

Dear Lore Bert, dear Dr. Dorothea van der Koelen, dear Marie-France Bertrand, Director of the Musée Würth Erstein, dear Mrs. Weber, Director of the Würth Collection, dear Mr. Kopff Chairman of the Board - Würth France, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank you once again for giving me the opportunity to engage with the work of this internationally renowned German artist. In the last 15 years I have had the pleasure to accompany her – sometimes at close range – in the realization of her projects in Germany, Italy, Europe and all over the world. Thus I have had the opportunity to get to know her artistic world more and more closely and thus to receive confirmation of what I understood from the first moment : Lore Bert is an artist who occupies a unique and undisputed position in the contemporary art scene. An artist who breaks new ground while remaining rooted in a heritage of spiritual values. By spiritual values I mean the values of the intellect, of the spirit, values that are not only associated with Western culture. Lore Bert has traveled, worked and exhibited in 26 countries in Europe, America, Asia and the United Arab Emirates. In the process, she has crossed oceans and continents and entered into exchange with cultures far away from ours, long before they aroused the interest of the international art scene. Lore Bert has traveled and discovered signs, images, shapes, colors and materials that she has integrated into her own artistic universe with coherence. Because of her internationality, her tendency to look beyond borders, Lore Bert is in tune with the spirit of the place where we find ourselves today: Museum Würth. When I was researching for this speech, I read that the Würth Collection includes over 20,000 works by international artists and that Reinhold Würth founded museums in nine different countries: Germany, of course, France, Italy, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Austria, Spain and Switzerland. Reinhold Würth is certainly one of Lore Bert's most important and well-known collectors. If I am not mistaken, he already owns more than seventy works by the artist we are celebrating today. These are works that Mr. Würth has acquired at fairly regular intervals over the years. If they were all exhibited, it would be possible to reconstruct to a large extent the development of Lore Bert's oeuvre. Today, we discover here some of the most important works of the German artist from the Würth Collection.

The artistic world of Lore Bert and the paper

Before I talk about some of the exhibited works, I would like to explain why I love the work of this artist.

The works of Lore Bert testify to the coherence and poetic lightness of a universe in constant movement. A universe that is constantly renewed in the balance of fragile equilibria that shift according to colors, forms and rhythms. With a purity that both unsettles and touches us, the artist describes the secret geometry of a universe that seems to float in a timeless space. A world that gains life at the border between the visible and the and the invisible.

The material that gives shape to this world is paper. Precious, handmade paper: papyrus, Japanese paper, Nepalese paper...

The paper that is shown in all its fragility, is not simply a support, but the partner in the dialogue between the mind and the senses. It is the space in which the idea takes shape. Everything happens in dialogue with with the fabric, with the nuances of its textures, through the infinite possibilities that paper offers, through the folds, through the sometimes hardly perceptible transformations of the material.

In the works of Lore Bert there are no objects or representations. There are forms, colors, structures and rhythms, from which always new compositions arise. Compositions that transport ideas.

Lore Bert cannot be classified in a single art direction. Her works are not only abstract, but also concrete and constructive. They are works that leave the viewer the absolute freedom to look at them from their own point of view, to perceive them freely and to think freely. Her works spark our imagination.

As the well-known art historian Jan Hoet wrote in 2011:

'In Lore Bert's work it was the use of white paint, the instrument par excellence that can represent emptiness even through achromatic color, bringing about the immaterial light in her oeuvre – as Malevitch said he saw white as the manifestation of liberated nothingness, or as the Zero movement saw white, as a symbol of a humane world in which man can freely articulate himself.' (Jan Hoet)

The exhibition

In the heart of the exhibition, Lore Bert shows her environment " The Platonic Solids" : five mirrored sculptures in a sea of paper. The Platonic Solids are regular polyhedra representing the five elements (air, water, fire, earth and the ether, the universe, the last element discovered by philosophy) - a theme that Lore Bert has been working on since 1988. In 2013 she presented this installation for the first time in the exhibition " Art &

Knowledge in the 5 Platonic Solids " (an official collateral event of the 55th Venice Art Biennale) in the prestigious hall of the Biblioteca nazionale Marciana (in the Correr Museum in St. Mark's Square). The Biblioteca Marciana was founded in 1468 by Cardinal Basilio Bessarione, one of the most educated people of his time, a scholar of Plato. The exhibition of Lore Bert enjoyed high recognition. With over 105,000 visitors, it was one of the most visited art events in Italy in the summer of 2013.

Venice is not only an important showcase but also a place of interaction and exchange. A special visitor of the 55th Biennale, Cho Il-Sang (Director of the National Art Museum in Busan, South Korea), is fascinated by Lore Bert. That's why he invites her to show her installation as part of a solo exhibition at the museum he directs. And here it is again, the theme of the journey: From Venice to Busan, the second largest city in South Korea, then to Germany to Mochental Castle near Ehingen (2016) and to the Gutenberg Museum in Mainz, where Lore Bert showed Platonic Solids in a new context in 2021. Today we are here to present them in Erstein, France.

The Platonic Solids

There are five Platonic Solids: the Tetrahedron, the Hexahedron, the Octahedron, the Dodecahedron and the Icosahedron. Their names denote the number of faces in Greek (4, 6, 8, 12 or 20).

Because of their absolute regularity and the resulting beauty, Platonic Solids were considered divine in ancient times. They are three-dimensional solids constructed of equilateral, congruent faces. Because of the symmetry of corners, edges, and faces, each Platonic Solid can be thought of as having both an circumsphere and an insphere.

It is no coincidence that people have always associated these regular solids with creation itself.

Because of their shape and properties, because of all that their geometric completeness evokes, the Platonic Solids in Lore Bert's work are not a symbol to be interpreted. They represent an opportunity: the opportunity to perceive and grasp through observation an abstract, "intangible" concept: the idea of perfection, of beauty.

The five sculptures stand in a white field, reminiscent of the ocean, made of hundreds of folded sheets of paper. A white, fragile field that paradoxically seems to protect the sculptures and demands caution from the viewer. A field of white paper exposed to the

ravages of time, evoking in the viewer the memory of their own vulnerability. This feeling disarms us. It sharpens our sensitivity and gives us the possibility to observe and perceive everything differently.

As proof that there is no clear interpretation of what we see, just as there is no clear perspective on reality and the world, the surfaces of Platonic Solids are made of mirrors. So it happens that what seemed to be in front of us suddenly shows us something that is elsewhere in the room: Not only the objects in the room, not only light and shadow, but also all the visitors, their perspectives and - in a figurative sense - all their ideas, all 'worlds' and impressions become part of the artwork. Through the reflections of the mirrors, the clear form of the Platonic Solids questions something: our usual way of relating to the world around us. The installation seems to suggest to the viewer how multifaceted the interpretation of reality can be, and how infinite are the perspectives from which it can be observed.

Collages und relief-objects

The installation " The Platonic Solids " was realized for the Venice Art Biennale. In this context, the reflective surfaces of the sculptures were in harmony with the constant movements of the water along the canals, on which the beautiful architecture of the lagoon city was reflected. In the exhibition we are opening today we can experience the memory of this image: Lore Bert's paintings hanging on the walls are reflected on the surface of the installation. Some of them, in fact, refer directly to the Venetian architecture. The works "Colorful Quatrefoils in Black", "Colorful Trefoils", "Black White Gold" and "Depths" testify to Lore Bert's great interest in architectural elements and her admiration for the churches and palaces of Venice, which she discovered as early as 1955 during her study trip to the "Serenissima". With a great deal of imagination, Lore Bert succeeded in transforming the structures of the Venetian floors and the characteristic quatrefoils of the palazzi along the Grand Canal into a seemingly endless variety of compositions. Starting from a historical-architectural heritage, Lore Bert creates images that are new and imprint themselves in the viewer's memory.

As I mentioned earlier, Lore Bert explores in her work all the possibilities that paper offers. She plays with colors and shapes, with the different textures of various types of handmade paper. Her compositions convey clarity and stillness. They present us no stories, no emotions. In her works there is no representation, but the beauty inherent in the

manifestations of human thought. A beauty that Lore Bert tracks down and transports into her artistic universe. These are concepts and forms borrowed, for example, from mathematics, geometry, architecture, literature and the world of philosophy.

As can also be seen in the exhibition, the circle is a recurring geometric shape in the work of Lore Bert. "Golden Circle" is the title of the work published on the poster.

The circle, made of pure gold leaf, seems to float in the white field of the paper, in constant, steady motion, like a planet in its own atmosphere. The gold is reminiscent of the Orient, the place where the sun rises. It reminds us of the endless and divine sky of the Byzantine icons. White is the light, white is the purity. The delicacy that flows into the work. White is the fragility that becomes visible. It is the silence. While the shape (the circle) suggests the idea of completeness. The idea of an eternal cycle of beginning and end, the cycle of life. The circle is nothingness and totality. It takes us to another place where there are no things or feelings, no breaks, no weight.

I could go on for a long time telling you about my impressions and thoughts on the works of Lore Bert exhibited here. I prefer to let the works themselves have their say, because they do not need explanations, but only your openness and your imagination.

Finally, I would like to mention the collage cycle "Europe - Identity in Difference". This cycle was created in 1993 and was exhibited in 1995 in the "Sala do Bonet" in the Palácio Nacional de Sintra in Portugal. The red background of the collages is made of handmade Nepalese paper. The fine lines draw structures of imaginary architectures that enter into a dialogue with white and black geometric shapes. We read the names of the countries of the European Union - each written in its own language - on the voluminous surfaces of Japanese paper and absorbent cotton. This cycle seems to suggest to us visually what the title itself says. In banal but clear words: everything that European countries have in common unites them, but they remain different. And it is precisely each particularity, each difference, that constitutes the strength of their union.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Cristiana Coletti

(Erstein, 11. Juni 2023)