



## Ute Kathrin Beck

Ute Kathrin Beck's forms, that do nothing but quote, are covered in gloss and mica, the deformed, distorted, receptive, conserving character of a ceramic vessel. Formed from clay by hand, her vases become archaic cult objects, purely the ornaments of a decadent reified world. Surfaces sport knobs, spines, folds, crater-like indentations and voluptuous curves. Baroque magnificence, opulence, and sensuousness.

An alchemist, she fires her vessels on a really lavish scale with metallic glazes containing oxide of iron, copper, platinum, and gold. The exuberantly rampant quality of these spectacular forms makes them seem like foreign bodies mysteriously oscillating between Nature and culture, which negotiate the lust for material things and their magical quality. Although vessels are, as far their original purpose is concerned, meant to be touched, hers repel touch by means of numerous defence mechanisms in their skin. What makes them so fascinating is the interrelationship between attraction and repulsion. They defy their serving function to become an assault on "good taste" and "pure functionality".

The Gitter-Vasen [Lattice Vases] with which Ute Kathrin Beck pushes the possibilities of ceramics to their limits, hence finds a formula, as it were, for "liberated form" can entrap nothing, stifle nothing. Societal norms condense into shapes. Working on form always also implies working on the norm, which here becomes polysemic and not readily applicable. Long before the world was visually familiar with the corona form of the SARS-CoV2 virus, Ute Kathrin Beck was shaping those spiny, spherical configurations in clay and covering them in platinum, copper or gold. The new semantic horizon they have acquired while the pandemic is running its course, only consolidates the potential slumbering in them that is inherent in all of Ute Kathrin Beck's objects. They are meant to be awakened.

What slumbers in them – to quote Baudelaire – "Tips out a tangle of good and evil" ["Verse confusément le bienfait et le crime"]. Their appearance contains "sunset and dawn" ["le couchant et l'aurore;"].

They randomly dispense joy and catastrophe ["Tu sèmes au hasard la joie et les désastres"]. Thus Ute Kathrin Beck's Corona shapes remind us that a meaning transcending our senses and incommensurate with our (moral) standards is intrinsic to Nature in the guise of a perfect virus that is beautiful, even sublime, in form.

Que tu viennes du ciel ou de l'enfer, qu'importe,  
Ô Beauté! monstre énorme, effrayant, ingénu!  
Si ton œil, ton souris, ton pied, m'ouvrent la porte  
D'un Infini que j'aime et n'ai jamais connu?

[Vers 6, Hymne à la Beauté (Charles Baudelaire, Les Fleurs du mal)]

What matter whether you come from heaven, or from hell,  
O Beauty! vast, terrifying, primal monster!  
If your eye, your smile, your foot, open for me the door  
to an Infinity that I love yet have never known?

Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum (Virgile, Énéide III, 658): description de Polyphème. Chez Baudelaire, qu'importe, ce sont le rythme et le son, alors l'art pour l'art exemplifié par l'onomatopée et transporté ici à travers la référence virgilienne. Le problème transculturel s'exprime dans la traduction du mot « ingens » / « ingénu » . « dem Kinde verwandt » est une traduction ahistorique de faux ami [[[la traductrice en anglais]]]

Parotta Contemporary Art Gallery  
"Les Fleurs du Mal" - Exhibition  
Dr. Birgit Kulmer, M.A.