

werner schreib

Established in 1987, Laure Genillard is a private contemporary art space in Fitzrovia, London. With an extensive history in the London art scene, the gallery's intention is to engage both selective audiences and a wider, inquisitive community.

Exhibiting artists range from the established, many of whom have a lasting working relationship with Laure Genillard, to young and emerging artists whose work aims to exceed commonplace categorisations. The programme is led by a desire to tacitly overlap successive exhibitions, generating dialogue between the various artistic generations and their highly diverse practices. That being said, the programme seeks to be impromptu and un-authoritative, and the merits that might arise from Laure Genillard's exhibitions will always remain ambiguous.

The gallery has a dynamic relationship with independent curators including Rozemin Keshvani, Hana Noorali and Lynton Talbot amongst others. Accompanying such curated group and solo exhibitions have been a series of publications, film screenings, artist talks and live performances.

Laure Genillard first opened in Foley Street in 1987, bringing a keen eye on developments in abstract and conceptual art, elaborating on 70's minimal art practices and discourses. The gallery moved to a larger space on Clerkenwell Road in 1997, soon to become well-known for its large installations and for allowing artists the freedom to engage directly with the space. Its third location saw a return to Fitzrovia where it now resides at 2 Hanway Place.

Laure Genillard has been seminal to the practices of several British artists, whose work first showcased at her gallery, including Catherine Yass, Fiona Banner, Martin Creed, Peter Doig, Gillian Wearing, Simon Starling as well as many artists from Europe such as Maurizio Cattelan and Sylvie Fleury amongst others.

Laure Genillard Gallery
2 Hanway Place, Fitzrovia
London W1T 1HB

Open Wed/Thu/Fri/Sat, 1–6 pm
T +44 (0)20 7323 2327
M +44 (0) 7796 156 805

lgondoninfo@gmail.com
lglondon.org

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Images © the artists 2016

Editor: Rozemin Keshvani
Texts: Rozemin Keshvani, Werner Schreib,
Ingeborg Schreib-Wywiorski,
Gabriele Schreib, Laure Genillard

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Werner
Schreib



Werner Schreib
portrait: Thomas Cugini

aftershock – the grammar of silence

exhibition
17.9–12.11 2016

Laure Genillard proudly presents AFTERSHOCK, the first major British exhibition of post-war German artist and poet Werner Schreib, together with a sound installation, DUSK, 2012 by artist-composer Annea Lockwood.

Werner Schreib was an important rising star in the post-war German art scene. He is best known to London audiences for his participation in the 1966 Destruction in Arts Symposium where he created several notorious pyrotechnic performances condemning the Allied involvement in the Vietnam War. His practice was outward-looking, collaborative and prolific, spanning painting, printmaking, performance, poetry and public sculpture. AFTERSHOCK features Werner Schreib's uniquely crafted and fragile works on paper which he began to create in the 1960s. Schreib's work combines Surrealist and Dada aesthetics with the sophisticated manipulations and theory of a destructive art practice. The artist employs the very means of destruction to create works that engage in a discussion of 'terminal culture' and its potential to bring about the end of civilisation.

Annea Lockwood also participated in the Destruction in Arts Symposium, creating a piano destruction work with Ralph Ortiz. For Lockwood, who has a deep interest in our relationship to the ecology of the planet, the destruction of the piano was as much about the artist's effort to explore uncharted languages of composition as it was about deconstructing the canon and culture of the piano itself. Lockwood was more interested in organic forms of deconstruction and eventually turned to events involving Piano Burning, Piano Gardens and the other Piano Transplants, in which defunct pianos were burned, drowned, beached, and planted in an English garden, and which all involve the action of slow, natural processes on pianos. Lockwood's installation, DUSK, is an environmental sound work concerning the hidden and inaudible sonic phenomena generated through underground explosions from 'black smoker' hydrothermal vents on the seabed, normally only accessible by seismologists. Lockwood has transposed these frequencies to the audible range, focussing a listening experience on that which may not otherwise be heard, and creating a work that gives us a glimpse into the hidden voice of the planet we call Earth.

Rozemin Keshvani, curator

I first encountered the work of Werner Schreib through the 2013 exhibition *Exploding Utopia*, curated by Rozemin Keshvani and myself. This was a momentous exhibition looking at artists who used explosives, powder or fire amongst other materials to make their artworks. As an astute curator, Rozemin picked the work of Schreib to feature alongside 18 contemporary artists. It was a wonderful choice, the only artist from a different generation (he was born in 1925), thus bringing a historical aspect to the treatment of our very special subject. His work epitomised the free-thinking attitude and desire to break with tradition that was present in much of the important art of his time.

Rozemin sourced four beautiful works on paper from Ingeborg Schreib-Wywiorski, Schreib's widow, made with a combination of two techniques recurring frequently in his work, *frottage* and *fumage* which were perfect for the exhibition. The use of smoke left soft grey shades, often combined with burnt punctures, a metaphor for the moon or a burnt-out sun, and bringing a sense of poetry to the work, a constant throughout his *oeuvre*. Werner belonged to a post-war generation traumatised by Nazi Germany devastation, inevitably reflecting on these experiences through his art practice.

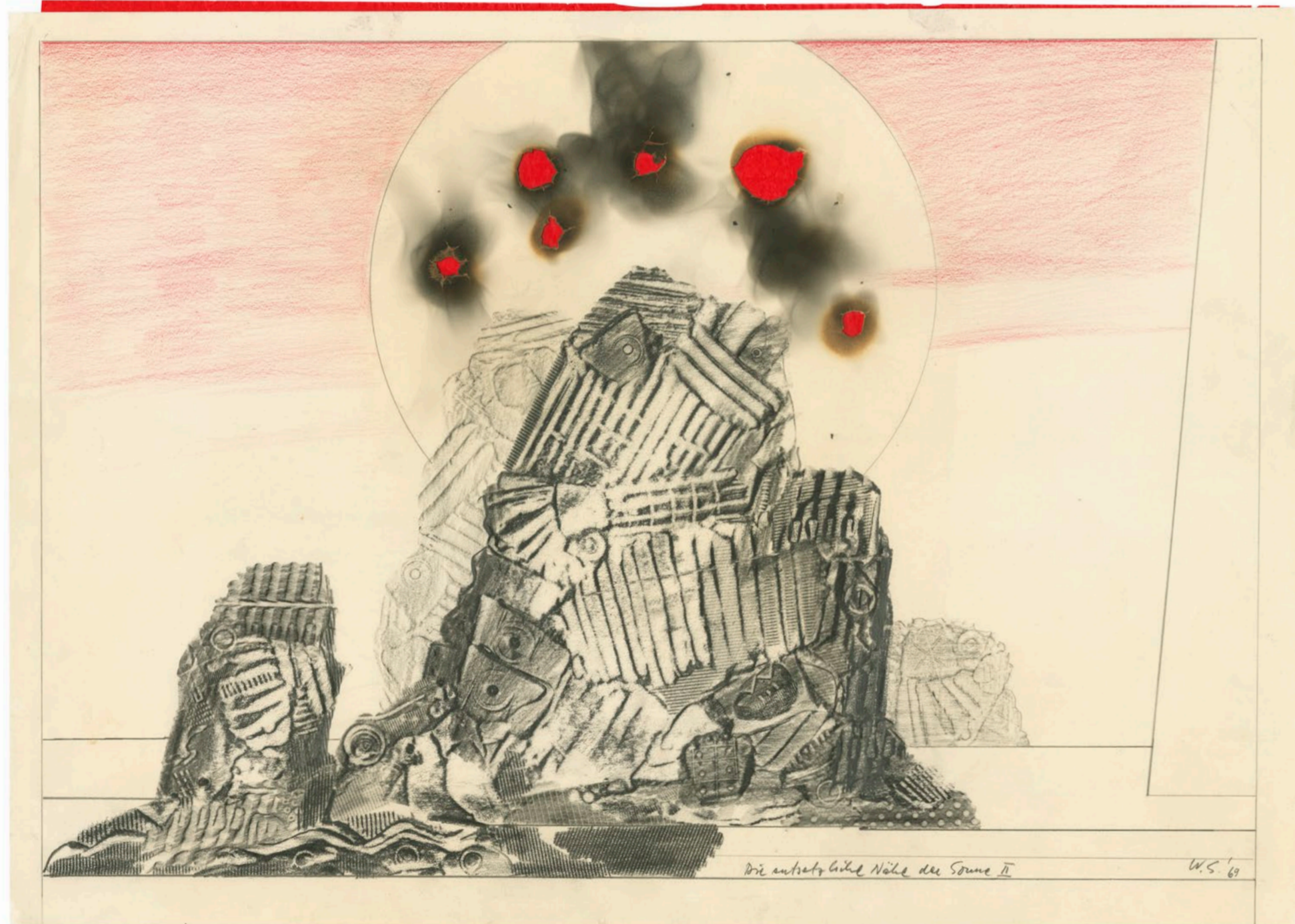
I met Werner Schreib's remarkable widow Ingeborg in May when I traveled with Rozemin to Hamburg. She welcomed us warmly to her one-bedroom city-centre apartment covered with works and artefacts by Schreib; there were lovely vitrines full of interesting white ceramic wares and many important works on the walls. The next day, we spent time in the apartment looking at catalogues, bibliographies, video cassettes and then went up in the communal attic of the building, an old wooden beamed storage space smelling like an ancient depot, where Ingeborg laid out dozens of drawings and monoprints for us to choose from. After making our selection, we carefully wrapped them up in appropriate materials for the flight back to London, with much help from our lovely host who journeyed several times up and down three flights of stairs. What splendid form Ingeborg was in!

Having just turned eighty, Ingeborg is a very special character, a strong German with a twinkle in her eye, superbly organised and punctual in all aspects of life, whether with her correspondence or turning up at our hotel before we had. Even if married with Werner for just a few years – he died tragically in a car accident on a motorway – she speaks passionately about his work and has since carried his flag continuously with numerous posthumous exhibitions in institutions in Germany after his death in 1969.

The car accident was never of his making, returning from a Baden-Baden exhibition with friends, driving at night on a fog-bound motorway and suddenly running into a stationary juggernaut lorry which had slid and blocked all lanes. Two people died instantly. Ingeborg survived the accident with serious facial injuries to awaken alone and in shock in hospital after many days in a coma.

Like Werner, Ingeborg was a child of the war (never wanting children of her own) and seeming to have spent a wonderful and extraordinary time with Werner, sharing much of his sense of politics, his desire to make manifestos, his urge to create a better world of new compassion and kindness through art and love of life.

Laure Genillard, 2016



Die entsetzliche Nähe der Sonne II (The horrifying proximity of the sun II), 1969
Pyrogravure, frottage, fumage and crayon, 42 x 59 cm

aftershock — the grammar of silence

An earthquake splits the landscape, swallowing a city. A volcano erupts propelling a plume of poisonous ash seventeen miles into the sky and causing an explosion so loud it travels four times around the globe. Hiroshima – the explosion of a nuclear weapon, hotter than the surface of the sun, instantly vaporizing 70,000 human beings and incinerating tens of thousands more, initiating shock waves over 700 miles per hour and firestorms that ravage everything for miles. Events which generate shock. Not just individual shock but collective shock. The shock of a people. The shock of a nation. The shock of a generation. Shock that leads to mass trauma. Nagasaki and Hiroshima, after Guernica, perhaps the first mass collective shock in modern world history.

Shock, unless experienced, is virtually impossible to describe. An altered state of consciousness, a momentary withdrawal into self, a kind of paralysis of the body. Blood flows away from the heart. The outside world is shut out. A complex and continuous condition in which there is no sudden transition from one stage to the next. At a cellular level, shock is the process of oxygen demand becoming greater than oxygen supply. Vital organs and tissues begin to shut down. Death is imminent. Common reported symptoms include psychic numbing, emotional detachment, inability to speak, a sense of unreality, derealisation and depersonalisation. Shock may also induce psychogenic amnesia, autobiographical memory loss, or instead flashbacks and the continued re-experiencing of the traumatic event. Until recently, emotional shock has been defined by its lack of physical damage to the brain; yet, recent post-mortem studies conducted on soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder suggest that shock waves from explosions do in fact damage brain tissue.¹ Blast exposure is, it seems, associated with a unique pattern of lesions in the human brain, irreversibly scarring brain tissue and indicating a possible physical cause for the condition.²

In the next instant, there exploded suddenly into my vision a strange and uncomfortable image of that carriage. Everything turned a horrible, urine-coloured yellow. The carriage seemed to be distorting, being pulled and displaced as though it were a flat, rubberised photograph that someone was yanking at the sides. I heard no sound. (I read three days later that experienced soldiers tell you if you don't hear the sound of an explosion you are probably about to die.)...

John Tulloch, 7/7 Survivor of the Edgware Road Bomb³

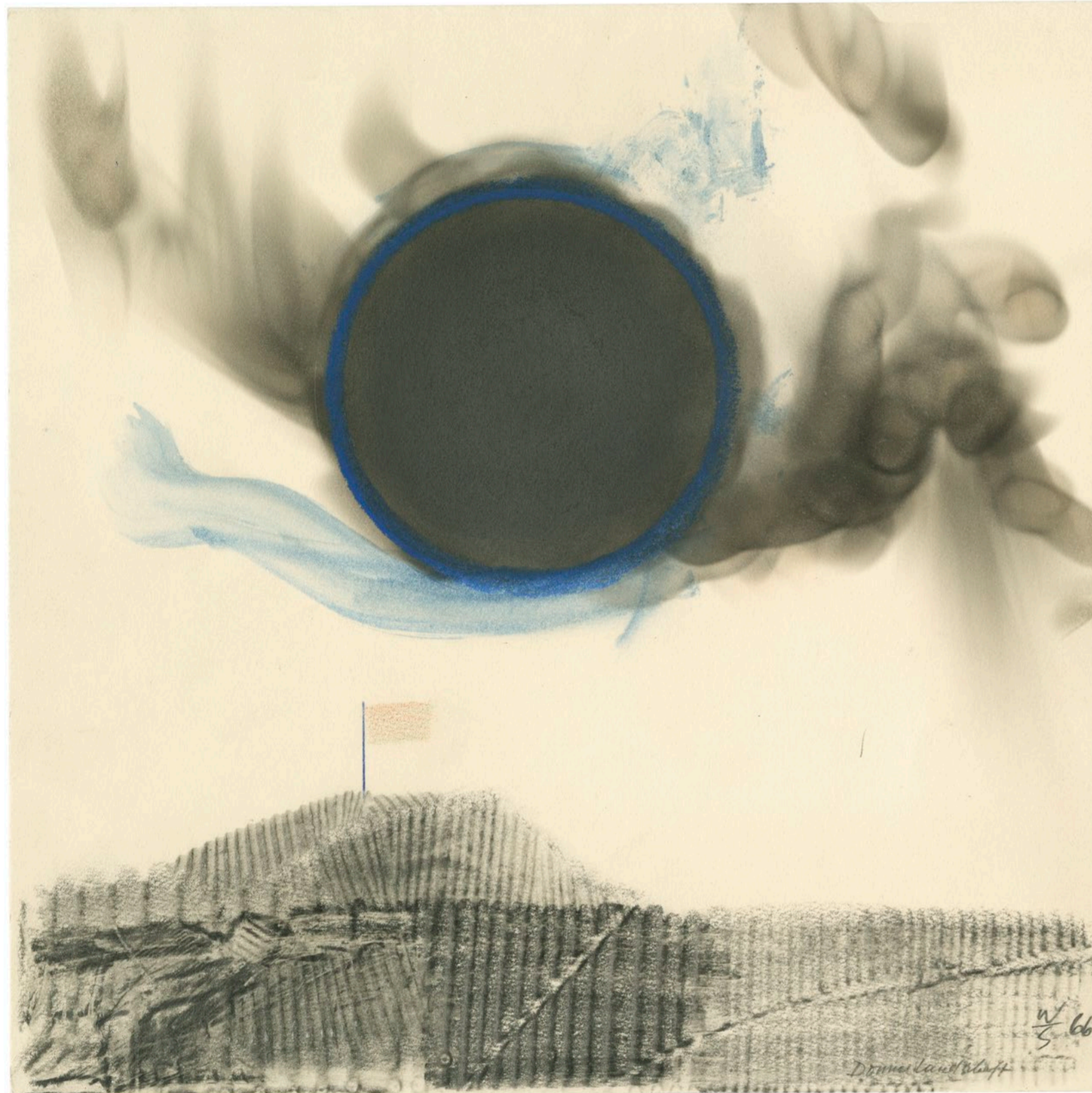
Silence. A withdrawal, a pause, the essential minimal; the in-between. The liminal state.

Rauschenberg's white canvases — the 'body of an organic silence, the restriction and freedom of absence, the plastic fullness of nothing, the point a circle begins and ends'.⁴

Silence as suppression. Silence as avoidance... 'silenced guilt numbs and anaesthetizes'.⁵

John Cage. The anarchy of silence.

What happens in silence? Silence as a potentiality. Silence like that well hidden in the desert. The blue flower hiding just beyond the stars. The potential for healing. For a new awareness. Something is not not happening. Silence has a grammar but seeks a voice. For silence is never silent.



the destruction in art symposium – a werner schreib action

For today access to truth is by way of the profane.

Siegfried Kracauer, *The Bible in German*⁶

We do not wish to raise *The Tin Drum* in our election campaign.
I can no longer bear ... the degeneracy of modern art...

Lately it's become fashionable for the poet to take on the role of politician and critic. If they do, that is of course their good democratic right, but then they must also accept, so to speak, that as philistines and incompetents, they are judging things that they simply do not understand. To put it bluntly, I have no desire to discuss economic policy with Mr Hochhuth, in the same way as I would not presume to give Professor Heisenberg lessons about nuclear physics. That would be stupid. They mumble and chat, concerned with things about which they have no clue. They debate at the most basic level, yet as 'high-brow' poets they want to be treated seriously. No, we are not going to put up with this situation. At this point they are no longer poets, but self-important 'pinschers' (yapping little dogs).

Chancellor of Germany Ludwig Erhard, 1965⁷



Pyrogravure Happening at DIAS, 1966
'Semantic Pyrogravure with Ludwig Erhard',
1966. Such a provocation was a criminal
offence in Germany. *Stern* covered the event
diplomatically as an anonymous contribution
by an unknown artist

It is the afternoon of 10 September, 1966. We are at the London Free School playground, an appropriate setting for Werner Schreiber's action – a large vacant lot littered with castaways and the detritus of past events, the remains of a World War II bombed site in Westbourne Grove just north of Notting Hill. Werner has arrived with his pictures, his easel, his cordite gun-powder and magnifying glass.⁸ A small crowd is gathering, curious. The crowd is made up of artists, poets and their families. Small children mill about, playing amongst the rubble, finding the odd piece of shrapnel, kicking the solid rubber of unwanted tires. They are about to participate in a happening. By their participation, they will become accomplices in a transformative experience. Schreiber uncovers a large portrait of the Chancellor of Germany, Ludwig Erhard. He places this portrait on the easel. Underneath the portrait he has placed another picture, this one could be from LIFE magazine – the ubiquitous image of Vietnamese villagers, an old man surrounded by smiling children tentatively observing the photographer, a strange mirror to the children who now watch them watching. A woman kneels, her face shadowed under her 'non la' palm-leaf hat. Even behind their war-torn faces, in the picture they appear trusting, somehow innocent. Behind them, a soldier stands. He towers above them, weapon carelessly strapped across his body.

Schreiber has begun to speak to the crowd, perhaps discussing Germany's involvement in Vietnam and Cold War politics, perhaps alluding to his own participation in the war. The anti-Vietnam sentiment in Germany led by the so-called 'leftist intellectuals' is coming to a head. Schreiber describes the man in the portrait, the Chancellor of Germany, Ludwig Erhard. The Chancellor has apparently publicly profaned the literary-artistic intelligentsia, called them 'pinschers'. They should run to their ivory towers with their 'tales' between their legs and stay out of politics. Schreiber now takes down the image of the Vietnamese villagers.

He focuses the crowd's gaze on the Chancellor's portrait. He pulls out his magnifying glass, holding it near the portrait and drawing it closer to the picture, still closer. With this glass, he tells us, he can examine the Chancellor more closely, perhaps even reveal his true character. The glass flashes in the sun. A flare suddenly appears in photograph. The image has somehow caught fire. Self-combustion. Flames race around the Chancellor's face, chased by malevolent folds of orange criss-crossing their prey as if guided by a capricious hand. It is burning; the portrait is engulfed in flames, the Chancellor now barely visible. With nowhere to go, the fire disappears as quickly as it appeared, offering up only charred remains – photographic paper now replaced by a carbon memory.

Schreiber has created a 'semantic pyrogravure', an indiscernible carbon memory, from the portrait of the German Chancellor. He calls it *Ein Pinscher probe die Verbrennung Ludwig Erhard* (A little dog rehearses the combustion of Ludwig Erhard).

born in 1925

His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

Walter Benjamin, writing on Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*...⁹

The world is an inheritance that we enter upon the day of our birth... from the very moment that we know about the possibility of voluntary death and yet go on living, we take on the debts of the world as our own.

Leszek Kolakowski, *Ethik ohne Kodex*, 1967¹⁰

1925. Fascism is on the rise in Europe. The year might be said to begin on 3 January with Mussolini dissolving the Italian parliament and announcing himself dictator, 'Il Duce', in his words 'a man who is ruthless and energetic enough to make a clean sweep'.¹¹ With this one act, he announces the birth of totalitarianism. Meanwhile in Germany on 27 February, Hitler leaves prison undefeated and the Nazis hold their first gathering since their failed coup at the Munich Beer Hall Putsch.¹² He reclaims his position as absolute leader of the Nazi Party. In July, he publishes *Mein Kampf* (literally, 'My Struggle'), his political manifesto produced while imprisoned at Landsberg Am Lech fortress prison, and creates the National Socialist German Workers' Party, the 'NSDAP'.¹³

Werner Schreiber is born amidst the din of a rising rampant nationalism, on 16 March, only days after Hitler assumes his leadership. His precise coordinates, Berlin. Like so many German children of his generation, he is destined to become one of an army of young scouts that come to be known as the 'Hitler Youth', the *Hitlerjugend*.



Werner Schreiber circa 1942

Not long after Werner's fourth birthday, the world suffers a total collapse in the financial markets, the first in a series of disasters. On 29 October the Wall Street stock market crashes. Black Friday has arrived. First in America, then the rest of the world, companies are instantly bankrupted. Contagion. Banks tumble like dominos. People instantly lose their life's savings. Unemployment rapidly soars. Poverty and starvation become real possibilities for entire continents. The people panic. Governments seem powerless against the worldwide economic collapse. Fear rules; violence, its governing statute. The Great Depression had begun.

This was Hitler's moment. He begins to speak of the necessity for 'fierce totalitarian will' and the people embrace his rhetoric and promise of simple immediate solutions. Within weeks, Hitler rises to absolute dictator of Germany and sets in motion a chain of events resulting in the Second World War and the deaths of nearly 50 million human beings through war and deliberate extermination, beginning with an arson attack on the Reichstag building in Berlin on 27 February 1933.¹⁴

Schreiber was swept into the Hitler Youth. A young boy, he loses both his parents, first his father who died of blood poisoning in October 1930, and then his mother, whose death followed a few years later in 1938, leaving him orphaned and under the guardianship of a brutal uncle at the age of thirteen. Schreiber was sent to the Napola (the Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt), elite boarding schools indoctrinating Nazi ideology with the mandate of creating future Nazi leaders – their motto – 'Education for Nazis, proficient in body and soul to the service of people and the state'. The objective in Hitler's own words:

A violently active, dominating, intrepid, brutal youth - that is what I am after. Youth must be all those things. It must be indifferent to pain. There must be no weakness or tenderness in it. I want to see once more in its eyes the gleam of pride and independence of the beast of prey... I intend to have an athletic youth - that is the first and the chief thing. ... I will have no intellectual training. Knowledge is ruin to my young men.

Adolf Hitler, 1939¹⁵

Werner Schreiber becomes a lieutenant at the age of 17, and like so many other youths of his generation, he is working to resurrect the German people and rebuild Germany — perhaps even to make Germany great again. In his smart uniform, he appears the helpful Boy Scout, handsome, sincere, innocent, perhaps even hopeful. By all accounts, he enjoyed his time at boarding school, not the least because he was taught to ride a motorcycle and was finally free of his tyrannical uncle. His goal is to train as an electrical engineer at the Gauss Engineering Academy where he enrolled and studied for one term in 1943 before joining the war. Schreiber does well in his studies and becomes an officer, a post normally reserved for children of the Nazi elite.

The young Lieutenant joins a minesweeper crew charged with making the seas safe for the advance of the fleet. He was decorated on several occasions for safeguarding his flotilla.¹⁶ His ship, possibly the M-36, was sunk by the RAF in the Fehmarn Belt in the Baltic Sea in 1945, where it seems he suffered hypothermia, for he retained a deep antipathy toward cold water for the remainder of his life. Now twenty years old, Schreiber is captured by the British and held in Schleswig-Holstein prison camp. During this hiatus, this moment of silence, the horror of partaking in the war begins to sink in. It was a feeling shared by the many young men who returned home after capture. The devastation. The lies. The shame. The mutilated cities, destroyed bridges, mass graves and the never-ending hope for a better life, which many of them saw only in death. Poetry comes as a release for these feelings.

meine stadt hat keine brücken;

doch ich kenne eine

die brücken hat von gold.

Dort wohnt das lachen.

Und von den gästen in ihrem schatten

träumt keiner ans andere ufer sich,

denn ihr bogen ist endlos und grün,

und ihr anfang der tod.

my city has no bridges;

but I know of one

with bridges made of gold.

There lives laughter.

And of the guests in her shadow

not one dreams of the other side.

Because her arch is endless and green

and her beginning is death.

Werner Schreiber, *The Song*
Courtesy Ingeborg Schreiber-Wywiorski, trans. Arjuna Keshvani-Ham

The Allied Forces now wage a new type of battle, a propaganda battle to 'educate' the Germans on the Second World War and what political theorist Gesine Schwan in her study *Politics and Guilt, the Destructive Power of Silence* has called the 'murderous Nazi morality'¹⁷ — photographs, films, newspapers, speeches, all focus on the destruction, the loss, the failure, the shame, the responsibility.¹⁸ Schreiber thinks a great deal about the atrocities of war. He is a survivor and survivors bear guilt.

...a survivor as 'one who has encountered, been exposed to, or witnessed death and has himself or herself remained alive.'... Whatever the text of survival, it must be read through the discourse of destruction... Survival... leaves a 'death imprint' that is accomplished by 'death anxiety, death guilt, or survivor guilt', guilt that entails a 'sense of debt and responsibility to the dead'. Survival also causes 'psychic numbing' that incapacitates the individual's ability to feel and to confront certain kinds of experiences...

Kristine Stiles, *Concerning Consequences*,
referring to the seminal work of trauma theorists, Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Markusen¹⁹

You have to know that we all, who were in contact with the war, did not speak about it. Instead we wanted to discover life in peace without prejudices, if possible. Especially being a young German with a deep shame inside when it was revealed what happened in reality and then each one of us had to admit how he had followed for years the wrong way. How we were trained to believe in the education of the Nazis, how we followed their ideals with full heart. Even doubting if we must notify the authorities when our parents would speak what was forbidden against our 'beloved Führer'.

Ingeborg Schreiber-Wywiorski explains the complexity of emotion of the young people steeped in Nazi ideology²⁰

Schreiber never discussed his wartime experiences. They remained with him the rest of his life. Determined never again to fall to the madness of war, he becomes a committed pacifist and actively seeks the company of like-minded individuals. Although he still contemplates the study of Engineering, he has begun to paint and draw while interned at Schleswig-Holstein, and eventually gains a place at the Muthesius-Werkkunstschule für Handwerk und angewandte Kunst where he studies painting and graphic art under the head of the Graphics Department, Theo Riebicke, the protégée of modernist architect Peter Behrens. Then from 1950, he attends the Wiesbaden-Werkkunstschule where he initiates his first happenings with friends.

While at school, Schreiber was taken with the work of German Expressionist painter and printmaker, Emile Nolde, whose broad unrefined incisions, jagged gouges and primitive aesthetic would become the hallmarks of Expressionist printmaking. Later influences would include Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky and Max Ernst whom he would meet in Paris, but the relationship of direct action on the plate and the mechanical processes implicit in printing would have a profound impact upon his work.²¹



Luciano Lattanzi and Werner Schreib preparing prints, 1967
Photo Romy Rohde

semantic painting

Everything we see could also be otherwise. Everything we can describe at all could also be otherwise. There is no order of things *a priori*. What constitutes a picture is that its elements are related to one another in a determinate way. The fact that the elements of a picture are related to one another in a determinate way represents that things are related to one another in the same way. Let us call this connexion of its elements the structure of the picture, and let us call the possibility of this structure the pictorial form of the picture.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*²²

Semantic Painting draws on Wittgenstein's logic of pictorial form and structural combinations of 'atomic' elements'. A picture comes together through basic gestures. Its meaning cannot be determined *a priori*. Its structure reflects that of the entire contemporary situation.

It was this alphabet of 'gestures' or signs that Schreib sought to uncover and utilise to develop what the artist described as a 'semantic' unique to the visual and pictorial process. From the late 1950s until his death, his drawings and paintings developed around an alphabet of signs implemented through a technical and semi-mechanical procedure. The notion of 'semantic painting' was simultaneously arising under a number of schools of thought.²³ The Italian artist Luciano Lattanzi was himself a founder of this notion. Schreib met Lattanzi on a trip to London in 1960, where Lattanzi had been distributing his manifesto on semantic painting.²⁴ The two artists found that they shared many of the same ideas and had, indeed, independently arrived at a practice and theory of 'semantic painting', based on ideas inspired by the writings of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Frankfurt School, particularly cultural theorist Siegfried Kracauer. The artists felt in tune, convinced that their ideas could express the *zeitgeist* of their contemporary moment.

Werner Schreib was first an artist with a broad technical knowledge and a deep intuition. When we met in 1960 in London, everything was already clear to him. His practice was completely in agreement with my ideas. What I mentioned theoretically as 'basic gestures' was already visible in his work, and even more we realised that we served the same objectives. A new, not informal, but formal direction in art. The quicker, the better! From that moment on came an exciting period. We worked together and exhibited together, he organising in Germany, and I in Paris and Italy.

Luciano Lattanzi²⁵

This led to an artistic friendship and to their 1961 trilingual publication *On the semantic picture* in which Werner Schreib and Luciano Lattanzi proclaimed themselves the founders of *Semantic Painting*.²⁶

In his lecture, *The Mass Ornament*, Siegfried Kracauer makes an argument for the priority of 'low culture', suggesting that only by examining the surface of a society can one determine the truth of their moment. Kracauer analyses the then current public entertainment 'Tiller Girls', a kind of idiomatic ballet popular with the public throughout the first half of the twentieth century. These perfectly matched all female precision dance troupes performed acrobatic dance routines in unison to produce a shifting series of mass geometric forms designed to be viewed from a distance. Moreover, he describes these geometric forms, as Schreib later does in his semantic painting, as consisting of simpler forms: the line, the circle, as well as waves and spirals. For Kracauer, the Tiller Girls are an instance of mass ornament, the structure of which reflects and reveals the structures and values underlying the contemporary situation of the populace for whom the entertainment is created.

The ornament, detached from its bearers, must be understood rationally. It consists of lines and circles like those found in textbooks on Euclidean geometry, and also incorporates the elementary components of physics, such as waves and spirals. Both the proliferations of organic forms and the emanations of spiritual life remain excluded. The Tiller Girls can no longer be reassembled into human beings after the fact. Their mass gymnastics are never performed by the fully preserved bodies, whose contortions defy rational understanding. Arms, thighs, and other segments are the smallest component parts of the composition. The structure of the mass ornament reflects that of the entire contemporary situation. Since the principle of the capitalist production process does not arise purely out of nature, it must destroy the natural organisms that it regards either as means or as resistance. Community and personality perish when what is demanded is calculability; it is only as a tiny piece of the mass that the individual can clamber up charts and can service machines without any friction... Like the mass ornament, the capitalist production process is an end in itself.

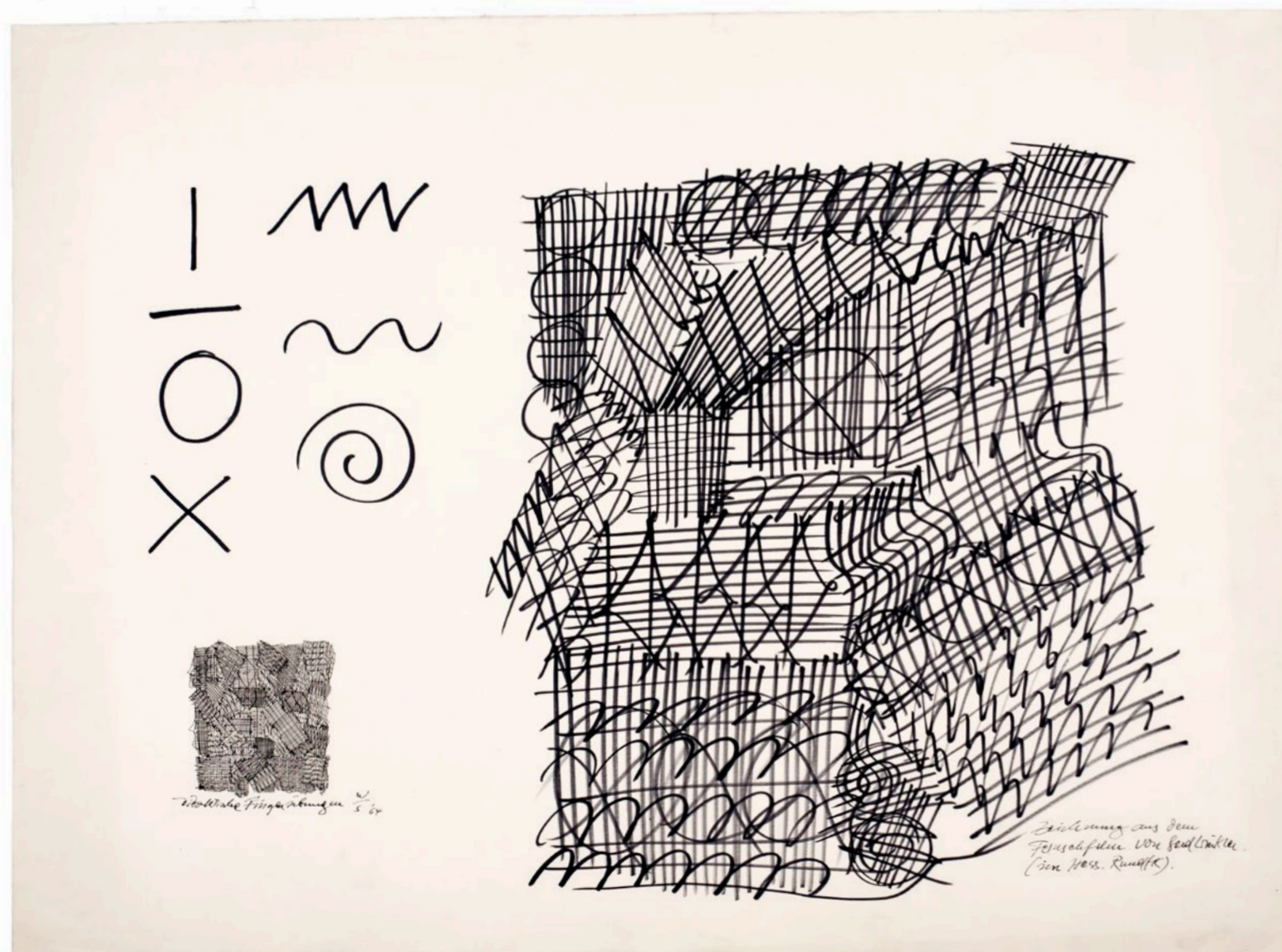
Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*²⁷

Semantic Painting is a means that seeks to comprehend the contemporary situation by engaging the idea of the 'mass ornament'. It is a rational method that sees the basic gestures of representation as comprising a structure of simple forms; the artist shares tools with geometry, with science. The notions of point, line, plane are built upon to include gestures such as spiral, waves, and circles. Semantic Painting is an autodidactic and rationally inspired form of painting that, by employing basic gestures together with the current means of production, claims the capacity to uncover the fundamental ideas driving the contemporary moment. It speaks to a universal understanding of 'sign' as based on an instinctive rational mechanical process that identifies and makes explicit the mass ornament regardless of any conditioning. These signs consist in a limited number of gestures repeated as painterly marks, similar to the alphabet, whereby within the unconscious resides a law that is universally recognised as language. This language gives rise to a sort of catalogue of 'semi-mechanical processes of creation' which Schreib expounded fully in his address to the Destruction in Arts Symposium in 1966 and later again set out in his Manifesto of 1967.²⁸ The artist who employs the semantic process does not act according to a preconceived result, *rather the result arises through the procedure itself*, gradually from decision to decision, controllable only stage by stage.²⁹

The artist neither controls the process nor interprets or analyses the world. The results are therefore unforeseen not only for the viewer but for the artist as well.³⁰ Semantic Painting is a process that enables discovery and a certain degree of objectivity. It bears a moral and didactic dimension in that it is capable of revealing and reflecting the very tenets of the system that brings it into being. In their catalogue for their joint exhibition *Information 61* held at the Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst, Schreib and Lattanzi explain their theory of Semantic Painting.

- 1 *What is the semantic image?*
It is a creation in painting, drawing or sculpture which grows automatically out of itself, as the result of organization of the basic gestures.
- 2 *From where does the basic gesture come?*
The idea of a basic gesture came from the observation of instinctive motions in the artistic process with precise reference to Action Painting...
- 3 *What is the basic gesture?*
It is a rational movement which expresses itself by a definitive shape, e.g. horizontal line, vertical line, zig-zag, spiral...
- 4 *How basic gestures are organized?*
Through their variation, addition, multiplication and integration.
- 5 *Why does the semantic image develop automatically from itself?*
Because one cannot preconceive the total result, since the creative conscience controls only that part of the work of art which is under elaboration at the moment in execution.
- 6 *What inspires the creative conscience?*
The unconscious memory of the past and the intuition of a mechanized future.³¹

The semantic process of image-formation arises as the artist organises the most basic gestures. These include the point, the horizontal, the vertical, the cross, the zigzag, the spiral and the circle.



Didaktische Fingerübungen (Didactic finger exercises), 1964
Frottage, quill and ink, 56 x 76 cm

By doing this methodically, Luciano Lattanzi and Werner Schreib are using a style which we call 'digital style', by means of which an aesthetic world is built up in an infinite number of stages (...alternatives) out of a repertory which is exactly calculated and calculable. The repertory of Luciano Lattanzi & Werner Schreib reads: vertical, horizontal, circular, zigzag, wavy, cross-shaped and spiral. And this repertory could be differentiated still more finely if we interpret it as a manipulation of straight and bent lines. Such a repertory contains the elements of possible aesthetic worlds in an unordered state. Each process of ordering, as a combination of simple elements with limited variation, guided by the imagination, the eye, the hand of the artist, aims at a new aesthetic world, a new aesthetic message. Luciano Lattanzi's and Werner Schreib's pictures show this in the juxtaposition of their products, despite different results, as well as the immeasurability of the fields of possibilities, the path from the single sign to the sign-structure to the super-sign.

... Historically one can place such painting, such an apprehension of art within a process of development which has its roots in the Romantic era (theoretically for example in the fragments of people such as Schlegel and Novalis) and its antecedents in the art revolution around the turn of the century (in Futurism for instance — Klee, Hözel; and then Wols and Pollock, among others): a development which led to the primacy of the means, to painting as a consciously manual, mechanical process, to the reduction of painting to the variation on a model. Within this line of development Luciano Lattanzi & Werner Schreib have their precisely definable place, for they have taken the tendency of reduction to the variation on a model one step further, by reducing the repertory of the model to the most simple signs and their manipulation.

Reinhard Döhl, *Prolegomena on a Style/*
On the semiotic art of Luciano Lattanzi and Werner Schreib (extract)³²

Expanding on Kracauer, Werner Schreib sought to apprehend the 'mass ornament' by employing the cast-aways of modern production, found objects which allowed him to employ the very ideas and forms inherent within mechanisation itself to cause the picture to disclose its own meanings. Screws, bolts, nuts, gear sleeves, mechanical fittings and relics, having lost their functionality, were employed as 'seals' in graphic processes which the artist analogised to those used in the production of the Medieval rubbings and in the long-established traditional manner of the Japanese print-making industry.

Schreib's own ideas derived directly from his own craft as a print-maker, and from his work with etching and engraving in particular, where the plate is 'marked' and then employed in a mechanical process to produce an image. Schreib was interested in the form of the tool that marks and the language implicit within the tool itself. The forms of the tools of modern production inhere the values of their own system of production, which may, by analogy be revealed by the artist who makes use of them through this simple and systematic act of printmaking, a form of mechanical reproduction itself.

In the years leading up to 1960, Schreib produces elaborate and complex drawings in Indian ink. These works are likewise made up of signs consisting of 'primordial or basic' semantic gestures whose elements are, as Schreib tells us, the horizontal, vertical, circular, cross, the undulation, the zigzag and the spiral. The composition of these basic gestures, realised through simple mathematical and geometric procedures – addition, multiplication, serialisation, variation, integration and parallel placement, could create an unlimited number of ornamental compositions each of which, might produce an aesthetically satisfactory solution, provided that a certain randomness was employed. The semantic system had to be strictly followed to avoid disturbing the aesthetic and compositional equilibrium. Excessive serialisation could, for example, lead to a redundancy of certain information; similarly the disproportionate use of any one element might result in a chaotic structure, and thus destroy the work's ornamental character.³³

Schreib's method builds on Paul Klee's theory, both theoretically and practically, whereby the aesthetic process behaves like a 'thinking eye', revealing the currency of its time.³⁸ These works are particularly remarkable as they once again emphasise Werner Schreib, the graphic artist and the insights that led to discovery of 'semantic painting'. For at one level, each of these three-dimensional works constitutes a unique 'plate' of sorts. Like a plate, each captures within a sculptural process the negative space of the materials employed to create the marks that will form the language through which the work is represented when finally 'printed', in this case, those being the materials involved in mass mechanical-technical production. Viewed as a plate inhering negative space, each sculptural work becomes a means of reproduction capable of imprinting its idea now upon the consciousness of the viewer of the works. Consequently, they create pictures which are also 'readable' and thus, 'semantic'.



Werner Schreib at the University of Marburg, creating a wall mural, 1969

In addition to producing works on paper, by the mid-1960s Schreib was utilising plasters, resins, *capaplast* and even clay to create three-dimensional reliefs and sculptures and indeed to craft porcelain vases.³⁴

Schreib employed a process of *cachetage* (the technique of producing an impression with stamps or 'seals') to create these large reliefs. Rolf Lauter has described the process as producing a complex ornamental structure created by employing objects in a technical means.³⁵ Using spatulas of various sizes, Schreib would first apply a shapeless mass of paste to canvas or on a board of masonite, creating fields consisting of parallel lattices to contrast with areas of flattened paste. Into this soft resin or plaster, he would imprint found objects of technical civilization, such as nails, buttons, screws, iron clubs, cogs, gear wheels, sleeves, caps, threaded nuts, coins and the like. These found objects Schreib referred to as 'Relikte der technischen Welt, die durch ihre Abnutzung Funktion verloren haben' (relics of a technical world deprived of their function).³⁶ At times he would draw spontaneous lines along the bottom of a work with his fingers or hands. As the work progressed, he would perform further manipulations — cutting the surface of the picture, *decoupage*, scratching the image, *grattage*, hitting it with a sharp object, *piquage*, smearing it with further applications of his amorphous paste, *maculage*, and later adorning the work with his own sensual impressions. In all cases, the process was both semi-mechanical and spontaneous. The resulting images often consist of two planes, reminiscent of landscape paintings, the lower region composed of an ornamental relief structure of *frottage* evoking associations of 'earth' and 'landscape'; while in the upper region, the thin parallel lines form a monochrome of undulating lines suggestive of atmosphere, sky or space.³⁷



Kleine Fuge (Little fugue), 1959
Etching with ink, 16 x 29.5 cm

destruction et transformation poetique – on sorrow floats laughter

This world-order ('kosmos'), the same for all, no god nor man did create, but it ever was and is and will be: ever-living fire, kindling itself in measures and being quenched in measures.

Heraclitus³⁹

The genocidal mentality is neither biologically ordained nor intractable. It is part of a malignant historical direction that extends into general realms of technology, ultimate power, and finally illusion. But there are other ways of thinking and feeling, already well under way [which] propel us, in fits and starts, toward a change in consciousness, toward a new narrative... At issue is the expansion of collective awareness, as an altered sense of self that embraces our reality as members of a single species and thereby opens up new psychological, ethical and political terrain.

Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Markusen⁴⁰

It is generally understood that destruction is essential to the nature of things and that without it nothing could be. Destruction is built into our species. If we could not destroy we would not survive for one moment. Our species destroys in the most fundamental sense to live, we destroy in the more human sense to realize ourselves. Our lungs destroy, our blood destroys, our stomachs destroy. We slaughter cattle, cut down forests and smash atoms all in order to be...

Our tragic dilemma is that because of our limited psychological evolution we have unwittingly instituted our biological and physical limitations. We have instituted the ultimate destruction of our species. Our science, our laws, our education, our economics all reflect our physical and biological evolutionary limitations. Evolution is a destructive adjustment, there is not concern for survival in evolution, only adjustment. Survival is an abstraction made possible only through psychological evolution.

Ralph Ortiz, Statement for DIAS, New York
(with the stamp 'Destruction et Transformation Poetique' from the Werner Schreib archive)

Werner Schreib travelled to London in September 1966 for the event known as DIAS, the Destruction in Arts Symposium. It must have been a momentous occasion in the artist's life to find an international community of artists and poets who shared ideas, concerns and values. Meeting Gustav Metzger, another artist from Germany whose life was, in many ways, a shadowy mirror to Schreib's own life, must have been particularly poignant. Metzger, one of the lead organisers of DIAS and author of the Destruction in Art Manifesto was a child refugee under the British Kindertransport Programme who lost both his parents when they were deported to Auschwitz.

By the age of 12, there was a war, and you couldn't escape it. It was connected with everything, Nazism, Judaism, the rise of Communism. It couldn't be avoided if you lived in Germany as a young boy. My first decade was spent taking in political activity, especially in Nurnberg. You couldn't avoid the parades. Every year the uniforms changed. As a young boy, I witnessed 100,000 men parading in front of my eyes. Even I [as a young Jewish boy] found them inspiring, until my mother pulled me aside ... I recall Werner Schreib distinctly. He made a very important and controversial action at the empty lot in Notting Hill for the Destruction in Arts Symposium in 1966. It was very exciting. But still many people were cautious of him because he was from Germany and had served in the war.

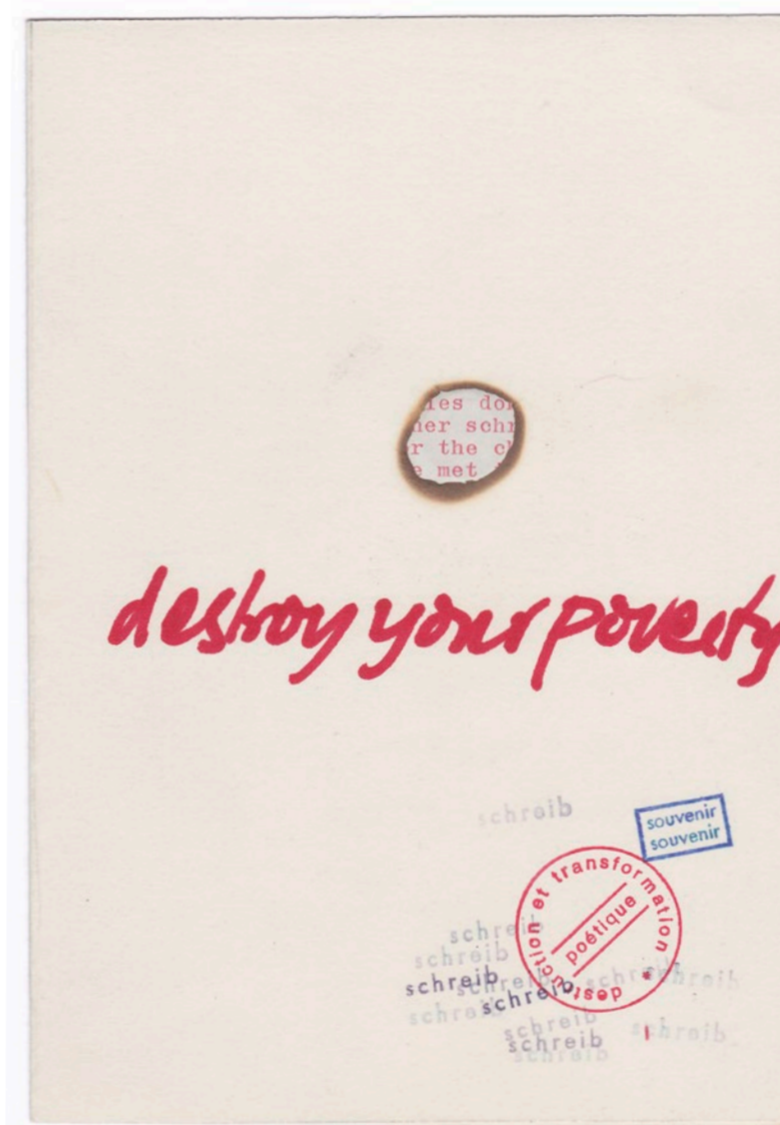
Gustav Metzger⁴¹

The DIAS experience was life-changing and Schreib would, on his return to Germany, produce a small edition of artist books he titled *Destroy your Poverty* for 'the chaps he met in England' concerning the relationship between capitalism and destruction. He would also become a lead organiser for the unrealised 1968 New York DIAS meeting, cancelled when Martin Luther King was assassinated on 4 April 1968.

'Creative destruction' was already by this point the defining idiom in the Schreib arsenal. The artist was active in organising happenings from the mid-1950s while still a student at Wiesbaden Werkkunstschule and had begun to use fire and explosives as a means of creative destruction from as early as 1965. Taking inspiration from the writings of the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus, he designed a special stamp 'Destruction et Transformation Poetique' to describe and announce this process of creation. He would use his stamp on works that employed processes of 'creative destruction', processes capable of creating transformational works through destructive processes. Schreib's own techniques drew directly from his experiences in the Second World War and included direct burning, explosions, interlaying gunpowder between layers of collaged materials, fumage and brûlage in order to create his semantic *pyro-gravures*, while he similarly utilised these techniques to produce monoprints and collage works. Creative destruction contributed to an artistic process that was for Schreib an essential technique of the semantic process for it utilised tools of modern processes and technologies, and by so doing allowed the tools and processes to reveal their own truths.

As with his deployment of 'Relikte der technischen Welt, die durch ihre Abnutzung Funktion verloren haben' in cachetage, the artist employs the very means of destruction that are the tools of war — fire, gunpowder, explosives. Cordite, being the material used to detonate the atomic bomb, code-named Little Boy, nineteen kilometres above Hiroshima, takes on a special significance in Schreib's practice. These tools speak for themselves; the artist merely initiates a procedure which allows these materials to behave according to their nature within an aesthetic context. By initiating the process as art, the destruction has no purpose as such; the detonation is entirely self-directed. There is no 'other'. Deprived of their function, these tools are directed entirely to the aesthetic, a procedure, an event with no end other than itself. The act of destruction thus becomes reflexive and as such one that reveals its own truth. By revealing its own truth through the media of art, a re-contextualisation has occurred. To draw on Kristine Stiles' analysis of destruction art, Schreib literally displaces, indeed appropriates the tools of destruction 'from the actual field of militarised combat by utilizing the substances of destruction'.⁴² They are not suppressed or hidden, but rather given voice through an aesthetic process. When Schreib utilises the materials of destruction, he creates a complex panopticon, a self-reflective and self-reflexive action that refers back both to his own contribution to the carnage of the Second World War and equally significant to that of his nation state. He is survivor in this process and his work, in re-creating the action of these materials, both articulates and assumes responsibility for the actions in a way that offers opportunities for reflection, discussion and healing.

The processes of engraving and etching again bear discussion, for here, the graphic procedures depend on mechanically reproducing the plate as a reflection on a sheet of paper or other material. Instead of engaging these mechanical processes for reproduction and thus reversing the plate, Schreib's monoprints transfer this process directly to the paper, the material itself, engraving the paper, rubbing the paper, burning the paper, causing injury with fire and smoke to once again create a semantic image. The destruction is apparent, not hidden. The technique, the image and the support become one and so become a means of transferring or imprinting its truth upon the viewer. Kristine Stiles has noted of similar works of destruction art: 'Destruction is no longer an abstract theatre of war. There is no alienation in the action. No denial of responsibility or immediacy.'⁴³ The trauma is directly employed, restated, revealed and thus transfigured.



'Destroy your poverty', 1965
artist book made for the artists Werner Schreib met at DIAS

While the monoprints employ the full breadth of Schreib's alphabet of signs and techniques, the processes involving burning take on special significance and are often utilised when discussing topics related to destruction. In the mid-1960s, Schreib created a series of 'Hiroshima' and related 'explosion' monoprints that bear the totality of the artist's now sophisticated and developed semantic through seemingly monochromatic dialectics, the lower regions employing *frottage* to reference earth and land, while *fumage* opens the upper regions to sky and space, here using the artist's unique technique of carefully applying his fingers to create plumes of rising smoke, both ominous and beautiful. These techniques give rise to a visual onomatopoeia as the terrible heat literally destroys the paper in works, such as *The horrifying proximity of the sun*, 1969, *The inevitable effects of elevated temperature*, 1968, *Eruption*, 1966 and *Türkischer Turm*, 1969.

Schreib's *pyrogravures*, burning the portrait of the German Chancellor, which he initiated at DIAS, take on a special significance, performed together with others in the shared public space. Igniting the portrait is immediate. The action cannot be sublimated or abstracted. It is no surprise that 'fire' becomes the chosen medium with which to relate the events of the Second World War. Hitler's assumption of power in Germany began with a fire, the burning of the German parliament building – the Reichstag. Hitler who had been dining at Goebbels's apartment, rushed to the scene, describing the fire as 'a beacon from heaven'. 'You are now witnessing the beginning of a great epoch in German history... This fire is the beginning', Hitler told a news reporter at the scene.⁴⁴ Fire moreover recalls both the actions of the German Chancellor in the Second World War, which include the genocide committed against the Jews, and the threat of a return to such actions through the words and deeds of the then current Chancellor and the war in Vietnam. Lastly, the act of 'burning' dramatically references the 'forgetting' implicit in technological warfare, recalling the invisible victims who were instantly vaporized in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the incineration of countless numbers in the German kilns, and later the self-immolation of Thich Quang Duc on 11 June 1963, the Buddhist monk from the Linh-Mu Pagoda in Hue, Vietnam, who burned himself to death at a busy intersection in downtown Saigon, Vietnam.

I was to see that sight again, but once was enough. Flames were coming from a human being; his body was slowly withering and shrivelling up, his head blackening and charring. In the air was the smell of burning human flesh; human beings burn surprisingly quickly. Behind me I could hear the sobbing of the Vietnamese who were now gathering. I was too shocked to cry, too confused to take notes or ask questions, too bewildered to even think... As he burned he never moved a muscle, never uttered a sound, his outward composure in sharp contrast to the wailing people around.

David Halberstam, *New York Times* reporter's eye witness account of Thich Quang Duc⁴⁵

Photographs are memories, memory constructs, memories controlled and laid in boxes and books. Susan Sontag reflects on how photographs *stipulate* collective memory. 'What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that *this* is important and this is the story of how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds.'⁴⁶ And later, 'images anaesthetise, images transfix'.⁴⁷ Burned, they are transformed into a different type of memory, a memory of pain, a memory made real again through the situation they represent, yet simultaneously a memory in ruins. That which was iconic is disrupted and what is absent becomes present again. If to canonise a photograph is a means of forgetting, to burn a photograph is an action that disrupts the canon, both transforming and refusing to forget.

In destruction art, artists present the 'imagery of extinction' localized in the body, the objects, which is offered as destructible material and/or agent of that destruction...performative practices, recapitulate the technological conditions, effects, processes, and epistemologies of terminal culture... the means by which a world consciousness is being formed that may contribute to the construction of an altered sense of self, which is necessary to ensure human survival.

Kristine Stiles, *Concerning Consequences*⁴⁸

Werner Schreib sought to transform not just memories but more importantly the psyche and the consciousness that gave rise to these memories. His aim was a means that enabled technology to disclose its own truths through the aesthetic of the mass ornament. Through his semantic painting, he initiated a grammar that revealed the structures of modern mechanical life and transposed and articulated the otherwise silenced and deeply buried traumas and histories too painful to recollect. Schreib's methods were aimed not toward erasing or cleansing his Nazi past or that of his nation. His aesthetic programme encompassed nearly every medium, with an agenda that was both socially and politically transformative. It is difficult to predict how influential Werner Schreib might have become had his life not been stolen from him at the very moment where his art and ideas had merged to become a potent force. Certainly his vast *oeuvre*, combined with his recognition of the unparalleled role of technology and his development of a visual semantics to reflect and deconstruct that role suggest a place of recognition in art history as does his practice of transformation through destruction. Werner Schreib stands tall among those artists who have struggled to directly confront the destruction brought on by the Second World War. The spirit of his work is, stated quite simply, captured with the words of Günter Grass, 'On sorrow floats laughter. In the heart of roaring lurks silence.'⁴⁹

Rozemin Keshvani 2016

- Scientists found distinctive injuries in the brains of eight military personnel who survived bomb blasts but died between four days and nine years after the trauma. The damage, which can only be seen following a post mortem examination, was in areas of the brain associated with cognitive function, memory and sleep. All of the soldiers had been caught up in explosions with grenades, mortars or improvised explosive devices and five had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress syndrome. See Sarah Knapton, 'Post-traumatic stress disorder linked to shock waves from bomb blasts', *Telegraph* (9 Jun 2016)
- All five cases with chronic blast exposure showed prominent astroglial scarring. See Sharon Baughman Shively, Iren Horkayne-Szakaly, Robert V Jones, James P Kelly, Regina C Armstrong, Daniel P Perl, 'Characterisation of interface astroglial scarring in the human brain...' (9 Jun 2016) <thelancet.com/journals/lanear/article/PIIS1474-422(16)30057-6/abstract>, accessed 16 Jun 2016
- John Tulloch, *One Day in July: Experiencing 7/7, John Tulloch, Survivor of the Edgware Road Bomb* (London: Little Brown, 2006), 15
- 'Robert Rauschenberg, letter to Betty Parsons (18 October 1951)', *SFMOMA On the Go* (July 2013) <sfmoma.org/artwork/98.308.A-C/research-materials/document/WHIT_98.308_034/>, accessed 20 July 2016
- Gesine Schwan, *Politics and Guilt: the Destructive Power of Silence*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 60
- Siegfried Kracauer, 'The Bible in German' in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar essays*, translated, edited, and with an introduction by Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 189-201 at 201
- Chancellor of Germany Ludwig Erhard speaking at the State party of the CDU Baden-Württemberg on 29 May 1965 in Ravensburg, and before the Business Forum of the CDU / CSU in Dusseldorf on 9 July 1965, quoted in 'Die Worte des Kanzlers, Eine aktuelle Zitatensammlung zum Thema: Der Staat und die Intellektuellen', *ZEIT ONLINE*, 30. Juli 1965, 7:00 Uhr <zeit.de/1965/31/die-worte-des-kanzlers>, translated by the publication team, accessed 9 August 2016. The Chancellor was also referring to Günter Grass' July campaign urging West Germans to vote for Willy Brandt, the Social Democratic candidate for Chancellor, in the Parliamentary elections. Rolf Hochhuth has become one of the most successful – and most controversial of German-language playwrights. In his essay, 'The class struggle is not to end', 1965, he criticized German society, and argued that writers should have a political function. The then Chancellor, Ludwig Erhard, made a number of speeches calling for poets to stay out of politics.
- Cordite was also used in the detonation system of the Little Boy atomic bomb.
- Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 249
- Lezek Kolakowski, 'Ethik ohne Kodex' in *Traktat über die Sterblichkeit der Vernunft*, 1967 quoted in Gesine Schwan, *Politics and Guilt: the Destructive Power of Silence*, 5 n. 11
- Christopher Hibbert and John Foot, 'Benito Mussolini', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <britannica.com/biography/Benito-Mussolini>, accessed 9 August 2016
- Philip Gavin, 'A New Beginning- The Rise of Hitler', *The History Place* <historyplace.com/worldwar2/riseofhitler/new.htm>, accessed 9 August 2016
- Ibid.
- Ibid.
- Hermann Rauschnig, *Hitler Speaks: A Series of Political Conversations with Adolf Hitler on His Real Aims* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1939), 246-47
- Werner Schreib received a war decoration in Swinemünde on 12 June 1944, and the Iron Cross, First and Second Classes on 18 February 1945, and finally in the last days of the war on 5 April 1945 he received the infanterie Sturmabzeichen in Silber by the Fifth Führer Regiment 4.
- Gesine Schwan, *Politics and Guilt: the Destructive Power of Silence*, 5 n. 58
- In her essay, 'The Ethics of Seeing: Photographs of Germany at the End of the War', Siobhan Kattago explains how the Allied Forces engaged in a systematic programme to educate the Germans after the Second World War. 'Allied photojournalists helped to create a singular image of German collective guilt, whereas German photographers conveyed the complexity of Germans living during the Third Reich'. Similarly, Allied photography and the decision to have Germans bury the concentration camps dead were all part of a programme in de-Nazification. See *Memory and Representation in Contemporary Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 49-58 at 52-53
- Kristine Stiles, *Concerning Consequences: Studies in Art, Destruction, and Trauma* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 32
- Note from Ingeborg Schreib-Wywiorski to author, 8 June 2016
- 'Werner Schreib is among the most accomplished [etchers] whom I have ever met. I believe that his graphic work is at the heart of his entire artistic production. The paintings and subsequent artistic outputs are, without the graphics, simply not conceivable.' Thomas Bayrel and Bernhard Jager, 'über Schreib' in Werner Schreib, *Das druckgraphische Werk* (Volker Huber Offenbach, 1974), 10
- Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, translated from the German by C.K. Ogden, with an Introduction by Bertrand Russell (Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922), Propositions 5.6.34 and 2.15
- Catalogue Galerie Sydow*, Frankfurt, 1964; see also the article by Reinhard Dohl, *Werner Schreib und Stuttgart. Eine Spurensicherung*, 4; and Vgl. auch Lucio (R.D.) Lattanzi: *Eine Analyse der semantischen Malerei*. Ebd., S. 49
- Ibid.
- Luciano Lattanzi, 'Zwischen Präsidenten und Vize-Präsidenten' in *Werner Schreib, Cachetagen, Objekt-bilder, Graphic* (exhibition catalogue, Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim, 1991), 9
- Dr H. Das Fenster, 'Über das semantische Bild / About the semantic image / Sur l'image semantique' in *Information 61* (Hrsg. von der Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst) (Appel, Frankfurt am Main: März-Februar, 1961)
- Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*, 6 n. 78
- Werner Schreib, *Manifesto*, San Marino, July 1967 (published 6000 Frankfurt am Main, Paul-Ehrlich-Straße, 27: semaion press, 1967)
- Reinhard Dohl, 'Werner Schreib und Stuttgart. Eine Spurensicherung', 23 n. 4
- Reinhard Döhl, *Prolegomena on a Style / On the semiotic art of Luciano Lattanzi and Werner Schreib* <reinhard-doehl.de/lattanzi_schreib.htm>, accessed 29 July 2016
- Information 61* (Hrsg. von der Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst) (Appel, Frankfurt am Main: März-Februar, 1961)
- See note 30, above.
- Ibid.
- Captivated by the idea of "living with art", Rosenthal invited internationally acclaimed contemporary artists to create limited edition porcelain reliefs and exclusive porcelain and glass objects back in the late 1960s. The major contributors to the Rosenthal Limited Edition Art Series include, among others, Henry Moore, Lucio Fontana, Eduardo Paolozzi, Victor Vasarely, Salvador Dalí, Hap Grieshaber, Frank Stella, Günter Uecker. Werner Schreib was invited by Studio-Line to Hvar, Croatia to create limited designs for the Rosenthal name. See Rosenthal <rosenthal.de/en/cms/company/our-service/brand_marks/rosenthal/>
- Rolf Latour, 'Die Zeichnungen von Werner Schreib: Werke zwischen Traum und Wirklichkeit' in *Werner Schreib* (edizioni roberto piccolo livorno, 14), 33-9
- Werner Schreib, 'Kunst und Technik' in *Werner Schreib*, Mannheim 1974 (exhibition catalogue)
- Rolf Latour, 'Die Zeichnungen', 35 n, op.cit.
- Klee's methods emerged from his idea of 'structural rhythms' that may from the most elemental to the more complex, be structured through repetitive processes. See *The Thinking Eye: Notebooks of Paul Klee*, translated by Ralph Mannheim et al. (New York: Wittenborn, 1961).
- Daniel W Graham, 'Heraclitus', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.) <plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/heraclitus/>, B30, accessed 29 July 2016
- Quoted in Kristine Stiles, 'Survival Ethos and Destruction', *Concerning Consequences*, 19 n. 29-66 at 29
- Gustav Metzger (born 1926) interview at his home in Hackney by Rozemin Keshvani, 9 February 2012
- Kristine Stiles, *Concerning Consequences*, 19 n, 35
- Ibid., 31
- Philip Gavin, 'The Reichstag Burns', *The History Place*, 12 n.
- David Halberstam, *New York Times* reporter's eye witness account of Thich Quang Duc in David Halberstam, *The Making of a Quagmire* (New York: Random House, 1965), 211
- Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador Books, 2003), 86
- Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 20
- Kristine Stiles, *Concerning Consequences*, 19 n. 31
- Günter Grass, *The Dog's Years*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (Reading: Vintage Books, 2000, first published, 1963), 322



'Love For Explosions Sake, Documenta Style 1968'
The car tire is punctured on the road to Kassel.
Ingeborg Schreib with Lil Picard who had to flee to New York once the Nazis came to power and whom Werner met at DIAS. Schreib staged a demonstration at documenta outside the Kassel museum in protest at the few German artists chosen to participate.

memories of werner schreib¹

It was the summer 1967. I had been invited to a birthday-garden-party in Frankfurt's Westend that was forced indoors by the drizzling rain. Inside the rooms lacked atmosphere as they had not been arranged for a party. Everything had turned dull and felt somewhat displaced, with people hanging around in the kitchen, hall and adjoining rooms. But suddenly a revival was taking place. Accompanied by 'aahs' and 'oohs', everyone made their way outside towards the terrace. A magical power seemed to have touched the garden and trees, which were now illuminated by mysterious red Bengal light. The figure of a man emerged from the dark, moving in both his hands sparkling Bengal candles. His appearance was striking as was the carefully orchestrated happening he had initiated only minutes before.

The middle class dress-code for men in the Sixties was grey flannels, white shirt and dark blue blazer. Instead this man presented himself in an outfit that bore the hallmark of the noble, working-class, Twenties, with a dark shining leather jacket, leather peaked cap and, in a gesture towards the hippie style, a shirt with orange and violet stripes and flowers, cut comfortably wide like a blouse, combined with brown-red chequered trousers. To emphasize the festive character of the occasion, he topped off this outfit with a red carnation fixed over the torn seam of his trousers.

At that time, I wasn't aware that he had a passion for pyrotechnics. More than once he had been involved in quarrels with the police who suspected that forbidden and secret black powder stocks lay behind his burning of pictures and many explosions. With his Berlin Chuzpe, he always managed to successfully deflect these suspicions, especially given that 'jumping crackers' were easily available for sale in shops — these supplied him with enough black powder for his activities.

But let's go back to the birthday party. Although half of Frankfurt's population knew of Werner Schreib, I belonged to the other half for whom his work remained a complete mystery. And this was just what he wanted. Nothing in the world was more exciting to him than provoking people with a completely unexpected situation. Too bad if someone was unable to keep up with him. Yet he was absolutely delighted when presented with the opportunity to explain his work and techniques to a lady such as myself. He would have been an excellent teacher, but sadly this opportunity evaded him. His application to the Berlin Arts Academy had been refused. And later when the Wiesbaden School for Arts and Handicrafts offered him a teaching post, he was rather reluctant to take on this responsibility, fearing that teaching would not allow sufficient time for his own creative work.

That very evening, after everyone had appreciated and valued his performance, he came directly to me, and looked me in the eye. 'How many children do you have?' he demanded. I was startled, answering 'None', while he replied he had several hundred children — his paintings. I still didn't know a single one of them!

Two days later, the doorbell rang. To my surprise, there was Werner Schreib carrying two of his children. On his way back from an exhibition, his station wagon was fully loaded with his art work, and before I knew what was going on, he had carried about half of his, not so tiny and light-weight, 'children' up to the third floor, presenting a sort of private *vernissage* for me. And just to ensure that I wouldn't forget him, he left with me two of these special 'tots', although I was apparently not alone, as it seems he deposited his 'children' in the apartments of all his friends in and around Frankfurt, a rather crafty way of storing his pictures while keeping his small studio clear for the creation of new work.²

Quite some time later, when we started living together, I managed to find him a studio-house which exactly fitted his requirements. It was situated in an old house in Frankfurt in an idyllic neighbourhood with about seven other studios of different sizes and heights, all built and used by the former owner. Schreib's studio was about six meters high, adjacent to a second studio of ten metres height. For a small charge, Werner was permitted to use this second studio space. This presented him with the opportunity to produce large scale works for the first time. Werner became convinced that we were accompanied by a lucky star, bearing in mind that he was superstitious. A few years earlier, he had consulted an astrologer for a long range forecast, a document which he treasured among his most private and intimate papers. He was predicted a long life, and more than once he emphatically explained to me the constellation of the astronomic signs of this personal horoscope. Absolutely nothing revealed the early death which had been the fate of both his parents and which he himself would suffer a few years later. After Schreib's death, I showed the horoscope to experienced astrologers who confirmed that there wasn't the slightest trace of jeopardy.

To the contrary, he was just about to enter the happiest and most successful period of his life. His art work was exhibited internationally and he received numerous prizes. He was invited for one-man-shows and was able to execute and fulfil significant commissions for public authorities. He became well-known and was finally able to sell many of his pictures. For the first time in his life he had money to buy sufficient material for the production of his works. And he possessed this wonderful studio, enabling him to carry out an order for a large scale wall relief for the town hall of Eschborn in the Taunus. I once asked him why his pictures never measured more than two metres. His explanation was very simple. The measurements of his home-studio only allowed him to produce works of smaller sizes. That studio was part of a small maisonette-type apartment, which the architect Carlfried Mutschler had reconstructed for himself and his young wife. On one wall he had installed a large studio-window. The four and one half metre high walls allowed the space to be separated.

Thus he installed on top of the kitchen and hall a bedroom with balustrade and staircase. Here Schreib's first large size paintings were born, with Schreib leaning on the balustrade while looking down on the canvas on the floor; this gave him the distance and overview necessary to determining the correct proportions for larger works.

His old studio was actually in the adjoining room, measuring about twelve metres square. There he produced the middle size pictures. Apart from the confined studio measurements, the general living conditions of the Sixties didn't allow sufficient space for hanging large-size pictures. Schreib wanted to sell his pictures. Thus he had to adapt to these conditions. Moreover he sought to gain collectors from those people who were disenchanted with the work on exhibit at the 'Belling Stag'. He was not convinced that people would sacrifice their cosy sofa and necessary furniture in favour of a large painting. As newly built homes in the post-war period were never more than two and one half metres high, there was little space for large paintings.

Based on his realistic view on the living conditions of his 'collectors', he was a convinced participant in the so called 'Kaufhof-Art', that is the presentation of art objects in shopping centres. This was an initiative established in the Sixties, long before the first poster-shops opened their doors, where affordable artworks and prints were offered by department stores. This enabled people with low budgets to purchase contemporary art and shed their shyness and prejudice towards art galleries.

How was Schreib's working day? He worked disciplined in his studio from nine in the morning until about seven in the evening when he would return home. After supper he answered letters, did some drawings, worked on printmaking in the basement, and sometimes read. All this included at least one hour on the telephone with friends about the latest gossip and trends, as well as what was new in exhibitions and publications. And more than once they got involved in serious quarrels, as a consequence of which Schreib wouldn't speak with one or the other for at least four weeks. But when all asceticism became too severe, they reconciled again.



Werner Schreib drawing one of his miniatures with quill pen and ink, circa 1967

Despite being a workaholic his life was very sociable. Many evenings were spent with friends, with a glass of wine in the Rheingau area or in Hochheim. Big festivities took place in the Taunus area with animated dance events. Memorable were those evenings during which we would read, one to another. Other times he would sit in an easy chair with a glass of whisky and his guitar, singing shanties or songs written by Bertolt Brecht.

It was the time when LSD was tested. Well aware of its jeopardy, Schreib was nonetheless curious, but at the same time afraid. He was aware of Henri Michaux's mescaline-trip inspired paintings. Of course one was tempted to find out the effect of LSD on human consciousness. But information and news on the use of LSD and its fatal results when people lost complete control of their behaviour, caused him to refrain from using this drug. Until one day the Frankfurt Broadcasting Networks and Television Studios called, inviting him to participate in an experiment with LSD in the presence of an experienced doctor and a public prosecutor. The experiment was set to take place in a more or less public atmosphere in a gallery under the observation of television cameras. A colleague from Hannover had already agreed to participate in this test, and these factors gave Schreib sufficient comfort to accept the invitation, but on the condition that I should be present. The aim of the experiment was to find out whether and how the use of LSD could lead to new expressions of art.

When I arrived in the studios, both artists were sitting in separate rooms in front of their drawing books. Schreib's colleague from Hannover was completely disturbed, not wanting to hear or see anything. Schreib however to the astonishment of the doctor seemed completely unaffected. Asked by the doctor to write his name correctly, he was amused to do so without difficulty. But then all of a sudden he took two, three, four coloured pencils. His writing grew larger and larger. Then, with very colourful felt-tipped pens, he drew quite audacious curves, explaining to the doctor a completely incoherent drive to Rome, while the drawn lines all terminated in a thick black point – of course that was the Pope, who else? With beaming eyes Schreib looked around. Asked whether he was happy in this condition, he enthusiastically replied that for this feeling he would even go into jail. But then the effect decreased and every word, however quietly whispered, sounded like a clap of thunder.

Earlier Schreib had eaten a sausage and his fingertips had become a little greasy. Under the LSD, he felt as though he was being wrapped completely in a thick layer of greasy fat which caused him to thoroughly clean and wash immediately. When he noticed my hushed conversation with the supervising doctor, he frightfully suspected to be sent to the mad-house, now and forever. Then the second LSD attack started, and again he was filled with happiness. Everything he saw appeared in complementary colours. Later on he told me that this colour experience had renewed his ability to paint the 'real yellow' again. Then the duration of the attacks became progressively shorter while the intervals grew longer and longer. This lasted three days and nights. Neither Schreib nor his fellow artist from Hannover ever touched LSD again.

Max Ernst was the artist Schreib most loved and admired. To commemorate his 80th birthday Schreib had prepared a big happening and surprise party, not realising that his own passing before the end of September would prevent him from realizing all his beautiful ideas for the Max Ernst celebration. A murderous car accident took Schreib's life at the age of 44.

Werner met Max Ernst in the famous Paris artists' café, La Coupole, where Max invited Schreib to join him at his table. With a twinkle in his eyes he was conscious of the fact that this meeting was owed to the attractive qualities of his second wife, a youthful blonde and natural beauty whom 'Father Max' made sit directly at his side. During the darkest moments of his career, when Schreib felt refused and misunderstood by the arts trade business, he found comfort in what Father Max had told him, namely that until he was fifty he never knew how to pay for the chicken to make his soup.

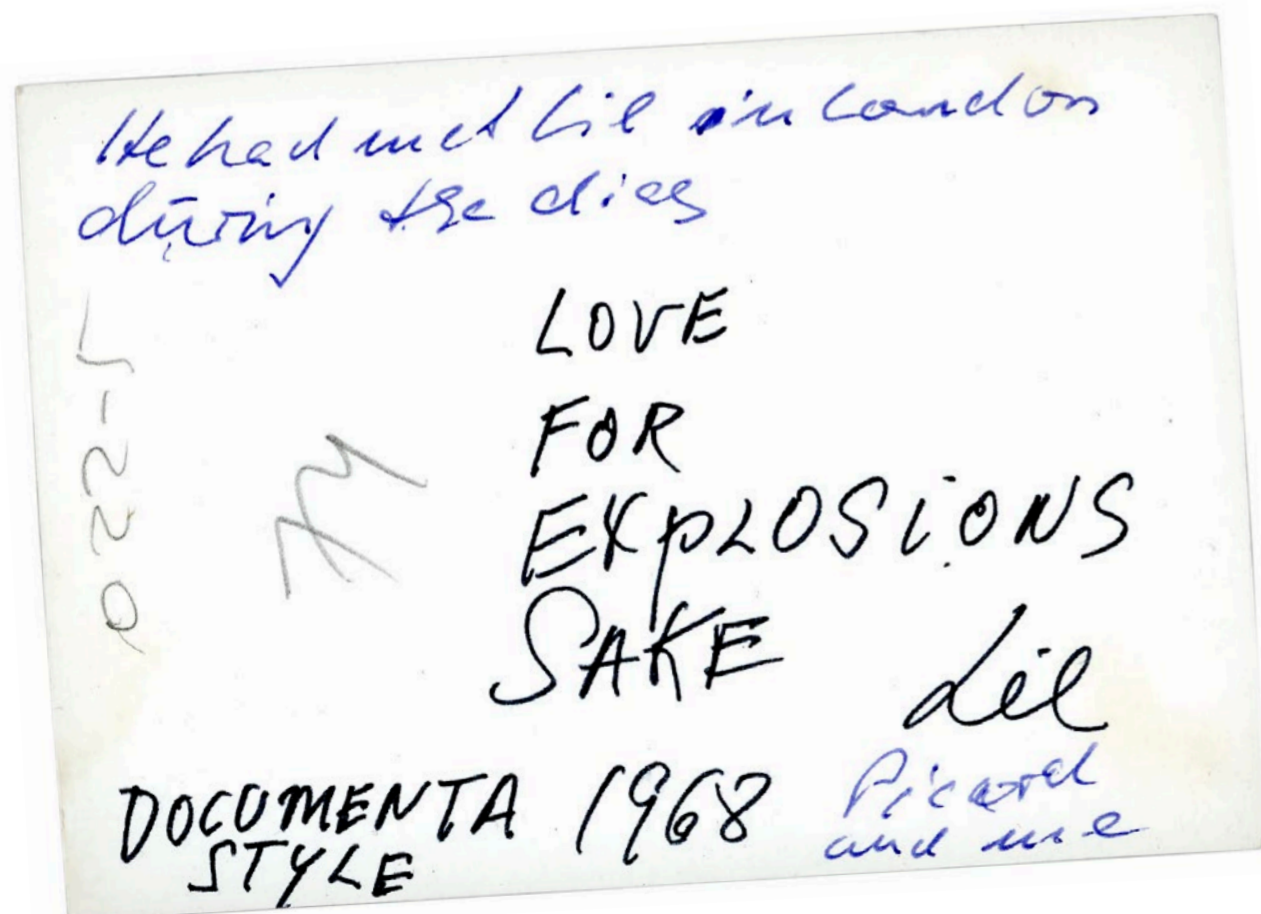
Our love of Paris and the French people was born in the 1950s, the period of Sartre's Existentialism, the Ecole de Paris and the attraction of a bohemian lifestyle. We recognized and appreciated the endeavours of Adenauer and de Gaulle. To have fluent command of the French language was one of Schreib's life long dreams. He had the notion that one day, fate would grant him this grace and ability, since he had not seriously undertaken any effort to learn this language. Convinced that he would at least reach the age of 80, he was sure that by then he would have absorbed the French tongue, just like his great idol Father Max. The many signatures on his pictures as well as the adaptation of French definitions for semi-mechanical production procedures as described in the magazine *Bizarre* are examples of his love of the French tongue.

Quite apart from French, he had absolutely no problem learning English, which he mastered during his first years in Wiesbaden when he fell in love with a young American girl who had come to Germany with the Army. It was his 'wild' time, as he would later tell me, the time when — at the age of 25 — his life started, leaving the war and the difficult post-war years behind him. Everything in this period must have felt like a play, discovering the world and himself, looking for challenges, crossing borders. He was campaigning for Gustav Heinemann and his newly established GVP (the All-German People's Party). He became a pacifist and was eager to learn about other countries and meet their citizens, and made many journeys throughout Europe, beginning with London in 1956. He had hoped to work as graphic designer in a big international advertising agency. But the resentment towards Germans was still strong. The only friendly person he met on his travels to London was an advertising copy writer, an excellent cook who would occasionally invite him for dinner and who later became an international success as a writer of crime stories.

Werner spent many hours in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The collection of Gothic and medieval canvas inspired him. It was then that he discovered the multiple forms of ornament and punch-techniques, which he started to use as part of his elementary formal language. The punched golden backgrounds became the inspiration for the sealing technique he would soon thereafter invent.

Ingeborg Schreib-Wywiorski, 2016

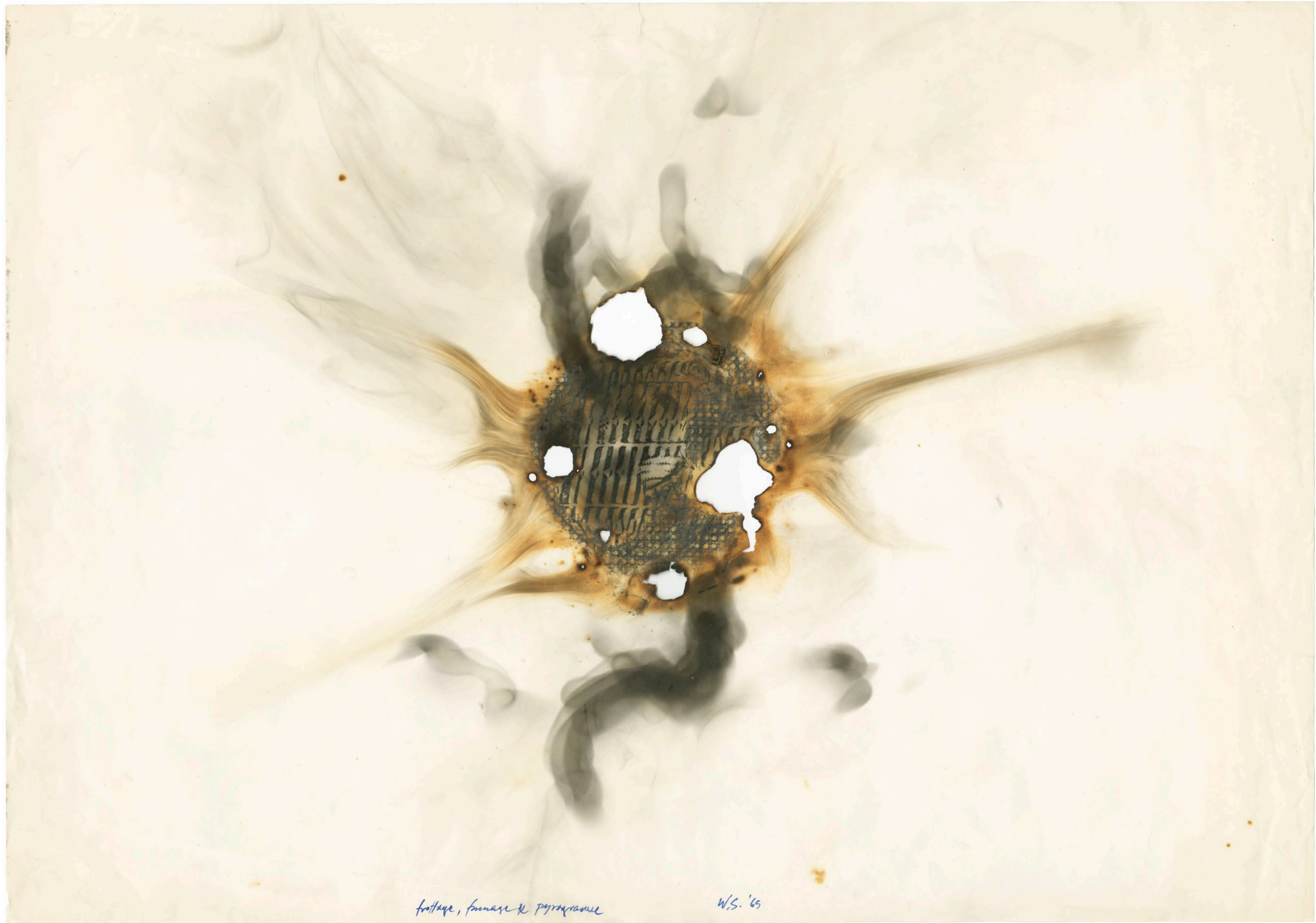
- 1 Translation by Isolde Stabenow from an article in the catalogue *Werner Schreib* for his 1992 exhibition at the Kundsthal Mannheim, Germany with assistance from Rozemarijn Keshvani and Ingeborg Schreib-Wywiorski.
- 2 These studios were part of the 19th century villa of the sculptor Bohle in Frankfurt/Main.



Verso of photograph on p. 22



Es gibt Tage, an denen die Tinte fliegen lernt (There are days on which ink learns to fly), 1965
Quill and ink on paper, 30 x 42 cm



Untitled, 1965
Frottage, fumage and pyrogravure, 62 x 88.5 cm

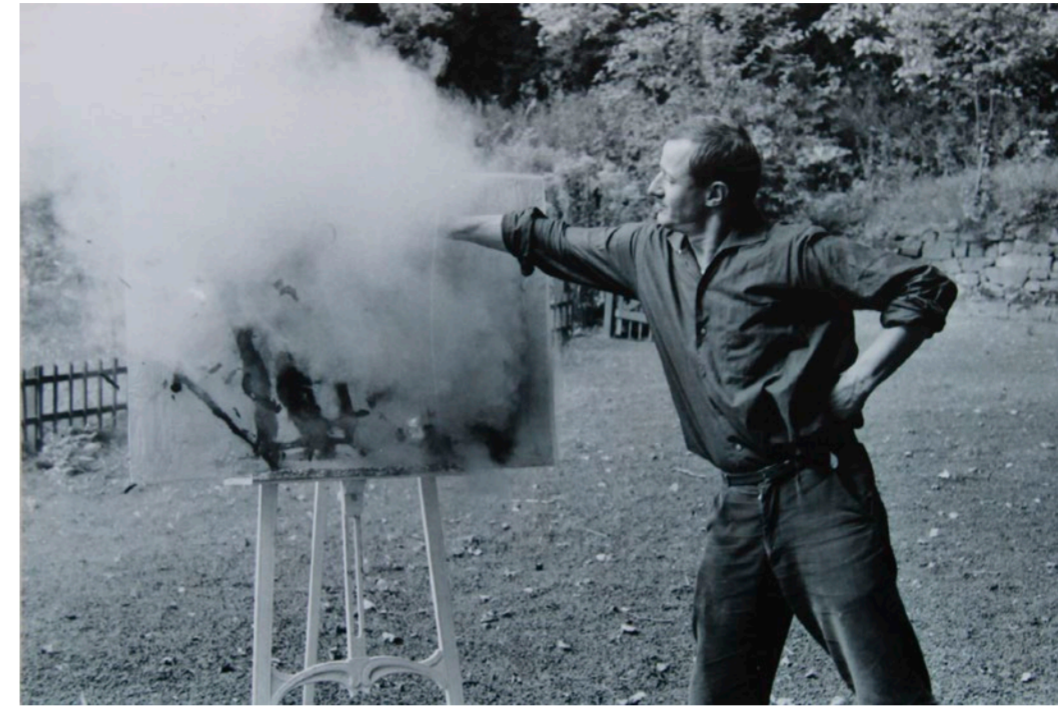
play with the fire

Dada was, in its time, like Futurism and Surrealism, understood as destructive. Yet the most surreal of situations is (as André Breton wrote in the second Manifesto) to take a gun and indiscriminately fire it into the crowd. A few weeks before his death Breton was told of a 'happening' in Texas, in which an all-American boy - Charlie Whitman - took a gun, climbed a tower, and from the raised platform killed twelve people, injuring another 31. Earlier, the gunman had killed both his mother and his young wife. Breton was deeply shocked.

In this example we have a recognized limit, which separates the reality of terror from the reality of the 'game' - that which we recognize as art. Art is, however, sometimes no less terrible; because whilst the picture or art-object may be understood as a facsimile or a fetishisation of the real, what we experience presents very real issues. What is suggested is a new semantic dimension to the abstract image, recognisable in the sinister language articulated by the cut-up canvases of Fontana, the burned panels of Yves Klein or Christo's bound objects. The uncanny speaks a language that is simultaneously cruel and beautiful. It is an aesthetic of violence. For example, the sight of a hydrogen bomb explosion - an outrageous, yet beguiling, spectacle that we can scarcely comprehend - a blazing catastrophe, as terrifying as the Angels of the Apocalypse.

Kurt Schwitters received many honours this year, yet it took an artistic movement 50 years to prevail over its critics. This problem faces us today, just by a different generation enriched by lessons learned from new experience.

Dada destroyed because destruction had become society's norm. German workers and French aristocrats, German aristocrats and French workers, they all murdered each other for the sake of 'honour'. Massacres on the Somme, the Marne and on the River Meuse in the year Dada started, 1916. Dada renounced '...images and language which have been devastated and rendered useless by journalism' (Hugo Ball). Dada ignored society because it was ripe for subversion. Now, fifty years later, it is amazing how the same images have become acceptable.



Werner Schreib, 'Pyrogravure' happening
Büdingen, 1966

We are thus obliged to be destructive. Because what the Establishment refers to as 'authentic', 'proper', 'lawful', 'constitutionally guaranteed' and 'inviolable' (or, in the language of the established art market, 'quality, innovation, originality') has long been shown to be discredited.

... Destruction in the field of visual media is a natural part of every activity; creation becomes understood as a process of conversion. Destruction is thus always transformative. The question as to what should be transformed presents itself through the image, and via the image, consciousness. Eyes and mind, these delicate senses, are the victims of our habit or thoughts. They can become desensitized, language no longer serves to describe the phenomena we witness. Each critic and every artist knows this. We try to use the same words with which we approach a Matisse or Picasso to describe a 'happening', pop art or Primary Structures event ... now, the image as a treasured artefact is intentionally abused by the artist; its exclusivity brought in to question...

Werner Schreib

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, no. 294, 19.12.1967, p.22
Trans. by publication team



Zwei Lesbierinnen (Two lesbians), 1952
 Quill and ink, 18 x 24 cm



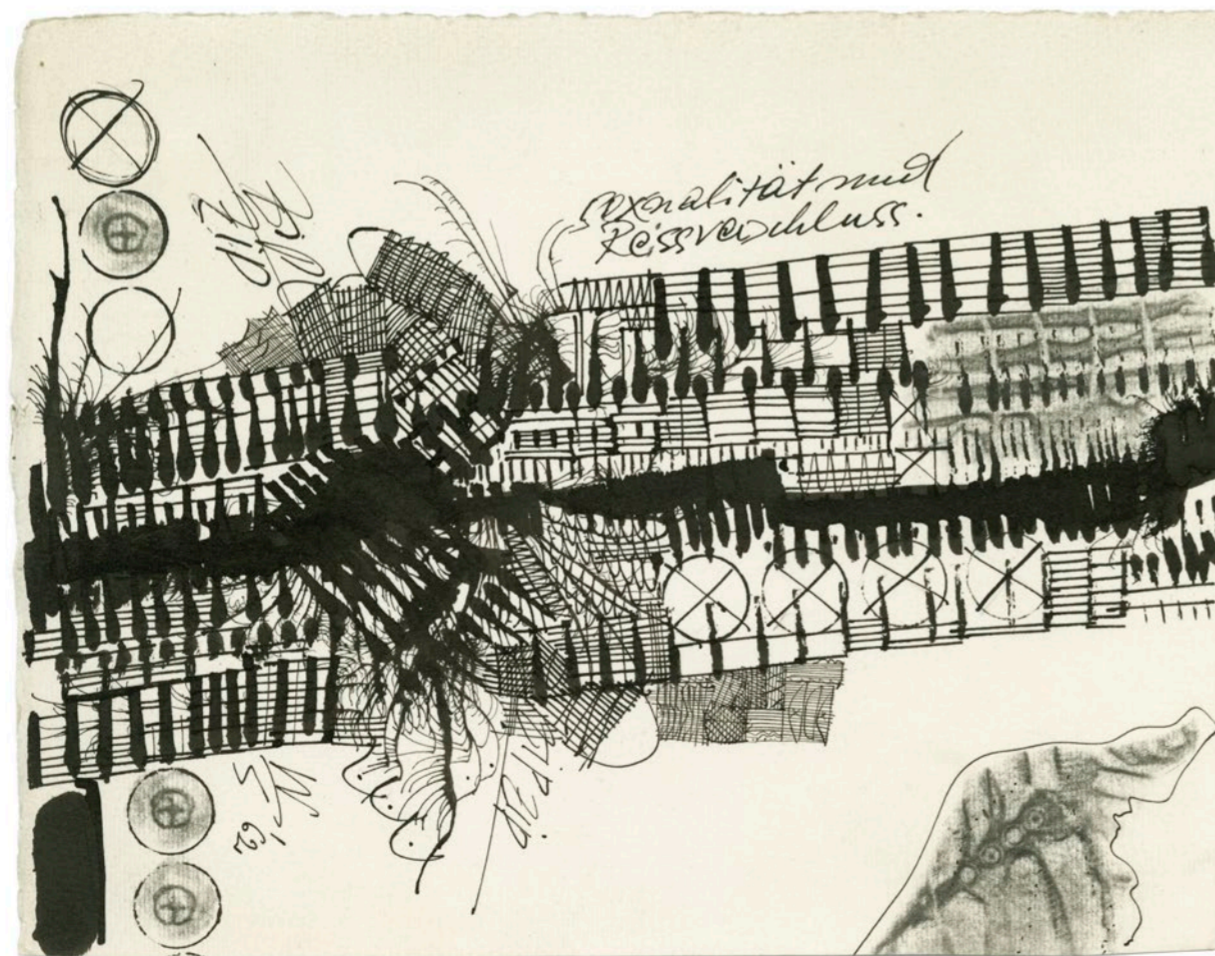
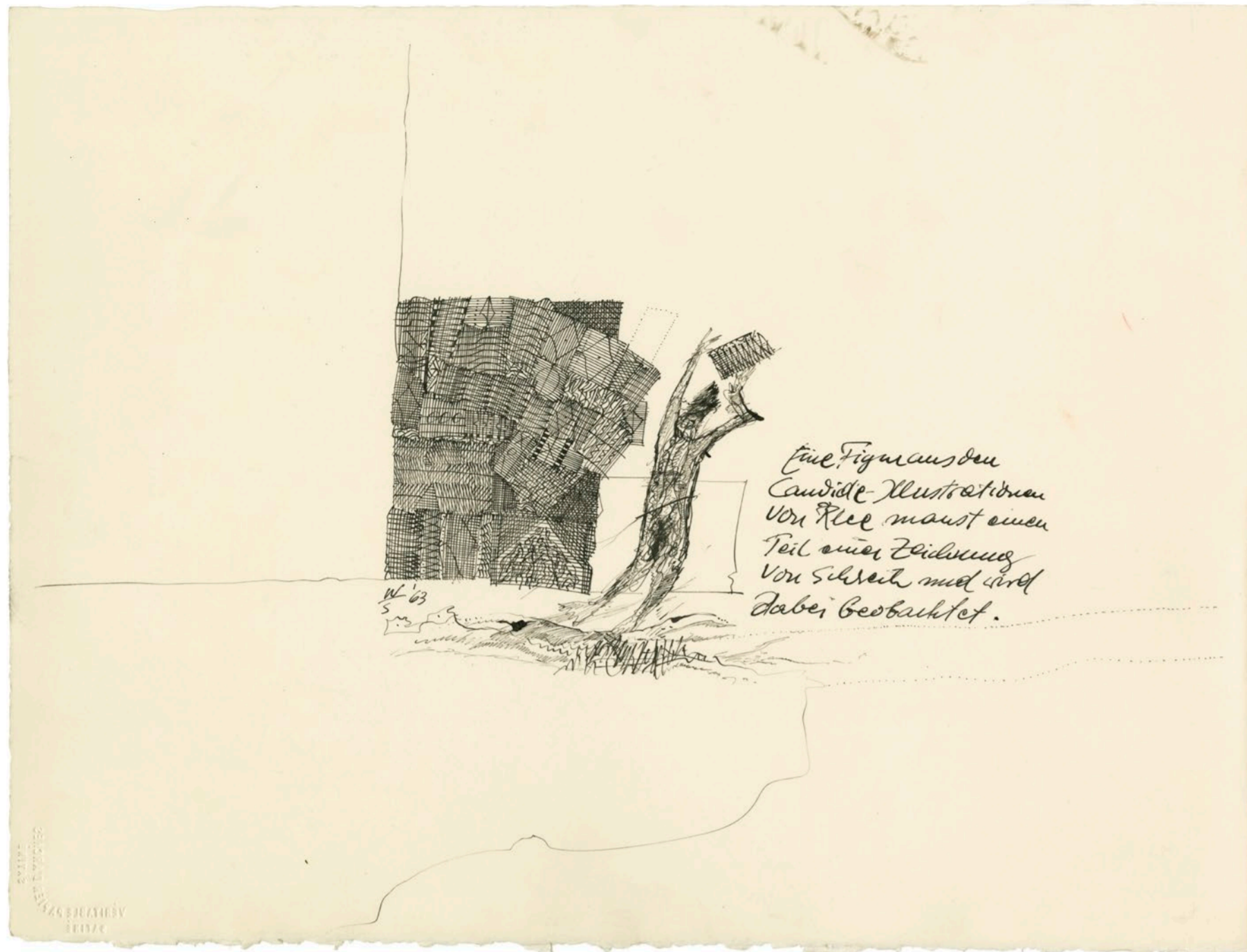
Der Organist (The Organist), 1953
 Quill and ink on paper, 43 x 30 cm



Zwei von den Siebenbergen (Two of those seven hills), 1957
 Quill and ink, 29 x 27.5 cm

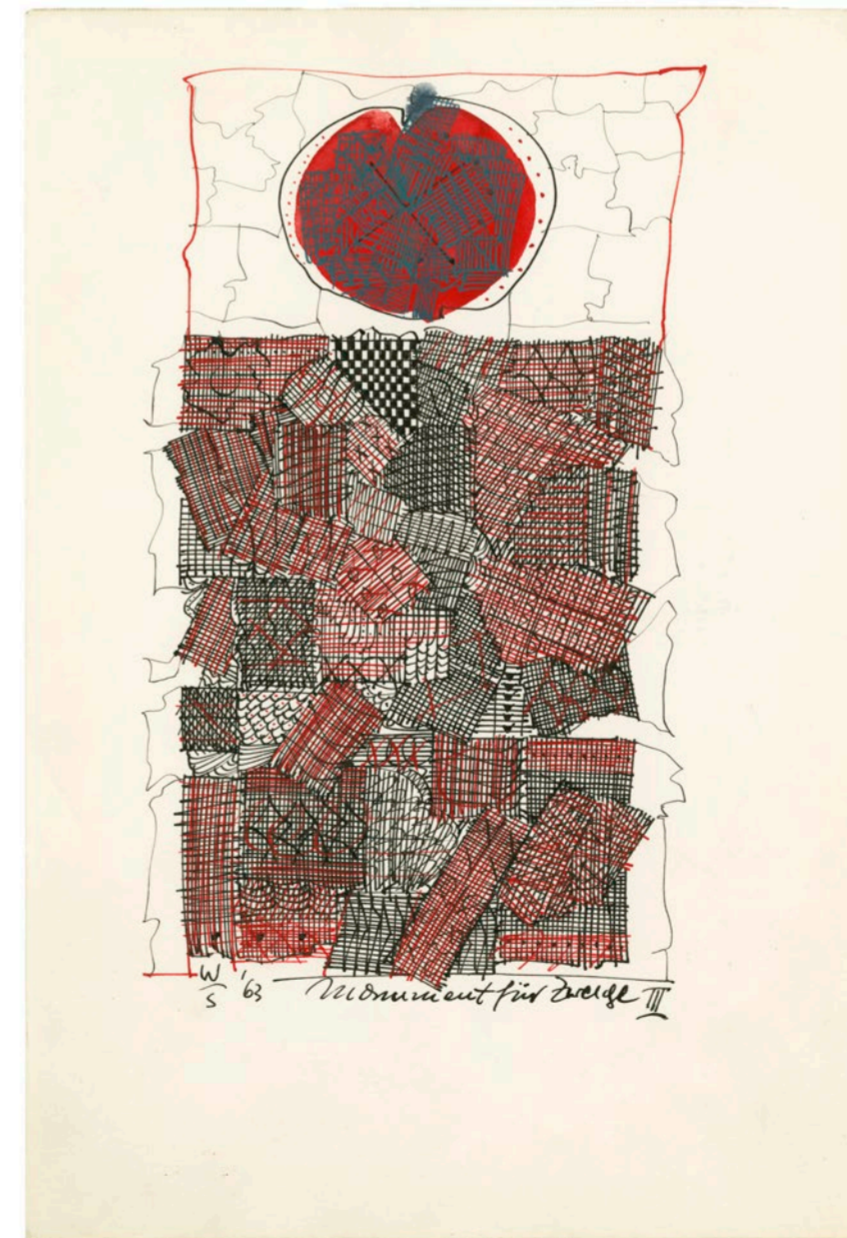


Woher kommen all die Leichen? (Where do all the bodies come from?), 1961
 Pyrogravure, 47 x 59 cm

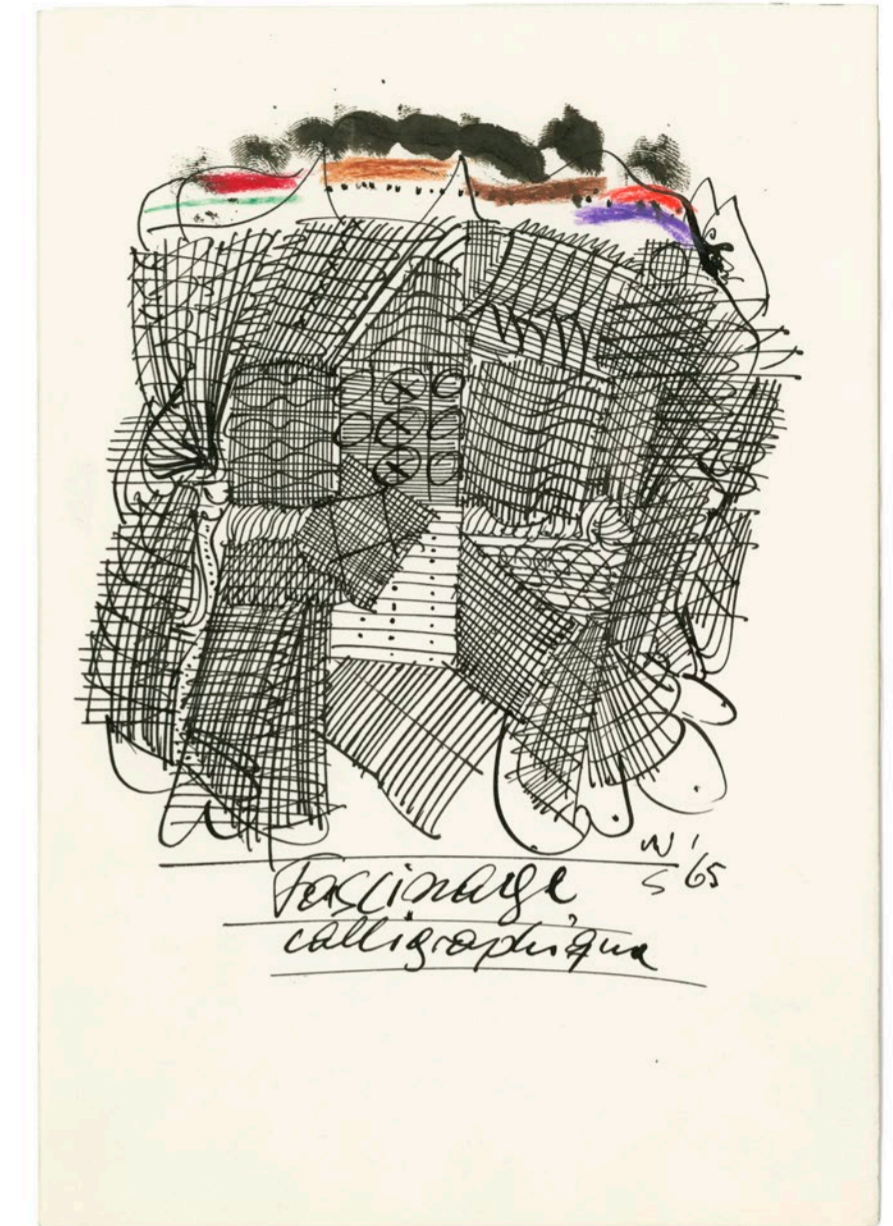


(top) *Eine Figur aus den Candide-Illustrationen* (A figure from a Candide illustration), 1963
(Paul Klee takes away part of a drawing by W. Schreib and is observed.)
Quill and ink, illustration on cardboard, 28 x 38 cm

Zip Zip, Sexualität und Reißverschluss (Zip Zip, Sexuality and Zipper), 1962
Frottage, quill and ink, 18 x 24 cm



Monument für Zwerge (Monument for dwarfs III), 1963
Colored pen drawing, 24,0 x 16,5 cm



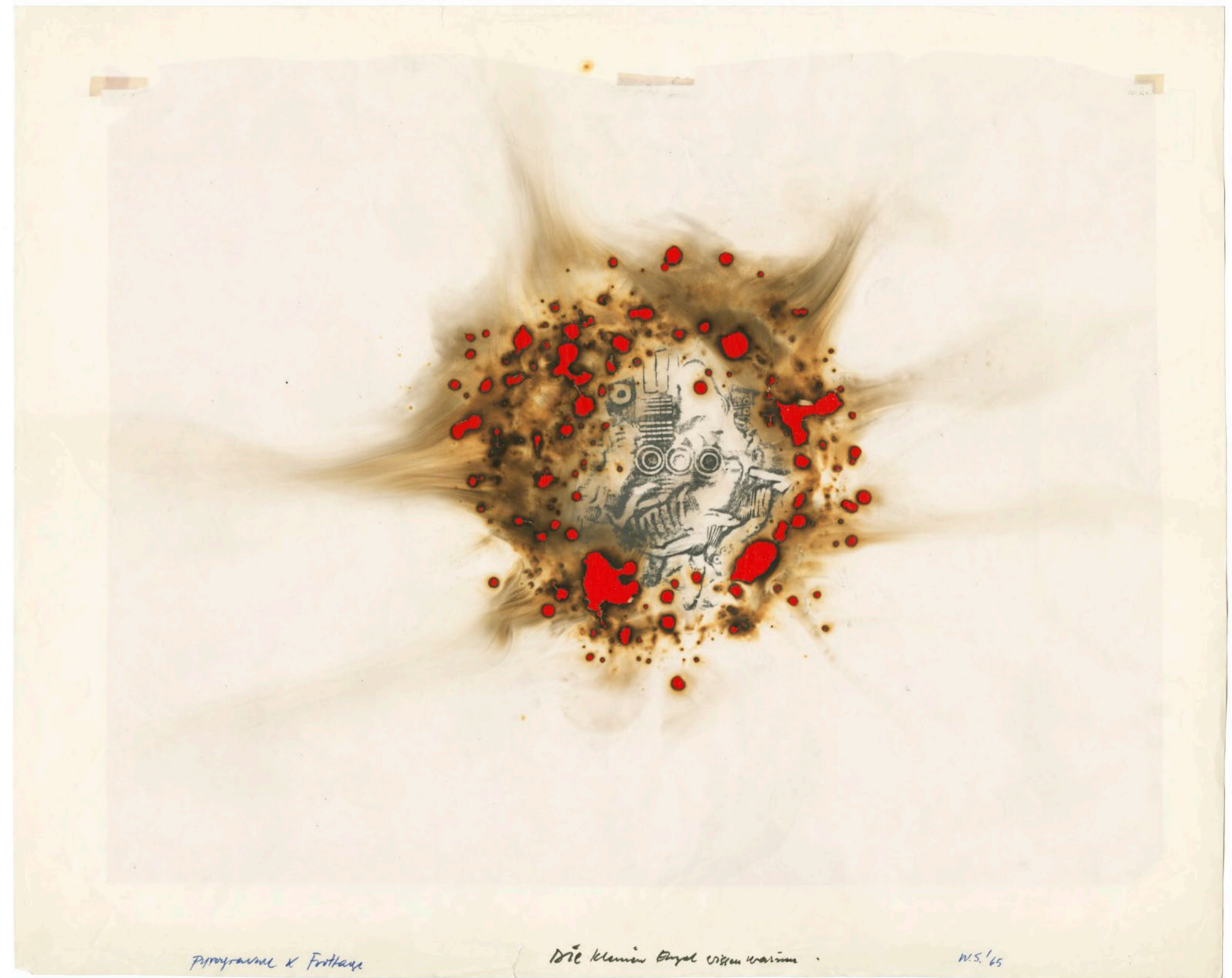
Fascinage calligraphique, 1965
Quill and ink with elevated colour on paper, 24 x 17 cm



Sie flüstern, sie murmeln ... (They whisper, they murmur...), 1964
 From the series 'Waiting for Godot' by S. Beckett
 Collage and frottage, 56 x 75 cm



Es gibt Dinge ... (There are things...), 1964
From the series 'Waiting for Godot by S. Beckett'
Collage and frottage, 56.8 x 76 cm



Die kleinen Engel wissen warum (The little angels know why), 1965
Pyrogravure and frottage, 60 x 75 cm



Pyrogravure Sémantique I, 1965
Pyrogravure, 65 x 50 cm



Pyrogravure Sémantique II, 1965
Pyrogravure, 65 x 50 cm



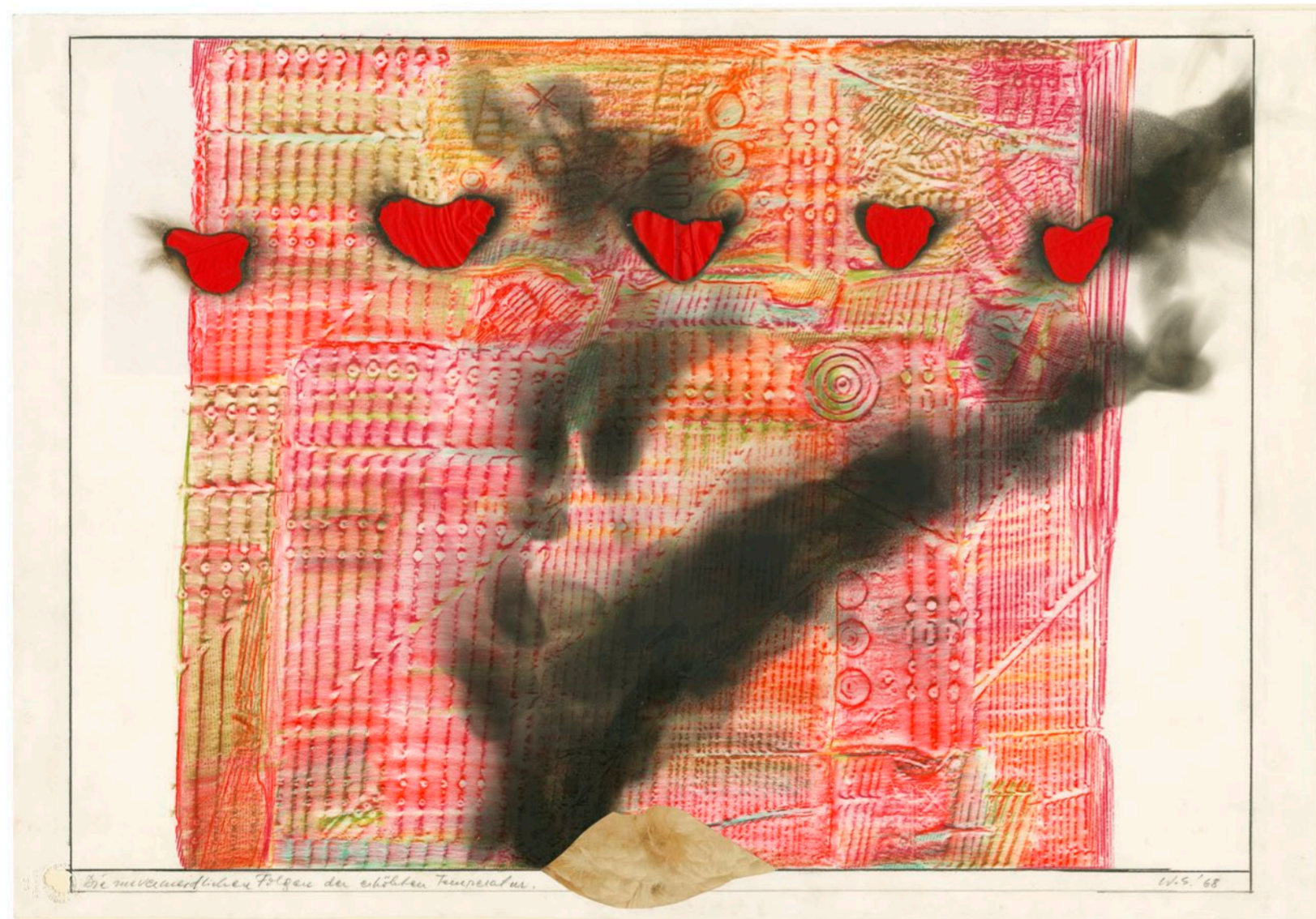


Taifun II (Typhoon II), 1966
Frottage, fumage, handmade paper, 31.5 x 26 cm

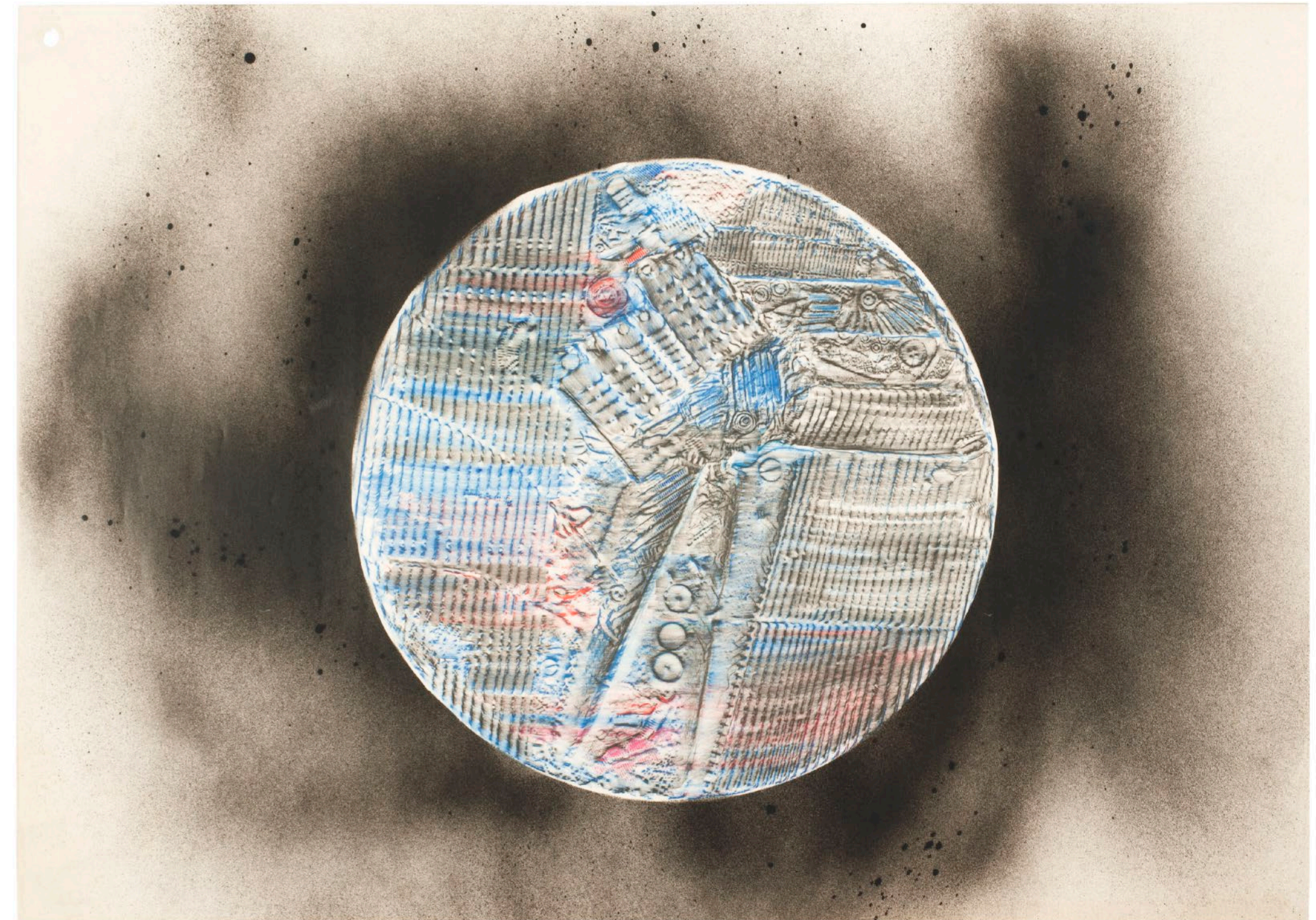


Hiroshima, 1966
Frottage, fumage, coloured chalk, handmade paper, 36.5 x 28.5





Die unvermeidlichen Folgen der erhöhten Temperatur (The inevitable effects of elevated temperature), 1968
Pyrogravure, frottage, fumage, coloured on cardboard, 44 x 63 cm



Untitled, 1968
Frottage, 62 x 88 cm



Gabriele Schreib in her miniskirt, 1964

the girl in a miniskirt

1964, my father Werner Schreib had spent several years studying the many revolutions in printing technology. He then travelled to Paris and London. We hadn't seen each other for a long time. I was fourteen years old; his little girl had become a wild and pretty young lady. Werner invited me to join him in Berlin, for the opening of his exhibition on 20 March at the book-art trade venue Camilla Speth. I was very happy to go with him.

It was the Easter holidays. I was with my mother Irmgard Schreib in the Harz mountains of Northern Germany. Werner, who lived in Frankfurt, was expected to collect me. My parents were divorced and I rarely visited with him. Before our little trip, he called me about ten times on the phone: 'Please do not forget to carry your passport with you, as it is necessary for the transit route we have to pass through Eastern Germany!' 'No, of course I won't!'

He came to our holiday address and we were thrilled to see each other. I was really crazy with the little present he gave to me: it was a red and blue miniskirt directly from Carnaby Street in London. So new-fashioned! I put it on. I felt so up-to-date and pretty. Soon we started our journey, talking about a lot of things. One hour later, we reached the nearby German border. We had twenty meters left to reach the frontier post, when I suddenly noticed Werner becoming pretty nervous. He left the car, opened his luggage, started to search his jacket and other clothes and after some time, he admitted, rather contritely, that he had forgotten his passport. I could not help but laugh, trying to do it silently.

It was about noon on Friday. The exhibition opening would start at 8 p.m. There was no way for Werner to get back to Frankfurt to pick up the missing document and be back on time. Within ten minutes, he had decided to go to the airport in Hannover. We were lucky to get a PAN AMERICAN flight which took us to Berlin within half an hour. I was so excited about this flight because I had never before travelled by airplane. I felt so very grown-up and important.

After all these complications, we finally reached Berlin where we stayed two days. The exhibition was a great success, many people came. Werner had calmed down and now cast himself in the role of an elderly man with a very young girl at his side. Many people were whispering and I could hear them fidgeting and asking themselves whether this was really the person who shared her life with this man or not. She was so young... and she wore such a nice miniskirt.

We sent each other several conspiratorial winks, but then, feeling we could hold the pretence no longer, we finally divulged the secret behind our little conspiracy. The audience gave us a rousing welcome with 'aahs' and 'oohs' at the moment when I finally presented my passport with the name 'Gabriele Schreib'. So it seemed the passport had come in handy after all! I was thrilled for I could see that Werner was so very proud of his (not so little) daughter. Visiting with my father during his exhibition, I was seeing a new side to his person and I became filled with great admiration and pride for my creative and enigmatic father Werner Schreib.

Gabriele Schreib, 2016

selected exhibitions

solo shows

1959	Galerie Schmücking, Braunschweig
1961	Woodstock Gallery, London Galleria Montenapoleone, Milan (with Lattanzi) Galerie Beno, Zürich (with Lattanzi) <i>Semantische Malerei</i> , Galerie Brusberg, Hannover (with Lattanzi) Galerie Le Soleil dans la Tête, Paris <i>Schwarz-Weiss 61</i> , Kestner-Gesellschaft Hannover, Wanderausstellung and Weitere Orte
1962	<i>La peinture sémantique</i> , Galérie le soleil dans la tête, Paris (with Lattanzi) <i>Warten auf Godot</i> , Schleswig-Holsteinisches Landesmuseum, Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig, und Reuchlin-Museum, Pforzheim <i>Semantische Bilder</i> , Kellergalerie Schloss Darmstadt, Darmstadt Bemalte Postkarten und Briefe deutscher Künstler, Altonaer Museum, Hamburg (Themenausstellung) <i>Sema / Lattanzi / Schreib</i> , Galerie Lutz & Meyer, Stuttgart
1963	<i>Werner Schreib</i> — <i>Semantische Bilder</i> , Galerie Sydow, Frankfurt Galerie Elitzer, Saarbrücken <i>Schrift und Bild</i> , Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, und Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden <i>Buchstaben, Schreibspuren, Signale</i> , Galerie d, Frankfurt
1964	<i>Werner Schreib</i> — <i>Semantische Miniaturen</i> , Galerie miniature, Berlin Sammlung Lierse, Städtisches Museum am Ritterplan, D-Göttingen Galleria Numero, Rome (with Lattanzi) <i>Pittura semantica</i> — <i>quadri nuovi di Werner Schreib</i> , Galleria Piemonte Artistico/Goethe Institut Turin
1965	Galleria Numero, Milan <i>Schreib / la poétique sémantique</i> , Galerie Gunar, Düsseldorf Galerie am Dom, Frankfurt
1966	Galerie Lauter, Mannheim <i>Postkarten Ausstellung</i> , Galerie Patio, Frankfurt
1967	<i>Schreib</i> — <i>Hommage à Heraklit et Beat</i> , Galerie C.D. Rothe, Wolfsburg
1968	<i>Paysages astronomiques</i> , Galerie Hilt, Basel
1969	Marielies-Hess-Stiftung e.V., Haus des Hessischen Rundfunks, Frankfurt <i>Werner Schreib / Zeichnungen Frottagen Grafik Bilder</i> , Galerie Dr. Ernst Hauswedell, Baden-Baden
1970	Galerie Kümmel, Köln
1972	<i>Werner Schreib Gedenkausstellung</i> , Kabinett Dr. Grisebach, Heidelberg <i>Werner Schreib Cachetage Frottage</i> ,Galerie von Kolczynski, Stuttgart <i>Werner Schreib</i> — <i>Gemälde, Frottagen, Collagen, Cachetagen und Graphik</i> , Galerie am steinernen haus, Manfred Schönbrunn, Frankfurt
1973	Galerie Huber & Herpel, Frankfurt
1974	<i>Das grafische Werk</i> , Kunsthalle Mannheim <i>Semantische Bilder</i> , Galerie Margarethe Lauter, Mannheim
1975	Stadtische Galerie Schloss Wolfsburg
1976	Galerie Dorothea Loehr, Frankfurt
1985	<i>Zeichnungen von 1959-69</i> , Galerie Patio, Neu-Isenburg
1987-88	Retrospektive <i>Werner Schreib</i> im Kunstverein der Stadt Siegen, anschließend im Kunstverein Ludwigsburg, in den Kulturämtern Soest und Hilden sowie in den Kunstvereinen Bamberg, Gütersloh, Paderborn und Bocholt
1989	Marielies-Hess-Stiftung, Frankfurt Galerie Lauter, Mannheim
1990	<i>Zeichnungen</i> , Galerie Lupke, Frankfurt
1991	<i>Minature e degni</i> , Galleria Peccola, Livorno
1991-92	<i>Werner Schreib Cachetagen Objektbilder Graphik</i> , Stadtische Kunsthalle Mannheim

group exhibitions

1956	<i>Neue Gruppe Rheinland-Pfalz / Malerei Graphik Plastik</i> , Frankfurter Kunstverein <i>5 Kollektivausstellungen Wiesbadener Künstler</i> , Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden
1956	Internationale Ausstellung <i>Künstlergruppe <Roter Reiter></i> , Schulneubau Rosenheimerstrasse, D-Traunstein, sowie Staatliches Kurhaus, D-Bad Reichenhall
1959	I. Biennale des Jeunes Artistes, Paris documenta II, Kassel <i>Farbige Graphik 59</i> , Kestner-Gesellschaft Hannover, Wanderausstellung, Hannover und weitere Orte <i>Junger westen</i> Städtische Kunsthalle, Recklinghausen
1960	VI. Mostra Internazionale Bianco e Nero, Lugano Arte Actual Aleman, Caracas, Bogota, Lima XXX. Biennale d'Arte, Venice II. Biennial of Prints, Tokyo

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1961	Internationale Malerei, Wolframs-Eschenbach
1962	International Prints, Cincinnati III. International Biennial of Prints, Tokyo Ausstellung 1962, Gesellschaft der Freunde junger Kunst, Baden-Baden
1963	<i>Schrift und Bild</i> , Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam Kunsthalle Baden-Baden
1964	VI. Exposition Internationale de Gravure, Lubljana I. Internationale der Zeichnung, Darmstadt <i>EDITION</i> , Galerie Brusberg, Hannover III. Internationale Triennale für farbige Original-Graphik, Kunstverein Grenchen, Parktheater <i>L'Art Jeune Contemporain en Allemagne</i> , Salon des Comparaisons, Gesellschaft der Freunde junger Kunst, München, Paris <i>was DA ist</i> , Galerie an der Nordweststadt Dorothea Loehr, Frankfurt a.M.
1965	<i>Buchstaben, Schreibspuren und Signale</i> , Galerie Friedrich + Dahlem, Munchen, und Hessischer Rundfunk, Frankfurt <i>Kunstfest in Büdingen</i> , Galerie am Rathaus, D-Büdingen Galerie tris, Wolf D. Klau, Kiel <i>Frankfurter Salon / Die Frankfurter Sezession und ihre Gäste</i> , Steinernes Haus, D-Frankurt
1966	I. Biennale de Gravure, Krakov <i>Junge Generation</i> , Akademie der Künste, Berlin <i>Tradition und Gegenwart</i> , Schloss Morsbroich, Leverkusen <i>Labyrinthe</i> , Berlin, Baden-Baden, Nürnberg
1967	<i>Fetisch-Formen</i> , Schloss Morsbroich, Leverkusen <i>Nuove Tecniche d'Immagine</i> , VI. Biennale San Marino Pittsburg International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pennsylvania <i>Strukturelles Ornament</i> , Galleria del Giorno, Milan Vancouver International Print Exposition, Canada <i>Das Blaue Bild</i> , Ludwigshafen <i>Herbstsalon '67</i> , Haus der Kunst, München <i>Collage 67</i> , Stadtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munchen <i>Deutsche Handzeichnungen und Aquarelle der letzten 20 Jahr</i> , Kunstverein Hannover Premio Internazionale per l'Incisione, Biella
1968	Exposition International des Dessins originaux, Rijeka Premio Internacional de Dibuix Joan Miro, Barcelona <i>Ornamentale Tendenzen</i> , Berlin, Leverkusen, Wolfsburg Wiener Secession", Grafik International, Wien British International Print Biennial, City Art Gallery and Museum, Bradford Neue illustrierte Bücher & Graphikmappen, Kunstverein Frankfurt a.M.
1969	Objekte und Bildreliefs, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart <i>Industrie und Technik in der deutschen Malerei</i> , Wilhelm-Lehmbruck-Museum, Duisburg <i>Napoleon 1969</i> — <i>Miniaturen nach, J.L. David</i> , Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig Neue illustrierte Bücher & Graphikmappen, Kunstverein Frankfurt Skulpturen im Park von Piestany
1970	<i>Ornamentale Gestaltungsweisen</i> , Karl- Ernst- Osthaus- Museum, Hagen III. Biennale de Gravure, Krakau <i>Die grünen Salons</i> , Baden-Baden
1971	Premio Internazionale per l'Incisione, Biella <i>Kunst der mittleren Generation</i> , Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig <i>Kunst im Büro</i> , Stuttgart
1972	3rd British International Print Biennale, Bradford City Art Gallery and Museums
1973	<i>Grafischer Realismus der Gegenwart</i> , Kunstverein Wolfsburg <i>Das kleinste Museum der Welt</i> — <i>Tabu Format</i> , Kunstverein Wolfsburg
1977	Internationale Buchkunstaussstellung, Leipzig
1979	<i>Schreib und Lattanzi</i> , Galerie am Palmengarten, Frankfurt
1980	<i>Edgar Ehses und Werner Schreib</i> , Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden
1983	<i>Kunst aus Frankfurter Privatbesitz</i> , Kunstverein Frankfurt
1986	Meisterwerke aus der Sammlung der Städtischen Galerie Wolfsburg, Kunstverein Wolfsburg
1990	Mercedes Benz, Mannheim
2013	<i>Exploding Utopia</i> , Laure Genillard, London

biography

1925	Born on 16 March in Berlin. He is orphaned at eight years and placed the guardianship of a relative, who puts him in boarding school.
1931-43	School in Berlin. He hopes to become an engineer.
1943	Volunteers for military service. Becomes Lieutenant in a minesweeping and safeguarding unit.
1945	Nearly drowned with his ship and is placed in an internment camp in Schleswig-Holstein. Remains after his release in Schleswig and begins to paint and draw.
1947	Moves to Kiel. Studies painting and graphics at the Art School.
1949	Marries and has a daughter, Gabriele Schreib
1950	He moves to Wiesbaden without his family and attends art school.
1950-8	First happenings with friends, a prolonged stay in England, and travels to Italy.
1959	After winning the first Biennale des Jeunes Artistes in Paris, he studies at the Academie Ranson, Paris, then in England under Stanley William Hayter. Learns the etching technique to multiple colour printing in a single pass. He meets Max Ernst. Gains more international solo and group exhibitions.
1960	Marries for the second time. Travels to London where he meets Luciano Lattanzi and together they develop the semantic alphabet of basic gestures. Besides etchings and cachetages, he begins to produce his first <i>Materialdrucke</i> .
1961	Returns to Germany. He lives in Frankfurt until his father's death.
1964	Receives awards at I. International der Zeichnung in Darmstadt and the Prix Ex Aequo at the Biennale in Krakow. He begins to implement his <i>cachetage</i> technique in concrete.
1965	Schreib actively engages and experiments with new forms of semi-mechanical manufacturing and print-making processes.
1966	He experiments with smoke and fire images (fumage and brûlage) and with rubbings (frottage).
1967	Starts designing limited edition porcelain for the Rosenthal Studio-Line.
1968	The 'Suite astronautique' created a series of astronomical landscapes, influenced by his admiration for Paul Scheerbart and the preparations for the first moon landing which are later produced as a series of limited edition prints numbered 100. He marries for the third time, to the copy writer Ingeborg Wywiorski.
1969	Dies on 20 September, while returning from the opening of his exhibition at Hauswedell in Baden-Baden when he collides with a jackknifed lorry on an unlit portion of the autobahn near Lorsch.



Werner Schreib 'Destruction Art' happening with disused tires, Frankfurt, 1968