

Susanne Prinz, Mariella Mosler

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The point of departure for Mariella Mosler's complex ground reliefs is an analysis of the given space. On the basis of her findings she creates exact geometric designs on paper which are later transferred to the grounds and the executed in sand. Important prerequisites for this transposition - alongside the regular size of the grains and the absolute dryness of the industrially sorted sand - are strict adherence to the design and technical precision, unencumbered by any striving for artistic autonomy.

Whereas many of her earlier ornamental ground works were reminiscent of the opulent patterns on oriental brocades, for the Zwehrenturm, a largely neutral, closed space, the artist has created an almost classical meandering surface ornament made up of bordered circular segments. Capable, theoretically, of being continued infinitely, the ornament replicates and shifts the optical center of the room. The original secure sense of space vanishes, giving rise in its place to a feeling of expansion, opening out beyond the existing architectural boundaries.

For Mosler the very process out of which her works emerge is as important as the spatially and geometrically determined construction of her wall and ground images. As the artist herself points out, the enormous effort obviously required to complete one of her sand reliefs provokes repeated comments about the apparent „waste of time.“ This is a consistent reaction within the logic of a system that speaks shamelessly of „cultural capital.“ The fact that her aesthetically satisfying works resist being consumed directly seems to be perceived by many as an irritating contradiction. All the more so, as Mosler's ornamental carpets superficially confirm the notion of the artist as genius, imposing an order on chaos and thus transforming it into beauty. The very material she has chosen immediately questions this aspiration, as the particular order it forms can only be maintained in a protected space, that is to say, it requires an institutional framework to safeguard its material existence. Metaphors for the paradoxical role of art in capitalist societies, Mosler's designs defy any attempt to introduce them directly into the commercial circuit that exploits „art“ as a commodity. In cash terms, the value of the commodity work remains unredeemable.