

## DIALOGUES WITH TIME AND INFINITY

The works shown in this book were created over the last seven years, a phase of the most intense work with subjects that are close to Susanne Hauser. The collection of drawings utilizes a mode of expression characterized by an impressive repertoire of pen strokes. The circle has been singled out as an attractive and significant surface for design. Appearing for the first time in the planet pictures, the circle was advanced as a format for the confrontation with various social issues. Susanne Hauser's drawings are internal images which are intuitively created from the involvement with a specific theme. They are executed with a rigorous and concentrated approach to work.

"Planets", presented as a complete series, are not just the quantitative bulk of the book. They occupy a special place in Susanne Hauser's work because she has maintained an interest in the planets her whole life. As a child, star watching was a subject of fascination for her. She and her brother spent many evenings on the rooftop terrace of her parent's home in Oberurnen, Glarus, where there were very few sources of artificial light to mar the view of the night sky. The heavenly bodies in the infinite, seemingly lifeless darkness are transformed in Susanne Hauser's drawings into amazing variations of the planet Earth. As the assertion "Planets... we are not alone"

implies, this artistic meditation on the inexhaustible opportunities afforded by the universe also holds out a perspective of life on other planets. "Planets" was first shown in 2012 with that title at the first Dublin Biennial.

Although Susanne Hauser keeps track of new developments in astronomy, incorporating for instance events like the discovery of new planets in her work, what happens on paper has its own dynamic. It becomes research of an inexhaustible multitude of structures. At a total of 53, the number of these worlds of drawing is limited, but the longer one observes it, the more one is attracted by unexpected forms and the feeling that this series could be extended ad infinitum. And in light of the countless pen strokes, 53 new planets is already an immense cosmos.

Forms are built up from shorter or longer sections of shading in this cosmos, with structures evolving from the density and direction of the strokes. All the planets are drawn with black, blue, red or green ballpoint pens. Sometimes lines are drawn through the circles. Using the earth as a familiar point of reference, one can easily discern the forms as continents, as topography, cliff-like structures or wave shapes. Or landscapes on the bottom of the ocean or as the traces of climatic events. Rhythms underscore the impression of permanent capability for change. The drawings are in a way dimensionless: the associations range from landscapes to cells in the body, from pictures of planets in space to scientific images from inside the human body.

## DAS GRAS WACHSEN HÖREN

There's another kind of stroke in the series "Das Gras wachsen hören". Instead of forming surfaces and structures, they converge in heaps and flail about in space with loops, curls or spikes. Much of the page is white, as the lines head off into emptiness like antennas. Sometimes looking like hair, they represent

## PLANETS

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## WE ARE NOT ALONE

instinct and sensitivity for change in the world. This series is also an image for Susanne Hauser's method of work and her way of finding an artistic answer to social events.

Susanne Hauser has already called her drawings "Zeitzeichen" (time symbols), which is actually a term in radio technology. Here it means signals and currents of our time which certain individuals pick up more than others in society. As a child Susanne Hauser was extremely aware of social events and situations, spending a lot of time simply observing her surroundings and her own inner world.

There was much discussion in a large family with diverse interests and her grandmother was not just a source of information about events in the world for Susanne. The people in the village also came to her grandmother to talk about political or social affairs. Except for her father, who worked for the Swiss Federal Railways, the whole family worked in the textile factories, where her sister had already begun when she was fourteen years old. She would bring sample books home from the mill, which were intended for an exclusive product: an umbrella made of silk. Susanne Hauser was deeply impressed by the creativity and variety of the forms of expression of the craftsmanship. The series called "Silk" with its bundles of yarn are a testimony to a textile industry that has meanwhile disappeared from Glarus.

## SILK

But indentured child labor as it was also practiced in Switzerland has by no means disappeared in many parts of the world. "Flowers" is dedicated to them and other socially disadvantaged persons. The flower as a potent symbol for becoming and decay recalls in this work those who are not able to develop, whose blossoming is suffocated, suppressed beneath unconscionable burdens. Susanne Hauser has selected the circle, the form of harmony, wholeness and perfection, to address human suffering. Two of the flower

## FLOWERS

### IN LOVE

pictures do that explicitly, superimposed with spirals of text. In stark contrast with the luxurious flower forms, the texts about child slavery, ignorance and cruelty strike a raw nerve. To recall the work conditions which also prevailed earlier in Glarus' textile industry, where the first industrial labor law was passed because of protests of the female employees, "Flowers" was rendered as a textile by printing the drawings in a row on 20 meters of satin.

In "Oceans" Susanne Hauser parts company with the circle.

### OCEANS

She uses the whole sheet to artistically delve into the multiplicity and forms of life in the oceans. The vastness and force of the ocean had impressed her as a child: there were a few emigrants in her family who had moved to Pittsburg in the USA because there was no way to make a living in Glarnerland. One of her relatives perished on his way over the ocean. Even in their absence the emigrants were a subject of discussion in the family through the stacks of letters the grandmother collected from them. In some of the drawings lines appear which resemble national borders on maps or even barbed wire. The oceans themselves do not escape the artificial borders drawn by human aggression, toward each other and the environment. Although the artist explores the wealth and fantastic world harbored in the oceans, she also points to our questionable conduct with the oceans which are the basis of our existence.

Some of the pictures from the series "Märchen, Mythen" are formally akin to "Oceans". The transition from underwater landscape and inner image is a flowing one, with the forms moving between fantastic patterns and organic structures. Just as the depths of the ocean are still unfamiliar for us, these drawings point out that there is more to comprehend than the simply visible. Susanne Hauser was familiar in childhood with the language of legends and fairy tales as one of buried causality.

### MÄRCHEN, MYTHEN

As oral events which were charged in their proximity to mountains and forests, they were never far from life.

"Märchen, Mythen" encompasses a series of mythical creatures, mainly from the world of animals. These are figures which stand for the absurd and inexplicable, but which also emphasize the relationship with the world of animals and plants. In these drawings Susanne Hauser is combining forms with symbolic power with a pronounced aesthetics of gestures and proportions.

Since almost all the drawings are made of short, densely applied lines, the method of work itself is an experience of the innumerable and infinite. This is at the same time a central content in Susanne Hauser's work. The drawings share tangents with the vastness of the universe, its beauty and magnitude, but also the unknown and unimagined possibilities of life.

Or, in the words of the artist:

"We're so small and don't appreciate at all that we are surrounded by such a magnificent universe."

*Text: Judith Annaheim*