

FeldbuschWiesnerRudolph is pleased to present new works by Danish artist RUTH CAMPAU in her second solo exhibition at the gallery.

Ruth Campau combines painting and sculpture in her singular installations – in her artistic practice she becomes an alchemist. Her works oscillate between light and matter; transparency and density, ephemeral and tangible, body and design. She works in symmetrical and dense layers of paint in radiating cool yellow, steel gray, silver and violet, her painting surface is acrylic glass and mylar. A thin layer of paint covers the whole length of the surface, which is formed into fascinating objects and installations. Organic and geometric, lucid and yet magic, with reminiscences of interior design, yet autonomous, and not subjected to any function.

Ruth Campau's inspiration is the turning point in art history where painting leaves the canvas: particularly the artistic tendencies of the American west coast of the 1970s. Her paintings become architecture and alchemy, creates new spaces and expands the field of painting.

Ruth Campau studied Art History in Copenhagen and is a member of the Danish Royal Academy of Fine Arts. She received several awards and prizes: amongst them the Eckersberg Medal of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (2018), a residency at the Accademy of Denmark in Rome (2015), a residency at ISCP New York (2013), the Mogens Ziegler Fond (2012), the scholarship of the Danish Arts Foundation (2008-2010), as well as the Honorary Prize of the Danish Arts Foundation (2004).

In addition to several solo shows – at Kernel Gallery, Cáceres, Spain (2018), Overgaden, Institute of Contemporary Art in Copenhagen (2015), ISCP New York (2013), and Kunsten Museum of Modern Art in Aalborg (2010), amongst others.

She presented her works in distinct group shows, for instance AROS Museum of Modern Art (2017), Deutscher Kunstlerbund, Berlin, Germany (2017), Esbjerg Art Museum (2015), Stadtgalerie Kiel (2013) and The Barker Hangar, Los Angeles (2012).

What will you be showing in THE FALL OF DIAMOND DUST?

The title DIAMOND DUST refers to tiny free floating bits in the universe, which reflect light when the rays of the sun hit them. These microscopic bits of dust also fall down onto the earth, but you cannot see them with your bare eyes. Thinking about this phenomenon – almost ephemeral and yet physical – is very inspiring to me. In my work, I have always been concerned about the elementary forces of outer world and the universe, as they determines the conditions that we live in. For this exhibition I have been inspired by these universal energies, as so often before. I have used my brush stroke more openly – and in a way that evokes the idea that it is done from above, like something falling down upon us. The brush stroke leaves waves of thick paint with nuances of color and some diamond dust – a shiny grain that I get from the children's decoration department. The surface of my paintings is mirror dibond, which means that the viewer is incorporated by the painting. To complement the narrative, I evolved deconstructed 'stars' for the exhibition – familiar forms expressing universal energies in a new abstract way.

Alchemy has been a continuous theme in your work.

An alchemist is seeking to create the ultimate matter; a substance prolonging life and improving life quality simultaneously. Metal, salt, silver and the four elements were brought together to realize a vision that was never fulfilled. There is an analogy to my work in a way. In my studio I have different materials and different paints as well as various media; fabrics, mylar and paper. And I always aim to produce the ultimate piece. To achieve that, I use a multitude of materials combined in unusual ways with different results: as instal-

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lation, sculpture, painting and some as a collage behind glass. For instance, I produce installations for which I paint on transparent mylar hanging on top of gold mirror foil. The material falls onto the floor just like soft fabric.

Why do transparency and reflective surfaces play such an important role in your work?

I like the transparency of mirrored materials, because that way I can use the light that is transmitted. With the light, the colors evolve and become alive – like a screen, lit from within. I like it when your eye is tricked. When the viewer cannot really find out what is going on. And when a material and object changes as you move around it. A mirror; it is like a reset button. You loose control – and have to find a new balance afterwards. This is also what happens in the bigger installations, where the body is smaller than the installation and the viewer becomes a part of it. The borders of work and audience are dissolved, and your senses are activated.

You work at the interstice of sculpture, architecture, painting and design. How did your artistic position evolve?

I started out as a painter. I always enjoyed the act of putting a liquid onto a surface. But I was neither interested in gestural painting nor an all too rigid minimalism, where no human touch is visible. I was interested in something in between: my own body movement, the process and the act of painting, the here and now. If human presence is visible in the artwork, it becomes interesting for me. Painting, to me, was and still is a form of meditation, a ritual. Subsequently, I became occupied with the idea of a painting representing human presence and infinity. In that period, my works often took on the form of big installations: infinite forms, just a sequence of something bigger.

I liked that the viewer was smaller than the work – being embraced by it. Thus, architecture and public projects were fun for me. My handheld brushstroke was easily implemented in architecture – representing human presence in a building that is otherwise made by machines. And since I feel like an artistic alchemist, the expression can result in painting, sculpture, installation or just a small collage inside a box. I use everything within my arm-reach that seduces my eyes. Painting, in my work, is allowed to be three-dimensional, defy the rules of matter and activate the viewer's body and perception.

You created several large-scale works for public spaces. What social function(s) does art have when it is shaping an urban environment?

Art gives identity to a place, to a room or to a building. It is very important that the artist uses his or her senses and intuition to find the right meaning for the public place or building. You should somehow distill its essence in the artwork. It shapes the character of a space and lends it a social quality. Ideally, its daily users will be much more integrated in the space and fond of it, because it is not just a place – it bears an aesthetic and philosophical quality.