

INGRID KERMA

Blushing Brides

broadbent

The Brides Stripped Bare.

'I worry that it's hardly there...'

It's a common concern of ours. We begin with nothing, which is close to our goal but this first nothing is unbidden, unmade. In fact it's only superficially nothing, we're already on our way towards something by virtue of our longing. So where does the longing come from? It has its source in our profoundest sense of who we are and the something at which it is aimed, if it is indeed anything, is the possibility of housing this sense beyond ourselves.

We only know that to get there, even to approach there, means relinquishing our familiar ways of knowing. Thoughts crop up, images appear, concepts form - the whorls and eddies of our workaday consciousness. It can't be helped and they shouldn't necessarily be resisted. But nor should they be mistaken for what we seek. But for our purposes we feel like stripping them and when you strip you run the risk of having nothing to show. That is painful, painful and a little embarrassing.

So the stripping must be careful, skilful. It's more peeling back than flagrant exhibitionism. That said, it is hoped that we will have something to exhibit for all our efforts. Even the skill is something that can't be fully known, though its purpose may be intuited - the deliberate obscuring of the phenomenal whilst preserving something of the truth to which it points. Sounds like a faith-based axiom. Pointing in painting and prayer - the will to send out sharp arrows of longing, darts to pierce what the medieval mystic has called the 'cloud of unknowing'.

When I look at "Large Glass" for any length of time I think I can see a cloud. The painting is simple; single wide overlapping brushstrokes made in a white of different thicknesses upon a black canvas. It gives the sense of something piling up, and yet what piles up is almost nothing. It hints at a geometry of progression and recession, of freeze-frame and dance, like scans of breath or thought. And while nothing is yielded, nothing is erased, the brushstrokes render every nuance of the canvas and vice versa. But this doesn't begin to account for the experience, namely that, together and over time these regular rhythmic bars seem to devolve into something with the illusory half-felt presence of a cloud.

There's technique of course, as with any act of contemplation, but it's humbly applied. There is discipline, formal at times, more speculative at others and a wisdom to move between the two. There are accidents, events beyond her control, wanted or otherwise. An older tradition might speak instead of grace. In "Large Glass" black scraped back turns to a blue that was never on the palette. The process is shrouded not so much in mystery as uncertainty. Once applied, the paint has its own laws, things happen to it in spite of her. But the paint couldn't have been applied in the way it was without the surrendering of some attachment to desired outcomes. Acceptance in the first instance and acceptance at the last; the ability to call it a painting, to say 'This is it.'

Above all persistence. Day after day after day. We know that the searching will take all the time we have to give to it and more...

It may be a million attempts at the same route like Mondrian,

like Pollock, like the monk and a lifetime's worth of repeated devotions. It may just as easily be a million different routes to the same thing. In the world of Art, she tells me that the latter is less fashionable, less promotable because less signatory. But I feel it has an ecumenism that introduces breadth to her enquiry...

Different paths, the same question. Like "Large Glass", "Pearl Whispers" is composed of a series of single vertical strokes, though here the bars are spaced. Again variations in the thickness of the paint are used to promote the phenomenology of presence. Here the thicker outer bars become increasingly faint at the painting's centre. We're left wondering whether the central bars are really there or whether they're just an optical after effect created by the impression of the peripheral bars. So, presuming that these central strokes are there, albeit vestigially, just how close are they to not being there? How much does

their existence depend on what is near to them in space or time? As with "Large Glass", we're conscious of an abstract scaffolding, a prison-house for something – be it an idea or a sensual percept – but we're increasingly concerned that the scaffold is not holding anything up, that the prison is empty.

Different routes, different targets, ultimately different epistemologies, equally prone to the illusion of something being grasped and fastened down, of something being present. Whatever the way we must pass through doubt, and at doubt's core is the fear that there's no core at all, that we've got nothing on underneath. What drives us on is our faith in the process and what we have to show for it.

Br Andrew Mitchell OSB Cam

Out of the Blue

The announcement of a new show by an artist one knows well brings with it a set of expectations. One is about to experience something new which is, paradoxically, familiar, already known. There's something very comforting about entering the gallery, slipping back into an intimacy one doesn't have to earn. The work has moved on of course, but by increments which are small, expected even, or that's the trick the intimacy plays. After all these pieces are essentially old acquaintances, friends even, and who is better placed than an old friend to offer comment and judgement... And yet, every now and then we come upon a body of work, which, without prior warning, shatters the smug confidence of familiarity and produces in us the thrill of the new.

Ingrid Kerma's last two shows at Broadbent were part of an ongoing exploration of blue, or rather of infinity through blue. The works were minimal and at the same time produced a sensory overload in the viewer. The hit was instantaneous, the whoa factor intense. What could possibly follow this type of work? How could Kerma continue in this vein? It seemed that all had been said and done. The next step could only be towards a total dissolution into infinity.

As you might have guessed I am a friend of these paintings, one of the people who ought to know Ingrid's work very well. Until very recently she and I worked in adjacent studios. What's more, we have done collaborative works, painting at the same time on the very same canvases for over a decade. Hence my confidence in predicting the changes in her work.

That vanished the moment I stepped into her studio and looked at her Blushing Brides. I was knocked for six. I encountered a body of work created very recently, a group of painting stripped bare, quiet and self-possessed, and not a single pigment of ultramarine or cobalt blue in sight. I felt I had stumbled on a new artist nobody had seen before, least of all me.

The individual paintings in this wedding party do not rely on their dress to dazzle; instead, almost naked, they quietly worm their way into our consciousness. If you do not give them time they will not impress you. No pyrotechnics or lush mysterious textures. Often, large parts of the grounded canvas are left untouched, only blush is applied with a few charcoal lines loosely framing the fields of subtle hues. This kind of painting demands great confidence and above all the discipline to do without the many visual devices in a seasoned painter's box of tricks.

Of course Ingrid Kerma's concerns, her quest, may not have changed at all, but the means of expression have altered a great deal. What was once radiating at full blast, with its luxurious, velvety textures has now been divested, stripped bare. A few may blush, but the large part of the assembled guests at the wedding feast testify triumphantly to the power of change.

Pierre Imhof, London October 2005







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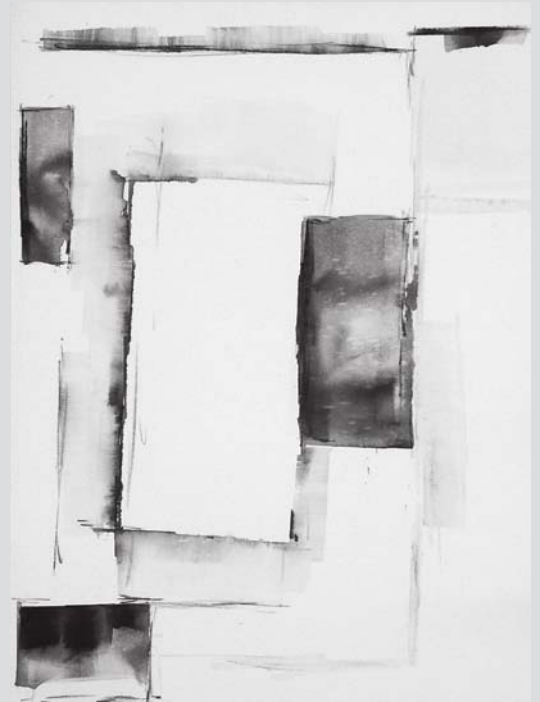
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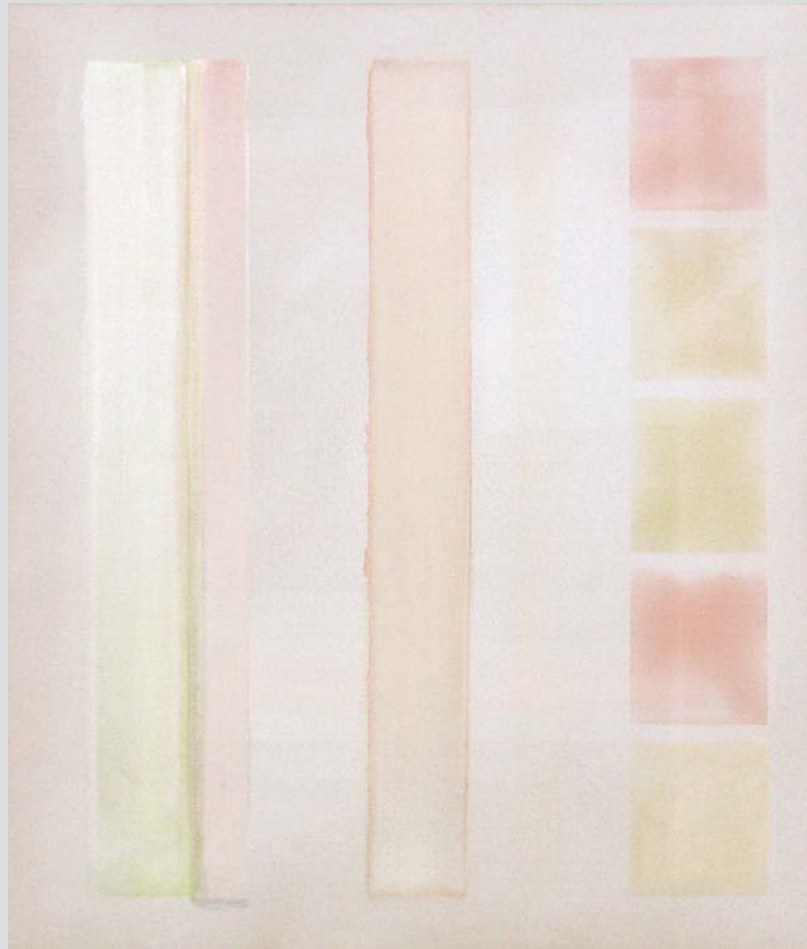


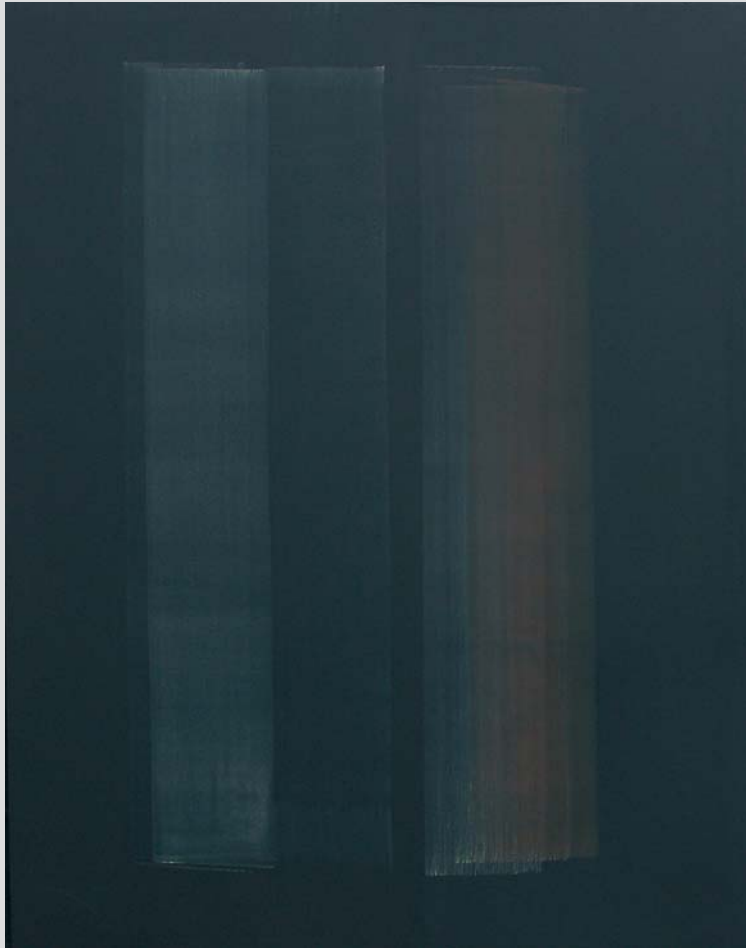
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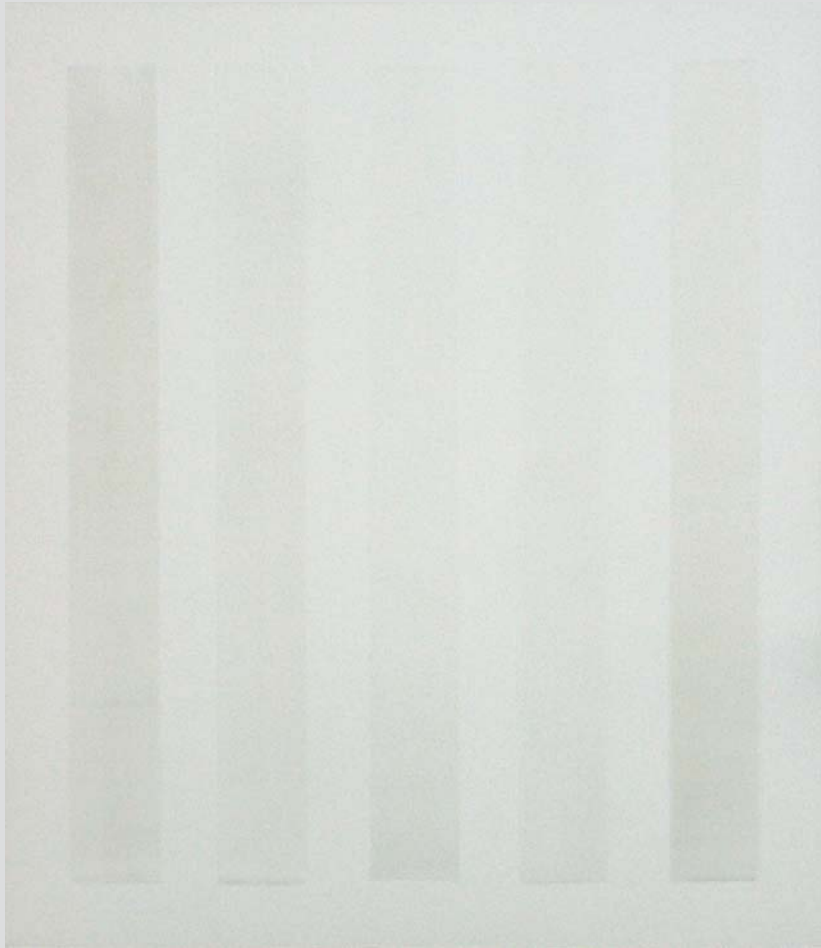


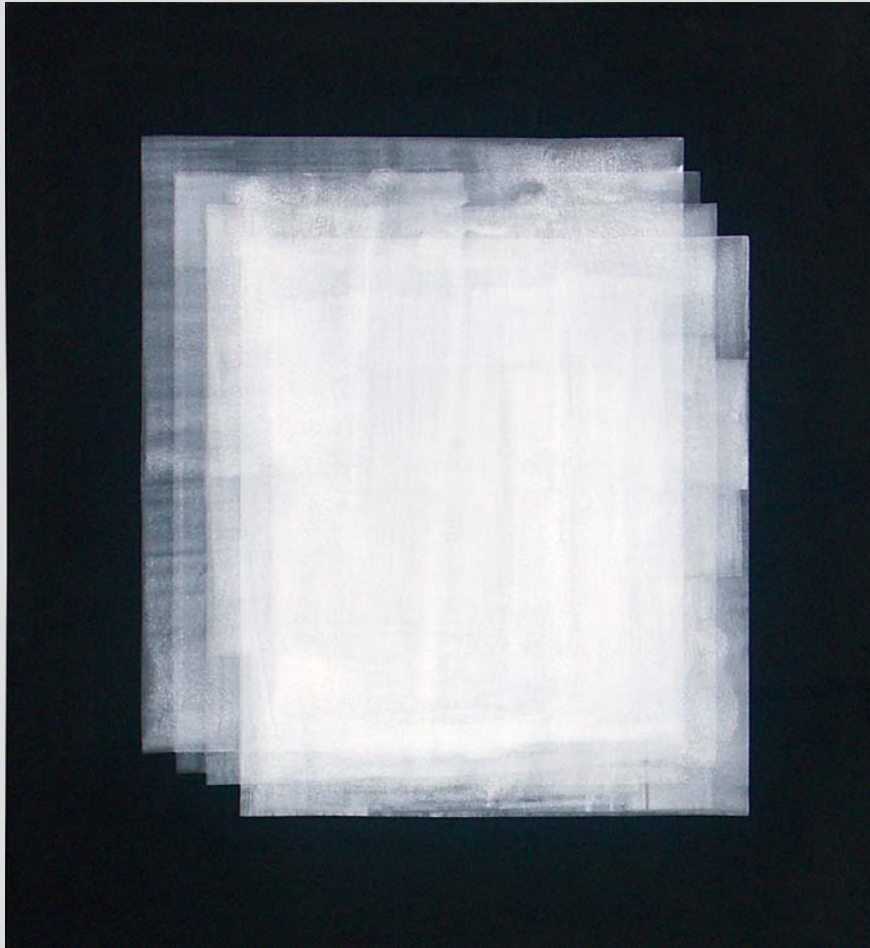


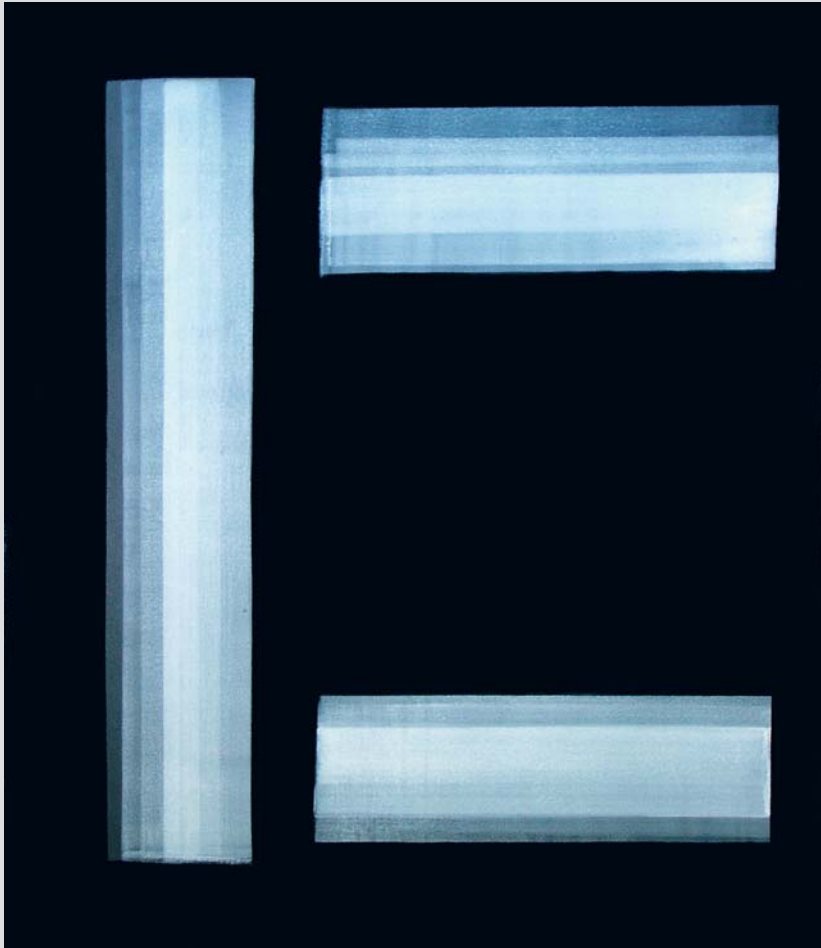


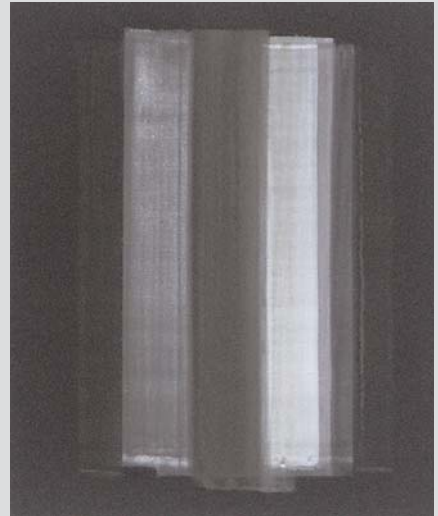
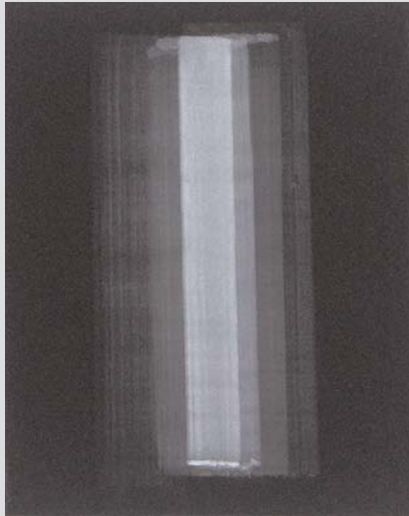
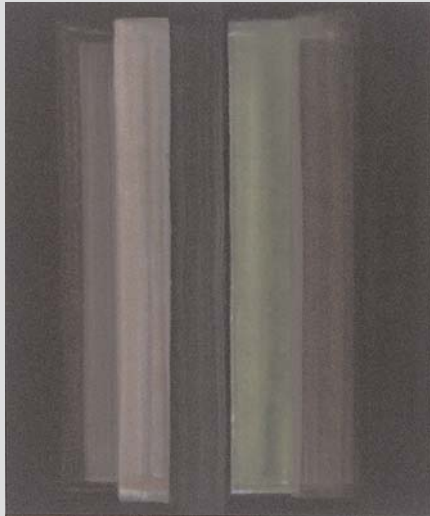


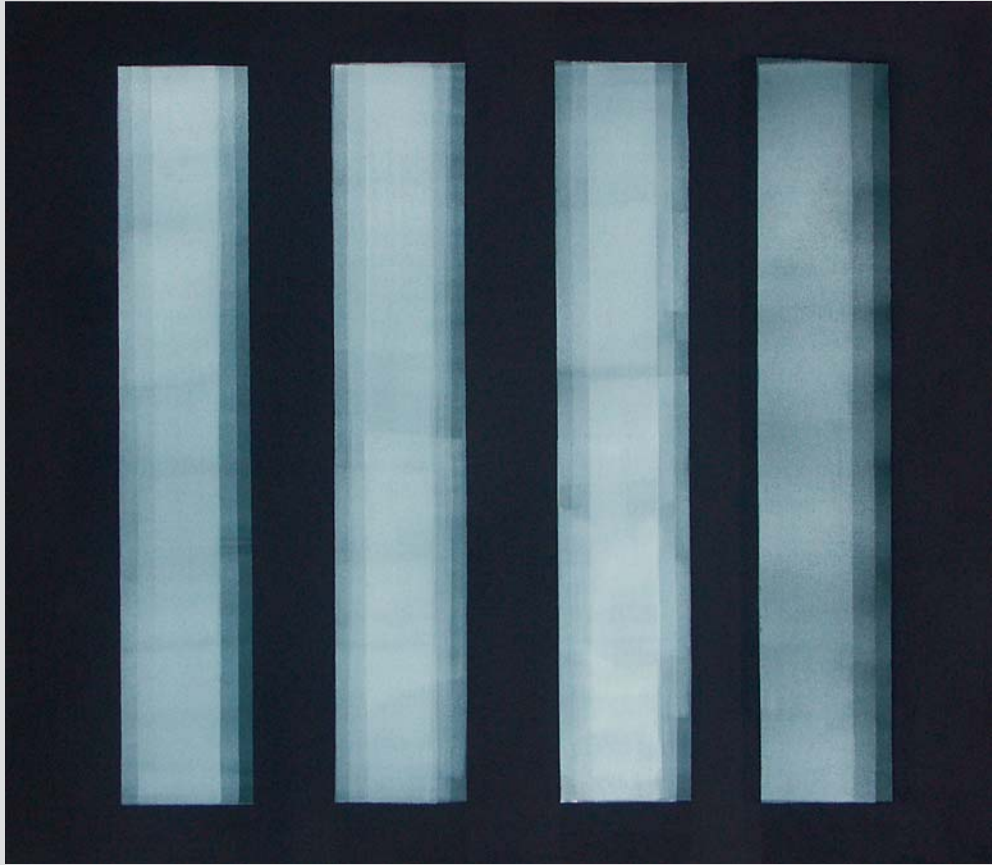


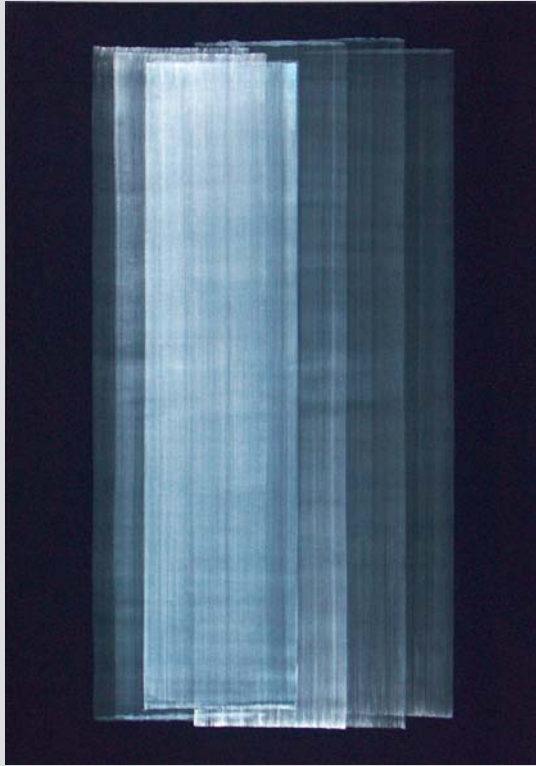


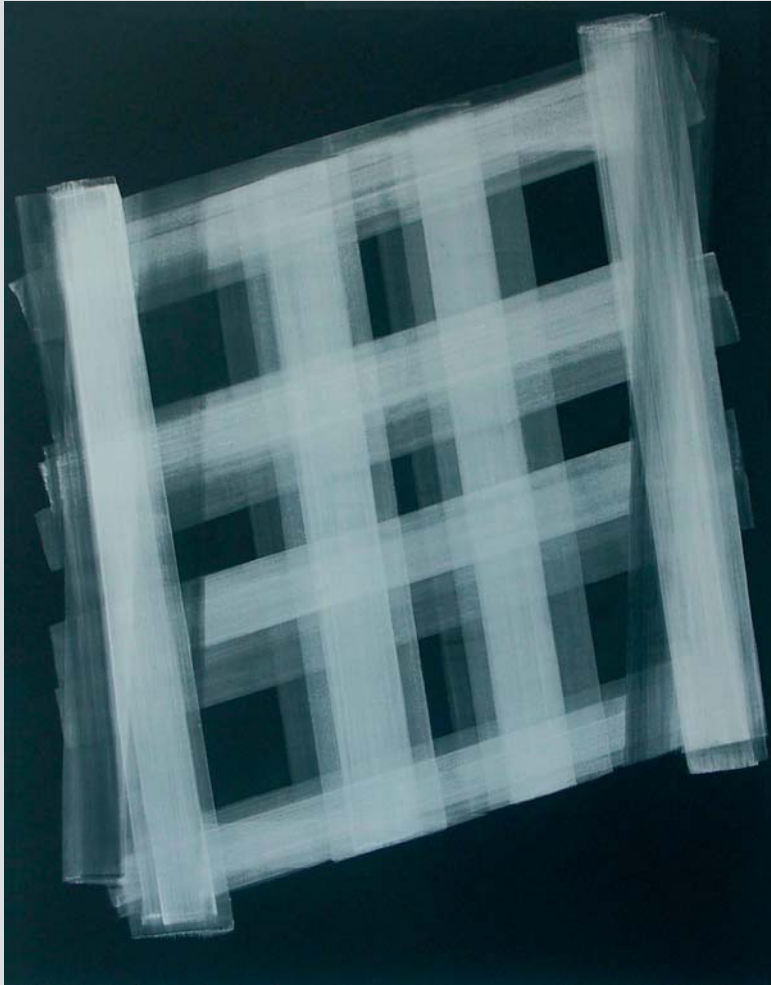


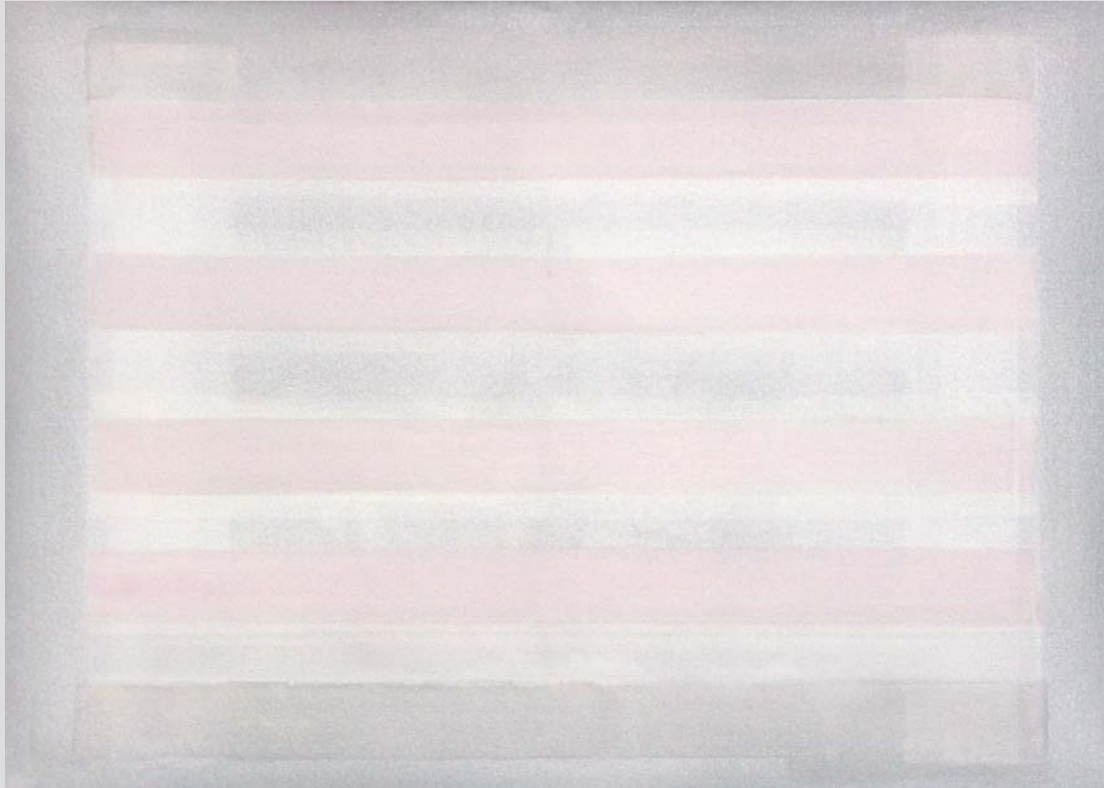


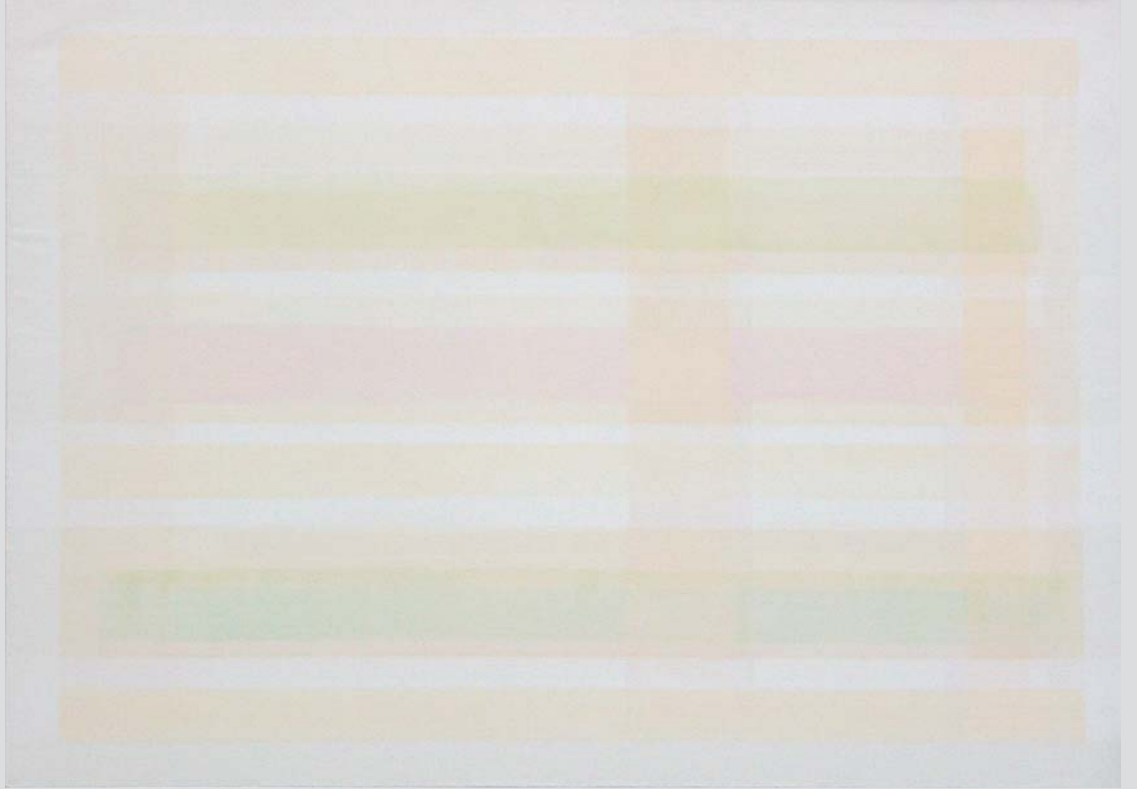


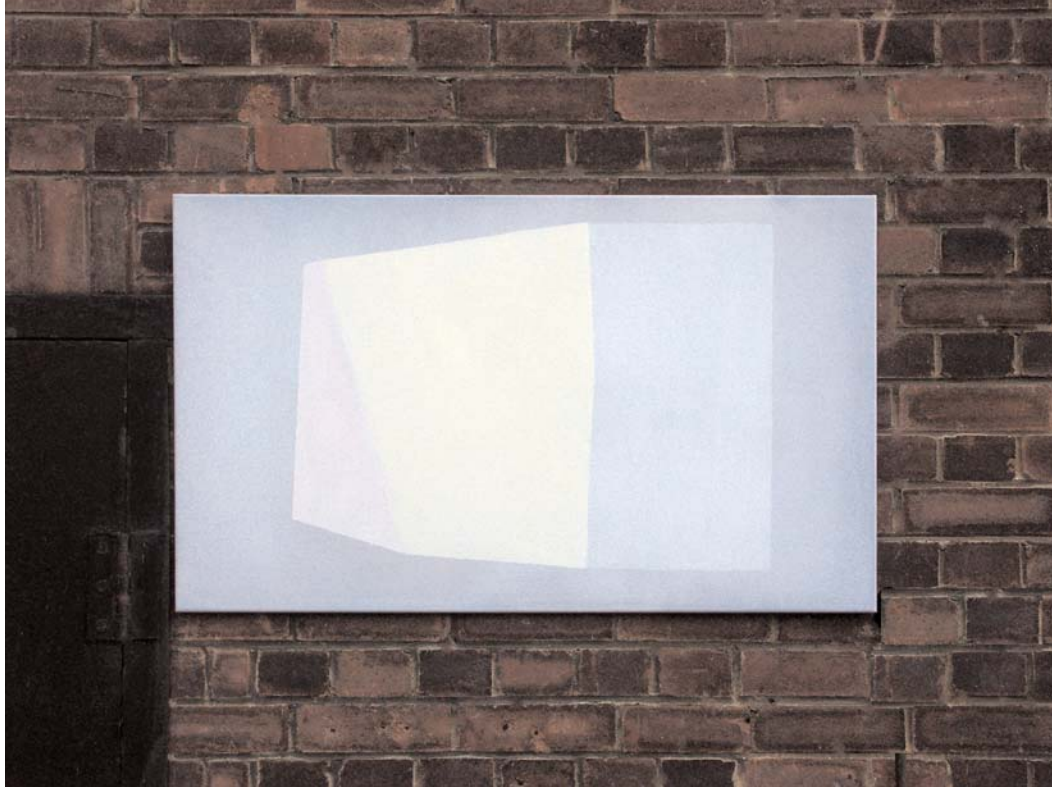












Little Pink House

All paintings are acrylic on canvas

- 1 Blushing Bride 3 2005, 140 x 120cm
- 2 Blushing Bride 2 2005, 150 x 120cm
- 3 Blushing Bride 1 2005, 140 x 120cm
- 4 Palace Garden 2005, 185 x 150cm
- 5 Dream Come True 2005, 185 x 150cm
- 6 Naples 2005, 120 x 90cm
- 7 Maid 1 2005, 120 x 90cm
- 8 My Country 2005, 120 x 90cm
- 9 Pageboy 2005, 120 x 90cm
- 10 The Dress 2005, 150 x 130cm
- 11 Pearls 2005, 150 x 120cm
- 12 Games Up 2005, 140 x 120cm
- 13 Black Pearls 2004, 150 x 130cm
- 14 Pearl Whispers 2005, 150 x 130cm
- 15 Large Glass 2005, 140 x 130cm
- 16 BFN (large) 2004, 150 x 130cm
- 17 BFS - Triptychon 2004, each 80 x 60cm
- 18 LFN 2004, 150 cm 130cm
- 19 X - Ray 2004, 100 x 80cm
- 20 Corpus 2004, 150 x 130cm
- 21 FFOAM 2005, 100 x 140 cm
- 22 FFO candy 2005, 100 x 140 cm

INGRID KERMA

Born in Eberswalde, nr Berlin, Germany
BA Hons, Fine Art Reading University, 1972-76
MA Goldsmith's College, London University, 1990-92
Founder member of Chisenhall Studios and Gallery
Owen Ridley Prize, Reading University
Greater London Arts Board Award
1998 Fellowship, Schloss Wiepersdorf, Germany,
2005 Artist in Residence, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt/Oder,
Germany
Lives and works in London and Berlin

EXHIBITIONS (Selection)

- 2005 *Blushing Brides*, solo exhibition, Broadbent Gallery, London
Kerma Paintings, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt/Oder, Germany
Chisenhale Open Studio Exhibition, Chisenhale Studios, London
Art 2005, London Art Fair,
3 Painters, Guarda, Porto, Portugal
- 2004 *special blue*, Keller & Greene, Los Angeles, USA
it's a wrap, Keller & Greene, LA, USA
Art London; Art Boulogna;
Das Fremde Sehen, Bahnhof Gusow, Brandenburg
- 2003 Art 2003, London
Tricolore (Kerma, Imhof, Imker), Galerie am Dom, Brandenburg, Germany,



- From the Archives*, Broadbent, London
Swiss Embassy, (Kerma, Imhof, Imker), London
- 2002 *Unbounded*, solo show, Broadbent Gallery, London
One+One=3 (Imker, Imhof, Kerma), Galerie M, Berlin
Imker (with Pierre Imhof), Phoenix Arts Centre, Brighton
Art 2002, London
- 2001 *Vermilion 2*, solo show, Broadbent Gallery London
Art 2001, London
- 2000 Art 2000, London
Imker (with Pierre Imhof), 97-99 Sclater Street, London
Portraits, Klostergalerie, Zehdenick, Germany
Paradiso, Klostergalerie, Neuzelle, Germany
Group show & symposium, Bahnhof Gusow, Germany
- 1999 *Vermilion*, solo show, Broadbent at the Curwen Gallery, London
- 1998 *Acht Kunstandachten*, Berliner Dom, Berlin
Solo show, Schloss Wiepersdorf, Germany

- Group show (with Sally Heywood and Peter Griffin), Broadbent at the New Burlington Galleries, London
- 1997 *Farbfelder, Farbräume*, solo show, Technical University, Berlin 'Quellen der Freiheit (Berlin-Wroclaw)', Wroclaw, Poland
- 1996 *Quaternio* (group show with Woisnitzer, Laszceanu, Ben Menahim), Galerie im Turm, Berlin
- Two-person show with Erika Stürmer-Alex, Galerie B, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt/ Oder
- Das Magische Quadrat*, solo show, Klostergalerie, Zehdenick, Germany 'Terra, Erde, Earth' (group show with Marlene Almeida and Erika Strumer-Alex), Nikolaisaal, Potsdam
- 1995 *Interior* (two-person show with Kathleen Mullaniff), Bedford Gallery, London
- Solo show, Galerie M, Berlin
- Von Meditation zu Expression, Galerie am Straussberger Platz, Berlin
- Imker* (with Pierre Imhof), Galerie Ursula Rövekamp, Zürich
- 1994 Solo show, Kleine Galerie, Eberswalde, Germany
- Zeichen in der Landschaft*, group show, Kesselhaus Kulturbrauerei, Berlin
- Works on Paper*, group show, Olinda, Brazil
- 1993 Solo show, Galerie Ursula Rövekamp, Zurich
- Solo show, Galerie Tallinn, Berlin
- 1992 MA Show, Goldsmiths College, London University
- 1991 Solo show, Galerie Ursula Rövekamp, Zurich 'Lets Us Have Our Meaning Back', group show, Goldsmiths Gallery, London
- 1990 Solo show, Galerie Unter den Linden, Berlin, DDR
- 1987 Whitechapel Open, Whitechapel Gallery, London
- Solo show, Chisenhale Gallery, London
- Solo show, Richard Pomeroy Gallery, London
- 1986 Whitechapel Open, Whitechapel Gallery, London
- New Acquaintances*, group show, Fabian Carlsson Gallery, London
- Group show, Schloss Pesch, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 1985 *Thirty London Painters*, Royal Academy, London
- The Last Wapping Show*, Wapping Studios, London
- 1983 *Pagan Echoes*, works selected by Waldemar Januczak, Riverside Studios, London
- 1982 Hayward Annual, Hayward Gallery, London
- Small Paintings*, Arts Council Touring Exhibition, selected by Tim Hilton
- Solo show, Air Gallery, London
- 1981 Whitechapel Open, Whitechapel Gallery, London
- 1979 *Recent Works by Young British Painters*, University of Texas at Dallas, USA
- Solo show, Air Gallery, London
- Group show, Penwith Gallery, St Ives
- 1978 *A Free Hand*, Arts Council Touring Exhibition, selected by William Packer
- Stowell's Trophy, Royal Academy, London
- 1976 John Moore's 10, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
- 1975 New Contemporaries, Camden Arts Centre, London
- Northern Young Contemporaries, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester

Blushing Brides

23 November - 31 December 2005

Brides stripped bare © Andrew Mitchell
Out of the Blue © Pierre Imhof



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