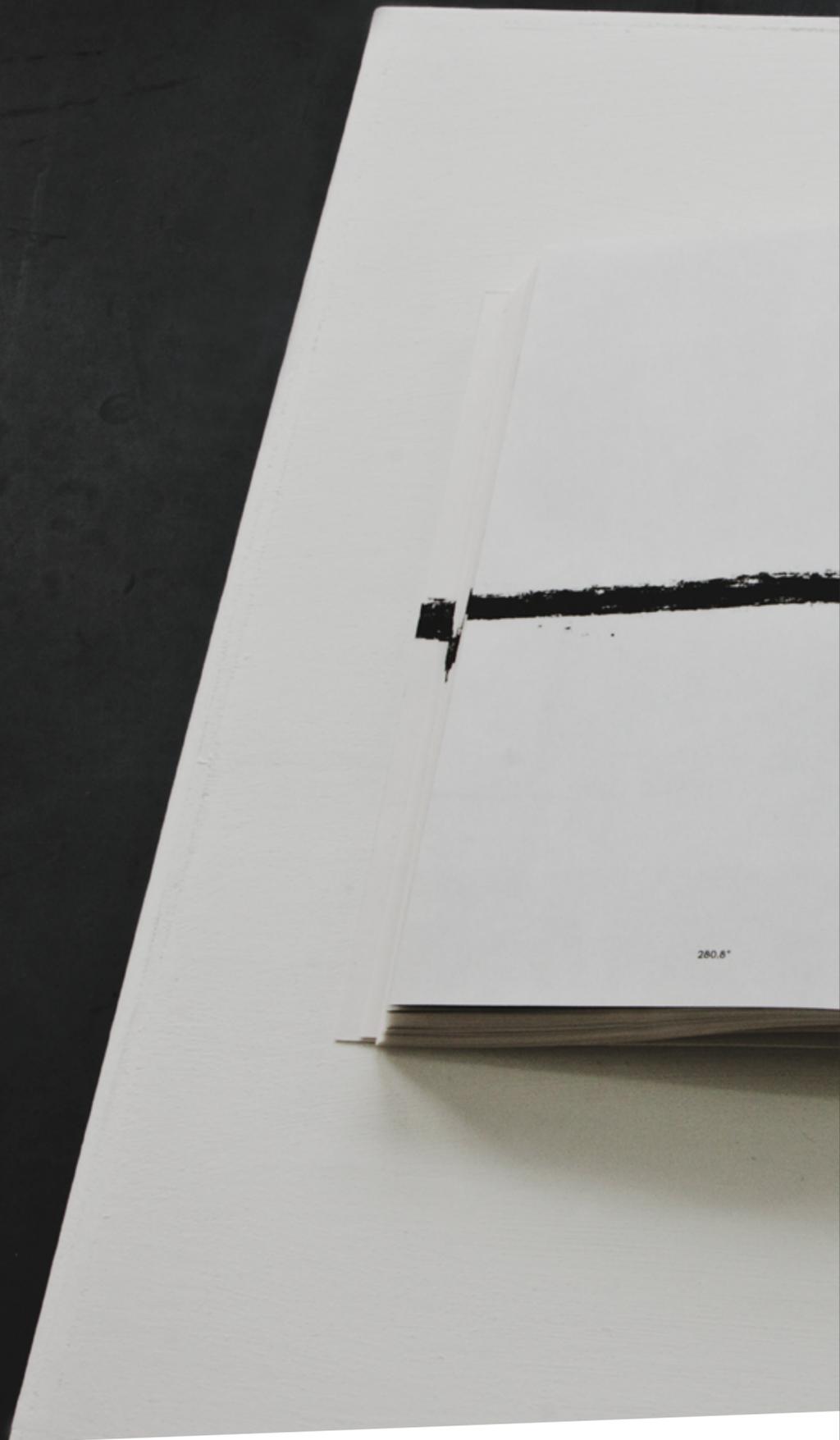
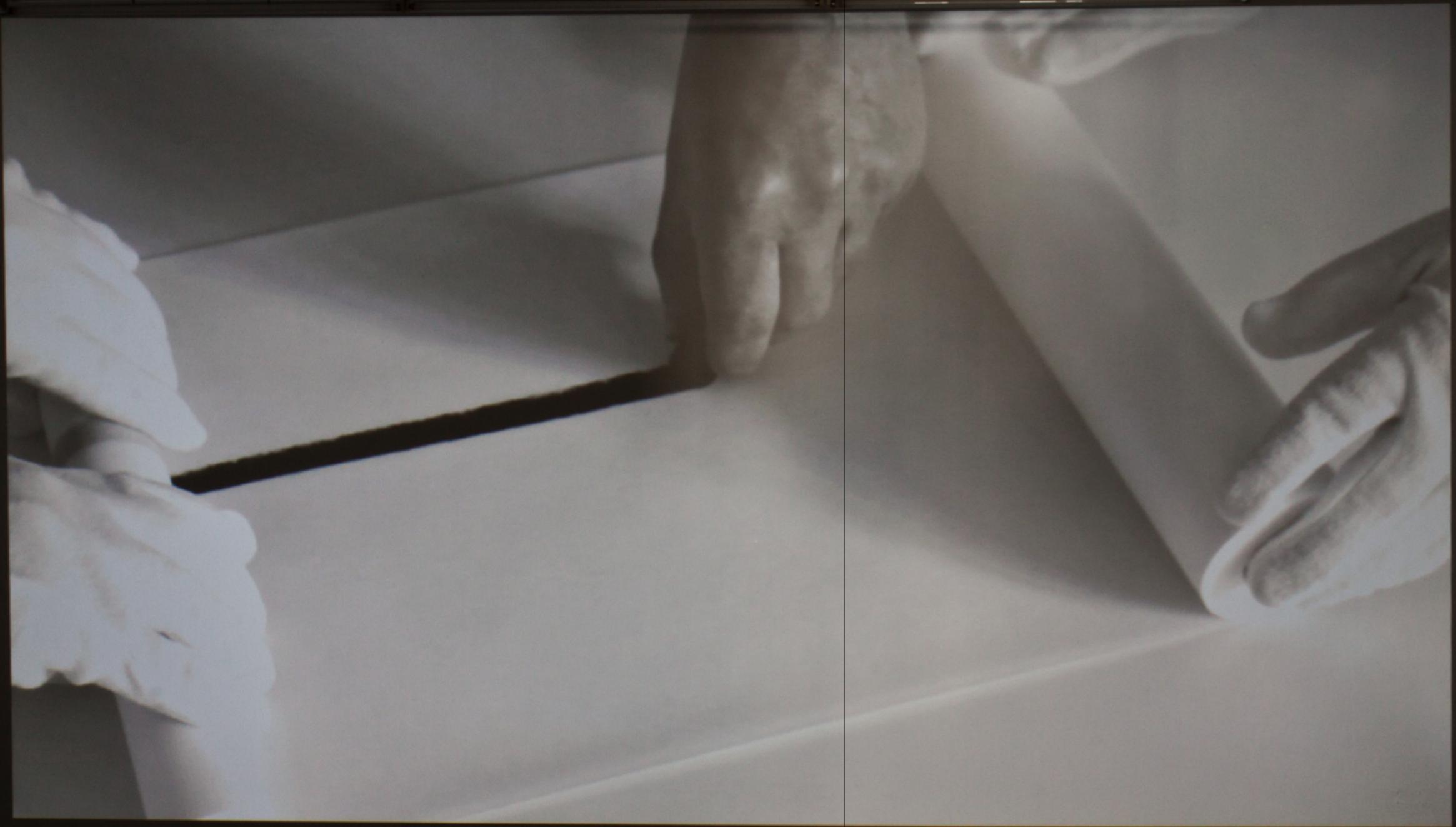
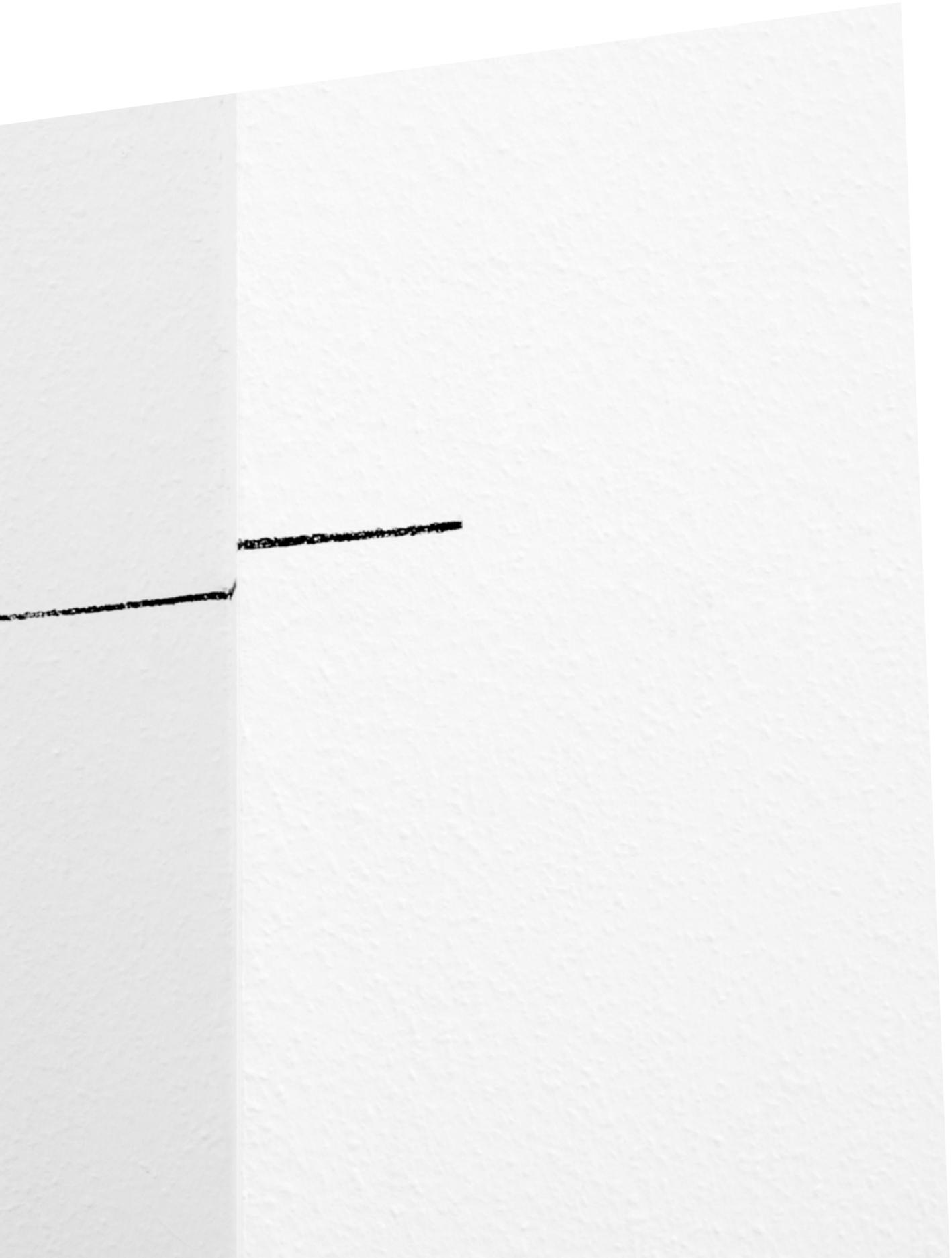


**1 DRAWN BY THE OTHER** 2014, HD-Video, 36 min, Loop, Edition von / of 5 Exemplaren / Copies **2 FOLDED LINE** 2015, zweiteilig / Two-Piece, Graupappe / Paperboard, je / each 69,5 x 50 cm **3 WALL FRAGMENT** 2015, Kohle auf Wand / Charcoal on wall, 5 x 23 x 25 cm **4 BROKEN DRAWING (15003)** 2015, zweiteilig / Two-Piece, Kohle, Papier, Holzrahmen, Wand / Charcoal, Paper, Wooden Frames, Wall, ges. ca. / in total approx. 208 x 210 cm **5 UNTITLED (10024)** 2010, Kohle auf grundiertem Baumwollgewebe / Charcoal on primed cotton, ca. / approx. 35 x 35 cm **6 POINT OF VIEW** 2015, Kohle auf grundiertem Baumwollgewebe / Charcoal on primed cotton, ca. / approx. 35 x 35 cm **7 ALEXANDER-LINIE (Printed Edition)** 2014, Buchobjekt / Book object, 626.2 inch **8 TOTER WINKEL** 2015, Kohle auf grundiertem Baumwollgewebe / Charcoal on primed cotton, 36,5 x 49 cm









**ERICH FRANZ: *A LINE WITHOUT A LINE / A LINELESS LINE*** As far as Jan Wawrzyniak’s works are concerned, what you see is what you get: individual straight lines and uniform, dark surfaces contrast with light sections. All the same, you can never entirely be certain about what you are looking at no matter how clear and stark it may seem. Recognition itself turns into a process without an end. As viewers, we experience an unabating sense of tension.

The intensity of this process of perception, itself elicited by a few brief impressions, suggests comparisons with American art from the 1960s and 1970s, such as Ellsworth Kelly’s geometric shapes or Richard Serra’s gigantic fields of drawn black paintstick. The spare straight lines and geometrical surfaces are also reminiscent of »concrete« art, the principle tenet of which was coined in 1930 by Theo van Doesburg: »Concrete rather than abstract painting, because nothing is more concrete, nothing more real than a line, a colour, a surface.«<sup>1</sup> By the same token, comparisons of this sort immediately postulate the very incomparability of the works themselves, that is to say, the completely different approach that obtains here. There aren’t any surfaces, there are no lines as such that purport to be »concrete« or »real«. Nothing appears to be fixed – as a geometrical shape; instead, everything is drawn, a drawing, suggested in charcoal, intimated, hinted at, often porous, transparent and intangible. Even the homogenous surfaces remain sensitive – produced using charcoal dust, either smudged or rubbed into the cotton fabric.

When it comes to Wawrzyniak’s work, shapes and lines have something about them that makes them impossible to pin down; they seem to dissolve themselves from the frontality of the surface and, in places, to develop an incipient depth of field. Their boundaries to the white ground seem more delicate and non-material, the dark areas mostly permeated with a muted, measured glow. Nothing here actually corroborates itself in any way; no single shape is complete or finished.<sup>2</sup> Nothing is flat and real. Ellsworth Kelly once said: »When you make a line or mark on a panel, you are involved in depiction.«<sup>3</sup> And that is precisely what Kelly wanted to avoid: the suggestion of a figure and a ground, of a body or depth or contour. In Wawrzyniak’s case by contrast, everything extends beyond concrete visibility.

To what extent can we speak of a »concrete« visibility? Ever since the nineteenth century, we have known that seeing not only entails the registering of momentary units of sensory information, but also the activation of earlier experiences and learning processes. Without necessarily being aware of what we are doing, we *interpret* all sensory data communicated to us by our eyes; we relate this data to our experience of touch, we are guided by the outlines of the body and we have learned to differentiate between optical impressions according to spatial conditions and propensities.<sup>4</sup> What we see is constituted largely by such »visual memories of perceptions« (Hermann von Helmholtz).<sup>5</sup>

This is precisely what Jan Wawrzyniak draws: not merely shapes, but also visual memories of perceptions. When seeing the traces and the suggested lines, one is involuntarily activating individual spatial experience, individual approaches to orientation and notions of movement. The power of these drawings lies precisely in their subtlety. These lines and surfaces suggest more that they show, they produce contradictory views or *foci* and draw the viewer in to a veritable abyss. We constantly interpret these drawings, recognising their deceptions, yet succumb to them all the same. Wawrzyniak’s drawings do not proffer any orientation, on the contrary: every notion of order your seeing eye tries to latch onto is whisked away by other equally insistent interpretations the drawing demands.

The exhibition *Unfinished* at the Kunstverein Lippstadt actually consists of nothing more than one single, straight line. However, it takes a while for this optical connection to emerge and even when you have recognised it, it denies you any surety of it being a guiding principle. It mainly comprises gaps, omissions, empty spaces between heterogeneous elements. It is only the viewer’s eye, striving to orientate itself, that creates a continuum, albeit an irregular and unstable one. Individual fragments contain a downward diagonal line, its trajectory is picked up in other sections. Nevertheless, what we mainly experience in this »line« are the interruptions in what is visible and in our act of seeing itself.

In a large framed drawing, three lines describe a rhomboid-shaped area open to the left and appearing as a displaced, shifted square – as though the format containing the drawing has pushed itself into the drawing. The lower line continues further along to the left below in a straight, torn edge of a piece of black paper duly enclosed by a second, smaller frame. Strictly speaking, it is not the line that is being continued here but its direction; as the edge of a black surface, it doesn’t represent a drawn movement as such, but instead suspends all manner of passing temporality. At the top, the trajectory of the line of the lozenge shape extends leftwards beyond the frame and traverses the wall for a short distance before coming to a halt, only to resume on a projecting wall. The line bypasses it, its angle of inclination remaining steadfast, even though optically it appears to be different. Two empty pieces of paperboard – one grey, one almost black – are suspended in the middle of the next long section of wall. Each one has a fold that follows the uniform (imagined) »line«. Through the open door of the adjoining room it is possible to make out a video projection documenting the drawing of an infinite, straight line: a roll of paper is pulled along at various intervals beneath a piece of charcoal held by a steady hand. This gives rise to the »drawing«, to the performance, to the boundless, limitless composition, to the idea of the line, which traverses the whole exhibition as a projection and a memory.

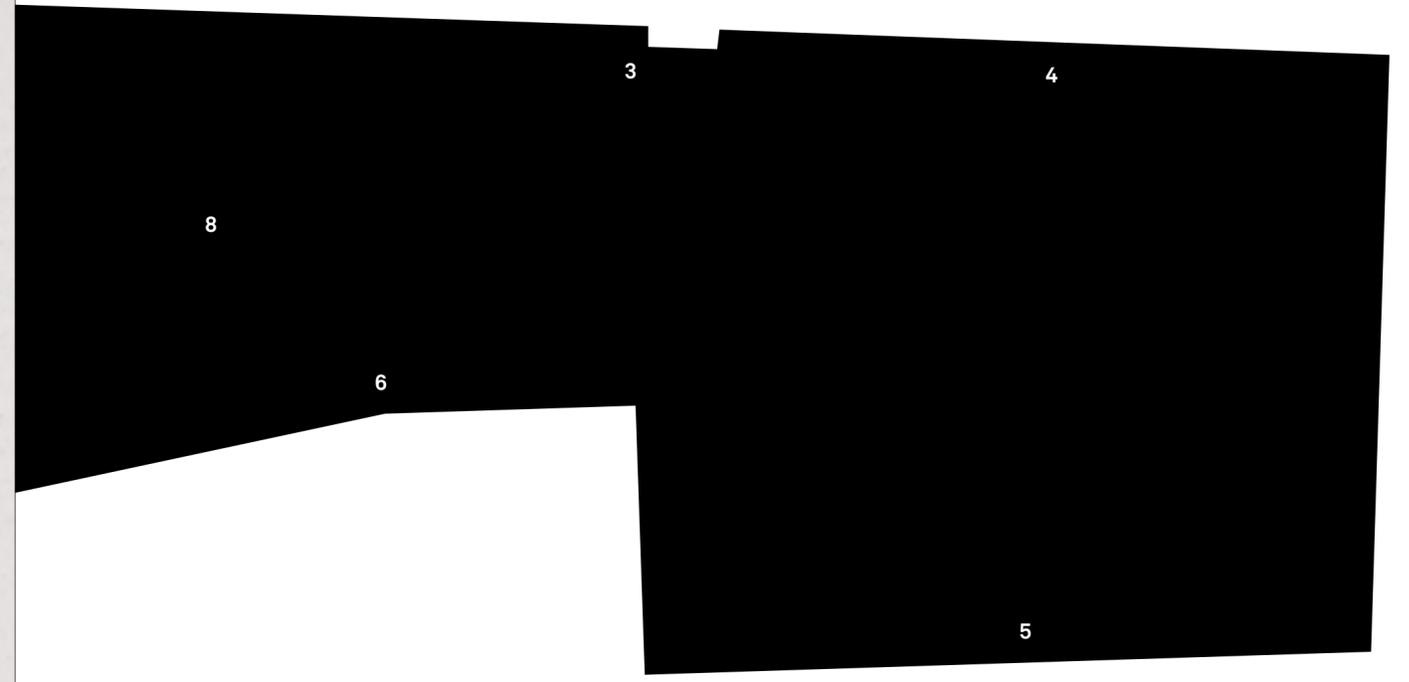
This line itself is devoid of form, nor does it produce form. On the contrary, it suspends our ability to assimilate the space through which it travels. As a line, its imagined unity is vertiginous. The eye finds no purchase, no hold.<sup>6</sup> The line also extends beyond the present and the past. This straight track (measuring 626.2" or 17 yds, 1' 2.2" = approx. 15.90 m) was produced for a room at the Museum Wiesbaden in 2014 and is reproduced in the book »Alexanderlinie«, lying open on a pedestal. The past action becomes the movement of the present escorting the visitor through the space – unfinished.



4 (Detail)

<sup>1</sup> Theo van Doesburg, »Com-  
mentaires sur la base de la peinture concretex, in *art concret*, première année, numéro d’introduction (Avril) 1930.  
<sup>2</sup> Cf. by contrast Frank Stella: »What you see is what you see«, in Bruce Glaser, »Questions to Stella and Judd«, radio broadcast (February) 1964, ed. Lucy R. Lippard in: *Art News*, (September) 1966.\*  
<sup>3</sup> Ellsworth Kelly in conversation with Nathalie Brunet, in *Ellsworth Kelly. The Years in France, 1948–1954* (Munich, 1992), p. 184.  
<sup>4</sup> Hermann von Helmholtz, »Die neueren Fortschritte in der Theorie des Sehens« (1868), in H. von Helmholtz, *Vorträge und Reden*, 4th edition, vol. 1, (Braunschweig, 1896), pp. 329–355.  
<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 358 f.  
<sup>6</sup> »The kind of perspectives I use are always hinted at, you could also describe them as dead ends. I come up with different lines that provide the eye with a channel to follow and then give it the runaround, so to speak.« Jan Wawrzyniak in conversation with Ulrike Kregel, in *Jan Wawrzyniak. Broken and lost drawing*, Exhib. cat. Museum Wiesbaden (Wiesbaden, 2014), no page numbers.  
\* Cf. also: »A painting is nearly an entity, one thing, and not the indefinable sum of a group of entities and references.« Donald Judd, *Specific Objects*, in *Arts Yearbook* 8, 1965.

**JAN WAWRZYNIAK** 1971 in Leipzig geboren / born in Leipzig, 2011 laureate Will-Grohmann-Preis der / of the Akademie der Künste Berlin Aktuelle Ausstellungen u. a. / Recent exhibitions were held, amongst others, at Weserburg-Museum für moderne Kunst Bremen (2015), Museum Wiesbaden (Solo, 2014), Galerie m Bochum (Solo, 2014), Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht (2013), Kunstmuseum Bonn (2013), Cultuurcentrum Mechelen (2013), Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern (Solo, 2012), Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz (2012), Akademie der Künste Berlin (2012). Lebt und arbeitet / Lives and works in Berlin



Ausstellungsansicht / Exhibition view

