



When I speak of painting, I also speak of painted color: by that, I mean that the physically preexisting color substance differs not only materially but also essentially from the picture's color as painted by me.

I see a picture not exclusively in its objectness, but always in its very specific relationship to me. This presence allows a close connection to the picture. I no longer stand outside a relational set of elements, but instead, through sensation and experience, stand in relation to the picture.

I understand painted color as a presence of color, which has an existential quality, related to my self. It is simultaneously material and immaterial. It has a place, but is at the same time uncertainly localized. It is visible, but also transcends the visible into the not-seen. It is indissolubly tied to purely sensual effects. Painted color is there, where we ourselves are.

—1983, a new translation of a statement originally published in the exhibition catalogue *Radical Painting* (Williamstown, Mass., 1984), 43

The concept of "picture" [*Bild*] is difficult for me. Its meaning is too general. Pictures are also generated by other media, such as photography, film, and television. They are used by and for advertising, propaganda, and the like. They are messages, and therein lies their power. They are mass produced, and thereby dematerialized, since

the materiality of the medium and the picture's color (whether electronic or printed raster dots, screens, or glossy paper) appear irrelevant to the representation of the picture's content. The location of these pictures is also of no consequence. As things are different with my works, I prefer to speak of "painting" [*Malerei*]. The concept of "a painting" [*Gemälde*] strikes me as too historical in the sense of painted content [*gemalter Inhalt*].

Nevertheless, the picture-ness [*das Bildhafte*] of my painting is important, as it plays a decisive role in filling out and charging the so-called "empty space" between the picture and the viewer. I do not see the space between the picture and the viewer as consisting in their distance from one another. Rather, the picture is related to our bodily presence, and is not just a thing in itself. The more a picture is complete and closed, a hermetic something, surveyable as an assembled whole, the more it lies beyond our co-presence. It is then a construct, actually a conceptual construction, conceived of in hierarchical terms. I call this the self-importance of pictures. Its aim is either the superiority of the picture or the omnipresence of the viewer. But we cannot appropriate the picture. Rather it is a question of self-disclosure, an outward and inward flowing, a self-extension; it is the unlimited movement of approaching, the yearning for the tangible. Modes and dispositions in conduct are crucial here: states of directional movement, of approaching and of withdrawing, of standing-across-from. The painting-picture is the presence of its own picture.

The sensuous phenomenon must not become autonomous, detach itself from its material cause and exert a merely uncontrolled effect, as a mood stimulant. Painted color must free itself from its materiality and yet eliminate any doubt in the viewer that it can be traced back to its materiality as its anchor. The "logic" of the phenomenal appearance must not actually transcend the "logic" of materiality to become a "logic" of emotion. Given that, the picture stands across from me, and in a state of "alertness," I face the Other.

—1992, from a conversation with Rolf Hengesbach, published in the *Sammlung Goetz* exhibition catalogue *Monochromie Geometrie*, translation by Theodore Talbot, here modified (Munich, 1996), 100