

## GAGOSIAN

### The Sydney Morning Herald

#### Curtain goes up on new Carriageworks' kaleidoscopic art installation

Linda Morris



*Katharina Grosse's installation. Photo: Supplied*

The public foyer of Carriageworks will be turned into a fabric sculpture the likes of which has not been seen in Sydney since Christo and Jeanne-Claude wrapped the vestibule of the Art Gallery of NSW in white cloth and rope a quarter of a century ago.

After transforming a piece of Danish coastline into a river of red, the next public project of the celebrated Berlin-based artist Katharina Grosse is to create a striking art installation in the former Eveleigh locomotive workshops, now a performance and arts space, for the Sydney Festival. The piece will be open to the public until April.

A total of 8250 square metres of fabric – more than Christo and Jeanne-Claude used in 1991 – will be draped, suspended and knotted about the walls, columns and rafters of Carriageworks to create a sculptural form that rises 10 metres high and shrouds the Carriageworks' entry.

Onto the fabric swags Grosse will paint a colourful kaleidoscope with a spray gun in a process that will take 10 days to complete.

Grosse's installation, according to Carriageworks director Lisa Havilah, will be the organisation's most ambitious single-artist commission and a special opportunity for Australian audiences to experience the artist's vision and transformative beauty. For the artist it will be the biggest interior art installation of her career.

"It's the first time I make a painting that actually creates a space for itself in a sense," Grosse said from Germany.

"Normally you hang a painting on a wall, let's just say, and I'm very fascinated by how a painting might appear and has different ways to live in our experience.

"I was intrigued by the fact Carriageworks has in-built theatres, clear cut, quite hard spaces built of concrete, more or less like boxes inserted into the given space. This idea of inserted areas into the architecture I found very interesting and I wanted to do the same on my own terms."

Grosse describes the form of her fabric installation as a "big bag open where the ceiling is, the columns are sewn in like a big piece of cloth". "It's like as if you make some clothes for the space."

Pieces of fire-retardant fabric will be shipped from Germany, sewn together and hung in December by a team of 20 technicians guided by the artist. "I want the whole piece to look like as if it's been hoisted up in one sling," Grosse said. "As if you improvised – you needed a space, you wanted to make it out of fabric and that's how you did it, that's how I want the piece to look."

Grosse will paint the inside, the palette to be decided only once the fabric scaffolding has gone up.

"My palette is very simple," she said. "I have five or six basic colours that have colder and warmer hues, and some are transparent and some are more opaque and they make about 20 to 30 colours I always have with me."

Senior curator Beatrice Gralton hoped the art installation would be "a joyous and uplifting experience" for visitors.

"The whole interior of the work will be painted – including the floor. Perhaps it will be like walking into the interior of a kaleidoscope. The work will never be static as the sun passes over the glass skylights of Carriageworks, throwing shadow and light into the installation."

Carriageworks had been watching Grosse with interest for a number of years, Gralton said. "She takes the idea of making a painting to a new place.

"There is no singular point of view, instead the visitor is sed in a work traversing the material world, the landscape and architecture. At Carriageworks we are also interested in rupturing conventional understandings of what art is, and where it begins and ends."

Last year Grosse's paint gun transformed Fort Tilden, the former US army base at Rockaway Point in New York, trashed by Hurricane Sandy.