

Kasper Andreasen moment's notice

For this presentation, the writing in the source publication is transposed onto a makeshift architecture creating a scale model within the vitrine pavilion. The installation will be on view during the month of September, accompanied by an appropriated version of the publication (2007/2024) which includes an essay and an intervention by Dagmara Genda.

The exhibition runs from Thursday, September 5, until Sunday, September 29, 2024.

A finissage and book launch will take place on Saturday, September 28, at 4:30 p.m.

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<https://kasperandreasen.com>**

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Vitrine Rathaus Tiergarten
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A Loss for Words

Dagmara Genda

Kasper Andreasen writes drawings and draws writing. Sometimes he does so on a computer. First he collects textual fragments just like some people collect stamps. They come from books he has read, titles of works he has previously made, the news, public signs, e-mails, journal entries, among other things. He types them out into separate text documents, sometimes one phrase per file, and saves them into carefully labelled folders.* ‘The font is not so important’, he tells me over a coffee in Moabit, Berlin. At least not at this stage. Later the gathered phrases are used like elements of a collage; they are blocks of meaning exactly arranged over the surface of a semi-translucent page.

The resulting composition, titled *moment’s notice*, is not a poem nor is Andreasen’s method a narrative strategy. It is a nebula of stray words, orphaned sentences and peripatetic phrases – a cartography of textual impressions suspended in hazy off-white. The text from the underlying pages hovers like a shadow, or like those gradually fading layers of mountains in Chinese ink landscape paintings. Some phrases are inverted, others light grey, and still others are barely there at all. Many of these softly out-of-focus words can still be read, especially if one flattens the pages together, but for the most part they linger like fading bruises and can be fairly easily ignored. Do their receding contours belong to the bold typeface printed onto the surface of the page?

A palimpsest aesthetic subtly pushes Andreasen’s thin book into three dimensions, as does his lack of page numbers and the black tint of each paper’s fraction of a millimetre edge. Order is just a matter of pragmatics. You may flip the pages back and forth, one or more at a time. The spatiality foregrounds simultaneity – all the words exist in this moment at once. The book, with its rejection of time and its spatial ordering of narrative, results in a kind of ‘contraction’, to borrow a term from Samuel Beckett’s 1931 essay on Marcel Proust. This vocabulary fits neatly into Deleuze’s writing on time, which he divided into three syntheses. The first consists of repetition, which is intrinsically related to duration. It is through repetition, like the sun rising each day, that one can feel the movement of time. The second is the past as

'contemporaneous with the present that it was'. That is to say, the past does not recede but piles up, increases in density, it contracts. In Deleuze's words: 'it insists, it consists, it is' (Deleuze 1994: 82). The third synthesis is the 'caesura', or the cut. It is the so-called empty form of time that slices between past and present, and by making that distinction, it articulates the conscious self in time.

In his 2018 book *Selfie: How We Became So Self-Obsessed and What It's Doing To Us*, Will Storr explains that we narrate time as a novel with ourselves as the hero, though interestingly enough, this hero is more or less formed through a third-person perspective. Studies show that there is no significant difference between how we interpret our own emotions and behaviour and how we interpret those of others. When it comes to our own behaviour, we just have the benefit of being able to observe our thoughts and feelings as they happen, leading us to believe we have direct access to their source. Storr explains we are actually engaged in a type of conjecture; we confabulate a narrative of identity that gives rise to the illusion of an overarching consciousness. It's a theory that Andreasen's work with words seems to support. For Andreasen, the entire notion of narrative is disrupted. This has consequences for identity, as reflected in the autobiographical component of *moment's notice*, in which the artist charts his itinerary through life in seemingly inessential fragments. His 'narrative' is a textual drift of national colours, stations of arrival and departure, fleeting memories and quotes from books, all of which elicit the melancholy of coming and going. His written *dérive* – he compares his process to Debord's 'psychogeographical observation' – reflects the drift that characterised his life from an early age, a life of immigration and regular moves between languages and countries. The narrative of 'naturalised' (a term problematically used for citizenship) identity was thus repeatedly interrupted, revealed as artifice, and constantly re-pieced together into a fractured whole.

Deleuze and Guattari write, 'There is no mother tongue, but a seizure of power by a dominant language within a political multiplicity' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 13). In Andreasen's case, this seizure of power has never been complete. Never long enough in one place to pick up the local dialect, each tongue became a foreign language. His experience becomes an embodiment of

Derrida's assertion that there is an 'essential drift (dérive) bearing on writing as an iterative structure, cut off from all absolute responsibility, from *consciousness* as the ultimate authority, orphaned and separated at birth from the assistance of its father...' (Derrida 1988: 8). Later in the text Derrida goes on to write that this is also true of the spoken word. Rather than carrying a consistent meaning or intent, the collage of words we use can be read differently depending on placement, citation, punctuation, tone, volume, etc., even if their readability, and iterability, always remains.

It is the experience of estrangement that chips away at the assumed stability of language and text. When in his last book *Cosmos* Polish émigré writer Witold Gombrowicz asks how many ways we can arrange the 24 letters of the alphabet, he is not only speaking to language's creative potential, but also to the radical contingency of any arrangement. For Gombrowicz, alienation, not belonging, becomes the rule. The most representative aspect of this alienation is his assertion that the Pole must be 'removed from Poland' to become the 'anti-Pole' (Gombrowicz 1973: 104). This is not a simple rejection of birthplace but, as I have written before, a negotiation of the problem of form and a resistance of completion. The anti-Pole is a relational construct that is constantly rewritten and reformed according to the contingencies of life rather than rooted in metaphorical soil.

Russian poet-in-exile Joseph Brodsky also severed identity from place. In his essay 'Less than One' he refutes Marx's assertion that 'existence conditions consciousness' by noting that the statement is true 'only for as long as it takes consciousness to acquire the art of estrangement'. Thereafter, 'consciousness is on its own' (Brodsky 1976: 3). This is not to mean that consciousness becomes free from environmental influence or comes to exist as a sovereign idea. It is ultimately, to return to Derrida, the negation of '*consciousness* as the ultimate authority'. Separated from existence, consciousness, like national identity, no longer has a leg to stand on. Consciousness strays like Andreasen's wandering words; it really is on its own.

Implicated in the notion of exile, as well as Debord's *dérive*, is the movement of the body. The body is uprooted, displaced, adapted or maladapted, and its potential for narrative is stunted. The relationship between narrative and body is not immediately clear

when reading a book, but it often takes centre stage for visual artists who work with words. Artists tend to spatialise words into objects and installations – Lawrence Weiner’s dry wall texts, Barbara Kruger’s immersive political proclamations, Tsang Kin Wah’s wallpapers made of racial slurs, and Irma Blank’s books as sculptures are just a few, if albeit varied, examples. To these we might add Andreasen’s textual investigations. His particular engagement of the body starts with the homophones of rooting and routing, with which he ends his introductory essay in the last publication of *moment’s notice*. The sprouting of roots entails the creation of a pathway, though this creation is often unconscious and mistaken for a road followed rather than one that is invented along the way. This is even more pronounced in his translation of *moment’s notice* into a public vitrine on a busy Berlin street. As an installation, the book is, with a few subtle changes, enlarged into a kind of wallpaper and unfolded into a three-dimensional environment behind glass. Even the staples which bound the book together take on a life of their own. Through enlargement and compositional rearrangement, they become formal and notational additions that speak to an organisational logic as well as reveal a yearning toward a language beyond the codified script. The spatialisation invites the body to move around the pages and skip between the words. Once again, Deleuze comes to mind: ‘The ideal for a book would be to display everything on such a plane of exteriority, on a single page...’ (Deleuze 1994: 17). In the spatialised book, the reader’s body moves from word to word and thus steers the progression of narrative otherwise implicit in the flipping of the page. In Andreasen’s words, the body roots only as long as it is routing. This leads to a particularly Deleuzian formulation of identity. It privileges the reality of fragmentation (and constant re-fragmentation) over the myth of origin.

Yet the vitrine in which Andreasen unfolds his text maintains essential ties to the structure of the book because it is a model behind glass, and thus a closed-off whole. The viewer experiences the space by projecting themselves within it. A book is also a model into which one projects. It forms a whole with its own logic and rhythm. Although in Andreasen’s case this rhythm is syncopated and contains skipped beats, it still functions as a complete composition – a characteristic expounded upon by Petra Van der Jeught in her accompanying essay for the first edition of *moment’s notice*.

She compares Andreasen's work to a story wherein the main character 'through the protocol of "un-seeing" ... creates a mindscape that makes sense of the "noise"'. With the new publication, Andreasen practices an 'art of estrangement' in order to dive back into this noise. This estrangement takes the form of an invitation; Andreasen asked me, a foreign agent, another artist, a writer and also an immigrant, to intervene into his book, to fragment it, and thus to estrange it from its author.

Like Andreasen, I start with a set of homophones: whole/hole. The whole of the book will be punctured by a literal hole. What could be more disruptive than an injury, an incision, a cut? The cut renders the art object incomplete, and the cut is also the moment of exile from the so-called homeland. For Deleuze, the cut, or caesura, ruptures the passive syntheses of past and present. It is through the cut, Deleuze argues, that the new is created.

A cut is not a citation, nor is it a blank space, of which Andreasen already makes good use. Sometimes he embeds parentheses into sentences as placeholders. Between the brackets lies nothing, but this nothing is somehow separated from the other nothing of the page. It is the demarcation of space into place, like a rest in a piece of music, a space of potential and a moment of anticipation. The cut, on the other hand, cannot be filled. It is a transgression, a wound penetrating the iterative and contracted space of the book. Because the assumed ground – the carrier that is the page – has been sliced away, the outside of the book intrudes into the inside.

In regards to his cut technique of composition, and specifically in reference to his audio tapes, William Burroughs once said that when you cut into the present, the future leaks out. This should not be interpreted as a kind of prophecy, though that seems to be what Burroughs was getting at, as much as that which we still cannot articulate or fully grasp. In Andreasen's book, the cut opens both ways, into previous pages and pages still to come. At times words leak through and at other times, they just disappear. New phrases and arrangements of words are made not only across the surface, but through depth, and these connections change with the flipping of the page.

The fragments that leak through are not citations and they are also not wholly intentional. A decision

to cut in a certain direction also has consequences for the view in the other. A cut is thus intrusive. Unlike the hazy, receding letters seen through the translucent page, it declares its estranging presence. I compare it to a stranger captured in the optically flattened background of a family vacation photograph. We know they do not belong and they are kind of ruining the picture, but they remain an irrevocable part of the composition. Though in this case, with the turn of a page, the intrusion disappears and makes way for another one. The absence becomes the presence, not as a space of potential, but as a window of escape.

Like Heidegger's broken hammer, one cannot take the injured book for granted but is invited to take a deeper look into its particular type of objecthood. It has strayed away from the hierarchy of things that we are used to and replaced it with an undefined object lingering in a stage of becoming. It's an artist's book, but also an art object, and also a damaged book because a previous 'whole' publication exists. This changeability and latent interactivity emphasises the process of making over the finished product. It is the change enabled by the cut that fractures objects into moments, thus allowing their contours to be drawn anew. Without change, objects become names, countries, concepts, and identities. At a moment's notice, they are packaged and labelled. And then, they fade into the background and disappear.

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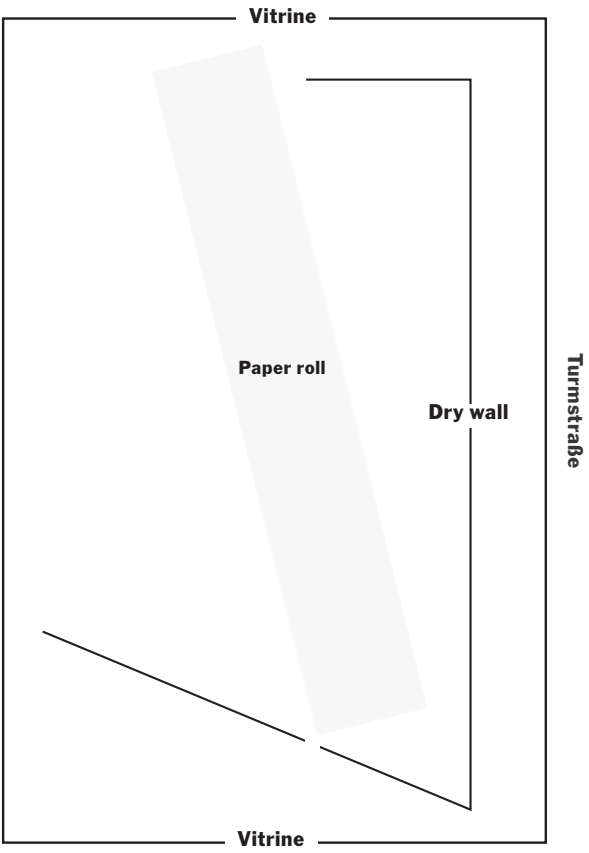
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Vitrine pavilion / Turmstraße, Moabit, Berlin