

*Flora, fauna, fluidity and finesse in one.  
The playful handling of nature in art.*



# Dietmar Brix: Art is When the Image Speaks

The property alone is worth a closer look, with its impressive and distinctive atmosphere – once the perimeter wall and security cameras have been successfully negotiated, that is. Within seconds you find yourself transported into a fascinating bygone world. The Altes Pumpwerk Neckarau, located in the district of the same name in Mannheim and perfectly renovated to its original neo-Gothic state from the year 1903, has won numerous awards as a historic landmarked industrial building. As you wander through the vast gardens full of exotic plants and trees, it feels like you are in a foreign country. Everyday life seems so remote that you sense this visit will stay with you for a long time to come. The building itself even surpasses the garden: a modern artist's residence with studios, galleries and living areas in one. The huge rooms, dominated by



*DiDietmar Brix; Discover; 2013, oil on calico, 180 cm x 120 cm © Dietmar Brix top left: Dietmar Brix, photo: Christian Dammert*

steel and iron from earlier times, lend this industrial building an air of productivity and technology which, in combination with the many pictures on view in a wide range of formats and the amazingly comfortable living quarters, seems near-perfect. For here art meets industrial design. And all of this in a seamless transition from dizzying heights to the depths of a cellar. The name of the artist who lives and works here is Dietmar Brix. It is not so much the paintings on the walls that make it clear that an artist lives here, rather the tasteful and imaginative interior decor and the well-designed 1,600-square metre garden with bamboo and exotic plants such as peonies, camellias and a variety of rhododendrons and magnolias.

Brix's artworks on show at the current exhibition 'Achtung Brix' are presented – together with



## EXHIBITIONS

### Current exhibition: 'Achtung Brix'

4.10.- 26.10.13: New Paintings.

Special Guests: Galerie Tammen & Partner (Berlin) with Lothar Seruset (sculpture/wall reliefs) and Marion Eichmann (installation/collage).

The combination of sculptures and wall reliefs by Lothar Seruset with collages and an installation by Marion Eichmann creates an unexpected atmosphere of concentrated artistic energy in Dietmar Brix's exhibition space, where viewers and visitors are inspired to contemplate the nature of art. It is not just that the works on display develop a surprisingly rich potency here, but the exciting combination of different art forms and media offers a whole new perspective on the physicality of the media used, the mastering of which constitutes the transformation of creativity into art.

Opening times:

Friday: 3 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Saturday: 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

and by prior appointment

#### Further information:

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#### Other exhibitions:

- Until 15.10.2013: 'Discover – Brix', White Porch Gallery, Provincetown (MA/USA); solo show
- Until 26.10.2013: 'Discover – Brix', art studio fael, Hanover; solo show
- 7-10.11.2013: Contemporary Istanbul with Galerie Tammen & Partner (Berlin), solo show
- 3-8.12.2013: Context Art Miami. Dietmar Brix at 'Art from Berlin', with Galerie Tammen & Partner (Berlin)
- 5-8.12.2013: Parallel to Art Basel Miami - Brix launch USA: Grand opening of the R-House, White Porch Gallery, Miami (USA), featuring 'Discover – Brix' until 2014



*Dietmar Brix; Discover; 2012, oil on calico, 240 cm x 180 cm © Dietmar Brix*

works by Marion Eichmann and Lothar Seruset (see left) – under the motto 'Discover'. And that, in essence, is what the art is all about – the act of discovery, and the curiosity to explore new things. Brix's special combination of floral motifs set in strong colours with his very distinctive, abstract transformation of colour and form is especially appealing due to its impulsiveness and sheer force. The focus of his painting is the continually changing colour surfaces and textures that meander through his images. In his work 'Discover' (see p. 6), for example, the artist creates a panorama of

following the laws of gravity, move from the top down the canvas. Almost in the centre, a dark, grey-black background, running downwards and separating the vibrant streaks of colour on either side, gives this work a magical, organic, even floral quality – like a doorway adorned with completely unknown, fantastical symbols that opens into an enchanting, neo-Romantic world. Dietmar Brix usually works with oils (on calico or linen canvas) – which he not only applies with brushes, but by adopting a literal 'hands-on' approach. Using his bare hands, he applies the paint across the canvas in great streaks of colour. It is a very physical kind of work,



## EXHIBITIONS

but without this exertion he would not be able to create such trails of paint that seem to be twisted and knotted together, and which unite – reluctantly – only to separate once again, all culminating in a vigorous process of constant flux. He covers the canvas with thick layers of paint almost in relief, ultimately exposing the act of painting as a perpetual process – indeed, the only constant in life, and especially in art. The energy driving this flux can only result from the continual evolution of artistic style. A good example of this is seen in another work from the 'Discover' series in which the floral element is given greater space and the vegetal structure lends the composition its formal hierarchy with various tree forms. Establishing a spatial viewpoint is – as is generally the case with Brixly's work – difficult, as the expressive and informal elements resist any spatial, geographical sense of order. The images are not just timeless but also placeless. And yet they still manage to 'speak' to the viewer directly, are dialogical, and exert a near-Dionysian force (see p. 7).

The emphasis on the here and now also provides the clue as to how our gaze is supposed to wander across the canvas, as seen for example in his 'Bamboo' pictures. Bamboo, one of the most fascinating plants in the world, belongs to the family of true grasses and is particularly impressive from an artistic standpoint due to its pliability, the strength of its stem and its fast rate of growth, often reaching 30 meters or more in a short space of time. These grass-like, woody plants combine this mixture of lightness and airiness with a materiality capable of rapid growth. This element of constant change, the continual modification of everything that exists is a central



*Dietmar Brixly; Hubba Bubba Bamboo Bubble;  
2011, Öl auf Nessel, Durchmesser 160 cm ©  
Dietmar Brixly*



*The Altes Pumpwerk in Mannheim-Neckarau – home and studio of the  
artist Dietmar Brixly. © Dietmar Brixly*

theme in Dietmar Brixly's work. His paintings are imbued with a powerful luminosity that extends beyond the edges of the canvas and permeates the surrounding space, as demonstrated in his work 'Hubba Bubba Bamboo Bubble'. The bamboo traverses the picture, curving and intertwining with other branches. Enveloped by a pinkish background, the picture conveys a well-balanced mixture of expressiveness and calculated figuration. The colour remains colour and is not set in opposition to the figurative elements, but actually serves to heighten them. The circular shape and the interwoven bamboo have neither an end nor a beginning; the creative squaring of the circle is presented as a timeless, never-ending art form. The picture becomes something meditative, contemplative, and gently but insistently triggers a muted and intense dialogue between the work and the viewer.

As the eye of the beholder moves across the canvas, this internal dialogue between the image and viewer, especially in Brixly's early works, increasingly brings into focus the many different figurative 'ingredients', from geckos to butterflies and birds as well as plant remains and leaves.



## EXHIBITIONS



*Dietmar Brixy; Discover; 2013, oil on calico, 100 cm x 80 cm © Dietmar Brixy*

In his new work from the 'Discover' series, however, the viewer's attention is immediately drawn to the strong, twisting lines of the red-green swirl of paint (see above). Powerful and compelling, it not only divides the picture but takes on the proportions of an almost perfect, centrally positioned form that can be read as a branch with leaves surrounded by tropical fauna.

Flowing gradients of colour drifting downwards, with hints of floral structures in shades of blue and green, textural and almost in relief, help to give this work a powerful and discernible natural credibility, which is accompanied by the ambiguous desire in the viewer to reach out and

'feel' the paint to satisfy his or her sense of touch. The first colourful layer of paint applied by the artist is just the beginning in a laborious process. Once dry, the second impasto layer of paint is applied – either with a palette knife, paintbrush or often by hand to create a textural relief, a mixture ultimately of abstract and figurative painting. Finally, Brixy removes some of the paint to form figurative structures that in the end can be clearly recognized as real objects, such as branches, leaves and fruit. It is a creative amalgamation that evokes visual landscapes to represent a dynamic and gripping organic process. The images lose nothing of their inner tension as, with their expressionistic openness and the mixture of colour and form, a

Dietmar Brixy was born in 1961 in Mannheim, Germany. He studied at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Karlsruhe under Wilhelm Loth, Michael Sandle, Harald Klingelhöller, Katharina Fritsch, Werner Pokorny and Elisabeth Wagner (1985-1991) and has lived and worked as an artist in Mannheim since then.

From 2001 to 2003, he renovated and refurbished the landmarked neo-Gothic pump station Altes Pumpwerk Neckarau (designed in 1903 and built to plans by Richard Perry, the director of urban planning in Mannheim) as a living space and studio. Since 2004, annual exhibitions of Dietmar Brixy's most recent works have been held at the Altes Pumpwerk Neckarau, and have evolved from being an insider's tip to a must-see event. Trips throughout Europe to paint and study as well as to Malaysia, Mexico and Bali, the Seychelles and the USA have been important sources of inspiration for the artist. His works are regularly exhibited at well-known galleries and art fairs in Germany and abroad and have been purchased by both private collectors and institutions and museums.

highly individual, personal style emerges that is entirely distinctive of Dietmar Brixy's painting. Nature becomes a plaything of art and vice versa. Art of this kind has an underlying force, affecting us more than we realize at first. It is capable of drawing the viewer into the painting; triggering in us the instinct to interpret the images ourselves, in what becomes a personal, rhythmic dialogue with the 'speaking' picture. These works hover between abstraction and figuration, and it is just as well that neither the artist nor the viewer has to decide which of these two styles is most dominant.

Michaela Buchheister