

As so often with Robin Mason's work, what first strikes the unaware visitor is its sheer exuberance. The busy installation of works on paper, drawings, paintings and sculpture that is made specifically for GiG Munich, is no different. We enter to a riot of colour, where vibrant oranges, acid yellows, baby pinks and sky blues all vie for our attention. Where there is no colour, a mass of line takes over, forming waves and swirly patterns – dots and dashes cover any spare surface. Anthropomorphic forms rise up from the ground and grow through and between other forms, twisting around open books or vignettes that give us little views to somewhere else, tree covered landscapes, doorways, windows, more flowers and plants. Pierced by arrows or covered by cloth these forms have an erotic language of their own, some phallic, some clearly female in their appearance. Just when it seems we are able to find some familiar ground, the scale shifts suddenly. Large forms become small and things far away, close by. We find the night sky, reduced in its vastness, low down on the floor, its image only visible from behind and in a mirror.

The work's exuberance is combined with so many references that it is easy to lose track. Some of these, like those to kitschy Bavarian souvenirs or to the Isenheim Altarpiece, would be familiar to a German audience, others are known to the artist only. Speaking to Mason one hears stories of earlier trips to Germany, of towns visited because of a book once read, of the disappointment of finding the Black Forest, not black but green, and of glasses, all four from a set, that belonged to his parents. The direct reference for the show is the 1609 painting *Flight to Egypt* by Adam Elsheimer, considered to be the first accurate depiction of the night sky in the Renaissance period.

Hovering above the exhibition is what could be seen as the eye of God and this is perhaps our entry point into the work. For God here, despite the numerous references to North European Christianity, is a Dionysian God, presiding over a world of the will to power, a world of forces and affects, and of the various powers that make up Life. That libidinal drives, both positive and negative, are at work in Mason's practice is a fact acknowledged by other commentators, who noted that the pleasure apparent in Mason's paintings tends to give way to feelings of anxiety and dread. I would say that in this exhibition, we enter a sphere in which each element casts influence on another, again positive and negative. But the trick that Mason conveys so well, is of affirmation. As Spinoza, Nietzsche and Deleuze have shown, to affirm brings joy and joy brings us closer to God. In this way, the "constellation" of the title stands for as much the night sky as for the crown of stars, the Corona Borealis, which Dionysus gifted Ariadne and tossed into the heavens.

Threshold, 2017, acrylic on paper, 175 x 240 cm
€ 16 830



Black Forest Lake, 2017, acrylic on paper, four wineglasses, 65 x 42 x 15 cm
€ 870



Over the Border, 2017, velvet robe, acrylic on wood, 38 x 300 cm
€ 1440



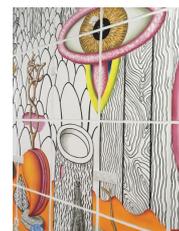
Constellation, 2017, acrylic on wood, 30 cm in diameter
€ 960 each



After Elsenheimer, 2018, acrylic on wood, acrylic on paper mirror, 40 x 30 cm
€ 1580



Collection, 2018, acrylic on paper, approx. 650 x 320 cm
Price on enquiry (around €1400 per panel)



Journey, 2014, zinc engraving on paper, 33 x 56 cm
€ 3500



As part of the GiG MUNICH collection:

Mousetrap, 2018, digital print on archival paper, 10 x 15 cm
€ 70 (5 for €280)

