

## **The Beetle - Cultural Symbolic Image, Biographical and Archival Collection Object, Visual Imaginative Space**

An interview between Judith Kukla and Anja C. M. Schönau

### **Anja C. M. Schönau:**

You have chosen the beetle as your artistic subject. Biologically, beetles are considered the most species-rich order in the animal kingdom and are present in the collective memory of many cultures. What is your artistic interest in this particular subject?

### **Judith Kukla:**

A single beetle seems unspectacular at first. Only a comparison of beetles reveals the range of colours, details, special, specific haptic qualities. Some beetles seem mystical... like fantasy creatures. Culturally, beetles are attributed different symbolic powers and meanings. When I personally think of beetles, I think of collections and showcases in museums. The theme of collecting is very significant for me in connection with beetles.

### **Anja C. M. Schönau:**

Collections archive, document, preserve phenomena, knowledge and also memories. What is most likely to trigger your memories? Are your memories constant?

### **Judith Kukla:**

I am reminded by something. Conversations. Interactions. Dreams. Objects. Little talismans. Anecdotes, language, literature, experiences of nature, special places and smells. Memories become distorted, become wishful thinking.

### **Anja C. M. Schönau:**

Is your memory always tied to something or does it also come without warning?

### **Judith Kukla:**

It doesn't necessarily come when I want it to.

### **Anja C. M. Schönau:**

It cannot be controlled, it is unplannable, unpredictable?

**Judith Kukla:**

Yes, but very often memories are triggered.

**Anja C. M. Schönau:**

Do you confront viewers with blackouts in your artistic work?

**Judith Kukla:**

Stereotypes of a beetle shape our memory. I do not show a beetle that is true to nature. Experiences of nature, memories, sensory experiences, pictorial considerations shape my artistic decisions.

**Anja C. M. Schönau:**

Do you have cultural practices to repress your memories or keep them alive?

**Judith Kukla:**

I find it very difficult to throw objects away. I create collections.

**Anja C. M. Schönau:**

What is the function of these collections?

**Judith Kukla:**

They are around me, they surround me. They give me stability, security. A feeling of well-being. Sensory experiences. I experience the smells in the workshop very intensively.

**Anja C. M. Schönau**

You speak of the smells in the workshops as a sensual quality. What other qualities does sculptural, artistic work have for you personally?

**Judith Kukla:**

Exposing has a different effect on my inner being. It makes me marvel. I am interested in the process of transformation. Knowledge, experience and subjective world construction are significant. I am not primarily interested in the realisation of a true-to-life image of a beetle, but in uncovering the aura of fantasy, of the mystical, of memory. ... in the sense of a Kafkaesque beetle.

**Anja C. M. Schönau:**

Thank you for your multi-faceted, analytical view of your artistic, sculptural reflection and action at the interface between knowledge, experience, memory, imagination and fiction.

The interview was conducted by Anja C. M. Schönau, Academic Lecturer in Textile Art & Textile Design, Transmedia Processes, Intermedia & Stop Motion, Ceramics and Porcelain, Paper in Space, Drawing, Environmental and Product Design with Judith Kukla, former Bachelor student and participant in the artistic workshop hours.