

*The Double Time of Drawing*

19 May – 30 June 2023

„Let us go to the opposite extreme and think of works of art which above all breathe life and action. Let us consider drawings, which give us the joyful sense of fullness with the greatest economy of means – little substance, almost imponderable. None of the resources of underpainting are here, no glazes or impasto, none of the rich variations of brushwork that give brilliance, depth and movement to painting. A line, a spot on the emptiness of a white sheet flooded by light; no yielding to technical artifice, no dawdling over a complicated alchemy. One might say that spirit is speaking to spirit. And yet, the full weight of the human being is here in all its impulsive vivacity, and with it is the magic power of the hand that henceforth nothing can impede or delay even when it proceeds slowly in anxious study. The hand finds every instrument useful for writing down its signs. It fashions strange and hazardous ones; it borrows them from nature – a twig, a bird’s feather. Hokusai drew with the end of an egg, and even with his fingertip, ceaselessly seeking novel diversities of form and new varieties of life. How could one ever tire of contemplating his albums and those of his contemporaries, which I should willingly call the *Diary of a Human Hand*? You can see the hand move about in them, nervous and rapid, with a surprising economy of gesture. The violent mark it deposits on this delicate substance, this paper made of scraps of silk, so fragile in appearance and yet almost indestructible – dots, blots, accents and those long crisp lines that so well express the curvature of a plant or of a body, those brusque and crushing strokes in which the very depths of shadow are looming – all convey to us the world’s delights and something not of this world but of man himself: a manual sorcery not to be compared to anything else. The hand seems to gambol in utter freedom and to delight in its own skill. With unheard-of assurance it exploits the resources of an age-old science; but it exploits also an unpredictable element beyond the realm of spirit, that is to say, accident.“

Excerpt from

*Henri Focillon - The Life of Forms in Art, Zone Books, New York, 1992, pp. 174–175*

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