

Jakob Gasteiger – Works on Paper

Jakob Gasteiger was born in 1953 in Salzburg, he lives in Vienna and in the Weinviertel/Lower Austria. His successful impact on the art scene of the nineteen-eighties was marked by a position contrary to the dominant trend of New Painting at the time with its commitment to a personal touch and style. Despite his allegiance to painting in the grand manner and which he still adheres to today, he regarded it more in terms of a conceptual and minimalist idiom: serial productions instead of the stroke of genius in the masterpiece, more “making” instead of “painting”. Added to this was the extended spatial-architectural aspect, which liberated the panel picture from its hermetic situation. These characteristics apply to a great degree to Gasteiger’s “Works on Paper”, produced since the nineteen-eighties. They have constantly accompanied his painted works and still do today. His favourite material is carbon paper, torn out of its functional context in the typewriter. At first, he produced serial compositions within the picture square, in the minimalist geometric canon of forms. Subsequently Gasteiger transposed this procedure onto the wall, mainly marking conspicuous zones of the interior space such as protruding wall segments or wall areas bordered by Baroque cornices. As part of the *Personal Structures* exhibition, he has now adorned a room in the Venetian Palazzo Bembo near the Rialto Bridge with a monumental wall installation using carbon and silk paper. In contrast to earlier examples of his work – mostly structured in a strict grid – the current work appears distinctly more open, more open in terms of the processual markings in its making. The bonding substance blended with the paint when sticking the paper to the wall, transforming its original black to blue. The colours run down the wall in fine cascades and even wet the ground. Gasteiger deliberately keeps all these traces, lets the work take over as it leaves its own traces. The work’s heterogeneity also occurs in the various choices of paper colour. Thus the reddish silk paper generates a fiery atmosphere, in diametric relation to the deep, dark blue and massive black. This dense blackness conveys the impression of extreme heaviness and solidity, optically filling the surrounding space.

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