

WITHIN AN OPENING DARK...

ILLEGIBILITY

of this world. All things twice over.

The strong clocks justify
the splitting hour,
hoarsely

You, clamped
into your deepest part,
climb out of yourself
for ever

Paul Celan
(trans. Michael Hamburger)

There is a fascinating duality in the drawings of Gert Germeraad. Before his series of murky inner landscapes in charcoal, whose movements extend profoundly downward and inward—in towards the stuffy black booths of horror and dread—I notice that each line is like a sensitive nerve fiber. A life-line that, while making up this dense darkness, would also discover the world; would grant it light, form and gestalt. A line tracking forth through the condensing dusk, forth to a chink of light, to the possible, liberating opening.

Here all is drawn with the searching, exact lines of reality; but paradoxically, the blacking is also a kind of flux of light. Viewers find themselves in a mental habitat that in one aspect is utterly foreign and threatening, yet still envelops them with a familiar sense of domesticity. Openings emerge once we—artist and viewer alike—have become accustomed to the dark.

This duality is naturally concerned with viewing and reading the world. The inner and the outer. The psychic and the physically manifest. Where subjective experiences are juxtaposed with universal applications. Despite the varied formats of the drawings, they all carry the same potential charge.

In the chiaroscuro of the world of drawings, there opens a space in which the conflicting forces of existence meet and challenge one another. Life's possibilities sprout from within the malice of nightmares. The undulating

lines move with greater intensity about the repeated, transforming patterns of existence.

Only recently has Gert Germeraad brought his drawings to light, rendering all the more palpable the consistently intriguing duality inherent in his artistry. The image maps of these psychically dark drawings and the chisel-sharp busts presume and reinforce each other. The works illustrate the elements of an entirety, in which Gert Germeraad recounts the histories of his subjects in his own highly personal way. Stories of affiliation and alienation, assurance and foreboding, vulnerability and strength, past and present. Ultimately--of seeing/regarding and shaping/recreating.

Drawing has always informed the work of Gert Germeraad, like a natural spring, long before he began sculpting figuratively. The painted, illumined busts and the unlit, monochrome drawings are twin parallel forces in one shared corpus. The abstract meets the real and the concrete in vivacious interplay. A force is exerted from within, another from without; and inside this force field, the artist is granted the opportunity to see himself—and what he usually terms "The Other". This "Other" represents the unknown, whether peril or mystery, as well as the familiar and customary. It both distinguishes and unites. The Other is no other than the "You" that every "I" needs as a mirror in order to grasp the far-reaching consequences of one's actions, to determine the depth and expanse of one's own habitat.

Experiencing Gert Germeraad's drawings is like standing in a darkroom as photographic prints of humanness are processed and gradually materialize. Or rather: we witness how humane (and inhumane) motor patterns take shape. Every drafted line, like every contour of the busts, is begotten between joy and pain, between inception and diminution, between fragment and narrative. Gert Germeraad understands that life and art must be pursued into their most confining recesses, there to find freedom.

Thomas Kjellgren

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