

THERESA WEBER

WOVEN MEMORIES

19 June to 5 September 2021

DORTMUNDER

The exhibition *Woven Memories* follows a trail between present and past in which personal, social and global events interweave. Through painting and installation, Theresa Weber examines cultural hybridisation, ideals of beauty and multiply coded symbols of belonging.

Embedded in a playfully dystopian architectural ruin of bricks and *Lianas* (2019) that causes interior and exterior to merge, various wall objects give rise to a landscape with points of spatial and temporal depth. Some of the wall fragments also function as presentation surfaces, as do metal constructions that resemble hammock frames, or the lianas in which objects are entwined.

Theresa Weber works familiar, strange, fetishised elements into these picture-like objects, along with personal found items and souvenirs that tell of her German-Jamaican-Greek background. Her interest in prostheses and hybrid bodies (human/object) is expressed in the use of materials such as artificial nails, synthetic hair, body padding and silicon, but also textiles and jewellery. These are all things that extend the body and give it an identity. In the artistic works they become organic cultural traces, disembodied remnants whose historical associations and social hierarchies are decoded on the material level.

As an Afro-German artist, Weber makes conscious use of codes that can be read in multiple ways and refer to different cultures or epochs. Braids of artificial hair (weaves) are a centuries-old cultural practice in the African diaspora, a source of identity and a symbol of resistance. Here the tradition of braiding forms a historical bridge to the elaborate hairstyles of Greek antiquity which also echo through Theresa Weber's work.

For her processual pieces she collects artefacts that refer to dichotomous spiritual categories such as life and death – hair, nails, insects – to transparency and opacity – silicon, polyester, paper prints – and to past and present – real turn-of-century jewellery, costume jewellery. She also frequently weaves parts of existing works into new ones.

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The resulting assemblages initially arise on a horizontal surface, on which the artist examines the objects' interconnections. The art historian Leo Steinberg (1920–2011) describes this practice of horizontal arrangement as working on the 'flatbed'. The image carrier isn't thought of as an illusory space, as in classical painting, but as a surface on which different information can be ordered and sorted so as to produce coherence or chaos through its arrangement. Both ends of the spectrum are present in Weber's works. The dimensions are displaced in grid patterns, and a fingerprint or fingernail looks almost architectural next to the depiction of a piece of wall. This displacement demonstrates the connection between bodies, buildings and society. Each element is part of a greater whole: 'Chaos is beautiful when one understands that all its elements are equally necessary.' (Édouard Glissant)

*Woven Memories is the first institutional solo exhibition by Theresa Weber (*1996 in Düsseldorf). Her work can also be seen in the parallel group exhibitions Sweet Lies – Fiktion der Zugehörigkeit, Ludwigsforum, Aachen, and Genius Loci IX: Strikes back at Setareh X, Düsseldorf. In July Weber graduated from the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where she was in the classes of Ellen Gallagher and Katharina Grosse. She was nominated for the Federal Art Prize in 2020.*

The exhibition is accompanied by a brochure designed by the artist combining drawings and texts by her with texts by the Caribbean poet and theorist Édouard Glissant (1928–2011). Nominal charge: €0.50.

*Please note: The performance FLUIDITY, by Anys Reimann and Theresa Weber, will take place in the exhibition on 12 and 14 August. Part of Dortmund Goes Black, an initiative by the Dortmunder Kunstverein, Schauspiel Dortmund, the Dietrich-Keuning-Haus and the Internationales Frauen*Film Fest Dortmund + Köln.*

The exhibition is supported by:



The performance is supported by:

