

The Houses Of The Serpent Bearer
The 9th House

Mónica Mays
Flora Yin-Wong

14.07. – 20.08.2023

Lucas Hirsch, Birkenstraße 92, Düsseldorf

Curated by Pina Bendfeld



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The Serpent Bearer

„I want to demonstrate that this—the world we live in—is imagined, and transmutable in more ways than we are used to discussing.“ – Alice Notley, Songs and Stories of the Ghouls

The ninth house in the astrological cycle is associated with the insatiable curiosity to approach the complexity of a universal order – or chaos. It rules the constant expansion of the mind as well as spiritual and intellectual exploration beyond the mere surface of its surroundings.

The works of artist Mónica Mays and producer and DJ Flora Yin-Wong both seem to be influenced by this cosmic energy. Despite the different artistic media, they present astonishing analogies in terms of content and form.

Mónica Mays' sculptures emerge from organic, found and collected materials, which in their combination transform into something new, growing out of the old or „the other.“ These assemblages become autonomous beings, while carrying the historical, social and symbolic references of their previous contexts. Through re-arrangement, they experience a shift in perspective – both literally and metaphorically.

Flora Yin-Wong's musical work is similarly composed, assembling various sound snippets into aural collages. In response to the myth of the 13th zodiac sign – the Serpent Bearer – and Mónica Mays' sculptures, her live set attempts to weave dissipating fragments from the imaged sound of the wings of silk moths, religious motifs from Daoist temples and Catholic Churches, to sub-bass frequencies meant to lure in snakes.

In the corners and crannies of the gallery, musical fragments resonate like echoes. They may be the whispers of the spirits released by the fan and umbrella objects opening up in the space. Or the numerous pictorial motifs on the wall pieces that quietly tell their story. Meanwhile, the sculptural creatures at the front seem to coil to the sounds, performing a ritual. Their looped rattan strings make them look like grotesque, folkloric instruments from which the music might originate. With their twisted posture and curved wooden feet, the objects seem to passionately spin around themselves, as in flamenco – in the repertoire of which the unfolded fans are also essential elements.

These paper objects reveal two graphite drawings that can be viewed from different perspectives, like an agamograph. Similarly, the symbolism of the fan can be analysed from several positions – as a status symbol, as a weapon and simultaneously a shield, through its historical circulation from East Asia to medieval Europe, or its complex non-verbal, gestural language.

Such a language also appears to evolve in the exhibition, in which all aspects, details and references resonate with each other on various levels, sharing their stories. In analogy to the agamograph, those stories can be (re-)told and (re-)read in different ways depending on the perspective, shifting from a linear approach and opening up to complex connections, associative relationships and even paradoxes hidden in some places.