

Caroline Kryzecki

Counting Silence

29 August – 31 October 2020

Caroline Kryzecki is known for her ballpoint pen drawings that consist of thousands of overlapping lines arranged in layers or grids. For almost a decade, she played through all the possibilities: from extremely reduced monochrome works with only a few superimposed grids to drawings that almost seem like paintings. With her partly monumental works as large as 270×190 cm, the artist explored physical and psychological boundaries as well as the limits of the material. Kryzecki always focuses on the working process. Ideas are born in the process and in a certain sense the works emerge from within themselves. Kryzecki sets herself rules, enters structures, and therein finds freedom.

The drawings with horizontal and vertical lines often have the appearance of textile. Kryzecki has been involved in weaving for years. Weaving is interesting for the artist because the technique of weaving is also based on grids. Two thread systems are crossed at right angles. There are further analogies, not only structurally, but also phenomenologically: some ballpoint pen drawings look digitally conceived, and weaving is an early digital medium. Through the interweaving of warp and weft threads, weaving ultimately involves working with colour dots, which produce an image when viewed together. Today we are talking about pixels. And indeed, Jacquard looms were already controlled by digital data carriers – punch cards – at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

During her visit to a weaving mill near Kassel in 2018, Kryzecki came across a stack of fifty-year-old cartridge paper from the GDR. This paper – with a printed grid – was used by fabric designers to create textile patterns. In February 2019, Kryzecki took the cartridge paper with her to Bethany / Connecticut, where she had received a studio grant from the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation. There for the first time in almost a decade, she picked up a brush. And just as she limited herself to the simplest means of drawing in ballpoint pen works, the line, this time she used the simplest means of painting, the brushstroke. She printed small shapes in the fields of the grid, consisting of a straight line and a curve – conic sections, similar to semicircles. Following self-imposed rules, Kryzecki placed these imprints like pixels in the grid, leaving herself and the works to the process. Again, this process showed a multitude of developmental possibilities through coincidences, deviations, errors or the visualization of structures. After Kryzecki recognized this, she had rasters screen-printed on paper measuring 140×100 cm

and 190×150 cm, back in Berlin. In reference to the cartridge paper, where the key data are listed next to the grid, Kryzecki had her name and the details of the places of origin BETHANY / BERLIN printed on the paper.

Caroline Kryzecki painted thousands of brush impressions from gouache and watercolour on paper specially produced for her. She worked with the primary colours red and blue, each in a variety of tones. By combining the colours and changing the size and orientation of the print and the white space it leaves, as well as by modulating colour tones and opacity, Kryzecki can vary the works within the grid in many ways. The variations within these parameters result in seemingly unlimited possibilities. There are nearly seven thousand fields, subdivided into about half a million smaller fields. The artist first chooses one of these possibilities, follows a self-imposed rule and creates an initial structure. In the course of the work, situations then repeatedly arise that require further artistic decisions or reactions to the process. The work within the process is thereby a constant interplay of intuitive and reflexive steps.

The repetition and the work in the grids makes one think of artists such as Anni Albers, Irma Blank, Channa Horwitz or Agnes Martin, without Kryzecki referring directly to them. She finds parallels and sources of inspiration in music: composers like John Cage or Morton Feldman. Morton Feldman was inspired for his compositions by the Anatolian nomadic weaving. During weaving, the finished part is not visible, which leads to asymmetries in the finished carpet. These are not corrected, however. Rather, the process determines the work. As with Feldman the tones, for Kryzecki the brushstrokes are the material for becoming a work – not the building blocks of a finished idea. Staking out a field, working on the basis of structures, eliminating hierarchies, entrusting oneself to the process, not correcting anything and dispensing with a finished idea – these are characteristics of Kryzecki's work in which she recognizes herself.

Kryzecki has called her exhibition *Counting Silence*. This title evokes the silence of the snowy forests of Connecticut, but also the understanding of silence in the book of the same title by John Cage. Cage, a friend of Feldman, is also another important source of inspiration from the field of music. Cage often said how he noticed in an anechoic room that silence does not exist because in a silent environment you can hear your own pulse and

nervous system. With 4'33'' he invented a piece that has silence as its theme (consisting of supposed silence, it is not composed and refers to nothing, but simply happens like the circulation of blood in the body). The works of *Counting Silence* also pulsate and refer to nothing. It almost seems as if one can feel one's own pulse beat when viewing them.

Counting Silence thus implies two things: silence, but also the numerical, the rhythmic, the beat, the passage of time. If you immerse yourself in the works of *Counting Silence*, time seems to stand still. If one asks Kryzecki about the nucleus of her work, it sounds paradoxical at first – she first comes to the playful in view of her structured approach. But even this contradiction is only apparent, because every game has rules. The observance of these rules and the seeming repetition of sameness contains moments of freedom. These moments also need to be savoured. They are rare. Just like the silence of time standing still. We should count silence.