6. Networking in and between Works

The work *All Things Involved in All Other Things* was created over a period of four years—from 1964 to 1968 (fig. 49). This is evident from the signature, which also specifies that Bauermeister began with the horizontal section in 1964, then added the vertical one in 1966, and finally completed it in May 1968. The first official presentation was planned for a gallery exhibition at Bonino in 1967; the work was not only listed in the exhibition catalog, but the announced exhibition title—"anything anywhere always anyway all things involved in all other things"—refers to the work and to Bauermeister's artistic strategy in general, because in sums up programmatic networking in a statement.[1] The title is, by Bauermeister's own account, an extension of a sentence by Marshall McLuhan: she has read the study *Understanding Media*, published in 1964, and expanded the technological and media extension of human beings to "things."[2] In Bauermeister's case, "things" means all the things or objects that the viewers can possibly imagine. The involvement of the things should be understood initially as immanent to her oeuvre with respect to the materials and techniques employed; it is necessary to include as well all aspects that serve their production, presentation, and distribution. *All Things Involved in All Other Things* was on view from December 1968 in the *Annual Exhibition Contemporary*

1 It is included in the list of her works in the exhibition catalog and dated 1966; *Bauermeister: paintings and constructions*, exh. cat. (New York: Galeria Bonino, 1967), n.p. The work cannot be identified in the photographs of the exhibition. The title of the exhibition is noted in Bauermeister's sketchbook; see Mary Bauermeister, "Skizzenbuch, 1965–67 USA," unpublished source, paginated by the artist, p. 11. Because all the exhibition catalogs of the Galeria Bonino were called *Bauermeister paintings and constructions*, it cannot be determined conclusively whether the title was also communicated officially or whether Bauermeister wrote down for herself the title of the work and four supplemental words in order to make her own artistic approach clear; see section 2.3.

2 McLuhan writes: "In the electric age, when our central nervous system is technologically extended to involve us in the whole mankind and to incorporate the whole of mankind in us, we necessarily participate, in depth, in the consequences of our every action." Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 4.

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American Sculpture at the Whitney Museum of American Art.[3] It is less remarkable that Bauermeister's art was seen as American, since her first participation in the *Whitney Annual Exhibition* had been in 1964, as had the museum's first purchase. It is more interesting that the Lens Box was seen in the context of an expanded concept of sculpture in 1968, since the exhibition was explicitly dedicated to the genre of sculpture.

Fig. 49: All Things Involved in All Other Things, 1964–68, ink, offset print, glass, glass lens, wooden sphere, straws, wooden objects and painted wood construction with rotatable elements, 221 x 72.5 x 91 cm, LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn (2014.186,0-0).

3 See *Annual Exhibition Contemporary American Sculpture*, exh. cat. (New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1968), n.p.

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The work consists of various components assembled to form a unit measuring 221 by 72.5 by 91 centimeters. Bauermeister began with a horizontal Lens Box, corresponding to her first presentations of that group of works in 1963 and 1964. A square recess has been cut into the back of the Lens Box; into which another, slightly oval, ground for drawing has been inserted. A kind of roller is found inside the wooden base of the Lens Box. The roller is completely covered with writing and drawing and can be rotated by a circular wooden disk on the right side of the work, which is also decorated with comments and drawings. There is also a square cutout in the front of the base, so that the roller can also be seen from there. This results in two different reception experiences: Looking from above into the horizontal Lens Box is a smaller detail that is influenced von the layers of glass with lenses, stones, wooden spheres, and pencils as well as reproductions of other works and additional written or drawn comments, so that the composition changes continuously as the roller is turned. In addition, the section with the roller is also recontextualized. A different part of the roller is seen when looking at the front. It was Bauermeister's intention to allow the viewers to change the composition continuously by turning the wooden disk attached to the outside, which would, on the one hand, activate the disk and, on the other, constantly challenge their interpretation.[4] A number of hands are drawn on the rotatable wooden disk, representing a direct appeal to the viewers. In addition, four names can be identified as well as a "moi" for Bauermeister herself. Each of the names is written on one of the hands and they identify people who contributed to making the Lens Box.[5] In addition to the appeal to touch the disk in order to change the composition, the many other hands may also stand for a work of art always being dependent on numerous helping hands that are not clearly identifiable, as was shown earlier using the example of Becker's definition of "art worlds."

4 Other works in which the viewers can actively determine the composition are *Magnetbilder* and *Hommage à Mar-bert Du Breer*, discussed above, but also *Poem Optique*; the two Lens Boxes have, in addition to layers of glass, panes that can be turned to change the composition. The Lens Boxes *Music Box* of 1966–68 and *Money Laundering Maschine or Fiat-Clean Money* of 1984–86 are constructed similarly to the lower part of *All Things Involved in All Other Things*; each has an integrated roller that can be altered by a construction on the side. A history of modern art work that encourage the viewer's physical intervention or for which it was at least intended when they were made, though it is no longer permitted today for conservation reasons, was presented in the exhibition *Spielobjekte: Die Kunst der Möglichkeiten* at the Museum Tinguely in Basel in 2014. In an interview in the accompanying exhibition catalog Bauermeister emphasizes the potential for activating when the viewers can change a composition; Frederik Schikowski, "Interview mit Mary Bauermeister: 'Was macht es mit euch, wenn ihr was ändert?,'" in *Spielobjekte: Die Kunst der Möglichkeiten*, exh. cat. Basel, Museum Tinguely, 2014 (Heidelberg: Kehrer, 2014), 34–43, esp. 39.

5 "Susi" and "Diter" were Bauermeister's sister and brother-in-law; both occasionally assisted her; "Albert" and "Carl" were the names of employees at that time.

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The vertical section begun in 1966 brings together a number of elements that are central to Bauermeister's oeuvre. Stones, straws, glass, lenses, wooden pens and spheres, drawn needles, hands, and musical notes can be made out as well as studio materials such as small containers of paint—many of them are linked by comments. The concepts for the work can be found in her sketchbook for the years 1965 to 1967: they make it clear that Bauermeister originally wanted to include still other aspects, including fluorescent paint that would react to ultraviolet light and objects on the outside of the base like a large brush applying paint.[6] As with other works planned in the sketchbook, with *All Things Involved in All Other Things* the level of conception must be distinguished from the actual execution; in the process of realizing the work the artist makes adjustments, which presumably grow out of the commentary system.

Because Bauermeister worked on it over a long period, it represents a merger of various elements that had been employed previously. At the same time, it is also the starting point for new things and programmatic in particular for the overall connectedness of Bauermeister's artistic work. First efforts in this direction include the aforementioned reciprocal references in the *Needless Needles* series and the insertion of reproductions of it in new works, but this is just one characteristic of a broader approach: the networking of works to one another results in the formation of metalevels as well as to a comprehensive assemblage, so that all the "things" in her oeuvre are networked to one another. Bauermeister referred to this reciprocal reference and development within her artistic works with a laconic comment directly below her signature. To the three years 1964, 1966, and 1968 she added "dead of the artist …" The omission points indicate where the year of her death can be entered. Although the work is said to have been "completed" in May 1968, Bauermeister is pointing out that it continues to develop with every work added to her oeuvre. A process that ends only when she passes away and no more works of art will follow. This should be understood to mean that the totality of motifs, techniques, and materials that had been developed up to the point of its completion will continue to be applied in the combination principle and commentary system in a general many-valuedness. This permanent recourse results in a constant refinement of the individual elements since they always contain (minimal) shifts and new contextualizations. Accordingly, future works will also have an effect on *All Things Involved in All Other Things*, since statements made in them change the overall orientation of the elements employed.

Pencil as Motif

An excellent example of this is the motif of a pencil, which is inserted into the work by drawing, with comments, and sculpturally as a wooden object. This can be traced back to the drawn and glued-on needles in *Needless Needles* works from 1963 to 1964,

6 See Bauermeister, "Skizzenbuch, 1965–67 USA" (see note 1), 19.

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since that was the first time Bauermeister thematized the objects she uses in the production process. In the years that followed she introduced drawings of her own hands in the process of drawing with a pencil.[7] In 1966 she created the Lens Box *Peng-cil*, in which she reflected in drawing on the variations that writing instruments, and in this special case "pencils," can take, though here no physical objects are inserted yet. The wordplay in the title gives the motif first level of meaning with connotations of violence, though the comic-book-like "peng" seems like a parody.

Different wooden objects in the form of pencils can then be found on the frame and in the recession of the Lens Box *Pen-g-cil Introverted or Hommage à Robert Breer* of 1967. From this point, writing instruments turn up in all variations, as drawing and as sculptural objects that in Bauermeister's oeuvre are the equals of the wooden spheres that were already omnipresent several years earlier.[8] After completing *All Things Involved in All Other Things*, she made *Absolute Master Piece/Peace* in 1969, a Lens Box in which the writing instruments are attached to the frame so that their tips point to the viewers (fig. 50). Especially in connection with the title, this can lead to an aggressive reading: the word "peace" seems like a threat here, since it is intended to ensure an "absolute master"—the playful interruption of that interpretation is provided by the word "piece," which denotes the work a "masterpiece."

All of these levels now influence the pencil motifs in *All Things Involved in All Other Things*, whether or not they were produced before or after that work. This is an essential aspect of the networking between the works. *Don't Defend Your Freedom With Poisoned Mushrooms or Hommage à John Cage* already made it clear that sociopolitical events can also be incorporated. They too are elements of the networking and therefore should not be seen in a different context from that of the pencil motif: the motifs are appropriated artistically, repeatedly inserted into works, and varied in the process—the commentary system merely draws on heterogeneous sources.

7 This motif and the tools or instruments of the production process are examined in more detail in section 6.2.

8 Bauermeister has pointed out that she decided to include pencils as objects because she heard from an art critic who equated the many round forms in her work with the female laying of "eggs," and in response she wanted to create a "male" counterweight. This lends the pencils an ironic and emancipatory dimension that is at the same time a feminist commentary; Hauke Ohls, "Interview to Mary Bauermeister by Hauke Ohls," in *Mary Bauermeister: 1+1=3*, exh. cat. (Milan: Galeria Gariboldi, 2017), 6–44, esp. 18.

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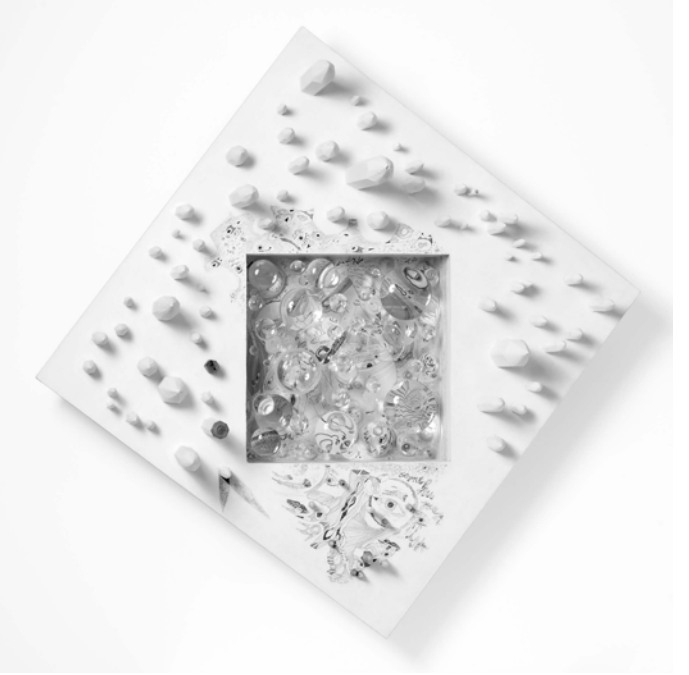
Fig. 50: Absolute Master Piece/Peace, 1969, ink, glass, glass lens, wooden sphere, wooden object and painted wood construction, 80 x 80 x 45 cm, Studio Gariboldi, Milan.



Network-Like Networking

The title *All Things Involved in All Other Things* already refers explicitly to the status of comprehensive connectedness. Here we are working with the concept of networking in order to relate it to assemblage theories so that the connections within one work and between several can be grasped. The concept of the network, by contrast, should not be applied explicitly to the works of art. The minimal definition is simply a "number of points or nodes and their connections or edges."[9] This can, however, be further specified, so that, among other things, one had to "imagine an unhierarchical, acentric, modularly ordered, self-organizing, and communicatively densely coupled linking of individual elements" in order to obtain a more meaningful con-

9 Arno Schubbach, "Was sich in Bildern alles zeigen kann: Überlegungen mit Blick auf die Visualisierung von Netzwerken," in *Zeigen: Die Rhetorik des Sichtbaren*, ed. Gottfried Boehm, Sebastian Egenhofer, and Christian Spies (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2010), 207–32, esp. 211.

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cept of the network.[10] Beyond that, not only is a "heterogeneous, hybrid, temporalized circulation" necessary but the possibility of identifying net-creating and net-using entities collapses.[11] It would be conceivable to assume a "network metaphor" in order to juxtapose "metaphysics aimed at unity" with a fundamental "heterogeneity and connection."[12] These approaches, however, relate to Bauermeister's oeuvre in an ambiguous way, since, on the one hand, she repeated appears in her works as their author and makes herself a theme; on the other hand, the element integrated by her are transferred into a logical internal to the work that intrinsically functions with the identity of reflection of the object. It certainly appears at first as if all the possible themes, techniques, materials, and styles are appropriated without recognizable hierarchy and are granted a certain contingency. Behind every incorporation and subsequent development within the overall association of all the works, however, stands the decision to permit that circulation within the oeuvre. The networking is therefore more precise, since the connection of "identical elements" across different spatial and temporal contexts includes Bauermeister's approach in the combination principle and commentary system.[13] To avoid the risk of a double coding with the concept of the assemblage therefore, the term "networking" will be retained and further expanded in the epilogue.

Using Latour, however, it is possible to shift the focus in a fruitful way: For him, a network is "not a thing out there," but rather explicitly the specific way a text about a phenomenon is written.[14] The network judgment is thus by no means made about an object; on the contrary, everything can be described in a network-like way, since that is the way to activate (new) translations of something, for example, of a work of art or an entire oeuvre. It is simply about give an account of the "trace left behind by some moving agent," in all its facets.[15] Latour's understanding of the term "network"

10 Julia Gelshorn and Tristan Weddigen, "Das Netzwerk: Zu einem Denkbild in Kunst und Wissenschaft," in *Grammatik der Kunstgeschichte: Sprachproblem und Regelwerk im Bild-Diskurs; Oskar Bätschmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Hubert Locher and Peter J. Schneemann (Emsdetten: Imorde, 2008), 54–77, esp. 58.

11 Sebastian Giessmann, *Die Verbundenheit der Dinge: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Netze und Netzwerke* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2016), 421.

12 Gelshorn and Weddigen, "Das Netzwerk" (see note 10), 58. In their text Gelshorn und Weddigen also speak of the problem of the ubiquitous use of the concept of network, which they call "network paradigms" this could be "exposed in the future as an 'ether' of the turn of the millennium that explained everything," but at the time the influence of the network on cultural theory was impossible to avoid; ibid., 73.

13 See Giessmann, *Die Verbundenheit der Dinge* (see note 11), 15.

14 Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 131.

15 Ibid., 132. This trace can also be called a "trajectory." It is a more recent concept from Latour. See Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 38–42.

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is thus better suited to the (descriptive) approach if we are trying to give an adequate account of Bauermeister's works.

Networking is omnipresent in her oeuvre, not only because she repeatedly takes up again materials, techniques, or styles or specific elements that refer only to one work but also and above all by means of picture-to-picture references, when already executed works are integrated into a new one. There is also the reverse case when Bauermeister refers in a current work to a future one by means of the commentary system.

6.1 Picture-to-Picture References

There are numerous examples in Bauermeister's oeuvre of her inserting photographic reproductions of her own works into new works. They are then commented on or altered with materials such as wooden spheres, pencils, lenses, writing, straws, and stones. Photographs of works are not an exclusive way of establishing connections; sometimes works are sketched or referred to in writing. One also finds individual motifs such as needled or a drawn seam as connecting elements.

In general, Bauermeister used picture-to-picture references to establish links between them that can then change to another level of connection, resulting in unities of several works. To approach this phenomenon, I select from the many concepts that have employed to describe visual connections the term "interpictoriality."[16] Although the term is recognizably close to "intertextuality" and emerged from that field of research, the theory of intertextuality cannot simply be transferred to visual artifacts because there is a risk of undermining their pictorial status.[17] "Interpicto-

16 Guido Iskenmeier understands interpictoriality to be a concept with potential for international connectivity and a complementary partner to "intertextuality." In his view, the term "interpictoriality" should be preferred over such terms as ""Interikonizität," "Interbildlichkeit," and "Interpikturialität"," because it can be related to the English term "pictorial"; Guido Iskenmeier, "Zur Einführung," in *Interpiktorialität: Theorie und Geschichte der Bild-Bild-Bezüge*, ed. Guido Iskenmeier (Bielefeld: transcript, 2013), 7–10, esp. 7. "Interpikturialität" as described by Valeska von Rosen does, however, clearly overlap with Iskenmeier's understanding of his concept; Valeska von Rosen, "Interpikturialität," in *Metzler Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft: Ideen, Methoden, Begriffe*, ed. Ulrich Pfisterer, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, Weimar 2011), 208–211.

17 Elisabeth-Christine Gamer offers a broader look at the debate on the "intertextuality of pictures" in her eponymous study. She analyzes intertextuality as well as the attempts to apply it to images along with a "terminological exploration" of the neologisms developed; Elisabeth-Christine Gamer, *Die Intertextualität der Bilder: Methodendiskussionen zwischen Kunstgeschichte und Literaturtheorie* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2018). For a critical assessment of the application of intertextuality to images, see Hanne Loreck, "Dem Vernehmen nach …: Kritische Anmerkungen zu einer Theorie der Interpiktorialität," in *Interpiktorialität: Theorie*

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rial" will be used to describe any connection between two images, regardless of their media context and how this connection established can be further refined: they can be purely formal or stylistic correspondences or nuances of subject matter that evoke a prior image.[18]

The special quality of Bauermeister's oeuvre is that she worked primarily with self-references, and they are not hidden hints that only an audience familiar with art can identify but rather photographic miniatures of her own works that are clearly recognizable in the composition. It was necessary for viewers to know Bauermeister's previous works; should that not be the case, she often included the title of the (reproduced) work or parts of it in the new one.

In *All Things Involved in All Other Things*, for example, the Lens Boxes *I'm a Pacifist But War Pictures Are Too Beautiful* of 1964–66 and *Some Nice Decorative Colours (… For Attraction)* of 1966 are included on the roller as color photographs, each in a round cutout. The first of the latter was also integrated into the overall composition as a drawing, continuing the color scheme of the Lens Box on the roller and placing a mesh of lines, circles, and letters next to the reproduction. In addition, the word "Pacifist" in uppercase letters can be read above the inserted detail. The part of *I'm a Pacifist But War Pictures Are Too Beautiful* that is reproduced already contains an inserted work, namely, *Trichterrelief* (Funnel Relief) of 1963. This represented another level of interpictoriality since the work that represents a second-order picture-to-picture reference is also integrated into *All Things Involved in All Other Things*. The numerous drawn circular forms on the roller next to the cutout refer to the round elements in *Trichterrelief*, a work based on Bauermeister's point structures and the round forms of modeling compound. In the reference to *Some Nice Decorative Colours (… For Attraction)*, Bauermeister was being even more explicit since she wrote not just a single word from the title around the cutout but rather the full title.

There are formal reasons why the reproduced works are usually inserted into the new works as round cutouts. They are thus integrated as another element into an overall composition in which round forms are frequent. A drawn hemisphere applied to the frame or the background of a Lens Box is usually integrated into a commentary system next to it that is also round. The older works inserted thus enter into a (homogeneous) compound that does not appear to be antithetical on principle. Nevertheless, because they differ in color the photographic reproductions can always be recognized as such. On the one hand, this emphasizes the networking of

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und Geschichte der Bild-Bild-Bezüge, ed. Guido Iskenmeier (Bielefeld: transcript, 2013), 87–106, esp. 93–94.

18 In order to do justice to processes of picture-to-picture reference, Iskenmeier described fourteen concepts, all of which represent a refinement of interpictoriality; Guido Iskenmeier, "In Richtung einer Theorie der Interpiktorialität," in Iskenmeier, *Interpiktorialität* (see note 17), 11–86, esp. 76.

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the works—they are not foreign bodies in a new context; rather, there is a general connectedness of all the works; on the other hand, with this approach Bauermeister ensured that the Lens Boxes, stone pictures, and point-structure pictures remain exactly identifiable. The style of the reproduced cutout is in that respect congruent with its environment also in the way it is inserted so that it seems difficult to imagine that Bauermeister could have used someone else's artwork here. The recession of the horizontal Lens Box of *All Things Involved in All Other Things* can serve as an example here: in the background, which surrounds the roller in a square, small cutouts of *Some Nice Decorative Colours (… For Attraction)*, *308,975 Times No … Since …* and *In Memory of Your Feelings or Hommage à Jasper Johns* have been inserted. The specific works can probably be recognized only by an eye trained in Bauermeister's art. In general, however, the individual elements on the reduced cutouts conform more to the surroundings into which they have been inserted.

There are also picture-to-picture references that remain within one work, so that an artwork has an explicit reference to the same work. There is a modified miniature of *All Things Involved in All Other Things* drawn on the roller of *All Things Involved in All Other Things*. It is mirrored and has several additional elements that are not part of the final work. Among other things, there are clearly more wooden pencils sticking out of the side of the work—that is to say, materials that Bauermeister certainly could have attached. There are, however, other additions that could not have been implemented or only with difficulty: In the final work, a narrower and dense field of straws has been integrated on the right side of the vertical section, whereas on the left site the straws are spread out more and therefore take up more room. Accordingly, in the drawing on the roller the larger section of straws is on the right, and several straws extend beyond the termination of the work. It even seems as if they stick out of the side of the work and keeping getting larger as soon as they have left the frame of the Lens Box. At some distance from the work, the caricatured drawn straws are deformed, and at that point at the latest one has the impression that the straws are meandering through the room.

Bauermeister added written comments to this section, and one sequence can be decoded as "straws, bigger straws, bigger straws flyin … took off." The drawing of the work and the addition of the "bigger straws flyin" clarifies in particular the aspect that Bauermeister intends for the picture-to-picture references as a way to develop her works further. The viewers perceive both "versions" of *All Things Involved in All Other Things* simultaneously; one need only shift focus from the drawn miniature to the Lens Box as a whole. But because the Lens Box is the support of the drawing, and it is in turn one component of the work as a whole, even if another section is seen, synchronicity has to be assumed: The visual presence of *All Things Involved in All Other Things* as it can be seen in the exhibition venue of the LVR-LandesMuseum in Bonn is not final in character, because as soon as one discovers the drawing on the roller,

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the version with the flying straws is (also) valid according to Bauermeister's many-valued aesthetic.

The picture-to-picture references in Bauermeister's work establish networks to other works in her own oeuvre, which likewise initiates a constant reinterpretation, since the works are embedded in new, expanded context. With every reference that is added, the previous work also changes, much as with the element of the wooden pencils. That is only the case, however, because Bauermeister does not think of the components of her oeuvre as solitary—rather, all things are involved in all other things.

Repetitions and Their Differences

In connection with interpictoriality, one can speak of "pictorial memory": Bauermeister secured her own works in the new one and in the process performs a self-canonization; in addition, interpictorial references should be understood as "'machines' that generate meaning and produce difference."[19] A painted or photographed quotation can never be seen as a direct transfer because differences in the material, medium, and even format reign. This necessary deviation already triggers a process that is exponentially increased by Bauermeister's commentary system. The mass of picture-to-picture references, their different embedding in the works, and Bauermeister's specific aesthetic permit a permanent production of difference. Moreover, not only do the picture-to-picture references initiate a self-canonization but also, complementing that, the continuous repetitions also have other productive qualities: they are a "process that creates identity" by which Bauermeister affirms herself as an artist and in parallel with which a "larger aesthetic unity" is created.[20]

This "unity" results from the specific nature of the self-repetition which brings out differences between the works when an older work or a specific element (of writing, drawing, or material) is repeated in a current work. The networking works in both directions; it has a generally transformative influence:

> "Repetition is no longer a repetition of successive elements or external parts, but of totalities which coexist on different levels or degrees. Difference is no

19 See ibid., 39–50.

20 Verena Krieger and Sophia Stang, "Wiederholungstäter: Die Selbstwiederholung als künstlerische Praxis in der Moderne," in *Wiederholungstäter.: Die Selbstwiederholung als künstlerische Praxis in der Moderne*, ed. Verena Krieger and Sophia Stang (Cologne: Böhlau, 2017), 7–17, esp. 13ff. Michael Lüthy declares with regard to modern art that it fundamentally leads to "universal phenomena or repetition"; for him they structure the "art field"; Michael Lüthy, "Serialität als Selbstreflexion," in ibid., 19–28, esp. 22.

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> longer drawn *from* an elementary repetition but is *between* the levels or degrees of a repetition which is total and totalising every time."[21]

In order to understand what happens in works of art, an extended understanding of the term "repetition" has to be assumed, since difference as a productive element occurs in the space between the different repetitive movements. There is the literal repetition of a certain element, for example, of a drawn needle, a glued-on stone, or the reproduction of a Lens Box and the totality of repetitions that is connected with the specific repeated element in general—in the case of the latter, Deleuze also speaks of a "profound repetition of the internal totalities."[22] The recurrent repetition of the totality also leads to the unfinished past of Bauermeister's oeuvre, since at precisely that point, the understanding of difference begins: direct occurs in the interaction of two repetitions and then continuously changes the already finalized works. Using the combination principle and the commentary system Bauermeister produces a situation in which a repeated material, word, or entire work is not merely employed again but the difference movements result in an overall aesthetic unity of the oeuvre in which the works continuously affect one another. For that reason, the concept of the network is not employed here for the compound of works, since, on the one hand, that causes one to lose sight of the object itself, since it is substantially about the connections; on the other hand, it suggests a stability that is not possible but has to be renegotiated each time: "The things are present; they form arrangements, ensembles, or assemblages without for that reason also being networks in each case."[23]

Bauermeister made it clear that in her work she did not want past and present to be seen simply as intertwined with each other by addressing future works as well by means of the commentary system in her works: sometimes the exact reference to the three levels of past, present, and future cannot be distinguished, for example, in the comment "this is part of another painting," which occurs frequently in the notational iconicity of her works.[24] Bauermeister was referring to the section that

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21 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 1997), 287.

22 Ibid.

23 Hans Peter Hahn, "Der Eigensinn der Dinge: Einleitung," in *Vom Eigensinn der Dinge: Für eine neue Perspektive auf die Welt des Materiellen*, ed. Hans Peter Hahn, (Berlin: Neofelis, 2015), 9–56, esp. 27–30. In arguing that a network metaphor loses sight of the objects themselves, Hahn refers to Graham Harman's object-oriented philosophy. Harman intends it primarily as a challenge to Bruno Latour's actor-network theory; Bruno Latour, Graham Harman, and Peter Erdélyi, eds., *The Prince and the Wolf: Latour and Harman at the LSE* (Winchester: ZERO, 2011). This debate is assessed in Hauke Ohls, *Objektorientierte Kunsttheorie: Graham Hamans spekulative Philosophie im Kontext einer (nicht-)relationalen Ästhetik* (Hamburg: AVINUS, 2019).

24 The transformation into "this is not this painting" seems to occur with the same frequency; there is also a Lens Box from 1966–67 with that title. The comment "this is part of another

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contains this comment—but that is not part of the painting. In *All Things Involved in All Other Things*, "this is part of another painting" can be found several times. One example is placed on the roller, where the comment is written around an inserted reproduction of *Some Nice Decorative Colours (… For Attraction)*. The comment seems to be an obvious statement that is easily understood. "This is part of another painting" also occurs in the recession of the horizontal Lens Box, and here the sentence does not refer to an inserted work; rather, it is positioned in a mesh of "ja," "no," and circular structures. This section refers explicitly to another work, but it is not clear which one it is.

Based on the difference movements running through the oeuvre as a whole, a not-yet-executed work can be manifested, as is clear from other comments. In the Lens Box *Needless Needles Vol. 5*, two retrospective comments can be found written in the upper left corner: "idea from last painting" and "idea from before last painting"; with "and/or" Bauermeister connected the statement "idea for last painting." This section, which also has a drawn seam, is thus an idea that is supposed to have been established in the previous work; the statement also contains an ambiguity, since it could also be read as a reference to Bauermeister's final painting. That the word "idea" could refer to that small and arbitrary insight was already described in the chapter on notational iconicity. Accordingly, the statement need not refer to the theme of the needle that determines the work; in principle, every element should be considered. On the right side of the Lens Box, "idea from next painting" again refers to the future dimension. This time, however, it is a reference to a coming work not yet executed, and it is found in a section that was made in 1964. The section is separated by a line, and there are no written or drawn elements within it, just a seam with four stitches simulated on the upper edge. One should not conclude from that the next painting by Baumeister contains no idea or that an explicit void is expressed here; rather, the idea could already be manifested by networking. It could be contained in the section but it is not yet possible to perceive it, since the Lens Box was in the process of being executed—it is playing with levels of time.

Bauermeister does not seem to have intended for a future work to be actually "inscribed" materially into an already existing one. Rather, the possibility exists that the ideas that are manifested in other works will find expression precisely in this one section. That can happen if the totality of the oeuvre is conceived as a compound. The works still to come in which new repetitions are constantly being carried out permit a production of difference that permits a reference back in both directions that is also a reference in advance. When something in the future is addressed in Bauermeister's works, a section is deliberately left free for it, or it is identified as part of another work, it is a sign of the intended networking that is supposed to unfold.

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painting" occurs in every conceivable transformation in Bauermeister's works, often spelled "p-art" and "an-other," in order to activate additional levels of meaning within the words.

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Any use of the combination principle and commentary system in essence has the potential to add something new to a particular element, which changes its overall orientation—and Bauermeister left room for these changes already when executing her works.

Square Tree Commentaries

The picture-to-picture references within a work can be nested between several others to such an extent that one has to assume an extension of a picture-to-picture schema; this can be observed in the Lens Box *Square Tree Commentaries* of 1966 (fig. 51). The work measures 76.8 by 76.5 by 16.2 centimeters, and its title should definitely be understood literally: it consists of comments on *Square Tree* of 1965, and the plural is important. A photographic reproduction of the Lens Box *Square Tree* is inserted in the background of the subsequent commentary work (fig. 52). The initiating work is a square Lens Box composed of (written and drawn) comments, wooden spheres, and glass lenses. Behind it stands a small wooden dolphin, or mooring spar, that has been sawn through lengthwise; it is an object from a harbor to which a ship would have been moored.[25] That also explains the title *Square Tree*, since it is a square Lens Box with a wooden dolphin that was originally a tree.

25 Bauermeister also employed the other half of the dolphin in 1965 as material for the Lens Box *Half Tree*. She was able to take at least two dolphins from Staten Island to her studio in 1963. The second one was not sawn through and was used for the lens-box ensemble *Three Trees*; that dolphin has since been exhibited several times separately as a found object titled *Hafenklotz* (Harbor Spar).

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Fig. 51: Square Tree Commentaries, 1966, ink, offset print, glass, glass lens, wooden sphere and painted wood construction, 76.8 x 76.5 x 16.2 cm, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, The Joseph H. Hirshhorn Bequest, 1981 (86.268).

Inside the Lens Box we can make out not only the photographic reproduction but also a drawn "paraphrase," in which several sections of the pictoriality of the original work have been transferred by "formal transposition."[26] This paraphrase undergoes various transformations: For example, at top left Bauermeister has reproduced one part of *Square Tree* in a delicate drawing, which is then continued, distorted, on the wooden spheres or reproduced their again. There are additional distortions caused by the lens. Starting out from this section, fragmented details of *Square Tree* can be identified throughout the recession of *Square Tree Commentaries*. Some are elements from the Lens Box that served as a model, some are suggestions of the wood frays of the dolphin. Bauermeister composed both drawn and written comments on it, and even wrote the word "commentaries" in one place.

26 Iskenmeier, "In Richtung einer Theorie der Interpiktorialität" (see note 18), 67.

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Fig. 52: Square Tree, 1965, ink, glass, glass lens, wooden sphere, found harbor object and painted wood construction, 32 x 35 x 13 cm, Private Collection USA.

The word "me-mories," spelled thus with a hyphen, can be read on a sphere within the recession. With such small transformations Bauermeister achieved a minimal shift in meaning: they are explicitly her own memories illustrated in her own work. This wooden sphere is taken up again in a drawing on the left of the frame of *Square Tree Commentaries*, whereby the writing is permeated by other circles that transition into lines—simulating that these changes are being caused by the lenses. This is not the only example of the reference of sections within the recession that are taken up again on the frame. The drawn lines and the written "memories" are embedded in another mesh of lines that is a distorted reflection of the photographed frays of the wooden dolphin. The situation is different on the upper termination of the frame, where a negative form of the already painted outline of the dolphin is drawn in delicate lines.

This projection from inside the Lens Box onto the frame, on which there is then a second-order comment, is found most clearly in the work's lower section: the entire lower part of the work, from the bottom edge of the recession to the termination of

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the frame, mirrors the area above it. Bauermeister chose the same scale for it and in part reversed the color scheme so that a positive-negative form results; in addition, comments on the upper section are worked into the lower one that are already comments on another work. For example, the two sections of the dolphin from *Square Tree* above them are reproduced in brownish paint to the left and right of the recession of *Square Tree Commentaries*; the reflection below is white on the left and on the right consists of fine lines, whereas everything outside of the reflection is rendered with brownish paint.

The delicate lines that are often seen in the Lens Box form the projection here, the taking up or developing of elements already inserted as references: in the initial work *Square Tree*, the upper section of the dolphin is a section that results from a found object. The photographic reproduction has already introduced the pictorial reference into the new work; the next level follows in the form of the painted copy next to the recession; the new reference in the reflection below introduces the element in delicately drawn lines into the section as a whole. This can be synchronized with a perspective of many-valued networking levels, since with this aesthetic approach by Bauermeister it is legitimate to assume that the delicately drawn lines are already contained equally on the found dolphin or emerge as a result of the identity of reflection of the object in the lower, mirrored section of the dolphin.

The picture-to-picture references cause yet another phenomenon in addition to many-valuedness: the repetitions and the associated production of difference create an "active reworking" within the oeuvre, as Mieke Bal has called it: "Hence, the work performed by later images obliterates the older images as they were before that intervention and creates new versions of the old images instead."[27] Whereas Bal is speaking of appropriations by others, in Bauermeister they are self-appropriations. *Square Tree Commentaries* does not merely paraphrase sections of *Square Tree*; rather, the adopted is transformed several times, resulting in a retroactive effect on the previous work. This too can be reconciled with Deleuze's view of movements of difference and repetition.

Subsequent developments make it clear that Bauermeister was constantly dovetailing the levels in order to reveal many-valuedness and encourage the production of difference. The reproduced passages in *Square Tree Commentaries* are by no means without variance of the originals; rather, they reflect on networking and different forms illustrating it: On the lower edge of the recession a quarter-sphere of wood has been attached to the frame. The upper left corner of *Square Tree* is paraphrased on it, whereby the elements within the box once again consist of fine lines and the frayed wood of the dolphin. Inside the drawn box we read "e.g.," that is, "for example." In the mirroring below it Bauermeister took this up again as a written com-

27 Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 1.

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ment; the spot where the wooden sphere had to be placed is marked; "repeat" also stands here, and she has indicated as fractions the transformation from a half- to a quarter-sphere—all framed in a mesh of lines. The "e.g" from the original work can be found a little further down; it appears to have sunk out of the written comment. On the right side of the recession and at the same height as the written and attached quarter-sphere, another "e.g." can be found; here it is modulated from delicately drawn lines and strives to break free across the edge of the Lens Box. If we assume it is to be read from left to right, this is the direction of something that follows, a networking with a coming work. In all three cases, the abbreviation "e.g." indicates that it must be assumed that we are being confronted with an (arbitrary) element from Bauermeister's standardized approach. The "e.g." has its starting point in the drawing of *Square Tree* on the wooden sphere seen on the frame of *Square Tree Commentaries*; this "example," however, is already standing in for a (drawn or written) comment that could also have been placed here; the networking occurs anyway: Bauermeister built her oeuvre from a standardized use, and in the end everything refers back to everything else. Which "example" is employed here is less crucial; the abbreviation "e.g." already suffices.

One last decisive aspect of *Square Tree Commentaries* is the theme of the work process, here in the form of time spent working. The mirroring below the recession has a darker section that in part repeats elements from above and in part contains new comments. Right next to his section stands "working time," with a border around it, and diagonally below it "5 hours," with an arrow pointing down to the right in the direction of the darker passage. Below that we read "5 minutes"; the arrow next to that points down to a schematic sketch whose position corresponds to the photographic reproduction of *Square Tree* in the Lens Box *Square Tree Commentaries*. The differences between the executions of the two sections are so striking that the indications of time seem appropriate, even if it is presumably a generalization based on the contrast employed. The time-saving executed part is filled with abbreviations such as "e.g.," "etc.," and "usw." (and so on); another example of how the written comment is employed but at the same time the other written and drawn themes and forms must be thought of as well.

By using picture-to-picture references in her oeuvre in this way, Bauermeister created an (inherent) iconic logic. She reproduced for that purpose works that have already been completed with a signature in order to provoke their finality. Beyond that, it is above all the individual materials, motifs, and thematic focuses that are continually cited to achieve networking, further development, and retroactive effect. Whereas Deleuze emphasizes that artists are not active "in order to reproduce an object on the canvas" but always paint "on images that are already there,"[28] Bauer-

28 See Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 61.

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meister's approach consisted of taking up what she has already completed herself; she painted on her own pictures. This corresponds to her reference to Günther's non-Aristotelean logic: the visual language personalized and reproduced by Bauermeister uses the media conditions of the support, since nondichotomous logics can be presented in simplified way in the iconic, since both sides of a mutual exclusion are present simultaneously in the showing; here two elements are initially only two positivities.[29] It is this circulation of self-introduced elements that can lead to reflection on the epistemological makeup of one's own depiction. Visual critique that questions and generates knowledge is understood here to be the analysis of "modes of iconic representation."[30] Bauermeister created not only a metaphysical approach via her aesthetic but also an epistemology that questions the pictorial elements in each case and their networking to one another as well as circling around their reciprocal influence. Both levels—the metaphysical and the epistemological—are irreducible to each other in detail, but they have points of contact in the overall assemblage that constitutes Bauermeister's oeuvre.[31] The connections result from the specific iconic logic. In addition to the many-valued aesthetic, therefore, one can also speak of an epistemological aesthetic that is crucially tied to a researching approach:

> "Works of art as we want to understand them for an epistemological aesthetic are, by contrast, not produced objects of use, but rather vehicles of reflection, media of communication, or catalysts of experience. Crystallization of engagement with the world that has become material."[32]

These engagements stand outside of unambiguous categorizations; rather, iconicity perhaps an "excess of the imaginary" with which a productive visual critique once

29 See Martina Hessler and Dieter Mersch, "Bildlogik oder Was heißt visuelles Denken?," in Martina Hessler and Dieter Mersch, *Logik des Bildlichen: Zur Kritik der ikonischen Vernunft* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009), 8–62, esp. 24–26. Uli Richtmeyer goes a step further in this respect; for him, the possibility of negation can only take the form of a not-showing and hence of a dissolution; this fundamentally rules out a contradiction in the visual; Uli Richtmeyer, "Logik und Aisthesis: Wittgenstein über Negation, Variablen und Hypothesen im Bild," in ibid., 139–62, esp. 159.

30 Gottfried Boehm, "Ikonische Differenz," in *Rheinsprung 11: Zeitschrift für Bildkritik* 11, no. 1 (March 2011): 170–78, esp. 173.

31 It is a process that can also be grasped as "linking" in the sense of "hyperimages," which are to be understood as "autonomous images" that can at the same time produce an "image complex"; Felix Thürlemann, *More than One Picture: An Art History of the Hyperimage*, trans. Elizabeth Tucker (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2021), 1–19.

32 Anke Haarmann, *Artistic Research: Eine epistemologische Ästhetik* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2019), 65.

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again emerges as a distinctive feature.[33] A work of visual art with a specific iconic logic manages through constant mutual references to annul supposedly simple certainties—for example, when Bauermeister writes, contrary to arithmetical conventions, "1+1=3."

6.2 Production Processes between Hand, Eye, and Tools

The interplay of hand, eye, and tools or instruments becomes an essential point of reference for Bauermeister in her works from 1966 onward. This interest could already be seen earlier in the repeated theme of needles, since they too were employed in the light sheets as objects of artistic work and then reflected on in the works. The term "tool" is usually avoided in an artistic context and "instrument" used instead. The reason for this is an idealistic separation that attributes a craft working of materials to the tool, whereas the instrument is associated with intellectual activities.[34] The reason that the term "tool" is primarily employed here, however, lies in Bauermeister's use of the term: in her Lens Boxes, drawings, and stone pictures from 1967 onward the writing word "tool" comes up frequently, usually in connection with the objects of her artistic work; "tool" also occurs repeatedly as part of a title, and there is a series called the *Tool Series*. Bauermeister seems to have deliberated chosen the term as opposed to instrument because she did not want to achieve disembodiment on an intellectual level.

Making herself a theme in her own works was fundamental for Bauermeister, but it was usually done in order to refer to the processes of production to which she is bound as an artist. She was the one who worked the material and needed hand, eye, and certain tools to do so. The explicitly employed self as theme also permits the aforementioned expansion of many-valuedness to her own subject. The (self-)interpictoriality she employed is thus a confirmation of and challenge to her own person. By means of self-reference she achieved a "self-empowerment as controlling and creative authority [that] potentially subjugates to itself the entire world as material."[35] It has repeatedly been pointed that the formation of modern subjectivity as

33 Gottfried Boehm, "Ikonisches Wissen: Das Bild als Modell," in Boehm, *Wie Bilder Sinn erzeugen: Die Macht des Zeigens*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Berlin University Press, 2015), 114–40.

34 Philippe Cordez, "Werkzeuge und Instrumente in Kunstgeschichte und Technikanthropologie," in *Werkzeuge und Instrumente*, ed. Philippe Cordez and Matthias Krüger, Hamburger Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte: Studien Theorien, Quellen 8 (Berlin: Akademie, 2012), 1–19. This difference is closely tied to efforts to separate the visual arts from the crafts and to distinguish among the arts; see Matthias Krüger, *Das Relief der Farbe: Pastose Malerei in der französischen Kunstkritik, 1850–1890* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2007), 206–8.

35 Verena Krieger, "Sieben Arten, an der Überwindung des Künstlersubjekts zu scheitern: Kritische Anmerkungen zum Mythos vom verschwundenen Autor," in *Was ist ein Künstler? Das*

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prototypically productive was first achieved by creativity.[36] In Bauermeister's work, however, it is specifically a working subject who occurs repeatedly in self-referential fragments that condition and are nested in one another. It is crucial that she as creator of the works be a theme of the statement since it is her hands and eyes using the tools: Winfried Nöth calls this "enunciative self-reference," and it seems profitable to connect it to "iconic self-reference" as he defined it, which is characterized by "recursion," "recurrence," and "repetition" and also cases a "circular or loop-like return to an earlier point."[37] Bauermeister created new levels in this way that together construct a networked whole. The self-thematization she employed is not, however, completely reconcilable with a self-reflexivity in which art thematizes itself as artwork and self-referentiality seems crucial.[38] For that reason I employ here the term "self-reference" and further refine it as "metareference." Moreover, not only can self-repetition, that is, recourse to previously executed works, be seen as self-reference but also the renewed use of already employed elements, "because a repeating same results."[39] Every "no" formed from curved lines, even without the implications of the many-valued aesthetic, would thus have a self-reference.

Subjekt der modernen Kunst, ed. Martin Hellmold et al. (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2003), 117–48, esp. 119. Krieger describes in her text seven strategies that have been applied to undermine the connectedness of one's own subject with the production of art; for her, the twentieth century is a history of failed attempts to achieve this, which in the end only modernized and strengthened the artist-subject; ibid., 145–48.

36 See Josef Früchtl, "Die Unverschämtheit, Ich zu sagen—ein künstlerisches Projekt der Moderne," in *Subjekt und Medium in der Kunst der Moderne*, ed. Michael Lüthy and Christoph Menke (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2006), 37–48, esp. 43–44; Michael Lüthy, "Subjekt und Medium in der Kunst der Moderne: Delacroix, Fontana, Nauman," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 46, no. 2 (2001), 227–54, esp. 229.

37 Winfried Nöth, "Self-Reference in the Media: The Semiotic Framework," in *Self-Reference in the Media*, ed. Winfried Nöth and Nina Bishara (Berlin, New York 2007), 3–30, esp. 20–21.

38 Such processes of a paradigm shift of the representational system of art to a dominant self-referentiality characterize the theories of Niklas Luhmann and Jacques Rancière, among others, both of whom saw the upheaval as being introduced with the rise of Romanticism; see Niklas Luhmann, "Die Ausdifferenzierung des Kunstsystems" (1998), in Luhmann, *Schriften zu Kunst und Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008), 316–52, esp. 327–30; Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 42–44. Birgit Mersmann describes this as an elevated standpoint of self-reflection that can be compared to idealistic transcendental philosophy; it attempts to reach a state of self-knowledge by continually engaging with itself; see Birgit Mersmann, *Bilderstreit und Büchersturm: Medienkritische Überlegungen zu Übermalung und Überschreibung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999), 22ff.

39 Winfried Nöth, Nina Bishara, and Britta Neitzel, *Mediale Selbstreferenz: Grundlagen und Fallstudien zu Werbung, Computerspiel und den Comics* (Cologne: Herbert von Halem, 2008), 214.

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Tools of *A's Touch*

In diverse works Bauermeister made it clear that the hands, eyes, and tools are those of the artist herself. One of these is the drawing *The A's Touch* of 1967, which measures 60 by 80 centimeters (fig. 53). The A in the title stands for "artist" and is an allusion to the work's subject, since it shows the artist's hands and eyes with her tools in the process of creating the drawing. With "artist's touch" Bauermeister was referring to the touches that must have occurred to create the works. In addition, she was commenting on the work of art and its marketing when the name and statue of the artist are cited as an argument for its sale or quality.[40] It is by no means the case that Bauermeister depicted herself painting in a "scenario of production," which was a common motif in the early modern era.[41] In Bauermeister's work, tools are used to produce what they and the hand that guides them or the eye that observes them are also made from. They are the same written and drawn elements of which the result and the reason for illustrating consist; usually the tools, hands, and eyes produce one another.

In the context of Bauermeister's oeuvre, therefore, the mesh of interwoven and fragmented ways of depicting the process is crucial. Multiple nesting results: For example, one hand is holding what appears to be a lens that is causing the distortions of the elements in the work, and in it another hand holding a lens can be made out. The larger hand consists of distorted lines and a small "no" repeated several times. Another hand in the same style can also be made out, holding a brush and about to draw the hand with the largest lens. They are joined by two other hands with tools: a hand with a needle above them, which is itself in part firmly sewn to the drawing's ground, so that the drawn seam on one end transforms into malformed needles, and on the other end threads fall down into the largest hand with the lens, forming several words such as "si" and "oui." Another hand is found below and to the right of the scene; it seems to emerge from delicately drawn, slightly wavy lines, and is holding a pair of scissors with which it is cutting into the lines of the largest hand. This collection of hands and tools is just one example of many, and often Bauermeister had the elements interact with one another, so that they can no longer be fully differentiated.

40 Whereas this is a minor aspect in the drawing *The A's Touch* and the Lens Boxes with the same title, in the *Studio Fetish* series from 1967 to 1971 Bauermeister grappled in more depth with the phenomenon of the artist's personality and the possibility of fetishization by touching. For Hartmut Böhme it is, among other things, the reciprocity of touching and its prohibition in the status of art that in the interplay with the exhibition situation produce fetishes that shape our relationship to all objects, even those outside of art; see Hartmut Böhme, *Fetishism and Culture: A Different Theory of Modernity*, trans. Anna Galt (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 279–95.

41 Victor I. Stoichita, *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Metapainting*, trans. Anne-Marie Glasheen (London: Harvey Miller, 2015), 240.

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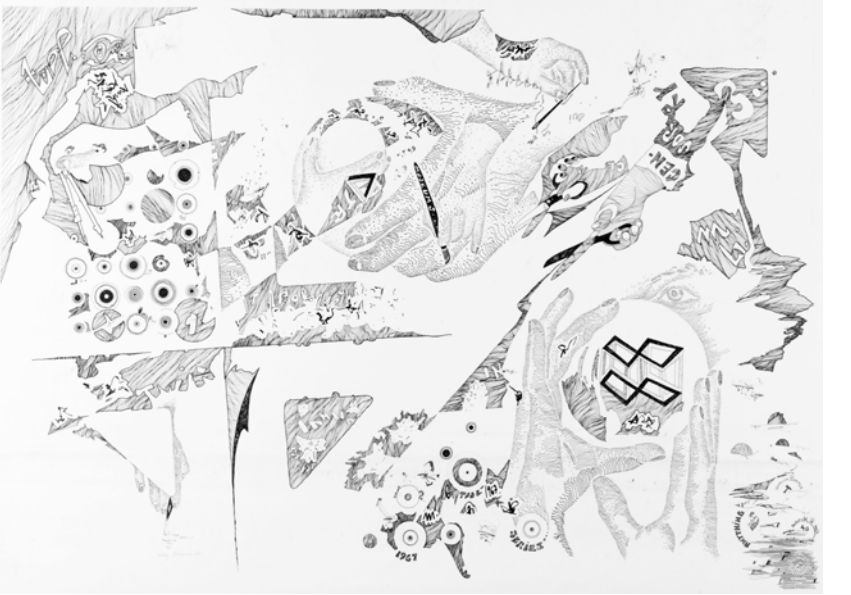
Fig. 53: The A's Touch, 1967, pencil, graphite, ink on paper, 60x 80 cm, Mary Bauermeister Art Estate.



Of the (art) tools that she inserts into her works the most important are lenses, brushes, writing instruments, compasses, needles, glues, pliers, and maulsticks. The last of these make it easier to glue stones. Inserting here means as a drawing, photograph, object, or written word, with no corresponding hierarchy in the level of significance. The understanding of tools in Bauermeister's oeuvre is very broad. This is clear from the word "tool" itself, which is used to represent tools directly and is included several times in the drawing *The A's Touch*, for example, at top left in a mesh of lines and in the center at the bottom edge. There it is seen together with the addition "series," since the drawing is part of the *Tool Series*, was perhaps even its starting point.

From 1967 onward, lithographs of this drawing were repeatedly used as the background of Lens Boxes. This resulted in the series *The A's Touch (Artists Touch-Haha)*, which refers directly to the drawing in its title. The Lens Box *All Things Involved in All Other Things* also has a lithograph of this drawing that is further developed by comments. The vertical section of that Lens Box has *The A's Touch* as background; it was in part colored, and wooden spheres, straws, and lenses on layers of glass also enhance the composition. In addition to drawing instruments, which Bauermeister again labeled, there are also several wood imitations of pencils in this section, and the word "tool" is clearly legible on one of them.

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Easels

Every object used to produce works was a tool for Bauermeister and accordingly was reflected on in her art. This process culminated in her thirty-part *Easel Series* from 1969 to 1973. Easels are removed from their ancillary, tool-like, functional context in the artistic process and elevated to works of art. The easels were, however, transformed by Bauermeister so that their dimensions, proportions, and forms deviate from the familiar values. On the one hand, there are miniaturizations; they are copies of common wooden easels in a handy format; on the other, there are enlargements, so that only the lower, left-hand side of an easel is executed, standing in for an oversized large easel. Several of the easels appear to have been modified based on a coordinate system and are correspondingly narrow, while others have been widened.[42]

Bauermeister showed a first realization of the *Easel Series* in her exhibition at the Galeria Bonino in 1970. Several of the works were created site-specifically for that exhibition space; these are the so-called *Corner Easels*; they adapt to the corners, edges, and pillars in the room. In addition to changing the usual proportions and fitting them into the dimensions of a space, one also observes variation in the basic form of the easel as with, for example, *Buckled Easel* of 1971 (fig. 54). At 182 by 81.5 by 81.5 centimeters, its measurements bring an ordinary easel to mind. But the vertical wood construction on which a canvas would normally lean is not consistently straight but rather buckled and bent forward, defeating its function and making it a (fully adequate) work of art in the exhibition space.

42 The modification of a coordinate system to produce a "change in form" was described above in connection with Bauermeister's reading of Wolfgang Wieser; see section 2.1.

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Fig. 54: Buckled Easle, 1971, wood, 182 x 81.5 x 81.5 cm, Mary Bauermeister Art Estate.

To help describe these processes, one can think of Martin Heidegger's "tool analysis" from *Sein und Zeit* (translated as *Being and Time*). Heidegger defines the difference between "readiness-to-hand" and "presence-at-hand," in which the former describes an object that is used, has a genuinely serving function, and therefore vanishes in a "referential totality."[43] This "equipment" escapes our everyday experience into a "totality of equipment" until a disruptive moment occurs and a (perhaps temporary) uselessness occurs, so that the object enters the mode of "presence-at-

43 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 97–99.

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hand."[44] What was not obtainable previously, because there was no process of conscious reflection on the object and hence no level of the visible, now reveals itself for the first time. The process in Bauermeister's works is considerably broader than this: For her, there was no reason why the tools—that is, everything used to produce the works—could not themselves become a statement. Moreover, their design is transformed as soon as they are inserted into artworks such as Lens Boxes or stand in the room as object as with the *Easel Series*. It follows from that not only that the individual elements of the combination principle are repeatedly integrated and commented on, but also those objects that Bauermeister needed for production. They are not ruled out but always have to be considered as well. That too results in their transformation, since they are another aspect of the many-valued aesthetic. Bauermeister was thus continuing her "include anything" method, which was discussed above. Those two words are found repeatedly in her works, as well as variations such as "anything included," on the frame of the Lens Box *Square Tree Commentaries*, for example, and in the drawing *The A's Touch*.

Pictionary's Checkered Pattern

The connection between that use of the word "tool" and the insertion of tools with the motifs of hands and eyes can be determined more exactly from the Lens Box *Pictionary* (fig. 55). Hands and eyes are also tools in the broadest sense in her oeuvre. *Pictionary* was made from 1966 to 1967 and measures 54 by 100.3 by 23.2 centimeters. The work consists of a back that has drawn and written on and objects attached; at its upper and its lower termination wooden guiderails with three groves are attached. Inserted into these grooves are three panes of glass with lenses; each is about half the width of the Lens Box and can be shoved left or right.

The title is a portmanteau of "picture" and "dictionary." This should be understood to mean that Bauermeister wanted to provide an overview of the procedure employed (physically) by her to create the picture. With this Lens Box she was creating a reference work for translations of the processes employed by the artist: translations of the actions executed that usually remain hidden into an illustration of these actions. *Pictionary* dovetails these individual levels in such an intricate way that it is difficult to get an overview.[45] The work contains aspects that were already described for *The A's Touch*; for example, the way in which tools are visualized in the process of making something but are themselves made is comparable. The composition is

44 Ibid., 103.

45 *Pictionary II* is a continuation of the early work and was executed in 1967; its dimensions are nearly identical at 54.3 by 99.7 by 24.1 centimeters. Its composition is much more intricate and, in contrast to *Pictionary*, incorporates objects; because of its wealth of detail, an overview of its imaging processes is nearly impossible.

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striking for its checkered pattern that suggests shirtsleeves from which are emerging hands formed with the small repeated "no" or with curved lines. Several of the drawn and drawing hands are also rendered in this pattern; in addition, the checkers on wooden spheres undergo illusion-like distortions. The checkered pattern goes back to a series of photographs taken by the photographer Peter Moore in 1964 while Bauermeister was preparing for her exhibition at the Galeria Bonino. It shows the artist dressed in a checked shirt while working on *Howevercall*. The photographic technique has captured an artistic process as Bauermeister is working on something with her hands and other tools. In *Pictionary*, very different work processes are illustrated; one essential component, however, is fragments of hands with tools, usually showing the wrist and part of the lower arm as well. From the checkered pattern it is possible to infer that Bauermeister was illustrating her own hands with drawings in her works.

Fig. 55: Pictionary, 1966–67, ink, glass, glass lens, wooden sphere and painted wood construction, 54 x 100.3 x 23.2 cm, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Drawn and distorted checkers are common in her works, and they refer first and foremost to this series of photographs. In her Lens Boxes especially the checkered pattern occurs repeatedly; it stands for the work process. Even if viewers are not familiar with Moore's photographs, a transfer of the checkered pattern can be seen as representing working on a work: in *Hommage à Brian O'Doherty* of 1964–65, a (drawn) line is made by a hand; the attached lower arm is covered by a checked shirt. This section is a cutout photograph. It is easy to identify it as the artist because a little lower another cutout from a photograph is inserted that shows Bauermeister's eyes and parts of her face. The checkered pattern of the shirt is first continued in a draw-

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ing in *Hommage à Brian O'Doherty*, then an arrow with a question mark next to it actively challenges the viewers to consider whose arm it presumably is. The checkered pattern then spreads to the right and left above the top edge of the work and is distorted by drawing. This is a first step in the introduction of checkers as a metaphor for her own work process. The shirt Bauermeister was wearing in the photographs is integrated by her as material into the Lens Box *What's Ahead for the FBI* in 1965 and commented on several times. The lower end of the sleeve even pushes its way out of the recession on the right side and extends over the edge of the Lens Box.

Hand

The hands of a human body belong to a line of interpretation in cultural theory in which they are, on the one hand, described as metatools and, on the other, associated with cognitive abilities.[46] Not only are the hands used to produce and use tools but they are also themselves tools; both make them a "figure of knowledge."[47] "For with the hand one can realize nearly all possibilities of emotional, social, psychological, intellectual, musical, and artistic expression of which human beings are capable."[48] Understanding the hand as a figure of knowledge that enables people to realize certain things is also a constant in the history of art in which Bauermeister took part by introducing her hands: based on "palpable operations," aspects of "working and influence the work of art" become evident.[49] As a "slave of the mind," the hand had to execute, but it is also responsible for the idea to become visible at all.[50] In addition, the hand can also be credited with "epistemic ability," so that it does not simply the "recipient of orders from the head" but also results in the "development of new ideas."[51]

Bauermeister did not, however, emphasize one drawing hand as a central motif; rather, there are a number of hands, all of which belong to her and use different tools. Moreover, the hands are composed of the elements that in general determine her artistic oeuvre, such as the formula "yes, no, perhaps," curved lines, and the checkered pattern. This initially links every single line, circle, or point back to

46 See Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 149–78.

47 Benjamin Bühler, "Hand," in *Kultur: Ein Machinarium des Wissens*, ed. Benjamin Bühler and Stefan Rieger (Berlin 2014), 60–79.

48 Richard Michaeles, "Vom Greifen zum Begreifen?," in *Die Hand: Werkzeug des Geistes*, ed. Marco Wehr and Martin Weinmann (Heidelberg: Spektrum, 1999), 209–25, esp. 210.

49 Susanne Strätling, *Die Hand am Werk: Poetik der Poiesis in der russischen Avantgarde* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2017), 479.

50 Maike Christadler, "Die Hand des Künstlers," in Wehr and Weinmann, *Die Hand* (see note 48), 325–38, esp. 327.

51 Monika Wagner, "Geliehene Hände: Antony Gormleys Field," in Cordez and Krüger, *Werkzeuge und Instrumente* (see note 34), 185–97, esp. 186–97.

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Bauermeister as the person who executed it, but she too, the artist herself, is composed of elements that reveal a many-valuedness. Depicting hands that are emphatically her own as creating in her works is an effort to mediate between subject and medium.[52] Because it is the subject that advances the many-valued process by means of the identity of reflection, the various hands in *Pictionary* express the multiplicity of perspectives that have already been adopted. Because they grow out of the corresponding elements, this can be further developed with the identity of reflection of the object, since the motifs of hands result from products of many-valuedness. For that reason, too, categorizing the hand as another tool is important, since between the hand itself and the objects that Bauermeister needed to produce her works there is no qualitative difference; they are all contained in the drawings as if two viewers were reflecting on the composition at the same time. The components in the works of art have no hierarchy in terms of an active production and a passive being-produced but are rather all arranged on a horizontal plane.

Eye

Another aspect that Bauermeister often employed in her works is drawings of her eyes or parts of the face distorted by lenses. They can also be traced back to a photograph, in this case one taken by Hans Namuth in 1965: In the black-and-white photograph Bauermeister is seen with her head turned slightly to the side, while her gaze is fixed on the camera's lens. She is holding in both hands a convex lens that covers part of the left half of her face, with the lens extend down to her lower lid of her left eye. The position of Bauermeister's hands has been posed for the photograph; with the index, middle, and ring fingers of her right hand she is supporting the left, reflective side of the lens, while the thumb and middle finger of her left hand are holding the lens fast at the top and bottom. Aspects of this portrait photograph, which stylistically recalls photographs from the circles of the Bauhaus, are reproduced often in drawings in her works from 1965 onward, usually with a suggestion of a lens and one or more eyes.

In the drawing *The A's Touch*, the position of her hands is accurate in its details but has been drawn in mirror reverse; the eye looking out from just above the lens was also transferred to this work by Bauermeister. Several reminiscences of Namuth's photograph can also be detected in *Pictionary*: for example, a hand consisting of "no" written many times is holding a drawn lens in which four fragmented self-portraits of Bauermeister appear; her eyes and mouth can be made out several times. Three of these self-portraits are drawn by Bauermeister; the fourth results from a lens that is glued to one of the panes of glass above it. It is thus a fleeting impression that results

52 See Michael Lüthy and Christoph Menke, "Einleitung," in Lüthy and Menke, *Subjekt und Medium* (see note 36), 7–11, esp. 8.

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from the specific camera angle with reproducing the work. Very different possibilities result for viewers standing opposite the work at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, approaching the work, moving away from it again, experiencing the lenses distorting effect by moving one's own body, and viewing the individual elements from the left or the right.

Lenses and Bauermeister's eye(s) are, like her hands, one part of the artist's work process which at the same time includes her personal process of viewing her works. Every time a lens is placed, she considered which previously drawn, written, and glued-on components of the work could potentially be altered by it; every layer of glass that adds a new level with lenses also goes through this process. When Bauermeister inserted her drawn hands with a lens that is also drawn in which fragments of her eyes appear, it illustrates the entire production process. The eye appears as a tool in a generalized understanding and should be understood to be the equivalent of Bauermeister's hands; accordingly, usually their interplay is shown.

By introducing her own eyes, often as fragments, however, Bauermeister was also participating in another topos, which alternates between gaze, perception, and knowledge.[53] The varied discourse on theories of reception and its epistemological qualities is less crucial here; rather, by introducing the motif of her eyes the artist seems to accelerate the many-valuedness in her works. The idea, already addressed in the discussion of Serres, that the Lens Boxes can be seen as the starting point for producing multiple images has a close connection to the eyes depicted in them, since it is "still a box, but now an eye also."[54] The French philosopher is drawing a connection line here between the inside in which ever-new images are produced and a transitional aspect that ensures its permeability so that perception can take place at all. The motif of the eye should not be interpreted exclusively as a tool; rather, it too encourages the production of many-valuedness that is essential for an ever-new recombination of the individual elements within the artworks: "The eye is thus the representative of the eccentricity of vision in which a genuine power of insight is always inherent."[55] This "power of insight" can be related to the visualization of her eyes in Bauermeister's works.

53 See Hans Belting, "The Gaze in the Image: A Contribution to an Iconology of the Gaze," in *Dynamics and Performativity of Imagination*, ed. Bernd Huppauf and Christoph Wulf (New York: Routledge, 2009), 93–115.

54 Michel Serres, *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies*, trans. Margaret Sankey and Peter Cowley (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 147; see also section 2.1.

55 Sabine Flach, "Das Auge: Motiv und Selbstthematisierung des Sehens in der Kunst der Moderne," in *Körperteile: Eine kulturelle Anatomie*, ed. Claudia Benthien and Christoph Wulf (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2001), 49–65, esp. 49.

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This is closely related to theories of the reciprocal gaze, in which it is not just viewers who occupy the active position but artistic works, too, have agency.[56] In Jean-Paul Sartre's analysis of the gaze or look, it need not be a pair of human eyes for a differentiated reaction to occur in what is being looked at. He defines his "Being-seen-by-the-Other" as a situation in which something or someone else could potentially view the looked-at so that he or she is recognized as a subject, whereupon this "Other is by definition something that cannot be an object."[57] Eyes are not a "sensible organ of vision" but very generally "the look's support."[58] In this view the eyes' being-looked-at results in a situation in which, on the one hand, the viewers undergo a change; a process of becoming aware of their status as subject is initiated. This is reinforced by the structure of *Pictionary*, since the three panes of lenses can be shifted by the viewer, so that they are "explicitly" integrated into the work if its complete potentiality is to be realized.[59] On the other hand, it is even more crucial with reference to Bauermeister's works that a transformation of the object occurs. In the Lens Box *Pictionary* it is Bauermeister's eyes that strip the work of art of its status of a alleged passivity and evoke its own productivity.

This can be synchronized with the identity of reflection of the object, since the changed status and the "power of insight" in combination enable a situation in which the viewers in principle no longer need a doubled reflection: the work of art has the possibility of producing this itself. In general, "identity of reflection of the object" has been understood to mean the situation that an object or comment was integrated into the work of art and then commented on in turn; these are already the two levels of reflection. If Bauermeister's concept of the tool is considered, it becomes possible to refine this: Tools included not just the utensils with which she worked but also her hands and eyes and in principle everything necessary for the production of a work. Bauermeister used tools, illustrated their use, and in the process reflected on both at the same time. Her gaze, which is depicted in the artworks, is at the same time that of the person trying out the position of the lenses. Her hands, which are shown in the process of drawing, are drawn by her hands, or her (drawn in the work) hand is drawing a stylized element from her repertoire. It also happens, however, that nothing can be identified at the tip of the (drawn) pencil. Hence something is being created here, or the viewers cannot perceive the motif, or the pencil is responsible for creating the ground. It goes without saying that it is also

56 See Horst Bredekamp, *Theorie des Bildakts: Frankfurter Adorno-Vorlesungen 2007*, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2013), 237–41.

57 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Sarah Richmond (New York: Routledge, 2020), 347, 367.

58 Ibid., 353.

59 Wolfgang Kemp, *Der explizite Betrachter: Zur Rezeption zeitgenössischer Kunst* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2015).

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possible that the creating hand and the seeing eye separated from its specific activities are autonomous motifs. Even in that case, though, the motif is composed of the elements of many-valuedness such as "yes, no, perhaps," the circular forms, the checkered pattern, or the curved lines.

Setting out from her maxim to "include anything," Bauermeister integrated herself into the works of art and thereby constituted her own artist-subject as many-valued. This is made clear by fragmentation and also by the elements of which the self-drawings are composed. From that follows, on the one hand, that Bauermeister was integrating her own subject into the identity of reflection of the object, since they way she designed the self-references gives them their own potentiality within the works of art. That means they are no longer tied exclusively to her as subject but have the possibility of undergoing a transformation as a result of the commentary, just like the other motifs in her oeuvre. On the other hand, the tools are by no means isolated but rather simultaneously connected with all the elements of the artwork. This symbiosis creates a new many-valuedness, so that two contradictory motifs are contained in a larger motif.

The work of art results from a process in which everything is irreducibly connected to everything else. Bauermeister as author is also integrated into this, just like her other tools and elements from the combination principle, the aesthetics of materials, and the commentary system: all together, it is a constantly crisscrossing "chiasm."[60] Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes this figure as a "reciprocal insertion and intertwining of one in the other."[61] For Merleau-Ponty, one's own body is always the starting point since it establishes the "first coordinates."[62] But it should by no means be thought of as solitary; rather, it is integrated into its surroundings. Every gaze is already a "dehiscence" into the tissue around the person, into the "*flesh* of things."[63] At the same time, for Merleau-Ponty the hand is a "being of two leaves," that is, not only a tool to make something but also and equally one's own body—it is a being between the categories of subject and object.[64] The crucial thing here is that with Merleau-Ponty one can no longer assume an isolation of the individual levels. If all of the things depicted in the works can be a tool, then they were all produced and are at the same time in the mode of production. This clarifies, first, why Bauermeister uses the word "tool," defines it so broadly, and integrates these tools into her works. It becomes possible to assume that the (many-valued) "involvement"

60 Ludger Schwarte, "Taktisches Sehen: Auge und Hand in der Bildtheorie," in *Auge und Hand*, ed. Johannes Bilstein and Guido Reuter (Oberhausen: Athena, 2011), 211–27, esp. 226.

61 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 138.

62 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), 100.

63 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (see note 61), 132–33.

64 Ibid., 137.

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of the individual elements is fundamental; this also makes connecting the motifs meaningful—for example, when her hand is composed of the checkered pattern of the shirt. Moreover, it is another reason for the omnipresent self-thematization in her works: the hand employed to create and the viewing eye belong to the artist, and hence the activity is also part of the work of art; both a caught in a chiastic inseparability. The constant self-reference in Bauermeister's oeuvre should be understood from this motivation; her own subject is another aspect of the (many-valued) connectedness.

Work Processes

This inseparability is additionally affirmed by Bauermeister's explicit thematization of the production process and a general processuality in her works. This results not only from the tools but also by means of questions about the works that she writes into them as comments. *Some Stones Missing* of 1967 is a work with stones measuring 101 by 101 by 10.2 centimeters; it also contains several wooden pencils and written or drawn passages (fig. 56). The central section of the work is largely determined by a progression of towers of stones, whereby the lower rows consist of individual small stones. This middle section is on a particle board covered with canvas, which is mounted on another sanded wooden support. The second sheet of particle board forms the background for the first and extends several centimeters above its upper termination so that the progression of stones looks centered. On the right side of the smaller board covered with stones, several rows have been left free; the ground is painted white. Here Bauermeister placed three towers of stones, which are also painted white. Attached to the two smaller towers of stones are two of three wooden pencils. Because they too are painted completely white, it looks as if these objects are responsible for the unnatural color of the three piles of stones. The third pencil is attached to the tower of stones in the upper right corner; here the oval stones still have their natural colors, but this too could soon change, since the work looks as if it were in a moment of transition, a process of change that has come to a stop at this instant.

Against the backdrop of her many-valued aesthetic, it must be assumed that the work continues in its process at all times. Individual towers of stones and individual stones are distributed on the larger board, which otherwise has no components but sand. It is suggested that these are stones missing from the small board as if they—also at this very moment—fallen down to the side. That this is a moment of disruption is clear from the title which refers directly to "missing" stones. On the white surface there are drawn and written comments that refer to the work process. They are, however, only visible because the stones have come off here. Otherwise, they remain covered by the found material. The comments are the substructure of

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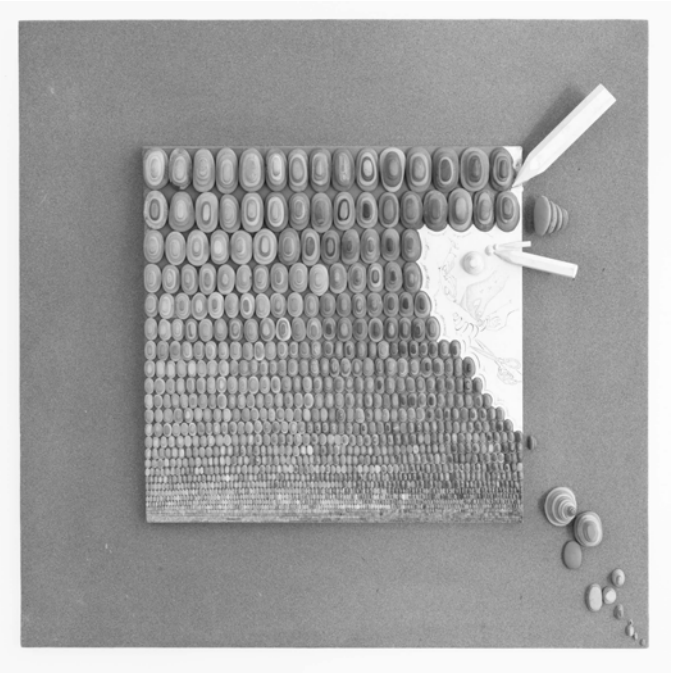
the work, and we can only speculate about which other aspects the work would expose if the other stones also fell down.

Fig. 56: Some Stones Missing, 1967, stones, paint, ink, wooden objects and sand mounted on linen panel and particle board, 101 x 101 x 10.2 cm, Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY.



The drawn comments include hands formed from strokes, curved lines, and the small repeated "no" as well as a pair of scissors, towers of stones, and tubes of the glue that Bauermeister used to attach the stones. Among the written comments one can also make out interrogatives, for example, the three tubes seem to be writing "where …?," "what …?," and "how …?" Most of the written comments, however, are near the adjoining towers of stones, and their arrangement imitates the oval outlines of the stones. Those comments consist largely of questions about the work, especially about the stones employed in it. It seems as if the artist has integrated into the work questions from viewers that she had already heard many times. Among other things, we read: "Where did you find them," "How did you glue them?," "Did you polish them? Do you." This makes it clear that Bauermeister's stone works were accompanied by these questions as they were being made, and they are contained in the works even

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if they were not visible because of a hypothetically intact row of stones. The (drawn) processes of production have to be reflected on as well—gluing the stones or cutting the canvas—as questions from viewers that accompany the work. The work is constituted by the totality of this networking.

The suggestion of processes of change happening at that moment in which the viewers are standing opposite the work is supplemented by Bauermeister by referring to changes that occur with the passage of time: *All Things Involved in All Other Things* has a comment in the upper area of the Lens Box that reads: "this is natural dirt from 1967 on."[65] Bauermeister thus focused on an arbitrary place in the work where very probably dirt will collect on the bright background. Equivalent things are often characteristic of her works, in which a section that usually has not been drawn on will be given the comment that it is reserved for "future dirt." In the work *Hommage à Brian O'Doherty*, there is even a wood quarter-sphere with "dirt department" written on it that has been attached in a way that dust and other deposits will collect on its surface. Bauermeister explained her intentions here in her sketchbook: "The clearer, cleaner something gets, the more [it] attracts the uniqueness of dirt."[66] The sections are deliberately left free and demarcated with borders so that they look "cleaner," and it becomes possible to use the "uniqueness of dirt." It is a process that participates in change and chance, or at least she tries to delegate these small, specially marked sections to (future) randomness.

In *All Things Involved in All Other Things*, too, Bauermeister addresses another aspect of change. On a wooden cube in the upper area of the Lens Box the words "können be replaced by" are followed by two indications of size: "7 × 7 or 14 × 14." We can speculate that it was to be replaced by a Lens Box, since the object on which it is written has a drawing of a small Lens Box; moreover, it is included in a row in which two Lens Boxes were attached to the frame of *All Things Involved in All Other Things*. Bauermeister gives permission to change an element of the work later if the corresponding size is available.

In accordance with the leitmotif of this study in which all of the works are grasped as an assemblage, we can conclude that the objects of production would also have to be incorporated, which includes the hands and eyes that produce it. Moreover, the production process and the possibility of changing the work have to be included as well. For any assemblage, and accordingly an entire artistic oeuvre, is subject to a constant process of individuation in which differentiation occurs;

65 Below this sentence one sees a line of graphite that curves into itself and seems uncontrolled. Bauermeister follows this with the comment "and this is painted dirt," which can be understood as an ironic statement about the art world; see section 5.2.

66 Mary Bauermeister, "Skizzenbuch/Quaderno, 1961–1963," unpublished source, paginated by the artist, p. T4.

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every new element produces increased autonomy.[67] Bauermeister incorporates the production process and changeability into her aesthetic, and they have a status equal to the other omnipresent components such as the drawn circles and the words "yes, no, perhaps."

6.3 Reflections on Titles and Frames

Two other aspects have a mediating and autonomous dimension in equal measure: the titles and frames of the works. The two are closely related and their potential to expand reflection within the works should be incorporated as well. The titles of works have already been addressed several times, especially because they are often written on the work in question in ever-new variations. They also come up on other works of art in order to intensify the networking. The term "frame" is also used repeatedly to describe the border of the recession of a Lens Box. Although the term might seem to be a conservative one for describe the structure of a work, since the wooden elements on which she writes and draws do not correspond to a normal frame as the demarcation of the pictorial from the outside, it is nevertheless used here because Bauermeister herself works with the term. For example, on diverse Lens Boxes the word "frame" is found on the corresponding section. Title and frame can also be intertwined, since not only do the titles of several works contain the word "frame" but the title is also written on the frame.

Titles

We have already referred to the connotations for the subject matter of titles such as *Needless Needles*, *Hommage à Brian O'Doherty, The A's Touch*, and *Pictionary*. They all open up an additional level of the work. In Bauermeister's case, that should be understood to mean that they guide the reception: in the works containing writing, the title can usually be read directly; it is integrated into Bauermeister's specific notational iconicity. Additional statements and also additional titles (of other works) are always present as well. Because of her intricate aesthetic and networking, it would therefore be impossible to distill out the primary level of meaning that she would like to communicate as an artist. The commentary system would never end, even the material limitation of the individual works would be no obstacle, since the networks lead via individual works and groups of works into the oeuvre as a whole—since this process appears to be continually expandable, the work titles offer a way to demarcate the works from one another.

67 See Manuel DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 140.

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In order to categorize the different uses of titles better, John C. Welchman developed a three-part model: he speaks of a denotative, a connotative, and an untitled paradigm for titles; the model has been repeatedly refined, but the basic structure was not abandoned.[68] That works of art were conceived with titles that generate meaning that were, moreover, chosen by the artists themselves began comparatively late with the exhibition practice of the nineteenth century.[69] The title subsequently took on a dimension that no longer had only a denotative, descriptive level but also had the potential to expand and alter the meaning. Titles were employed as "frameworks of associations" in this context, especially with reference to the written word within a work of art; Duchamp's works are often mentioned.[70] For Welchman, it was condensed temporally between Impressionism and the end of Dada, for which the title was fundamentally redesigned on a connotative level and became a "hyper-supplement":

> "The title is thus a code of hyperspace of the image. It is a plateau that opens up a thousand interactive possibilities of reading, viewing, and socializing. We find the title as an identity or as an absence, as a poetic supplement and an institutional critique, and as a memorial or a detour into absurdity and nonreferentiality."[71]

It is important to understand the title as a "plateau" of opening when it is tied to a connotative approach. In Bauermeister's case, this led in the direction of an "identity" of the work, since the title represents at least to some degree a constriction. It delimits the area in which the viewers can try to find their path to an interpretation. That this already includes "a thousand interactive possibilities of reading," as Welchman expresses it, results in Bauermeister's case from the permanent many-valuedness. In a group of work like *Needless Needles*, it is the incorporation of statements that are continually varied in small fragments, so that it no longer seems possible to determine which is the original starting point and how it is to be understood—with each new variation, the overall meaning expands, and the title opens the path to this broad field.

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68 See John C. Welchman, *Invisible Colors: A Visual History of Titles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 2–8 and 323–27.

69 See Natalie Bruch, *Der Bildtitel: Struktur, Bedeutung, Referenz, Wirkung und Funktion; eine Typologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005), 10–14.

70 See Katrin Ströbel, *Wortreiche Bilder: Zum Verhältnis von Text und Bild in der Zeitgenössischen Kunst* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2013), 57–58; Alexander Streitberger, *Ausdruck, Modell, Diskurs: Sprachreflexion in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Reimer, 2004), 53.

71 Welchman, *Invisible Colors* (see note 68), 43.

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At the time Bauermeister was living in New York, "a rhetoric of titles expanded to include irony and quotation" sprang up in the city's art world.[72] This is also reflected in her works. Whereas in her early artistic phase she did not assign titles at all or did so pure denotatively, the years from 1960 to 1962 are marked by a hybrid of denotative titles with slight connotative qualities. Beginning in 1963 and more intensely from the following year, Bauermeister worked with all levels of connotation and used the title as an artistic element. That seems to be connected as well with switching her language from German to English, because she began working with literal translations such as *Howevercall* and double meaning resulting from hyphenation, as with the Lens Box *No More Pain-ting* of 1965. Moreover, in her sketchbooks from this period Bauermeister noted ideas for titles, several of which she used, such as *Some Nice Decorative Colours (… For Attraction)*, while others remained unused, like "only beautiful no idea."[73] It cannot be determined whether she was collecting ideas and then executing a work connected to the title or whether she had already begun these works and then after or during the process took a suitable title from the sketchbook; both approaches are conceivable. There are also works for which the title was not written down beforehand but was while working on it, such as *Needless Needles*. In that case there was a reference back to an already completed and exhibited light sheet: not only the title of *Linen Nähbild* (Linen Sewing Picture) was changed but the work was also reworked.[74]

The titles that seem to be more denotative In character should in Bauermeister's case be located in an in-between space in terms of subject matter: the Lens Box *Writing* consists of "writing' and a good part of its look was produced by "writing." In addition, the title can be read on the frame. On the one hand, this defuses "the conflict in the turning something visual into language" by "loosening" previously "unambiguous media categories."[75] On the other hand, a kind of expansion occurs, so that not only "the analysis of the text of the title but also of the look of the title" is equally important.[76] The title *Writing* is intertwined with the specific understanding of notational iconicity in Bauermeister's oeuvre. The reason a denotative dimension cannot be assumed even in the case of *Writing* was already clear when analyzing the work: the curved lines form the word "writing," but at the same time they are (only) lines of modeling compound.

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72 Tobias Vogt, *Untitled: Zur Karriere unbetitelter Kunst in der jüngsten Moderne* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2006), 9.

73 See Bauermeister, "Skizzenbuch, 1965–67 USA" (see note 1), n.p.; Bauermeister, "Skizzenbuch Quaderno, 1961–1963" (see note 66), T18–19.

74 See section 2.1.

75 Vogt, *Untitled* (see note 72), 253.

76 See ibid., 254.

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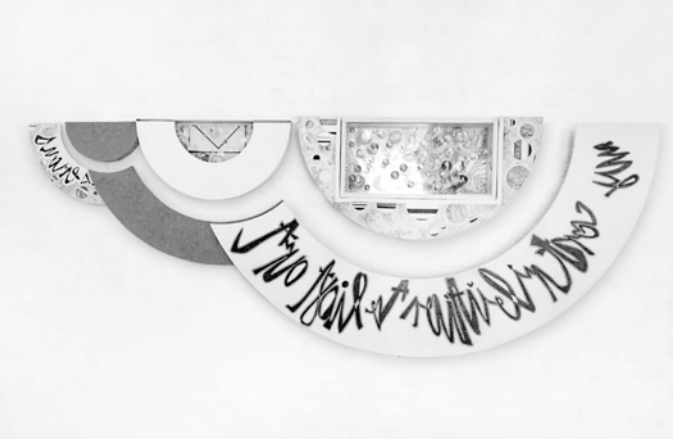
The combination of title, the notational iconicity in the work, and the levels of reflection initiated by them and even contain the combination principle becomes especially clear with the Lens Box *My Contribution to Light Art is Dead Serious Art* (fig. 57). It was produced in the years from 1966 to 1967, and its four parts in their prescribed arrangement measure 106.7 by 288.3 by 12.7 centimeters. The work's title is found in part on the lower curved wooden elements, where we can recognize the words "my contribution to light art" and "serious"; they are written from right to left, that is, in mirror writing. In the recession of the larger of the two Lens Boxes the whole title is seen, again handwritten and with an orangish-yellow border, but writing runs from left to right.

Fig. 57: My Contribution to Light Art is Dead Serious Art, 1966–67, ink, offset print, glass, glass lens, wooden sphere casein tempera, fluorescent color and painted wood construction, 106.7 x 288.3 x 12.7 cm, Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY.



With the term "Light Art" Bauermeister was referring simultaneously to several trends in contemporaneous art because light's qualities were employed in very different contexts. First, it can be traced back to her intersections with the Zero movement, in which light as an artistic means was one of the primary sources of reference.[77] Second, it was, however, primarily the artist with whom Bauermeister was

77 See Heike van den Valentyn, "Utopische, reale und lichtkinetische Räume der Zero-Zeit," in *Zero: Internationale Künstler-Avantgarde der 50er/60er Jahre*, exh. cat. Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2006), 56–67. The experiments with light art from the circles of the Bauhaus and Russian Constructivism may also have attracted her attention; in her sketchbook she herself recalls that she had to obtain information about those

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being exhibited in the mid-1960s, such as Dan Flavin, Larry Bell, or even Thomas Tadlock, who worked with light's qualities and who are associated with terms such as "Light Art" or "Light and Space."[78] Bauermeister used the possible connotations of the word "light," both as a noun and an adjective, also in the senses of "light meal," "light weight," and "light work." Because she had to think in a foreign language and accordingly often had to search for an adequate translation, she took the approach of working with different contexts of meanings.

Her "contribution" to Light Art, as announced in the title, is "deadly serious art." This is, first, an ironic commentary on contemporaneous art using light. It is associated with a certain lack of content, whereas her "deadly serious" art works with metaphysical questions. The comment is ironic because she is inserting two set pieces of Light Art from her own oeuvre: she could also have integrated light sheets into this work but she chose two details from point structures designed with fluorescent paint. The red semicircle at top left and the red, curved wooden element below imitate Bauermeister's aforementioned Phosphorous Pictures from around 1960. By directly addressing the phenomenon "Light Art" in the work's title and referring at the same time to an existing group of works of her own, she was positioning herself, at least peripherally, as an (early) exponent of this art movement. This could also be related to the "cunning" that Brian O'Doherty said in his review would be needed in the art world. In addition, it is another example of how Bauermeister tries to take up her own oeuvre and its development in more recent works. By incorporating the Phosphorous Pictures into a Lens Box, Bauermeister

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artists; Bauermeister, "Skizzenbuch Quaderno, 1961–1963" (see note 66), 63. Because in her works and titles she often worked with immediate contemporaneous reference, however, it is more probable to assume it was the light art of the 1960s in her American environment.

78 Bauermeister was, for example, represented in the exhibition *Art in Process: The Visual Development of a Structure* at the Finch College Museum of Art in 1966, in which Flavin also participated; *Art in Process: The Visual Development of a Structure*, exh. cat. (New York: Finch College Museum of Art, 1966). Also in 1966 Bell was represented with a transparent cube of glass in the *Annual Exhibition 1966: Contemporary Sculpture and Prints* of the Whitney Museum, in which a Lens Box by Bauermeister was shown; see *Annual Exhibition 1966: Contemporary Sculpture and Prints*, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1966). The light object by Tadlock was shown a year earlier at the Whitney Museum in the exhibition *Young America 1965: Thirty American Artists under Thirty-Five*, in which four works by Bauermeister were also seen; see *Young America 1965: Thirty American Artists Under Thirty-Five*, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1965). On the history of the development and concept of Light Art, see Peter Weibel, "The Development of Light Art/Zur Entwicklung der Lichtkunst," in *Lichtkunst aus Kunstlicht: Licht als Medium der Kunst im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert/Light Art from Artificial Light: Light as a Medium in 20th and 21th Century Art*, exh. cat. Karlsruhe, ZKM, 2005–6 (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2006), 86–222. The usually marginalized history of women artists of Light Art is addressed in Elizabeth Marie Gollnick, *Diffusion: Women Light Artists in Postwar California* (New York: n.p., 2018).

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has recourse to the combination principle: the fluorescent effect that was still the focus of the early group of works is now just one aspect with which to make a new statement.

Frames in Connection with Titles

Bauermeister integrated the frames of her Lens Boxes completely into the compositions, also by means of the title. On the 60 by 60 by 20-centimeter Lens Box *The Frame Should at Least Have Something to Do With the Unnecessary Detail (In the Middle)* of 1966, the title of the work is written on the frame in a spiral (fig. 58). Only the parenthetical addition is missing, which appears in the mesh of notational iconicity inside the Lens Box's recession. The frame is designed to correspond to the inside of the Lens Box. Wooden hemispheres with writing and drawing have been attached in both areas; there are also variations on the drawing elements, also arranged in circles. It is striking that the frame has been worked far less than the recession. The "unnecessary detail" is the center of the composition, or at least that is where it is located, and most of the time was spent on it. With the explicit contradiction that Bauermeister achieved with the title, she manages to open up a higher-order level within her oeuvre. Her emphasis that her usual approach of filling up the entire recession with the commentary system is "unnecessary" makes this approach explicit in the first place. The expression "unnecessary" should not be understood literally; rather, because on the frame and in the context of the word "frame" it refers to the actual main part of the composition, it is possible to recognize connections. The elements within the recession are networked with others on another plane. Bauermeister's aesthetic needs both the frame and the emphasis that it is a frame to produce demarcations from other works: "The frame as edge and border, as boundary and limit."[79] These demarcations are then explicitly integrated into order to transition to another work. This is closely related to the discussions of picture-to-picture references, since the references to other works in *Needless Needles Vol. 5* and the phrase "this is part of another painting" are (usually) found on the frames of the works. With regard to the mediations that can be initiated by the frames, two aspects are decisive: first, a frame has self-referential characteristics, especially when the written word "frame" refers to it; in addition, it has a "meta-referential function."[80]

79 Louis Marin, "The Frame of Representation and Some of Its Figures," in *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork*, ed. Paul Duro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 79–95, esp. 81.

80 Werner Wolf, "Introduction: Frames, Framings and Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media," in *Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media*, ed. Walter Bernhart and Werner Wolf (Amsterdam, New York 2006), 1–40, esp. 31.

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Fig. 58: The Frame Should at Least Have Something to Do With the Unnecessary Detail (In the Middle), 1966, ink, glass, glass lens, wooden sphere and painted wood construction, 60 x 60 x 20 cm, Private Collection USA.

The latter is clear from the way the word "unnecessary" is written in *The Frame Should at Least Have Something to Do With the Unnecessary Detail (In the Middle)*. The first part—"unnece"—is written from right to left and separates the lower left edge of the recession of the Lens Box from the second part. The "ssary" is then written to the left of the recession and from bottom to top. Bauermeister placed the entire word in quotation marks, as if she wanted to relativize the statement, because the main composition does not seem entirely "unnecessary" to her. This also draws attention to the center and encourages reflection on what characterizes this area. Connecting to the lower left corner of the recession, and as an element that hyphenates the word "unnecessary," is a painted square that is composed chromatically of individually drawn lines in dark red at the edge by way of orange to yellow in its interior. The lines frame a white square; Bauermeister is thus simulating a frame for a white painting with no elements whatsoever in its center. The colors from red to yellow can be made out inside the recession; several of the curved lines on the wooden spheres are bordered by them. Blue can also be found there; it refers to another color square in the upper right corner of the frame area. Together they establish another con-

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nection from the frame to the "unnecessary detail," since both share one color, but whereas they are arranged geometrically on the frame, the colors in the recession unite with the lines that exemplify many-valuedness.

That the red-orange-yellow square is meant to be understood as a frame without a (finished) painting is made clear by the three letters Bauermeister has written directly under it: "V.I.P." The abbreviation "V.I.P." stands, in Bauermeister's case, for "very important picture," a series of works she began in 1966 or 1967, so after making the mark on *The Frame Should at Least Have Something to Do With the Unnecessary Detail (In the Middle)*. The wordplay with "V.I.P.," changing "person" to "picture," can be found earlier—written out and as an abbreviation—in the notational iconicity of Bauermeister's art. There are seven works in her oeuvre that can be assigned to the *V.I.P.* group.

One of these is the Lens Box *V.I.P. (Very Important Picture)* of 1967, which measures 162.6 by 162.6 by 20 centimeters (fig. 59). The center of the works, much like the "unnecessary detail," was left blank; a square cutout there shows the white gallery wall. Everything outside of that square is all the more richly detailed: Bauermeister applied four curved wooden elements whose outer corners result in a nearly square plane; they are loosely arranged in a checkered form. Because the edges of the (empty) recession are arranged either vertically or horizontally, the work as a whole appears to be slightly shifted. The four wooden elements that have been joined to make the frame have drawings, writing, photographic reproductions, and wooden spheres. Many of the motifs already discussed (repeatedly) can also be found here, such as circular structures, curved lines, drawings of "yes, no, perhaps," series of numbers, sections with fluorescent paint, the themes of tools and Bauermeister's hands and eyes. Two photographic reproductions of the works *Pst…Who Knows Wh…* of 1966 on the left and *Peng-cil* from the same year—both are reflected on in drawn and written comments. The chromatic gradation of red-orange-yellow that makes up the small drawing with "V.I.P." written below it in *The Frame Should at Least Have Something to Do With the Unnecessary Detail (In the Middle)* can be found again repeatedly. Here the colors are used in combination to color spheres, circles, and other drawn elements or to connect to them; the correspondence of colors is another level of networking. The work's frame, on which all the (executed) aspects of the composition are found, has two layers of lenses over it. The panes of glass to which the lenses are glued are also curved but they are different from each other; moreover, they did not terminate together with the edges of the four wooden parts. This reinforces the impression that the frame has been multiply shifted, while the center of the picture remains stable. The basic idea for the compositions can be dated to 1961. At the time Bauermeister made an entry in her sketchbook titled "Ausserbild" (Outer Image): the description and associated drawing reveal a pictorial idea that

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contrasts a "blank" square center with a frame filled with details.[81] Here, too, the composed frame is square; with the *V.I.P.* works, Bauermeister refined the original concept and applied it to Lens Boxes.

Fig. 59: V.I.P. (Very Important Picture), 1967, ink, offset print, glass, glass lens, wooden sphere and painted wood construction, 162.6 x 162.6 x 20 cm, Private Collection USA.

The *V.I.P.* works belong to the period of the late 1960s in which the frames of works of are no longer (solely) part of the works but increasingly became their main statement.[82] In that context, however, not only can the picture frames be regarded as an emphasized termination of a work of art, but so are the frames of the supporting wall, of the room of the gallery space or museum, and the social framework of art.[83]

81 Bauermeister, "Skizzenbuch Quaderno, 1961–1963" (see note 66), 10.

82 See John C. Welchman, "In and around the 'Second Frame,'" in Duro, *The Rhetoric of the Frame* (see note 79), 203–22, esp. 219–20.

83 See ibid., 206; Alexander Alberro, "Institutions, Critique, and Institutional Critique," in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge Mass., London 2009), 2–19.

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The work *V.I.P. (Very Important Picture)* participates in these developments with commentary that reflects on art: Bauermeister in general stuck to the elements of which her work is composed. The arrangement is simply reversed, so that the white wall, which is normally completely outside the work of art, moves to the center. The composed frame becomes denser, and this is further heightened with glass and lenses. This makes it clear that in general the frame is integrated into the composition. It is also a reference to the theme of the frame in contemporaneous art. Bauermeister could continue to execute all of the compositional unities of her aesthetic and at the same time reflect on the "esthetic potency" of the gallery wall by explicitly framing it.[84] This is not, however, an ongoing and exclusive reflection on or critique of the supporting system of art and its institutions, as could be found in the work of Daniel Buren and Michael Asher at this time.[85]

V.I.P. (Very Important Picture) and the other works of that series are logical continuations of the theme of the frame in her work. Bauermeister once again employed the title to that end: the common abbreviation is first given a perplexing aspect with the change to "picture." This shift in meaning is reinforced by leaving out the actual picture. This inevitably provokes the viewer to examine what can still be considered a "picture" and what the boundaries are, since even though Bauermeister declares everything outside of the recessions of the Lens Boxes to be the frame, this area is completely integrated into the composition or is even the only part of the work that is composed.[86]

Working with the commentary system encourages a networked genesis of works, and reflections on the frame are part of that. For example, on the left side and below the recession of the Lens Box *St. One's II*, which was made in the years 1965 and 1966, we read "frame wanted" (fig. 60). In addition to this thematization of the frame on the frame, there is another comment on the right side that is embedded in a structure of drawn lines: "frame for frame wanted." It is the next level of reflection, which grows out of the commentary system: whereas initially a frame is needed to make the status of the work of art, this is transgress by the new thematization, which de-

84 Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube* (Santa Monica: Lapis, 1986), 29.

85 See Daniel Buren, *Limites critiques* (Paris: Yvon Lambert, 1970); Michael Asher, *Writings, 1973–1983, on Works, 1969–1979, Written in Collaboration with Benjamin H. D. Buchloh*, ed. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, 1984).

86 Even among the Lens Boxes with no frame but only a small border of wood or stainless steel or whose recession has no back wall, there are examples in which the (absent) frame is nevertheless incorporated. The drawings of the Lens Boxes *Palette* and *Tiny Palette*, for example, extended beyond the termination of the reception; in the case of *Weeping Pen*, spheres with drawings are also glued to the frame.

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mands another framing.[87] In Bauermeister's work, there are small references that offer components that are critical of the image or reflect on art and its institutions, and together they form the horizon of her oeuvre when they are added to the other aspects.

Fig. 60: St. One's II, 1965–66, ink, offset print, glass, glass lens, wooden sphere and painted wood construction, 42.2 x 41.9 x 16.8 cm, Charles Yassky, New York, USA.

This is a Museums-Piece/Peace of 1966 can serve as another example (fig. 61). The work consists of a frame for a Lens Box but it has no recession. It is instead placed on an ordinary commercially available easel painted white, which is incorporated into the work by means of drawings: the white pattern on the otherwise very intricately composed underground of drawing corresponds exactly to the structure of the easel, if the wood cutout that was actually conceived as a frame for a Lens Box had been placed on the lower, adjustable, bearing surface. The few centimeters that the frame has been shifted upward result in distortions.

87 See Vera Beyer, *Rahmenbestimmungen: Funktionen von Rahmen bei Goya, Velázquez, van Eyck und Degas* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2008), 235.

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Fig. 61: This is a Museums-Piece/Peace, 1966, ink, wooden sphere, easel, 170 x 90 x 16 cm, Mary Bauermeister Art Estate.

This is a Museums-Piece/Peace is the work that led to the transformed easels of the *Easel Series* produced from 1969 to 1973. Once again, the tools used to create the works have been integrated into them. Not only a helpful utensil, like an easel, is integrated into the finished work of art; the work is also complemented by an object that was actually intended to be its frame and was at least used as such in other works. The structure of the work is at the same time a comment on the contemporaneous tendency to (over)emphasize the frame, on the one hand, and on the still dominant art of Abstract Expressionism and its art criticism, on the other.[88] The title both thema-

88 With reference to the frame in Abstract Expressionism, Richard Phelan has written how it was repressed more and more to eliminate illusionism and at the same time make the viewer's presence possible; Richard Phelan, "The Picture Frame in Question: American Art, 1945–2000," in *Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media*, ed. Walter Bernhart and Werner

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tizes the museum as a frame for art and affirms the quality of the work itself. Finally, the wordplay of "Piece" and "Peace" need not be related literally to the museum; it is another shifting of a supposedly unambiguous reading.

Networks and Autonomies of Title and Frame

For Tobias Vogt, the title and frame belong in a shared context, because they both take on a "mediating function" between the work and its surroundings and each must be thought of in a specific interstice.[89] This is also true of Bauermeister, who also employs both title and frame with multiple functions. Both should certainly introduce a demarcation, to lend a work a certain degree of autonomy and at the same time mediate within the oeuvre in a way that brings things together. On the one hand, the title refers to the work in question, opens up various directions for interpretation, and generates an area of tension of more precise determination by the viewers. On the other hand, the same title also contains a level of networking, since it can be found as a comment in many other works, sometimes in modified form, and evokes a connection to the original work. In addition, Bauermeister has repeatedly worked in series, sometimes far apart in time, so that it cannot be assumed that a title was refined within a short span of time. It is to same degree equivalent with the frame: it forms the termination of a work and declares it to be an aesthetic unity. Bauermeister actively integrates this demarcation in that the frames represent an equally valid part of the composition; the elements in the recession refer to everything lying outside it, and vice versa. Moreover, the frame can be explicitly address or be the primary designed aspect of a work. The crucial thing is that the networks are repeatedly taken up on the frame of the works as well, in which small cutouts from a previous or subsequent work are identified as belonging to it.

Bauermeister's specific use of title and frame can be defined using Derrida's theoretical figure of the "parergon": "A parergon comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside.

Wolf (Amsterdam, New York 2006), 159–75. Bauermeister's allusion to the art criticism on Abstract Expressionism should be reconciled with the oft-cited article "The Crisis of the Easel Picture." In it Greenberg describes how the easel painting "as a vehicle of ambitious art has become problematical," so that its destruction must inevitably come; Clement Greenberg, "The Crisis of the Easel Picture" (1948), in Greenberg, *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 2, *Arrogant Purpose, 1945–1949*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 198), 221–24, esp. 224. Bauermeister declares the easel itself and a picture that is actually a frame to be a museum work.

89 Vogt, *Untitled* (see note 72), 21.

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Neither simply outside nor simply inside."[90] The "parergon" is a hybrid supplement, since, on the one hand, it belongs inevitably to the work of art and cannot be detached from it; on the other hand, it cannot be seen as one and the same as the artwork either. If one attempts one or the other—that is, complete identification or detachment—the "parergon" is closer to the other, in each case—"an ill-detachable detachment."[91] With this concept Derrida is referring to Kant, who in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (*Critique of Judgment*) writes of "ornaments" or "parerga," by which he means something external that does not become entirely the inside of the object and therefore should be judged to be negative.[92] Derrida expands the meaning of "parergon," since it is no longer regarded to be something decidedly negative. The "parergon" even becomes something necessary in order to provide a balance for the constantly occurring "internal lack"; this "parergonal" state of suspense is at once contrasting and disappearing.[93] Bauermeister's title and frame have a function in her oeuvre that can neither be detached from one another, since both persist in the same interstice, nor inseparably connected with the corresponding work, because then it would negate its own autonomy.

The synchronicity of amalgamation and autonomy is an essential feature that will be regarded as fundamental in the next and final section of this chapter. The different elements in Bauermeister's oeuvre, which she repeatedly recombined and commented on, form metalevels in combination for which the works strive together. The new unities that result have in turn implications for the individual works. To that end, the focus will turn to a drawn structure that can presumably be traced back to the checkered pattern and that seems paradigmatic for this aspect of Bauermeister's art.

90 Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McCleod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 54.

91 Ibid., 59.

92 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 110–11. Kant cites as examples frames of paintings, draperies on statues, and colonnades.

93 Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* (see note 90), 59.

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6.4 The (Many-Valued) Metalevels

> Since metareference can also be used for comments on the aesthetics of one's own work, or on other works, or on aesthetics in general, authors may also employ it as a means of educating the recipients, or of providing interpretational clues and cognitive frames to their own works.[94]
> *Werner Wolf, 2009*

The constant incorporation of metareferences in her works is another aspect of networking in Bauermeister's oeuvre and at the same time crucial for unfurling the many-valued aesthetic. In order for many-valuedness to be accepted in the works of art and for two contradictory elements to be interpreted accurately as equivalent, the viewers' activity is necessary. The "meta-experience of the picture" is a "cognitive frame" that leads to a general "meta-awareness."[95] This "meta-awareness" results from the work reflecting on the elements of which it is composed or that are inserted into other artistic works.[96] In Bauermeister's case, a graduated system is recognizable: First, there is the singular object level of the work of art; it has all of the compositional elements that together produce the work. From several of these elements that participate in the metareferences, metalevels emerge, because they reflect on themselves or on the work. The metalevels can for their part be joined again, which then should still be worked out as a metaimage. Also embedded into the bringing together of levels of reflection that always form a large unity are the many-valued aesthetic and its possibility. It can at the same time be possible to identify them on the first level, that of the object, resulting in a circular reconnection of the system.

To form metalevels it is necessary to determine a generic metareference. A quantitative increase in metareferences in works of visual art since the 1950s and at the latest with the rise of Pop Art has been described.[97] Carla Taban, too, assumes an

94 Werner Wolf, "Metareference across Media: The Concept, Its Transmedial Potentials and Problems, Main Forms and Functions," in *Metareference across Media: Theory and Case Studies*, ed. Werner Wolf with Katharina Bantleon and Jeff Thoss (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 1–85, esp. 66.

95 Bruno Trentini, "The Meta as an Aesthetic Category," *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture* 6, no. 1 (2014): 1–9, esp. 8; Wolf, "Metareference across Media" (see note 94), 27.

96 See Wolf, "Metareference across Media" (see note 94), 30–31.

97 See Katharina Bantleon, "From Readymade to 'Meta²': Metareference in Appropriation Art," in *The Metareferential Turn in Contemporary Arts and Media: Forms, Functions, Attempts at Explanation*, ed. Werner Wolf (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 305–37, esp. 307ff.

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art-immanent development of metaphenomena in the period from 1950 to 1970, although they must be viewed as present since time immemorial, they were usually implicit processes that were underdeveloped for the work of art as a whole.[98] Taban describes metareferences as a "cluster of interactive dimensions which constitute the artwork as such."[99] This goes beyond the self-reference that exists, for example, when Bauermeister inserts her own hand or eyes into a work of art or writes the word "art" in a Lens Box. It is a step of reflection and network that leads further to metareference. It is crucially important that the viewers not linger in the internal events of a work; rather, they must take this step to a general level that opens things up. The metareference makes it possible to formulate statements about iconicity that address both the specific work and other works at once.[100] These include written or drawn elements or written comments on them and the placement of the specific elements that reflect on the makeup of the artwork itself, on the specific features of its medium or specifics of its genre, and on the system of art in general.[101] For Wolf, the different metareferences within a work inevitably constitute an overarching metalevel. This effect will be studied in relation to Bauermeister's oeuvre. Wolf also describes metareferences as a phenomenon of "transmediality"; this concentration on transgressions of the medium can only be pursued in a limited way here.[102] In Bauermeister's art, shifts in medium are omnipresent; her picture-to-picture references, for example, can be traced back to such processes. Nevertheless, the nesting of different media or the transfer of representation from one medium to another does not appear to be a primary factor behind the metareferences in her works.

Accordingly, her use of them can be understood more clearly using Mitchell's term "metapicture," if it is understood as structurally equivalent to metareference: If one artwork were to be inserted into another, even if it involves a transposition of media, it is initially (merely) a "picture-within-a-picture," that is, just as significant as any other object in a picture.[103] The metapicture, by contrast, needs a "nesting"

98 See Carla Taban, "Meta- and Inter-Images in Contemporary Art and Culture," in *Meta- and Inter-Images in Contemporary Art and Culture*, ed. Carla Taban (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013), 11–40, esp. 24–25. René Michaelsen likewise observes in his study: "Where there is a metalevel, there is also modernity"; René Michaelsen, *Der komponierte Zweifel: Robert Schumann und die Selbstreflexion in der Musik* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015), 27.

99 Taban, "Meta- and Inter-Images" (see note 98), 25.

100 See Marina Grishakova, "Intermedial Metarepresentations," in *Intermediality and Storytelling*, ed. Marina Grishakova and Marie-Laure Ryan (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 312–31, esp. 314.

101 See Wolf, "Metareference across Media" (see note 94), 43–44.

102 Ibid., 14 and 64.

103 W. J. T. Mitchell, "Metapictures," in Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 35–82, esp. 42. So that the individual steps that lead to metalevels will not be ignored, I will continue to use the term "metareference." It permits more precise analysis of the individual aspects within a work than speaking directly of a "metapicture" would.

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of references, thus dissolving "the boundary between inside and outside, first- and second-order representation, on which the metapictorial structure depends."[104] The *Needless Needles* works could be cited as a suitable example, in which every reference is commented on anew and the demarcations of one work from another are challenged. This is not an extreme case in Bauermeister's oeuvre: her anticipations and recourses are always present. Moreover, there are no mere adoptions from one work, a concept, or a drawing for a new one; it is always subject to commentary, which results in nesting. There is constant reflection on where a work begins, when it can be regarded as completed, and how it relates to other works, because the individual comments must be seen as freely mobile. At the same time, the works are objects that make a statement about art and aesthetics—all these references produce potentials that can be described here as metalevels. Bauermeister's repeated use of humorous comments or parodies must be understood in this context as well; their purpose is "destabilizing" the reception of the work through the "display of pictorial paradox and forms of nonsense."[105]

In Bauermeister's oeuvre there are numerous passages that could be called, following Winfried Nöth, "self-referential metapictures." He assumes that works with metareferences usually have self-referential aspects as well.[106] Examples that could be cited include Bauermeister's illustrations of her own hand in the process of creating, which are simultaneously being drawn by another drawn hand that is also intended to symbolize her own—the levels are composed of elements of many-valuedness. Such sections can be found, among other places, in *Some Stones Missing*; hands that are applying glue to attach stones draw other hands with that glue. *The A's Touch* and *Pictionary*, too, also have such nesting, so that the works represent their own creation, although representation is the reason for creating them in the first place.[107] This "act of meta-referential self-appropriation" can lead to a hypostasis that gives rise to "meta-meta-art," that is, when something metareferential is reintroduced into a metareference.[108]

The Checkered Pattern as Metareference

One metareferential element that occurs often in Bauermeister's works is the transformation of the checkered pattern into a nested structure. The Lens Box *Who Knows Why/What to Paint Anymore* of 1966 is characterized by this process (fig. 62). The work

104 See ibid., 42 and 189.

105 See ibid., 57.

106 Winfried Nöth, "Metapictures and Self-Referential Pictures," in *Self-Reference in the Media* (see note 37), 61–78, esp. 76.

107 See ibid., 64.

108 Bantleon, "From Readymade to 'Meta^{2}'" (see note 97), 326–27.

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is structured in a way that a Lens Box that consists of a recession and a frame has another surface attached at bottom left that is in turn drawn on and has wooden spheres attached to it. This square place has the same dimensions as the original frame and increases the size of the frame that can be employed for the composition, resulting in an overall size of 123.2 by 124.5 by 17.8 centimeters. The overall look of the composition of *Who Knows Why/What to Paint Anymore* amplifies this reference to the frame because most of the written and drawn comments cover just one section of the work. It forms a semicircle around the recession of the Lens Box, extending downward and to the left; the adjoining plane is completely covered with the commentary system—it looks as if Bauermeister created an extension of the frame in order to continue the comments.

In several places there are asymmetrical borders containing the checkered pattern; it also extends across a drawn arm in the upper right corner of the work and on the wooden spheres in the recession. The checkered pattern runs through the work in different phases of distortion: Whereas at first the individual squares are warped, in several sections they transform into connected cubes that produce a new pattern. Bauermeister introduced the work's title here as another level that points to the modification of the checkered pattern. The question reflecting on art—"why" and "what" one is supposed to paint at all—is answered by the artist in this and other works from this period. For her they are transformations of the checkered pattern into structures that Bauermeister called "unsculptable sculptures."[109] The climax of the distortions of the checkered pattern as "unsculptable sculptures" can be found repeatedly in *Who Knows Why/What to Paint Anymore*: above all they cover the drawn section of the frame and the adjoining plane. For example, a pattern of cubes begins in the upper left corner of the added drawing surface. The distorted cubes initially look like produces of a non-Euclidian geometry and transition gradually into a new structure. They also recall cubes, but the twelve edges are emphasized because Bauermeister simulated by drawing the omission of the six squares as sides. The next step of development produces the "unsculptable sculptures"; they still have twelve edges but they are nested, so that there are multiple intersections of the edges. The formation of six congruent squares that together produce a cube is no longer possible. The idea that the "unsculptable sculptures" provide an answer to the question "why" and "what" should still be produced as art, specifically what can be "painted," had many consequences for Bauermeister's oeuvre.

109 Hauke Ohls, "Interview to Mary Bauermeister by Hauke Ohls," in *Mary Bauermeister: 1+1=3*, exh. cat. (Milan: Galeria Gariboldi, 2017), 6–44, esp. 8. The question "why/what to paint?" is also written into the work *Poster (1967 Pittsburgh Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute)* and directly below it answered "paint some unsculptable sculptures."

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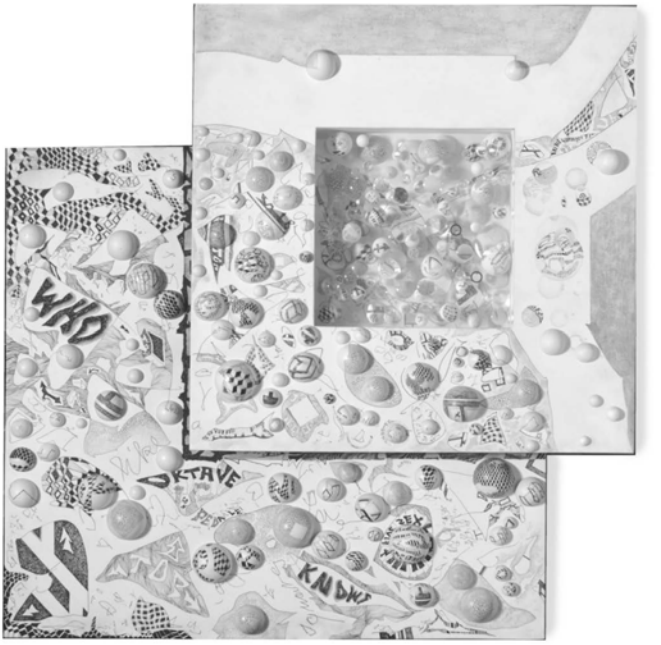
Fig. 62: Who Knows Why/What to Paint Anymore, 1966, ink, glass, glass lens, wooden sphere and painted wood construction, 123.2 x 124.5 x 17.8 cm, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, The Joseph H. Hirshhorn Bequest, 1981 (86.266).



The snaking structures offer points of contact to the many-valued aesthetic. One work that can be regarded as exemplary in that respect, and which further clarifies the idea of "unsculptable sculptures," is *Put-Out (Escaping From the 4th Dimension)* of 1969 with the dimensions 142.9 by 102.9 by 17.8 centimeters (fig. 63). This Lens Box has an asymmetrical form and is constructed to simulate an "unsculptable sculpture." Three small Lens Boxes have been inserted into the dominant frame. The twelve edges of the "unsculptable sculpture" are arranged so that a hypothetical object results that could not exist in three dimensions. Bauermeister in part employed her point structure to simulate the form, to which end she had recourse to her combination principle. A drawn arm of curved lines snakes through the edges; the hand is holding a drawn sphere on which an "unsculptable sculpture" is depicted. Directly below that follow several three-dimensional wooden spheres that are attached to the frame of the Lens Box; each of them has an "unsculptable sculpture." The same is true of the two hemispheres attached to the gallery wall and the individual spheres distributed on a small white pedestal. The "unsculptable sculptures" seem to be "falling" out of the frame, and the work "produces" these forms. The spheres change size in

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the process; first, there are very small ones, which are still attached to the Lens Box; then their size grows exponentially as soon as they leave the work, only to become gradually smaller again when they are more distant from it.

The subtitle of *Put-Out (Escaping From the 4th Dimension)* seems to refer to the origin of the "unsculptable sculptures": the work itself and the individual spheres have a geometrical form that, viewed speculatively, could be imagined present in a fourth dimension. The drawn arm ensures that several of these "unsculptable sculptures" also reveal in the three-dimensional world as if they have "escaped" from the work. It is suggested that the Lens Box is a four-dimensional figure in which corresponding geometries exist. Bauermeister thus formulates a comment that reflects on art on several levels. It can be connected to an aspect of the *paragone* debate, in which painting simulates the three-dimensionality that is inherent in sculpture, which led to reciprocal valorization and devalorization and became potent again in the twentieth century in altered form.[110] Bauermeister's Lens Box, by contrast, has one more dimension. It is also possible to see the fourth dimension as a challenge to statements made about Abstract Expressionism: among other things, interpretation of Abstract Expressionism emphasized "flatness" as a characteristic feature specific to the medium of painting and called for artists to concentrate on that quality.[111] Bauermeister took the opposite position here: not only is the third dimension integrated here but yet another one.

110 See Andreas Schnitzler, *Der Wettstreit der Künste: Die Relevanz der Paragone-Frage im 20. Jahrhundert* Phil.Diss. Graz 2003. Berlin 2007.

111 Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (1960), in Greenberg, *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 4, *Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957–1969*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 85–93, esp. 90.

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Fig. 63: Put-Out (Escaping From the 4th Dimension), 1969, ink, glass, glass lens, wooden sphere, casein tempera and painted wood construction, 142.9 x 102.9 x 17.8 cm, Collection Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. Samuel Metzger 1977.251 (1977.251-jj).

The understanding of four-dimensionality that dominated in Bauermeister's oeuvre at the time of this work has not been precisely documented. It may be referring to time as an additional level, which would permit a connection to Bauer-

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meister's reading of von Weizsäcker's writing, since he challenged the concept of time. For von Weizsäcker, time does not have a successive order but has to be determined proleptically: "It is the direction of the *gaze* that determines the direction of *time*—not vice versa."[112] He understands that to mean a "form of time," in which the form does not emerge within time but the other way around: time only on the basis of the form; these "forms" thus make time and knowledge possible.[113] Von Weizsäcker also attributes to perception the ability to "offer a clear account of geometric and mechanical laws," which anticipates a possible theory; he believes that artists are among those who can take over this task, that is, offer stimuli to perception to adopt a changed view of time in the first place.[114] In this view, works of art are not illustrations of theory but themselves the breeding ground for understanding phenomena and then formulating theories. If it is assumed that time is a freely available determinant in a fourth dimension, then it is not necessarily responsible in a successive order for creating a geometric object; rather, the "unsculptable sculpture" can develop completely separately from the influence of time. What results from this becomes fully understandable only from another publication to which Bauermeister repeatedly referred: it is the connection of changes in time with changes in form, in which a new complex unity is created, as described by Wieser; he too speaks of "forms of time" that grow out of it.[115] The "unsculptable sculptures" on the spheres and the overall look of the Lens Box *Put-Out (Escaping From the 4th Dimension)* are a form that makes it possible to imagine the challenged concept of time in an additional dimension.

Bauermeister's integration of the fourth dimension into her works is not an isolated case. Among others, Duchamp, to whom the artist has repeatedly referred, spoke of phenomena of a fourth dimension and integrated it into his work. For Duchamp, objects should be understood in their dimensionality as analogies to cast shadows. When a three-dimensional object cases a two two-dimensional shadow, then three-dimensionality is the projection of an object with another dimension.[116] It is conceivable that Bauermeister was familiar with Duchamp's statements or had

112 Viktor von Weizsäcker, *Gestalt und Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 13.

113 See ibid., 42–48.

114 See ibid., 47–48.

115 Wolfgang Wieser, *Organismen, Strukturen, Maschinen: Zu einer Lehre vom Organismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1959), 149.

116 Marcel Duchamp, "À l'infinitif," *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Da Capo, 1989), 74–101, esp. 88–101; Herbert Molderings, *Marcel Duchamp: Parawissenschaft, das Ephemere und der Skeptizismus*, 3rd ed. (Düsseldorf: Richter, 1997), 34 and 46–49. Section 2.1 already cited the art critic Holland Cotter, who described the reception of Bauermeister's Lens Boxes as looking into the fourth dimension, which could also be cited here as a horizon.

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exchanges with him about these speculations that influenced her approach to the fourth dimension in the "unsculptable sculptures."

Curved geometric forms are a constant in Bauermeister's oeuvre from 1966 onward. They can be understood, following Nöth, as part of an "ambiguous picture"; they are objects that cannot exist in space, so that they open up a metareferential level.[117] The "unsculptable sculptures" thus reflect on the (im)possibility of forms of artistic expression and on the epistemic power that can come from them. This "impossible border-crossing," according to which something paradoxical is expressed as a given, is a characteristic of metareference.[118]

Meta-Image

Bauermeister's works are permeated by these aspects of the metareferential: in addition to the nesting of picture-to-picture references, the circular properties of the producing and being produced of motifs such as hands and eyes, and the "unsculptable sculptures" and their reflection on the dimensionality of art, the elements of many-valuedness have to be reconciled with metareference: every "yes, no, perhaps" or circular structure that is dissolved produces a "thinking image," in that the work of art reflects on its conditional nature and also formulates statements about higher-order qualities.[119] These statements can concern groups of works or her own oeuvre but can also include genre- or art-specific questions. Parts of the commentary system and the combination principle can also have an effect on the metalevels if they connect all the works to one another and formulate statements about art in general.

One crucial reason for emphasizing the ubiquitous use of metareferential aspects in works of visual art since the mid-twentieth century is that metareference can be understood as a reaction to "binary opposition."[120] Wolf is speaking here of an ontological level that is transgressed in works of art such that paradoxical yet actual statements are made.[121] For Bauermeister's oeuvre, the term "metaphysical" is more apt, since Gotthard Günther wanted to establish his many-valuedness as a metaphysics without ontology. Leaving that aside, it seems to explain accurately Bauermeister's recurring use of metareferential elements: it is the questioning and transgression of binarity that leads to her many-valued aesthetic. The paradoxical should not be grasped as such in the works; there are, rather, many statements that

117 Nöth, "Metapictures and Self-Referential Pictures" (see note 106), 63.

118 Wolf, "Metareference across Media" (see note 94), 52.

119 Vangelis Athanassopoulos, "The Image by Itself: Photography and Its Double," in Taban, *Meta- and Inter-Images* (see note 98), 133–48, esp. 135.

120 Werner Wolf, "Is There a Metareferential Turn, and If So, How Can It Be Explained?," in Wolf, *The Metareferential Turn in Contemporary Arts and Media* (see note 97), 1–47, esp. 36.

121 See Wolf, "Metareference across Media" (see note 94), 53.

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exist side by side and are of equal value and can be brought together. This continuous taking up again of individual elements in her works produces the metalevels. Connections result not only within but also between works, which in turn leads to higher-order levels of reflection. Every metareferential element contributes to the constitution of metalevels. This reciprocal networking can also be found in Wieser's biologically oriented approach: "Elements combine with other elements into higher unities"; in the process, the "effects of the elements on one another" and "the properties of totalities" reach a higher-order position.[122]

The merger of individual levels can be expanded more and more so that not only explicit groups or works or, for example, all of the works that contain an "unsculptable sculpture," form a network, but also every Lens Box and, ultimately, the entire oeuvre. It is the concept of the "metaimage" in which this ultimate conflation results. The metaimage embraces not only the self- and metareferential elements and the resulting metalevels but also disciplines with the prefix "meta-."[123] The metaphysics in the works is enclosed in the metaimage. A majority of the processes in Mary Bauermeister's oeuvre can be related to the many-valued aesthetic and the metaimage; they are in turn a component of the totality of manifold networks—a more comprehensive assemblage.

122 Wieser, *Organismen, Strukturen, Maschinen* (see note 115), 12.

123 Taban, "Meta- and Inter-Images" (see note 98), 20–21.

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