

weiss kaue schwarz kaue

The title of the exhibition already suggests the intensive exploration of the industrial history of the Ruhr area which lies behind Yoana Tuzharova's approach to the two rooms in Künstlerzeche Unser Fritz Herne: "weiss kaue schwarz kaue". Previously, she had pursued her interest in the structural change in the Ruhr coal mining area during her scholarship period at Styrum Castle, at the end of which the exhibition "Metamorphoses. Topology of the capital" in Mülheim an der Ruhr took place. In Herne, Tuzharova developed the works conceived in Mülheim an der Ruhr, closely related to the space and history of the colliery. These art works trace the change from an industrial society to a service-based society and then to the volatility of digitized life and interweave - typical for Tuzharova's spatial work - sculpture and architecture.

The rhythm of a single composition permeates them all, and is, so to speak, their condition and their consequence: The starting point is the curve of the DAX (German stock market index), which updates every two seconds during the opening hours of the stock exchange, (i.e. Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.) and maps the economic development of Germany in real time. It thus allows conclusions about global financial markets and economic systems. Although decisive for the individual way of life, stock market processes are incomprehensible and obscure for many. In collaboration with the musicians Francesco Marzano and Leon Eckard, the artist translates the DAX curve into a melody that can be sensually experienced through the sounds of the concert flute, bass flute and piccolo flute. The low-overtone sound of the flutes is in turn translated by a sound transducer into a series of sine tones,¹ which can be sterile and empty, alarming and calming at the same time. In a second step, the artist adds a

¹ Sine tones are tones whose oscillation can be described by a mathematical sine function. As a rule, a pure sine tone cannot be generated naturally. The DAX curve, which appears abstract, is translated into a tone by Tuzharova and thus preserves its symbolic properties.

twofold visual component to this translation: On the one hand, the sine tones make tonewood vibrate, on which coal, ash, salt and earth particles hop, dance, and come to rest, and always create new, regular patterns in this way. These materials are mirrored and multiplied to form intertwined ornaments which are weaved through the entire exhibition. On the other hand, the “chrónos” installation is illuminated more, sometimes less intensely, in the rhythm of the rising or falling DAX curve. Chronos is the personification of time in Greek mythology and symbolizes the tireless passage of time, as well as of one’s own lifetime. On this background, the constantly resounding DAX tones and light signals seem like the ticking of a clock that indicates infinity, but also the inevitable end (of life, an era or the economic boom?).

Just as open and potentially endless as this melody is, are the ornaments that Tuzharova creates from it: the open ornamentality is shaped in such a way that it can theoretically continue to develop infinitely. The image cell that every ornament produces becomes a component of a limitless architecture. Just as a sine tone can sound empty, the ornament lacks a narrative sense at first glance. Yoana Tuzharova, who studied mural painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, before studying at the Art Academy in Münster, has been devoting herself to the mural as an art-historically charged form, which, like the ornament, initially served only one decorative function. In the context of her preoccupation with economic systems, she reinterprets it: The mural “gabelstab” was created from earth pigments that she collected on the colliery premises and applied to the walls of the Weißkaue with lime casein using the Secco method.² Similar to some of the “cluster monuments”, it is aesthetically reminiscent of the sacred architecture of churches or castles – a plain image that stands in a strong contrast to the industrial surroundings of the old colliery.

² In contrast to fresco painting, secco painting paints on walls that are already dry.

The ornament becomes an important link to the serial structures that run through Tuzharova's whole artistic work.

In general, the materials she uses are expressive: coal dust, ashes, salt and earth are deeply poetic and historically charged substances. Both salt and coal, as "white" and "black gold", were once symbols of wealth and catalysts of economic success stories - and have since become mass products that - together with their associated economic systems - have been forgotten. Has coal, once the most important medium in the region, been converted into a simple ornament? The ashes as a confluent symbol of death and fertility, as a synonym for the beginning of a new life, as well as the soil as a substitute for nature in the exhibition space, become elements of the organic language that Tuzharova develops in order to visualize abstract processes.

The former Weißkaue, in which the miners used to put off their everyday clothes in order to put on their dirty work clothes in the Schwarzkaue, and its central installation "chrónos" evidently symbolize the workspace, while the installations in the Schwarzkaue, i.e., in the former actual workspace, resemble the layout of public, representative spaces and thus also the shaping of leisure time. Although the tiles parallel the former design of the "Kaue", Tuzharova primarily uses them as an archaic medium that transforms into a link between economic-digital and physical space. In the same way, the soil as a breeding ground for turf and houseplants in the "cluster monuments" becomes a bridge element between industry, art and nature. The Künstlerzeche is one of many examples of how former industrial wastelands, collieries or coking plants were converted into project spaces that were intended to provide social and cultural impulses: the previously neglected importance of art, culture and nature became a central component of structural change in the region. So, it is not surprising that nature also finds its way into the former industrial rooms as part of Tuzharova's exhibition.

In Tuzharova's installations, material, form, concept and process create the narrative of the flowing transition between past and future, economic wealth and decay, endless digital and concrete physical space. Their multi-layered, site-specific occupation comes together to form a work that can be understood as a hymn to structural change, but at the same time as a critical commentary on how business and industry can have an immeasurable influence on life and nature. The complexity and entanglement of modern economic systems is reflected in the different media that Tuzharova adopts: light and sound installations, sculpture and architecture as well as performance. So "weiss kaue schwarz kaue" is not only an artistic commentary on economic change, but also a personal development and a return to Tuzharova's artistic beginnings.

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