

**HERBERT BRANDL *RIO BRANDL***  
**INNSBRUCK 17.12.2021–26.03.2022**

The exhibition *RIO BRANDL* is premiering in our Innsbruck gallery, showing ink-paintings on paper from the 80s and 90s and a selection of paintings on canvas. Accompanied with a text by Dieter Ronte about the large-format paintings in 1989.

*HERBERT BRANDL. Drawings*

Large drawings, untitled. And yet capable of being given a title; as it were, seemingly depicting. The viewer is able and is allowed to recognize, but the artist leads him astray, for he does not characterize precisely. What matters is not an issue of realism, not clarity of depiction, not iconographic connections, for these remain in the background. Black on white, the transcendence of the normal standard of a drawing in terms of its format. Brandl is expansive, uses large-size papers for statements that are new. These statements have been placed freely and certainly emotionally. They obey kinetic forces that have their origin in the corporeal physis. Brandl is an eruptive artist, not the sort to ketch out a drawing beforehand and have it executed by someone else. He is an artist with a ductus recognizably his own. As regards the Austrian tradition Brandl is one who carries on what others have begun. He takes up ideas that have legitimately been explored before him by artists like Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka. But there is something that distinguishes the young artist from his predecessors. In Austrian art artistic scandal has never been occasioned by form, always by theme. It was either pornographic or anticlerical; it was too private. This voyeuristic aspect is lacking in Brandl's works. Instead, he places art quite directly, consistent as it were from a subjective point of view, Bodily emotions turn into art as though by themselves, the traditions of *l'art pour l'art* and of tachism are invoked, nevertheless forms take shape, which are multifarious, whose multidimensionalities are really no longer writable by means of letters, except perhaps if we tried Dostojewski as a blow-up, to then perceive that the words can no longer be read- I contrast to the picture- it is clear at first sight that Herbert Brandl's works subscribe to the system of delectation. Although the ensemble of his large size drawings yields a theatrical scenic construct, when viewed individually the various drawings differentiate themselves like autonomous, legitimate drawings of emotions. Brandl sets signs that become drawings. He works in black on white, foregoing colour, embellishment, the possibility of evaluation and idealization. Yet black does not equal black, white does not equal white. The paper, the surface on which the drawing is executed, is as it were inundated, overwhelmed, almost denied. Nevertheless, it is the vacant areas, that ones not covered by the drawing, that are the starting point for a possible recognizability. Brandl uses the paper without doing violence to it. The picture remains a picture that can be explained. The depiction accepts the surface on which it is drawn. All the more monumentous, however, are his formulations, his positioning of lines, his ways of covering the surface. The paper becomes the starting point of drama, totem, cross, humanity, the flesh; formulations that become known to us by an unconscious process, that abandon clandestine positions. Brandl accentuates the drama of drawing. This evidenced by the large dimensions as well as by the vehemence of his ductus. The drawing is thus not a sketch, not preparatory. It is not a first impression, or an idea for a work of art to be executed later, but an autonomous act of placing, a legitimate eruption for the sake of self-actualization. In this sense the large drawings regain that sketch-line character, that fleeting quality which they inscribe into the extended realm of ideas. Insofar as Brandl withholds precise indications from the viewer, when looked at his works of art give rise to ambiguities that reflect this activity as a process-as the artist's true vocation to create. Brandl puts his cards on the table. His works of art are genuine confrontations, and hence challenges. He confronts the viewer with something that the latter may either be able or not be able to empathize with. Brandl is decidedly eruptive, emotive and at the same time challenging. He holds back nothing he operates without secret hiding

places. Brandl is explosive, hence demanding, is exhortatory, yet at the same time private. Brandl's art, which is characterized by a number of different techniques, is overflowing with baroque. Long-standing traditions are visualized in a new way, the past is brought up to date. But this is done only by the artist's realizing through the process of drawing his own insights based on experience or notions. Brandl's drawings are statements of an individual on today's societies, which have given themselves over to movement as lack of control, to innovation and to lack of morality. Where society is no longer able to control its own developments, the seemingly uncontrolled is being brought under control by the artist. It is thus a matter of moral, but not moralizing, points of view; those points of view that take effect, wherever black on white, i.e., printing, the consequences of Gutenberg, propagates ideas, but is perhaps no longer able to control the effect of an idea, since the individual in our society has to suffer too much from it. Brandl perceives this point of view of the individual, he articulates it. His drawings are despair and joy, negation and optimism, precision and evasion, inscribing and dominance.

DIETER RONTE  
Vienna, Juli 1989