

[style](#)

# Eyes wide shut I

The magic of the unique - in her Kunstkammer, Dr. Simone Herrmann a work from the international art trade every week. Episode 32 Part 1: "Ryoanji" - Mixed Media Painting by Carole Seborovski.

from [dr Simone Herrmann](#)

June 4, 2020



"Ryoanji", 2002, enamel, wood, fabric, plaster, vinyl; 61 x 50.8 x 10.2 cm; Verso signed, dated and numbered lower right: SEBOROVSKI 2002 02.15. CS 02.15. Price: 12,500 euros, Karsten Greve Gallery, Cologne; [galerie-karsten-greve.com](http://galerie-karsten-greve.com). Courtesy gallery Karsten Greve

Artist in front of world receiver. For her portrait, Carole Seborovski had herself photographed in front of a sculpture with a hole in her stomach, a giraffe's neck and a satellite dish. A woman with an enigmatic face without make-up looks out of the semi-darkness of her New York studio. *Such blue eyes!* Screams the old Ideal song. Oddly enough, when you see them, you can't get rid of the French word "lisse". Maybe because it sounds so soft as she smiles. A smoothness that has something mysterious about it. You can imagine her in a David Hockney painting, in front of the blue square of a pool. In front of wide clear areas. Translucent, thin-skinned, with those insidious thoughts behind the blond forehead.

Born in San Diego in 1960, a child of the hippie era, Seborovski lives and works in New York; her works can be seen in international collections such as the New York Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art New York, the Tel Aviv Museum and the Museo Cantonale d'Arte in Lugano.

Karsten Greve, who has represented the artist since the 1990s, is dedicating a solo show to her in his gallery in Cologne until June 13. 34 works. Paper works in classic techniques, in ink, oil, acrylic, but above all mixed media painting, objects for which she uses plaster, wood, silicone, vinyl, fabric, lacquer, yarn, enamel, sand, beads, mirror glass

“I started painting in the late 70s,” says Carole Seborovski, “and this intuitive process has kept me in suspense for 40 years. I start with a clear plan, but as I work, my work grows beyond the original idea into something I could never have imagined, it takes on a will of its own...”

Of course, says Seborovski, her experiences and inspirations are reflected in it: Brancusi, Fontana, her preoccupation with nature, with myths, religions, and archaic cultures. In a Jungian way, she says, she's drawn to "archetypal networks." “I tend towards abstraction because I find there is poetry in it and because it's more open to multiple interpretations. For me, art is the spiritual in nature. Something that connects us to the unknown and unconscious, to our culture and to each other, as human beings.”



"Ryoanji", 2002. Enamel, wood, fabric, plaster, vinyl; 61 x 50.8 x 10.2 cm; Verso signed, dated and numbered lower right: SEBOROVSKI 2002 02.15. CS 02.15. Price: 12,500 euros, Karsten Greve Gallery, Cologne.

Seborovski called her oval, amorphous high relief “Ryoanji”. One looks into this oval as into a mirror. Memories are formed and what has long been forgotten floats to the surface in these pictures and comes to light again.

The relief is framed in cobalt blue and enameled in green, no grass or leaf green, a tone that harmonizes with the gold. Gold flickers and specks, splintered pebbles are encrusted within, formations of small blue rectangles set on top. They run diagonally through the oval, connecting some of the golden pebbles. The surface of the oval is reminiscent of a seal, with six pairs of wings embossed on it. angel wings? Sometimes it happens that the golden particles sit directly on a pair of wings. Like a head of gold. This is how a child would draw a butterfly. Or an angel. The wings form a six-pointed star. Seborovski has traced the lines of Japanese monks raking gravel...

"Even as a student, I was interested in Taoism, Zen Buddhism and calligraphy," she says. She was fascinated by the inner contemplation and writing with ink as a form of meditation. But when she travels to Japan in the 90s, it is the old imperial city of Kyoto that captures her. "Unexpectedly, I was drawn to the Zen Gardens in Kyoto, especially the gardens of Ryoan-ji Temple. This garden should be seen from above, from a viewing terrace. It was designed for this perspective. Once a day, monks raking the white gravel form rhythmic lines. It has a contemplative quality to how the large stones are placed in it; they are arranged in such a way that you can never see them all at the same time. Only through a quick flash of knowledge could it happen that you can see or understand the garden in its entirety," says Carole Seborovski. "Although organically composed, it is its abstract, spiritual composition that most concerned me." This garden, she says, "houses the answer to an unasked question."

It is a core of poetic inexpressibility, the answer to that unasked question that Seborovski describes as a dream sequence, as a sudden flash of realization in "Ryoanji": "I saw everything from a bird's eye view, my wings spread as in a dream and on the Landscape looking down below. The surface bubbles and new rock formations emerge. Gold flecks are scattered across the surface and blue steppingstones form a path through the painting."



"Ryoanji", 2002. Enamel, wood, fabric, plaster, vinyl; 61 x 50.8 x 10.2 cm; Verso signed, dated and numbered lower right: SEBOROVSKI 2002 02.15. CS 02.15. Price: 12,500 euros, Karsten Greve Gallery, Cologne. [galerie-karsten-greve.com](http://galerie-karsten-greve.com) Courtesy gallery Karsten Greve

Green and blue. "Ryoanji" means "mountain-water landscape" in Japanese. The garden artist and painter Soami, who lived in Kyoto until 1525, is said to have laid out the 10 by 30-meter garden surrounded by a low mud wall. There are no trees, no bushes in it, just some moss growing on 15 boulders, which in turn are arranged on the white gravel surface in groups of five, three, two and again two stones. One of the most common interpretations is that one can recognize the Chinese character for "soul" in the mysterious harmony of the garden. A calligraphy of stone inscribed on the white gravel.

Seborovski captures fleeting thoughts, flickering particles of gold that solidify, coagulate into amorphous forms. The oval, symbol of female nature, serves her as a means of containing fragmentation and balancing opposites. Her perspective lets us see lines. Lines drawn by humans. Gravel raking monks. They form into bird wings, these lines. To angel wings. From above, from above, the earth looks like a beautiful star.

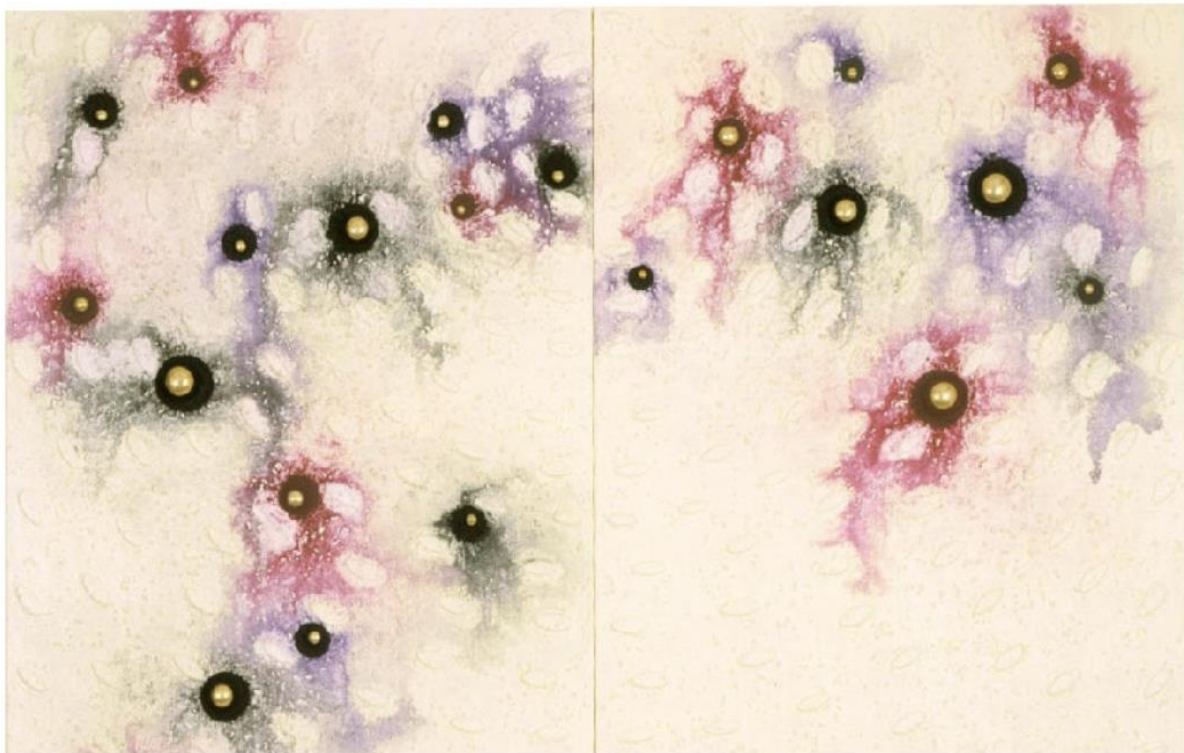
[style](#)

## Eyes wide shut II

The magic of the unique - in her Kunstkammer, Dr. Simone Herrmann a work from the international art trade every week. Episode 32 Part 2: "Mountain Mist" - Mixed media painting by Carole Seborovski.

from [dr Simone Herrmann](#)

June 4, 2020



Courtesy gallery Karsten Greve

A flower meadow in the fog. The painting is called "Mountain Mist" and the reminiscence is obvious: an Asian screen, from Japan, Korea or China, two panels on which flowers appear in a milky mist. Although there are no mountains to be seen, the rhythm of rising and falling lines and the blossoms placed high in the picture suggest a hill on the second panel.

"I couldn't get the painting 'The Beginning of Spring' by Guo Xi, an 11th-century artist, out of my mind. How the foggy landscape ripples in and out of space, and how the mountains become immaterial through the fog!" Carole Seborovski says it was through this image that the idea for "Mountain Mist" came to her. Then she also remembered "Chen Rong, the 13th-century Chinese ink artist and his painting "Nine Dragons". "Again, I was mesmerized by the way his dragons swam in and out of the mist. I imagine the topography of my painting as projected sunbeams radiating outwards from the upper edge of the painting. There are multiple celestial bodies or suns appearing in the mist.





"Mountain Mist", 2004. 2 parts: acrylic enamel, vinyl, glass beads, sand, beads, plastic, wood. 182.9 cm x 203.2 cm x 12.7 cm (2-part, each 91, 44 x 203.2 x 15.51 cm); all elements signed, dated and numbered lower right on the reverse: SEBOROVSKI 2004 04.03; CS 04.03. Price: 29000 euros. Karsten Greve Gallery, Cologne. [galerie-karsten-greve.com](http://galerie-karsten-greve.com)

Courtesy gallery Karsten Greve

Strange to wander in the fog. The poem by Hermann Hesse comes to mind. "Strange to wander in the fog! Every bush and stone is lonely, no tree sees the other, everyone is alone. (...) Strange to wander in the fog! life is loneliness No one knows the other, everyone is alone." But the flowers look at us with dark eyes. flower eyes. Seborovski speaks of suns,

of cosmic phenomena. It could be coneflowers, echinacea, which always have something tough and stiff about them, and which also grow in the mountains around San Diego, where Carole Seborovski grew up. It is possible that she remembered such hangings of flowers. The fog makes them change characters. The softness of the colors and the creamy texture of the white petals covering the two panels are reminiscent of cosmeen. This fluttering, the delicate blossoms, the silkiness of these white sheets – it is still there, but ready to evaporate, to become immaterial. The two panels record a transformation.



View of the collage "Squeeze and Release", 2001. "Mountain Mist", 2004. 2 parts: acrylic enamel, vinyl, glass beads, sand, beads, plastic, wood. 182.9 cm x 203.2 cm x 12.7 cm (2-part, each 91, 44 x 203.2 x 15.51 cm); all elements signed, dated and numbered lower right on the reverse: SEBOROVSKI 2004 04.03; CS 04.03. Price: 29000 euros. Karsten Greve Gallery, Cologne. [galerie-karsten-greve.com](http://galerie-karsten-greve.com)  
 Courtesy gallery Karsten Greve

Flower eyes look at you. And then you approach, you notice that they are pearls, silver, with a golden sheen, and you see your own face in them. The flowers are watching us. An oppressive feeling. Despite the pastel, somewhat fuzzy romance of the colors. In "Curious Garden", a collage, acrylic and ink on paper, Carol Seborovski has already formulated this feeling of being alive in nature, quite humorously. Blades of grass get googly eyes and whisper curiously among themselves. Here the flowers have eyes like black gorges. The viewer looks into the darkness. In Hesse's poem, this is what "inescapably and quietly separates us from everything".

So, they're not that innocent, these flowery eyes. Botanically, they are sexual organs intended for reproduction. Bees, pollination, wind and wafts of fog – from a distance you think you can see the shimmering of bees in the golden flash of the balls. Here and there - and there again! So, pollination. And aren't human eyes also sexual organs? If not primary, then secondary? Because it starts with a look, eyes are instruments of seduction and of being seduced. Fertilization *organs avant la lettre*. One looks into the silvery, gold-flashing darkness of these eyes - and looks into oneself. Wandering alone in the fog.

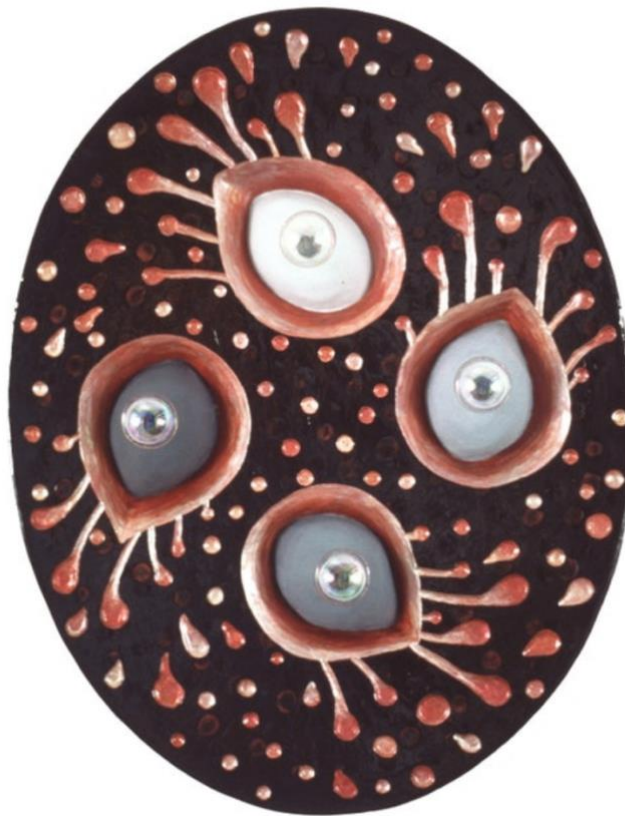
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# Eyes wide shut III

The magic of the unique - in her *Kunstkammer*, Dr. Simone Herrmann a work from the international art trade every week. Episode 32, Part 3: "Reflections", object painting by Carole Seborovski.

from [dr Simone Herrmann](#)

June 4, 2020



Courtesy gallery Karsten Greve

"Years ago, I had a window that looked out over a pond," says Carole Seborovski, and it sounds like the beginning of a fairy tale. "My painting *Reflections* is a reminder of the flickering light on this oval pond. The carved piece of wood is oval and rising from the center are four painted domes of plaster-like material, topped with reflective glass bubbles looking upwards." Bulging eyes. It is only when you look at the relief from the side that you can see how far they have stepped out of their caves. After all, what else should the four "knobs" (Seborovski calls them "mounds") be - but eyes?

Four eyes that seem to swim, all four with red and gold lashes. Or is it paramecia? protozoa? barnacles? sperm? Who knows, whatever Seborovski may have been thinking at the time of the window by the pond. myriad thoughts. Back then, 18 years ago. As she watched the reflections of the light. Or the word has two meanings as she contemplated her life looking out over the water. Reflections.

So, eyes looking up from the dark water. Four eyes that seem to circle each other, two people. It's no coincidence that they sit in an oval shape, Seborovski's symbol for the ovum, the egg cell. The sperm eyes are gray, darker and lighter to the lightest gray, almost white. All colors are included in grey. All possibilities. Like in the gene pool of two people. Mix them up – how many colors, how infinitely many possibilities then mixed! Eye colors and nose shapes, fingernail moons and the way someone laughs, what they see and what they don't. All these options are included. But everything is still eye. That's the beginning, the comical surreal euphoria of being in love. They are practically spilling out of their sockets, these glassy eyes that see nothing. Eyes wide shut. like barnacles, who detach from their anchorage and driven by fate, glide through the dark water. To what goal? To a mysterious destination where they settle, inextricably. Or does it only seem so, and in the next moment they, which are so tightly joined, could flow into each other like drops of water or tears and become one. They are not touching yet. The eyelashes are ticklish in their corners. So, they circle each other. Four eyes. The eyelashes are ticklish in their corners. So, they circle each other. Four eyes. The eyelashes are ticklish in their corners. So, they circle each other. Four eyes.



Side view: "Reflections", mixed media painting, 2002. Enamel, wood, modeling clay, vinyl, glass; 35.6 x 28 x 8.9 cm; Verso signed, dated and numbered lower right : SEBOROVSKI 2002 02.11/ CS 02.11. Price: 12500 euros. Karsten Greve Gallery, Cologne. [galerie-karsten-greve.com](http://galerie-karsten-greve.com)  
Courtesy gallery Karsten Greve

The oval shape makes the relief a magical symbol, reminiscent of motifs from sunken civilizations. "The conical breasts on the granary doors of the Dogon people of Mali," explains Seborovski, inspired some of their oval reliefs. This abstraction, the symbolism of fertility, also appears again in "Reflections".



"It was like opening a door to another dimension, to something that is there, mysteriously present, yet invisible." "Reflections" is a magical symbol of human relationships that contains both: outer and inner. Reflection as the bouncing of waves at an interface. And: examining, comparative reflection. Carole Seborovski combines two worlds in her art. The material world of concrete things and surfaces, understood through the senses, through sight and touch. And the other world behind external perception, immaterial and mystical. "I often mix yarn, string, or sand into my paint to give it a 'ghost,'" she says. And so, the black oval with the "tops", the four eyes and the seven sharp points is also a fetish object. A mantra like the amulets in ancient Egypt. Symbol and dream shaft to another world.