

The silent question of happiness

Mannheimer Morgen, 30 September 2020, Author: Christel Heybrock (hey)

Happiness is blue and is called "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 at the same time is moved like an organism by the shadows of the trees vibrating in the wind, fanning the light.

Pictures in various formats are distributed around the house, the blue is repeated in various variations under the title "Happy", contrasting with yellow, orange, red, lavishly all this. Brixy has invited the young sculptor Matthias Garff from the Berlin gallery Tammen as a special guest, and he is bubbling over with humour 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, can do the tiniest and very large formats. And somehow everything fits together, Brixy's pictures, which always evoke a 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 moist paint, play a formative role, there are no figures, no animals, no people.

Brixy's pictures: Atmosphere and plant growth, dramatically one with burning horizons, juicy and bursting 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 - 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 created in the 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 Garff seems to sweep into this ambivalence like a merry whirlwind. The blue wall in the hall is answered by an almost two-metre-high gorilla in the open kitchen: Garff's fauna is a joy. Yes? It is completely made of disposable material, of the excessive consumption of us contemporaries. Happy? Sometimes quietly asking about happiness: what is it for the others?