

***Line, Colour, Drawing
in Kant and Hegel***

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Kant and Hegel have diametrically opposed views concerning the relationship between colour and drawing. For Hegel colour is all; while for Kant drawing is central. Through an analysis of both these positions the conclusion that is drawn is that colour and drawing have a necessary interrelation. One cannot be thought other than in relation to reach other. Taken together they are integral to the development of a philosophy of art.

Key words: Kant, Hegel, colour, drawing, line

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Drawing is not just the presence of lines, as though drawing could be reduced to the presence of sketched form. Drawing brings the line as a question into play. There is however a fundamental addition here. For Kant and Hegel, and indeed for other philosophers, writers and artists, drawing has to be thought in relation to colour. Indeed, there is a question as to whether, within the domain of art, it is possible to hold colour and drawing apart. Matisse's famous comment in his letter to Henry Clifford reiterates the presence of an already present relation.

Si le dessin procède de l'Esprit et la couleur des sens, il faut dessiner pour cultiver l'Esprit et être capable de conduire la couleur par les sentiers de l'esprit¹.

These opening comments create a setting. The aim of this paper, which is to investigate the way Kant and Hegel's engagement with drawing is equally one with colour, is part of a more extended research project concerning the relationship between philosophy and the particularity of the work of art². The formulation – *the work of art* – creates a specific point of orientation. It refers both to the work of art as an object, as it does to

¹ Henri Matisse to Henry Clifford, 14 Fevrier 1948. Quoted in M. Imdahl. *Couleur: Les écrits des peintres français de Poussin à Delaunay*, Maison des sciences de l'homme, Paris, p. 182.

² The initial attempt to outline the project of which this paper forms a part is presented in my *Art's Philosophical Work*, Rowman and Littlefield, London 2015; Id., *Drawing Jerusalem. Notes on Hans Bol's Jerusalem, with Christ and the Good Shepherd (1575)*, in T. Stoppani, G. Ponzio and G. Themistokleous, *This Thing called Theory*, Routledge, London 2016.

the work of art as an activity. The latter, the activity, is art's work as the work of art. Emphasizing activity rather than the mere givenness of the object introduces a fundamental shift in approach. The object figures differently. Consequently, the question to be taken to any particular work of art is how it works as art; a question which assumes that the locus of meaning cannot be reduced to the content of the image. Rather meaning is an after effect of the way materials are at work. Materials present. Marks mark. There is always another marking in the mark; another presentation in any presentation. Any sense of purity therefore is undone in advance.

Philosophy has addressed art under different headings. While there are a range of approaches this project has a founding contention, namely, that aesthetics as a way of addressing art effectively ends with Kant and that the philosophy of art begins with Hegel. Hence developing a philosophy art has to begin with the recognition of the limit of aesthetics. The opening staged by the circumscription of aesthetics is already clear from Hegel's argument, located in his *Lectures on Fine Art*, that while the work of art (thus art's work) has an obvious aesthetic dimension, it is also true that the work calls on thought³. The immediacy of the aesthetic and the call on thought cannot be separated. For Hegel they take place «at the same time [*zugleich*]». The work, in having an already present and thus ineliminable ideational content is itself, therefore, a locus of thought. If it can be said that the work of art calls, then it calls to be thought and not just to be experienced. (The assumption is twofold; the work of art can be thought and the work – even the lines – is itself always already a locus of thought). Thinking is a necessarily mediated process that cannot be reduced to the immediacy of the aesthetic. Responding immediately, the argument would then continue, is not philosophical nor moreover can it engage the work of art. The aesthetic is premised on

³ The passage from Hegel's *Lectures on Fine Art* around which the paper turns is the following: «What is now aroused in us by works of art is not just immediate enjoyment but at the same time [*zugleich*] our judgment also, since we subject to our intellectual consideration (i) the content of art [*Inhalt*], and (ii) the work of art's means of presentation [*Darstellungsmittel des Kunstwerks*], and the appropriateness or inappropriateness [*Angemessenheit und Unangemessenheit*] of both to one another. The philosophy of art is therefore a greater need [*Bedürfnis*] in our day than it was in days when art by itself as art yielded full satisfaction. Art invites us to intellectual consideration, and that not for the purpose of creating art again, but for knowing philosophically what art is» (G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1988, 12/25).

the refusal to respond to art's inherently ideational content. In sum, aesthetics is based on the refusal to think art. As a result, it is essential that if philosophy is to engage with actual works of art and thus to view art as always already the locus of thought, then their specificity of these works as the interplay of the material, the ideational and the aesthetic is that with which any engagement has to be made. That interplay – the locus of engagement – is the *mattering* of art. Mattering is art's work understood as the work's activity – its being art. Mattering is an essential element within a materialist philosophy of art. Created here is the framework within which to approach the way that Kant and Hegel's engagement with drawing is from the start an engagement with colour.

There are two important additional points that need to be made here. Both concern limitations that clarify further the project of this paper. The first is that both colour and its relation to the line are addressed as they occur within *the work of art*. A concern with colour in the visual field involves one set of concerns that is delimited either by the physiology of perception or a specific set of objects. The work of colour within art's work and thus within a philosophical concern with art involves a fundamentally different sense of colour. The assumption that the first has automatic extension would be simply another instance of philosophy's inability to respond to art as art. In other words, it would be another instance of the failure to think the particularity of art's work. Wittgenstein's proposition in the *Philosophical Investigations* – «don't think, but look! [*Denk nicht, sondern schau!*]» has to be inverted⁴. There is a different imperative: Look at that that which is already a locus of thought. At that point looking and thinking coincide. This is the *sine qua none* for the development of philosophy of art.

The second point will only emerge in the guise of a conclusion. If the aesthetic is premised on the failure both to recognise and respond to the always already present ideational content of art's work, then the opening assumption that form is informed and thus calls on thought has a significant effect on the way in which the relationship between line and colour – thus drawing and painting – are then conceived. An effect

⁴ L. Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations*, Wiley-Blackwell, London 2009, §66.

that calls into question the traditional ways in which both of these oppositions are understood. It provides further openings in the development of a materialist philosophy of art; where the latter is simply a philosophy of art that accepts art's mattering as that which has overall priority.

1.

What is drawing? Rather than assume there is a direct answer to this question a start will be made here, not with drawing as such, but with drawing's mythic beginning. At the outset, the outset as itself constituted as a locus of activity, there was a hand that moved. The founding myth of painting is of course equally the founding myth of drawing. They are together at the origin. Though this particular beginning ties architecture (the wall) and sculpture (the relief) to the evocation of what is in fact a complex of origins⁵. There is there a constellation of concerns not the mere line. These interconnected beginnings are recounted by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History*. They are staged a number of times in Book XXXV⁶. The story concerned the daughter of Butades; the latter a potter from Sicyon. His daughter, on the departure of her lover for battle, traced the lover's outline on a wall. Pliny reports that there was general agreement that painting began with the drawing of this line. While the line may have been generative insofar as led to painting, it was generative in other ways. Pliny reports the event as an account of a specific origin and then goes on to indicate that the drawing had a further effect. The drawing was itself an origin, thus another origin. Origins have an ineliminable and thus anoriginal doubling⁷.

According to Pliny Butades responded to the lines created by his daughter in a precise way. Pliny writes:

⁵ The overlooking of the architectural can be understood as an attempt retroactively to eliminate complexity in the name of what would only ever be a putative singular origin. For an examination of the neglect of architecture see Robin Evans' essay *Translations from Drawing to Building*, in his *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays*, Architectural Association Press, London 1996.

⁶ Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXV. On the significance of this story for art history see: R. Rosenblum *The Origin of Painting: A Problem in the Iconography of Romantic Classicism*, in "The Art Bulletin", 39, 4, 1957; V. Stoichita, *Short History of the Shadow*, Reaktion Books, London 1997.

⁷ I have developed and deployed the term anoriginal to describe an origin that is always already more than one. That plurality is ontological nature rather than sematic. See my *Recovering Anoriginal Relationality*, in "Research in Phenomenology", 47, 3, 2017.

Her father pressed clay on this and made a relief (*typum fecit*), which is hardened by exposure to fire with rest of his pottery; and it is said that the likeness was preserved in the Shrine of the Nymphs until the destruction of Corinth by Mummius⁸.

The line becomes a «relief [*typus*]». One medium led to another. The literal and figural crossing of a line results in the creation of an object that can itself be located in an inventory of all objects. In the end it became just an object. (Or at least an object defined by the imperatives of preservation, no matter how unsuccessful this may have been, rather than one with artistic meaning on its own). The line moves beyond itself. And yet there were lines. The first iteration of the story is clear: *umbra hominis lines circumducta* (the lines were drawn around the shadow of a man)⁹. The line is the result of drawing; drawing is the result of the movement of hands. The lines that were drawn, if the unfolding of the report is followed, were themselves part of a process in which drawing is already a form of tracing. Within that process the drawn line while traced, was equally preliminary. The lines marked a condition that retrospectively became a limit condition. The line opens and sustains the possibility of a passage. And thus from one perspective the line, which is already in place as a threshold, is there as the passage itself. The condition of this passage, a passage whose presence is the actualization of a potentiality, is the presence therefore of the line as preliminary¹⁰.

Precisely because the line works as a point of departure, the opening question has to be: Was the drawn line ever just a line? The question might be thought to pertain, and pertain uniquely to the line, and thus hold to the line as resulting from the moment in which the moving hand encountered a surface. Even though that encounter was necessarily mediated by the presence of a drawing implement, if that mediation were left to one side, then the moment of encounter might be taken as a moment of pure immediacy. If this were the case then the line is the gesture; or more precisely that conception of gesture in which the gesture is «pure means» and thus withdrawn from

⁸ Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXV.151-2.

⁹ Ivi, XXXV.15.

¹⁰ On the line as «preliminary» is my, *The preliminary: notes on the force of drawing*, in “The Journal of Architecture”, 19(4), 2014, pp.470-482.

any logic of utility, and in harboring a version of Kant's famous «purposiveness without a purpose», the line then becomes the gesture that can be associated with the work of Agamben. For Agamben gesture «is the exhibition of a mediality, it makes visible a means *as such* [è l'esibizione di una medialità, il render visibile un mezzo come tale]»¹¹. The defining element inheres in the «as such [*come tale*]». And thus in the possibility of there being gesture «as such». And yet, what stands countering such an eventuality, namely an eventuality that is the identification of the gesture with that occasioning of expression which was itself truly the «expressionless», is a different conception of the line and parenthetically another conception of gesture¹².

In contradistinction to this merely posited pure state, there is another possibility. One in which the drawn line is linked to the ineliminability of thought. Allowing for this link means that rather than being a pure site the line is informed *ab initio*. The latter brings with it a possible radical reconfiguration of form. Though now the movement would have been different. The line would have been the same. The hand would still have drawn. Butades' daughter would have traced her lover's presence. Now, however, presence would have marked absence. In other words, there cannot have been just a hand. The line would have borne it. The moving hand recalls. The remembering hand inscribes what it recalls within the line as the line. Memory here need not be an intentional act. Indeed, memory works beyond intention. This slippage of intentionality's hold, the line slipping from its hold, still allows memory to register as the line is being drawn and then it is retained in the now recalling drawn line. A line that is, of course, always able to remember more. (Remembering more than it was ever thought to have known. This is, of course, a description of the interpretive act and thus of the line as a hermeneutic site). As a beginning, equally at the beginning, the line marks both presence and loss. They are presented by the drawn line. The line, and it is now this charged line, lent both itself and the charge – admitting their originality and

¹¹ G. Agamben. *Mezzi senza fine. Note sulla Politica*, Bollati Boringhieri, Milano 1996, p. 63.

¹² I have tried to develop another conception of gesture, one that is in accord with an understanding of the line as informed form in my: *Gesture and Expression: Limiting Lament's Expression*, in "International Yearbook for Hermeneutics", 16, 2017; Id., *Two Forms of Gesture: Notes on Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin*, in "Aisthesis. Pratiche, linguaggi e saperi dell'estetico", 10, 1, 2017; Id., *Empathy and Gesture: Warburg in La cappella Sasseti*, in D. Rubinstein (ed.), *Fragmentation of the Photographic Image in the Digital Age*, Routledge, London 2019.

thus the impossibility of separating form from its having been informed – to the relief that occurs after the line. The relief which was «made [*fecit*]» by her father after the lover's departure. The line has become a drawing. Becoming that specific instance of informed form that was a precursor; the line as informed form and yet also preliminary.

Here precision is vital. After the line there was a «relief [*typus*]». However, that particular relief is an instance, an example, of what comes after the drawing of a line; thus after drawing. That it is an «instance», or an «example» indicates the presence of a particular and not the presence of a formal and form giving relation that has a singular determination in each instance). Here, the relief occurs as the line is crossed; enabling it to be crossed is the presence of the line as informed form, though, and this point is key, the relief, while present after the line is no more than an instance of that which may have come after this particular line (or set of lines and thus a drawing). Hence the relief in question is an example. It has a relation of indetermination to this particular preliminary line. In sum, the line is a precursor to the extent that there is an indeterminate relation to that which occurs takes place after it. The line endures therefore as a precursor. While it cannot be pursued here with the detail that it deserves, this is the point at which to note one of the difficulties inherent in Derrida's engagement with the story of Butades in his *Mémoires d'aveugle*¹³. Not only is his analysis dependent upon paintings by Suvée and Regnault – which are described only in terms of their content, Derrida is systematically uninterested in which was identified earlier as a work's «mattering» – it is also the case that what is left are the complexities introduced by Pliny's own narrative. The concept of the line that appears is the one that also figures in his *À dessin, le dessin*. Again Derrida's concern is the line's inscription within a phenomenologically orientated problematic of visibility. While, of course, Derrida is right to suggest that that the line «*donne à voir*», the line thus positioned, for Derrida is what he calls the «*ligne pure*».¹⁴ The argument here is that there cannot be a pure line. This it is impossible to write of «*le trait*» that it «*se soustrait à la vue*» for the precise reason that the «*trait*» (the mark) cannot be reduced to that which only occurs in

¹³ J. Derrida, *Mémoires d'aveugle*, Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris 1990, pp. 54-56.

¹⁴ J. Derrida, *À dessin, le dessin*, Francispolis Éditions, Rouen 2013, p. 36.

the visual field¹⁵. This is the mistake made by aesthetics. The line/mark is always already more – an excess referred to earlier in terms of the doubling of the line or mark – is that which gives it an ineliminable hermeneutic quality. Again the elimination of that quality is the project of aesthetics. The preliminary resists its incorporation into the project of aesthetics. The line is always preliminary in this precise sense. While the line is both preliminary, it is equally the site of a specific determination of informed form. And yet, here, it is vital to be cautious since there is already a tradition of imbuing the line with ideational content and this is a version of the informing of form. However, this often takes the form of the attribution of a representational quality to the line. It is important therefore that a differentiation be made.

The presence of drawing in Roger de Piles' *L'Idée du Peintre Parfait* 1699 is a case in point. The framework of representation predominates. In that context drawing is held back from painting. Drawings have a specific determination. For de Piles drawings are described as the «*les Pensées que le Peintres expriment ordinairement sur du papier*»¹⁶. While for de Piles drawings are also «*studies [études]*» what is important here is the identification, or at least conflation, of thoughts and studies. «*Drawings [Les dessins]*» are «*thoughts [pensées]*» insofar as they are provisional. However, and here is why caution is necessary, it is a sense of provisionality that cannot be disassociated, at least initially, from the framework of representation. The question then is the extent to which they represent thought such that they are then simply the form taken by thought. The question does not just link thought to representation. More emphatically, one is then defined in terms of the other. Determination and representation intertwine. What cannot be doubted is the reciprocity of relation between line and thought. Lines «*express*» thoughts. There is a correlation. However, following from the argument staged above there is no necessity that the line, and by extension drawing, be understood as only operative within the structure of representation. What de Piles is claiming is that drawings have an ideational content. Form is already informed. In his case however that is because they «*express*» thought. Retaining the framework of representation and thus using the language of expression is not the only possibility.

¹⁵ Ivi, p. 37.

¹⁶ R. de Piles, *L'Idée du Peintre Parfait*, François l'Honoré, Amsterdam 1753, p. 31

Once allocated the quality of being a locus of thought, then neither lines nor drawing depend upon expression – or the recovery of an intention of express – to be understood as such; i.e. to be understood as loci of thought. The suspension of the assumption of operative presence of the framework of representation as the only way of understanding drawing as a locus of thought creates the opening which representation cedes its place to presentation. As a result, while the drawing/thought relation is maintained, there is concomitant transformation of what is meant by the informing of form. Lines are not informed by an intentional act in which the mind would guide the hand. There is a different claim. The claim pertains to how mattering – the interplay of materials and meaning – is understood. Namely, it is not just that form is already informed, its being such is, in fact, the ontological status of the line.

Paul Klee in writing about art, though the point may have its greatest acuity when it is said of drawing, that it «...*gibt nicht das Sichtbar wieder, sondern macht sichtbar*» (...does not reproduce the visible, rather it makes visible)¹⁷. If what it makes visible – the line therefore present as a *making visible* – is not to be understood as the presentation of an invisible outside and therefore not defined in relation to the invisible, as there countering invisibility, but has a different quality, then, as a result, other considerations obtain. Indeed, what matters, matters in the precise sense that what is at work is the object's presence as matter, thus its mattering, then the line works after the hand. Working, that is, after the hand has worked. While retaining the hand's recall there is now the opening in which the line can continue to remember. In the case of Butades' daughter, while the lover withdraws the drawn line retains.

The line as presentation, as that which «makes visible», has to introduce the question of presentation, and it is a question that accepts the line's provisionality. Accepting, that is, the line's status as preliminary. There is now a new question: What is presented? The answer to this question hinges both on the recognition that the informing of form means that what is presented is always that which while allowing for its possible reduction to the trace as or to the gesture, where the latter is understood as originally pure, purely

¹⁷ P. Klee, *Schriften. Rezensionen und Aufsätze*, DuMont Reiseverlag, Ostfildern 1990, p. 118.

formal, in working with the supposition that this pure state could only ever be a produced state – and thus not pure at all – it would thereby follow that the line had an importantly different quality. The line is the site of a material presence in the precise sense that the informing of form in presenting both the ideational and the material thus precludes the complete reduction of the material to the empirical. The informing of form means that the line is itself the locus of an insistent irreducibility that occasions its future, which is its openness to relationality. It is open to the continuity of its own release of futurity. In other words, its finding form. While this is finding within indetermination form nonetheless occurs. Butades created form. Formally, futurity depends upon the resistance to closure. This resistance is sustained by the informed line and the continuity of the possibility of its finding form. This is the ontological condition of the line; namely it is doubled at the origin. The line reappears therefore as the locus of what has already been described in terms of an original doubling. And thus there is the presence of the drawn line as a plural event.

2.

While it is essential to continue to develop a thinking of the drawn line as the site in which there is an original informing of form, to the extent that the project remain philosophical, or rather continue as philosophical, once elements of philosophy's own engagement with drawing are brought into play, drawing's already present relation to colour then comes to figure. While there is always the general question of what it means to think drawing as a topic within the philosophical, in this context two already staged answers will be considered, namely Kant's and Hegel's. What both answers underscore is the proposition that any concern with drawing is equally a concern with colour.

In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant argues the following in relation to drawing:

In painting and sculpture, indeed in all the pictorial arts, in architecture and horticulture insofar as they are fine arts, *the drawing is what is essential* [*ist die Zeichnung das Wesentliche*], in which what constitutes the ground of all arrangements for taste is not what gratifies in sensation but merely what pleases through its form [*durch seine Form gefällt*].

The colours that illuminate the outline belong to charm [*Reiz*]; they can of course enliven the object in itself for sensation, but they cannot make it worthy of being intuited and beautiful, rather, they are often even considerably restricted by what is required by beautiful form, and even where charm is permitted it is ennobled only through the former¹⁸ (Emphasis added).

Central here is the contrast between what Kant identifies as «charm [*Reiz*]» and «form». How is that difference to be thought? What is its quality? Occurring in §14 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is what might be described as a literalization of form insofar as Kant seems to be concerned with the artwork's formal arrangement. Moreover, it is an arrangement that holds itself apart from colour. It is, of course, this position that receives a complex type of reversal in Hegel who, while championing drawing, in the end takes the side of colour. Why? The answer is straightforward. Hegel's concern with art's work demands that attention be paid to presentation and thus to what he describes in the *Lectures on Fine Art* as the «*Darstellungsmittel des Kuntswerks* (art work's means of presentation)»¹⁹. Kant, on the other hand, continues with the object's intuitability as a locus of organization. Indeed, this has to be the case since Kant is concerned with the subject's relation to the object. And therefore the object as a potential locus of philosophical investigation is subsumed under a more general concern with object's intuitability. In other words, with what he identifies elsewhere in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as the «form» of the object. (Namely, the object's generalizable conditions of intuitability). Here the limit emerges. Kant cannot move from the subject (the locus of the aesthetic) to the object and thus to the need to think the always already present interplay of the material and the ideational. The implication of this position should be clear. Once it can be suggested that drawing «pleases through its form [*seine Form*]» what then follows is that while any one work's «means of presentation» can be of no real philosophical significance for Kant – other than being dismissed as «charming» – that is not the major point. What is far more important is that the means for it to be thought are themselves not present. To the extent that a concern with either «means» or «medium» did not pertain, or were reduced to that which charmed, what then would drawing be? If the Kantian path were followed, then

¹⁸ I. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, translated by P. Guyer and E. Matthews, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001, §14.

¹⁹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, cit., vol. II.

the answer would have to do with the formal arrangement of lines and thus the presentation of form. Kant's thinking however pushes further, in the end pushing against itself.

Drawing, in Kant's overall philosophical project, also figures as providing a language, perhaps a set of images, through which processes of thinking (cognition) can themselves be understood. Drawing figures within the argumentation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

We cannot think of a line without drawing it in thought (*Wir können uns keine Linie denken, ohne sie in Gedanken zu ziehen*) we cannot think of a circle without describing it, we cannot represent (*nicht vorstellen*) the three dimensions of space at all without placing three lines perpendicular to each other at the same point, and we cannot even represent time without, in drawing a straight line (*Ziehen einer geraden Linie*) (which is to be the external figurative representation of time (*figürliche Vorstellung der Zeit*), attending merely to the action of the synthesis of the manifold through which we successively determine the inner sense, and thereby attending to the succession of this determination in inner sense²⁰.

The formulation that appears above presents drawing as having a representational quality. Moreover, here the thinking a line is the drawing of a line. What follows from this set up is of fundamental importance, namely, that the line's «representation» is already the representation of a thought. Kant writes that the straight line is «the external figurative representation of time». The question, of course, is how this representative quality is to be understood. What is it that the line presents? The answer can only pertain to the ideational. The line presents the circle, or three-dimensionality, or finally time; a presentation within and as representation. Drawing, therefore, because it is the presentation of abstractions, also presents the condition of presentation. These abstractions are not the abstract as opposed to the figurative. In other words, it is abstract insofar as what is presented by the drawing is the very condition of presentation itself. Of interest here is the way abstraction as the condition for any «representation» has to be a pure presentation and thus is there as the latter's condition of possibility. This establishes, if only at the outset, (and this is the essential point, i.e. its only being there at the outset) the appearance of a link between drawing and that conception of

²⁰ I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by P. Guyer and A. Wood, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Ma. 1999, B154.

gesture in which the latter is the condition of expression. However because of both the the interplay of representation and presentation on the line hand, and the use of a conception abstraction that has content – e.g. the abstract circle, or time (as an abstraction) means that any attempt to equate abstraction with the pure immediacy has become impossible. Its becoming thus attests both to the opening up of drawing and the connected and now inescapable reconsideration of form.

In relation to free hand drawings by Raphael and Dürer, Hegel writes the following. It is a formulation that indicates in what way, for Hegel, drawing and paintings are connected.

these free-hand drawings have the greatest interest because we see in them the miracle that the whole spirit of the artist passes over immediately into the manual dexterity which with the greatest ease, without groping, sets before us in the production of a moment everything that the artist's spirit contains. For example, Durer's marginal drawings in the Prayer Book in the Munich Library have an indescribable spirituality and freedom: conception and execution appear as one and the same, whereas in paintings we cannot get rid of the idea that perfection has been achieved in them only after several over-paintings and a continuous process of advance and improvement. Despite this, it is only by the use of colour that painting gives to the life of the soul its really living external appearance.²¹

Note the two-stage presence of «spirit» within this formulation. In the first instance, within the drawing, perhaps as the drawing, «spirit» moves through the artist in terms of the latter's «manual dexterity» in order to allow for the presence of what is identified as the «artist's spirit». In drawing, specifically in Durer's «marginal drawings», there is an immediate presence/presentation of «spirit». And yet, painting brings something more into play. Repeating Hegel's final formulation concerning colour is important in order to understand the particularity of drawing. He argues that the use of colour in painting is that, and in contradistinction to drawing, it «gives to the life of the soul its really living external appearance». Even though it involves a set of different arguments that cannot be taken up here, it is still possible to link «material» and thus the «medium» to presentation and as such move drawing away from the inherent conception of abstraction at work in Kant's formulation. Hegel's comments on Dürer remain important since he identifies, as noted, both a complementarity as well as simultaneity.

²¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, cit., pp. 838-9.

A twofold presence marked in the passage in terms of «conception» and «execution». In the drawing, they are one and the same. To reiterate the point; Hegel writes «conception and execution appear as one and the same». While there is a sense of immediacy here, what is presented is the immediate presence of informed form. Thus the immediate presence of that which is always already mediated, namely, informed form. Mediacy however is not initially a position that involves a relation to the conceptual. Rather, it pertains to the process of painting, i.e. to the «continuous process of advance and improvement» that comes with the repeated application of paint.

Painting introduces colour. For Hegel there is a sense of literality here in that drawing was assumed to be literally without colour, while painting in deploying colour, in depending on colour, allows for what Hegel refers to as «carnality»²². If flesh is the place where spirit lives – and the determining figure here is the Jesus of *St John's Gospel*, Christ as a philosophical trope insofar as Christ is, to meld John and Hegel, «spirit having become flesh», then colour becomes the *sine qua non* for its presentation. In sum, the position is clear – no colour no life. For Kant, of course, colour is not just inessential more importantly it belongs to the realm of «charm» and thus falls within the domain of subjectivism and thus outside the realm of universality, *albeit* subjective universality. Hegel's counter can be described in terms of both universality and materiality. As a result another mode of presence or presentation occurs. Indeed, at work here are two different senses of presentation. For Hegel that which has universal force is actually present within the work. What this means is that colour is both itself and ideational from the start. (That it can only have the ideational content identified by Hegel is clearly not the case. Here is the opening to what will emerge as contestability). And yet the significant point is that colour is material as opposed to the merely empirical. Furthermore, were there to be just colour without a link to the ideational – and the absence of the link would be a quality of the work – then the work of art would have lost any connection to the «spiritual» (in Hegel's sense), to its being a determination of Spirit, and as such would be unthinkable (in the precise sense that there would not be a call on thought).

²² For a systematic engagement with this aspect of Hegel's writings on colour see J. Sallis, *Transfigurements: On the True Sense of Art*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2008, pp. 74-104.

Even though in Kant's formulation the line is informed – perhaps *pace* Kant – the process of informing is radically different. Presentation involves referral and indetermination at the same time. In the case of the reference to drawing that occurs in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, drawing presents the ground of presentation. However, when Kant adds that it «pleases through its form» then the other element that needs to be added to the interpretation of the overall passage from §14 is that while drawing presents, there is the need to announce the simultaneity of pleasure and then – and this is of course the point that is essential to the Kantian project – to restrict that pleasure to itself. Pleasure cannot open beyond to thought and thus to the conceptual. This is aesthetics' insistent point. Equally, it is point of impossibility. To restrict thought is already an act of thought.

The impossible possibility of purity – of pure presentation – can be clarified by returning to the reference to drawing that occurs in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. What occurs within that reference is formulated unequivocally in the language of representation. Kant is clear, he wrote that «we cannot even represent time without drawing a straight line». The point is that what such a formulation stages is a relationship between the line and a specific form of presentation. What had to be held apart now appears, in this formulation at least, to have to be combined. The line, the drawn line, which while it has to be that which «pleases through its form», is nonetheless that which also, and thus at the same time, has a presentational quality that while referring to that original setting cannot be reduced to it. A constitutive spacing is uncovered and which functions is the formal undoing of the possibility of pure immediacy. This occurs because while it may please through its form, it is equally the presentation of time. The line is informed and therefore is not just form. It presents in excess of itself thus eschewing any possible *reductio ad unum*. The inscription of this doubling means that Kant's project frays at this precise point. Even though the line had to be held apart from the conceptual, once what is at stake is the process by which the subject represents to itself, then drawing has a doubled presence in which form as always already informed comes into play. Note the claim at A162-A163 concerning the

process of what might be described as self representation:

I call an extensive magnitude that in which the representation of the parts makes possible the representation of the whole necessarily precedes the latter. I cannot represent to myself any line no matter how small it may be, without drawing it in thought, i.e. successively generating all its parts from one point, and thereby first sketching this intuition²³.

The question to be addressed here does not pertain to the ineliminability of drawing, thus thinking's need to draw – even though that would be an important project in its own right – rather what is of concern here is the quality of the drawn.

The drawn line does not just allow thinking. The line drawn is thought itself; it is the site of thinking, even if not understood as such. Again, it is not just that the Kantian insistence on holding pleasure apart from the conceptual is itself already a conceptual claim, here what is at stake in the impossibility of the Kantian position in which there is the refusal of the informed line. Even though, in the end, this is precisely what occurs. Indeed, the conjecture is that this is what always had to occur. The uninformed line could only ever be produced as such. The line is present therefore as always already presentational in ways that allow it not simply to present the conceptual but to have been conceptual from the start. The line therefore is a locus of thought (thus it calls to be thought). This repositioning of the line allows in Kant, though *contra* Kant, for what Hegel already knew about colour. Colour was already informed though this has now to be seen as an already present quality of the line. While for Hegel colour has a specific determination, one that flows from the incorporation of Christ as a philosophical *topos* into the structure of thought, for Kant what endures is a line that is informed abstractly. In the end this is a more truly Kantian position. Abstraction here needs to be understood as that which stages an indeterminate relation both to the thinking to which it gives rise and to the sense of the universal to which it is related. For Hegel colour is given within a structure of carnality. To the extent that there is a break with this determinate presence and colour endures as merely informed there is a possible coalescence between Kant and Hegel. What continues to insist therefore is the link between these opening considerations since they resulted in showing that the way that the drawn line becomes

²³ I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, cit., A162-A163.

drawn takes place to the extent that form's particular presence is always already informed. As a result what needs to be pursued are the differing ways in which informing occurs and thus the informed is present.

3.

Emerging from the preceding is what has been described as a coalescence between Kant and Hegel. And yet, it is one with an important tension. In both instances what became clear is the ineliminable presence of informed form. However, there is an important difference. In the case of Kant the position was simply that while the possibility of informed form was refused, when it came to be drawing – it should be recalled that the formulation was that it pleases «through its form» – as his position was advanced, the line came to carry a weight greater than mere drawn presence. A weight, moreover, that indicated the impossibility of any initial purity or singularity. The could never have been a line without content. (To claim that there could is premised on a profound misunderstanding of the ontological status of the line). However, that content was not there as an addition. It was not as though content had been drawn into it. It had an original presence. The line, thus drawing, took on an informed quality. That quality did not itself have a determined content, what is opened up as a consequence is the possibility of line and thus drawing as a locus of pure abstraction. Colour would still remain distanced. It would have to continue merely as that which charmed. Colour would become an empty abstraction. Here, of course, is the opening to Hegel. For Hegel, in the realm of painting, colour is all. And yet, there is a precise reason why this is the case. For Hegel painting has a very clear project. As he argues in the *Lectures*,

Painting has to portray spiritual subject matter in the form of actual and bodily human beings, and therefore the object of this love must not be painted as a merely spiritual beyond (*blosses geistiges Jenseits*) but as actual and present (*wirklich and gegenwärtig*)²⁴.

This cannot be presented by drawing. The bodily – already captured in the term «carnality» – cannot be drawn. It inheres in the tones that only flesh can have. The ripple of muscles evinces a necessarily spiritual force. For Hegel this is bound up with

²⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, cit., 45/819.

the «spirit having become flesh». However what that position sustains is the necessity that colour is informed. The limit of Hegel's position is not the presence of informed form but that the informing in question has an already determined and thus necessarily singular quality. What is excluded is the possibility that colour is a pure abstraction. There is one clear reason why this is the case. The presence of an already present determination, i.e. the ascription of a single and singular meaning, rather than remaining and end itself opens up a hermeneutic site. A site in which interpretation while linked to the specific presence of colour can, nonetheless, be contested. As a result colour, as a hermeneutic site, in which while one determination was sustained, contains the potential to open precisely because that determination would always have had a relation of indetermination to the work's mattering (where mattering is taken as the abstract quality of *the work of art*). Here is, of course, the link to Kant insofar in there too the line will have a relation of indetermination to that of which it was preliminary. For Hegel, for example, Christ's flesh is the locus of spirituality rather sensuality let alone sexuality²⁵. The question that has to be faced is how, if there is flesh, could the potential for the erotic ever absolutely excised? The answer is to insist, as Hegel does, that there has to be a sense «appropriateness [*Angemessenheit*]» between any one work's «means of presentation [*Darstellungsmittel*]» and the work's ideational content. However, the work's presentation and hence the relation cannot be policed absolutely. Art's capacity for invention is art's capacity for the «inappropriate». There is an ineliminable potential within art for what Hegel would have deemed to have been «inappropriate». That does not mean that form is other than informed. It is rather that forming informs a project that while incorporating Hegel moves beyond it.

The «inappropriate» while referring to the possibility of content can be linked equally to the presence of contestability. While it is always the case that form is informed, the important point is that presence does not have a singular designation. Any configuration – which means any one instance of mattering – is open to interpretive contestability. Contestability depends upon the informing of form. (Otherwise

²⁵ On the possibility of an attribution of sexuality to the figure of Christ see, L. Steinberg. *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1997.

interpretation would be nothing other than the banality of description). The conclusion here is that once there is an insistence on mattering – the interplay of meaning and materials – and once it is assumed that form, be it line or colour, is always already informed, then the presence of line or colour, and thus drawing and painting, cannot be withdrawn from their position within art's work. As a result it is not possible to isolate either colour or line and treat either of them as though they were ends in themselves. Hence, once incorporated within the dynamic set of processes that comprise art's work, any strict opposition between line and colour comes undone. Drawing and painting, have to be repositioned such that once mattering prevails while line and colour return they are only ever there as part of any one work's particularity as *the work of art*.