

Announcement of exhibition

VERA RÖHM

Poetics of the Cosmos

22.04. – 05.07.2023

Vera Röhm works with space and time. In many ways, she deals with the precision and clarity of reality and observes the formal beauty of proportions. With great continuity, she has gone in search of images of objects and constructions to highlight the connection between body, movement and cosmic phenomenon. The exhibition "VERA RÖHM – Poetics of the Cosmos" at the Cadoro – Centre for Art and Science of Gallery Dr Dorothea van der Koelen in Mainz-Hechtsheim presents a selection of new works from various work cycles. On the ground floor of the Cadoro, the large installation *Laborinth* and the sculpture *Bogentor* can be seen. In the upper room, photographs and graphics from the work cycle "Astronomy", among others.

For the installation *Laborinth* (2007/2021), Vera Röhm joins three arch-shaped segments to form an open space. On the free-standing walls, which are over two metres high, the sentence "Die Nacht ist der Schatten der Erde – Night is the Earth's Shadow" shines in 251 different languages. Since 1985, Vera Röhm has been working with this poetic statement, which was handed down by the baroque naturalist, astronomer and linguist Johann Leonhard Frisch (1666-1743).

The astonishing number of languages with their letters and symbols that seem both foreign and familiar shine out of the darkness. Their light pervades the room. If signs cannot be deciphered, questions arise. The enigmatic is an indication of a diversity that is threatened today, because languages are increasingly being lost around the world. In view of the diversity of its translations and typographies, the *Laborinth* invites us to discover a polyglot world: a cosmic phenomenon that all inhabitants of the earthly world experience daily is named a hundred times over and made visible in the languages of the world. Every single language is and was spoken somewhere, it can be located in a country on the planet. There are currently about 8 billion people living in this world. Without language and writing, it would not be possible for humanity to communicate. This idea is contained in the word *Laborinth*, with which Vera Röhm brings together two different definitions: Her work is a place of research (laboratory) and a complex network (labyrinth).

The *Bogentor* (2013/2021) is part of a new series of works. They are sculptures made of Corten steel and Plexiglas. They explore in variations the space of possibilities of arch and gate, the balance of forms in relation to each other and the freedom of the figure in space. Changing radii and wide or narrow curvatures of the arch determine

the aesthetic perception of the physical presence of the sculptures. The various arched gates thematise the precise relationship between dimension and idea, the measure, and the idea of the round. They demonstrate the relationship of materials to each other and the difference between the geometric figures of circle and sphere or line and stele.

The second part of the exhibition shows photographs and graphics. In large format, Vera Röhm shows a series of pictures whose abstraction contains an irritating moment. Coloured reflections and even transparency in the two-dimensional structures suggest that we are not dealing with modulated surfaces, but with photographs of a three-dimensional object given in detail. This is not and should not be recognised. But the details, in their great magnification, convey precisely that "aesthetic charm and mathematical rigour" which the art historian Anca Arghir identified as characteristic of Vera Röhm's sculpture. The new series *Variations on the Cross Sculpture* (2023) continues the rational principle of a constructive-concrete tendency in the 1970s. However, the giclee prints focus on the illusion of seeing in a special way. The abstract visibility of the images reveals the incommensurability of reality.

In the multi-part *Astronomy Wall* (2004/2023), Vera Röhm's travel experience and engagement with the diverse sources of science, astrophysics, astronomy and cosmology manifest themselves. The impressive juxtaposition of Vera Röhm's photographs of the solar eclipse in 1999 or of historical observatories in India and China, complemented by representations of copperplate engravings of 18th century astronomy or of planets, offers a tableau that transcends space and time. It is exemplary of the artistic practice of composition with which Vera Röhm creates an overall picture from individual images, in which different elements are juxtaposed and interwoven, but can be expanded or put together differently at any time. Thus the *Astronomy Wall*, as an image of images, is the epitome of a poetics of the cosmos that people have subjectively imagined and will imagine of the world observable and comprehensible to them in the past, present and future.

"As an artist, I try to represent the phenomenon of space and time with different media. The photographs of the magnificent and monumental facilities of the observatory in Jaipur show the elementary principles of astronomy: the shadow and its movement as a visible indication of comic events."

Vera Röhm (2004)

The exhibition "VERA RÖHM Poetics of the Cosmos" is the artist's fourth solo exhibition in collaboration with gallerist Dr Dorothea van der Koelen. It can be seen from 22 April to 05 July 2023 in the gallery's rooms in Mainz-Hechtsheim.

At the opening on 22 April 2023 from 4 to 6 p.m., Prof. Dr. Dieter Ronte will speak at CADORO – Centre for Art and Science in Mainz, August-Horch-Straße 14, 55129 Mainz-Hechtsheim, Tel. +49-(0)6131-21 91 883, zkw@vanderkoelen.de.

Vera Röhm, born in 1943, studied at the Académie Charpentier in Paris and at the ECAL in Lausanne. After returning from study visits to New York, New Mexico and California, she devoted herself mainly to sculpture. From 1976 onwards, the artist occupied herself with the metamorphoses of the material (series of "Ergänzungen"). Since 1983, she has devoted herself to the visual representation of time and movement as well as the visualisation of cosmic states with the help of various means of expression. In the individual work cycles of her diverse artistic oeuvre, she always combines exact studies with empirical approaches to challenge our notion of time, space and movement. Her images in her photographic works focus on the rhythmic spatial construction of architectural forms.

Vera Röhm is the winner of several realised competitions for art on buildings. Her sculptures in public space are located in Germany and France. Her works are in numerous museums and private collections, including the Fondation Vasarely, Aix-en-Provence, the Espace Monte-Cristo, Paris, the Kunsthalle Mannheim, the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen, the Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt, the Mondriaanhuis, Amersfoort, and other collections in Europe and the USA.

She lives and works in Paris and Darmstadt.