

Stories about growth:

The word *growth* is often placed in opposition to the heterological: growth versus decline; growth that is exponential and upwardly mobile. In the self-help universe, growth is still a forecast far removed from an earlier, lesser mode of being; it is a way that *should* be, it is a mindset or discipline of exfoliation and the proper orientation: turning yourself towards, tapping into, or being guided.

Growth that purports results, which, being *the result of or in reaction to*, tends to mirror the very preconditions of its own production. A related story of growth told by Rosalind Krauss pits Cy Twombly against Jackson Pollock, wherein growth, or a search for authenticity, is "of the same metaphysical substance as the artist's existence ". In this story, where Pollock's work assumes a unified *body* and fictional whole of *truth*, Twombly's work offers the body not as a fictional whole, but in parts, as a truth that refuses reconstitution. Here we have a story of growth that attempts to escape form, but which, still self-determining, can "never fully summon forth."¹

Growth as a question sets these old, familiar stories in motion, still aiming beyond growth towards a new, or at least more visible schema. But Krauss tells another story: The idea of growth as a catchall for a promise of authenticity, however self-determined, is also under the influence of unconscious impulses. In this case, growth is about transformation: with each successive collection of actions taken, the original question keeps changing. The search for the *one thing* becomes *and all of these things*. Oppositions, contradictions, and simultaneous positions are no longer only variations on a theme, but a vital process that can't be seen all at once.

Maybe we feel that we need to see and feel everything about growth to really know and prove that it's happening, and only then can we feel that's it's doing *anything* at all. But growth is also about what is left out of the ideal, hoped-for schema; what we are not conscious of, but what pops up nonetheless. The question that turns into a story then becomes another story of what runs parallel, and counter, to all our efforts.

To this logic, if there is a *truth* in growth, or this *counter-growth*, it may be in this zone of *not-all-at-onceness*; in what makes itself known in pieces. If there is authenticity in growth, there may be no singular access point to this desired state or way of being. And, if there is a plan or direction or optimal path towards growth, it may be in a practice of daily externalization of what is emergent rather than determined. It may be that if growth *is* anything, it is in what is, *and* what is not yet, visible.

Text by Kim Neudorf

¹ Krauss, Rosalind. *The Optical Unconscious*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993.