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RICHTER 858 MAKES U.S. DEBUT AT SFMOMA AND IN PRINT
Landmark Multimedia Book Released
in Conjunction with Major Retrospective

In conjunction with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) presentation of *Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting*, a remarkable eight-painting suite of abstractions by Gerhard Richter, *Abstract Pictures* (858), 1999, will be on view at the Museum from September 26, 2002 through April 1, 2003. Simultaneous with the exhibition opening, an extraordinary book of poems, essays and music inspired by and specially commissioned for the series, *RICHTER 858*, will be released internationally.

One of the rare groups of Richter abstractions to remain fully intact, *Abstract Pictures* (858) consists of eight intensely colored and formally complex paintings, which were among the first works completed by the artist in the summer of 1999, after recovering from a serious illness. Compelled by these works—and with the artist's blessing—writer, editor and record producer David Breskin created *RICHTER 858* as both investigation and celebration of this suite of pictures in particular, and Richter abstraction in general. The book presents a unique mix of image, music, and text:

- Thirteen American poets—among them two Pulitzer Prize winners, five MacArthur and six Guggenheim Foundation fellows and a former Poet Laureate of the United States—offer a dynamic range of poetry triggered by the paintings
- Guitarist and composer Bill Frisell contributes a musical response in the setting of a 21st-century string quartet (violin, viola, cello, guitars and electronics)
- Noted art critics Dave Hickey and Klaus Kertess provide insightful essays, which are complemented by a sampling of Richter's own thoughts on painting, process and abstraction over a 40-year period

RICHTER 858 accompanies these new pieces with vivid, large-scale reproductions: the eight paintings are shown first at more than half-scale, then in a double-gatefold panorama and finally, most unconventionally, unbound in a folio at the back of the book, allowing them to be removed and displayed according to the reader's wishes. At the

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same time, the core of the book consists of 35 large reproductions of details from the paintings, each paired with a page of poetry or text. Published by The Shifting Foundation in association with SFMOMA, and designed by Mark Fox of BlackDog, (whose work was the subject of an SFMOMA exhibition in 1999), this oversized volume (12.5 x 17 inches) is housed in an aluminum slipcase that echoes the artist's distinctive choice of support for all but one of the 858 paintings, and comes fully protected in its own laminated cardboard box. The book will be available at the SFMOMA MuseumStore and online at www.sfmoma.org for \$125.

“The idea was to create something more like an artist's book than a conventional catalogue,” explains Breskin. “Something polyphonic, with a multiplicity of styles and modes and yet at the same time a kind of rigor and order, so that it might be in sympathy with Richter's own practice. And while you are listening to this chorus of American poetry, criticism and music—which hopefully will promote a deeper understanding of the paintings, their complexity, what Richter is doing—you get sort of beaten to death with peacock feathers by the reproductions, which are insanely beautiful. Which is to say that the study of abstraction doesn't have to be dry or forbidding; it can be sensuous, delightful and pretty cool. And that's what we've tried to do here.”

RICHTER 858

ISBN 0-9718610-0-5 U. S. \$125

Hardcover

12.5 x 17 inches

120 pages with gatefold + 8 plates unbound / 61 color images

Full-length music compact disc

Brushed aluminum slipcase with laminated corrugated box

Distributed by D.A.P in North America; by Thames and Hudson abroad

Music: Bill Frisell with Jenny Scheinman, Hank Roberts and Eyvind Kang

Poems: W. S. Di Piero, Dean Young, Ann Lauterbach, Richard Howard, Paul Hoover, David Breskin, Connie Deanovich, Robert Hass, Brenda Hillman, Michael Palmer, James McManus, Edward Hirsch, Jorie Graham

Texts: Klaus Kertess, Dave Hickey, Gerhard Richter

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Hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays) 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; open late Thursdays until 9 p.m.; summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day) 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day.

Admission prices: Adults \$10; seniors \$7; students \$6. SFMOMA members and children twelve and under are admitted free. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free. Thursday evenings, 6 to 9 p.m., admission is half price.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by MUNI, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans and Caltrain. Hourly, daily and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415/348-0971.

Visit our Web site at www.sfmoma.org or call 415/357-4000 for more information.

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Citysearch.com. Reduced admission for seniors is sponsored by Pacific Bell. KidstART free admission for children twelve and under is made possible by The Charles Schwab Corporation Foundation.

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