

LE SALON

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KATJA MATER

FIELDS ON A LINE

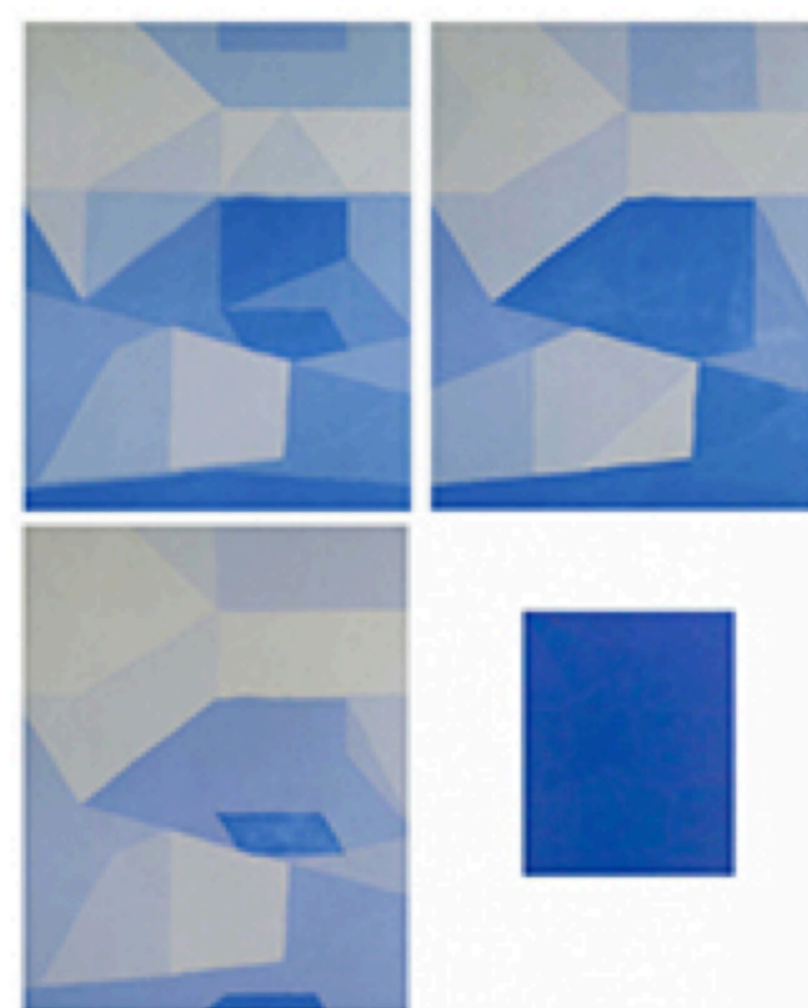
29.11.2014 - 01.02.2015

KIOSK, Ghent

EXHIBITION REVIEW – 04.01.2015

By Jana Haeckel

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DANIEL DEWAR ET GREGORY GICQUEL

DES INTUITIONS SAUVAGES

INTERVIEW – 07.11.2014

Par Dorothee Dupuis

Entretien avec le duo d'artistes à l'occasion de leurs expositions à la galerie Micheline Szwajcer du 10 octobre au 8 novembre 2014 à Bruxelles et au Musée Rodin du 27 mai au 26 octobre 2014 à Paris.

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ZIN TAYLOR

THE TANGENTAL ZIGZAG

14.06 - 19.07.2014

Kunstraum, London

EXHIBITION REVIEW – 01.07.2014

By Letitia Calin

Zin Taylor's first solo show in the UK continues the logic of the exhibition as chronicle, but this time the story takes a turn and introduces a new protagonist within his repertory of pattern-characters: the zigzag.

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ANN VERONICA

JANSSENS SAN SEVERO

20.05 - 27.06.2014

Cappella San Severo, Naples

PHOTO REPORTAGE – 09.06.2014

By Marco Ghidelli and Luciano Romano

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KATJA MATER
FIELDS ON A LINE
29.11.2014 - 01.02.2015
KIOSK, Ghent
By Jana J. Haeckel

FIELDS ON A LINE

Space is what arrests our gaze, what our sight stumbles over: the obstacle, bricks, an angle, a vanishing point. Space is when it makes an angle, when it stops, when we have to turn for it to start off again.

Georges Perec: *Species of Spaces*

Katja Mater (*1979) mistrusts reality – or at least the idea of it, captured on a picture in a frame. The Dutch artist, who recently moved to Brussels, uses photography, film, drawing and installation to extend the borders of the medium by blurring its technical origins.

Most of her works operate with the process of translation – from a drawing into a photograph, from a photograph into a spatial installation, back to an image on the wall – to create a space that could be called in-between. During this process, a new space is created, a space that questions the traditional idea of represented reality/truth through photography and film, opening up to the individual perception of a spectator.

Her current exhibition at KIOSK in Ghent, titled *Fields on a Line*, transformed a seemingly constructivist wall painting into a six minute long film. Mater used the specific architecture of the building – a former anatomical theatre built in 1905 by Louis Cloquet – and painted the



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Emiliano Battista: Locus Solus Domesticus

Jacques de Neuville: Vinyle à l'atelier - Pochettes d'artistes en Belgique

Eva Fabbris: Dompter le White Cube

Lionel Demarville, Iona Suzuki et Pauline Muyltermans: Prix Coups de Cœur des Amis de La Cambre

David de Tschanner: One Sculpture a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

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Robin Vanbesien: Michel Auder

Walter Swennen: La couleur est un mot incroyable

walls of four rooms in the exhibition space in different colors. At the same time, she filmed the transformation-process in a three-minute shot in both directions before the walls were whitened again. The result is a site-specific installation that guides the visitors through the former 'painting' to a room where the 16-mm film is projected in a loop.

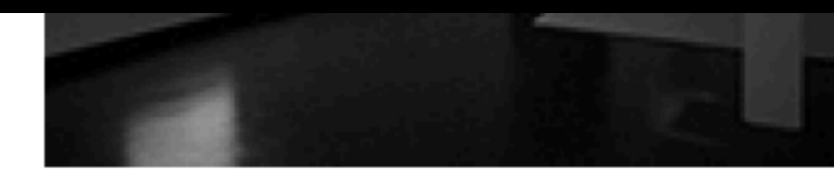
Fields on a Line could be described as a suspension of space and time, folding two spaces and a different time-experience into each other: When suddenly a door appears in the film, the supposedly neutral, objective and non-illusionistic geometric forms reveal themselves as painted walls of the architectural surrounding. The visitors are obliged to locate themselves in the particular exhibition-space where the filmic setting becomes the functional background for a subjective bodily experience: the individual walk of the spectators through the exhibition space differs from the linear film-rhythm of the camera. Furthermore, the film documents a former colored space that is no longer present in the architectural surrounding.

Like most of Mater's works, *Fields on a Line* is interested in showing a space *in-between* by using little gaps, imperfections and irritations. The installation represents a 'possible' reality that can only be captured by film and escapes human perception. This exceptional approach to the medium could be read as poetical counter-narrative to the alleged documentary legacy of photography and film. Living in the digital era, our belief in images is more jeopardized than ever. Mater's works play with the present-absence paradox of a filmed or photographed subject/object, telling us about a common attitude towards reality: the more we try and believe to approach the pictured truth, the more we have to realize the impossibility of such an attempt. Installations like *Fields on a Line* make us aware that we only perceive very delusive and partial traces of the 'real', which are inevitably influenced by our own perception.

On a bright November day, I visited the artist in her studio, located on the 10th floor of a high-rise in Brussels. We sat down to talk about her work, questions about time and space, and the beauty of errors:

Jana Johanna Haeckel How would you describe the role of photography in your work?

Katja Mater Most of my work is photography or photography related, but I wouldn't consider myself as a photographer. I reflect on photography and its use in a spatial, in a physical and in a discursive way. I am interested in the things that photography and human perception do not have in common – the areas where they don't overlap, that fall out of a category of human



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perception; especially because photography is often seen as a medium that documents an idea of the 'real'.

JH You mean in the sense of the “indexical” truth claim in analogue photography – the idea that photography relies upon the indexicality and visual accuracy of photographs as “light inscribed on a photo plate or on paper”?

KM Yes – and also in the sense that photography is seen as a kind of ‘window to the world’. Many of my works deal with this idea or definition in a very general way. Is the camera able to make things of a ‘parallel world’ visible, a world that exists in a way, but that you can't really ‘look at’? But you are able to photograph it. A space in-between that only becomes visible through photography.

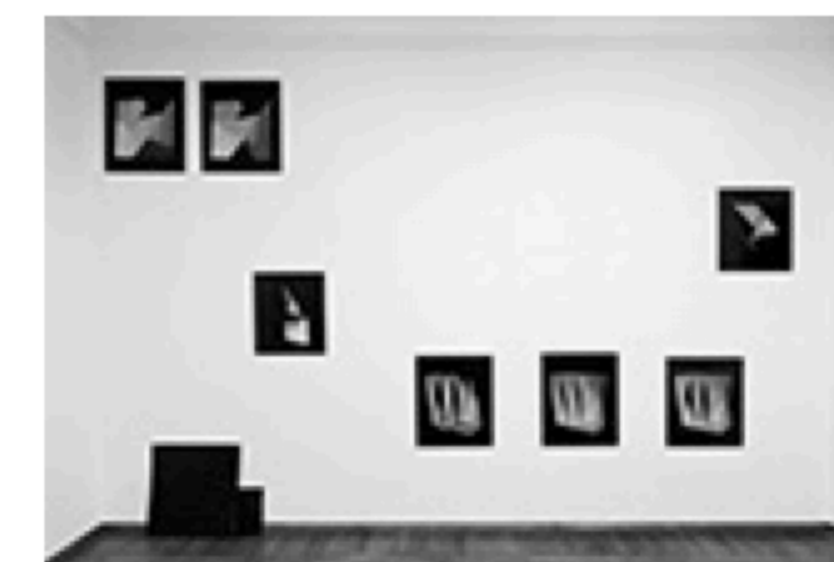
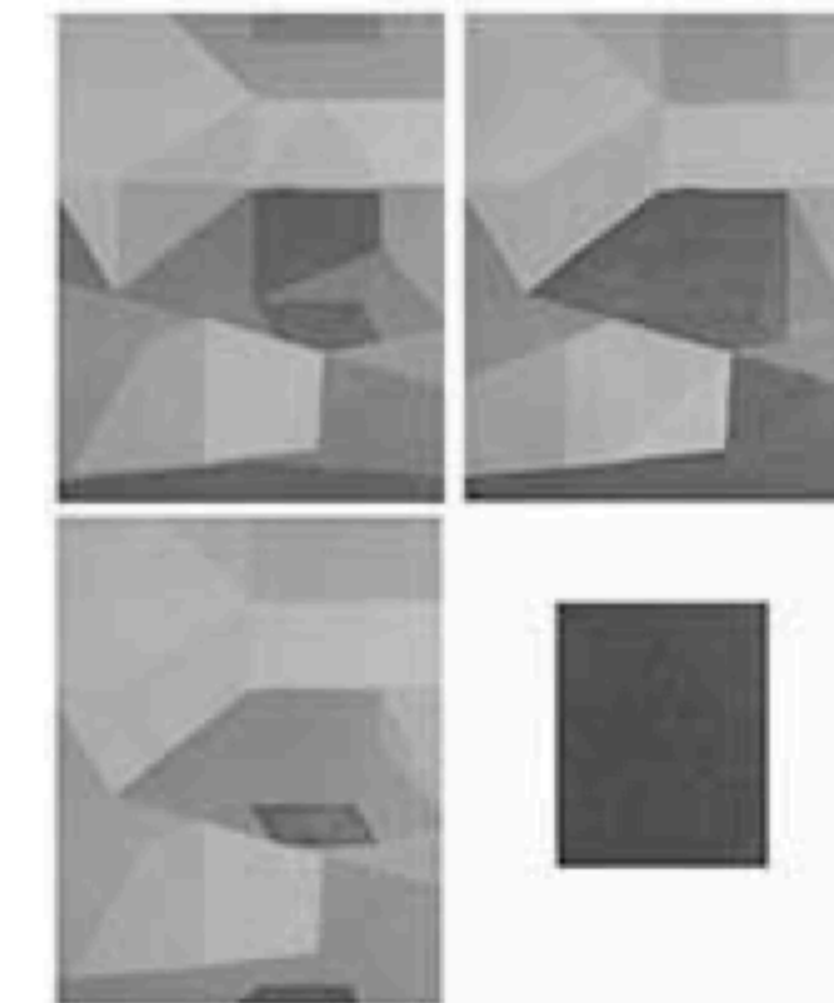
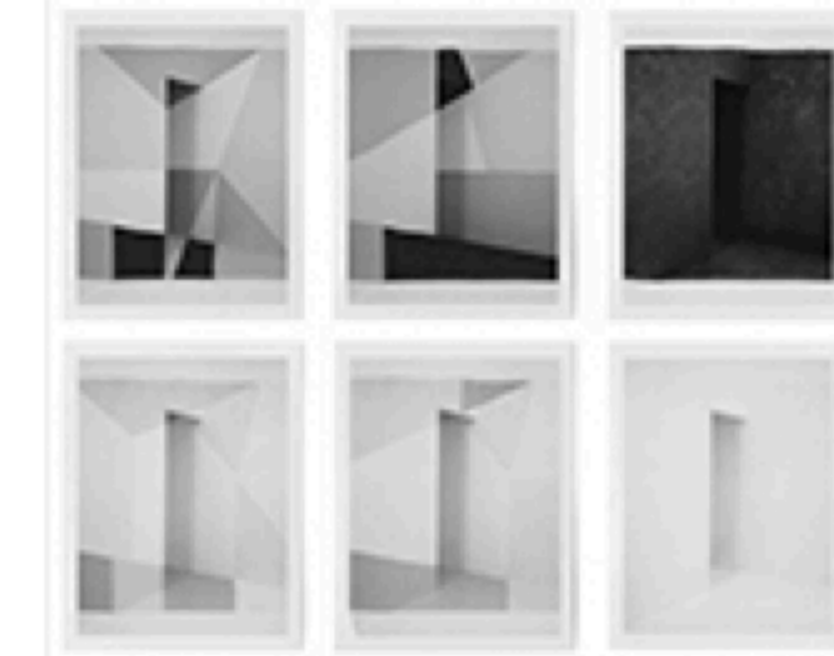
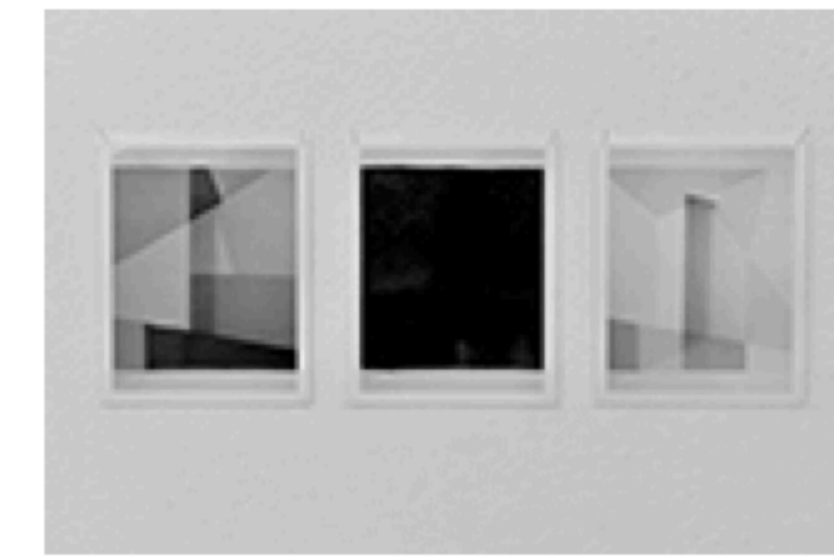
JH Maybe you can show me some of your works to illustrate this idea...

KM My process of recent works is built on the idea of constructing an image on a negative, as opposed to photographing an instant moment in time. I use several steps to capture spatial transformation over time. The *Density Drawing* series, for example, shows diptychs that are a hybrid of a drawing and a C-print. For this, I captured various moments during the drawing process a single negative. The results that you see here are layered images that capture multiple moments in time.

JH So you try to extend or burst the traditional idea of a photo, the borders of the medium? May one define this as a kind of post-photographic practice, an artistic way of dealing with photography after the invention of the digital – you question the medium and its traditional use?

KM Yes. I am also very much interested in the way in which a photograph reflects on the things happening outside of the frame, like the moment of its making, the titling or how it refers back to an event, the rules I develop. All the possible outcomes of the process interest me as much as the image itself. For my series *Parallel Planes*, I used several negatives documenting the same process to produce more than one outcome of the same event. For the series *Time Passing Objects* I painted on three-dimensional paper objects that are photographed during the process. In exhibitions I show these multiple photographed versions as well as their residue, the objects themselves.

JH So you go from the three-dimensional form of the object to the two-dimensional form of the photograph and back – but you also show the original object, making the production process transparent...



KT Exactly. This play between the two- and the three-dimensional space becomes especially important in my installation works, like in the *Site Specific Density Drawings* or in *Interior*. I work here very site-specific and try to find a part of the exhibition space that has special characteristics: a doorway or an electric outlet for example. I use these elements to tie in the result with the location, while playing with the two-dimensional image and the three-dimensional space. I look for a tension that is in-between these both.

JH It seems to be very important for you to show how the image has been produced, what it is made of – you want to make visible how the camera is producing a certain idea about ‘reality’?

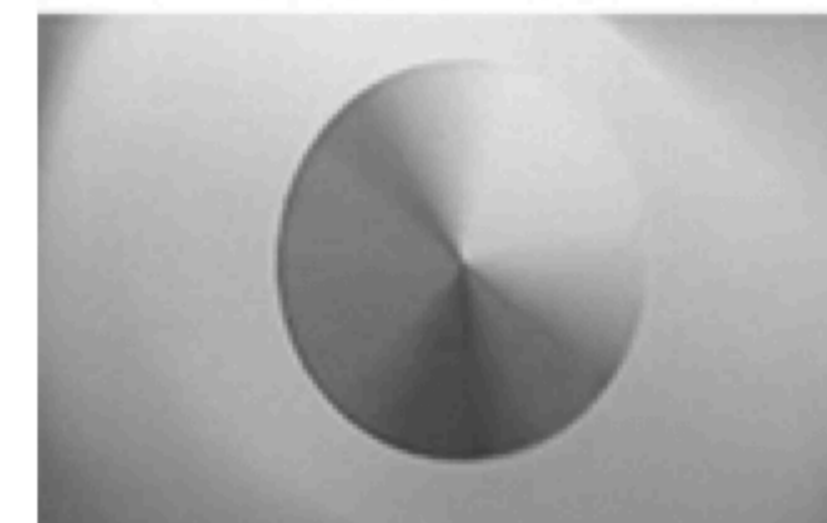
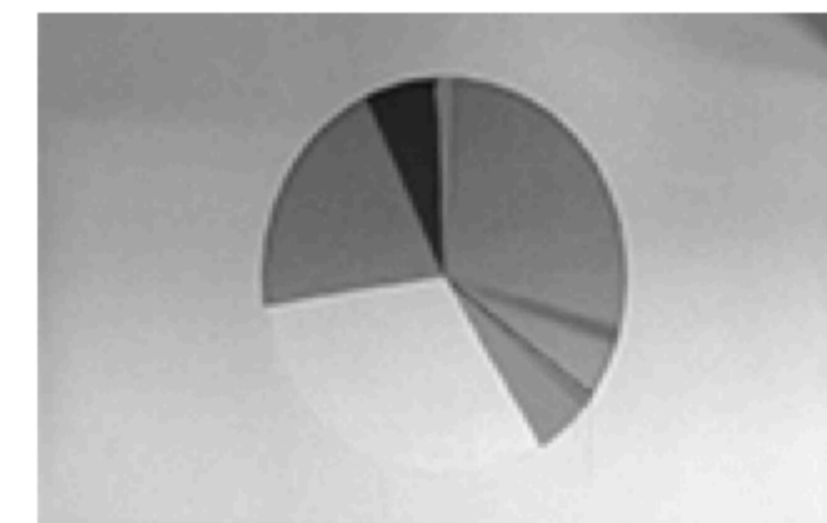
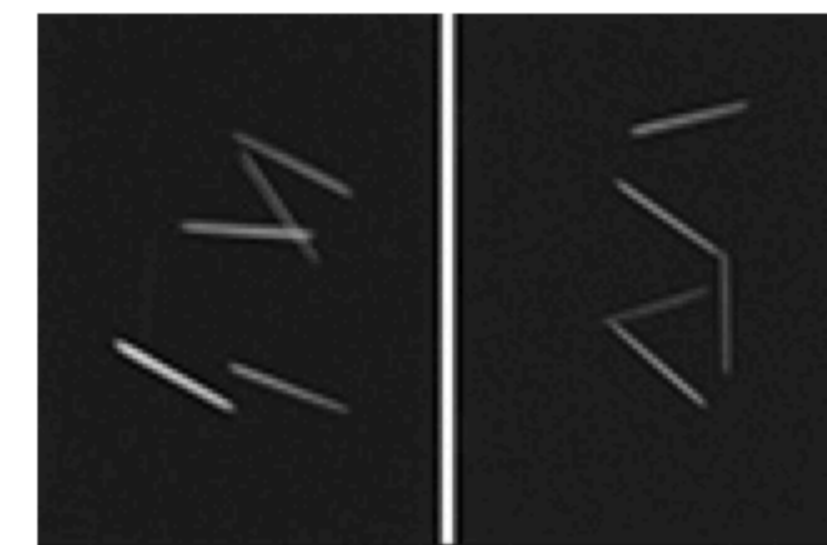
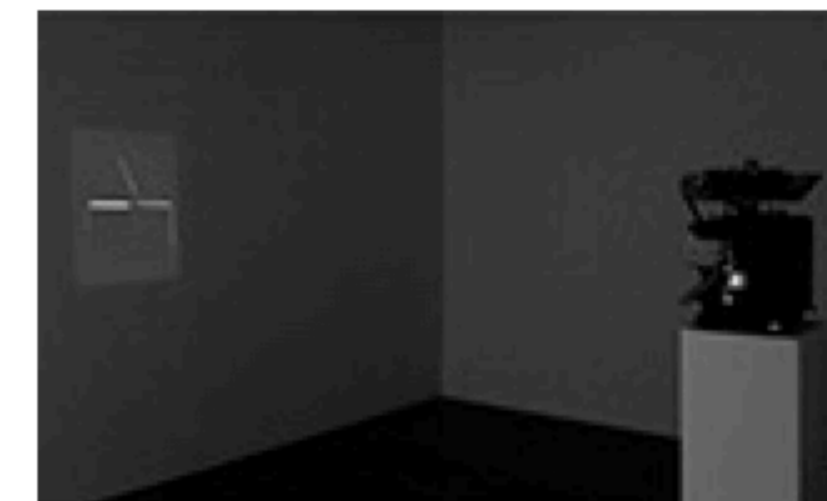
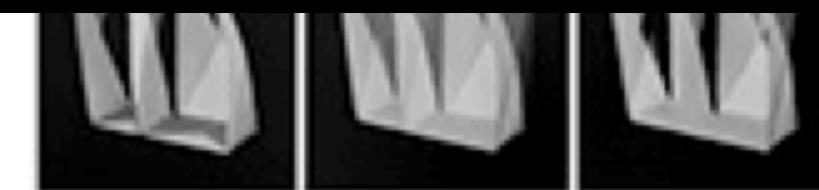
KM Yes, definitely – but I also try to show how the camera could work. There are always different steps in the production of the work that I would like to show, like going back and forth. So finally the making of my works is an execution of these different steps. This is also the reason for me why a work can’t really ‘fail’: there is always an outcome.

JH The first time I saw some of your filmic works, like *Composition of Light* or *Searching for White*, they reminded me of the early works of Olafur Eliasson and his fascination for physical phenomena, like light or movement. But at second glance, one of the works of Moholy-Nagy came to my mind: *Lichtspiel* (1930) – a very kinetic approach to space and light produced by a machine...

KM I actually don’t know Moholy-Nagy’s films – but I am familiar with his other works. Of course physical phenomena, like light or movement, do play a very important role in my work. For my exhibition at KIOSK I made a film that has been shot on the location: a big scale site-specific drawing captured on film. I painted on the walls and floors and gradually captured the process with a camera that moves through the space following a straight line. I am playing again with the in-between-effect of a three-dimensional space and a two-dimensional drawing. As a visitor you have the feeling that you are inside a painting but you don’t see it. For the first time I worked with a camera team. An important factor here was to give some responsibility of the process out of hand, which created more risk. The possibility of errors is something I always look for in my works.

JM Why is this risk so important for your work? Is there a certain wish or need to turn a scientific idea about perception in a situation of failure, of imperfection – to play with a moment of ‘error’?

KM Yes – the moment of a mistake has always interested



me, even though it is very hard to plan and work with it. This is also the reason why I make works – or work-processes – that are very complicated, where it is kind of unavoidable to not make certain mistakes or to completely control all the different steps. Especially in my new work the moment of ‘error’ became more extreme, as I usually just had to deal with my own mistakes.

JH So here someone else had to translate your visual ideas, to complete your very elaborate work process. It seems that you always translate one medium into another and open up the moment of creation for the spectator. How important is the role of translation in your works?

KM I am always interested in the area where two media meet and – how did you say – where a translation or an exchange is happening, or a hybridity happens, where both forms are true. This idea was also a principle for my work at KIOSK. For the film that I shot, I painted the room in colors, filmed it and whitened it again. So going from white to color and back to white, functions as a kind of translation process: from a painting to a film to an installation, where you can walk through... So yes, you can very much compare the idea with language and the process of translation: moving through several steps – like grammar, words, etc. On the other hand, I see my movie also as a kind of memory, a time capsule. It documents a painting-process that is not visible any more and that needs to be discovered through the spectator.

JH This reminds me very much of the idea on time by Alan Lightman, you were telling me about. In his book *Einstein's Dream* Lightman describes the difference between body time and mechanical time. The painting process is a very long and physical one, compared to the mechanical moment of taking a picture with an apparatus. Moreover, the visitor brings along his own, individual time-experience when he walks through the installation space. Could one say that you are trying to deconstruct the idea of a mechanical, countable time that is measured, with an individual, subjective time-experience that is documented in your artwork?

KM Absolutely – because it takes a certain amount of time to walk through the space and it has a totally different rhythm compared to the camera going through the space...

JH What is the idea behind the title of your work at KIOSK, *Fields On A Line*?

KM The line symbolizes the line through the space, but also the time line. The field is the space, the composition – the layers of the exposure of time.