

Andrew Nille

Albert Herter's Work (for M.P. and E.A.) (2024)

Can you hear me? "Loud and clear", he'd respond. The line wasn't good. I'd been sectioned, away from the city this time. I was having difficulty speaking; in my mind everyone was listening to us. The TV had a life of its own.

Originally we'd met at a birthday party for a mutual friend. We drank and talked, I can't recall what about. It was an inspired group of characters, memorable in that way. Maybe it was my imagination but as it was winding up it seemed like he was starting to instigate an orgy. Interesting, I thought, but as usual that's my cue to leave.

Later, I was in crisis again. The whole city was now. I was walking in bad directions, a kind of circulating self-sabotage. Throwing people off my trail and then collapsing for days, repeatedly. A best friend intervened and connected us directly. He'd posted his services online as a form of mutual aid – "call anytime, free of charge".

I called and we began. Analysts are usually reluctant to talk about theory, as I understand, but that's where the conversation went. I wasn't capable of much else. The doctors weren't so supportive of our calls. Understandable. At least they allowed it, and let me have a few books from home. Better than the Bible, those standard issues placed in drawers and shelves. "Immortality isn't everyone's thing"¹, I said, and he chuckled.

A quote he repeated to me by Freud: "there where it was, I must come to be". But he translated it differently: "there where it was, I must come to enjoy". Eventually the malleability of adages across my obsessions became safe ground for me to begin exploring, as he advocated, whatever is "unique and idiosyncratic" about myself. Rearranging phrases, altered or sharpened to cut. It doesn't always work. When it does it's physical, it hurts in the best way. After all, it's whatever works for you.

Deixis presupposes Anaphora (2019), the series of drawings shown here recently are his last artworks he said, "unless something changes". I always thought he might be drawing as we spoke on the phone, scratching away at the details. He wasn't. For me, they suggest a visual representation of that lack of rapport that Lacan insisted on. It's helpful to look at them and consider the idiosyncrasies in everyone and all those unstable connections to endure. Change the language however you want. There where it is, we must come to.

¹ Schwitters via Goethe, somewhere.



Albert Herter
Deixis presupposes Anaphora 3, 2019
Ink, oil pastel, pencil, marker and water colour on paper 77 x 57.5 cm
Photo: Nicholas Mahady