

A Novella

- I At a distance from painting, paintings are discussed. Everyone has talked regularly about painting. The way in which paintings are talked about determines the paintings to follow. So it follows that everything must be said that can be said before the next one can be seen. The commentary is on the progress of that which is boiled down to art, and within this, on the progress of paintings, and within that, on the perspective encompassed in these paintings. Here, everything is said that can be said in the current state of affairs about which things produce these paintings and which paintings these things produce.

At times, when I sat alone and thought about the things that art is making, I was horror-struck as it dawned on me that the things that make art and the things that art makes need to be encapsulated in a single, sublime speech, and that this speech should yield a wall of sound.

One thing that makes art is the one who makes art herself. Among those who make art, there are those who cry, who rage, who genuflect, who versify, who praise, who preach, who declaim, who search, who combat all the others, who accept all the others, who accept just a single clipping, and then again those who speak, who cannot speak, who prefer not to speak, who remain silent and in their silence believe to be speaking. Everyone can see these and all the others. Some of them take pleasure in the things that art has made or in the things that make art, others take no pleasure in it.

They say it all depends on where you're standing. But it depends just as much on knowing which things brought you

Preface

Isabelle Graw, Daniel Birnbaum

This novella obsessively revolves around “the things that make art and the things that art makes.” The things that make art can be a velvet blanket, flowers, a ray of light, or a coral necklace. The things that art makes can be social connections, visual experiences, or the feeling of being held hostage by a painting while standing in front of it. Items such as lipstick or a fountain pen help the protagonist of *f.* (“f” stands for female) come into being—she claims to have been born the day she started writing with her father’s fountain pen. Apart from the outright oedipal dimension of this vocation-narrative, we are constantly reminded of the increased importance of the person (the artist) behind her product (her art). The way the artist stages herself is therefore treated as an integral part of her practice. Her discourse, the books she reads, or the records she listens to—all these things matter to her art and are therefore listed in the following pages.

Art, in the case of *f.*, means painting. We witness the author’s stubborn belief in painting as an art form that possesses a specific potential: “I believe in oil paints like the eco-freak believes in his homeopathic medicine.” There is a pathological aspect to such a fetishistic clinging, which is not only admitted here but deliberately carried to an extreme. One of the manifold advantages of painting is its longevity: “In the end, they will be there when I’m not anymore.” Paintings indeed are able to survive the one who created them, but they are also saturated with her ghostlike presence. It is for this reason that attention is directed toward the way the artist performs, the way she appears on the stage called the art world. Lipstick is treated as a central vehicle for the formation of the artist’s identity. As the

narrator says, “Mrs. Benway became Mrs. Benway through lipstick.” But we are also reminded of the structural affinities between female maquillage and painting—painting, like makeup, is all about effects and make-believe. This structural affinity was already at work in Manet’s paintings, demonstrating his keen interest for every detail of female toilette or maquillage.

f. is also a rallying call for painting written by someone who is not supposed to paint, written by someone who finds herself fixed to the place of the hysterical woman. What is significant is that this position is adopted and refused at the same time. *f.* encourages us to leave the place we have been assigned to—it argues that if she can leave it you can too.

Who is speaking here? Remember Jutta, the fictional character in the Bernadette Corporation’s novel *Reena Spaulings*, who learned certain ways to avoid the pitfalls of a “self.” She prefers to disseminate her being into a machinic multiplicity of expressions: “Books, ideas, movements, figures, photos, data, other lives. I can almost tell the place on her body where she has digested Artaud, Rimbaud. Hers is an intellectual body of pure capability, but one that is also open, looking to be determined from outside, ready to re-write everything, to co-write, to be written on.”¹ Is she a *plurale tantum*, like the noun “scissors”? She certainly appears in many guises. And since in each incarnation she is already several, it makes for quite a crowd.

Jutta Koether—painter, writer, critic, performer, musician—forces us into a new plural.

1 Bernadette Corporation, *Reena Spaulings* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2005), 154.

Lucie Beyer, Mrs. Benway, Herma, and Herma's sister first appeared more than a quarter of a century ago when the small Austrian gallery Bleich-Rossi published this novella about women and painting. We want to thank Jutta Koether for letting us present this fascinating piece of writing in English alongside a facsimile of the original. We also want to thank the translators, Nick Mauss and Michael Sanchez, who did an excellent job. Welcome to *f*.

A Novella

- I At a distance from painting, paintings are discussed. Everyone has talked regularly about painting. The way in which paintings are talked about determines the paintings to follow. So it follows that everything must be said that can be said before the next one can be seen. The commentary is on the progress of that which is boiled down to art, and within this, on the progress of paintings, and within that, on the perspective encompassed in these paintings. Here, everything is said that can be said in the current state of affairs about which things produce these paintings and which paintings these things produce.

At times, when I sat alone and thought about the things that art is making, I was horror-struck as it dawned on me that the things that make art and the things that art makes need to be encapsulated in a single, sublime speech, and that this speech should yield a wall of sound.

One thing that makes art is the one who makes art herself. Among those who make art, there are those who cry, who rage, who genuflect, who versify, who praise, who preach, who declaim, who search, who combat all the others, who accept all the others, who accept just a single clipping, and then again those who speak, who cannot speak, who prefer not to speak, who remain silent and in their silence believe to be speaking. Everyone can see these and all the others. Some of them take pleasure in the things that art has made or in the things that make art, others take no pleasure in it.

They say it all depends on where you're standing. But it depends just as much on knowing which things brought you

to where you're standing—so that you have the freedom to leave this place.

One-point perspective is totally over. But all attempts at making some part of one-point perspective useful again remain solo efforts and contradict the idea of one-point perspective from which they derive, all the same. The inventors of one-point perspective were able to invent it because things happened to them in the production of paintings—many singular experiences that all boiled down to one-point perspective—not because they had to solve one little singular problem. The inventors of the abolition, doubt, and dissolution of one-point perspective proceeded in just the same way. It was only their successors who felt the pangs of their loss and wept in the face of their perplexity over their singular problems—by shedding singular tears as artworks. Or they defied their pain with a joke. But it is never a singular problem, never one thing that art makes, but very many that make art.

When you make art, you're often asked: "What's art doing?" But never what the things are doing that make art. One could answer the question by publishing a diary, or a manifesto, or an interview, or a link, a cryptic remark, a boundary, a gig, a fit of rage, by gently leading astray, a speech, a destruction, an act of violence, effects in a painting, an expulsion, a well-thought-out method of marketing warfare. I can also let another person take care of it, or an entire delegation, or undertake a conspiracy of German with English and say: excess-success-flame-fame-cream-glory.

Ultimately, the question will be answered with the aid of the things that make art, and I am a thing that can write down and speak this knowledge.

Here, the t
follows is

Thus the v

Thus the v

Thus succ

break each

contesting

the carma

forms of c

old—but

of life in

in space.

ii Things Th

Found an

Velvet Bl

Velvet sk

women s

purest fo

from the

manufac

departm

ment sto

leave. Ye

recount

the wall

know

Here, the things are handed over. As they are, everything that follows is.

Thus the world in paintings.

Thus the world in dispute over paintings.

Thus successions of paintings and disputes over paintings that break each other's necks, nicely but violently break the neck, contesting each other's function and authority and yet, despite the carnage, win a new life. After these experiences: new forms of combat. No bloody holes via radioactive rays—that's old—but multiplied reiterations of death. Thus the essence of life in manifold multiplication. The assignment: advances in space. There are always more than two representations.

II Things That Are Stuff—

Found and Collected by Mrs. Benway

Velvet Blanket

Velvet skirts. Old women like to wear velvet skirts; younger women scarcely wear them. All that velvet: suffocation. In its purest form velvet appears as a velvet blanket, assembled from the skirts of women or out of old curtains or out of newly manufactured velvet, purchased at Hertie or Kaufhof. The velvet department is the most horrific of all departments in the department store. Here you can't just choose the commodity, pay, and leave. You can't even speak here. The saleswoman has just recounted how she herself took some of this velvet, nailed it to the wall, and set up and photographed her homemade straw flowers in front of it. Female suffocation. Her fingerprints, my fingerprints, ugly blotches in the fabric-flesh. Then the velvet is

lifted up and cut noiselessly. It is the best material for catching the echo of alien speech that pours into me day and night and night and day, it filters it and brings it to suffocation. Contrary to mirrors, velvet swallows up light. Choking. Softly devouring. Left to lie in the cellar, velvet cultivates mold cultures. Entire epochs of art have subsisted on the representation of velvet's properties, on the idea of collapsing—stunned by pain and loss of blood—in a mountain of velvet. Kicked head. Swathed in velvet, a piece without edges, held together by a cord. Pure tactility. Skirts made of velvet are without a pattern. Blankets made of velvet have the patina of centuries, even when they're brand new (centuries of suffocated alien speech). New velvet, even when it comes from Taiwan, makes Europe look good enough to eat. I traveled to Madrid, to the Prado, and checked out who there had painted velvet, where and how. Still, after all this, the velvet enterprise is not concluded. Today, for example, I'm listening to "Some Velvet Morning" by Nancy Sinatra and Lee Hazelwood. Indestructible undertaking. I am the one who took it upon myself. I claim this undertaking.

That's all said a bit hastily: fast things like Pop—good. But velvet as a blanket is the age-old sound on which the Pop venture can spread itself out.

Coral Necklace

Bric-a-brac. Things one wants to have. Because the women in the paintings of the Madonna have them. Or because so many women had them when they were so hard to come by and today you can find them so easily. Just as teacups and velvet can be had. Lighters are to be had and art is to be had. I can say I have these things. I also have coral necklaces. In pearl form and in the naturally occurring form—small rods. But best of all are the coral necklaces in slightly misshapen cylinders that are

almost like dice. Coral necklaces to shake awake. Technically you get a coral necklace on your engagement. But it's the same if you're presented with them as a fetish or as a symbol or as adornment. They get lost. Unless they've already torn and dispersed in pieces all over the apartment.

So speechless, so coral necklace. So they tinkle around for titles, they, with their color. They tinkle a little melody. Thrown on the table they trigger the sound of a muffled shot. Fold it up, unfold it, roll it up. It triggers a sound no matter what I do with it, as long as it doesn't tear.

Is this a new form? All I need is many coral necklaces. Will they throw themselves into my arms, onto my neck? Keep on track to survive. Like newspapers, reports, like the things that are there for the seeing.

I undersign, I, Mrs. Benway, in the hermeneutical continuity of a coral necklace, in immobile-mobile monotony, that coral necklaces can do all these things. Chew at the infrastructure, let newscasts squeeze through, keep on track to survive. Bric-a-brac, do not let them tear. Like those that are still to follow.

It isn't easy with this bric-a-brac. It is difficult to grasp everything that is present and not to get lost in the odds and ends. The things that make art, make things that art makes, make power, make time, visible, I make. Thus one thing follows the other. Thus one speaks who sometimes has something to say to art, thus Mrs. Benway speaks, even when speaking has nothing to do with the art, it often touches upon the same things, namely, those that make art, but also those that art makes. She knows about these things. Things have no life of their own. Immobile things are awoken through speech to mobility. One of these

is the coral necklace, another one of these things is the velvet blanket. Is an orange, are lips, is a dress, is a tomato, is a pillow, is a flag, is a curtain, is a woman's leg, is a screen, is a heart, is something that sits in space and makes space open. Sometimes even flowers or just a ray of light. That's how it is and not otherwise, Mrs. Benway says about these things that are here and get collected.

I
Where things are, are spaces in which they are. The things constitute a space spacious enough for many other things, for even more things and many, many things (that don't necessarily have to be things that make art). Two things create space that produces a third thing. Therefore, one by one paintings must be produced that elicit the things from the space. Because again and again new things are produced through more and more paintings of more and more things; more and more space for more things. Then they develop principles, these things, orders; they compose themselves, they heap themselves, they become irregular. Give me more, says Mrs. Benway, more lips, more oranges, more hearts, more light. They refuse and they agree, says Mrs. Benway, and I want them to work, therefore all the things from the spaces on the paintings and the paintings in the spaces from which in endless series more paintings must be accepted, I cause the powers that stick in the things to seem liberated, in that the paintings capture them, they return to them their functions and their appearance. I dissolve them, says Mrs. Benway, I dislocate them from another, I put them in sequence, I position them, I mobilize them, I make them subordinate to my system, which is an assessment and a making, I endow them with character. I make light in the space and I operate and I am hysterical while I do it. Many often say of me that I am hysterical and histrionic, which

abstracts one's view
conditions that next

Orange
A thing is a thing
one with itself. No
lazy. No, one has
happy about it, the
delivered, made
nothing one can
ties. She doesn't
solitude, this is
round thing. S
color, this is h
color stays. Th
from other to
really concer
thing. But I
Since I have
longer a wo
Benway. Th
Once she's
and it's ju
mine ane
as round
between
when sh
world—
why th
of stud
what I

obstructs one's view, but I am familiar with the terms and conditions that necessitate hysteria.

Orange

A thing is a thing and at one with itself. The orange, too, is at one with itself. Not airtight, not watertight, very round, very lazy. No, one hasn't seen me growing. And Mrs. Benway is happy about it, that one hasn't seen the orange growing. It was delivered, made presentable, and offered for sale, and there's nothing one could know about it, except for its exterior properties. She doesn't want to stop at that. This is how she is in her solitude, this is how she is among company: an indifferent, round thing. She can roll away or stay put and rot. This is her color, this is how she changes her color and this is how her color stays. Thus Mrs. Benway has her own taste that is different from other tastes but still so similar that she doesn't have to really concern herself with her taste. A mobile and very immobile thing. But I'm not worried about what I am, says Mrs. Benway. Since I have to decide anew each time what it is I am, it's no longer a worry. That's how it is with me and my things, says Mrs. Benway. That's what her relationship to the oranges is about. Once she's determined what she is, she may rot and roll or both and it's just like with the orange, but she must always determine anew—and she wants the transitions and leaps to be just as round and rotten and equivalent to the state of things between the transitions. Mrs. Benway is the most Mrs. Benway when she speaks English: "The changing shapes of a changing world—we grow accustomed to them and seldom ever wonder why they arise. If changing shapes are to become the object of study, the evidence must be presented visually. That is exactly what I do."

Fountain Pen

Now she brings the things into motion. Now she shows how it really is with the paintings, how they are produced, and says that her development began with the development of penmanship and then, much later, with the hand that records the notation of what should go into a painting. It all started on the day when, after practicing penmanship with chalk on a chalkboard, after the retracing of signs, she could finally write her own writing in a notebook with a very wide fountain pen with a golden nib, filled with blue ink. Enumeration of things like fire, color, tomato, head, and, eventually, orange—written down with her father's fountain pen. Mrs. Benway says it was such a beautiful fountain pen, one that smelled like fountain pen, like leather and ink, because it had been tucked in a leather case blotched with ink. It was a fountain pen whose nib sprung back and scratched with verve and noise, filling, changing, decorating, messing up, or writing on the white of the page. To write an "I" for the first time and to let it get out of hand right away: spreading out, dispersing, movement, essentially. That's how it all began.

That's how I began to write, that's what I was like. That's how I started to assemble the words that meant the things that were there and that I saw. That's how I amassed a great number of things that weren't there in that I enumerated them. They didn't have to be there since they had been written down by hand. That's how I looked at things and wrote them down—seeing was writing. And also the words as things written down were one with themselves. They were so close these things. Then they disappeared forever or appeared again, destroyed or improved or the same. Then they were there again and then they were distant. There are things that will never appear like that again, but they're not relevant anymore, it's about the things I write

of what she
from what she
the same thing

Curtain
Curtains are a k
a curtain made
words ... pres

I was somethin
assume that o

agreed becau
approved of

kinds of ho
of centurie

face of a w
life behin

choice. T
as one of
fall, inn

dant ve
thead

waste
mysel

from
light

ben
in t
its
br
e

down today, because they are there and they will be different from what they were before I wrote them down, even if they are the same things that were already there before.

Curtain

Curtains are a lovely thing. My friends Rosi and Bettina had a curtain made that hung freely in space and pinned onto it the words "... prefer to hold on to your intimacy." Even though I was sometimes at odds with the sentence, because one must assume that one can't hold on to anything, and sometimes agreed because it is a true and useful maxim for artists, I always approved of the curtain. Just as I approved of all curtains in all kinds of homes on all kind of paintings painted over the course of centuries, I even give approval to the curtain in front of the face of a woman, the veil, and to the man who spent most of his life behind a black silk cloth tied over his face in sorrow, by choice. This histrionic form of the curtain, too, qualifies him as one of the things that make art. Bound, gathered, form and fall, inner tensions and structures of resistance, those abundant velvet doorway curtains later used as bedspreads, then threadbare, thrown away. I waste. I am most extravagantly wasteful with my own velvet curtains. I could never bring myself to hang them up. Hanging them up would mean control from above, incidence-of-light prohibition or incidence-of-light regulation. A curtain is best when it is a surface, a recumbent surface, visibly large, painting. Then I picked it up and in the act of picking up, everything, especially the curtain, is at its most beautiful. Then I gathered and tied it together, and hung it in various ways in front of the window. The incidence of light caused by the gathering and binding and picking up and hanging of the curtain changed over the course of the years. Today the light that falls in through the half-gathered curtain speaks English.

Many years passed since the first written page, since the recognition of my own handwriting, and since all successive attempts to eliminate it. Many years had passed and the words of the English language had gained in significance in equal proportion to the diminution of light let in by the ever-widening and liberated curtain. So Mrs. Benway writes on the other curtain, the one that's not hanging but only covers a surface: glisten glitter gleam glow glossy glory glass glassing glazed glaizie glazer glaster gleaced gleeding gleaming glimmered glistered glamorous glare gloam glimpsed gloom gloring glint glish glory glace glanzgold glut glossiness. All shadows and all rays of light are abandoned in me, me the human. Isn't that how it is? And hidden behind this shadow and in this light all life forms reveal themselves that are abandoned in me.

There she is. Mrs. Benway. Pathos and hysteria and light. What leads to the fact that mountains of dead things exist in her, that art became of them, that she is a curtain behind whose cover things can sometimes rot to art. Sometimes she assembles so much that it can't help but to be as one: that which she presents and that which she represents and the things to which she returns their appearance and which she suspends in order to suspend all others.

Lipstick

First it lay on the shelf over an always-dirty sink. Then it was noticed by the magazines and the pictures on its pages, advertising beauty. Then used on the lips of the others, and finally on my own. Finally applied to the surfaces that are lips and used up. Every year there are new models and new types and sorts and new shine and dullness, congealed stuff and molten. Loveliest when on display in the department store. It's the one type of sustenance that only makes a girl more and more hungry,

the displays, the pictures of displays, the imagined displays, testing it out on oneself and on others in the light of the displays, the comparisons, the new statements. One notices the passing of time in the changing of the displays. Since one always has to know, wants to know what the next display will show. It won't do decked out in something predictable, it must, always, every year, be entirely new.

Early on she had roamed through the museums of the world, and even if the disadvantage of travel with little money and little luggage offered few opportunities for self-maintenance, she always carried the lipsticks with her and used them, because in the museums of the world it was all about inspecting the colors of the lips. That's how they had established themselves among the things that make art. And often these lips were so astonishing that she was tempted to violently remove the paintings of these lips from the museums—as she would the pictures of lips in the magazines—in order to make stacks of them. She learned. With the lipsticks and the surfaces on which the colors of the lipsticks were applied. To let these paintings work on their own would have been pure pimping. To steal them just to own them would just have had the suffocating effect of ownership, muted, at best, by the thrill of illegality. But she knew, when she hunkered down in front of a painting like this, that she could have illegality if she wanted it. She could have illegality if she wanted it, she knew. When she hunkered down in front of a painting like this and her gaze was directed solely toward the appraisal of surfaces covered in lipstick color she knew it was not the way she had been taught to look at paintings in museums. So she said to herself that she was regarding these paintings in an illegal manner. This was the only way for her, she who had learned to write with her father's fountain pen and had enjoyed the normal standards of a

bourgeois upbringing to enter into illegality (which was, after all, not a pronounced aspect of this upbringing). A childish illegality, if one considers what else was going on in the world at the time, but enough of an illegality to teach her the savvy required to move around in a world without laws. That's how Mrs. Benway became Mrs. Benway through lipstick. Through the alleged lipsticks that had applied lip colors over the centuries she could make an assertion for the first time in her life and spoke up during religion class, while the other fifteen year olds discussed the worth of the singular, unique person, that none of what was being said was true, but that she had seen that every person could be replaced by another (which should not be taken to mean that one could dispense with people altogether).

In that way she would have seen something and would have used what she had seen, but this was still closer to thought design than to knowledge, and because she knew that she didn't entirely know this thing, she knew that the time had come to really know a thing and to be able to assert it as knowledge in the world. Which was only possible because through her selection of things an effect was created, the power of the things began to function, and she could abandon herself entirely to their forces.

Does it make sense? Doesn't it make sense? The light shows itself in English. Aside from this differentiation she had never been much interested in questions of sense because she had seen that the conditions under which things are seen and named are crucial to their sense and that for her these were conditions of art, and that was obvious anyway.

So much had happened up until this point. A certain realm of knowledge had fenced her in and piled things up within it. But

the knowledge, just as much as the things, was not necessarily knowledge and things. She knew that, too. But she knew that on this day Mrs. Benway was born, even more emphatically than on the day when she wrote in her handwriting in ink for the first time.

Many more days came and a plenty and more of things that had to be ordered, enumerated, and written down in script. Sometimes the lipsticks were annoying. Sometimes, when they came too close to her as soft, supple red bodies, when they deposited themselves ointment-like on her lips, when they smelled good and shone beautifully, then their pure materiality became so devastating, so druggy, so like a friend and foothold and security, that they made it clear that there are attractions that are all smell, color, and consistency, enough to chain her, not only to this thing but to others as well. It wasn't the instructions on how to apply and layer lipsticks and about perfectly coloring in—reread countless times—that triggered it. Rather, it was the dismay over the ingratiating, all-ruining nature, over the pretty dishonesty that could nest in the materiality of a thing like this if one didn't do anything against it.

In the face of the lipsticks on the paintings and on her lips the resolution was made that everything would have to be made—on her part—with the things that surrounded her and that did everything.

Knowledge of total entitlement. A thing should perform everything. It performs magnificently (housewives know that). She didn't know that. But Mrs. Benway knew it. So she became Mrs. Benway. Mrs. Benway cut from the rib of the world-famous drug doctor, operating under the influence with dirty knives: cynic, homosexual, gun-crazy. Girls want to fall in love the way

she had fallen in love with things of whose danger she suddenly became aware; with her self-coinage by means of forced marriage to Dr. Benway all these problems were temporarily swept aside.

Only at the side of one like Dr. Benway could things be seen entirely as they were, without making advances to the interior. Because he handled dirty things, bodies, drugs, knives, trash, and language in a way that was laconic and purely comic. One who speaks another language. Thus she was able to produce the conditions for herself; use a language that was not her given language, that was more of a phantom, one that was present for the things that make art and for the things that art makes. Dr. Benway: Get the right start! Getting The Right Start. And behind that a borderless dial of the colors of human blood, slime, and filth. That's when everything really got going again.

What are you talking about? Are you talking to me?

About blood edicts. About speaking about things.

Buttons

As it had been with the lips it was with buttons. With the buttons on the dress of a duchess painted by Goya at the Prado, straight across from the *Nude Maja*, for example. These buttons are gigantic, with a landscape painted on each, perched on a constricted tiny trunk wrapped in white lace. So if you leave away the body and look at the buttons and if you allow the buttons and the body and the other figures around it all to grow together in the mind as a painting then we're dealing with things that make art and with things that art makes and we can see them. The position of the landscape in art is a button, no doubt. But I want the multiplication of buttons, Mrs. Benway

asserts. And she says to herself, yes, I happily take in these things that are depicted as being held together by a few strokes of the needle. Thus also the dress that is not a curtain and the ruched flower that is a sort of button on the body of the *infanta* by Velázquez. And the garb of the cardinal by Rafael, on which I can barely find even a single stitch.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Benway showed her the stitched-up wound beginning to heal on the body of one of his patients who had fallen into a hole and had broken all kinds of things around the hip.

These are the flat buttons with which I open and close the things, the jacket, the shirts, the dresses. Everything that is made of fabric is ready for buttons. Everything that has buttons and also an order and a grammar. And around this order, on the periphery, the large and varied offering of torn-off buttons flourishes. I treat the buttons like the moveable points on a position paper, like the generals with their little flags on the game plan. I am the position paper when I am with the things that make art. I have already sewn and sutured on many, many buttons. I have done this without considerable interest, but, overall, it is necessary that there are buttons and that they get sewn on. Without those buttons the painting would have been nothing, nothing at all.

Besides this, there are still the heaps, the clumps, the shabby piles, when something collapses, when armies become clumps on the position document. Vulgar, vulgar, screams the button, they all scream at once. And they are right, a button like this is a vulgar thing, like all things I have concerned myself with, but then there is still the hand that touches the button. And the screaming screams barbarously, no, not, and wants to explode

s. With the
ya at the Prado,
le. These buttons
n, perched on
ce. So if you leave
if you allow the
around it all to grow
re dealing with
akes and we can
button, no
Benway

something. Dr. Benway laughs derisively. Dump what's there on some unknown territory. Totally unknown territory is drawn as a white delimited surface.

Money

Give the things back their formality. Death has a formality—harsh during catastrophes and dissections, but also during operations where nothing remains but a sewn-up scar on the surface or a pile of coins and bills, which are just as much money as a scar is the sickness that leads to death. Name the sum, the sum, in sum, the numbers that stand in space, the mountains of debt, the indebtedness, the concatenation, the interest, the statistics, the International Monetary Fund, the conspiracies, arms trade. Money is an immaterial material. One cannot count it. I no longer even try to count it. It exceeds the surface. Here begins the beyond of the surface-things: the social, sculptures, networks. Capital has become the most fun, the most grand, the most beautifully encompassing determining factor. The thing that one can't gauge anymore, larger than life and soul. A reason to change the position paper completely. Rotation in a space whose measurements must be taken all over again. A space in which beauty must emerge because the efforts of power and evil and protests against them are enclosed by it. In which the most hysterical histrionic and conscious regimes find their place. All the other things I know are always only those that show something, that refer to something else, keep the machinery moving, and are satisfied as small things and accessories, while money is the big thing that has become gas-like in form. The great challenge now is to compute money, whose stench is stronger than the stench of corpses, because it subsumes the stench of corpses. Because on the one hand, money makes everything unified and convertible, but on account of this it also eliminates all units of measure, so that everything falls to

...Country ...
...debt ...
...of the ...
...arrangement was

...Affects all ...
...of heart, of ...
...of hand

...one changes from ...
...The position paper is ...
...an apparatus built up ...
...thing if I can get there

...Before seeing the ...
...seeing of color on ...
...opaque, two-dim ...
...the fountain pen,

...But once Mrs. B ...
...was more her ...
...she could relate ...
...she would not ...
...in which she ...
...position and ...
...spread herse ...
...women and ...
...an endless ...
...to and wh

...So the ...
...posse

pieces. Counting, computing, denominating, assessing value. Debit credit debit credit debit credit. I repeat. Debit credit debit credit debit credit. On that night I could no longer recall the composition of the flag of the Federal Republic, but I still knew that the arrangement was determined in 1945.

And money. Affects all other things, affects the configuration and breeding of heart, of tomatoes, of wounds, of women, of space, of hand.

So one changes from the things over to money and back again. The position paper is not paper, it is a space-position designator, an apparatus built up of things that can come to define everything if I can get them to work.

Before seeing the handwriting on the paper there had been the seeing of color on paper. Applied with crayons: fat, edgeless, opaque, two-dimensional. But this was during the time when the fountain pen, Mrs. Benway, and money did not yet exist.

But once Mrs. Benway existed—for whom the new language was more her own than the one she had grown up with because she could relate to it in her histrionic, hysterical nature, which she would not have been able to relate to in her mother tongue, in which she would have had to conform to a small underdog position and would have had to learn to coquette—she could spread herself out because she had found the language of women and of the pop song and everything else and a curtain, an endless surface without perspective, which she could refer to and which she could rule.

So the story begins with capturing the surface. Having taken possession of the surface she writes in order to constrict the

surface to the point from which everything must now be seen, all that was foreshadowed/implicit back then with the crayons. Now make the implication explicit. For starters, "The Smell of the Female" spread out over it, shortly thereafter followed the plea "Keeping the Issues Alive," then the date of departure, "The Road to Cairo." A year later she had arrived at the point—the inside of the surface—that was to relay movement to the periphery. She called it "Terminal Island," and wanted, from there, to home in on every point. Then it was winter for a few months and there were no new paintings anymore, but many other things with which she had been absorbed before "Terminal Island" had been reached made themselves noticeable, indeed, in a new mode. The things didn't conduct themselves in isolation from her, but among one another, apparently without asking her for permission. That's how it is in the twenty-ninth year of one's life, Mrs. Benway said to herself, that I notice that things show particular reactions when they come in contact with other things to which they are related by virtue of their composition. But the point where these affinities are contested, and even any new relations among things, that point is me. So she named the next result of her labors "Practical Relations of Everyday Life."

Then she discovered the things that make art and isolated their relations from all the rest and found that they, independent of their material constitution, over the immaterial vanishing point of money, were clinging together in a curious way and, since money had reached the greatest density in the West and conducted the things that make art from its vantage point as if by threads, she invented her "Spectacle of the West," an altogether artificial relationship to art, to the place where art takes place, and to money, which as an immaterial material creates the space, vaulted, so to speak, in which one's own place

must be sought after with a global positioning device. The first determination was "The Poetry of Economical Analysis When Translated into a Foreign Language." Just as she had found her way to this position she made an exhibition, initially bearing a title in her mother tongue. But since the mother tongue did not correspond with her own parlance, the exhibition was simply called show. In this show one could see preliminary stages of other exhibitions and a space in which only red paintings were shown. And lying in front of these paintings was a piece of velvet of the kind one uses for curtains. At this time she also found a notice in the paper that told of a painter who used to be a butcher, who now painted butchered animals, but not like Soutine in the colors of their flesh, rather preferably in blue, green, and white. To which he said, "Whoever paints red doesn't understand the body." She confirmed this in that her red had nothing to do with the red of the body or of flesh, even on the various occasions when she had painted body parts, which always contradicted flesh even though she had seen many magnificent meat paintings, among them Rubens's female bodies. But these were mostly illustrations of myths and legends in flesh and the color of the flesh was not red. A kindred friend, someone who understood her, sent a postcard on her twenty-ninth birthday of Mao's house of birth, to which a plaque had been affixed. People passed by and the plaque was not really all that visible, but its color was a glowing red.

Red paintings don't show flesh and don't resemble flesh, rather they resemble little red army units, cells: if anything, bloody money rather than bloody flesh. And much more like rosy money than like rosy flesh. One red thing followed another red thing and a new tube had to follow another, because she traveled through all the lands in order to check out where red was thought and how it was thought about. So

there were various sizes of tubes and forms, screw tops and hues:

1. Winton by Winsor & Newton / Alizarin Crimson / 1
2. Rembrandt / Geranium Lake / 356
3. Winton / Cadmium Red / 5
4. Winton / Vermillion / 42
5. Schmincke – Norma / Cadmium Light / 322
6. Talens / Cadmium Red, Deep / 307
7. Winton / Cadmium Red, Deep / 6
8. Mussini/Schmincke / Alizarin – Krapplack Medium / 346
9. Talens / Alizarin Crimson (Krapplack Dark) / 331
10. Winton / Geranium Lake / 22
11. Rembrandt / Cadmium Red Scarlett / 308
12. Rembrandt / Dutch Vermillion / 316
13. Winton / Rose Madder / 36
14. Talens / Red Dark / Rembrandt / 365
15. Norma/Schmincke / Chimney Red
16. Norma/Schmincke / Cinnabar Red, Dark / 320
17. Norma/Schmincke / Saturn Red / 321
18. Nr. 6 + Nr. 16
19. Metallic Red – Lacquer / Pelikan

And many more.

To press out, to express, pure action, the action that forces the color. The action that humiliates all other actions and puts them to shame. That keeps in check, that empties out. Well, yeah, red is justified only in all of its shadings and tints that come out of the tube, not circumstantially, but only in the shared wide space. Red, which pervades everything, but everything that there is in human life—that's what makes red red to begin with. A free ride for blood. That too, my dear, that too.

On the basis of red or on the basis of the things that make red and the things that should have been made in red, in other words, on the curtain that turned on the light in English by surrendering its light-incidence inhibiting qualities, annihilating its existence, almost, spreading itself out all the same, spreading itself out, nevertheless, in order to turn on new light in English and to absorb it. On this basis and on this curtain the surface in red took up the terms and definitions in handwriting, those terms that otherwise exist invisibly separated from the painting. On and in the surface now they become harmless and annulled as the definitions they once were. And for this reason alone, Mrs. Benway helped herself to exactly these tubes and definitions in order to yank out the hidden insides of the painting and to assign it to a surface that is not just pure surface like abstract paintings and also not dirty surface like Pop art paintings, but pure dirty pure dirty pure dirty surface, because she held on to a position paper that was not made of paper, but a positioning device that is now.

That things had amounted to this and were to amount to much more was a result of the things relayed here. And every daughter-thing of these things is a thing that is one with itself but knows a lot and knows about the parent-things and classmate-things that are contained by the space that makes the surface.

III Herma

A case of how strengths are combined in a person and the peculiarity of the things that determine her. Herma was never globally oriented, always fixated on her own place, the place she was born, but that wasn't anything special. She's not really anything special either, or rather, she wasn't anything special. Because now she isn't the way she once was. Because everything

she once did was nothing more than a denial of her existence and led her to a nonexistence. She was a nonexistence, one that dismantled and consolidated herself within and around things. Herma was a strict woman in a strict form. Which power can I strive for and what necessary resistances will I encounter? The powers and resistances she cultivated she labeled as things that have a form, and when she further cultivated the things that had a form she called them the forms that have a strict form.

Herma had done some things. In a report and in some things she'd made she laid down what had transpired. She had grown up in the absence of any particular loving intimacy from human beings. With one exception, her sister.

Sometimes she had this sister who at first only resembled her. With whom she discussed everything, the things, the figures, the names for dolls, the names for things out of which they had constructed a system and all the things that no one else was authorized to speak of. Nobody was permitted to speak or act on their behalf. Neither parents, nor friends, nor relatives. After all it was a tiny little world and this world had to be enlarged. One day this world and the sister were no more.

There was no special reason for entering into a new world. It simply happened. One could also say, the reason had been to maintain the form, but to find a new content. As it had always been about maintaining the form—the world was dirt, after all. The world outside was dirt, the insides of people were pure, that's how she had grown up, that's how they had been warped. Equal parts dirt and purity. The sister had disturbed this balance in taking purity to the place that had always been dirt. In the process of installing herself in the world, she had disturbed this togetherness by mere revelry, and afterward it was no longer

possible to reconstruct it. Once each of them had touched parts of the world, they each retracted their finger again, and turned away from the respective piece of world that they had touched. The one who had touched art turned away from art. The one who had never touched art went for it and both were still the same in their unbounded will and their unusual forms and both came very naturally to them. Both concerned themselves with the problem of definable relationships in relation to indefinable relationships. The sister in sport and Herma in art. Rise and fall, measurements and faces, colors and legs. Because one was a runner and the other painted the legs of Donna Summer in her first painting, though she couldn't stand Donna Summer, not her music or her legs.

They exercised a kind of cruelty on other life forms, which they'd previously tested out on one another and elaborated, and which they saw as a component of purity but never of dirt.

They explained and tortured and explained and tortured.

So it goes with the things that art makes. The things engage with the happenings that art makes. They create a unity with the things that are called art. They are not the things that are called art, but they align themselves. They constitute a ground. They consist of formalities. Herewith the circles close. Thus these things demand that one take them out and challenge them, they demand that one be articulate as one approaches them, to make a feedback loop. Should this become clear, then?

Painting a painting has nothing to do with the desire to paint a painting, says Herma, and she should know. She knows what she's doing in terms of technique. She doesn't let herself be led astray by the things that make art or anything else, because she

speech is remarkable. Others say the same thing about her paintings. But she says that it's dishonest to talk about art this way, since it's based on taste. It shouldn't be about life and its impressions and episodes. It should be much more about what things are objectively linked with—which feelings in which form—and how these things can be best strung together in a given form to achieve a universal contemporary expression.

I don't say anything, she says, about paintings I've already painted. But I don't also say anything about paintings that I would have been able to paint and did paint. I will only say something about what I didn't do, or what isn't present anymore. Doing nothing and saying nothing is an important statement that should be considered, even if I end up rejecting it since I'd like to add something to this world rather than carving out a hole in it: as bad as it is, it doesn't deserve that. And a hole is a hole, which can be filled again, unjustifiably, with speech. Nevertheless, there is a beauty and an allure to it: the great openness of the desert is always ready, and everyone who goes into it, in order to conquer it or to cross it, is welcomed and irritated, and many starve to death. But the rest of the world around the desert is filled again, teeming with life, and that's where the dirt is from which we're made.

This is familiar territory. But it is not where everything clumps together, where paintings clash and accumulate, shoved together so close that they create a hermetic cell, dividing and subdividing while still remaining together, until all the parts begin to resemble a single gigantic tumor. I'm interested in accelerating the last stage of this process, monitoring it until a single unity emerges and the individual parts are no longer recognizable as such. I have to compare the individual parts and observe how the tumor changes. Perhaps some parts can still

be recognized. Therefore the SHOW stands behind the whole range of ways in which work can be shown.

I don't want to talk here about any other type of exhibition except the SHOW, and I don't want to describe my memories. In memory, promises and sights and deeds are falsified into weeds. My weeds are already in my paintings and have nothing to do with my speech or my show; their place is not in memory, their place is now. The show was a show of past and current weeds, bound together with a binding agent called RED. Red stories, red sleep, red hunger, red surfaces, red calm, red muscles, red nose, red flowers, red body, red flesh, cadmium heart, and cinnabar droplets forming at the edge of a woman's mouth: all these things, color and head, can never be separated again. And pornography, aggressivity, violence, terror, blood, joy, films can never be separated either, once they've claimed their rights to red. Red becomes a thing when it is elevated or elevates itself. For three years, I've collected degrees of elevation, and others too. I've shown everything here that remains in the painting once it turns red, out of shame, rage, and dread. These are not final, but only comparative, results. The final results are, on the contrary, immaterial. More final results should be immaterial. I should have plenty of material to point to a final result that is immaterial. I go through a lot of cookies and flags and insignia on flags and red colors and drills in order to be able to deepen and specify what red fractures and explodes and splinters. It has nothing to do with the depth in the sense of bloody pits, but with that of cookies: how visible cookies are engraved in many shallow depressions—as we've seen, to call them holes would be a gross oversimplification. Look: I'm widening the little beams of light, they're already getting fatter. They grow and grow, stinking, too, of course. It's dirty in red. It's always dirty in red. But cadmium, pure cadmium out of the

tube, tortures me with the torture that the uncorrupted or incorruptible always inflicts. Pure red is a torturous red just like the torturous red of the dirt in red. Red can't be light. A red cross on the arm. The army. The weaponries, the camps, the bivouacs, the propaganda: the war, which, under certain circumstances, would preferably be settled over a game table before the dead peace comes. Red and red are still congruent, which is why they fight. That's the how the war began, that's how the war is fought.

This is what Herma says and she speaks clumsily and when she shows colors, they aren't her true colors.

Clear outlines are the most difficult, especially the fat spaces between the letters. Speech printed in red is no longer speech. It makes paintings and paintings like it make paintings. This is how the work gets done, and then something is done that wasn't done before. Then there's a ground to paint, graciously absorbed into the surface of the painting. Planes and schemata. No signature, no comparisons, no drips. A painting that reeks of fresh paint is no painting at all. No fraternizing of the senses. No fraternizing of the drips and the signature and the smell of paint with the painting. These aren't the things that make art. Establish your own law of judgment. No foreword, no preface. An open net filled with equivalent things. A closed net filled with equivalent things. Entrapment. Trapped paintings. I want you to paint these paintings, says Herma. I want you, first, not to paint these paintings, then not to kick them out, and then to paint them. That's how it goes (what isn't booted out): appearing and disappearing again on the surface of the painting, leaving no smell, but also exchanging equivalent paintings, exchanging red for red, in order to let light into the closed holes. Glowing parts in shopping bags. Most of them are paintings that are so

small they fit into shopping bags. Go shopping. Glowing parts in the shopping bag. They really get around. Go shopping with a glowing part in the shopping bag and check out new things. That's how paintings get around so much. They shouldn't be fragile, they shouldn't act fragile, no one should protect them from the bumps and scrapes they'll get when they're in their hiding place. Fire in the bag. A system of painting in a closed space. And a space inside a larger space. But the large space is the department store. The large space is alluring; it's the most beautiful space, more beautiful than a museum. Herma had never considered obtaining the funds to build her own department store, but instead tries to master the technique of tracking things down inside a large space. After taking them home, she exposes them to a certain quantity of filtered light, then returns to the store with extracts, glowing in the bag, and waits until they've earned the right to be taken back to the house again, until they've become glowing paintings, ready: degrees of ascension to heaven. Then back with the paintings to other paintings, where they have to make systems and groups and installations. Not installations, but constellations.

Herma arranges. The paintings that don't fit in the bag are the most suitable for reproduction, the easiest to explain, forming series by themselves. Series with money, bills, coins, with flowers and lumps. Paintings that can be hung must also be paintings that can be repeated. The sweet sound of repetition: a shrill voice trapping itself. And making any decision impossible. Swelling in the ears, glowing in the bag—Herma stops. Shining from behind the fog, tugging at the curtains, shooting between the ribs, sticking the head into a red cloud, extracting, attracting, boring holes, placing a perforated color in the earth and the lights so that it pitilessly illuminates red and the failure of red. Now she's laid a strip of red velvet in front of

the paintings. No one is allowed to approach these paintings. Red can't be taken, smelled, or seen anymore—only the paintings. No one should get excited by looking at them. The paintings don't want it. They demand to be counted, counting is the only way to escape the totality behind the red velvet in its full complex terror. An eye wedged in it, an eye as a hole of light. Herma makes no comparisons, comparisons are not equations. Every new composition is an equation in which the elements are solved. But where is the red? Not on the surface and not on the wall; not on the floor where the velvet is. The red is inside a weapon, and that weapon is Herma. Whenever she had to arrange something, making a new equation with the things that make art, she stirred up the details so much that everything flew apart and only the red remained, everything else bleached out by intellectual stimulation. Will she ever stop bringing red things into every new phase? Satisfied, she tears up her report and stuffs it into a box where she keeps photographs, like animals, of the things that make art. But then she can only see the box as a painted box and it becomes an oil painting yet again. An oil painting with a red box that doesn't smell. Only in summer does she have this luxury, since in winter, with the windows closed, the oil paintings smell more like oil paintings. Piles of secret materials are hoarded and destroyed. She arranges the velvet, with its faded sections folded inward, hidden, then unrolled again. But the new velvet from the store is larger than the faded old velvet, so she lays the new over the old.

iv By Other Means

Fake name, real name, fake money, real money. Illegally. Newly illegally. Dirt, purity, dirt, purity. Lucie Beyer is content with her favorite words and newly discovered foreign words and books

and more books. When she is content, she struggles twice as hard. Always in a fight with money, names, paintings, things that make art and things that undermine art. Saturdays in search of things that undermine art. She is a badly defined problem in search of a better definition. She polishes words, hoping for a method or at least a means to polish, then she doubles, doubles, triples, multiplies. She has pulled and arranged many roots. She doesn't compose any reports but she writes about art on pant legs (an old habit) and in letters about the things that undermine art. She'd like most to paint words on wall labels in museums. Lucie Beyer abandons herself to her thoughts, just as she had abandoned herself to her travels, out of restlessness, incessantly traveling, mostly without any professional motivation, still greedy to see everything she had read about in books and experienced through her favorite words. Yes, best without any professional motivation, to see what professionals don't like to see. And every time she started a new trip, she was committed to starting a new life. She always began a new work when she traveled, and she could only begin new work when she was traveling. It was a ritual and she hated it for this reason, since she had just stopped performing the rituals of ossified domestic life. Rituals like constituting herself through images in the newspaper, or through cheap meals: as soon as she found that they were taking up even an hour of her time, she would take it upon herself to fulfill her ominous "mission." This mission consisted of running down specific streets and figuring out what insignificant details of shop windows, corners of buildings, kiosks, restaurants, and pavements had changed since she had last been there. Whenever she was in a foreign city that she had liked but had already exhausted, she couldn't bring herself to go anywhere she hadn't already been on her first visit, but instead monitored tiny changes in familiar streets and squares. When this was over, it was time

to turn back home to the...
 the...
 under the weight of her...

It was strongest when this se...
 screens bright and fragrant, th...
 all the springs before. A ma...
 never be myself, and that's v...
 says Lucie Beyer. For me, t...
 hunger for the relaxing eff...
 me from getting too agite...
 wouldn't want to leave. I...
 not too agitated), I'd w...
 reason, in order to relie...
 to be a reason to take a...
 new work by new pec...
 D'Pensones. Or goin...
 exhibitions at the Ta...
 and bad, or big bad...
 small imitations: th...
 up at the beginning...
 artistic season acc...

Because there's a...
 the same pressu...
 what to orient y...
 Lucie Beyer, e...
 tedious child...
 effects of the...
 spring wh...
 I orient...
 the...

to turn back home, to monitor an area at least as large as the entire city in which she lived. And it was also a ritual in spring, her favorite time of year, to travel and rejoice and break down under the weight of her rejoicing.

It was strongest when this season approached. Squares and streets, bright and fragrant, their freshness each time fresher than all the springs before. A marvelous time of the year. But I can never be myself, and that's what's intolerable to me about spring, says Lucie Beyer. For me, the pressure of spring heightens my hunger for the relaxing effects of anti-ritualistic rituals. They stop me from getting too agitated; if I were to get too agitated, I wouldn't want to leave. At most, if I got too agitated (but I'm not too agitated), I'd want to leave only ritualistically, for no reason, in order to relieve the pressure. But there always has to be a reason to take a trip. Reasons often come up, like seeing new work by new people at Centre Pompidou or La Caixa D'Pensiones. Or going to one of the mostly bad big group exhibitions at the Tate Gallery. Better to have something big and bad, or big bad imitations, than small bad originals or small imitations: this was a topic of discussion that always came up at the beginning of spring. Is it just spring, or is every new artistic season accompanied by a drive to break off?

Because there's also a season that begins in the fall. In fall, too, the same pressure, discussions, debates, and questions about what to orient yourself toward, the large or small things. But, says Lucie Beyer, even though I don't want to think back to my tedious childhood memories, I know that I had already felt the effects of these seasons before I started school, with its fall and spring schedule. Like every insect and small child, I suppose I oriented myself toward a smell linked to a specific light and specific forms, which would disappear and reappear again in

exactly a year. And I remember that this effect didn't last long. When it was over, I felt the need to find a way to artificially reproduce it—delicately enough so that it wouldn't be destroyed—in order to get rid of the pressure, to purge it through ritual. Of course, as always, any attempt to do away with these pleasures and pressures is doomed, whether you want to participate in the destruction of art or not. And waste is always produced: speech about art where silence would be even more false. In spring, but in fall, too, Lucie Beyer becomes especially verbose because she has been starved for communication. And so she happened to talk quite a lot, and what she said had consequences: she began to examine her "issues," as she called the things that had always bothered her. For example, museums. A painting is hanging in a certain place. Will it be hanging in this same place next year? Will it be moved? Has the surface changed, have cracks appeared? Has it darkened? Out of all the people who have stood in front of it while I was away, has one of them touched it? Why have they stood in front of it? What have they gotten from it? What does it really look like? But it's still the same painting. Then she moves on to the next painting. One painting arises out of the other. Count the paintings. In the end, she has no favorite painting—what would it be, and where would it be now? The most beautiful thing is to count the paintings: it's something I remember fondly, since it reminds me that it can be repeated at any moment. That's how something is beautiful, and that's also how I deal with things that aren't art themselves, but make art and make connections. And so it happens that communication can still take place after all. With old oil paintings in old buildings or with new oil paintings in new buildings. Other things that can be counted aren't as exciting as oil paintings, but just as important as oil paintings. So in the same way that I amass oil paintings, other things are amassed as well.

But the other things aren't
or locked up until the next
to being counted, through
rest at another end by ano
painting, having more to
but establishing constrai
which, one can remembe

I like to look at details ab
to see their mind in their
attached to people—wh
through their movemer
while I look at them. Pai
and explicit in their int
always in the same plac
if I've been looking aw
Yet as they stay still, th
they will be there whe
hostage when I look at
stand, or sit in front o
thing they affect in r
your color analysis. H
thing alive; here is en
plagued with worrie
horror of paintings,
painting, I see that
Good paintings, pr
art, are the reason

They can also be
These paintings,
abundance of pa

But the other things aren't amassed into a heap, but stored away or locked up until the next census. Or toppled in the process of being counted, through which a story is made and passed on to others, until everything begins to spin and only comes to rest at another end by another means. Which is to say: as a painting, having more to do with counting than with memory, but establishing constraints for which, of which, and through which, one can remember.

I like to look at details about people—their clothes, their gaze—to see their mind in their face. But since these things are attached to people—who don't stay still and distort themselves through their movement—I'm forced to engage with them while I look at them. Paintings, on the other hand, stay still, fixed and explicit in their intentions and challenges, implacable, always in the same place, and they don't get frustrated with me if I've been looking away for a moment or been gone for a year. Yet as they stay still, they flash their details at me. In the end, they will be there when I'm not anymore. And even if I'm their hostage when I look at them, I'm not inferior to them. I lie down, stand, or sit in front of them and, in this moment, I'm everything they affect in me. Marbleized light incidence. Perform your color analysis. Here is something dead and here is something alive; here is everything. When I look at a painting, I'm plagued with worries—at the very least. I see the permanent horror of paintings, their unchanging beauty. And if it's a good painting, I see that it chooses its colors, scale, and forms itself. Good paintings, precisely when they portend the destruction of art, are the reason that paintings can and must still be made.

They can also be objects or a life or writing or, especially, music. These paintings, everywhere, everywhere. There's such an abundance of paintings. And there's also the paintings of these

paintings and the thousand connections and cuts and hinges and entanglements—it makes me dizzy just thinking of them. And I think only of them and I'm always dizzy. But I don't falter because I'm dedicated to the beautiful task of systematizing all these connections. And I know how beautiful the systematic is in itself, since the system that carries its own boundaries within itself demands that only itself be reproduced, and how beautiful it is that there is also a systematics of the boundaries of systems and that everything goes back into them again, both claims for paintings and answers to them, in turn imaged anew on new paintings.

That's what paintings are.

The most beautiful paintings today are the ones in which material analysis is pushed to absurdity. Many paintings live on material effects, just as many things that make art do. The material effects of things that make art are usually much bigger and more heroic than those of paintings that toy around with them. As well as material effects on the canvas and material effects that those responsible for the material effects only think of. Neither material nor immaterial material effects are paintings, but rather material effects. There was a time, however, in the history of painting when material effects were in painting and helped paintings to be paintings, but today their paths have split. And the path of material effects is a wide upward path. Today, everyone can love and fetishize specific materials. But this has nothing to do with good paintings and should be kept away from paintings. That said, it's good to know the materials that you fetishize. Like velvet for me, like wood for many things, like each kind of paper, like cotton, like rugs, like everything that can be folded and rolled. Like everything that can be crumpled up. Like everything one can make into a lump and

hide away quickly, or make into something you can quickly hide behind. But I honestly want to be with the material, not exploit it for its effects.

For relaxation and luxury, the sense of touch is more important today than ever before, and every experience literally gets caught up in things.

Now I'm performing a preprogrammed chance operation on my books. A fair amount of books had accumulated. They're sitting, half alphabetized, on a homemade shelf. But then the desire to inspect them, independent of their content, pleasurable only on the basis of the specific material form of their content. Like every record collector I know who begins to count his countless records, usually in an attempt to apply an additional organizational system to the already existing musical categories, I'm addicted to red books these days. Roland Barthes, *Michelet*; Emily Dickinson, *Gedichte*; Teresa of Avila, *Die innere Burg*; August Strindberg, *Das rote Zimmer*; William Carlos Williams, *Die Worte die Worte die Worte*; Michael Rutschky, ed., 1983 – *Der Jahresbericht*; Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagenwerk*; Jenny Holzer, *Truisms and Essays*; Albert Oehlen, *Abräumung*; *Deutsch-französisches Wörterbuch*; John Dewey, *Kunst als Erfahrung*; Peter Handke, *Die Innenwelt der Aussenwelt der Innenwelt*; Thorkild Hansen, *Reise nach Arabien*; Diedrich Diederichsen, *Sexbeat*; Peter Waterhouse, *Menz*; *Die Welt der Kunststoffe*; *The Fall: Lyrics*; *Wörterbuch der Philosophie*; *Wörterbuch der Psychologie*; Klaus Bittermann, ed., *Die alte Strassenverkehrsordnung*; Curt Paul Janz, *Nietzsche*; Thomas Bernhard, *Wittgensteins Neffe*; James Joyce, *Ulysses*. Then I photographed the red books and other red things, the red slowly squeezing itself out of my selection of selections. This is how

the forms and colors of these things get filtered out from the other things, squeezed out of reality, even if the content proper to their reason contradicts this operation, like I squeezed the forms of my own money out of the known forms of money before I laid them down on a piece of velvet.

That's a form that gets people worked up today in one way or another, or at least moves them. Making money, like becoming red, is something that interests everyone and moves everyone. Money is also a challenge to my ideas of the mobility of artworks. Money ensures that goods are as mobile and exchangeable as possible, and the attempt to accommodate the uniqueness of the signature, thumbprints, and fingerprints is the attempt to deliver art's claims to uniqueness over to maximum mobility. Even if credit cards are even more mobile. I mostly know about money in the form of cash or in connection with art or other such things that (should) come and go, disappear, or become rare; these things are beautiful, but they're a burden. I've always admired people who can keep the same things around themselves for their entire lives. The same items of clothing, or books, or a chair, or a clock. When I read somewhere, fascinated, that "an American scientist has discovered that . . .," I always ask myself what kind of person that might be, this unknown scientist, who has devoted his entire life to a single question or problem whose solution is disseminated in a few lines to the entire world through a tabloid. Not in the sense of what kind of life he'd like to live, since there's already biographies and biopics for that. But what kinds of things does he surround himself with, what kinds of things mean something to him? What would a thing-diagram of his fetishes look like, how wide is his range of appetites and obsessions? And also, what newspapers does he read, what paintings hang in his house, and, above all, how does he manage his money?

Living in forms and putting your money into forms leads to a greater abundance of forms than any painting. There are no squares, triangles, or other shapes. In oil painting there are no fanciful forms, because an oil painting is defined as a rectilinear stretched canvas coated with a primer, onto which oil paints are applied, that smell strong at first and then less and less. The glow of cadmium red in oil is different from the glow of cadmium red in acrylic. Even when American scientists tell me that now the effects of oil paints can be achieved without using oil paints, I don't believe them. I believe in oil paints like the eco-freak believes in his homeopathic medicine or the guitarist in the sound of her guitar, even if the same sound can be produced with a computer. These same guitarists don't mind using a Fairlight or a drum machine at all. I've spoken with many of them already, and they all insist that the intensity of the guitar's sound can't be achieved any other way. So it is with red oil paint. Electric red oil paint is oil paint from the tube. I'm so good at organizing, draping, laying, arranging, cleaning, clearing, saving, separating, mixing, and retrieving these tubes. They have such a nice personality. Disarmingly direct. They wear their names and all their information on their sides. However, their luminosity changes under the influence of a solvent, destroying their wishes or fulfilling their true ones. Red colors like crosses and hair and flags and guitarists' pants. Although one of them, wearing white, was singing, "There's more to the painting than meets the eye." Which rhymes with, "Rock 'n' roll will never die."

I have a fake name and I wear it like I cover my paintings with the English language. But this is nothing special, just a little exile, like squeezing color from the tube. A direct action, with no doubt, in which the real name is maintained; a name real only insofar as it is responsible for specific actions. This is how

fake speech works, which makes it possible to squeeze a sound directly out of the sound of speech. Sounds the same. I sit in my office, on some Breakdown Street, and the uniform sound of cars penetrates the window. All these cars are different, their destinations are different and the people steering them are different, with different goals. I imagine everything that will be moved, negotiated, perpetrated, destroyed within the next half hour, by the people driving the cars and the cars themselves, whose engines send their uniform sound up to me. Technical harmony. The whole world's wall of sound.

- v Now I'm going record shopping. The Edsel rerelease, the new Grebo, and then we'll see. Oh yeah, I need to look into the new Bomb Party album ... that's the band with a singer named Jesus, who sings things like "I am a love junkie" and "Women are the reason for existence." And he lies there half naked on a street corner, with mirrored glasses, a full beard, and an officer's cap on his head. He looks really good. Very Greboesque. My hair is super greasy today, too, yeah, super greasy, it feels like I have three huge gel packs on my head. I'm standing in front of Aachener Straße with so much grease on my head. Here you can really be in control. It should be called Ausfallstraße, Breakdown Street. There's a good view, you have control, you see what comes and goes, you can really imagine something here. And you see people whom you know by sight. It's even better than the place on Bismarckstraße, where you can see what paintings come and go, and what art people and other art things, and the asylum ... we called it that because the most motley crew of people from different countries had to prepare their national dish on portable stoves on the window ledge, because there was no kitchen and no money to go out to eat, but many many different people.

Here I see an ice cream shop, sports cars driving up to the special repair shop, regular cars, and so on.

The colors here on this street are fantastic, especially in the evening before it gets dark and you look out, straight ahead, as an intercity train goes by. You can see these pieces of the railway around the city, since the tracks run around it in a semicircle, but nowhere else do you have this view that is simultaneously a restricted view and a clear outlook. The two form a crosshairs and we are right in the middle of them.

Being in the middle is good. I'm happy that I'm in an organization that sticks me in the middle of itself. You can't ask for anything better.

Really? Yeah, really, but it's very good as it is, since here you can still deal with the means of production employed by rock and pop music. These means of production, and all the things that emerge from them, are really good for work, since they produce something new every day that isn't just a piece of news.

Don't stop listening to the news, to records, eating, concerts, and English. You have to pull yourself together, and the English language—nowhere else can you find such beautiful, contemporary, direct communication. And besides that, you have the spacing between the lines: music. We made it so that agitation would spread through music and all the people involved with it, but it was already in the music itself. There should have been even more people who were much more interested in music letting themselves be shaken by it.

New existences are emerging.

Music breaks open without you really knowing what it opens up. That's why most musicians say, in one form or another, that it has to do with *feeling*, a *fffeeeeling*, intensity, and fun—of course, always fun—but they're mostly English speakers, these rock musicians, so they say *fun*, *fffunnn!* And there's lots of songs about *feeling* and *fun*.

English is the best way to expressively transgress your inhibitions.

It makes the sound.

It's a transparent cable I can cling to. I'd like to keep holding on to it, more than to other things, because catching hold of it again is not easy. You have to always struggle, see, fumble, grab. I like it more than anything else, often more than paintings, although I love paintings very much, and often enjoy looking at many of them, having already traveled countless miles to look at them. I look at them and store them away, in the way that one can store something with one's eyes, then I go away and come back again.

I've never felt the need to have paintings around me that I've already seen. I'd rather have flowers, or things I've seen—things I've seen in paintings, or things that I think could become paintings. Everything is always money when there was money for projects, things, travels—never for a painting.

Paintings are a horror. And so many times I've joyfully abandoned myself to this horror, to horrific content, like the Spanish painters painted wounds, like the opulent flesh of Rubens, the analytic and despairing way that Goya paints events or non-events, the crazed appetites of Delacroix and the tormented Romanticism of Turner, and ... I shouldn't start to list names,

or else I'd never be able to stop, and because only my eyes have anything to do with these names, not me. Paintings aren't kicks. I've never seen a painting and thought that I wanted to own it, or make it myself. But I often feel like I want to own such and such an object, a piece of music, a ring or a sweatshirt or a black skirt.

Or a newspaper or a brush or fresh apricots or muffins, bagels, tights, a fat check, or news from old friends.

What interests me the most about most people is how they live—that is, how they make their money. When I have a pretty good idea of how they make their money, then I can forget about money and talk about all there is to talk about with them. It's often quite awkward. I have to brace myself, since I know how much the person hates being asked to divulge such personal information, and I understand, since I also don't want to exchange any personal information, but the money question nags at me when I'm talking to them. That's how these clusters emerge that I call "knobs"; I've already painted many knobs in order to be able to go on talking to people.

The knobs flash. Light, and the material aspect of the situation, retreats to the background. One of my daily tasks is to make these lumps out of light, but not to forget the lump without light, because a lump remains a lump. I wash, try to keep the sink clean, and either find a use for all the things lying around or throw them out.

I like light in all its forms. One line of inquiry about paintings is concerned with how a given painter renders light, but I'm more interested in how a given person renders light, in any form, and how each thing bears its own light, but my favorite now

is the light in the English language, which is a sound for me, a wall of sound.

In out in out. Going out is good. When they get older, many people can't or don't want to get themselves together in order to go out.

Living in a big city and not going out makes many people strange. It's most fun to go out with them once they've become truly strange, since they see and hear things that people who always go out can't see or hear anymore. Not exactly. It depends both on doses of things and doses of people.

Strong attractions. Everyone likes strong attractions and, up to a certain point, everyone likes to engage with delicate attractions in order to cut themselves off from strong attractions. And everyone likes strong attractions even when they pretend to like delicate ones, like delicate drawings or nostalgia for a place or the smell of flowers. And in the end, everyone experiences a so-called negative attraction, like to violence in any form.

Clean the glass until it breaks. Use the brush until it loses all its bristles. Love until it turns into anger. Measure the immeasurable and don't measure the measurable.

One of the most beautiful paintings I know is Joseph Beuys's black hole, that black, sooty hole, the hole the size of a stove-pipe drilled into the wall of Kunsthalle Düsseldorf that actually leads outside. I was very pleased to learn today about some Land-art scientists in Upper Palatinate who have just begun a ten-year project to drill the deepest hole in the world, 14-km deep. Everything points to the fact that another figure besides

the artist is taking over the work of the artist. Someone comes along other than the artist who has a ten-year plan and isn't afraid of the work involved with it, of taking measurements and not taking measurements. So it goes in West Germany.

There are 14 million road signs here. The hole goes 14-km deep, but not all the way through. And above it are 14 million road signs. So you're in the middle of the earth, but you're still pushing to the edge. You want to see the edge. And all the signs say: no edge here, just a little border, no edge here, just a little border. That's how little borders are—absurd, but also loved and praised as threats, the order of menial tasks: office time, closing time, controlled mini-scandals, organization.

Oh yeah, a wonderful part of the country, so clean.

I wouldn't be caught dead in the area where that hole is being drilled, and nowhere else, either. No one who was born in Cologne and had to experience that part of the country wants to go back once they've already had that experience. I'd like to walk to Cologne, as an old song puts it. So everyone from Cologne is addicted to cities.

I push, softly, softly, toward the end, which isn't an end since the end can only mean death—that is, doing something as serious with what doesn't remain, the dissolution of oneself, as what does remain of every human body. But nothing remains; something new comes along. Follows and follows and follows in the following ... what time is it?

Dirt and purity? What? It's late and it's getting later and tomorrow it will be early again. I'm not toying with the idea of playing the maid.

Each day I get closer and closer to the next millennium. That's what I like about luxury. And we appreciate the shamelessness of American movies, but also the pride of people who shoot other kinds of films against them and decry them as pornography. They say that women can't decide: one thing leads to another, but there are no decisions. They say that women can break something open without knowing it. Can someone break something open without knowing it? The "it": a painting, or a world? Knowing, because you're saying "it"?

Act now. You can, you can, I can. So I insist that the heart can bleed, that it doesn't matter when someone forgets a woman's name, but it does matter when someone doesn't know that they've forgotten it. The more unstable element I work with: the foundations of existence. Since the daily task is to produce unstable elements like *senses & instruments*, like the things that make art and make art, see page painting f.

So one thing leads to another. Plugged holes, big holes, small holes, and endless surfaces in which holes can be made.

That's how it is when I dream or imagine a space. It doesn't happen often that I imagine or dream about empty spaces. Things are shoved into it and it shuts down, then it's opened up again, cleaned, newly available. Women like to clean. They clean with the purest shamelessness. And they eventually clean themselves away and go through the mesh trap in the drain with all the other dirt.

Speak English or Die.

In out in out in out in out in out in out in out in out.

I wanna make you feel good ...

I want you to have it all.

We wanted to have her paint.

higher higher higher higher higher higher higher higher

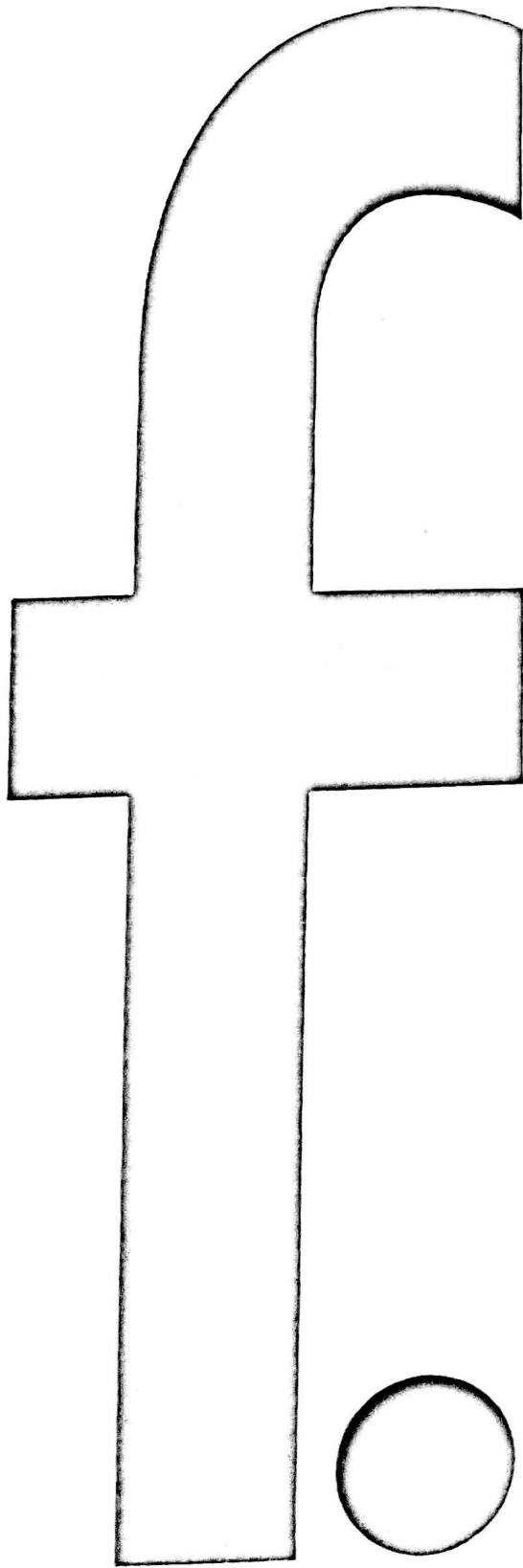
no one understands you like I do

You

We wanted to have her paint paint paint paint paint

to the very end

But it keeps going f. ff. f. ff. f. fff. fffff.



JUTTA KOETHER



THE THINGS ART MAKES

THE POETRY OF ECONOMICAL
ANALYSIS WHEN TRANSLATED
INTO A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

WE NEVER REALLY UNDERSTOOD
A FOREIGN LANGUAGE