

ANGELA DE LA CRUZ Painting has been slashed (Lucio Fontana), burnt (Alberto Burri), smeared (Gerhard Richter), and smoked (Yves Klein). With Angela de la Cruz, it's no more Mr. Nice Guy. Stretchers are smashed and shoved into corners. Canvas is ripped and left to flap pathetically. Painting is crumpled, stomped on, punched, dragged, and, finally, shed of its frame and any trace of dignity, left to slump like an uncorsetted, drunken bride, flopped on the gallery floor. So there, Painting! Take that!

000 Across history the painter has been a hero, a god, a macho man. De la Cruz is more like the painter-as-bad-mother, mistreating her offspring, letting them out of the house half-dressed and bleeding. At first the painter lovingly slathers the canvas with layers of oil paint and resin, more like a diligent floor-mopper than a painter. As happy newborns, her canvases begin life as integral, almost minimalist monochromes, shiny and flat. *Homeless II* (1996) has been snapped in two and propped miserably into the corner of a room. *Sky Folded* (1997) has been violently smashed and bent along the diagonal, like arms pinned behind one's back in a painful wrestle. *Shrink to Fit (White)* (2000) has yards of excess canvas heaped upon its inadequate frame, like the work of an immensely careless housewife, crumpling her sheets into a ball instead of folding them properly. 000 Clearly the power of de la Cruz's imagination lies in the variety of batterings she has found to inflict upon her paintings. There is an initial formula-like T-shirts, the works come in three sizes (small, medium, and large), and three colors (blue, white, and red)—but in her attacks, de la Cruz is fabulously creative. *Cadillac Painting* (1997) resembles a smashed automobile hood, like Warhol's car crashes come to life some thirty years later. *Misery* (1998) has been pinned beneath a chair whose wooden leg stands upon the damaged canvas like a champion prizefighter lording over his defeated opponent. *Damaged (Red)* (1998–99) was merely punched through along the edge, so it got off pretty lightly. But *Ripped* (1999) has been slashed from ear to ear, its entrails left to hang, quite dead now, off the bottom.

000 And still the body count rises: *One Painting* (1999) is missing its entire left half, and *Ready to Wear (Red)* (1999) looks like a once elegant lady whose canvas skirt has been lifted to expose a naked stretcher, spindly and obscene. Finally, with the gigantic *Larger than Life* (1998) set up in the ballroom of London's Royal Festival Hall, de la Cruz wreaked havoc on an enormous, 10 x 14 meters canvas painted a hideous, streaky brown. "Like a fat lady embarrassing herself on the dance floor," as the artist describes it, this site-specific work doesn't even bother to fit its surroundings. It stands, sagging and wobbly like a shipwreck, its canvas flapping like torn sails. "I reached a point at art school where I couldn't paint," the Spanish-born, London-based artist has said. "I was painting the same painting again and again. One day I just broke the painting. Not in anger but in sadness." In the process, de la Cruz reinvented herself not as a melancholy vandal, but as an extraordinary sculptor. 000 Gilda Williams

Born in La Coruna (Spain) in 1965, lives and works in London Selected One Person Exhibitions: 2002 – Perth International Arts Festival, The Church Gallery, Perth, Australia 000 2001 – Anthony Wilkinson Gallery, London 000 2000 – John Weber Gallery, New York 000 1999 – "Everyday Painting", Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna 000 1998 – "Larger Than Life", The Ballroom, Royal Festival Hall, London; "Everyday Painting", John Weber Gallery, New York; "Everyday Painting", Anthony Wilkinson Gallery, London Selected Group Exhibitions: 2002 – "Beauty", Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, United Kingdom; "Sitting Tenants", Lotta Hammer Projects, London 000 2001 – "Nothing: Exploring Invisibilities", Rooseum, Malmö, Sweden 000 2000 – "Three Rooms", Anthony Wilkinson Gallery, London; "Art for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", John Weber Gallery, New York 000 1999 – "Transgressions and Transformations", Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut 000 1998 – "Contemporary Women Painters", Hillwood Art Museum, Brookville, New York 000 1997 – "Fasten Seat Belt", Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna Selected Bibliography: 2001 – Louisa Buck, "I like sex a lot", *The Art Newspaper*, June; David Gleeson, "Angela de la Cruz", *Time Out*, 20–27 June; James Hall, "Angela de la Cruz", *Artforum*, October 000 2000 – Robert Curcio, "Angela de la Cruz", *Cover*, vol. 12 000 1999 – Martin Herbert, "Angela de la Cruz", *Time Out*, 13–20 October 000 1998 – David Barrett, "Angela de la Cruz", *Art Monthly*, July/August; William Feaver, "Angela de la Cruz", *The Observer*, 14 June; Adrian Searle, "One to watch: Angela de la Cruz", *The Guardian*, 30 May; Roberta Smith, "Angela de la Cruz", *The New York Times*, 30 January

1. *Homeless II*, 1996, Oil on canvas, 86 3/4 x 78 3/4 inches, 220 x 200 cm
2. *Larger than Life*, 1998, Oil on canvas, 33 x 46 feet, 10 x 14 meters, The Ballroom, Royal Festival Hall, London
3. *Misery*, 1998, Oil on canvas and chair, 31 1/2 x 21 3/4 x 21 3/4 inches, 80 x 55 x 60 cm
4. *Ready to Wear (Red)*, 1999, Oil on canvas, 78 3/4 x 71 inches, 200 x 180 cm
5. *Loose Fit III (Large/Orange)*, 2000, Oil on canvas, 53 1/4 x 53 1/4 inches, 135 x 135 cm
6. *Shrunk*, 2000, Oil on canvas, 38 1/2 x 50 3/4 inches, 98 x 129 cm

