

Marion Vogt: Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini - Melusina between Myth and Metamorphosis

(in: Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini – Melusina, Edition Convivium 2015, p. 22-24)

In her Melusina series, created in the year 2015, Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini articulates a central motif of Art, viz. the fragmented female body. And in spite of – or rather because of – their supposed incompleteness, these bodies which are at times slender and at times compact appear as finished units. The 21 bronze Melusinas were cast using the *lost wax* technique. They show the raw surface structure which is characteristic of Bettina's works. Textures reminding one of drawings point to the confection of the primeval model in the soft material of wax. The body curves are accentuated by brittle hatchings that in some places are condensed to a relief-like braid. The authentic casting skin with its earthy tone quality flashes up again and again, suggesting the character of archaic closeness to nature.

The coloring is characterized by the changing soft pastel tones, which appear at the same time in their impressive intensity. Alongside with warm red-pink shades and vegetative olive tones, the aquatic Turquoise acquires particular significance. The glowing patina, which shines out of itself, goes beyond the rich color palette without abandoning the coloristic total harmony. As always in Bettina's works, the coloredness contributes to accentuate the haptic effect. Because it does not cover the whole in an opaque manner or cover the surface in a uniform way, the polychrome treatment enduces a subtle interplay between a partial apperception of the material and the coloristic wealth. Dipped in delicious shades and involved in the dancing game of the reflections of light, the colorful texture modeling seduces not only the eye of the beholder – it also tentatively invites him to try a tactile experience.

Bettina's alive and kicking Melusinas, with their relief-like surface design creating an exquisite tactile stimulus, emit at the same time a brittle charm; and indeed, they were not created to please. Beyond mere erotic charge, this concept of Melusina radiates a refreshing liveliness which is precisely not tied up with a smoothed body ideal. Vital resilience and sensual femininity do by no means exclude each other here: on the contrary the polychrome figures express creative joy coupled with an almost Apollonian nimbleness. They spell out the mental attitude of the cosmopolitan philanthropist Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini.