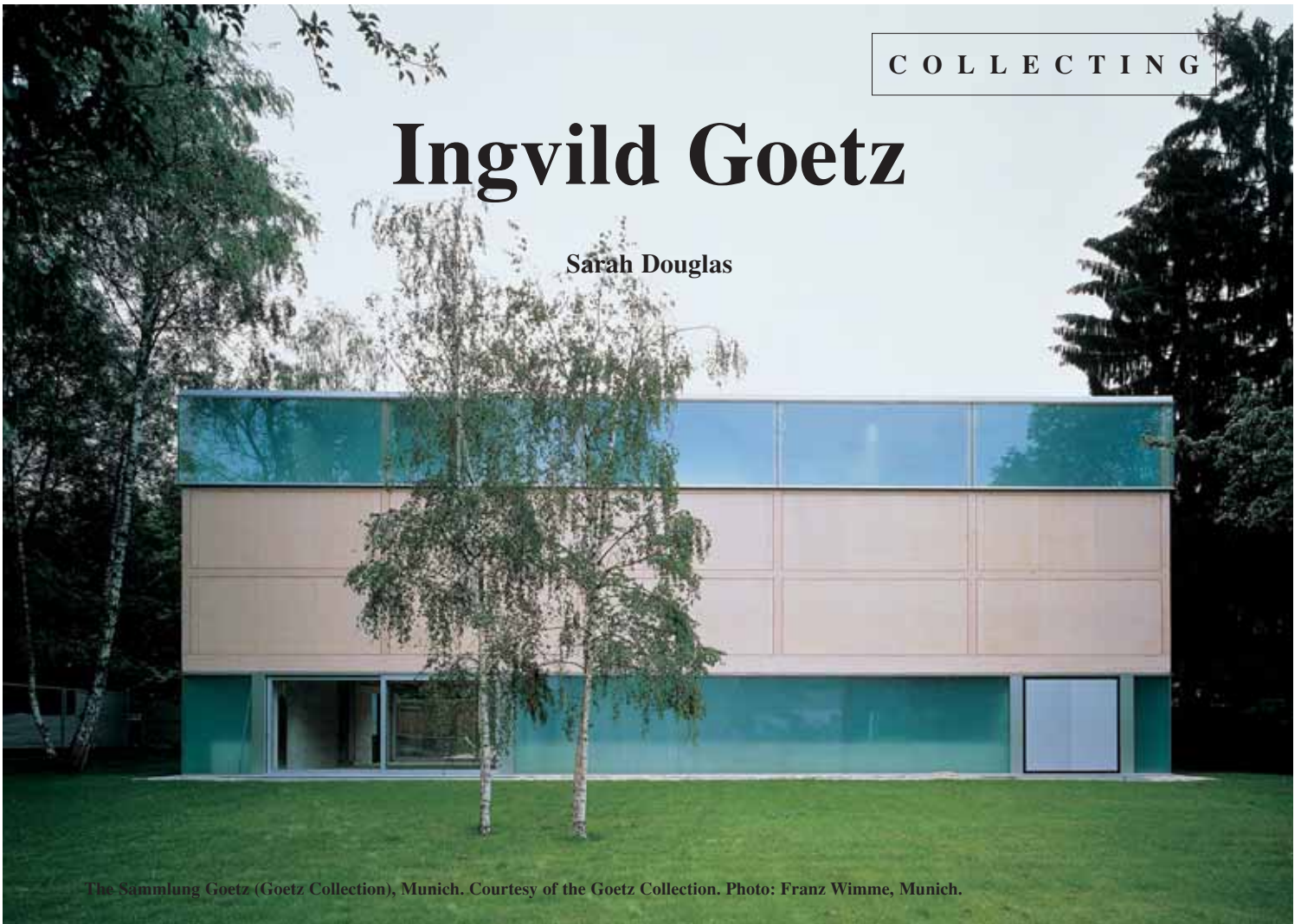


Ingvild Goetz

Sarah Douglas



The Sammlung Goetz (Goetz Collection), Munich. Courtesy of the Goetz Collection. Photo: Franz Wimpe, Munich.

With the market for works by American artist Richard Prince currently booming, it is worthwhile to recall that one of the best collections of his work, one that spans all the mediums in which he has worked, is that of Ingvild Goetz in Munich. Indeed, the market craze for Prince's work is such that, Mrs. Goetz acknowledges, "I can't afford it anymore!" But her trove of Princes is enviable, as she began collecting his work over 20 years ago, and now owns over 50 works, from the re-photographed magazine advertisements to the joke paintings and nurse paintings, to sculptures and books, and is currently displaying them in a major Prince exhibition that runs until May 21 at the Herzog & de Meuron-designed building that houses her collection. "When people think of Prince's work, maybe they think of one series, like the photographs, for instance. I wanted to show the whole spectrum."

But there is far more to the Goetz

Collection than Richard Prince. The collection, one of the most important of contemporary art in Europe, is often cited for its excellent selection of Arte Povera, comprising as it does pieces by the likes of Anselmo, Alighiero e Boetti, Calzolari, Fabro, Kounellis, Merz, Paolini, Pascali, Penone, Pistoletto and Zorio. But it is extremely strong in several other areas, including American artists of the 1980s and '90s. There are works by Mike Kelley, Cady Noland, Peter Halley, Carroll Dunham, Jenny Holzer, Matthew Barney (the "Cremaster" series), Raymond Pettibon, Paul Pfeiffer and others, as well as much important British art of the 1990s. One of the collection's focuses is on video and new media (last year the collection opened a 212-square meter space called Base 103 designed by Munich-based Wolfgang Brune Architects in consultation with Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, formerly a storage area in the building, for

displaying film and new media art); her collection ranks up there with the Kramlichs, with over 200 works of video art. Kutlug Ataman, Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, Peter Fischli and David Weiss, Rodney Graham, Pierre Huyghe, Bjorn Melhus, Anri Sala, Pipilotti Rist and many others are represented. And she is constantly augmenting her collection with the work of young artists. A few recent additions include the work of Berlin-based, Bavarian-born Thomas Helbig, as well as Paulina Olowska, and Lucy McKenzie. Continuing her interest in video and new media, she has acquired work by Mark Leckey, Hans Op de Beek and Barnaby Hoskins.

The building that provides a home for this collection is perhaps as famous as the works inside, though it has been called "one of Munich's best kept cultural secrets." Mrs. Goetz commissioned the elegant, minimal structure with a wood and glass exterior from Herzog &

de Meuron in the early 1990s, and it was completed in 1993, long before their other important museum projects, such as Tate Modern and the recently opened Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. The building boasts 370 square meters of exhibition space. That Mrs. Goetz is such a perspicacious collector, and such an ambitious one, likely comes from her long history with art. She opened a gallery called Art in Progress in Zurich in 1970, and relocated it to Munich in 1973. Before closing up shop in 1984 to concentrate on her collection, she mounted important shows by Arte Povera artists, as well as Bruce Nauman, Cy Twombly and others. She says it was hard to say goodbye to her life as a gallerist, but collecting is a passion for her, and she talks about the artworks she acquires as things she wants to have around for years. "Collecting," she says with a laugh, "is some sort of addiction."

True to her background as a



gallerist, however, Mrs. Goetz is not content to leave her artworks in one place. She is constantly organizing exhibitions for the collection, making it anything but staid. Mrs. Goetz wouldn't have it any other way. She decided to have Herzog & de Meuron create a building to house her collection because, she says, "it's terrible to have art and only see it all by yourself, or in storage. I like to be a creator of exhibitions, to see the art for a longer time, to have it around." The varied roster of exhibitions includes last year's "Fast Forward," a show of media art from her collection that appeared at the ZKM in Karlsruhe; it included over 70 videos, video installations and films from the 1990s to the present. In 2003, the Goetz Collection co-organized, with the Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, the exhibition "Just Love Me. Post/Feminist Art of the 1990s," which included work by Cindy Sherman, Tracey Emin, Rineke Dijkstra and others, all from the collection.

When talking about the many exhibitions the Goetz Collection has organized, she also points to the single-artist shows, such as those of Rosemarie Trockel and Thomas Schütte, as being especially gratifying. She tends to collect artists in depth, and the show of Schütte included works in a range of materials, from drawings to photographs to sculptures. Currently in the planning for June at the Goetz Collection is an exhibition cycle called "Imagination Becomes Reality," that will look at painting in relation to photography, video and sculpture. Part one is called

"Expanded Paint Tools" and is comprised of works by Franz Ackermann, Jörg Sasse, Thomas Scheibitz and Tal R.

As with a number of European collectors, she has in the past year or so become heavily involved in collecting contemporary Chinese artists. Her interest in this material is so strong — she now owns works by Hai Bo, Wang Jin, Xiang Liqing, Muchen & Shaoyinong, Xie Nanxing, Qiu Shi-hua, Ai Weiwei, Miao Xiaochun, Wang Xingwei and Bai Yiluo — that an exhibition for the collection is in the making. The Chinese artists that interest her are those who engage with new techniques, but also with tradition. "There are Chinese artists who are very much engaged with a European way of thinking, but they still use traditional tools, such as making porcelain or lacquer work. I think they are very, very interesting."

These days, when the contemporary art market seems a playground for new-moneyed speculators dashing off to art fairs to snap up work by the latest young, heavily hyped artist, speaking with Mrs. Goetz provides something of a reality check. "I call them the ear people," she says, referring to the speculators and those who chase the latest trends. "They are not looking, they are listening. An art investor talks about an artist or they get shown at a high profile gallery, then everyone talks about them, and people start jumping on the bandwagon." Not one to run with the crowd, Mrs. Goetz tends to avoid art fairs. "At an art fair," she says, "you can discover things, but you must see more.

What you get at a fair is just a kind of kick." For her, the process of buying art is one that requires consideration, and lots of looking. "I have a network of about a hundred galleries that I work with," she says. "I take a look with them, then I go to the artist's studio. You need to see a whole exhibition of an artist's work, and talk to the artist. It's important for me to see the how and why behind the work. It's a whole process. I never just see a painting. I need to know all about it."

Part of the problem with the new breed of buyers, Mrs. Goetz points out, is that in many cases they are buying art that seems easy to understand. Of her history of buying works by difficult, cerebral artists, she says, "I choose art that confronts, art that I can feel I am in a discussion with. I like art that makes me think, that opens up my mind to different kinds of political and social ideas, as well as ideas of beauty and ugliness." Asked for an example of work from her collection that fills this bill, she points to the series of grotesque photographs by Cindy Sherman. "I know what it's like to feel like that; it is a kind of attraction to both the negative and the positive. Some people think of these photographs as scary, others don't find them so scary at all. I like it when art leaves it a bit open."

One trend she finds problematic is the current craze for figurative painting. While she acknowledges that much of it, such as the work of Neo Rauch, is complex and challenging, other examples are "superficial, it doesn't really give you anything. For me it is important that something be

interesting for more than 12 seconds." She finds Rauch's work fascinating: "It takes time to go through the many levels in his work. That is what interests me in art, finding your own entrance to it."

For this seasoned collector, who gets involved in artists' work in order to own it for the long term, the current market is troubling, but she takes a realistic view. "The market has become its own kind of force," she says. "There are definitely two different kinds of collectors: speculators and those who are thinking in the long term." And things have changed, she agrees: "There are artists who have not even had a museum exhibition, and they are already very expensive, because of the market itself." When I ask her about today's much-discussed contemporary art market bubble, she acknowledges that there will one day be a correction. "I have no problem with that, these things happen. I just feel sorry for artists who got pushed up so much. When work is in speculators' hands, they could sell it immediately; but if the work is in the right hands, it won't do harm to the artist. I just feel sorry for these artists who have the hype of the wrong group." ■

Sarah Douglas is an editor for Flash Art.

From left: Portrait of Ingvid Goetz. Photo: Philippe Chancel, Paris; AI WEIWEI, Map of China, 2004. Ironwood (lignum vitae) from a destroyed Qing Dynasty temple, 40 x 97 x 198 cm; RICHARD PRINCE installation at the Goetz Collection. Photo: Wilfried Petzi, Munich. All images courtesy of the Goetz Collection, Munich.