

25.04 – 29.06 2013

Opening Thursday 25 April 6 – 9 pm

Ritsue Mishima Holger Niehaus

We think that we know the world but there are countless places on earth about which we know next to nothing. The ocean floor, for example, is home to numerous organisms never seen by mankind. Every time a new species is discovered we are amazed by its extraordinary form, beautiful colours, transparency and the remarkable ways in which it moves or hides from predators. Gravity plays a subordinate role. It is the currents that determine direction, temperature and the diversity of prey. In the underwater world everything can fly. The relationship between an organism's structure and its function is much less complex and advanced than among land animals. There appear to be no boundaries between plants and animals. A veil, a stalk, a fan, a hood, or a sphere with bulges: you can encounter everything that also has a place in the animal kingdom. The earth is teeming with co-inhabitants with which we have no affinity whatsoever.

I am struck by a similar astonishment whenever I encounter a piece of glass by Ritsue Mishima. What is it? How was it made? How does it maintain its form? How can it exist? Whether considered at a distance – as an entity – or in detail, a Mishima object remains a silent and incomprehensible being which nonetheless seems entirely natural. I dare not call such an object a vase because that is a household object that one places on the windowsill. A Mishima object is not of this world and does not lend itself to what we tend to think of as useful functions. The same is true of what Holger Niehaus does: he constantly undermines the notion that a flower, fruit or a fish has a use value as a commodity. Mishima's and Niehaus's artistry resides above all in highlighting the beauty that exists in every aspect of nature. It is a reminder that the most mysterious of emotional charges are to be found in the greatest simplicity of structure and substance.

Rob Smolders, march 2013

