

The kings of all animals hang head down from their hind legs like slaughtered cattle. The lion, symbol of Christ, animal of Marcus, is alone like all rulers. Here, he is not only duplicated; he is in effect cloned. With their bases pressed against each other, the lions are condemned to imitate the grid of the factory floor of the exhibition space Motorenhalle. Aligned with the cross-section of the room, they form a pyramid. But instead of hanging head up, they pose arse up. Between their bronze paws, they clutch two snakes, maybe personifications of Skylla and Charybdis but surely of heresy, poison, strife and sin. More than any other emblematic animal, this one brings to mind Dresden, faintly lifting its paw in the face of a very real danger. However, after this deed was done, the lions themselves became prey to the power that lifts them. Soil and other remains from their mundane existence stick to their bodies. And it gets worse. They are weighed down by iron balls like those used to confine prisoners. These are tied to nose rings, which are commonly associated with animals far below the lion's status like bulls or bears. They pull the already humiliated lions even further downwards. And more: Instead of proud roars, timid and hesitant sounds accompanied by jaw's harps come from their throats. These instruments, again, are not what one assumes; instead they represent the slit tongues of the snakes. The song title, ironically, is 'Hurra, wir leben noch' (Hooray, we are still alive), a Milva song interpreted by Raphaela Vogel.

The title "*In festen Händen*" implies being held firmly by a pair of hands, possibly secure, possibly dominating; German colloquial phrase for 'being in a romantic relationship' as in 'being romantically unavailable' for others.

Raphaela Vogel, Award winner 2015, Columbus Advancement Prize for Contemporary Art in Cooperation with ADKV

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