

Speech for the Exhibition Opening of 'Dietmar Brixy: Surprise & Tomorrow', Galerie Tammen & Partner, 09.06.2017

His means are traditional. But the way in which Brixy's works appear to seethe and bubble is unexpected for the present day. It's unusual to find an artist who dares to still create such works nowadays. Dietmar Brixy throws himself wholeheartedly into the stuff of paint, relies on the natural event which results from his interaction with the material, and agitates by means of his paintbrush. His paintings seem as if they're about to boil over. And in the process of such action, he raises reliefs in paint.

In an old sewage pumping station in Mannheim-Neckarau, Dietmar Brixy has created his own personal artistic cosmos, one in which he himself features as the central star. Here, art and life merge with one other.

Between his paintings and the garden next to his house runs the invisible thread of a dialogical interplay. The aesthetic added value which radiates from the world of his garden animates him to add further magical accents to his images. Inspiration and projection culminate in images which mix together the experience of the garden and the experience of the materiality of paint. The emphasis on wellbeing which results from this interplay is reflected on the canvas in typically Brixy psychedelia.

The impressions of leaves which sometimes appear in his images are a clear sign of this, taken from nature.

Such a 'Big Bang Bamboo Bubble' is then also precisely what's needed to make an image resemble the circular motion of a massage for the soul, carried out with the sensitive fingers of a loving gardener.

If appearances are not deceptive, then this local exhibition is anything other than an exercise in austerity. We are awaited by a piece of 'eye-candy' that even a

Berliner, spoiled with aesthetic delights and already well-fed on an abundance of art, can only describe as ‘splendid’. This is art with its full-fat content intact.

This exhibition comes less with a promise of heavenly paradise than of happiness here on Earth, and lifts our mood so thoroughly that it could rightly be hailed as an enzyme for better digesting the world of the here and now.

Dietmar Brixy’s work represents an artistic balancing act – with the casting off of the ballast of the terrestrial, on the one hand, balanced out, on the other, by the abstraction of that which he depicts.

His reworking of the reality we see into images of experiences and of the interior world gives rise to experiences whose testaments are the works we see here in the exhibition before us.

We thus arrive at the insight that the physical world we are able to grasp cannot be everything there is, and we delight as our pulse quickens from the further universes opened up to us by the heights of abstraction.

Dietmar Brixy was born in Mannheim in 1961 and studied in Karlsruhe with Harald Klingelhöller and Katharina Fritsch, among others.

The fact that he trained as a sculptor is immediately evident. He moves volumes across the canvas. For him, painting is an act of strength. This conqueror of the canvas works with brushes, spatulas, and his own two hands. He smears and digs in the pathways of lines, leaving behind gurgling lava and perfume. This is not entertainment, but rather existentialism.

Brixy stirs up the paint, creates reliefs, and exemplifies how the traditional elements of painting in the classical sense can be modernized in different forms. He transports the viewer to a magic mountain, even with his smaller canvases.

For each image, this thoroughbred painter has developed a recipe in which he has concealed a number of aromatic details to lend the whole work an air of creativity and timeliness.

Sometimes, he focuses on the processual, sometimes on the tactile interface of the surface, and sometimes his approach revolves around the thinkable, which frees the image from being only an object or commodity.

Brixy is constantly offering us new approaches to allow us to enter into lively communication with his images.

Currently, the multifaceted cycles ‘Surprise’ from 2015/16, and ‘Tomorrow’ from 2016/17, which open themselves up to a variety of interpretations, are spread out before us.

‘Surprise’, of course, implies the unexpected.

To our astonishment, the artist takes us along on an adventurous tour, directing us between the poles of nature and painting and, last but not least, into the nature of painting itself.

Brixy, who has travelled into the depths of his heart and back, as well as to Malaysia, Mexico, and Bali, provides new sustenance for the universal longing for Eden.

On the other hand, he allows us to sense the secrets of his painting, which produces surfaces of desire that are entangled like the dense vines of a jungle.

Brixy’s most recent cycle ‘Tomorrow’ rests on his well-known, convulsively colourful style, but mixes his need for harmony with regions of dissonance. Under these conditions, an image begins with a cacophony of waves of sounds curving into one another.

Beneath the tapestry of sound, wide rifts break open again and again, allowing us to intuit a sense of what is underneath or behind, or even to develop an expectation of what the future holds.

I'd rather not pin down too precisely whether this 'Tomorrowland' exists somewhere as a patch of Earth – or even whether such a place would actually be appealing or rather overwhelming.

Unquestionably, the images are imprinted by a hedonistic flow, which Brixy, with the full force of his soul, has made into an event.