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## Sealed Confessions

Confession has to be part of your new life. (Ludwig Wittgenstein)

Sealed Confessions is an exhibition of Tayo Heuser's latest works on paper. Conceived specifically for H29— an artist-run gallery space in Brussels known as an international showcase for contemporary abstract art—the exhibition marks a shift in the artist's creative process and brings a "new life" to her current production.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is a set of three large abstract drawings including words spelled out across their surfaces: Everything, Conceal, Nothing. Accompanied by another set of three drawings, also abstract in form yet confessional in character; a small sculpture containing written confessions of people concealed with black ink; and a participatory drawing inviting visitors to write and then erase their own confessions, Sealed Confessions explores, as its title suggests, the act of confession as both a declaration of beliefs, intentions, and emotions and a call for privacy, confidentiality, and truth.

The works featured here (with the exception of the sculptural piece) are drawn on large sheets of Japanese rice paper with a black ballpoint pen. They consist of dark circular shapes with intersecting vertical and horizontal lines reminiscent of Kazimir Malevich's Suprematist paintings or El Lissitzky's Constructivist explorations of space.

Although formally close to this early Modernist abstraction, Heuser's work is everything but purely abstract. By writing down in circles her secrets and memories in a stream of consciousness manner and then scratching them out until they are dissolved into abstract forms, Heuser creates works that are expressionist at heart; they are at once an externalization of private thoughts and feelings, and a concealment of the inner-self.

Although these latest works expand upon the earlier ones, especially in terms of the scale, tactility, meticulous execution, and more recently the theme of circle, they now embody fresh energy, certain edginess and deliberate imperfection.

Made on sheets of burnished paper, whose surfaces have subtle dips and valleys, and hang loosely from the walls, these new drawings attain sculptural dimension. Delicacy, softness, and quietude of former works now give way to sheer physicality of drawn lines and circles, which by balancing each other off result in highly potent surfaces. While the lines here serve as both a means of spatial ordering and as markers of time in which a stream of consciousness travels, the circles, drawn with a lot of force, function as deep wells of accumulated emotions and memories. Moreover, by measuring seven or eight feet in height, and thus exceeding the human scale, these drawings appear daring and provocative. Some that incorporate words—such as Everything, Conceal, Nothing—are even more intense and confrontational. They epitomize "sealed confessions" in which "everything" (intimate experience) is reduced to "nothing" (abstract form). Hence, they recall Kirk Varnedoe's remark on Abstract art, delivered during his Mellon lectures in 2003: "Abstraction is a remarkable system of productive reductions and destructions that expands our potential for expression and communication.

Vesela Sretenovic  
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