

Susanne Tunn (A.D., pouring tin, 2009)



A.D.
2009
Tin
28 m²

Contemporary arts entail reaching out to unusual materials. Tin must certainly count as one of these materials. For this metal no longer has a role to play in art today. At least, however, it is contained in bronze, which is obtained from an alloy of copper and tin. Yet, those who think of tin perhaps think of tin plates at the very best. Now, the sculptress Susanne Tunn uses the silver-coloured metal for a project that is not only situated in an unusual place but, with its interplay of the intended shaping of a floor sculpture and haphazard run of the fluid metal, also demonstrates considerable internal stress.

In the cowshed of a farmhouse, the artist slowly poured fluid tin onto an area of 28 square metres. Even if she had tested pouring the tin in her studio beforehand, possibly simulating the process, there is no way that the final result could be anticipated. This work reveals an unmistakable performative character. The act of production must be understood as a unique course in both senses of the words. Here we have not only the course of the work process but also the course of the metal itself, which seeks its own path on the uneven floor and comes to rest at certain places, depending on the texture of the subsurface.

The result is a frozen pool which, with its silver shining surface appears to be equally strange and fascinatingly alien, particularly in these surroundings. The sculpture looks like a lake without banks – or like the surface of a landscape with a unique profile, containing gentle undulations, depressions and grand drops of the material. Its beauty lies in the self-sought expansion, its light effect and in all that which disturbs the impression of an all-too perfect smoothness. As with Susanne Tunn's other works, particularly her stone sculptures, the poured tin also documents an artistic act that totally follows the legitimacy of the material. The artistic setting consequentially begins already with the choice of material and location where it is to unfold itself. Tin, which today is completely undervalued as an artistic material, now has its unexpected dazzling appearance in this unusual location.

The updated effect of the material is mainly due to the fact of its iconographic openness. A rarely used material is virtually without any previously coined meanings. This fact gives Susanne Tunn's work some of its evocativeness. The metal area, in its extension, can be understood as equivalent to a topography, which could be that of the battle at Kalkriese. And the melting of the metal is reminiscent of the manufacture of all the weapons and equipment deployed in the Varus Battle. Such notions are possible but not mandatory. As in all of Susanne Tunn's works, this metal sculpture also gains its appeal from its non-restrictable openness.

Stefan Lüddemann