

ART AUREA

ANGEWANDTE  
KUNST, SCHMUCK  
UND DESIGN  
DEUTSCH/ ENGLISH

ARTAUREA.DE  
ARTAUREA.COM  
HEFT 2  
SOMMER 2011



12 Euro

# ART AUREA



WELCHE      TECHNIK      LIEBEN      WIR?

# EWIGER FRÜHLING

## BARBARA NANNING

Von Piet Augustijn



Detailtreue: Blumenbukett  
aus weißem opakem Glas, 2011.  
47 × 30 × 75 cm.





Blumenobjekt von Barbara Nanning, 2011. Weißes und rotes Glas, geblasen und geformt.



Märchenhaft: Weißes und rotes Glas, 47 x 47 x 52 cm. Fotos Frantisek Kumsta.

Die Grenze zwischen Kitsch und Skulptur ist oft messerscharf. Vor allem, wenn es sich um naturalistische Motive in Glas handelt. Die Intensität, mit der Barbara Nanning ihre Themen variiert und die Möglichkeiten des verführerischen Materials ausreizt, lässt keinen Zweifel aufkommen, auf welcher Seite sie steht.

Als Wunderkammern bezeichnete man in der Renaissance private Sammlungen unterschiedlichster Gegenstände aus aller Herren Länder. Sie waren meist eingeteilt in Kategorien wie Ethnographie, Geologie, Archäologie und Kunst. Eine Wunderkammer wurde als Mikrokosmos oder auch als Welttheater betrachtet und galt als Ausdruck des Forschergeistes seines Besitzers. Je weiter er gereist war, desto größer war seine Kuriositätensammlung.

Die Ausstellung *Ewiger Frühling – Eternal Spring* von Barbara Nanning im Glasmuseum Alter Hof Herding in Coesfeld-Lette bei Münster gleicht einer solchen Wunderkammer. Einige hundert mundgeblasene und handgeformte Blumen und Pflanzen in vorwiegend weißem opakem Glas sowie Bukette in Vasen oder anderen Behältnissen stehen auf dem Boden oder hängen an der Wand. Zusammen mit den versilberten Wandobjekten bilden sie

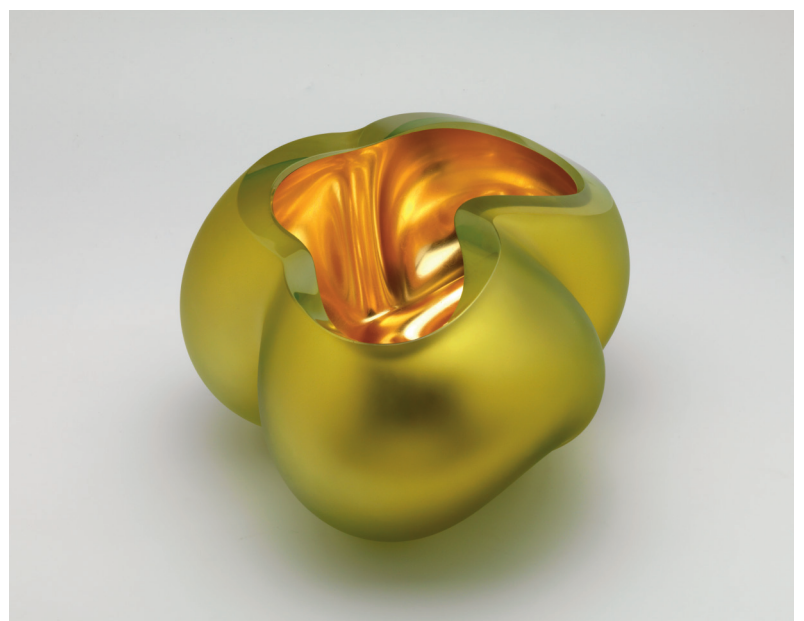
eine große Installation, ein Blumenmeer soweit das Auge reicht. Besonders auffallend ist die Installation *Pars pro toto*: drei wirklichkeitsgetreue Weiden aus Polyester, etwa drei Meter hoch.

Titelgeber der Ausstellung *Eternal Spring* sind Glasobjekte, die Beerentang-Blättern nachempfunden sind. Angeordnet in der Form eines Korallenriffs scheinen sie sich in der Strömung zu wiegen. Daneben liegen Flusssteine, aus denen gläserne Äste und Blätter zu wachsen scheinen, Korallengewächse auf einem transparenten grünen Fuß, gläserne Narzissen auf Füßen aus Polyurethan sowie Vasen gefüllt mit Blumen und Dornen. Insgesamt umfasst die Serie 600 unterschiedliche Pflanzen und Blumen.

Ein Video zeigt den Entstehensprozess. „Dazu inspiriert haben mich zum einen das exaltierte barocke Meissener Porzellan und zum anderen die Glaspflanzen der Glashütte Venini in Murano aus den 1920er Jahren“, so Barbara Nanning in dem Film. Anfangs hatte sie die Idee, mit ihren neuen Arbeiten auf verschiedene Werke aus der Kollektion des Glasmuseums Alter Hof zu reagieren. Aber auf dem Weg nach Tschechien besuchte sie in Meissen eine Ausstellung, die unter anderem die berühmte *Snowball blossoms vase* zeigte. Überwältigt durch die Schönheit, das pure Weiß, entstand die Idee eines großen Stilllebens.

Natürlich sind die neuen Glasobjekte auch durch Nannings frühere Arbeiten in Keramik sowie ihre monumentalen Projekte beeinflusst. Geblasen und handgeformt in weißem opakem Glas erscheinen sie wie aus Porzellan und entfalten eine starke Licht-Schatten-Wirkung. Die Blumen und Pflanzen bestechen durch eine bemerkenswerte Detailtreue. Dadurch entfalten sie eine natürliche Ausstrahlung, die aber durch die künstliche Farbgebung zugleich etwas märchenhaft wirkt.

Barbara Nanning, geboren 1957 in Den Haag, arbeitet sowohl mit Glas als auch mit Keramik. Die Ausstellung in Coesfeld-Lette zeigt, wo sie im Moment steht: sie ist eine Künstlerin, die bei jedem Auftrag über sich selbst hinauswächst und alle Möglichkeiten ausschöpft. In ihrem Werk verbindet sie klassisches Handwerk mit innovativem Materialeinsatz und einer eigenständigen Formsprache. Diese resultiert häufig aus dem Herstellungsprozess, etwa dem Drehen des Tons auf der Töpferscheibe oder dem Blasen des Glases. Barbara Nanning verbindet Tradition mit Erneuerung, niederländische Einfachheit mit orientalischem Reichtum, Struktur mit Freiheit und Ratio mit Gefühl. Die Natur, sowohl organisch als auch anorganisch, und vor allem die Bewegungen des Wassers, des Windes und der Wolken sind eine konstante Inspirationsquelle. Kristalle, Quallen, Blumen



Viel Gefühl: Schalenobjekte, 2007–2010. Glas, geblasen, geformt, teilweise innen vergoldet.



und Mikroorganismen studiert sie mit einer Faszination für Form, Struktur und Geometrie, die einer Forscherin aus dem 19. Jahrhundert würdig gewesen wäre.

Ursprünglich ausgebildet zur Keramikerin an der Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam, 1974–1979, und auf diesem Gebiet auch erfolgreich, spielt Glas ab 1995 eine wichtige Rolle. Parallel arbeitet Nanning jedoch weiterhin auch mit Keramik. Eine Serie von Keramikobjekten in monochromen Farben trägt den Titel *Botanica* und verweist bereits auf ihre intensive Beschäftigung mit der Natur. Was 1996 mit ein paar einzelnen Objekten begann, entwickelte sich zu einer ganzen Werkgruppe. Aus kompakten Knospen und Samenkapseln wurden üppige Blumen mit Blättern, die sich im Wind zu bewegen scheinen. Und die Blumen entwickelten sich weiter zu Unterwassergewächsen, die aussehen, als wiegten sie sich in der Strömung.

Nannings keramisches Werk diente auch als Ausgangspunkt ihrer monumentalen Arbeiten sowohl für den Außenbereich als auch für den Innenraum. In den letzten Jahren setzte sie verstärkt Computertechnologien ein, um ihre monumentalen Installationen zu entwerfen und zu konstruieren. In Zusammenarbeit mit der Industrie entwickelt sie immer neue Formen und Dekorationstechniken. Zu den wichtigsten Auftragsarbeiten der

vergangenen zehn Jahre gehört zum einen die Installation *Reclining Flowers* von 2000 für die Landespolizeidirektion in Driebergen. Zum anderen die *Galaxy*-Installation von 2001 im TNO-Gebäude in Eindhoven mit 234 keramischen Elementen.

Auftragswerke und freie Arbeiten von Barbara Nanning beeinflussen einander fortwährend. Ein Auftrag kann zu einer neuen Glas- oder Keramikarbeit führen, ein freies Werk kann zum Ausgangspunkt für einen weiteren Auftrag werden. In Coesfeld-Lette kommen beide Aspekte in einer wunderschönen Gesamtinstallation zusammen.

*Ewiger Frühling*

bis 03. 07. 2011

Glasmuseum Alter Hof Herding

Letter Berg 38

48653 Coesfeld-Lette

[www.ernsting-stiftung.de](http://www.ernsting-stiftung.de)

[www.barbarananning.info](http://www.barbarananning.info)



Schalenobjekt *Galaxy* von Barbara Nanning. Steinzeug, Sand, Pigmentpulver, Lack, 43 cm lang.



Große Offenheit: Schalenobjekt, 2008. Glas, Gold 999. Fotos Tom Haartsen, Niederlande.

pieces – most of them still in her favorite color, blue, but recently also in dark anthracite with asymmetrical metal decors – veritable entities steeped in history, seemingly afloat yet radiating the aura of centers of gravity in the midst of silence. It's the same silence this ceramist finds in Greek kouroi, in Bach's music or in Rothko's paintings.

#### CLAUDE CHAMPY EARTHBOUND

There are several aspects that reveal that Claude Champy feels strongly connected with the earth. Born in 1944 in Plaisir west of Paris, he lives and works in the house built by his grandfather. But it's not this conservative relationship to his roots alone that characterizes this exceptional ceramist. His highly expressive creations show how closely connected he feels to the material he works with, to soil, clay and, occasionally, porcelain. Surfaces featuring carvings, perforations and deformations are typical of the ceramic art brut created by this picture-perfect Frenchman. Whether crafted as vessels or freely designed objects, his works present themselves as ceramic landscapes with edges and crevices, fissures and cracks coated with smoothening glaze which he quite often generously applies in several layers that make his pieces look as if they were "clad" in a breathing, delicately grained skin. Whereas his starting point in the past used to be a perfect, exquisitely hand-turned vessel, the materials, i.e. clay and glaze, have increasingly developed lives of their own in the course of the decades. As a result, the potter has become a sculptor who nevertheless does not want to dominate his materials but instead accepts their idiosyncratic characteristics. The resulting shapes reveal the beauty of seeming naturalness which looks more as if it evolved rather than was made.

#### KEN EASTMAN ABSTRACT SCULPTURES

The works created by Ken Eastman, who was born in 1960 in Hertfordshire and currently teaches and does research at the Glasgow School of Art, are as confusing as they are fascinating. Exuding a monumental aura while at the same time featuring a gently rolling smoothness, his strangely animated ceramics elude any attempt at labeling them. Although they clearly allude to the notion of a vessel, i.e. a body, encompassing space, with an opening, they are so abstractly sculptural that we immediately discard any thought of functionality. Likewise, any association of stately architecture that might come to mind vanishes in view of these creations composed of individual mounted plates and deformed by mysterious forces. And even if their surfaces, including the non-planar ones, present themselves as zones of subdued, chalky-matte colors, either monochrome or with

gradations, one cannot say that they are painted or even decorated. Thus, being either-or and at the same time neither-nor seems to be their essence. These creations are 'reminiscent of' but not 'similar to'. Ken Eastman once said that he works, last but not least, because he wants to see things that he has never seen before – things which, although he made them, he can neither understand entirely nor explain. Well done!

#### KARIN BABLOK COMPLEX CLARITY

The starting point for the vessel compositions created by Karin Bablok, born in 1964, is surprisingly traditional. The implementation, however, i.e. the actual crafting process, often confronts this artist, who now lives in Hamburg, with the limits of what is practicable. After crafting wide, thin-walled cylinders on the potter's wheel she cuts these basic shapes into pieces. By bending, recombining and reassembling these pieces, she obtains new shapes which she transforms into eminently complex structures by painting them on the inside and the outside with black basalt glaze. The coexistence and interrelationship between volume, surfaces, strips and well-defined lines make for a wealth of inner connections which, depending on the beholder's angle, always offer different views and new insights. In the course of the years, Bablok has consistently increased the shapes' immanent complexity until she has reached an apex with her multi-chamber vessels. After teaching as a guest professor in Korea for one year she has enhanced her oeuvre by another dimension in the form of solid-colored porcelain. Crafting the cylindrical shapes with their pink, mint-green or gray stripes is a great technical challenge, and trying to reconstruct

the process inspires the beholder with admiration in view of these delicate vessels that radiate the beauty of a distinct modernity.

We would like to thank Marianne Heller, gallerist for ceramic art in Heidelberg, for her useful advice and consultation in making these selections.

[www.galerie-heller.de](http://www.galerie-heller.de)

Page 46

## ETERNAL SPRING BARBARA NANNING

By Piet Augustijn

The dividing line between kitsch and sculpture is often as sharp as a razor's edge, especially in the case of glass objects designed after naturalistic motifs. The intensity with which Barbara Nanning varies her themes and takes this alluring material to the limits leaves no doubt as to where she stands.

Chambers of curiosities or cabinets of wonder were the terms used in Renaissance Europe for private collections of the most diverse objects gathered from all corners of the globe. Usually they were divided into categories such

as ethnography, geology, archaeology, religion and art. Regarded as a microcosm or theater of the world, a chamber of curiosities was also considered the visible expression of its owner's spirit of research, and the more widely traveled he was, the larger the size of his collection of curiosities.

Barbara Nanning's *Ewiger Frühling* – *Eternal Spring* exhibition in the Alter Hof Herding glass museum in Coesfeld-Lette near Münster is reminiscent of such a cabinet of wonder. Several hundred flowers and other plants, blown and hand-shaped mostly in white opaque glass, as well as bouquets arranged in vases or other types of vessels are displayed on the floor or on the walls. In combination with the silvered wall objects they all contribute to form one large installation, a sea of flowers as far as the eye can see. A particularly striking creation is an installation entitled *Pars pro Toto*, composed of three true-to-life willows made of polyester and measuring three meters in height.

The *Eternal Spring* exhibition owes its title to glass objects inspired by Sargassum algae. Arranged in the shape of a coral reef, they look as if they are floating with the tides of the sea. Glass twigs and leaves seem to grow on pebbles lying on the floor, vitreous coral structures emerge from a transparent green base, glassy daffodils rise from polyurethane pedestals. Including the vases filled with various flowers and thorned branches, the series comprises 600 different flowers and other plants.

A video shows the process of their creation. "These objects were inspired on the one hand by the exalted Baroque Meissner porcelain and on the other by the glass plants blown in the 1920s in the Venini glass manufactory on the Murano Island near Venice," Barbara Nanning explains in the film. Originally, she intended to react with her latest works to various creations in the collection of the Alter Hof glass museum. But on a trip to the Czech Republic, she visited an exhibition in Meissen that displayed, among other objects, the famous *Snowball Blossoms Vase*. Overwhelmed by its beauty and pure white, she came up with the idea of creating a huge still life.

Of course, Nanning's new glass objects have been influenced by her earlier ceramic works as well as by her monumental projects. Blown and hand-shaped in white opaque glass, they look as if they are made of porcelain and unfold striking plays of light and shadow. The flowers and other plants testify to a remarkable attention to detail and thus radiate a natural aura which, however, has a slightly fairy-tale-like touch due to their artificial colors.

Barbara Nanning, born in 1957 in The Hague, works both with glass and with ceramics. The exhibition in Coesfeld-Lette shows where she's at today: she is an artist who surpasses herself with each new job and exhausts all the options and possibilities available. Her oeuvre combines classic craftsmanship with an innovative





use of materials as well as an independent language of form which often results from the crafting process, i.e. shaping the clay on the potter's wheel or blowing the glass. Barbara Nanning unites tradition with renewal, Dutch simplicity with Oriental opulence, structure with freedom and reason with emotion. All of Nature's elements, both organic and inorganic, and especially the movement of water, the wind and the clouds, serve her as inexhaustible sources of inspiration. She examines crystals, jellyfish, flowers and microorganisms with a fascination for form, structure and geometry that would have been worthy of a researcher of the 19th century.

Originally, from 1974 to 1979, Barbara Nanning trained as a ceramist at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam and thus far has been successful in this genre. Since 1995, glass has also been playing an important role for her, but she has continued working with ceramics. Her in-depth involvement with nature was already apparent in the first creations of a series of ceramic objects in monochromatic colors entitled *Botanica*. What started in 1996 with a few individual objects was to develop into an entire group of works. Compact buds and seed vessels evolved into luscious flowers with leaves that look as if they are gently swaying in the wind, and the flowers developed into underwater plants that seem to be floating in the current.

Nanning's ceramic oeuvre also served her as a starting point for her monumental works, intended both for outdoors and indoors. In the past few years she has increasingly used computer technology to design and construct her monumental installations. In collaboration with industrial companies she always develops new shapes and decoration techniques. Her most important commissioned works in the past ten years include the *Reclining Flowers* installation, created in the year 2000 for the state police department in Driebergen, and the *Galaxy* installation comprising 234 ceramic elements and set up in 2001 in the building of the TNO organization in Eindhoven.

Barbara Nanning's commissioned works and her independently created objects constantly influence each other. A commissioned job might lead to the creation of a new glass or ceramic object and, vice versa, an independently created piece of work might serve her as a starting point for a future commission. The exhibition in Coesfeld-Lette presents itself as a wonderful overall installation that unites both these aspects.

#### *Eternal Spring*

Until July 3, 2011  
Alter Hof Herding Glass Museum  
Letter Berg 38  
48653 Coesfeld-Lette  
www.ernsting-stiftung.de  
www.barbarananning.info

## THE SMALL AND THE LARGE CARL DAU

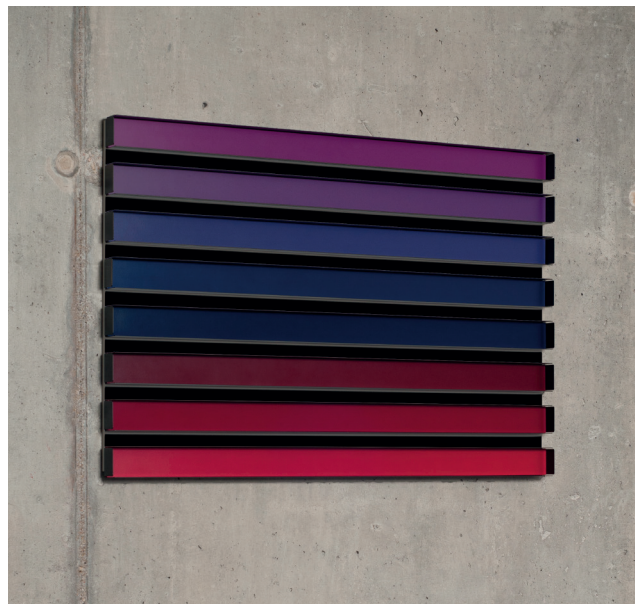
By Chio Schuhmacher

"The work of art should be entirely conceived and formed by the mind before its execution. It should receive nothing from Nature's formal properties or from sensuality or sentimentality. We want to exclude lyricism, dramaticism, symbolism, etc. The picture should be constructed entirely from purely plastic elements, that is to say, planes and colours. A pictorial element has no other significance than 'itself'." Theo van Doesburg 1924

Only seldom does a person of advanced age succeed in starting something new. Carl Dau, born in 1942, is a remarkable exception. After growing up in Hesse and in Hamburg, he first embarked on a career as a mariner. At age 23 he decided to start all over. He trained as a goldsmith, earned his master goldsmith's degree at the Hanau State Academy and, from 1972 to 1975, studied at Berlin's University of the Fine Arts. Afterwards he studied Industrial Design for two years under Professor Nick Roericht. This designer, renowned for his stackable tableware, had studied at the legendary Ulm School of Design which is also referred to as the "Post-War Bauhaus". This influence might have contributed to the fact that Carl Dau radically broke with the rules of traditional jewelry design.

Dau established his atelier in Berlin-Zehlendorf in 1980. Right from the start, he serially manufactured his jewelry from industrially prefabricated elements, doing without the traditional crafting process of casting, hammering, soldering, polishing, etc. Instead, he consistently applied his industrial design knowledge and skills to this tradition-steeped medium. Unlike many other prominent goldsmiths back then, Dau was not concerned about the art of creating or being acknowledged as an artist. He delighted in the process of designing, in perfect results and in measurable success.

With his first minimalist collections presented in the early 1980s he



questioned existing notions and values in regard to designing and manufacturing jewelry. For example, he was one of the first representatives of his trade to use stainless steel for serially manufactured jewelry. Stainless steel had already been featured by the Bauhaus as a furniture material and by some post-war jewelry artists such as Friedrich Becker and Peter Skubic. Traditional jewelers and goldsmiths, however, who sort of "decorated" jewelry wearers with precious adornments – and the respective monetary equivalent – regarded this profane metal as a sacrilege back then.

With his minimalist stainless steel pieces Carl Dau radically contrasted the boring, unimaginative and almost lifeless decorative jewelry of the time. His championing minimalism and logical simplification in serially manufactured jewelry had a lasting impact on the development of the jewelry culture since the 1980s. Sporting clear-cut designs and a compelling formal austerity, his pieces whetted people's appetite for simple things. Up to the present day, each of Dau's series has clearly shown that the implementation of his ideas in the designing and manufacturing processes is not easy but, instead, the result of an active, in-depth involvement with constructivism and minimalism in the arts and design, plus the use of sophisticated technology. Nevertheless, Dau did not only make stainless steel a "presentable" jewelry metal. He also contributed significantly to the acceptance of serial jewelry design as part of the Modernist tradition. The fact that jewelry design is publicly recognized today as a contemporary design genre is one of the merits of this Berliner-by-choice.

Now, in 2011, Carl Dau surprises us with an impressive series of large objects designed in this very tradition. In terms of form, these objects are related to his *monochrome* jewelry series created several years ago. Clearly revealing their affinity with Concrete Art and Minimalism, the objects are a new example of the tense

relationship between (jewelry) design and art. There are other, well-known examples by great painters and sculptors such as Pablo Picasso, Hans Arp or Alexander Calder who also made jewelry, i.e. reduced their large formats to wearable size. Yet none of these artists made a truly influential contribution to the development of contemporary jewelry.

But how should we interpret jewelry designer Carl Dau's wall and spatial objects? On the one hand, it is obvious that they have an affinity with works by artists such as Max Bill, Donald Judd or Mark Rothko. Dau resolutely identifies with them as role models or kindred spirits. Yet on a very fundamental level, his new objects clearly have their source in his very personal creative intention, his nature and the concept of serial manufacturing based on his systematic jewelry production. Although they reveal some stylistic features characteristic of the artists mentioned above and even though art-minded people naturally tend to look for parallels, it is evident that these objects are strongly and very consistently influenced by industrial design. This is also reflected in the choice of materials and Dau's clear commitment to reproducibility.

Apart from that, creating these voluminous objects as part of his late oeuvre was a beneficial project that motivated and encouraged Carl Dau. After all, the idea of turning his attention to large objects matured during an extended period of fighting a life-threatening disease. "I always need a bone to chew on," he comments – a realization that probably served him as a principle of survival in this severe crisis. What needs to be mentioned here though is that Dau already created his first wall objects more than 30 years ago. But back then, he gave up the idea of finding his way as a sculptor in favor of jewelry design. "Art objects did not appeal to me at that time," is how he explains this decision in retrospect.

When he created his early wall objects around 1980, after graduating