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Art of the week: Where the dreams sail

The staircase of raw wood is placed in the gallery space at Laura Mars in such a way that it acts like a barrier, one enters the room. One must first walk around it, then one could climb its steps. But you won't, because on the third step sits this clay mask, shimmering in deep green. The petulance of the installation makes you think. Chunks of stone on the floor invite you to trip over them.

A modular construction of horizontal and vertical wooden slats extends into the next room, where a kind of dark carpet hangs from one of the vertical wooden slats, with long tassels falling to the floor. On other vertical strips, running at a height of almost one meter, there are large colorful chunks of glass and DIN A4 pages written on by hand.

The modular wooden construction reveals the artist. I last saw the construction painted black, at Kunsthaus Dahlem. With "Manga Bell," Tina Born dealt with the legacies of the German colonial masters in Cameroon, such as an elephant skull with the identification number 18728, which she found in the basement of the Berlin Museum of Natural History. The large wooden animal silhouette of a woolly mammoth at Laura Mars is a reminder of this.

Is the wool hair of the mammoth in the carpet? No, the textile measuring 250 by 100 by 2 cm is made of linen. The artist made it herself, lined it with jute and called it "Gonfanon". This is the name of the special kind of flag or banner that hangs from a vertical pole, consists of several strips or ribbons at the waving end, and is preferably used at processions or victory parades. "Gonfanon" is also the title of what is now Tina Born's fourth exhibition at Laura Mars.

"Gonfanon" is for me the flag under which the dreams Born has jotted down over the years sail. Taking her cue from Arthur Rimbaud, who famously said, "I is another," the artist asked friends and acquaintances to nevertheless put their, i.e. Born's, dream notes on the page once again, each in handwriting. The dreams are colorful and complex, much like the large chunks of glass, which sometimes show serene transparency, sometimes are dark and opaque, often jagged with sharp, dangerous edges and then again gently rounded. Paradoxical motifs stand out, like the girlfriend as a twin, the malformed lion, the reading from the Austrian writer in an old farmhouse, who lines up hundreds of gray felt slippers in front of his front door for the guests. Of course, no one comes to visit him. There are no felt slippers in front of Laura Mars' door and the guests should come in droves.

Brigitte Werneburg, July 2023

Tina Born: Gonfanon, Laura Mars Gallery, through July 29, Wed.-Fri. 1-7 p.m., Sat. 1-6 p.m.; guided tour with Tina Born: July 20, 8 p.m., Bülowstr. 52.