

Claudia Büttner: The Artworks by Ulrike Böhme

At the end of the 20th century our cultural world is involved in an intense process of change. Along with the crossover of form and content, the informal use of the media plus different work techniques has led to a closer association between the genres. What immediately catches the eye is the possibility of a new relationship between art and architecture.

Thus the artworks by Ulrike Böhme are closely related to the origin of their respective context and can only be experienced in reference to their own spatial and thematic environs. Which means for the artist that her field of work must be constantly defined in situ. The artwork does not begin with her choice of material, a raw block of stone or an empty canvas in a studio. Her speciality is a certain form of art, in which her reaction to the given circumstances and the interplay with other participants is central.

When commissioned, she integrates a work into newly finished architecture or participates beforehand in the planning of the different building stages. She is accustomed to examining the area, the situation and the process for their content, their potentiality and, above all, for the time frame the transformations are subject to, so as then to respond quite deliberately. A work by Ulrike Böhme is characterized by the fact that it reacts to its contextual givens in such a way that presence and future both come into their own.

The form and content then chosen do not, however, lead back to what was originally found but allow us to perceive an autonomous means of expression that is increasingly more intelligible. Thus the formal implementation of Ulrike Böhme's ideas are characterized by a very clear structure and an almost puristically severe construction, by a starkly reduced language of form and color.

That poetic images, despite this, do emerge is not contradictory, but on the one hand is linked to the respective thematic setting of the chosen fields and, on the other, founded in the underlying mood, in which - almost inevitably - the phenomenon of transparency has an important role to play.

Thus windows, niches, breaks in walls, screens that - not till a second glance and a focus on their secrets, clarifications, insights and images including frosted glass, mirror reflections, illuminated construction parts - allow us, after closer inspection, to recognize the information, texts and signs. That our gaze is closed off then given free range, a process inherent in this play with transparency, becomes an important part of the work. In the end, the successive convergence grants the viewers with their wishful projection an almost greater share in the works than their conceptual contents.

In this way the effect of the single works makes clear that a pure autonomy of artistic postulation is not Ulrike Böhme's goal, but a synthesis of the relation between the architectural elements, free forms, technical progressions and the cultural and social contents and desires found in the function, place and user.