

Clara Aden

Nigeria

Biography

Clara Aden is a multidisciplinary artist and a passionate painter and illustrator known for her exciting pencil drawings. She has participated in various art exhibitions, workshops and projects around the world. She works in oil, acrylic and pastel, but mostly in charcoal and pencil. Her works are exhibited in galleries and awarded prizes in Nigeria and other African countries.

The artwork: aesthetic positions

"It's just too much (for me)!" - This exclamation was certainly made by some people at every stage of the Corona pandemic. Being overwhelmed by what is happening, being confined to a small (social) space, worrying about one's life and the lives of others, the flood of sometimes contradictory information: all this can be discovered in Clara Aden's work "Infomania II". With her hands placed almost protectively on her head, a young woman remains with her eyes closed in front of a laptop, which is already connected to her forehead and to one wrist with tubes. Blood and information flow in a circuit. Only the head and hands and forearms are visible, unprotected. The rest of the person has become unimportant. The young woman's face is slightly distorted, she seems to be in pain; her eyes are closed, her forehead is contracted. Her hair piles up and forms its own structure, almost resembling antennae. And behind her, a sun or moon rests neutral or uninterested in a red sky; highlighting the young woman, however, as if in a kind of iconostasis. The despair is clear. She is alone, despite all the information; the digital imprint of the world envelops her and rejects her at the same time. The computer, the digital, is a cold medium, this is clearly visible here.

The artworks

Infomania II

Mixed Media

2020

Size: 50.8 x 40.64 cm

Clara Aden: "In the age of the pandemic, is social media a blessing or a curse? They have a significant impact on the spread of fear and panic related to the Covid19 outbreak, affecting the mental health of social media users."

I believe I can fly

Acrylic on canvas, hand drawn letters

2020

Size: 30.48 x 25.4cm

Clara Aden: "I'm sure if the solution to the pandemic was to "kickbox" the virus, millions of people would trade in their shoes for boxing."

Head Crack

Mixed Media

2020

Size: 50.8 x 30.48 cm

Clara Aden: "According to UN figures, one in three women and girls experience some form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. The fear of violence is an everyday reality for women and girls. "Unbreakable Cracks" is a series of works that raise awareness about domestic violence against women and girls. Ending violence against women and girls is a matter of justice. We have the power and the strength to stand up, speak out and spread the word. Everyone has a role to play."

Racism threatens Freedom

Oil and gold leaf

2020

Size: 50.8 x 30.48 cm

Child not Bombers

Drawing pencils with a mixture of charcoal and clay (conte)

2019

Size: 76.2 x 60.98 cm

Work comment by kukutana

Clara Aden captivates with her clear attitude, which is immediately conveyed in her works. Her attention is focused on the silent, the weak. She suffers and shows her suffering from the world and the suffering of the world. With a sympathetic eye for those subjected to foreign violence, mostly women. She points out, directs the gaze, confronts in a quiet but definite way: We cannot look away and must ask ourselves what our attitude is. Clara Aden does not formulate an accusation, but she questions and hopes for an answer.

In her work "I believe I can fly" horror and hope prevail at the same time. With her wrists bound, her eyes widened in horror, her mouth covered by a mask, surrounded by letters, this is how we see the head of a young woman. On her head balances a birdcage, which is marked with the label "Covid-19". However, out of its open door flies a bird - almost like the dove that Noah sends out to look for habitable land for the people and animals again after the flood disaster. The dove brought back an olive branch - let's hope that habitable land will be found here too.

"Racism threatens Freedom": white and black are inseparable, not only bound together by a chain, but the two sides of one coin: the human being. Racism and racists do not understand this connection, threaten this inescapable unity, see in it a bondage. The gold leaf that Clara Aden uses for her work and that adorns the dress of the young woman who looks directly at the viewers, perhaps somewhat accusingly or questioningly, at least insistently, shows the value of this unity, the monstrous, the vital, the wealth. The gesture of hands open almost in blessing invites us to be human.

"Head Crack" shows a girl with a big hole gaping in her head: the head has cracked open. What has happened? With big eyes the child looks at us head-on, she seems alive, although she should be dead with this injury. What happened that it could come so far? Who is she accusing? What is she asking us? The picture is characterized by its own urgency, which is difficult to escape, precisely because of the overdrawing of the googly eyes, reminiscent of naive painting, and the realism of the injury. The artist is clear who she is accusing: the perpetrators of domestic violence and girls and women.

"Child not Bomber" shows another representation of a child who occupy their own place in the artist's universe. Again, a child marked by death, wearing a bomber belt that wraps around one hip. The child pulls up his T-shirt and shows us this bomb belt. It smiles cautiously. Who outfitted it like this? Is it a child soldier from the combat zones of northern Nigeria? The title warns: This is a child, not an assassin; what are you doing with and out of these children? The nuance in black,

gray and white that charcoal and pencil allow also points in its monochromaticity to the unreal of the situation in which the child finds himself: This apocalypse stands for the loss of childhood, of being human, for the supra-temporality and eternal return of cruelty - which is not at all drastically shown here, but lurks in the underground and background of the picture.

Clara Aden observes closely, looks, does not avert her gaze, even if what she sees is unbearable to some. She is a political artist who makes clear which people are affected by global developments and how. She is always concerned with the individual as a mirror of society, of current problems. Sensitively she reacts, feels with, does not give up.