

## Conversation with Amine Haase, 1993

Mr Richter, is it true that you're a conceptualist who uses painting as a means of proving his theories – as Pontus Hulten and Kasper König have just maintained?

No. I'm like a cabinetmaker who thinks about what kind of furniture is being made at present. The cabinetmaker isn't a conceptualist either.

But what about your paintings?

I simply like to paint.

But right at the beginning of the Bonn exhibition, we see mirrors – not paintings.

That's right, but mirrors are also picture-like objects, or whatever the term is.

But they are definitely not painted works of art. Do you enjoy the confusion surrounding terms that aren't clear-cut: painting, picture, object, concept?

Conceptual art was modern, and seems to be so once again...

In Paris, some critics hailed you as the father of post-modernism. How do you feel about this, considering you were already a Pop artist, a Minimalist and the godfather of the Junge Wilde movement?

That's fine by me. I have my own problems to be getting on with.

Such as?

Painting.

In Bonn, much more so than in Paris, you do in fact stage far more of what you call painting. Why?

There was less room in Paris, so I couldn't 'stage' anything. The rooms in Bonn are much larger. The arrangements are the result of a 'gut feeling'. After all, there isn't a set order for the paintings that needs to be observed in each location.

But doesn't your own perception of your works – which, after all, span a period of thirty years – require an order of sorts to make them accessible?

That's basically true, but the architecture in the Bonn location is very decisive – as is most architecture, in essence, whether it's barrack-like or grandiose, as it is here.

What do you prefer – a fairly sober building, like the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, or something like here in Bonn?

Initially, you have the impression that it's harder to see the paintings in Bonn: your attention is focused on the setting. But each picture stands out on its own – under quite different conditions than in Paris.

Talking of setting: why do you hang a Candle (1983) next to the three very large and dark paintings November, December and January (1989)?

It fits so well.

Advent in Bonn?

Yes, advent in Bonn. But I also show candles at the height of summer.

So now we're back to paintings?

Definitely.

## Interview with Stefan Weirich about the 18 October 1977 series, 1993

*When you were putting the series together, you spent eight months focusing on the topic of death. You delved into the details of the terrorists' lives, studied photographs of their cells. What was that like for you?*

It was tough. But it was, after all, related to my work. I didn't have to stare helplessly at dead bodies, but was also able to do something while I was at it. While I'm painting the dead, I'm well occupied. Like a gravedigger, if you will – because he has something to do, it almost becomes a normal job. It's actually more difficult to spend the whole day in the rooms where these paintings are hanging – living with them, as it were. But as long as you're painting, it's not such a burden.

*You also studied the different cultural objects left behind by the terrorists – using photographs that had been published in the press.*

I only had books, and piles of photos. Lots of photos. But of course I didn't have any objects that actually belonged to them. Even the record player I only had a photo of, which I'd collected. Naturally I had far more material than I actually used.

*Those were press photos.*

Yes, they were from the magazines *Stern* and *Spiegel*, and from books. You know, I had actually planned to make the whole thing broader, and then I surprised myself by reducing it to the dead, to the last moment. I was going to approach the topic far more comprehensively. I was going to paint things from their lives, from their active period, but it didn't work, so I gave up on the idea of painting that.