Ein kritischer Modus?
Die Form der Theorie und der Inhalt der Kunst

Edited by Helmut Draxler, Tanja Widmann

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Ein kritischer Modus? Die Form der Theorie und der Inhalt der Kunst is a document of teaching at an art institution and at the same time points beyond it. Conceived and realised by Tanja Widmann, this publication brings together different forms of expression—of theory, art and design—that were negotiated in the context of a seminar at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. The relationship and difference between theoretical thinking and artistic action form the basis and at the same time provide the impulse for this undertaking.
Three lectures by Helmut Draxler: “What does political art want?”, “Painting as a dispositive” and “The design of critique” form the prelude. The starting point for this small series of lectures were questions raised in Draxler's publication *Gefährliche Substanzen. Zum Verhältnis von Kritik und Kunst* (2007) and suggested further elaboration.
At the same time, this publication presents three exhibitions that were developed with young artists in the seminar that took the reading of the book as its starting point. The lecture titles were adopted as the titles of the exhibitions in a gesture of appropriation, but also as a moment of deceptive constriction of theoretical debate and artistic practice.
This process, which leads from the lectures and the reading of the book to the exhibitions, but also includes the production of the publication itself, is reflected in four conversations. In this way, the publication is designed as a kind of reader in which it also becomes comprehensible how the theory and practice of art can be placed in a relationship to each other without dissolving into each other, and how they only open up the symbolic space of critique in this proportionality.