

## **Hitomi Uchikura – *Lumière & Bright Cells***

31.5. – 28. 6. 2024

Opening: Thursday, May 30, 7 – 9.30 pm

The Japanese artist Hitomi Uchikura will have her second solo show at Semjon Contemporary and is showing new works from her recent studio practice.

Generally speaking, it can be stated that the artist is able to extract qualities from paper that one would not necessarily think of. Her mastery of her craft is evident.

The "Lumière" group of works consists of paper formations, mostly of a high rectangular format, which contain a sea of circular medallions of different sizes, whereby the areas between the medallions are partially cut out and allow the light behind them to pass through. The medallions are plastically deformed by the individual application of force. The result is a relief that is not produced by machine or computer, but individually by the artist. This becomes clear as soon as you approach the sculptural paper panels. Traces of the preliminary drawings are rudimentary and almost no longer visible. Each assignment of the individual medallions to one another takes place in the process of creation. There is no design plan that defines all the elements in detail beforehand. The embossing, i.e. the shaping by pressing the paper, is a lengthy process. The production of a relief is time-consuming. The invested and integrated energy literally radiates out of the relief.

The "Lumière" structures are hung at a certain distance from the wall. The optical state of suspension is intensified by the use of light, which increases the plasticity of the sea of circular concave medallions, creating a state of oscillation. The dynamic and static moments alternate. Once optically fixed, the medallions seem to alternate between concave and convex forms. The relief tilts between concave and convex plasticity, another moment that reflects the energetic charge and transfers it into a new reality.

All this emphasizes the moment of lightness, of floating and at the same time formulates the impression of a friendly, even cheerful frozen dynamic.

They are evocations of visual upheavals that happen abruptly, but do not cause unrest or chaos. The concentrated energy is channeled into an experience of calm and order, which nevertheless has a free breath in its stringency. The work of art becomes a meditation surface, a meditation space.

The fact that the concentration of medallions of different sizes does not generate the impression of an ornamental structure has always concerned me. Why is each work in this series pondered and balanced in itself and not a repetition of the previous work? Only in

the recent artist talk on June 1, 2024, did it emerge that Hitomi Uchikura first draws a landscape with thin graphite lines on each sheet and fills or covers the resulting inner spaces including landscape lines with circles of different sizes as a further preliminary drawing, which later become the concave medallions through embossing. In other words, the landscape is translated into an abstract, irregular structure that follows the proportions of the drawing and the drawing/landscape space. This rules out repetition and prevents the creation of repetitive circular structures that could become an ornament.

In their sculptural form, the "Bright Cells" take up the archetypal shape of the circle, the sphere, but here in a seemingly organic compression, and are interspersed with circular openings that allow a view inwards. The openings are closed transparently with camera lenses, which contrast with the colored leather that surrounds the built wall like a skin between the 'windows'. The view inside becomes a visual experience. The mirror fragments placed in the interior of the organoid form lead the gaze into infinity. The circular openings reflected in their perspective distortions become a confusing sea of light and countless reflections of form. Bright Cells. Infinity seems to be banished in these cells. They become energy cells, small reactors. Energy = light.

The power of Hitomi Uchikura's works lies not only in the reduction to form and thus as a metaphor of her concentrated artistic attitude, or in her mastery of craftsmanship, but the power of the works prepares a stage that opens the view inwards and outwards, into ourselves and into infinity.

Past and present, but also the future, are captured in a unique way.

Semjon H. N. Semjon, May 2024