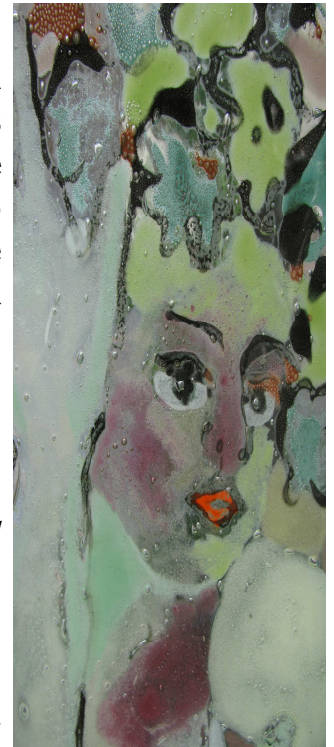


Eva-Maria Reuther
WORLDS IN WINE

From September 27 through December 4, 2010, in cooperation with Wine Cultural Center in Bernkastel-Kues, *Akademie Kues* is hosting the "Worlds in Wine" exhibition. Comprising an ensemble of 40 artistic stelae created by Lieser/Brussels-based Painter-cum-Glass Artist Mana Binz, the showing constitutes an art & culture project devoted to the culture of wine. It will be appearing at a dual location: *Akademie Kues* and Bernkastel-Kues Wine Museum.

"Whoever drinks this cup empty, straightaway the desire of beautiful-crowned Aphrodite will seize"

Inscription on the Cup of Nestor, dating from approx. 740 B.C., found on the Island of Ischia



In wine lies the truth, they say – along with pleasure, danger, temptation and desire. Wine quickens our senses. The golden juice is good for our health. Too much of a good thing, though, is bad and could engender illness or even madness. Conversely, in religious rituals, wine is of liturgical import.

In her artistic ensemble of vertical-format glass images, which she began in 2008 and just recently completed, Artist Mana Binz has expressively mirrored both the beneficial and the destructive impacts of wine on conscious awareness and fantasy. As her symbolic allegory, the artist chose a sliced-through bottle. "The content of the bottle spills out unto the world, even as the world finds access to the bottle," as Mana Binz explains her pictorial concept. Glass is not only one of her favorite working materials; it also stands in close connection with the artistic theme. Not only is wine kept in glass bottles and served in glasses, but glass per se unites the four classical elements fire, water, earth and air. In Mana Binz' opinion, glass, like hardly any other material, symbolizes – as it melts, flows and changes colors – the transformation of grape juice to wine and its gradual modulation from year to year.

Mana Binz' glass stelae stand in close relation to her large painted tapestries. This time, though, she has forsaken their non-transparent, mobile material in favor of transparent slabs of glass as the paintings' background. She mixes pigmented glass powder with glue to produce an adhesive compound for application to the backing. The actual application is a difficult, tedious process, proceeding dot of color by dot of color until, finally, lines, shapes, patches of color and, hence, coherent images emerge. The painted slabs are then covered with a second slab and fired in a kiln. The firing process produces bubbles of air and various other changes that Mana Binz consciously and intentionally incorporates into her visual concept and contentual substance. Ultimately, the fire engenders a new, inherently consistent, translucent yet light-filtering cosmos with a fascinating interiority all of its own.

Like her tapestries, Mana Binz' glass paintings are characterized by sweeping lines, chromatic sensuousness and intoxicating colors - and by the pleasure she derives from telling tales and fabulating. The artist's works are most decisively defined by her interest in people, whose ontological situation and *condition humaine* the artist manifoldly reflects across all culture lines. This, to be sure, produces not a merely a pictorial lexicon of humanness, but a whole new, if small, universe, where the world of observable reality and the artist's world of make-believe coalesce into a multicolored, extraordinarily vivacious world of images. This kind of universe is replete with narration, symbols and cross references, all of which merge to provide us with an abundance of sights for sore eyes and new intellectual insights into the old species of man.

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