

## The silent question of happiness

By Christel Heybrock

Happiness is blue and means "Message in a Box" - message in a box, or more precisely, boxes and surfaces, all together more than twenty parts, large and small. The large wall installation is a new series of paintings by Dietmar Brixy at the Altes Pumpwerk, and when the sun streams in through the high windows in the morning, the blue glows almost above ground and is simultaneously moved like an organism by the shadows of the trees vibrating in the wind, fanning the light. All around the house there are pictures in various formats, the blue is repeated in various variations under the title "Happy", contrasting with yellow, orange, red, all of them opulent, pastose volutes applied with the hands almost evoke the memory of baroque festivities.

Brixy has invited the young sculptor Matthias Garff from the Berlin gallery Tammen as a special guest, and he is bubbling over with wit and bizarre ideas with animal sculptures made from found material: birds and insects from shoes, jackets, pieces of carpet, crown caps and grandfather's milk churn, the man can do anything, and he can do the smallest and the very largest formats. And somehow it all fits together, Brixy's pictures, which always evoke jungle-like growth, and Garff's animals. Perhaps it is only in contrast that one notices: In Brixy's paintings, in which the fig leaves from the garden, pressed in damp paint, play a formative role, there are no figures, no animals, no people (although he has mastered them, as he proved earlier).

Brixy's paintings: Atmosphere and plant growth, dramatically one with burning horizons, juicy and brimming the other, stored in the thick curls and loops from Brixy's hands, perhaps unconsciously recreating the forms of growth given in the garden. The fig leaves inside: fragile, intensely present, but fragile because they are peeled off again after being imprinted into the damp layer of paint. Their presence as well as their vulnerability expand on the picture surfaces in the form of dripping gutters that seem never-ending, sometimes running beyond the edges - threatened life that slowly seeps away.

The levels of the world of appearance consisting of atmosphere and silent plant energy continue as a variety of pictorial levels in the different formats. Brixy has placed cubes, cube-like boxes, painted all around them as if the paint were growing around them alive. The fact that Brixy plays with formats is known from the past, when he, inspired by his bamboo plants, created a whole series in an unusual sound format. The boxes are more corporeal, appearing in small cubes as in meter-sized appearances, and the blue makes them unreal at the same time.

Sculptor Matthias Garff seems to sweep into this ambivalence like a merry whirlwind. Opposite the blue wall in the hall in the open kitchen, an almost two-metre-high gorilla answers: "Is he about to jump off the table? The impressive poses of the birds on their potato rake claws are magnificent, the larger ones in the garden stand on colourful rubber boots. Giant insects, a yellow cockroach in the kitchen, a grasshopper on the chest of drawers, a white moth with net eyes made of hairbrushes - all the way to insect boxes with tiny animals made of crown caps and candy paper, Garff's fauna is a joy to behold, pure happiness. Yes? It's completely made of disposable material, and Garff can use everything from oil canisters to training jackets. Materials that fly to him - from the excessive consumption of us contemporaries. Happy? Quietly asking about happiness: What is it for the others?