

May 2020

Erinna König

For many artists and art connoisseurs in Rhineland Erinna König is a familiar face. She studied at the State Academy of Fine Arts in the classes of Dieter Roth and Joseph Beuys, and took part in the LIDL Week at the Academy initiated by Jörg Immendorff and Chris Reinecke, which caused quite a stir. Yet the development of her art practice was not dependent in any way on this activist phase, since she saw her works from the beginning as aesthetic objects, not as calls to action. Later on, König was one of the artists who exhibited regularly at Galerie Erhard Klein in Bonn. She has talked at length about her experiences at the Dusseldorf Academy and the events of that time in an interview for Audioarchiv Kunst (Art Audio Archive) (<http://audioarchivkunst.de/zeitzeugen/erinna-koenig/>).

Now the sculpture hall of the Thomas Schütte Stiftung in Neuss is presenting Erinna König's first large solo exhibition. After I had prepared this show with the artist for over a year, the current dire situation prevented me from travelling to Düsseldorf in March in order to set up the exhibition with her. However, the exhibition layout that we had developed on the basis of plans and models proved to function well. The exhibition was installed by technicians in the usual few days and photographs were taken.



The focus of the exhibition is on recent works, but a few well-known earlier pieces are included here and there. There is also a wall cabinet in the side room displaying numerous small objects and sketches, as a kind of coded biographical retrospective. It would certainly not be correct to categorize König's art as sculpture. And yet it is clear that over the years the artist has remained true to the object: not to scurrilous items but to familiar things such as a mirror, chair, bedstead or curtain – everyday paraphernalia. Rather than focussing on their functionality, the artist's attention is caught by formal or narrative details, which form the basis of a visual idea. Since König does not intend her engagement with a found object to culminate in a simple punch line, she proceeds with thought and care, making a precise selection of the materials to be used. She is no handywoman, preferring to have works made perfectly by specialists, especially as unusual technical processes are often required. She employs a wide range of materials, with hardly any repetition. Parts of found objects and new additions fit together naturally in the finished pieces. This is an essential feature of König's works, given that these do not insist on their de facto nature, but aspire to the pictorial, unlike some kinds of object art that purport to be relics or fetishes. Erinna König uses an object to make something visible, while concealing it at the same instant, shrouding the work, often literally, with a veil of mystery.



The exhibition runs until 16 August. A catalogue is available with a comprehensive text about Erinna König's art and her biography. All further information at: [www.thomas-schuettestiftung.de](http://www.thomas-schuettestiftung.de).

Dieter Schwarz