

Frank Gerritz

Coded Connection

13.09. – 08.11.2008

Like all of Frank Gerritz' concept drawings, the works in the series *Coded Connection* shown at Galerie Fahnemann are created on sheets of paper with a format 42 cm by 58.8 cm. In 1989, Gerritz discovered that the pencil drawings he had regarded as no more than draft sketches for his iron sculptures had an autonomy that made them into entirely separate works with no illustrative reference to either the world or his oeuvre. Nonetheless, the sheets continue to function like a studio space in which sculptural installations are tested. The drawings show rectangular areas, each 20 cm in height, and interim spaces of 2 mm width. These measurements recur on Gerritz' early cast iron sculptures, the three-dimensional block shape of which was developed by inserting cuboids with 20 cm edges into one another; slits 2 mm wide were thereby created between the pieces of heavy material. All the mass and weight of the dark surfaces serves to give this 2 mm a context for its appearance. Like in the works presented at Galerie Fahnemann, the individual sheets of the diptychs also leave a gap of 2 mm free in the middle. Here, in each case piled-up blocks of eight "centres", as Gerritz calls them, lend rhythm to the pictorial space of the landscape formats as symmetrical, vertical formations. The combination of the diptychs, arranged in countermotion to the direction of composition, underlines the dialogue and the formations' basic formal grid.

In every type of work, Gerritz creates the surface play of his drawings by means of intense hand-processing. Carried out using the soft Faber-Castell 9B pencil on paper, MDF and walls or using an oil crayon containing wax (Paintstick) on anodised aluminium, the drawings perpetuate the artistic working process as a preceding action in time. The visibility of this process is important to Gerritz. Dense, regular lines of hatching are drawn in close-set rows, overlapping and adjacent to one another. Gradually, the carrying material is completely covered with graphite or Paintstick; to a great extent, its purely presented materiality disappears, although it remains existent as a sensually perceptible presence. Bit by bit, the vertical or horizontal hatching divides the surface into different zones. The direction of the pencil lines adopts the basic grid of the composition, visualising vertical and horizontal motion in the reflection of light. Layer by layer, the artist's meticulous work creates tableaux with a massive presence; using graphite on paper and wood, the work resembles a kind of trompe l'œil of metallic material, while using Paintstick on aluminium, it conceals the metal. In every case, the carrying material creates a sculptural spatiality. The material's own sculptural quality is consolidated in the case of MDF and aluminium. The sheets of paper crinkle under the impact of the drawing and lift away slightly from the background. The edges of the paper are blackened with graphite, which underlines this movement into three-dimensionality still further. Although he has produced no more free-standing sculptures since 1996, when drawing Gerritz also remains a sculptor whose works oscillates between two- and three-dimensionality.

Anna-Catharina Gebbers