

## **Convergence in Probability (Drawing and Processes of Drawing), (2011)**

Excerpt of the opening speech by Natascha Gruver at the exhibition “Convergence in Probability,”  
Galerie Stadtpark, Krems

Traces of movement—traces of memory—traces of thoughts

On three tables you can see works from Nikolaus Gansterer’s “Traces of Spaces” project created in 2010/2011 during a Residency in Belgium (Gent).

The theme in “Traces of Spaces” is recording the self, an automatic drawing or automatic drawing, where the artist does not draw himself, but creates a situation in which recordings can take place autopoietically, self-generating. For that, Gansterer constructed analogue “recording machines,” (for example, a box with a pen mounted in it) that were set up at different sites, and which, once set in motion, seismographically recorded the surroundings. The tables show the drawings created by this recording system.

Physical processes, such as oscillations and vibrations (e.g., from concrete, guard rails, train tracks) inscribe themselves onto paper. The pen mounted in the box becomes a seismograph of movement, of physical processes. A different construction records biological processes, such as the growth of a plant. What you see on table three are the traces made by a pen hung on a bamboo plant that was connected to a piece of paper.

The first table refers to natural history showcases in museums and shows the working instruments, writing utensils and rolls of thread that were used in the analog recording machines.

The second table shows the recordings (traces) of a recording machine (box with pen), which reacts to vibrations and records them in analogue form. The box was set up in different public sites: on a highway, on a church clock tower, and was also worn by the artist himself, on his body.

The concept of “Growing Drawings”: the seismographic recordings grow, they are generated within the certain time frame that the box, the “recording machine,” is set up, which can encompass hours, or even days, weeks, or months (in the case of the plant’s growth).

The third table shows the traces of a biological process, the growth of a plant. Something living begins to record itself, and leave behind traces of its growth. In this case it was a bamboo bush in the Palmenhaus. The drawing apparatus, the recording machine, is a pen mounted on a bamboo leaf, and connected with a piece of paper that is mounted in a fixed position. The apparatus is a copy that refers to the Crescograph, which was originally invented and built by Indian-British scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose. With the Crescograph, growth movements are engraved on a smoked glass plate.

Gansterer stages a seemingly scientific collection of “natural” recordings and artifacts. The recordings seem purely perceptive, produced without the help of a subject. The drawing systems generate traces and appear to depict reality, however: the selection and arrangement of the recordings on the table is clearly recognizable as a scientific staging, as “staging of science (scientific character).” What is important to see here is the context of machine, site, and drawing. I thus find the sketchbook on table three quite stunning and appropriate where the operational mode of the crescographic drawing apparatus can be seen as a type of technical sketch.

The question of what one wants to record and how one generates a situation that makes that possible, transcends the drawing as medium. Gansterer thereby shifts this question from the level of pure data collection, of apparently objective scientific observation to the meta-level of scientific staging. What can

also be said of Gansterer's works and working methods as a whole, is that he works via project cycles based on particular questions. A particular aesthetic develops from that. Rather than pursuing a type of drawing "monogamously," various processes, methods, and aesthetics emerge based on the particular, project-specific line of questioning. Gansterer's theme is drawing, as such, drawing also as performance, as performative process.