

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Paul Chan

Drawings for Word Book by Ludwig Wittgenstein

November 6 – December 19, 2020

Ground Floor

Greene Naftali is pleased to present Paul Chan's solo exhibition, *Drawings for Word Book by Ludwig Wittgenstein*. The artist's fifth solo exhibition at the gallery, *Drawings for Word Book by Ludwig Wittgenstein* features a series of drawings Chan created as illustrations for his latest publication, *Word Book*, which was published in the fall of 2020.

From the artist:

More than ten years ago, I heard a rumor about how Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote a textbook for children. I have never felt close to Wittgenstein's work: too axiomatic, too bloodless. But the more I learned about the circumstances that led to him writing this textbook, which was originally titled *Wörterbuch für Volksschulen* (or Dictionary for Elementary Schools), the more curious I became.

In 2018, I located a copy of *Wörterbuch*. And I was bewitched. It has never been translated into English. He wrote it in 1925, during a time when he was just beginning to change, as a person and a philosopher. By the early 1920s, Wittgenstein was already famous, for his first book, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. He was teaching at Cambridge, and was expected to be the heir apparent to Bertrand Russell. But Wittgenstein was deeply unhappy there. He once said he was "tired of prostituting his mind for smart people." So in 1921 he abandoned Cambridge and his privileged philosophical career, and became an elementary school teacher in rural Austria.

For six years he taught poor kids in grades four through six. During this time, it occurred to him that a good "dictionary" would help his young students learn. There were only two dictionaries available then. But one was too expensive, and the other was too small and badly put together. So Wittgenstein decided to write one.

Word Book is the first English translation of *Wörterbuch*. It consists of words and concepts (5,968 terms in all) chosen by Wittgenstein as part of his curriculum. But it is also a revealing document of Wittgenstein's own mind changing as a result of teaching (and learning) from children. He reconsidered his entire philosophy after his experience. *Word Book* is an utterly unique work from a formidable philosopher who ended up learning from his students about what it means to understand the world, and a testament to how a mind is changed, if one is willing to let go of a certain idea of who one happens to be.

My left hand is my non-dominant hand. I typically draw with my right hand. I've done what I call "left-handed path" drawings before. And it struck me as the way to go in making drawings for *Word Book*. The spirit of authority is not what motivates the drawings and the book. It's rather the notion that one's strength is really one's weakness, which makes possible the idea that one's weakness—given the right circumstances or frame of mind—may be one's real strength. I also like how the concept of the "left-handed path" is synonymous with alternative forms of belief, like mysticism and "black" magic. Or reason today.

I like drawing with my left hand because it feels as if different stakes about what matters on paper became visible to me. Maybe that's all we're ever looking for in making any work: new ways to see the stakes that matter.

Paul Chan
August 2020

An online launch event for *Word Book* will be hosted by Metrograph on Tuesday, November 17 at 8PM. The event will feature a live screening of Derek Jarman's film *Wittgenstein* with an introduction by artist and Badlands Unlimited publisher Paul Chan. Jarman's film will also be available to view on demand November 18–19. Please visit metrograph.com for more information.

Word Book is now available to purchase at Greene Naftali or on [Bookshop.org](https://bookshop.org).

GREENE NAFTALI

Paul Chan: *Drawings For Word Book By Ludwig Wittgenstein*

November 6 – December 19, 2020

Ground Floor

Front Gallery, clockwise:



Spekulieren (to speculate), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 150 x 48 inches (381 x 243.8 cm) each

Frame: 155 x 53 x 3 inches

(393.7 x 134.6 x 7.6 cm) each



der Rotz (snot), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Frame: 36 x 28 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches

(91.4 x 71.8 x 3.8 cm)

Main Gallery, clockwise:



Der Grieche, griechisch, Griechenland (the Greek, Greek, Greece), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 49 7/8 x 38 3/8 inches (126.7 x 97.5 cm)

Frame: 53 1/8 x 41 5/8 x 1 3/4 inches

(134.9 x 105.7 x 4.4 cm)



Die Währung (currency), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 49 7/8 x 38 3/8 inches (126.7 x 97.5 cm)

Frame: 53 1/8 x 41 5/8 x 1 3/4 inches

(134.9 x 105.7 x 4.4 cm)



die Nelke (carnation), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 49 7/8 x 38 3/8 inches (126.7 x 97.5 cm)

Frame: 53 1/8 x 41 5/8 x 1 3/4 inches

(134.9 x 105.7 x 4.4 cm)



neuartig (anew), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 49 7/8 x 38 3/8 inches (126.7 x 97.5 cm)

Frame: 53 1/8 x 41 5/8 x 1 3/4 inches

(134.9 x 105.7 x 4.4 cm)



versäumen (to fail to do something), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 49 7/8 x 38 3/8 inches (126.7 x 97.5 cm)

Frame: 53 1/8 x 41 5/8 x 1 3/4 inches

(134.9 x 105.7 x 4.4 cm)



die Galerie (gallery), 1228

Ink on paper

Paper: 49 7/8 x 38 3/8 inches (126.7 x 97.5 cm)

Frame: 53 1/8 x 41 5/8 x 1 3/4 inches

(134.9 x 105.7 x 4.4 cm)



der Quatsch, quatschig (nonsense, nonsensical), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 49 7/8 x 38 3/8 inches (126.7 x 97.5 cm)

Frame: 53 1/8 x 41 5/8 x 1 3/4 inches

(134.9 x 105.7 x 4.4 cm)



Kurieren (or to cure / to heal), 2020
Ink on paper
Paper: 50 5/8 x 98 3/4 inches (128.6 x 250.8 cm)
Frame: 54 5/8 x 102 3/4 x 2 7/8 inches
(138.7 x 261 x 7.3 cm)



die Seuche (epidemic), 2019
Ink on paper
Paper: 50 1/2 x 136 inches (128.3 x 345.4 cm)
Frame: 54 1/2 x 140 x 2 7/8 inches
(138.4 x 355.6 x 7.3 cm)



Primitiv, 2020
Ink on paper
Paper: 50 1/2 x 132 inches (128.3 x 335.3 cm)
Frame: 54 5/8 x 136 1/8 x 2 7/8 inches
(138.7 x 345.8 x 7.3 cm)



Das Edelweiß, 2020
Ink on paper
Paper: 39 1/4 x 27 1/2 inches (99.7 x 69.9 cm)
Frame: 42 1/2 x 30 7/8 x 1 1/2 inches
(108 x 78.4 x 3.8 cm)



Die Pflege, pflegen, der Pfleger (care, to take care, caretaker), 2020
Ink on paper
Paper: 39 1/4 x 27 1/2 inches (99.7 x 69.9 cm)
Frame: 42 1/2 x 30 7/8 x 1 1/2 inches
(108 x 78.4 x 3.8 cm)



die Amsel (blackbird), 2020
Ink on paper
Paper: 39 1/4 x 27 1/2 inches (99.7 x 69.9 cm)
Frame: 42 1/2 x 30 7/8 x 1 1/2 inches
(108 x 78.4 x 3.8 cm)



Die Börse (stock market), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 39 1/4 x 27 1/2 inches (99.7 x 69.9 cm)

Frame: 42 1/2 x 30 7/8 x 1 1/2 inches

(108 x 78.4 x 3.8 cm)



das Denkmal (monument), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 73 1/4 x 50 1/2 inches (186.1 x 128.3 cm)

Frame: 77 5/8 x 54 3/8 inches (197.2 x 138.1 cm)



der Geist, geistig (spirit, spiritual), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 39 1/4 x 27 1/2 inches (99.7 x 69.9 cm)

Frame: 42 1/2 x 30 7/8 x 1 1/2 inches

(108 x 78.4 x 3.8 cm)



der Satan (Satan), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 39 1/4 x 27 1/2 inches (99.7 x 69.9 cm)

Frame: 42 1/2 x 30 7/8 x 1 1/2 inches

(108 x 78.4 x 3.8 cm)



die Auferstehung (Resurrection), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 39 1/4 x 27 1/2 inches (99.7 x 69.9 cm)

Frame: 42 1/2 x 30 7/8 x 1 1/2 inches

(108 x 78.4 x 3.8 cm)



die Grippe (Krankheit) [flu (illness)], 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 39 1/4 x 27 1/2 inches (99.7 x 69.9 cm)

Frame: 42 1/2 x 30 7/8 x 1 1/2 inches

(108 x 78.4 x 3.8 cm)



das Eichhörnchen, Eichkätzchen (squirrel, oak kitten), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Frame: 36 x 28 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches

(91.4 x 71.8 x 3.8 cm)



die Essenz (essence), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Frame: 36 x 28 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches

(91.4 x 71.8 x 3.8 cm)



abspenstig (alienating), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Frame: 36 x 28 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches

(91.4 x 71.8 x 3.8 cm)



zwitschern (to tweet), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Frame: 36 x 28 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches

(91.4 x 71.8 x 3.8 cm)



der Rechtsanwalt (lawyer), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Frame: 36 x 28 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches

(91.4 x 71.8 x 3.8 cm)



das Verbrechen (crime), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Frame: 36 x 28 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches

(91.4 x 71.8 x 3.8 cm)



der Pfirsich (peach), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Frame: 36 x 28 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches

(91.4 x 71.8 x 3.8 cm)



der Fühler (feeler), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Frame: 36 x 28 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches

(91.4 x 71.8 x 3.8 cm)



der Honig (honey), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Frame: 36 x 28 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches

(91.4 x 71.8 x 3.8 cm)

Rear Gallery, clockwise:



heimlich (secret), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Frame: 36 x 28 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches (91.4 x 71.8 x 3.8 cm)



das Gebet (prayer), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 70 x 42 inches (177.8 x 106.7 cm)

Frame: 73 1/2 x 45 1/2 inches (186.7 x 115.6 cm)



Kultur (culture), 2019

Ink on paper

Paper: 122 3/4 x 48 inches (311.8 x 121.9 cm)

Frame: 126 3/4 x 52 x 2 7/8 inches
(321.9 x 132.1 x 7.3 cm)



die Maske, maskieren (mask, to mask), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 15 x 11 inches (38.1 x 27.9 cm)

Frame: 23 3/8 x 19 3/8 x 1 3/8 inches
(59.4 x 49.2 x 3.5 cm)



der Kauz, das Käuzchen (owl, little owl), 2019

Ink on paper

Paper: 15 x 11 inches (38.1 x 27. cm)

Frame: 23 3/8 x 19 3/8 x 1 3/8 inches

(59.4 x 49.2 x 3.5 cm)



die Auskunft, Auskünfte (information), 2020

Ink on paper

Paper: 15 x 11 inches (38.1 x 27.9 cm)

Frame: 23 3/8 x 19 3/8 x 1 3/8 inches

(59.4 x 49.2 x 3.5 cm)