

## Alvar Bohrmann in limbo

March 14th – April 12th, 2025

Opening: March 14, 2025, 6 – 10pm

The path to the zqm leads through a backyard on Petersburger Straße in Berlin-Friedrichshain, into the old rear building of number 73, and up to the first floor. The stairwell is old. Paint is peeling from the walls, the steps are worn, and cobwebs collect between the green slats beneath the stair risers. Upon entering the project space, the stairwell just traversed reappears in a distant, almost sterile repetition. The white stairs lead upward into a supposed nothingness.

With his installation *in limbo*, Alvar Bohrmann opens an intermediate space between turning back and moving forward. „In limbo“ is an expression the artist often uses – for states of suspension. In relationships, political situations, or career development, for instance. Being „in limbo“ requires patience. It is a state that must be endured. Pausing allows time to look around. And when you now look around the space, you realize that the material Bohrmann uses to extend the stairs is not solid or stable. Upon closer inspection, embroidery, floral patterns, and stains can be seen on the steps and the curves beneath the staircase. These come from used tablecloths that Bohrmann soaks in a cornstarch mixture, shapes, and hardens. The fabrics, now partially dyed turquoise, no longer serve as the foundation for festive gatherings but emphasize the theatricality of the installation. Instead of peeling paint and cobwebs in the stairwell, the tablecloths reveal the remnants of time spent together – of coming and going.

Bohrmann's installations always emerge from an intense engagement with the exhibition space. It is fitting, then, that the material serves as a reference to the stairwell on Petersburger Straße, which itself is a place of encounters, greetings, and farewells.

Stairwells serve as „intermediate spaces“ between inside and outside: no longer quite the private apartment, not yet the sidewalk or the street. Yet, as much as the actual stairwell on Petersburger Straße and the one in the exhibition space resemble each other, they are fundamentally different: while one is made of wood, stone, and metal, the other cannot bear any weight. While one allows ascent or descent, the other leaves you hovering before inaccessible steps leading to nowhere.

This concept of an unfulfilled transition from one floor to the next is also reflected in Bohrmann's choice of title. „In limbo“ originally derives from the Christian concept of Limbo, often colloquially referred to as the „edge of hell,“ describing a place between heaven and hell. However, in English usage, the term has been freed from its Christian origin and is more commonly used to describe a state of temporary uncertainty.

The chosen materials allow light to pass through while offering protection and shelter. A positive feeling of security and nostalgia emerges. Being „in limbo“ suddenly feels less unsettling. Upon leaving the project space, the viewer's perspective shifts for a brief moment – the stairwell momentarily elevates itself and ultimately becomes a work of art in its own right.

Jana Jarzembowski