

JACKY STRENZ

Galerie

LIN MAY

Grane

September 7 – Oktober 26, 2013

Lin May's illuminated silhouette tableau is based on a scene from Legend of the Nibelungs, delineating how Bruenhild, riding a horse named Grane, jumping it into dead Siegfried's funeral pyre.

Whenever humans are harmed, further sacrifices are termed 'damage to property' and hence of minor importance. Given the loss of human lives, any reminiscence that other living organisms are affected, too, amounts to a grotesque distortion of priorities.

So far it took truly exceptional personalities with utterly commendable social skills to dare to challenge the hierarchy within the realm of sentient beings by considering coequality of human and non-human animals. Only an impressive rating of good deeds entitled Saint Frances at the end of his life to solely ask 'brother donkey's' forgiveness for the hassle caused by the saint.

This not exactly glamorous means of transportation already appears in Lin May's previous work, in the shape of an ass wearing an explosive belt. Although the recent piece ostensibly is starring a mare, the length of the horse's ears hints at certain relations between the bearer of burdens and the bearer of heroes.

May's commentary to the image reads: 'At the moment of jumping off the rock it seems as if the horse was going to leap over the burning stake.'

Such insubordination and a latent pre-revolutionary tenor inform quite a number of works of the artist, who explicitly dedicates her activity to the movement for the liberation of animals. As a consequence she preferably collects her protagonists from hardly spectacular species like crayfish, foxes and wasps. Quadrupeds like the ones featured in the relief *Uerge Hawar al-Hammar* remain unspecified and hence as exemplary as their alleged whereabouts, a mythical region in Iraq - visionary creatures in an utopian landscape. Their day may come.

In *Ghost Ship Relief* likewise an oarfish next to a black smoker from the bottom of the sea represents the total of marine fauna hidden from the human eye.

Titled *The Liberation on Animals from their Cages XJU*, texts and images on the methods of animal liberationists suggest that mere empathy is too volatile a basis for lasting commitment. The championing of beings which are considered inferior on grounds as familiar as they are unfounded requires proceeding in an organised manner instead of giving in to emotion. What was once called 'the long march through the institutions cannot be cut short. Any euphoric beginnings are followed by drab paperwork, usually behind closed doors. Freedom – no matter for or from whom – isn't achieved by striking events well covered by the media but in committees, on boards and other tedious assemblies.

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In short: spontaneous sentiments caused by an animal's endearing appearance or by shocking information concerning its treatment may serve as a valuable source of inspiration all right. Long-term change however necessitates meticulous fine-tuning.

The activists' objectives, outlined in a congress' schedule along with summaries of the issues addressed at that time, hark back to prominent predecessors. Leonardo for instance embarked on quite a straightforward strategy. Famously being driven by insatiable curiosity this artist-cum-engineer would go for shopping sprees in Florentine bird markets, buying all sorts of fowl in order to have them immediately flap off, thus receiving a bit of visual instruction on the art of flying.

Text: Charlotte Lindenberg