puvogel, Renate**, *This is the Show and the Show is Many Things*, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Belgium, 1994
- Ramael, Greet**, *The Sublime Void*, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, 1993
- Reust, Hans Rudolf**, *75 Jahre Kunsthalle-Bern. Bild des Monats im Kunstmuseum*, Kunsthalle, Bern, 1993
- Reust, Hans Rudolf, *Indelible Evidence*, Galerie Erik & Otto Friedrich, Bern, 1994
- Reust, Hans Rudolf, 'Silent Music. Confrontations with Lost Meaning. On the Paintings of Luc Tuymans', *Parkett*, Zurich, No 37, 1993
- Reust, Hans Rudolf, *Luc Tuymans*, Art Gallery of York University, Toronto, 1994
- Reust, Hans Rudolf; Tuymans, Luc, 'Das megalomane Detail', *Kunstforum International*, Cologne, May-September, 1996
- Reust, Hans Rudolf, *Premonition. Zeichnungen, Drawings*, Kunstmuseum, Bern, 1997
- Reust, Hans Rudolf, 'In the Dark Regions of the World. Luc Tuymans' Recent painting', *Parkett*, No 60, Zurich, 2000
- Rinder, Lawrence**, *Premonition. Zeichnungen, Drawings*, Kunstmuseum, Bern, 1997
- Ruyters, Marc**, 'Tuymans', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 24 April, 1988
- Ruyters, Marc, 'Het zelfbewuste debute van een talent', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 12 February, 1989
- Salzman, Gregory**, *Luc Tuymans*, Art Gallery of York University, Toronto, 1994
- Salzman, Gregory, *Raoul De Keyser/Luc Tuymans*, Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent, 2001
- Schenk-Sorge, J.**, 'Luc Tuymans. Signal', *Hamburger Bahnhof. Kunstforum International*, Cologne, June-July, 2001
- Schepers, M.**, *Luc Tuymans*, Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Ostend, Belgium, 1990
- Schjeldahl, Peter**, *Luc Tuymans*, Art Gallery of York University, Toronto, 1994
- Schmidt-Wulffen, Stephan**, *Backstage*, Kunstverein, Hamburg, 1993
- Schwendener, M.**, 'Luc Tuymans: David Zwirner', *Artforum*, New York, March, 2001
- Searle, Adrian**, *Unbound. Possibilities in Painting*, Hayward Gallery, London, 1994
- Searle, Adrian, 'False Memories. Adrian Searle on Luc Tuymans', *frieze*, London, No 17, June 1994
- Sizoo, Hans**, *Modernism in Painting*, Provinciaal Museum, Ostend, Belgium, 1992
- Smith, Roberta**, 'Luc Tuymans', *New York Times*, 4 November 1994
- Stals, José Lebrero**, *Look at the Window*, Het Kruithuis, Stedelijk Museum voor Hedendaagse Kunst, Hertogenbosch, 1993
- Storr, Robert**, *Mwana Kitoko: Beautiful White Man*, Belgian Pavilion, Giardini of Venice, 2001
- Szymczyk, Adam**, *The Agony*, Galeria Foksal SBWA, Warsaw, 1995
- Tazzi, Pier Luigi**, *Documenta IX*, Kassel, Germany, 1992
- Todoli, Vicente**, *Privacy: Luc Tuymans, Mirosław Balka*, Fundação de Serralves, Porto, 1998
- Tuymans, Luc**, *Luc Tuymans*, Kunsthalle, Bern, 1992
- Tuymans, Luc, *Luc Tuymans*, Art Gallery of York University, Toronto, 1994
- Tuymans, Luc, *Heimat*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, France, 1995
- Tuymans, Luc, *Signal*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2001
- Tuymans, Luc, 'Enquête sur l'image peinte/What the Painters Say', *Art Press*, Paris, July-August, 2002
- van den Bosch, Paula**, *The Purge: Paintings 1991-1998*, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, 1999
- Van Den Bussche, W.**, *Luc Tuymans*, Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Ostend, Belgium, 1990
- Van Den Bussche, W., *Modernism in Painting*, Provinciaal Museum, Ostend, Belgium, 1992
- Van Den Boogerd, Dominic**, and Geerling, Let, 'Tussenposities. Ulrich Loock, Marien Schouten en Luc Tuymans in gesprek over schilderkunst', *Metropolis M*, Utrecht, No 3, June 1992
- Van Den Boogerd, Dominic, *Blow Up*, De Pont, Tilburg, The Netherlands, 1995
- Van Den Boogerd, Dominic, 'De Heimat als hersenschim', *HP/De Tijd*, Amsterdam, 6 October, 1995
- Van De Sompel, Ronald**, 'Luc Tuymans in Ruimte Morguen. Onblusbare Melancholie', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 21 October, 1989
- Van De Sompel, Ronald, 'Eenvoud en ontzaglijke monumentaliteit. De betekenis van een verlies', *De Morgen*, Brussels, 3 March, 1990
- Vande Veire, Frank**, Doodgewoon. Beelden van de dood in de actuele kunst met een terugblik op Ensor en Rops, Cultureel Centrum de Warande, Turnhout, Belgium, 1988
- Vande Veire, Frank, *The Sublime Void*, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, 1993
- Van Ruyseveldt, Robert**, *Luc Tuymans*, Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Ostend, Belgium, 1990
- Van Ruyseveldt, Robert, 'Luc Tuymans', *Kunst Nu*, Ghent, No 2, 1990
- Van Ruyseveldt, Robert, *Luc Tuymans*, Art Gallery of York University, Toronto, 1994
- Wesseling, Janneke**, 'Nurkse, weerbarstige schilderijtjes', *NRC Handelsblad*, Amsterdam, 16 June, 1993
- Wim, Peeters**, *Sincerity*, Tokyo Opera City Gallery, 2000
- Yoad, James**, 'Luc Tuymans. Renaissance Society', *Artforum*, New York, Vol 23, No 8, April, 1995
- Zacharopoulos, Denys**, *Documenta IX*, Kassel, Germany, 1992

Public Collections

Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerp
 Museum Overholland, Amsterdam
 Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
 FRAC, Auvergne
 Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin
 Kunstmuseum, Bern
 BACOB, Brussels
 Collection of the Flemish Community Brussels
 Art Institute of Chicago
 Staatliche Kunstsammlungen - Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister, Dresden
 Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt
 Centre Genevois de gravures contemporaines, Geneva
 Association of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Ghent
 SMAK - Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent
 Museum of Modern Art, Stadsgallerij, Heerlen
 Louisiana Museum, Hørsholm
 Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld
 Tate Gallery, London
 Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
 Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht
 Sammlung Goetz, Munich
 Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes
 The Museum of Modern Art, New York
 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
 Provincial Museum of Modern Art, Ostend
 Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
 Philadelphia Museum of Art
 Fundação de Serralves, Porto
 San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
 De Pont Foundation, Tilburg
 Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
 National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
 Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg

Comparative Images

page 150, Paul Cézanne
 Still Life
 Sammlung Oskar Reinhart, Winterthur
 page 22, Caspar-David Friedrich
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Interview Juan Vicente Aliaga is a lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Arts in València, where he lives and works. He is co-editor of the books *Arte Conceptual Revisado* (Conceptual Art Revisited, 1990) and *De amor y rabia: Acerca del arte y el Sida* (On Love and Rage: Art and AIDS, 1993). A curator and art critic, Aliaga writes regularly for *Artforum* and *frieze*.

Survey Ulrich Loock is Associate Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art at the Fundação de Serralves, Porto. He has previously been Director of the Kunstmuseum Luzern (1997–2001) and of the Kunsthalle Bern (1985–1997), where in 1992 he curated Luc Tuymans' exhibition 'Disenchantment'. He is a widely published art critic, concentrating on the critical appreciation of Modernism and connected issues and artists.

Focus Nancy Spector is Curator of Contemporary Art at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. She has organized exhibitions on the work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Andreas Slominski and Lawrence Weiner, as well as Matthew Barney's *Cremaster* cycle.

Choice Andrei Platonov was born in 1899 in Voronezh, Russia. He worked briefly as a newspaper journalist and an irrigation engineer before devoting himself to writing fiction and poetry around 1926. Platonov's longest and most ambitious work, *Chevengur*, partially extracted here, was published posthumously in 1972.

Update Hans Rudolf Reust is Director of Art at the Hochschule der Künste in Bern. He has written for numerous journals including *Artscribe*, *Parkett* and *frieze*, and regularly writes for *Artforum*. Reust has also contributed texts to catalogues on artists including Thomas Schütte and Thomas Struth.

Artist's Writings Luc Tuymans is a Belgian artist who has been exhibiting internationally since the early 1990s. One of the most significant painters working today, in 2001 Tuymans represented Belgium at the 49th Venice Biennale. In his writing Tuymans discusses the present state of figurative painting and his position in it, and offers insight into his subtle yet compelling imagery.

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