

Captured in the heartbeat

Hanna Gagel



Boundless
Travertine, 60 x 20 x 20 cm

Current theories suggest that it is not possible to create anything new in art. Nevertheless, Elisabeth Germann has succeeded with her new take on the age-old subject of sculpture: the female form. And she has done this with such impressive implicitness that onlookers are hardly aware of what an independent stance the artist has represented in this subject so steeped in tradition. Her work arches from the first primordial woman, the creator of life, the Stone Age Venus of Willendorf to Aristide Maillol. In this example, femininity is seen from a completely different angle for the first time: from neither a voyeuristic nor a postmodern perspective.

The rich unfolding of the work emerges from a centre in the sensorium of the artist. The internal dialogue is understood as being part of her womanhood. This work considers the meaning of relationships - both the relationship with others and the relationship with oneself; searching and finding a closeness to oneself and to others in many various forms. In essence, Elisabeth Germann addresses a truly fundamental existential state that we all experience.

Germann's sculptures are so intensely moving because they have a skin. And this is by no means obvious. Many female figures in conventional conceptions appear to be frozen and without skin in their nakedness. Germann's pieces, however, manage to convey something of the warmth of the skin in the cool stone. That may sound trivial and yet it represents so much, as one is barely aware of it because it is not overly imposing.

Our idea of abstract art does not necessarily involve sensual vitality. And yet this is the secret behind Elisabeth Germann's work. She knows how to combine these seemingly separate worlds. Yes, the abstract form of her sculptures increases the effect of the life forms that are perceived in an extraordinarily sensual manner. She designed the numerous references to the female organism in the form of fragments. The idea of the whole is thereby conveyed in a sensually charged but fragmentary form. Germann says: "I often only represent the abstracted part of the body, to intensify the urgency of my message." This includes movement. It is not shown directly, but can be interpreted from the suggestive dynamic chopiness of the sculpture.

An equally powerful and subtle work stands and lies in front of us - on many emotional levels; it is created from sensitive perceptions, feelings from our memory, touching with eyes and hands. Germann's work truly exemplifies the original Greek meaning of aesthetics: Aisthesis encompasses consciousness, sensation, emotion, and knowledge.

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