



Gerhard Richter: Picture "10.4.88" (1988) (Unique piece)

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For Richter, watercolour painting was like a little break from the large-format paintings in oil. Painting pictures was his daily work, his profession - whereas when painting watercolours, he was able to indulge his moods, the painter said. Richter had already made his first attempts at watercolour painting at the age of 17. However, when he began his studies at the Dresden Art Academy in 1951, he initially lost sight of watercolour painting because it was not taught at the academy. Richter produced his first series of works in watercolour in 1964. But it was not until 1977 that he included watercolour painting in his oeuvre. He always worked in cycles and created entire series of watercolours within a few weeks. At the end of 1997, he finally finished his work in this technique completely.

During the two decades during which Gerhard Richter painted watercolours, he developed a very individual definition of this painting technique. After all, Richter would not have been Richter if he had executed watercolour painting in a textbook manner. As in his oil painting, he was not satisfied with the limits of the technique. Instead, he modified it and was constantly on the lookout for new possibilities and facets. His refusal of the rules of watercolour began with his choice of medium: When he began to paint in watercolour on a larger scale in 1977, he did not paint on special watercolour paper as usual, but on plain writing paper, some of which was even chequered or lined. In combination with the very damp paint, this thin paper curled extremely. According to his own statement, he tried to avoid the typical watercolour aesthetic and wanted to give his works an individual character.

Even when applying the paint, he did not adhere to conventions. He almost completely avoided the transparency typical of watercolour and applied the colours with high opacity. When choosing colours, he allowed himself excursions into unfamiliar realms and used light and bright colours, as well as now and then very dark tones such as black, grey and brown. In the entire painting process of his predominantly abstract works with watercolours, random processes also played an important role for him. For example, after applying the paint, he swung the sheet in different directions and thus allowed the watercolours to take their free course.

Watercolour on paper, 1988, signed and dated. Motif size/sheet size 16.1 x 23.3 cm. Size in frame 35 x 42.5 cm as shown.

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