





Florian Unterberger

* 1973 Bad Ischl, Austria | Vienna, Austria



Florian Unterberger studied at the University of Applied Arts Vienna with Wilhelm Holzbauer, Zvi Hecker, Zaha Hadid. Lives and works as a visual artist in Vienna and Bad Ischl, working on architectural and conceptional drawings.

swrgb - totale bik 51090942171709pencil and colour

pencil on paper, 2

totale bibliothek

pencil on paper, 2

pencil on paper, 2

pencil on pape<u>r, 2</u>

gute figur

emil achtzehn

pencil and colour

anna coloured pencil o

vierundvierzig pencil and colour

julikrise
pencil on paper,

hochform pencil and colour

da zeichnet eine coloured pencil o

das ist eine pfeif

gebündeltes hall

pencil on paper,
moderner hypera

pencil and colour

sarajevo - urbo k

pencil on paper,

pencil and colour

schlüsselwerk

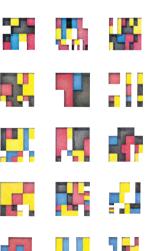
Since 2011, Florian Unterberger has been developing a continuous body of work, the Total Library, a series of drawings whose formal connectedness emerge from a geometric translation of the Latin alphabet into a spatial colour code. This code can equally be applied in two or three dimensions.

The act of translation as an underlying code is itself of interest. It utilizes—and functionally extends—the common character set of the alphabet in order to create possible building blocks for a visionary new world. This transformative mechanism provides for each letter its unique and unmistakable geometry, whereby the 'A' itself remains 'A' in its pure and smallest function—just as if it would be translated in a series of bits and expressed as the binary '11000001'. Each character is, in the first instance, a value in itself manifested as a coloured surface or figure, which, then, in conjunction with the others, forms an art based and self-contained sign system.

The alphabet and its applications gain tectonic qualities, similar to that referred to by Gottfried Semper (1860–63) as "the art of assembling rigid [...] parts into an immovable system." Each letter is turned into a building block that, for its part, is capable of translating any abstract terminology back into an actual reality. The chosen text in this context is not only programmatic, but can also be understood as a map or architect's plan. Formal and conceptual analogies may be made to the art of Suprematism and De Stijl or to Christopher Alexander's "pattern language", but this would not be accurate. The Total Library moves away from the 'how' of those conceptual analogies and instead data mines the 'what'.

1941. Jorge Luis Borges's The Library of Babel, describes a fractal spatial structure that contains all books with all possible combinations of the alphabet including the twenty-two letters, the full stop, the comma, and the space. Each wall of each hexagon shaped unit is furnished with five bookshelves; each bookshelf holds thirty-two books identical in format; each book contains four hundred ten pages; each page, forty lines; each line, approximately eighty black letters. The German mathematician Daniel Schäfer calculated that the number of such permutations (and thus the number of books) is 101.845.281. The library itself—assuming each of its hexagonal cells has 100m³—would sum up to a volume of 101.845.232 cubic light years. Borges' imaginary library is—at least according to our limited conception—so comprehensively large and enormous that the envisioned, endlessly repeating, reading cells seem almost minimised to the size of a doll house.

Employing Florian Unterberger's instrumental visual language as a double translation. Total library itself—a pluralised 'itself'—put to work to translate Borges's fractal spatial translation now coded as The Library of Babel. Borges' repetitive hexagonal structure, which



is unfortunately somewhat tedious, could be replaced by all possible combinations of all the letters. Thus enabled: the building of a spatial typeface, whose figuration itself would not be bound exclusively to the idea of a book or other medium or the signs contained in it, but would be the spatialisation of a chosen language into a total information architecture. One could navigate any text as a route while moving through this world! As unbelievably large and complex as this assumption would be, it is nevertheless definite and finite in its geometrical properties, especially since the entire figuration can be represented and limited at least mathematically.

Architecture is not only an expression of the time and circumstances of its creation, but also a carrier of signs and space-creating elements. Florian Unterberger's systematics provides us with a completely new function level allowing the signs to aggregate into architectural structures and thus becoming a total cluster of information. Of course, the choice of the initial terms used is decisive in this process, since they combine in their translated form a newly designed reality. Claim 1: this represents the greatest possible objectivity in the artistic means of communication (basic code). Claim 2: it forms a highly subjective and surprising configuration at the moment of their application.

These open concepts also characterise the author's live model and are thus, in sum, approximations to a conception of the world that may infinitely expand in its delicate and ever seductive beauty. Whereas this very linguistic quality was developed for the very purpose of depicting the artist's reality, it remains open, imaginative, never certain what he does next, what emerges as his mark or what he elegantly omits along the way.