

Press Release and Invitation

**SHANNON BOOL:
THE INVERTED HAREM II**

**FOYER:
LORENZ STRASSL/FRANK STÜRMER**

12 February - 25 April 2011
Friday, 11 Februar, 7 p.m. opening

**BONNER
KUNSTVEREIN**

SHANNON BOOL: THE INVERTED HAREM II

The exhibition of the Canadian artist, SHANNON BOOL (*1972, lives in Berlin), leaves us with a feeling of déjà-vu. A curtain out of denim, carpets and dance poles. The artist takes objects as the basis for her work that recall localities such as a pub or a club. Whether bleached, highly polished or disconcertingly combined, her works lure and captivate. Bool leads us into a place that plays out between inner images and distorted appearances and suggests free associations.

BOOL's forms of expression are versatile. Besides floor works, there are also objects, silk paintings, photograms and collages. Some elements of her visual vocabulary stem from classical painting, yet without making their historical dimension visible. Others originate from religious symbolism without playing out their dramatic dimension. In other situations, BOOL samples references from popular culture. The motives derived from cultural history are not quoted, but transformed into pure pictorial material.

Visitors to the exhibition encounter carpets referenced from historical paintings and given such names as "van Eyck Carpet" or "Memling Carpet". The artist returns the ornaments—derived from the art-historical canon of images—back to the horizontal plane of carpeting, which she, in turn, orders handmade from Turkish weavers using the finest techniques.

Within the framework of the exhibition, the harem provides a leitmotif. In the 19th century, these secluded quarters became a topos in western painting that represented an ideal location for projection. Here is where the male view of the female was portrayed, just as much as the west's view of the orient, enhanced by unbridled and beguiled sensuality. In BOOL's works the issue of perspective is always addressed, not only in the sense of the male view of a woman's world. In contrast to the Renaissance artist who demonstrates his painterly prowess by his mastery of perspective, BOOL lets the historically-cemented balance of power become playfully derailed.

She uses the appealing power of certain materials, while simultaneously robbing the objects of their functionality; her disconcerting interventions generate distance to the everyday. Her vertical sculptures—reminiscent of go-go dancers' poles—as well as her silk paintings evoke a seductive dance that never takes place. The viewer is deluded into fantasies that remain unfulfilled.

SHANNON BOOL studied in Frankfurt and New York. Her ongoing interest in literature is infused with a specific sensibility in handling materials, which leads to unusual shifts in meaning. Her work over the past years has attracted growing interest and been exhibited in many venues, such as the Kunsthalle in Baden-Baden, the CAPC in Bordeaux, the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds, the RMIT Project Space in Melbourne or the Migros Museum in Zurich.

This exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst in Bremen.

Supported by:  

FOYER: LORENZ STRASSL/FRANK STÜRMER

For the first time, not one but two artists have been invited to collaborate in making their mark on the foyer. The two artists living in Munich—LORENZ STRASSL (*1970 in Ingolstadt) and FRANK STÜRMER (*1972 in Bucharest)—have been represented internationally at group exhibitions. The Deichtorhallen in Hamburg recently nominated STRASSL for the “Körper-Foto-Award”; STÜRMER was the prize winner of the 2010 Bavarian Cultural Promotion and is part of the Goetz Media Art Collection. This installation, developed in the close artistic engagement between STRASSL’s large-scale photographic works in lightboxes and STÜRMER’s 2-channel video installation, invites the viewer to enter into a dialogue with two autonomous works.

In his photo and video works, FRANK STÜRMER concentrates on mostly quiet, seemingly everyday situations, whereby their combination and superposition lead to a lively synthesis. As is the case in the presentation of the 2-channel video “Ohne Titel (Bicu Sandu)” from 2001-2009. The static setup of one monitor shows the rhythmically recurring wave movements of an oceanic panorama. Once the viewers’ eyes wander to the right, they witness a strangely appealing singing performance of an almost toothless man who, at a restricted gait, seems to be moving towards the viewer and out of the picture. The German translation of the cheerful lyrics flashed on the screen stands in contrast to the triste, cramped spatial situation and the singer’s gloomy fellow men. The scene is, in fact, that of a psychiatric ward, which has a both ordinary and surreal atmosphere.

Such a concentrated view of a unique and ephemeral time and place can also be found in LORENZ STRASSL’s work. His photo works display staged scenes of household articles—often furniture and appliances—as well as moving elements like fire, smoke or water. Different from what you might expect, these arrangements exist only for the brief moment of the photo shoot and are subsequently destroyed. The three photo works presented at the Kunstverein portray stage-set views of rooms with strange and mystifying arrangements. A chair assaulted by knives, a boat on the vestiges of a bed, a column-like object swathed in bands of paper.

In the wake of the foyer presentations of Michael Bauer, Philippe Decrauzat and Christine Würmell, the foyer will for the first time not be used as a one-dimensional plane in the ‘classic’ format of a mural. The juxtaposition of moving digital pictures by two artists—despite all dissimilarity—will open our eyes to their kindred themes and related means of expression. Similar to Stürmer’s video and its view of the ocean, in which a single small ship vanishing at the horizon recalls civilization, humanity in Strassel’s photo works is, to the same degree, both present and absent. The two works subtly mediate between the everyday and the uncommon and unique.

Further events:

Tuesday, 1 March, 6 pm: Unter 4 Augen (tête-à-tête) guided tour through the exhibition by Julia Krings and Christina Végh

Thursday, 14 April, 6 pm: Artist’s talk between SHANNON BOOL and Christina Végh

Sunday, 17 April 12 o’clock: Orient Yesterday – Islam Today? Discussion between Daniel Redlinger, M.A. (Asian and Islamic Art History at Bonn University) and Fanny Gonella