

The title of the book Ein Neger mit Gazelle (engl: A Negro with Gazelle) is borrowed from a palindrome, a sentence that can be read backwards and forwards. It reads completely: Ein Neger mit Gazelle zagt im Regen nie. (A Negro with a gazelle never hesitates in the rain). The author of the palindrome is not known with certainty, it is partly attributed to Arthur Schopenhauer. I got to know the play on words through my father, who enthusiastically tried to create palindromes in German himself. His fondness for palindromes was so great that my parents decided at my birth that my name would be Lin if I was born a girl and Nil if I was born a boy. Since my father, who had immigrated from Iraq, was dark-skinned himself and suffered from exclusion in Germany, I did not find his quoting of the pun "A Negro with a gazelle never hesitates in the rain" racist at the time. A group of sculptures I worked on in 2003 seemed to resemble the content of the sentence: a human figure, an animal figure and an abstract drop element like clotted rain, all elements of the group carved in black

polystyrene. Therefore I gave the sculpture the same name, and I also named my first artist book, on which I worked in 2004, after the palindrome, in memory of my father. The term negro was not part of my language even then, and I didn't know anyone who used it. I assumed that it was so obsolete that it would be unproblematic in the field of sculpture as a title. For several years I did not pick up the book and did not pass it on, and suddenly I realized that not the content but the title was the reason for it. Time has brought with it a different sensibility and other necessities. Racism as well as any other form of structural oppression must be fought.

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