

Hanna Roeckle

Configuration in Flow – Sculptures since 2014

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Hanna Roeckle took part in the exhibition *Melencolia* in the museum Haus für Kunst in Altdorf/Uri in Spring 2014. The exhibition title references Albrecht Dürer's celebrated copperplate engraving from 1514. The winged figure sunk in thought in the foreground of this engraving has been perceived as personifying inspired melancholy in the sense of brooding artistic genius. The engraving is highly complex in its iconography and contains numerous symbols that can be interpreted as metaphors for the liberal and mechanical arts. These include a polyhedron in the middle ground which can be seen as emblematic, as was usual in Renaissance art, of the link between art and science.

Numerous artists have engaged creatively with this work of Dürer's. Alberto Giacometti's 1934 sculpture *Le Cube*, for example, directly takes up the polyhedron from this engraving and reinterprets it as an abstract head. That Hanna Roeckle has also drawn spontaneous inspiration from this solid is congruent with two aspects which are evident in the wider context of her work. The connection between science and art signified by this geometric solid and celebrated by Renaissance artists is a topic she has frequently explored. While it may not always be immediately obvious to audiences, all her works are resonant with enthusiasm for open science, interdisciplinary topics and the broadening of one's perspective on diverse everyday phenomena which science promotes. Again and again, Roeckle finds inspiration in areas as diverse as molecular biology, geometry, fibre optics and, most recently, space exploration as well as stimulating her creative process through engagement with topics such as the colour spectrum of minerals, Mandelbrot sets and fractals, and architectural structures.

While Dürer's many-sided solid provided the initial impetus for the development of Roeckle's response to it, the formal solution she has found adheres strictly to the modular dimensions of her entire oeuvre (43 x 33 cm), which is characterized by alternation between small and large formats and between open and closed systems. This module is inscribed multiple times as a whole or in part in *Aquarius*, the first polyhedron developed for the museum exhibition in Altdorf. Its upper edge is 43 centimetres long, and the distance from this edge to the centre of the truncated rhombus is 33 centimetres. Subcomponents from this module ultimately form the basis for all of the geometrical objects since developed. Only the small and large sculptures in the *Pyrit* series are based on a freeform model not subject to these mathematical constraints.

From its very beginnings, Hanna Roeckle's artistic work has always deeply probed the possibilities of painting and integrated painting seamlessly into a system of spatial references. This is apparent in each of her works series and has been continued into the fully plastic works developed since 2014 on the basis of elementary shapes. This explains why their colour compositions (in dichroic lacquer hues specifically mixed for the artist's works) are such a decisive component of these works. The lustrous brilliance of the lacquered surfaces allows these sculptures to transcend their materiality and project their specific auras outward into space. Light plays a creative role in this process – as viewers change their vantage points, the shimmering colours also shift subtly. The effect prompts beholders to bring their own perspectives into their engagement with

these works. At the same time, it also promotes active communication with and between the works and the surrounding space.

This interplay of shifting colours also supports the illusionist effects manifest in some of these sculptures and already inherent in the earlier paintings series *Tilings* with all its puzzling and exciting spatial effects. A fleeting glance at the works *Rosetta* or *Fluorit* and their respective series does not always immediately reveal whether surfaces are open or closed, concave or convex. The importance of colour and its correlation with space and materials in Hanna Roeckle's oeuvre is especially apparent in her use of colour to create the backgrounds particular wall objects are displayed against in exhibition spaces.

This group of works now contains a broad spectrum of shapes in varied colour compositions. Against the background of her exploration of the relationships between solidity and space, fullness and emptiness, mind and matter, drawings and small plasticine models serve to provide formal reassurance. Area, lines, volume and the horizontal and vertical planes are the main threads running through these. The series *Stelen/Columns* formed from lying polyhedrons emphasizes the vertical in its upward-bound dynamism. The stacks of polyhedrons can be imagined as infinitely extensible and pay homage to Brancusi's *Endless Column*. The free-form sculpture *Pyrit* is quite different in this regard, stressing the diagonal as it extends into space in a compact and dynamic fashion. The crystalline *Fluorit* pieces, ordered singly or in series, are slightly reduced in volume. The majority of these relief-like pieces are displayed on walls. This also applies to the group of works named for the space probe *Rosetta* which intellectually extend space on earth into the cosmos and, at the same time into virtual space through their allusions to hidden data. In all of these works, strict clarity enters into a liaison with sensual colours and it becomes abundantly clear that form and materiality are equal partners for the artist.

Hanna Roeckle has developed her sculptures in concrete spatial contexts time and again, and on each occasion she has done justice to her ambition to establish connections in both directions between the works and the exhibition space she treats less as a stage and more as a given part of her artistic work. Her most recent sculptural work has resulted in magnificent installations in Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Museum für Kommunikation Berlin, the sculpture park attached to Kunstmuseums Liechtenstein, and the International Criminal Court in The Hague.