

IRIS MUSOLF



Yule Balls (Bombs), 2018 – 21

Cast concrete, Metall

When you search for the words “family” and “Christmas” together on Google, the top result will lead you to a website for psychotherapy. Whereas those who do not have a family often dread Christmas, others see the holidays through a web of idealized expectations. Our families are the center of gravity in our emotional universe, the focal point for an invisible force that keeps pulling us back towards them. Family ties are like gravity in that their strength decreases with distance, but their range is infinite and there is no way to shield against them. You cannot escape your family, and this is especially true during the holidays.

Iris Musolf's *Yule Balls* reflect this tension. The artist's material of choice is concrete, which she casts into a variety of shapes: Blow-up dolls with an obvious purpose or, as in this case, Christmas balls. She removes the hangers, fills the glass balls with the viscous material, then re-attaches the hangers. Once the concrete is completely set, she wraps the ball in cloth and carefully chips off the glass mold to reveal the raw surface of solid concrete: smooth at the bottom, but rough and porous at the top. The light and delicate qualities of this fragile ornament and the playfulness of its colorful reflections have vanished and given way to the heavy roughness of a gray rock. The brilliant symbol of lightness, joy, and superficial consumerism has been transformed into an object whose reminiscence to a hand grenade is not accidental. It reminds us of the explosive potential that often lingers over Christmas gatherings with the family.

Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that a few delicate shards of colored glass remain near the attachment point. They bear witness to the fact that lightness and heaviness are inextricably linked. Hard moments only become bearable if there is a flicker of hope, and moments of levity can only truly be appreciated when we are aware of their ephemerality.

BIO

Born 1980 in Hanover / lives and works in Berlin. She studied from 2002 to 2009 at the University of Fine Arts Braunschweig with Bogomir Ecker and Candice Breitz (Meisterschülerin, master class student) and obtained a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Fine Arts Braunschweig. In 2005 she received the Erasmus scholarship for fine arts (Nice, France), in 2008 the scholarship Intensive Program AKI / ArtEZ, Enschede (Holland) and was nominated in 2011 for the Karl Schmitt-Rottluff scholarship, nominated in 2012 for the Young Academy of Fine Arts and nominated for the Sprengel Award in 2014. In 2016 she received the award for the art competition of the Federal Office for Radiation Protection (Salzgitter). Her work has been presented in numerous galleries and institutions in Germany and abroad, including in (selection): Kunstverein Mannheim, Städtische Galerie (Viersen); Neue Galerie Landshut; Goethe Institut (New York City, USA)