

## **Brimming with Energy - 2005**

### **(Brixy's Cosmos)**

At first sight the sheer size of this painting is overwhelming: Four canvasses are put together to form one large picture of 9.60 meters length and 1.80 meters height. The painting self-confidently dominates the entrance wall to the large area used for staff get-togethers and events. A voluminous diagonal in red and orange cuts through the painting from bottom left to top right, its beginning and end – if there is one at all – being outside the picture. An orange and brown spiral winds around it loosely spaced irregularly. The rest of the pictorial space is dominated by an apparently homogeneous deep blue colour which also seems to spread endlessly in all directions and is composed of many different hues of blue and green as well as white and black. Often put lavishly on the canvas with the hands colour bands stretch horizontally across the surface in soft waves and accompany the eye feeling its way across a work of art ten meters long.

Following our accustomed way of reading we look at the painting from left to right. This means that we are following the rising diagonal line and thus the direction of movement which always signifies positive dynamics in our western culture. Looking more closely we meet a strange world of figures on our way hidden in the blue expanses: slightly halfway above the centre, a bird fluttering above it, a human figure floats into the picture from the left whose arms have been transformed into shells, and somewhat further to the right three geckoes swim in the blue flood of colours. At the upper and lower edges of the second canvas elliptically arranged bands can be perceived linked crosswise by struts which in the pictorial vocabulary of the artist's universe symbolically refer to boats.

Having moved so far the eyes again come across birds, butterflies, shells and ammonites. For a number of years these motifs have belonged to Brixy's paintings being recurrent components of his pictorial world and forming a kind of individual mythology successfully resisting any clear interpretation. The motif of the shells can be associated with thoughts of withdrawal, calm and reflection, the butterflies stand for the fleeting joy of life and permanent transformation. Swift movements are characteristic of the bird and gecko as well, whereas the human shapes floating in space point towards the melancholic soft realm of dreams. All of these filigree and strangely immaterial figures hardly assert themselves in the layers of colours put on vigorously and impasto, seeming to surface only with difficulty in order to plunge into depth with the next wave. They visibly fight with the colours and so tell us something about Dietmar Brixy's style of painting.

In order to be able to master this unusual format and support the four canvasses the artist in his studio had to build a construction made of bamboo stems linked by an enormous awning. At first Brixy turned his attention to the surrounding pictorial space, the progress of the diagonal line being marked by a rope. He covered the surface with a patchwork of yellows, reds and greens put on with a spatula on which he placed numerous layers of green, black and, above all, blue colours with a brush and often with

his hands as well. Before these had dried completely, he uncovered the underlying colour patches here and there with a comb, their playful rhythm forming swinging parallel patterns in this sea of colours making them appear more translucent, ephemeral and lighter in these places. Thus the blue colour prevailing in most of the picture is intensified by the colours lying underneath its surface, whereas sprinkles of orange-red are found near the diagonal which dominates the picture. By sprinkling bright red colour on the canvas with a brush or a comb, Dietmar Bixy here adopted the technique of “dripping” which had once been developed by Max Ernst and Jackson Pollock. The complementary colours blue and orange highlight each other, thus creating an extraordinary tension. Generated by the glowing diagonal the powerful stream of energy traversing the pictorial space can hardly be controlled, and the fields of energy spreading out from it stretch in all directions. Possibly they determine the umbilical cord sometimes spiralling more narrowly and sometimes more loosely around the diagonal. Here we meet with a motif which was important for Dietmar Bixy in former phases of his artistic development: The spiral is an ambivalent sign which can be read excentrically as well as concentrically and stands for development, but also for retrospection, for moving as well as resting, for dynamic and concentration.

By using his artistic means of expression consistently condensing over the last years, Dietmar Bixy has succeeded in creating a work of art which subtly refers to the location it is meant for – the Grosskraftwerk Mannheim (GKM) – without, however, leaving the very personal cosmos of his pictorial world. It is this very concept which the artist expresses in the telling title of this painting: “Brimming with Energy (Bixy’s Cosmos”).

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