

Isa Genzken (f. 1948)

Vollmond, 1997/2023

Steel, glass, polyester og LED-light

A moon that is always full is impossible. Or: A moon that keeps being round and bright and hangs like an unceasing cold pearl above the Earth—such a moon does not exist. Because time rushes forward and changes the shape of the real moon, from white-hot coin to white-hot eyelash to white-hot coin, and onwards through eternity. Creating something impossible must be a great success for an artwork. The impossible is quite kindred to the sensational. And behold: In the middle of a city hangs a low and enormous and apparently always full moon, gleaming night after night. Below never-black summer skies, below the frost. In front of thick clouds and through seasonal sprouting and withering, the same glow pours out of it.

Isa Genzken thought up this moon. She is an approved superstar. She, in particular, is able to think up and then create an impossible moon. The most sugary poetry motifs, those are the ones she upscales and erects in public space: big rose, big orchid, big moon. *Vollmond* is a sculpture and most sculptures are possible.

This moon is built of industry: it is a lamp or a column. A massive and earthbound element, far from the spherical magic we have long granted celestial bodies. For quite a long time, art has wanted to look like the world, represent it with as virtuous a precision as possible—and for even longer, humans have been courting the moon. Maddened around it, like lunatics, worshipped and dreaded it, reaped its everlasting poetry. Reached for it with blue hearts and a sense of ownership. And finally caught it, touched it. Now we have the real moon—it is mapped out, documented, and within reach.

So, what does it mean to make one more? Not paint or write it forth, but erect a steel version and let it beam on landscapes in need of a bit more spirit and some silvery moods. When she built hers, Isa Genzken said: “Once a month we have the pleasure of seeing two full moons at the same time.” And now it is here, in a city among lamps and other lunar distractions. Luxurious. Who is who? Will an electric glass circle be able to rouse that same enchantment as real full moons that splash into open hearts through open eyes, month after month?

Perhaps an artificial moon reminds us of a real moon, and a real moon reminds us of a made-up world. That is, a world about which we can wonder. It is very important that we wonder!

Or perhaps, in a post-mythological reality, where the sky belongs to NASA and full moons are something we bestow on our feeds, sculptures are more puzzling than reality. The artwork can wake up or keep vigil over a worn-out world, the moon can wake up or keep vigil over a worn-out human. Over any human. The moon does really belong to everyone. Almost the same is true of public sculptures and exactly the same is true about beauty, artificial and real. A moon without beauty is simply impossible.