

Luminosité – recent photograms by Gerda Schütte

Nomen est omen: the French term *luminosité* means brightness, implying that the essence of Gerda Schütte's recent photograms is already included in the title.

When creating these photograms during the last years, the artist has studied light-dark contrasts with all the refined nuances in between that make them appear almost like drawings, occasionally forming pairs comprising the photogram and its contact print of the same size, thus further accentuating the contrasts; recently she has rather been concentrating on capturing as much light as possible in the photogram and its visual outcome, at the same time skillfully sustaining the mysterious quality and strength of the subject. The spherical structures – known from former groups of works, as i.e. the *spheres* – or other organic forms set against a delicate grey background are distinguished by a very intricate internal structure that appears almost like breathed on the paper.

As a photogram shows the antitypical world in its bright and dark shades, it can only be exposed to very weak light. Anyone familiar with darkrooms will be able to imagine the time-consuming experiments with the luminous power of the light sources and their positioning in relation to the object that lies on or is placed in front of the photographic paper, needed to create results satisfying the artist's ambition. Gerda Schütte is an expert in the art of drawing with light, who is constantly challenging herself, not sparing herself in phases of intensive work and willing to go to any extremes.

Enormous amounts of PE-paper are consumed until the result, initially often initiated by chance or caused by an „accident at work“, intensifies to form an inner picture, which is then imitated as closely as possible. We are then rewarded with never-seen-before pictures, the effect of which may be surprising, as with the „spheres“ or the recent circular luminosity works that are strong in their presence yet very delicate. The circle as a basic geometric element and sign, which has accompanied humanity ever since, is presented in a new guise.

Gerda Schütte crosses another border with her triptych *Coquelicots*: the artist's affinity for drawing is turned into a game of deception, creating a strong watercolour-like, blurring effect, consciously employing the out-of-focus effect when depicting natural forms as i.e. a bunch of dried poppies, and generating bewilderment as well as a feeling that the work can hardly be defined as a photogram.

With the advent of digital photography the artist decided against using a camera

(also against the previously used traditional film camera) and dedicated herself to the photogram.

Gerda Schütte is attracted by the relationship between light and photosensitive paper and likes to explore the boundaries of this genre. However, a sense of the image of the images remains, still keeping its enigmatic form.

The Baroque artist Silvius Schwarz in Mathias Gatza's novel *Der Augentäuscher* would have had a close ally in Gerda Schütte, at the same time envying her for being able to capture the image on paper. His picture, however, fixed on a silver plate by means of a *camera obscura* – the contrast to Schütte's recent works could not be greater—is blackened beyond recognition.

Berlin, February 2016

(*) Not without reason have I included her photograms into my two drawing exhibitions entitled *Lieber Künstler, zeichne mir!/Dear artist, please draw me a...!* in 2014. Some of her works were published in both comprehensive catalogues.