



The New York Times - *Helen A. Harrison*

The Planet's Glories and Some of Its Pains

Augustus Goertz is a formalist, but not in the traditional sense of a painter concerned primarily with constructing balanced compositions of shapes and colors. On the contrary, his compositions seem to be redefining themselves continuously, shifting in one's field of vision even as the eye scans them for structure and coherence. This fluid quality is one of his signature devices. Another is the sensuous, tactile surface, rich with subtle undertones and punctuated by shimmering highlights.

The narrow gallery makes it a bit difficult to appreciate the full impact of Mr. Goertz's chromatic effects, which vary with viewer's position in relation to the canvas. If the surfaces often appear to be in motion, it is partly a result of altering one's vantage point to allow the play of light to pick up or play down the sculptural character of tile thick impasto. And, like Impressionist paintings, these look significantly different from a distance, where the underlying armatures become evident.

Although they are not landscapes in the literal sense, many of the paintings allude to natural phenomena, especially light and water. When the two elements interact, as with sunshine reflected on the sea, familiar landmarks dissolve and the picture plane becomes the orientation point. One loses the feeling of any specific locale and instead discovers more generic associations with nature. In "The Swimmer," for example, movement through space is implied, but in a non-specific, timeless milieu more imaginary than actual.

"Access 6" suggests a portal or entry without boundaries, a flexible, unimpeded interchange between inner and outer realities. From surface to depth, from light to darkness, from fantasy to memory, perceptions switch back and forth in a mutually enriching game of hide-and- seek. Similarly, the implicit wall of color that structures "Cliffhanger" is no more solid than a veil of mist, and just as sensitive to the nuances of changing light.

Der vorweihnachtliche Stress hat jeden eisern im Griff. Fast jeden. Der Münchner Schauspieler Michael Brandner kennt ein Rezept dagegen: „Man muss einfach früher anfangen, Geschenke zu besorgen. Dann lässt man den Stress links liegen, geht auf den Viktualienmarkt einkaufen und kocht was Schönes. Oder man sitzt mit Freunden in einem Café oder einer Kneipe und vertrödelt die Zeit, etwas Besseres kann man vor Weihnachten nicht machen.“ Und dann sagt er diesen einen wichtigen Satz: „Sich Zeit zu schenken, ist etwas Wunderbares.“ Michael Brandner ist einer der prominenten Paten des BMW Kunstadventskalenders zu Gunsten von SOS-Kinderdorf. Er wird am 12. Dezember „sein“ Fenster öffnen und das Kunstwerk von Christel Lechner enthüllen, das einen Mann zeigt, der einfach nur dasteht und nach oben schaut. „Der Himmelsgucker“ heißt die Skulptur, und sie sei in dieser von Hektik geprägten Zeit zur Nachahmung empfohlen. Besonders bei den beiden Markenschaufenstern der bayerischen Autobauer am Münchner Lenbachplatz und am Berliner Kurfürstendamm. Wer sich dort ein wenig Zeit schenkt und nach oben guckt, der sieht großformatige Abzüge zeitgenössischer Kunstwerke, erlebt einzigartige Open-air-Galerien. Initiiert und realisiert wurde dieses in Deutschland einmalige Charity-Projekt von der Münchner Journalistin und PR-Managerin Birgitt Wolff, die wie bereits im vergangenen Jahr 25 Unternehmen die Chance gab, sich für Kinder und Kultur zu engagieren. „Der Kunstadventskalender bietet 25 zeitgenössischen Künstlern eine einzigartige Plattform, um ihre Werke der Öffentlichkeit zu präsentieren“, so Karsten Engel, Leiter Vertrieb Deutschland der BMW Group, „und für unsere 25 Premium-Partner ergibt sich ein inspirierender Rahmen für ein vorweihnachtliches Zusammentreffen. Zudem übernehmen wir wiederum soziale Verantwortung.“

25 Maler, Fotografen und Bildhauer haben ein Kunstwerk gestiftet. „Dieser Adventskalender“, sagt der Maler Jakob de Chirico, „öffnet nicht nur Fenster zum „Jesuskind“, sondern auch zu den anderen Kindern, die heutzutage immer noch „im Stroh“ geboren werden. Als Künstler ist es eine Ehre, an dieser Initiative teilnehmen zu können, weil dadurch eine konstruktive Verbindung zwischen Kunst, Wirtschaft und Benefiz hergestellt werden kann. Man spricht immer von der künstlerischen Sensibilität, dieses Projekt ist eine hervorragende Möglichkeit, sie 24 Tage lang in die Tat umzusetzen.“

29 prominente Paten haben sich für dieses Projekt Zeit genommen. Und zwar nicht nur die, die zum Öffnen eines „Türchens“ notwendig ist. Nein, die Schauspieler, Sänger und Moderatoren haben sich zusammen mit 24 renommierten Köchen an den Herd gestellt und Weihnachtliches gekocht. Was zu wahrhaft köstlichen Geschichten geführt hat – zu sehen sind sie beim Nachrichtensender N 24 unter der Woche jeweils um 18.25 Uhr, sonntags jeweils um 12.15 Uhr. Nachzulesen (auch die Rezepte) in dem Magazin „Charity“, das in den beiden BMW Markenschaufenstern sowie in den deutschen Relais&Châteaux-Hotels erhältlich ist.

Es ist an der Zeit innezuhalten. Und die Kunstwerke in München und Berlin zu betrachten. Oder im Internet: Unter www.kunstadventskalender.de kann man selbst jeden Tag ein Türchen öffnen. Mit dem Sponsor, dem Künstler und dem prominenten Paten:

Gestern (Relais & Châteaux): Der Schauspieler Christian Kohlund öffnet das „Kingdom of Peace“ von Prof. Hans-Joachim Pietrula. Die Fließtechnik seiner Aquarelle verzaubert, es gelingt ihm bis zur Vollen- dung, die Formen immer mehr aufzulösen und seine Impressionen in herrlichen Farb- kompositionen wiederzugeben.

Heute (Tiroler Nussöl): Die Moderatorin Annemarie Warnkross öffnet „Slide“ des

New Yorker Künstlers Augustus Goertz. Er arbeitet mit einer sehr eigenwilligen Methode. Die flüssig und mit dem Pinsel malerisch-impulsiv auf rohe Papiere auf- getragenen lichtempfindlichen Fotochemi- kalien bilden die Basis für den dann folgenden fotografischen Belichtungs- prozess.



BMW KUNSTADVENTSKALENDER
02. Dezember 2009

Rheinische Post - *Christiane Dressler*

Nude at the window - *July 4, 2005*

"An image is an image" and one might add, it is a bare fact, dirty and beautiful, equal to life and equal to those explosive pictures painted in the light by New York artist Augustus Goertz. Wandering through the San Francisco Art Institute when he was a student, he ended up the dumpster of the photo department. Whilst others are looking to find perfection, he discovered the imperfect, destroyed and mutilated image as the source for his painting. He uses the art of photography to transform this medium into a 21 century painting.

His atelier in New York's Tribeca district is like an alchemical lab. The process of painting is performed in the dark by the usage of chemicals. Layer by layer he applies liquid silver halids as the subfont for a painting which is reactive and simmers in the best manner of traditional and Modern Art.

The color application appears grey brown and lighter darker. It is poured, splashed, dripped, aspirated, washed and moved over the projection of a photographic master which arises as a shadow of light out of the dark. It develops like a Polaroid, being fixed and volatile until the paper is saturated.

We can see a nude on the windowsill showing its thighs like a peacock shows its feathers. She is stimulating, teasing, aggressive. The viewer feels the sex in it until he walks along romantic arcades allowing him to rest upon classic forms.





dART International - *Christopher Chambers*

Augustus Goertz at Rentschler/Law, Hudson, NY

Augustus Goertz's recent, richly textured, mixed media paintings invite the viewer to dive into a primordial, celestial haze of light and color. Paints, emulsions and various goops are slathered, troweled and poured, creating a rugged terrain of gutsy, built up surfaces. The pigments he uses have an iridescent quality that cause them to change with the ambient light. Each painting has one overall hue. Green fades to black in mottled phosphorescence on one piece. Copper-toned atmospheric splatters ebb and flow across bold diagonal ridges on another. The centerpiece of the show was a large diptych titled *Starry, Starry Day*, an obvious allusion to Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. Luminous spirals reminiscent of the mysterious nocturnal sky of the Impressionist masterpiece coagulate in an off-green vaporous field. Goertz is an adept latter day expressionist. He exuberantly melds the physicality of the art object with metaphysical pictorialization.

STADTMENSCHEN

WZ-Center: Aus Ritterskamp wird Milian

Der Zeitpunkt passt: Während der Modemesse CPD eröffnet Annette Görtz am 5. Februar einen Store an der Trinkausstraße 7 im WZ-Center. Die Adresse ist prominent und international bereits für avantgardistische Mode bekannt: Aus „Ritterskamp“, seit mehr als 20 Jahren eine der ersten deutschen Shopping-Adressen, wird unter der Leitung der Görtz-Welsch Modedesign GmbH „Milian“.

Mit der Übernahme von Ritterskamp setzt Annette Görtz auf 140 Quadratmetern in schlichtem Edellook auch das Multilabel-Konzept des Vorgängers fort. In Kombination mit anderen Avantgarde-Labels, etwa Issey Miyake, werden hier ihre Kreationen gezeigt. Hans-Jörg Welsch, Geschäftsführer des Unternehmens und Ehemann von Annette Görtz: „So zeigen wir konkret, wie eine optimale Kollektionsmischung mit anderen Designerlabels aussehen kann.“

Für Annette Görtz gehören Mode und Kunst zusammen. In ihrem Showroom an der Kaiserswerther Straße hat sie im Dezember den New Yorker Künstler Augustus Goertz mit seiner ästhetischen Fotomalerei ausgestellt.



Sie verstehen sich: der Künstler Augustus Goertz, die Modedesignerin Annette Görtz und Hans-Jörg Welsch (von links), ihr Ehemann und Geschäftsführer des Unternehmens Görtz-Welsch Modedesign GmbH, das mit „Milian“ zur Trinkausstraße 7 zieht.



Westdeutsche Zeitung - *Helga Meister*

Photochemistry - *July 30, 2005*

American Augustus Goertz loves old photos. If he can't hold of them he takes some pictures and transforms them by using chemicals. This 'chemical' painting makes a girl or a model a mystery and a scenery obtains patina. He projects his photos onto raw paper which he then makes photosensitive. Using brushes and clothes and maybe dripping the chemicals onto the paper he starts to alter the photo. The image turns into a volatile phenomenon. The result is a vanishing painting, finally accentuated with real colors. The show at Eikelman's is a premiere for the man from Los Angeles.



Lines - *Judd Tully*

There's a throbbing surface tension and physicality in Goertz's new work, brawny components that brand his paintings and make them appear to oscillate before the viewer's eyes.

In "Mother Earth," the square format of the distressed canvas barely contains the bombardment of paint and found detritus that carve globe shaped forms and pulse with their own ghostly light. The closer you approach the canvas, the more the applied and peeled away surfaces churn and emote. The choreography of movement is chaotic yet controlled as if navigated at high speed.

Goertz's palette is earthy and urban, a secret witch's brew that can resemble scorched earth or the blistered remains of a planetary collision. Time and space become the favored themes in this abstract jungle. The canvas becomes a kind of archaeological site bearing hidden remains for the viewer to discover.

Though resoundingly abstract and seemingly stripped bare of any recognizable image, the paintings manage to convey a surrealist tone, touched by the textured likes of an Andre Masson or Jean Dubuffet. This sensation grows clearer with "Grand Illusion," as the alternating horizontal bands of dark and light pigment create a trompe l'oeil of deep ridges.

While most of the paintings impart a feeling of landscape, whether earthly or otherwise, the kaleidoscope of low-wattage colors that dominate the wavering bands of pattern in "Tenement" deliver a different effect as if excavating layers and layers of linoleum tile from a Hell's Kitchen tenement.

Given the artist's downtown studio address and its intimate proximity to Ground Zero it is difficult to miss the cataclysmic pitch and tone of the otherwise silent paintings. Their power and burnished beauty rise phoenix like from the wild and ravaged field.



"In liquid light"

**"As a painter one builds on everything that has gone before"
(Augustus Goertz)**

With this exhibition Augustus Goertz from New York City is presented in Germany for the first time. His position as a painter in the contemporary art scene is outstanding insofar as he completely refuses to fall for any fashionable compromises so commonly seen in the art world. One could speak of Goertz as a *pictor doctus* as he understands painting as the intersection of aesthetics, science and philosophy. Yet never completely excluding a sense of mysticism and intuition. To Goertz painting means investigation and interpretation of the world- it is never just a mere artistic performance. In his work the artist's inner nature and the perception of the world outside unite in an unbreakable bond. It seems, that Goertz finds infinite and constantly expanding possibilities in the use of artistic media to express himself. With astonishing sovereignty he understands how to work with all stylistic and technical resources that are historically available for a painter of the 21st century. But he will always remain a painter. Painting is the origin and the intention of his art, no matter which media he uses. "painting is my base" (Goertz). It is just painting in which Goertz finds the unity of soul, body and mind. ("the triangle of mind, body and soul"). His latest cycle "In liquid light", shown in this exhibition can be seen as a manifestation of his artistic beliefs. It is already the title that refers to the physical and chemical foundations of these unusual works. The photosensitive layers, that are liquidly on raw paper, show the tracks of impulsive gestural painting. This creates the picturesque background for the process of photographic exposure that follows afterwards. It is exactly the background relief, created by such dynamic brushstrokes in which coincidence is given a lot of space - that allows photography as a reproductive medium to gain its inherent sensibility. Painting serves as the basis of photography: Goertz translates the history of photography, that has its origin in painting, in a highly original way. By doing so, he translates a historical process of the early 19th century into a highly complex painting technique of the 21st century, and creates as he says "a sort of living history." "The Resurrection of Eve" incorporates aforementioned almost perfectly: the theme itself evokes multiple associations of religious art. The photographic theme suggests an almost surrealistic view due to the bizarre perspective. But in the end it is the gestural painting of the background, the spots of colors that are put in very decisively, and the texture of the surface that unites all the pictorial elements to a *concordia discors*. This is what makes the cycle "In liquid light" a masterpiece.



Bare Imprints - Almut Haboeck

Making "art" is making decisions. Decisions before the creation, decisions during the creation, decision after the creation. Some our brain is conscious of, some we become conscious about much later in the process. Art making for Augustus Goertz means an inquiry into philosophical questions, questions of time and space, of matter and energy, the human being and the universe, the question of living and being alive. These questions, constantly re-asked, revised, and re-answered combine the series of the Bare Imprints with his other oeuvre as an underlying thought system.

The series that is shown had its more direct inspiration during his years in art school, when he would wander through the different departments ending up at the dumpster of the photo department. What the photography students regarded as failed experiments became a major fascination - visually and intellectually - for Goertz's art: The photograph capturing a moment in time and space, but at the same time fixing an identity of a person or a thing by the medium's nature of being eternally reproducible. Augustus Goertz's series of photographic paintings deals with this contradiction, with the nature of memory, acknowledging that time and space are fluid, moments, people and memories are always in the process of fading and re-appearing in different forms and spaces. The series Bare Imprints portrays women who have been loved, are still loved; it shows the memory of these intense moments which make up our existence.

The process of painting becomes a collaboration between the artist and the model when the picture of the moment is taken. The process of painting itself takes place in the dark room, the photographs are projected on paper which Goertz has made light sensitive by brushing on silver halide. It is here and as the photograph is painted, sponged, dripped on and washed with photochemicals, that the moment is captured - not as it "is", but as our memory has to accept the fading nature of life itself. What one sees in the end are a bare imprints, abstract identities of people who disappeared in space and time. One can only sense their identity of that particular moment, but never know them. We know someone or something at a particular moment in space and time, but we never know before, how we will remember later. Later we remember the memory of the past and the memory will be as fluid as the bare imprints. Maybe it is in these works that photography and painting have found a peaceful synthesis.

Almut Haboeck, New York



Topographies - *Kristen Frederickson PhD*

Augustus Goertz and Duston Spear share a belief in the ability of the painted medium to express infinite variety both of material and emotion. While maintaining an ultimate abstraction, both painters invest their surfaces with artifacts of the physical and intellectual world. Goertz and Spear see painting as a way to map and memorialize the traces of history and the ongoing process of life; the physicality of the works themselves arises in part from the complexity of layering, and in part from the variety of materials used to achieve the effect of depth.

Augustus Goertz has been called a "painter's painter," a testament to the intense connection he feels with the history of abstract art and his commitment to exploring the outer limits of possible materials. For Goertz, the act of mark-making defines painting, whatever the medium. In the case of these paintings, photographic emulsion has been applied to the canvas in spontaneous, wide-sweeping gestures, sometimes incorporating natural materials that occur in the landscape in which Goertz creates his work.

Since the painterly material is light-sensitive, these works become literal developments over time, with their significance deeply rooted in the notion of a captured moment. Each gesture is a reflection of an instant's experience of life; memories of conscious existence reverberate in undulating surfaces and the subtle relationships of color. As free of references as these paintings are, they encourage the viewer to form associations with geographic, almost archaeological traces.

Duston Spear uses abstraction as a starting point for paintings that refer explicitly to the past. Her quotations from Stephen Crane's Civil War poems establish her work as a link between past and present, history and contemporary significance. The essential illegibility of the text, represented in Spear's own highly idiosyncratic handwriting, exists as a kind of gloss to the abstract surface, created with housepaint, tar and varnish. The extraordinary depth and gesture of these painted surfaces underscores the often-overlooked physical nature of the painting process. There is an emotional gruesomeness to these works that is partly a reflection of the poems' meaning, but also a response to the visceral quality of the paint itself; the viewer is both drawn to and pushed away by these paintings in a give-and-take of communication. The relevance of Crane's political messages coexists with the essentially timeless nature of abstract painting.

It is tempting to relate these painters to larger-than-life figures from the history of modern art. When their work is seen together, Augustus Goertz and Duston Spear form a communicative link between such disparate artists as Gerhard Richter and Nancy Spero; their work explores the relationship between painting as materiality and process and painting as a language to reflect the continuum of human history.



Ann Landi - ART news

Augustus Goertz's art belongs to a tradition of painterly painting that goes back at least as far as the Renaissance. It was the great Venetians, especially Titian, who discovered that paint could be an end on its own, that the bravura brushwork describing a sleeve or a suit of armor was as much a part of the image as the "disegno" or the iconography. Subsequent artists—one thinks of Velazquez, Hals, Turner, Manet—would delight in the viscosity and possibilities for translucence inherent in the medium. Paint could be light and paint could also be matter.

In more recent times, the Color Field painters, beginning with Rothko, pushed toward ever purer abstraction. Whether thinned to a fine mist and pumped through a compressor, or layered as thickly as cement, paint became the primary carrier of feeling. With an authority unmatched by any critic in our own day, the late Clement Greenberg declared that painting had finally reached the goal it was striving toward over all those centuries: Reduced to its rock-bottom essentials painting was about painting, pure and simple.

It's no accident that Goertz belongs to this tradition, which has gotten somewhat lost in the buzz of post-modernist attitude and affectation. The son of a painter, he grew up in an atmosphere enlivened by the presence and aesthetics of some of the masters of earlier generations. Aside from Rothko, his parents' circle of acquaintance included Barnett Newman, Larry Rivers, and Louise Nevelson. On the West Coast, in San Francisco, where Goertz studied, painterly painting reached an obsessive-compulsive pitch inlay DeFeo's *The Rose*, a work whose accumulated layers eventually reached a startling eight inches in relief and 2,000 pounds in weight. (DeFeo, significantly, was one of Goertz's teachers at the San Francisco Art Institute.) What Goertz brings to the tradition is a willingness to stretch the category, to experiment with new grounds (and even collage)—and a playfulness that was outside the rather rigid theorizing of earlier generations.

His latest works, the *Globe Series*, continue the concerns and ambitions that have occupied him at least since the late 1980s. His sources and allusions remain many and varied, from NASA photographs to movies. *O-zone*, for instance, found its inspiration in a Czech film about thermonuclear Apocalypse, "Summer at the Hotel Ozone." Its oozing red and gold surface seems to hint at some end-of-the-world cataclysm, but there's also the sense of lifting off and away that goes right back to Titian and his otherworldly *Ascension of the Virgin* in the Frari. *Globe*, at the opposite end of the emotional spectrum, presents a cool lunar surface, heavily scarred and blistered. But as in other paintings, Goertz invites multiple interpretations: The purely extraterrestrial readings are subverted by what appears to be a ghostly plan for a cityscape in the upper lefthand corner.

The way Goertz's paintings turn out, curiously, is often not the way they began, *Tulip*, for example, the most "global" of the *Globe Series*, started off as a still life. Over time it evolved into something quite different, though its heavily crusted surface might still conjure up some overripe fruit. There is something touchingly like Cezanne about this kind of artistic process: One senses the painter grappling with an external reality, approaching it again and again, editing and revising, until an image emerges that bears little resemblance to its source in the real world.

A few words should be said about Goertz's efforts on a smaller scale. The average viewer may not realize what a difficult balance he's able to achieve in dimensions that approach the size of traditional easel paintings. Because of the heavy layers of paint and the jewel-like colors, these could easily slide into the category of precious objects, but through a sleight of eye and hand, Goertz always pulls back from that brink. The paintings always "read" as illusions, as belonging to a Western way of picture making rather than, say, the realm of the purely decorative that exists in glazed pottery or textile design.

As Goertz puts it, his works "come out of the alchemy of painting." They also come out of a turn-of-the-new-century realization that the more we know about space and matter, the more realism and abstraction begin to find a common ground. Sophisticated photographic processes and lenses magnify the world in a way never before imagined, so that Goertz's paintings partake of up-to-the-minute knowledge of the cosmos while giving a generous nod to some of the most hallowed traditions of Western art.



Aimie L. Gresham

Exhibition Hosted By Siemens Corporation

If you make your way to 319 Greenwich Street, up a narrow staircase, through a narrow hall lined with large canvases, jutting colors and abstract strokes, to a room with a floor marked by years of paint and materials, you will find you are in the heart of Augustus Goertz's live-work studio.

Internationally known Mr. Goertz, a longtime New York City painter, exhibits at the Kim Foster Gallery here in New York City. A student of Carnegie Mellon University and the San Francisco Art Institute, Mr. Goertz studied under other distinguished contemporary artists, such as Bruce Nauman, Tom Akawie, Jay Defeo and Jim Rienkin. Yet his inspiration began long before his formal training, as both his parents were also painters.

With an affable smile and relaxed manner that reflects his willingness to discuss his *métier*, Mr. Goertz will cheerfully explain any piece that catches the eye. Although he is a self-described free thinker, it is clear that Mr. Goertz's work is grounded in his unique perspective, a perspective that marries painting and its philosophical underpinnings, with the notion of the super-conscious and universality of all things.

In fact, Mr. Goertz liberally suggests that art, by its inherent universality, will sustain, even as other institutions falter; an idea that is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that his individual works, for the most part, serve in a particular series, and are not in fact disconnected.

To examine his works under the umbrella of universality, one should consider the notion that art renders specific clues about where we came from and where we are going. In parallel be it his *Descendents*, *Interplanets* or *Avatar* series, the works are interwoven amalgamations of emulsions, rubber, wood stains, varnishes, heat set dies, sand, acrylic paints, or any combination therein, which hint at their original states. These textual materials serve as conduits for his message of universality, but are not alone in their efforts, as he will, from time- to-time, incorporate the written word.

The discerning eye can also clearly catch the dimensional and spatial nature of his work in the naturally formed and freely inspired brush strokes which are adroitly applied. Moreover, to expand on the universal theme, Mr. Goertz will explain his perspective on the real world and the underlying world. If, however, you ask Mr. Goertz who his influences are, he may suggest a former teacher or Picasso may be evoked, but for the most part his inspiration comes from the value he places on works that illustrate a universal message.



Eros & Surface Depth - Robert C. Morgan

The experience of looking at a painting by Augustus Goertz is hardly a static optical affair. It's more like an exotic ambulatory adventure - both visual and tactile- arbitrated by the interaction of the eye-brain mechanism. One feels a sensation about the surface as if it were in the process of giving way to an uncertain depth.. The layers of form and color emit a dispersion of light within an open terrain. In such an imaginative pictorial space one is apt to discover flora and fauna, microbes of phosphorescent unicellular marine life, congealed into a densely fluid and virtual environment. The eye moves in staggered sequences propelling in and out of these brilliant resonant layers of pigment and other selected chemical ingredients.

Yet somehow within this fluidity there is a persistent structure beneath it all - a structure that suggests the presence of another substratum of memory, an irrational ordering of de-differentiated space, a hallucinogenic view of nature that recalls a primal instant lurking somewhere in the swamp. This fecund amorphous territory begets sheer pleasure. Goertz offers an abstract allegorical adventure that stays not only within the mind but aligns itself with the body. Painting is felt as a biological sensation that alludes to both inner and outer temperatures. The climate of his paintings is both of the mind and of the flesh; in essence, an erotic climate. The morass of obtrusive forms teems with galactic evanescence. The pores of the surface expand and contract weaving in and out of the dark and light miasma. Color shifts its hue and sweeps through various interstices of Goertz's resplendent textural permutations. Augustus Goertz has been working with three identifiable series of work: The Floor Space series, the Inner-Landscapes, and the most recent Diamond Plates. The Floor Space series began in the early nineties at a time when Goertz was working with emulsion and photographic imagery processed directly on canvas. The support of the canvas was shaped like an extended rhomboid turned upside down. The process further involved painting over or around the photo-image along with other mixed media. While at the outset the content of these works was figurative and erotic, such as *Nude* (1992). More recently this series has become totally abstract and more concentrated on the field than on any semblance of a figure to ground relationship.

A good example would be the painting *Emulsion* (1996.). Here the surface is entirely covered with a mixture of actual photo emulsion, plaster, and liquid acrylic. The strokes sweep across the frame on a diagonal tilt - energetic and replete with spatial effects reminiscent of a neo-futurist space-time abstraction. Two other works from the shaped variety of the "Floor Space" series are *Ascension* and *Insemination* (both 1996). In these works the photo emulsion has been deleted entirely and the focus is given to the painterly manipulation of the surface. Whereas *Ascension* suggests some kind of transcendent experience or dematerialized light-force that moves again diagonally from the darkened lower left to the brilliant upper right, *Insemination* is more involved with the overall effect of the dark umber and rich texture within the painterly field.

Insemination is a major work by Goertz in that it captures the objecthood of the shaped canvas as a total effect; yet, at the same moment, one is optically absorbed into the aleatory field of textural swirls. The dark umber with lightened variations opens up the possibility of a rhythmic counterpoint to the flow of the surface as one is contemplating or holding the shape of the structure in check. What Goertz has achieved in *Insemination* is a shifting inner-outer sensation, a cognition sensory illusionism, where the tension between the objecthood of the painting and its inner permutations of swirling lights and darks against the diagonal slats of the "floor space" creates a visual, tactile, and physical complexity that is at once paradoxical and yet clearly suspended in its momentary resolve. It has an unyielding quality, one that refuses to relinquish its spatial authority and one that will not give in entirely to its literalness.

Given the commitment of Goertz to this particular structure - the most radical aspect of his "Floor Space" series - it may become apparent that this extended inverse rhomboid has a history, a morphological logic that goes far beyond, shall we say, the painter's whim to change the predictable rectilinear shape of the canvas support. In conversation, Goertz has suggested that the concept of the shape arrived as a result of studying the manner in which the lines of his vision followed from the point of observation outward and into the space, not unrelated to the cone of vision from a slightly obtuse angle in relation to the floor plane. One might read this painterly thought in the spirit of existentialism, as a coming to terms with the language of one's own vision, as one sits and contemplates the field of one's personal space, one's extended territory from the corporeal positioning of the relatively static moment of vision outward from oneself, as if .in the process of examining the sense of certainty that one may feel about oneself in relation to the given space that is there.

For anyone who has read Jean-Paul Sartre's disquieting short story, entitled "The Room", this quality of self-alienation could be understood as a metaphor for a distorted sense of space-time, a kind of space-time compression, a moment where the mind encloses upon one's vision of the world, and the focus upon oneself becomes entirely related to that personal space - how one turns or moves, ever so slightly, in relation to a given space. It is, indeed, curious that the German art historian Ulrike Klein cites Goertz' primary interest in painting as "devoted to the close interrelationship of time and space."

Yet there is another source as well, an art historical source - one that is less personal, and perhaps less contrived in terms of the certainty of acknowledging one's personal space as a fortress in relation to the outside. The early Renaissance painting by Andrea del Castagno of David (1450 - 57) at the National Gallery in Washington D.C. would appear the most obvious affinity to the pointing by Goertz.

Andrea del Castagno, being a contemporary of Piero della Francesca, was obviously aware of the structural permutations of vision in relation to this great Biblical myth, the symbolic act of conquering in which the young David defeats the threatening giant, Goliath, and severs the head from the body. In painting, this is one of the great interpretations of this deed - comparable to the later sculptural works by Donatello and Michelangelo. Castagno had painted the young David with the head of Goliath at his feet on a leather shield - the shape of which corresponds amazingly in dimension to the extended inverse rhomboids in Goertz's "Floor Space" series.

The difference, of course, is that Castagno's David was painted on a leather shield that was slightly curved. Goertz's rhomboids are flat and the material is, of course, canvas. Still, there is a remarkable correlation in terms of the visual effect - as to how the energy of the figure (in Castagno) encapsulates the interior of the shape and how the energy of Goertz's swirls of umber against the diagonal "floor space" offers an abstract tension. In both cases, one never loses sight of the objecthood of the thing itself - in Goertz, the shaped canvas; in Castagno the leather shield. One might further add that one the shield was used as the support for David, it was not intended as an object for battle or for any further use in this sense, one might understand the function of the shield as similar to one of Duchamp's Readymades. Once the object had been selected by Castagno, it proved functionless as anything other than a sign in relation to the interior image.

In the case of Goertz, the sign has not been transposed from function to non-function in the same way. Rather the Inverse rhomboid of *Insemination* has been made to order. It functions as the concretion of one's perception of the floor at an obtuse angle and as a manifestation of one's sense of certainty within an existential space. In either case, there is a certain heroic dimension in these works - Goertz's *Insemination*, of course, being within a strictly contemporary genre and therefore not comparable qualitatively to that of Castagno.

The "Inner-Landscapes" have a more recent genesis than the "Floor Space" series. These paintings are not dependent on the perceptual reference of the floor, but are more traditional in format and in some sense more delirious in the intensity of color, often utilizing brilliant hues that evoke an emotional resonance as if to consume the gaze of the viewer. Unlike Rothko, the "Inner-Landscapes" are not bifurcated on a vertical axis nor are they imbued with darker tones. Goertz uses the physical texture of his materials as essential ingredients in the construction of the surface. In this sense, the paintings are quite literal evocations of a process. Yet somehow the quality of gesture and color in these paintings go beyond the literal process. So the abstract elements signify emotional content.

Contrary to the abstract paintings of Gerhard Richter, they do not carry a cynical edge. Goertz' paintings are more overt, more open and direct than those of Richter. They are also more intimate. The distance is not so much the issue. Rather it is the closeness that one feels. As the title of the series implies, these are "Inner-Landscapes." They are simple, yet they are also complex. They are literary, yet they are also metaphorical. They are paintings that refract the sensory quality of light. The color is directed toward the light. Light, one might say, is the chief component in these pointing, the direction that opens up a microcosm of space and time that is forthright and filled with an energetic absorption.

Finally, the "Diamond Plate" series is another recent group of paintings that deploys the use of industrial rubber matting that is adhered directly to the canvas. The title is taken from the imprint on the rubber, a repetition of diamond studded marks, perfectly uniform, another type of Readymade. Here the Readymade surface becomes the given texture on which the paint is applied. In *Blue Jay Blue* (1996), for example, the density of the blue is augmented by the diamond shapes that function as a kind of pervasive patterning. The further one stands from this square format the more dense the color appear. The surface is transformed into a silent constellation. The infinite scope of the uniform sides of the quadrilateral suggest an expansion that extends on all sides. The blue and black texture is replete with allusions to deep space. The space is always on the surface, yet always alluding to something behind it. A different kind of painting from the "Diamond Plate" series is a work called *TriBeca* (1996) which, of course, refers to the location of SoHo that became a well-known haven for artists in the seventies. The graffiti signs - a circle and an arrow - could refer to some sort of erotic attraction that holds the surface together. They are spaced at opposite diagonal points on a diagonal. The surface is rubber matting as is *Blue Jay Blue*, but the effect of the yellow, green, and red pigments gives a much different feeling. The reference is more literal, but there is also an attempt to pull this literalness into a metaphorical statement about individual perception and identity, a statement about making contact with the city as a cultural center, a nexus of blurred edges where one action runs into another, and art becomes a matter of trans-sensory experience and anonymous hybridizations.

What Augustus Goertz reveals in his paintings is a type of abstraction that is paradoxical in its directness and discreet in its sensitivity. His paintings are not afraid to offer presence as opposed to distance. They are willing to shed light on matters of authenticity in contrast to the banality of process than leads to yet another cynical response to an overwhelming information overload. There is a certain wonder in these painting that might be called child-like. This child-likeness may be interpreted as a return to the indulgence of the tactile visual world in an age where the mind and body have become increasingly separated from one another. If there is such a possibility that one can construct an erotic sense of surface that allows the optical gaze an alternative to the endgame of pop imagery, then Augustus Goertz has presented this offering - not as another code or representation, but as a group of intimate signifiers that reverberate with an intensity of light that ascends the mind's eye into a world apart from the morass of banal spectacles.