In 1992 the American art historian and theorist Craig Owens identified the “displacement from work to frame” as a central feature of postmodern artistic production. Examples of this centrifugal displacement include works by such influential artists as Daniel Buren, Marcel Broodthaers and Joseph Beuys. In the works of these and other artists the loss of a “centre”, the abandonment of the sacred canvas, pedestal etc. becomes manifest; the traditional, physical and tangible work concept is exchanged by an expanded field of meaning, a marked, yet borderless space.

Central to this doctoral thesis is the question how the artistic movement from work to frame, from ergon to parergon (Jacques Derrida, Jacques Dugast) or from one medial product to its paramedial frame (Urs Meyer) is mirrored in the poetic work of four contemporary German poets. In the last twenty years, Friederike Mayröcker, Thomas Kling, Durs Grünbein and Ulrike Draesner all have written poetry that explicitly refers to the field of the visual arts, but that can neither simply be viewed as ekphrastic (i.e. descriptive) poetry, nor aims at the constitution of a so-called intermedial as-if, the imitation of the medial ‘other’ (Rajewsky). In many of the poems discussed and analysed in this thesis, it rather becomes evident that a work of art does not derive its status from within itself, but from its surroundings, its expanding and multiplying contexts.

The poems discussed in this thesis in manifold ways install themselves in the contextual framework surrounding works and oeuvres and thus bestow upon themselves the status of an allographic (cfr. Goodman) element belonging to the parergonal, paramedial surroundings of the work of art in question. The alliterative terms Kunst, Künstler, Konzept and Kontext (art, artist, concept, context) featured in the title of the thesis are used to point out the gradual displacement from the actual, physical work of art in Mayröcker’s, Kling’s, Grünbein’s and Draesner’s poems.