

## Kultur

# THE GRAIL AT THE MOMENT OF ITS UNVEILING

Filled with light::

Works by Rita Grosse-Ruyken from June 18 onward

at the Museum für Angewandte Kunst

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Text: F.A.Z., 17.06.2009, Nr. 137 / Seite 40

The fact that everything has its utility goes without saying. The only question is, what utility. One would not want to, nor could one, drink from the fragile vessels Rita Grosse-Ruyken displays in glass cases as well as in extensive installations. This is not just because they are part of an exhibition, and as such untouchable. Also, and above all, it is their delicacy, their perfect form and their unspoiled state that prohibits us from such an act. They do not seem to be made for earthly nourishment. Yet they are by no means empty. Rather, as objects in an exhibition, they serve their intrinsic purpose of capturing something, of being filled with something, of enclosing something. These works are thus different from, for example, vases, which always convey the impression of something missing when they are shown in a museum without flowers. These vessels are sufficient unto themselves. That is because they fulfil their purpose. They grasp what cannot be grasped. In these bowls, goblets and chalices, light is collected, immateriality, imaginary substances. This is how one could imagine the Holy Grail at the moment of its unveiling: radiant, vibrant, immaculate.

The Museum für Angewandte Kunst Frankfurt is now presenting the first show of the complete works by Rita Grosse-Ruyken, a goldsmith artist who combines physics and metaphysics in a unique way in her work. She has researched the materials of gold and silver with scientific technical methodology and, based on her experiments and innovative approaches, created works of incomparable transparency at the threshold of dissolution into light and luminosity. Her vessels are of such nobility and delicacy they could have been made for an Olympian banquet, where

the gods pass one another food and drink that seem to consist of gold dust and sunlight.

The rooms in which Grosse-Ruyken presents her works – ritually, as it were – are completely white, a dazzling white reminiscent of the recent Terence Koh presentation at the Schirn. There as well, one had to squint in order to discern what the artist was offering for view. In contrast to the show by the enigmatic and strongly self-oriented post-modern Canadian artist, however, the exhibition opening tonight on the Sachsenhausen Schaumainkai is much more closely related to the avant-garde approaches which emerged in the art of the twentieth century from what could be called the “spiritual in the arts”. To make visible what is invisible, to dissolve matter into light, to explore the transition from colour into the non-colour white: “Rays of Light”, as the show is called, takes us straight to the heart of the debate over the potential of art in an age of visual over-stimulation, the loss of aura, and reality as conveyed by the media.

Nowhere, of course, is esotericism forced upon us or ideology placed on display. The objects and ensembles are of an exquisite subtlety; they float weightlessly with a filigree gracefulness that reminds us of things Far-Eastern. The artist essentially works with white and with gold, transporting everything into an otherworldly as well as artistically artificial sphere. These objects come to us from another world: an art world already long considered a correspondence to unreachable, impassable, paradisiacal, transcendental spheres. Light has always been considered a symbol of spaces never yet seen by mankind. This exhibition permits something seldom encountered in a museum: mystical experiences.