

“Between Hand and System: ‘2 Kiss Each Other (8 Generations), C 4-Detonation (Countdown), Angles of Viewing – Declination, Electric Current, Pop Song Apparatuses, Pulse, Acoustic Fields, Changes of Direction (North, East, South, West, Up, Down), Count/ Rhythm – Uncoupling’” by Jorinde Voigt

In modern and post-modern art, very different functions are attributed to drawing: for some, it is simply a secondary medium for studies and designs, while others see it as an independent genre. While standing for direct expression on the one hand, it has been and is employed in neo-avantgarde work concepts to set up the objectivity of representation against ‘privatist’ conventions of art associated with subjectivity and expressiveness. Since the late fifties at the latest, i.e. in the context of the post-war avantgardes, drawing has come to be employed as a medium and genre as trans-disciplinary as it is referential, incorporating the representational practices of music, architecture, fashion, film reportage and science etc. Jorinde Voigt’s works may also be set within this tradition; they recall musical-choreographic ‘systems of notation’ and ‘scores’ in the context of Fluxus, serial music and new dance, but also conjure technical-scientific or algorithmic modes of notation (which were most recently popular in cartographies based on the chaos and fractal theories in the eighties). Or they are reminiscent of the model – conceived by Marcel Duchamp among others – of the diagrammatic drawing, which is founded on mathematical principles of measurement, calculation and the dimensioning of drawn proportions, in challenging opposition to painterly rules of composition: this is a model that survives, after all, in the so-called ‘working drawings’ typical of historical conceptual art. Here, according to the US-American artist Mel Bochner, it is a matter of a processual drawing activity that helps the artist to formulate his or her speculative ideas: “As an object, a working drawing can only be described as a piece of paper covered with the random visible jottings of non visible activities.”¹

Now it would be possible to view Voigt’s current work “2 Kiss Each Other (8 Generations), C 4-Detonation (Countdown), Angles of Viewing – Declination, Electric Current, Pop Song Apparatuses, Pulse, Acoustic Fields, Changes of Direction (North, East, South, West, Up, Down), Count/ Rhythm – Uncouplings” in this light as well, insofar as the drawing is conceived as temporal, successive processes of addition oriented on the Fibonacci and Lucas sequences, which raises the question of the work’s status: i.e. whether the unconnected elements listed in the title – which enter into the design and realisation of the drawing – are

¹ Mel Bochner: *Anyone Can Learn to Draw*, in: Bochner: *Drawings 1966-1973*, New York 1998, p. 35-37, here p. 36.

explicated formally in a way that allows us to perceive them as a concise, aesthetic mode of representation within the medium of drawing. And is this mode of representation one that points towards an abstracted idea – e.g. a ‘quasi-scientific’ investigation of kissing behaviour under specific conditions, in this case generative and demographic? For it is obviously not Voigt’s working principle to proceed in a mimetic-reproductive manner, but in accordance with the rhythms existing in everyday perceptual reality, which she appropriates in order to lend structure to the drawing process. In a musical-artistic sense, one could regard Voigt’s drawings as potential scores or instructions for action, if they did not refer to ‘banal’ processes and activities like kissing, which take place all the time and everywhere anyway. So this is not an instruction to do something – rather, it is about creating the moment of reception in and through a process that is literally one of “time-production” (Voigt’s works exude an impression of obsessive, painstakingly patient labour): for the vantage points from which the observer views the process of drawing are inscribed into the drawing as well, as decentralised positions and changing records of the moment. Grasped serially, the sequences of angles of viewing generate temporally determined, synchronous constellations made up of markers and interruptions or pauses, i.e. a matrix oriented on the model of language. The mass of data and information with which this matrix is filled ebbs and flows in the form of straight and curving, continuous and interrupted dashes and sweeping lines, in combination with numbers and letters that can scarcely be deciphered due to their size, number and complexity, and develops into exuberant graphic excesses: astonishingly lucid prismatic-dynamic formations that demand concentrated perception and time-consuming reading from the observer. But however seriously it is intended, every attempt to unravel – at the moment of intelligent observation – the interlocking formal progressions, which suggest a multilayered drawing process declined from beginning to end repeatedly and thus non-linear and repetitive, will inevitably lead to sensual collapse. Like those works that Bochner refers to as ‘working drawings’, their contingent progressions mean that Voigt’s drawings evade the logic of the (purposeful) rationalism to which the ‘pragmatic’ use-orientation of their representational systems appears to be dedicated. It is here that tension emerges, a tension that we should call aesthetic; it distinguishes Voigt’s drawings from the empirical experience of the self-explanatory, (quasi-) scientific data-recording processes to which historical conceptual art became affiliated in its attempts to create a new objectivity that could be verified by the viewer as a subject. However, Jorinde Voigt is bold enough to essay the complicity of artistic and scientific aesthetics without rigidly avoiding the physical and subjective moment of signature, seeking to counteract the dualism of art and science in precisely this way. It is

therefore possible to read from her drawings the “performance of signature” that literary theorist Georg Witte discerned in the scripturalism of avantgarde artists – as a constitutive counterpart to their preference for automatised drawing techniques.² This also makes clear that Voigt pursues (literary) techniques of ‘setting the stage’, typical of writing rather than the classical model of drawing based on the image.

As a result, her finely ramified combinations of lines, numbers and letters resemble indexically abstracted text systems made up of data and vectors; systems that hold in check the same explosion(s) of potential processes and actions that they programmatically trigger. The fact that ‘2 Kiss Each Other’ while a computer is busy calculating the structure of a pop song and elsewhere a bomb is detonated could – if argued in terms of chaos theory – spark an experience of simultaneous non-simultaneity in the aesthetic perception of the drawing. Seen in this way, Voigt’s works represent no more than ‘self-explicating’ systems in the medium of drawing, which – in autonomous correspondence to a ‘self-implementing’ reality – concern the conceivability of as yet unknown experiences, which potentially destabilise existing systems of order by setting each other in reciprocal motion.

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² Georg Witte: Die Phänomenalität der Linie – graphisch und graphematisch, in: Werner Busch, Oliver Jehle, Carolin Meister (eds.): *Randgänge der Zeichnung*, Munich 2007, p. 29-54, here: p. 42ff.