

Mensuration of a kiss – The drawings of Jorinde Voigt

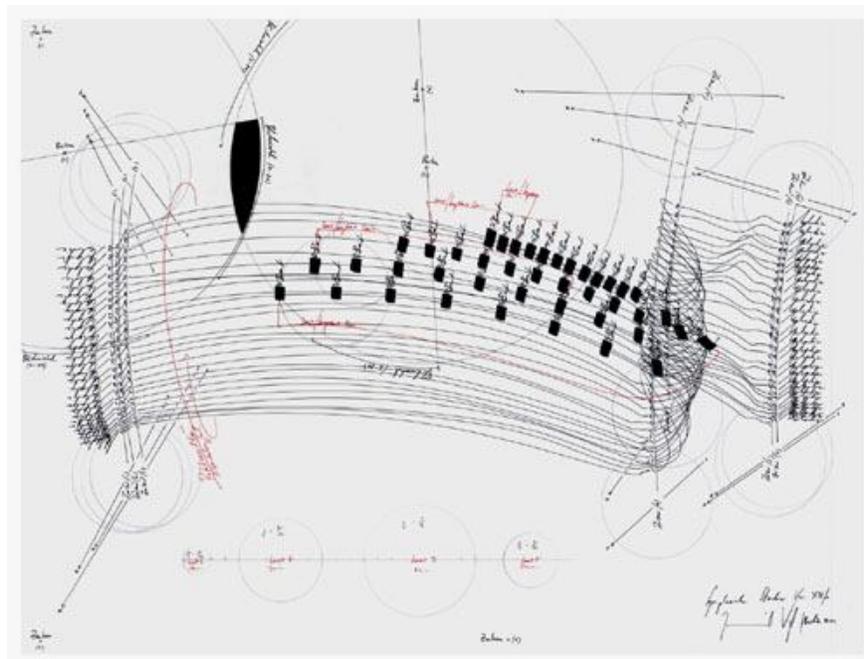
Julia Thiemann

Biography

Jorinde Voigt, born 1977 in Frankfurt am Main in Germany, studied Visual Cultures Studies first in the class of Prof. Christiane Moebus and then at Prof. Katharina Sieverding at the University of Arts in Berlin. Voigt completed her studies 2004 as Meisterschülerin of Prof. Sieverding. Since 2002 Jorinde Voigt has numerous solo exhibitions and group shows for example in Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, Sweden and The United States of America. Her work is represented in various collections, such as the Museum of Prints and Drawings Berlin or the Federal Republic of Germany's Contemporary Art Collection. She lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Artist's statement

“The topics arise from the examination of social and cultural environments. The observation from which the diagrammatically note is developed, is phenomenological and implies popular collective knowledge. [...] The process of designing the notation as well as the actual use of the notation explores the perception of an incident. Whereas this operation constructs a coexistent reality related to the observed interrelation. The development of a topic occurs through an extreme reduction of a phenomenon into the most typical (neutral) parameter. These were performed with data of time, speed, directions and space, thus the single parameter is declinable and the spectrum of inherent possibilities is visible. [...] Therefore every drawing is an image of an actual examination, which has always to be understood as an experiment and as a documentation of a thought process at the same time. This function develops from the ambition to find an advanced scripture, which enlarges the terms / nomination of the things and makes an entity and simultaneity of connotations possible.” (Jorinde Voigt (2010): Concept Interhorizontal Nexus I – VII)ⁱ



Jorinde Voigt: **Symphonische Studie Var XIV / 1**, 2009. (Symphonic Study Var XIV / 1, 2009). Tinte, Bleistift auf Papier, 46 x 61cm.

“I am world.
Yet the world is not me.”
(Daniil Charms)

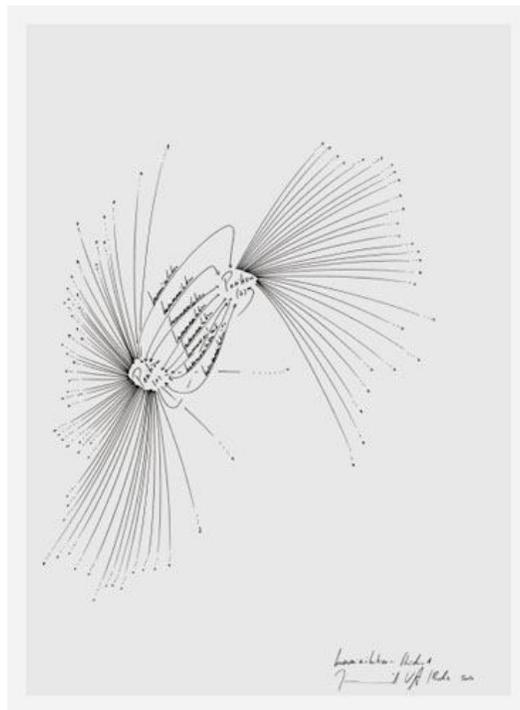
Jorinde Voigt's drawings consist of graphite lines, numbers, words and signs. In the manner of inscribing some of the accurate lines and curves Jorinde Voigt's drawings are getting reminiscent of visualization modes for experimental results in science. But instead of trial instructions or scientific conclusions the artist is drawing emotional or notional associated moments, for example a kiss, a dance, the horizon or the perception of music in a very own aesthetical transformation with more or less measurable parameters. These drawings oscillate between art and science, between a subjective and objective perspective on the world.

Voigt understands her own work as a form of experiment and process of thinking, which explores reality, especially social and cultural aspects of the environment we are living in. As it will be shown in the following reflection of selected works art and science cohere in a specific way in Voigt's work.

The Russian poet Daniil Charms explained that the experience of our environment is very individual and subjective as well as abstract and objective at the same time. We are used to see the world we are part of in our very special perspective, but the world is more complex than our perceptions. This difference between subjective or objective perspectives and the process of abstraction in conceiving the world is important for Ernst Cassirer, a German philosopher, as well. Cassirer understands symbolic forms as the fundamental scheme for human beings to interpret reality. At this art and science are two different ways to understand the world, which have a unifying aim but diverging methods. According to this Cassirer

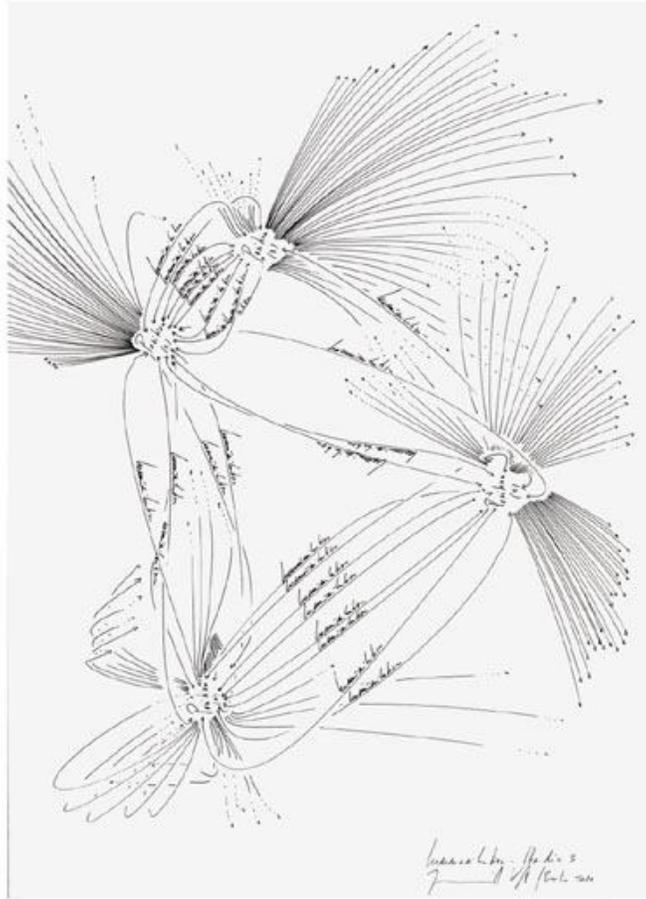
describes how reality becomes summarized and objectified in science, while art emphasizes various facets of our environment. Whereas art is accentuating the diverseness of the world, science is searching for homogeneous principles of reality. Furthermore in this plurality art can not only exhibit subjective feelings and perceptions but can also objectify emotions.ⁱⁱ

The possibility to translate experiences of reality in an artistic way with a scientific objectifying aesthetic is the main issue of Jorinde Voigts artworks. Thereby the artistic experiment often serves the function of finding new possibilities of expression or an inconvenient perspective on reality as Jorinde Voigt is searching for new ways to understand and visualize our surroundings, emotions or thinking concepts.



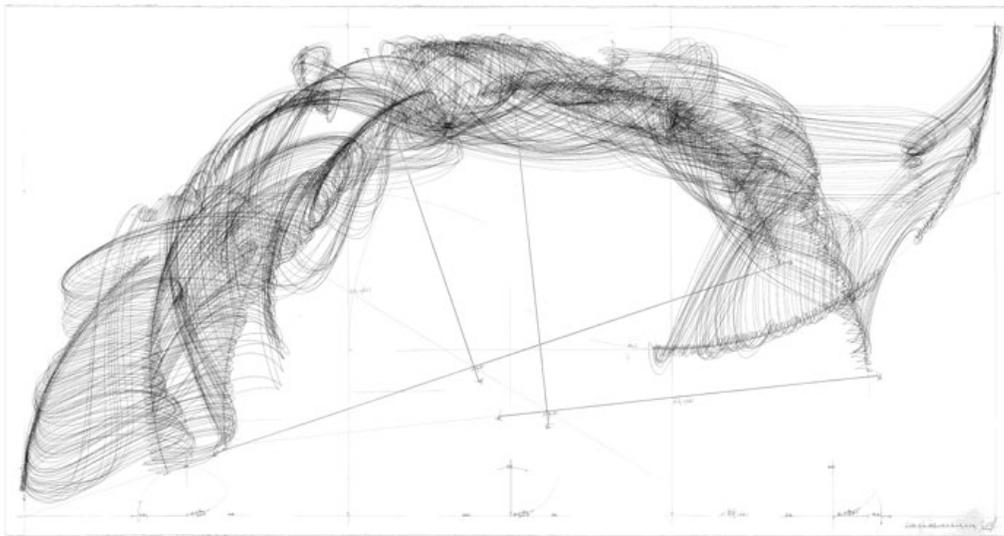
Jorinde Voigt: **Kommunikation-Studie 1**, 2010. (Communication-Study 1, 2010) Tinte auf Papier, 36 x 26 cm.

As an example Voigts *Kommunikation-Studie* (2010), a survey of communication in four parts, shows in the first drawing diagrammatically two positions whose communication with each other and with others is recorded with arrows labeled with the word *Kommunikation*. These interconnections between the communication partners diagrammed with curved and straight lines are getting more complex in the other three drawings of the series, where the positions of communication accumulate. Here a process of exchange is pictured on the one hand descriptive with lots of lines and arrows which are awakening emotions and ideas of the communication, on the other hand it is still very abstract and impersonal for that it shows more a system of communication than a specific situation with concrete persons and contents. This demonstrates how Voigts artistic exploration of the world functions through an extremely reduction of selected aspects into certain more or less theoretical categories of the artifact which construct her drawings. These abstractions of concrete situations into archetypes or paradigms are constitutive for Voigts drawings as well as typical of scientific research.



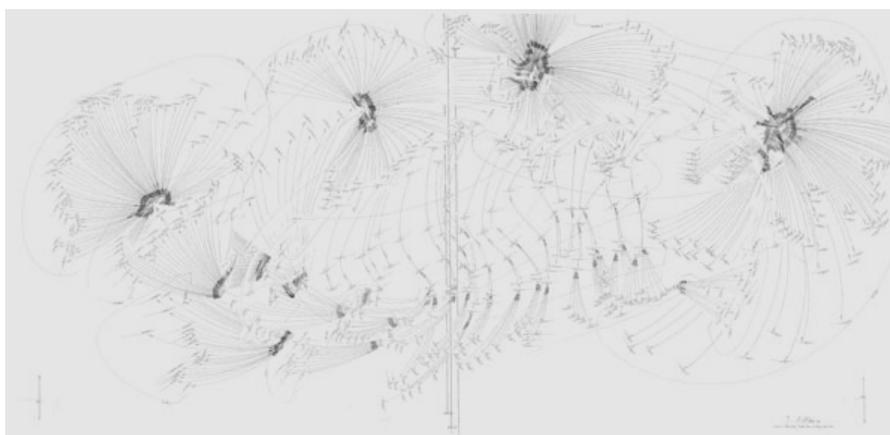
Jorinde Voigt: **Kommunikation-Studie 3**, 2010. (Communication-Study 3, 2010) Tinte auf Papier, 36 x 26 cm.

At the same time Jorinde Voigt's drawings are not only abstract and objectifying, but also very sensual. So the drawing *Konstellation Algorithmus Adlerflug 100 Adler, Strom, Himmels-richtung, Windrichtung, Windstärke* (2007), which visualizes the flight of a hundred eagles, is not the notation of real pathways of flying eagles, but allegorizes the principle of a flight of freedom in the sky bordered or directed by parameters of wind direction, orientation, storm force and flow, which is both abstract as well as full of possible emotional associations. The large scale drawing of ink and graphite on paper can be characterized as some kind of curve with several points of origin and end as well as labeled reference axis mostly in the midst of the picture. While the drawing is structured through reduction and complexity, movement and rhythm, the pencil stroke wakens ideas of strength, air flows and moves.



Jorinde Voigt: **Konstellation Algorithmus Adlerflug** 100 Adler, Strom, Himmelsrichtung, Windrichtung, Windstärke, 2007. (Constellation Egale Flight 100 eagles, flow, direction, wind direction, wind forth, 2007) Tinte, Bleistift auf Papier, 114,5 x 218 cm.

Another very emotional associated topic, kisses of couples in nine generations from two points of view, is portrayed in Jorinde Voigts work *2 küssen sich – Aktionsablauf / 9 Generationen; 2 Richtungswechsel (N-S)* (2010) in very dynamic lines and curves in divergent concentrations. Here a kiss is allegorized in an abstract drawing with scientific aesthetic, so that questions how feelings and elusive moments can be quantified are brought up in this aesthetic translation. At this not only Voigts procedural methods play with different connotations, but the medium of a drawing is also transdisciplinary as it is used for scientific and artistic purposes. While scientific drawings often are concepts or preliminary studies to classify empirical data or to carry out an experiment strictly after instructions, Voigts drawings are exploring reality in aesthetic experiments, for example via effects of simultaneity and multiple perspectives so that different aspects of the perceived world or abstracted parameters in the drawing correlate at the same time with each other and have to be thought together. Because of the aesthetic suspense which is immanent in every drawing Voigts, her pictures are much more than just empirical measuring data of an incident.



Jorinde Voigt: *2 küssen sich / 9 Generationen; 2 Richtungswechsel (N-S)*, 2010. (2 kissing / 9 generations; 2 changes in direction (N-S), 2010). Bleistift auf Papier, 115 x 240cm

Most of today's educational and researching systems in this world are linguistically and mathematically saturated. This scientific predominance is utilized in Jorinde Voigt's aesthetic works as well. Although she is transforming the parameters of visual representation in her work, she uses the same codes of scientific discourses in her drawings which are dominant in the value systems of modern societies. In doing so she shows how specific kinds of illustration can help a drawing to appear respectable and academic even if it strictly spoken is not researching in a scientific mode. In this way she is on the one hand unmasking the code system of scientific representation, while she uses it by herself for the impact of her drawings on the other hand. Though the viewer is first aware of the aesthetical composed overall picture and recognizes the scientific structure not until a second glance.

In her artworks Jorinde Voigt uses familiar forms of scientific images for artistic drawings in a new style. Similar to science she examines particular details closely. Yet she is not analyzing the chosen details in a scientific way, but changes them into a symbolic form in the sense of Cassirer. So Voigt uses a scientific structure, for example the structure of a diagram, which she transforms in an aesthetic style without transporting scientific content. Therefore determining to Jorinde Voigt's works is the symbolism of a scientific aesthetic to mediate insight in this world in an artistic way.

ⁱ Translated by the author. Compare the original German version: Voigt, Jorinde: KONZEPT Interhorizontal Nexus I – VII. Berlin 2010. http://jorindevoigt.com/blog/wp-content/wp-content/uploads/KONZEPT-Int.NEXUS-Kiev_D.doc1.pdf

ⁱⁱ Compare: Cassirer, Ernst: Versuch über den Menschen. Einführung in eine Philosophie der Kultur. Hamburg 2007. P. 221 ff.

Julia Thiemann is a student of Magister in Sociology and German Literature at Leibniz University Hanover, Germany
