

# THE END OF ALL PLANS

## THE PENCIL DRAWINGS OF MARTIN GROSS

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The works of Martin Groß can be read as landscapes, reminiscent of maps in the way that they not only represent a physical space but allude to somewhere beyond the merely geographical into the landscape of the mind – utopia and plan in one. As potentially ideological designs, maps, building plans and circuit diagrams serve to orientate and instruct. Martin Groß' drawings, however, reject any such functionality.

In addition to individual etchings and screen prints, Martin Groß favours the immediacy of pencil drawings. On large sheets of paper, monumental architectural designs come into being; strict compositions and complex spatial structures that appear fragmented in places, depriving them of any readily apparent meaning. Although the gesture of “grand designs” is present in every one of his pieces, the shifts in perspective and fractures in composition lend them an ambiguous Previous Era feel. Are they daring future designs or already ruins? Post-industrial landscapes or visionary city plans? In their position as a hybrid between the concrete and the abstract, the images serve as projection surfaces for their own horizon of experience. They are fragmented ensembles of form, hanging in indecisive limbo between industrial production plant and living space. This is also referred to with the titles of the drawings, which connote city names without presenting us with concrete places that we could research. They are hidden cities.

In moments of restrained chaos, the sketched form returns with the reappropriation of traditional artefacts and unreal spaces. Prior to this reclassification, the deconstruction of older designs, often also concrete sketches of buildings and urban constellations, takes place. What begins as uncertain, graphic exploration develops into an architectural structure. This design phase is followed by a lengthy correction process of erasing and repeated overwriting. Deconstruction and reconstruction coincide in a single act, but complete extinction never occurs. Unlike painting, where earlier etchings blend into and disappear behind the oil colours, all lines in drawing remain visible as wear marks, imprints and worn patches on the paper.

This intensive editing and continuous strain on the substrate must cease before crossing the boundary into destruction. At this point, deconstruction and reconstruction experience a limitation. The co-dependent layers of becoming and disintegrating now develop an exposed dimension of memory and obtain spatial depth. Although the drawings themselves follow no linear narrative structure, they tell a story through their acquired time horizon.

With various micro and macro perspectives occurring parallel to and simultaneously with one another, the common central perspective in depictions of architectural design is eliminated. Motion, repetition and layering evoke a cinematic production process.

Social utopias find their expression in architectural visions which, as anachronistic structures, can outlive their former superstructures. Martin Groß, born in 1984 in Plauen (Vogtlandkreis), is familiar with such areas of transition between abandoned industrial site and industrially produced architecture. His field of work retains a futuristic element, approaching the visionary. However, his images remain in a state of suspense and pursue no clear goal. They are neither subjective, romantic glorifications of the past nor apocalyptic disaster scenes, as abandoned developing or deprived areas are often depicted. In their role as compact state descriptions, they are able to comment on the contemporary absence of utopian designs for the future with analytical precision.

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