

PLANT_LAB_OV

The desire to find ways of making drawings outgrow the limits of the two dimensional surface is the driving force of Birgit Knoechl's practice. She draws ever-new forms and patterns based on the shapes and structures of all manner of vegetative life forms -- and then cuts these forms out and arranges the cut_outs as sculptural objects in different spatial scenarios, or animates them by filming them in close-up. Trying out these different scenarios for staging the cut_outs in installations, Knoechl continuously explores how these drawings cut into space and what the space would do to them, how their staging in the space could bring them to life, and how the space could be brought to life through the drawings. Knoechl thus shows installation and video to be media that can open up a space (a real space as well as an imaginary one) around a drawing -- or more precisely, that in space and video the immanent potential spatiality of drawings can be unfolded.

Through this exploration of space and video as media for staging and contextualising cut_out drawings runs a sensibility for the principle of growth. A kind of growth that, even though it surrounds us everywhere in the form of vegetative life, we still fail to understand -- mostly because we have not even begun to realise how strange, how alien, how other this infinitely silent and slow, but utterly uncompromising, persistent growth is to which plants dedicate their existence. It is this sensibility for the utter otherness of the principle of vegetative growth that Birgit creates through her work.

This concept of growth does not come to figure in her work as a mere metaphor. It is its principle. It is immanent to her use of drawings as a basic material that is made to outgrow itself through its staging in space and video. The immanent principle of growth thereby becomes the material core of a work around which many associative discourses and dreams of equally utopian and threatening forms of wild growth can flower.

Text by Jan Verwoert

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