

SHANNON BOOL
at GAK
27 Nov - 30 Jan 2010



© Shannon Bool, *Curtain*, 2010, Öl und Batik auf Seide, 123 x 160 cm
Courtesy Galerie Kadel Willborn. Foto: Tobias Hübel

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The Inverted Harem I

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Everyday life, literature, psychology, music, and art history are Canadian artist Shannon Bool's sources of inspiration. Her paintings, photograms, collages, carpets, murals, and objects explore shifts and reassignments of meaning. Bool (born 1972, currently based in Berlin) is fascinated by ideas across different cultures and ages, and the revitalisation of quotidian phenomena and references through the excavation of their original meanings. Drawing on a diverse range of epochs, Bool creates images that blend historical and contemporary motives, materials, and content figure accordingly as equal peers in her artistic practice.

Bool's exhibition at the GAK is titled *The Inverted Harem I*. Evoking exoticism's stubbornly persistent view of the harem as a site of mystery, the exhibition explores the contrasts between Western projections of the reality of the East, our fascination with the harem as a private space, and the transfer of materials, along with notions of femininity, eroticism and the Orient, and their treatment in carpets, for instance, uncover Western perceptions of Oriental ornamentation by revisiting 19th-century tablecloths and English pub furnishings, which in turn drew on Middle Eastern patterns. Moving across cultures, Bool's drawings combine elements taken from paintings and pub floors in designs that evoke life in the visually stunning works of traditional Turkish carpet makers. Elsewhere a series of drawings in the exhibition space, blending the imagery of the striptease with art historical references to the Bauhaus and Minimalism. In another work, the bedroom designed by Adolf Loos for his wife becomes defined by its material contrasts, and the site of a reinterpretation of femininity. Meanwhile, a series of drawings conglomerates of painterly clichés (silk painting meets both abstraction and graphic representation) explores the three-dimensional nature of art by accentuating our awareness of the wall behind her works, and presents viewers with a plethora of art historical references that range from Jasper Johns.

With its linear structure, *The Inverted Harem I* guides visitors step-by-step from an open space of interaction (represented by a "user-friendly" sculpture complete with champagne and fresh fruit) towards an increasingly closed and intimate space.

Previously presented at national and international group exhibitions, this showing of Shannon Bool's *Inverted Harem I* at the GAK Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst is her first institutional solo exhibition.

A catalogue documenting the exhibition and showcasing Shannon Bool's creative works will be published in early 2011.

Curator: Janneke de Vries



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