

Nikolaus Gansterer

Just as thinking rushes ahead of the thought, so does drawing rush ahead of the drawing and the process ahead of the result. In Nikolaus Gansterer's work, the processes of thinking and drawing are conceived as analogous, developed as synonymous and analysed in terms of their identity. As processes, the only relationship they have to the things they produce, only to leave them behind, is ambivalent. What seems to be preserved in the manifest thoughts and drawings are just traces that capture what is no longer there, figures of presence and absence at once – legacies of a process that moved ahead turning to new questions and spaces. In this sense, they testify to the relationship that thinking and drawing have to the untenable and the unstoppable. Seemingly etched into the untenable is the contradiction, the argument that turns against the argumentative and rejects, corrects and revises itself in order to replace a final solution by the next one that is possible. When Gansterer integrates objects and findings of different proveniences into his processes as well, he does so only to test them, to sound out their forms and functions: not only does this render the terminology with which they are described shaky, but it also starts to oscillate between the nominal, the metaphor and the allegory. What is thereby half described, half designated is a design (*Entwerfen*) that inexorably distances itself from the throw (*der Wurf*) in order to hold on to the mutability, to the resistance to the resistant aspect of reification on which drawing gnaws, denuding the thing and its possibility. The gesture of drawing and writing follows speech, a rhetoric of doubt that lives off the word, distorting, lengthening and changing it, only to drop it for another one, for a synonym or a homophone twin. What captures them is merely the trace of mutability: even the ground from which the cause peels off in order to produce an effect – the old bond of causality – starts moving, motivates itself to ambiguity. For only a brief moment, the trace promises the ground into which it inscribes itself, sketches itself, in order to see it only as a picture: as a ground of the picture that covers the cause, as a panel behind which hides the authoritarian quality of education in order to legitimize the mimicry, as a wall that draws a line between the inside and the outside. The drawing in Gansterer's hand and word transcends these grounds, blurring the terminological boundaries that collide with the origin in the concept of the ground. The question of the first stroke, of a basic line, leads only to the figure of carving that still echoes etymologically in the graphic arts, the sound of a wound that is added to the concept of the ground like a name: let's call it the ground of the picture, which is not sufficient to cause a drawing. Only drawing elevates it to a picture ground, which is therefore always floating above the ground without a reason, professing its faith in the secondary, entrusting itself to the sign. Gansterer's gesture takes off from the ground in order to keep drawing wherever the voice takes over the movement of the hand, the word turns the head in order to devote itself to the dance, to the mis-written, to the mistake as a source of reason.

— Andreas Spiegl

Published in 2015 on the occasion of the exhibition "The Bottom Line", at SMAK, Gent, Belgium.

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