

ARTFORUM



Nikolaus Gansterer

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Art and science generally complement each other, like two sides of a coin: When one moves into the foreground of thought, the other continues to operate in the background, and vice versa. With his current exhibition, Nikolaus Gansterer succeeds in making these two proverbial levels visible at the same time. Here, Gansterer combines experimental procedural methods à la Athanasius Kircher with the rich modernist formalism of Alexander Calder through his own network of diagrammatically drawn spaces.

The fragile drawings that Gansterer renders on two-dimensional media, such as paper or vellum, only in order to melt them into a unity on a simple quill—as in the case of *Ideenspieß* (Idea Skewer) (all works cited, 2013)—transform completely into three-dimensional space in installations such as *Theoriegehäuse I* (*Memoirs of the Blind*) (Theory Housing I [Memoirs of the Blind]). In the latter, the first of four *Theoriegehäusen* on view, we see a collection of bent wood sticks precariously bound with adhesive tape, a construction that strives to represent the associative character of human thought. Under this curved and branching “theory house” are not only fictional measuring and imaginative instruments that give visual form to a thought, but also seemingly temporary manifestations: Small white balls in different sizes, furnished with letters and numbers, lie strewn about on the base of this work as if at random, and seem as though they might lead to a great totality, an end result.

With this exhibition, which is titled “When thought becomes matter and matter turns into thought,” Gansterer is not seeking to reach conclusive findings. For him, the outcome lies in the process itself, and it is precisely this process that also sets the two sides of the coin rotating.

Translated from German by Diana Reese.



Nikolaus Gansterer, *Theoriegehäuse I* (*Memoirs of the Blind*) (Theory Housing I [Memoirs of the Blind]), 2013, mixed media, dimensions variable.

— Franz Thalmair

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