

Lena von Goedeke

Raw Feels

February 2nd – May 17th 2018

Raw Feels at Galerie m Bochum is the first solo exhibition of the work of artist Lena von Goedeke, born in Duisburg in 1983 and today based in Berlin. The pieces on view – silhouettes painstakingly cut out by hand; massive, almost floating landscapes of cement; fine-lined drawings covering an entire wall – must be seen in the original to be grasped. The fine, dusty cement sand that has trickled away at the edges of the work, leaving behind a barren landscape, or the glitter and shine of reflector foil cut into sculptural patterns: the materials with their different textures and surfaces command our gaze, raising contradictions and questions.

We wonder for example whether the perfect and systematic patterns and structures may have been generated by machine, which is in fact the case: the artist first designed the three-dimensional web of silhouettes with the help of a computer program used to generate virtual worlds and then assiduously cut the negative areas out by hand. The genesis of Lena von Goedeke's works is closely linked with electronic data processing. This is symbolically conveyed in the Certificates with a fingerprint as reference to our existence between the analogue and the virtual worlds: the digital fingerprint that tracks our online activity, the unlocking of a touch screen and the touch screen as such, the finger that grants us access to a virtual world where, paradoxically, at the moment it is "entered," the tactile level, along with so many other levels of sensory perception, becomes meaningless.

This sensory level is precisely what is so central to Lena von Goedeke's works, which is why the objects and their nature demand such close scrutiny. It is all about their existence in the here and now, about encountering them face-to-face. The materials deployed require us to examine them in detail, evoking what Lena von Goedeke alludes to in the exhibition title Raw Feels: the qualia – a complex and controversial concept that deals, in short, with our subjective experiences, which for all of our neuro-scientific knowledge cannot be captured objectively. Qualia ask "What does it feel like?"

In this era of digitalization and artificial intelligence, Lena von Goedeke explores the merging of analogue and digital technologies and their perception, hitting a topical nerve. The discrepancy between the content of our subjective experiences of the two different worlds is made manifest in her objects, related as they are to both, thus stimulating thinking on many different levels. The realization that what is deeply human in qualia cannot be reconstructed in artificial intelligences is just one of many associations that may arise when contemplating this exhibition.