

## **Annett Zinsmeister: In the Deep Rapture of Light and Colour**

*“Art is nothing but the light of nature”* Goethe

Hans Kotter is an expert when it comes to colours and light. His main interest during his study of painting lay with colour compositions, handling plane areas and structure, and colour and form. At the end of the nineties he began to concentrate more and more on the medium of photography. Devising his own experimental set-ups, he devoted himself to a study of light and its segmentation into colour spectra. The visualisation and aesthetic staging of light refraction, and colour compositions of great virtuosity have been part of Kotter's basis repertoire of works since then:

“There is no other element with such a lasting impact on life on our planet as light. Light fascinates me in a huge variety of ways and I have investigated the medium of light, with its composition, physical contexts, colours, perception and cultural history for many years. The experiences and insights resulting from this investigation are later implemented in my works.”

It is the playful treatment of a wide range of materials such as oil, water, acrylic glass, stainless steel, chrome etc. and their effects in relation to light and colour which fascinates Hans Kotter and inspires him to try out new forms of expression continually. This diversity in the handling of materials is revealed in his works' great power of expression and variety.

The abstraction of colour and light creates diffuse landscapes, the illusion of distance, mysterious waves, the impression of water, shimmering heat or the finest of fabrics, which seem to glide across the picture surface in undulating folds. The apparent materiality of these unmanipulated photographs of the immaterial – of light and colour – points to their origins in painting, yet at the same time they document physical processes. The incredible degree of beauty, opulence, brilliance and simultaneous mystery with which natural scientific insights can be manifest in art is quite remarkable.

The artist's treatment of colour plays a key role in all this. Hans Kotter employs his profound knowledge of colours and *their very different effects in relation to light conditions and proximity to other colours* to relate colours to each other systematically yet intuitively, so creating harmonies as well as extremely exciting contrasts.

The series of works *colour codes* is evidence of this approach: *colour codes* are light objects, the vertical coloured structure of which illuminates ever fresh combinations of colours with endless variety. At first glance, these photographic collages, which are reminiscent of barcodes, create an effect using minimal aesthetics, unfolding a diverse play of colour on the basis of LED lighting technology. A large number of optical and aesthetic impulses are created by changes in coloration; the codes appear to be moving slowly due to the changing colour spectra. Even the surrounding wall space and the room itself cannot remain unaffected by this choreography of light and colour.

Indeed, the room always plays an important part in Hans Kotter's installation works. Light is brought into play in a subtle way, for example, as a blue line: the cubature of the room disappears into the darkness, reduced to its contour lines. This abstraction of three-dimensional space certainly causes many details to disappear, but other elementary spatial information is manifest more clearly as a direct consequence. Three-dimensional compositions with fluorescent tubing and illuminated objects immerse different rooms into changing currents of light, and the viewer experiences a roller-coaster ride of sensory impressions and emotions.

In his latest works, the so-called “Tunnels”, Hans Kotter is concerned with an illusion of space: in newly developed light objects consisting of filigree, reflecting glass volumes that generate a special aura of their own due to their superior material quality and precision, the approaching viewer is compelled by a mysterious and forceful attraction, which gradually develops into a deep rapture. As if by magic, the reflecting surfaces of the light object are transformed – when the source of light at the object's centre is switched on – into an enchanting tunnel of colours, the end of which is unforeseeable, and which – as in Alice in Wonderland – offers us apparently infinite freedom to develop our fantasies and imagination. The tunnel pointing into infinity, whether curving or straight, is a phenomenon that appears so realistic one would like to extend one's hand into it; one is overcome by an irresistible attraction. But it is a game with illusion, with the apparently endless, constantly surprising and astonishing ways to stage light and colour artistically. This extremely aesthetic and simultaneously mysterious interplay of reflecting surfaces and endless colour compositions propels the viewer into a rapture of colour and depth from which he has no desire to recover quickly, thanks to the artist Hans Kotter!

**CV Annett Zinsmeister**

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