

## **Photogrammes by Gerda Schütte**

Again and again viewers are puzzled by the art works of the artist Gerda Schütte who has lived for 40 years in Paris: At first and also often at second glance one doesn't notice that in the case of the exhibited works we are confronted with photogrammes.

Most people mistake them for drawings. The basic, reduced forms in which the artist is interested, above all in the work group Spheres, with their sensitive and gradually differentiated grey tones of circular lines, render the photogramme in appearance very close to drawing.

That is not a coincidence: Gerda Schütte explores with the technique of photogrammes the outer limits of what is technically possible. Often the process of making is a big mystery anyway. Due to the accelerated development of digital photography hardly anyone is aware of this very old and direct technique of making images with light.

On the other hand because Gerda Schütte has elevated this ambiguity to the level of subject itself. The photographic act of conveying an object in an alienated form enables an abstract sign to be created from the original object. And it is this abstract sign which elicits so many different reactions and leads us away from the medium of photography, because we no longer know how to define it in those terms. Even though Fox Talbot spoke at the beginning of the 40's in the 19th century of photogenic drawing, it was his intention to represent the object as realistically as possible with the aid of light and light sensitive paper. Also Anna Atkins, who published the very first publication of photogrammes in 1843 of her work British Algae, Cyanotype impressions, strives to convey the plastic reality of the Algae so precisely and as life-like as possible. For Gerda Schütte this artistic approach is alien, one can even say suspect.

She creates for herself another world to plunge into. It requires an open mind and curiosity on the part of the viewer. Gerda Schütte who draws with light, wants to reveal the secret of light and exploit it as an accomplice, in order that everyday banal appearances are transformed into an abstract transcendent sign. In her analogue photographs of the 90s (compare portfolio on the gallery's homepage) this tendency towards an abstract sign is already visible. Gerda Schütte's interest in photography lies in the investigation of what is technically feasible, a departure from the terrain of classical photography, which is always the natural representation of the visible object. One could say that the artist attempts to negate the process of representing itself, as the intention of the photographic process, and to formulate instead the photographic process itself as the goal of photography. The results have a strict and reductive beauty, which still embody within them the nuances of life.

H. N. Semjon, February 2013