

more than a bird

25 years of artistic friendship birdman and jens mohr

Opening: Wednesday, 27th September 2017, 7 pm

Duration: 28th September until 15th November 2017

“The only way to have a friend is to be one.” (Ralph Waldo Emerson) This quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson describes birdman Hans Langner’s and Jens Mohr’s friendship very well.

Everything started in 1992, when birdman Hans Langner had a free space in his studio in Bonn, Germany, left. The first to reply was Jens Mohr. They got along well immediately and inspire one another until today. The studio was a former bakery, where both processed all kinds of utensils and even made combined artworks, that now can be found in the Museum Dr. Guislain, Belgium. After two years, they dissolved their collective studio, because birdman decided to move to Hong Kong; they stayed in contact henceforth and didn’t lose sight of each other.

25 years after their first encounter, the gallery gugging presents an exhibition in honour of the two artist friends. The title of the exhibition “more than a bird – 25 years of artistic friendship birdman and jens mohr” came from their common stay in Malta. With a twinkle in one’s eye referring to the bird-motif, that for both is an artistic theme, but also to their creative urge, that is unstoppable when working together around the world. Especially working together in many different places and being in need of harmony connects. This causes a downright creative urge, to describe it in birdman’s words: “It feels like fulfilment, an undertow! Sometimes we are working the whole day, 12, 14 hours and don’t do anything more than that. We enrich and compliment each other very well.” There will be the possibility to witness the creative process of the two artists and to get inspired in the birdman studio in Vienna from 27 November to the 2 December under the title “Creative urge”.

The exhibition, that will be set up together with the two artists, features their comprehensive Œuvre, whereby accordance and intersection in their way of working are essential. They work with findings, they collect, just with what’s there, and don’t

get influenced by current events. Every item is potential material and should be transformed. An already finished artwork or an everyday item metamorphoses into something new. The aspiration behind it is, to emphasize the painting's or object's essence, to make it even more beautiful and precious. Furthermore they have in common that their art is spontaneous and made without any drafts or sketches. Similarly intuitive is their "Instant Art", as they like to call the works they create on the spot, mostly in front of an audience.

In spite of all, one must not forget that the two of them are self-sufficient artists and work independently from each other. Since 2015, birdman Hans Langner works almost exclusively on overpainting tapestries and gobelins, that become more and more densely, golden, opulently, almost baroque. In doing so, the invisible birds, that are hidden in them, are made visible by coloring the background. Another focus lies on overpainting and overworking religious art with a message: love. Primarily he uses antiques, that give his works an ancient touch. He dedicates his creativity to beauty and aesthetics and works and lives following this credo.

Jens Mohr on the other hand works magic on allegedly inutile stuff and invents quirky humorous creatures from findings and everyday objects of all kinds. They are superficially without a message and live from the combination of opposites. For instance using iron and cold material for "softer", smoother animals. They are entitled to exist without any burden of thoughts, what seems to be the privilege of animals in general. Taking a differentiated look, his characters develop mixed traits, humanly and animally both ways. About the special friendship to birdman Hans Langner Jens Mohr says: "The extraordinary about us is that we are working together on so many levels, not side by side and that is very rare".

The visitors of this upcoming exhibition can look forward to an interesting mix of works by birdman Hans Langner, reaching from tapestries to golden, opulent wall objects, and to invigorating, witty arranged assemblages by Jens Mohr, such as the "Sheep flock" or "All my little ducklings".

We hope you enjoy the exhibition, the new catalogue and are looking forward to your visit in the gallery gugging!

galerie gugging

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