

Farbring 450d

Susanne Rottenbacher's sculptures arouse a sensual relationship between man, space, time, and light. Minimalistic in shape and technically highly complex, the transparent plastic objects appear in an interplay with their environment: Their appearance changes with the time of day, radiating light into their surroundings and thus sensitising the perception of the viewer.

The sculpture „farbring 450d“, placed on a grassy area by the Oker River, consists of a clear acrylic toroidal structure some two metres in diameter. The outer surface of the shell is partially painted, striped with various tones of red. A multitude of pink LED lights are affixed to the space inside the outer cladding. The translucent membrane lets their coloured light shine through, while the „white“, natural light of the piece's surroundings is absorbed by the ring – the diodes appear to fade in lighter conditions and burn more brightly as the ambient light dwindles, making the ring itself seem to materialise and ebb away again. On some summer days, they seem to vanish entirely; at night, they twinkle like pink stars reflected a hundred-fold in the clear acrylic of the ring and scatter their light into the surroundings, onto leaves and trees. The complicated technical underpinnings and the synthetic quality of the ring are transformed into a poetic field of perception that counters with stillness and contemplativeness the fast pace and faith in technology of our times. It is undeniable that Rottenbacher's objects display a certain tendency toward the decorative, but every trace of functionality, such as those fundamentally present in designed objects, has been stripped away. Instead – much like the geometric shapes of American Minimal Art of the 1960s – the simple form and serially placed light sources challenge the viewer to gain awareness of his own body's position in space. Following the principles of the French phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Rottenbacher's work avoids all narrative or symbology, seeking not to distract the viewer from himself, but to open up the experience of body, object, space, and time – the stark rationality underpinning „farbring 450d“ dissolves entirely into intuitive perception.

Gesine Borchardt 2010