Tatjana Gerhard: Glashaus

Little eyes delicately peek out from the canvas (In der Grotte, 2024), one apparently lost eye stares at you (Überall ist Farbe, 2024), eyes turn away or pierce through you. The paintings of Tatjana Gerhard lay eyes on you.

The sizeable, colourful works develop instinctively, without preliminary studies or premeditated compositions, and with a deep passion for painting. When three peepers loom over a fist that tightly grips a paint brush, it’s with eyes full of love (Ich, 2024). Forms visit the canvas, move all around, blow up or shrink. As they make their walk, they tumble over each other and lose pieces. Sometimes they wind up where they were in the first place. But at the end it feels different, they had to make this journey. Gerhard takes time and communicates with her works, often with several at the same time. The dialogue spreads over the different canvases. She distances herself, listens and digs further. It is reflecting and putting them through their spaces. Until the form, material and colour are fully lived through. “*One eye sees, the other feels*,” wrote the German-Swiss artist Paul Klee (1879 - 1940). Gerhard does not look without feeling. She paints tactilely and sensually, touches, and kneads until she understands, or new questions arise. Courageously all doors are wide open while creating. Before you know it a bird spontaneously flies by (Die Zecke, 2024). In a similar way, figures are sheltered by a house or cave (Gestern ist vorbei, 2024) and the phoenix rises from its ashes. From the intimacy of the process an intuitive symbolism is born. When boundaries are set and blurred, it is investigated where one person's freedom ends, and another's begins. Are they embracing or devouring one another? Titles add a layer and refer to a tick, theft, vampire, unrest, and motherhood. By choosing the German language, she evokes her own mother tongues and homelands and the question of where you are ultimately at home? Artistry and life are inextricably linked for Gerhard. When she places her hand on the wall (Hand auf Wand, 2024) she focuses as much on herself as on the origins of painting in prehistoric caves. Removing and adding fragments until everything is in balance contains a metaphor for life.

Gerhard's glass house is personal and vulnerable. It is transparent, but is it see-through? Particularly in the work Glashaus (2024), the bird only shows its legs. Exposing yourself without self-protection can break the safety that a home can provide. And at the same time, just because someone is looking doesn't mean you are seen. The free bird knows that humour has the biggest power to question the truth. This exhibition with colours so cheerful that they sometimes shine in your eyes shares that the painter has come home. More than ever, she lives within herself. When the works look at you with their grotesque grimaces of pain or pleasure, they have the power to be anyone's story. They are highly personal and extremely universal. “*We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are*” writes Anaïs Nin (1903-1077) and she seems to describe these powerful, fragmentary scenes: “*We do not grow absolutely, chronologically. We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not in another; unevenly. We grow partially. We are relative. We are mature in one realm, childish in another. The past, present, and future mingle and pull us backward, forward, or fix us in the present. We are made up of layers, cells, constellations*”. The glass house reflects like a mirror.

Femke Vandenbosch