

Bettina Weiß – Gamma

December 16, 2023 – January 27, 2024

Form, Color and Spirit

Embedded in a deep and space-dominating blue that almost borders on ultramarine, the new paintings from 2023 shine like jewels in the exhibition space, creating the intimate atmosphere of a cabinet that shines out into the gray, wintry Berlin cityscape with its precious objects.

A variation of shapes and sizes, on canvas or wood, are thoughtfully placed in relation to one another. Rectangle, circle and triangle.

The two large tondi, each 120 cm in diameter, are hung at eye level on the one hand and, on the other, close off the wall surface at the top (metaphorically opening it up). The picture discs themselves radiate outwards through the color fields that extend from the center of the picture towards the edge. In one of the tondos, it is as if the curved tails of color are strung together, which could make the tondo optically rotate. In the other tondo, it seems as if the ever-expanding circles of color moving away from the center of the picture are pushing out into the space beyond the canvas, optically held together only by the ellipsoidal areas of color, also radially arranged and reminiscent of the basic shape of a flower. A superimposition of rings in the center of the picture also gives it a spherical quality.

The choice of color and the plastic application of paint reinforce the impression. Each local color defining the individual partial form is broken up many times by other colors, which are repeatedly superimposed and sanded away so that they partially enhance the basic tone. The application of shimmering layers of pearlescent, gold and silver paint binds the picture together and gives it additional energy through its diaphanous materiality. It shimmers everywhere, depending on the viewer's point of view and the incidence of light.

The large counterpart, a canvas square called *Aurora*, placed powerfully on the opposite wall and moved far from the center of the wall, forms a great contrast to the dynamically light tondi. Here, too, the canvas is broken up into partial forms consisting of circles of different sizes, but the difference in material, the contrast in material, creates a dynamic within the canvas in a different way, associatively drifting into the space beyond the canvas through the cut of the circles. The contrast between dull 'pure' colors and the composite colors is a bold assertion, the balance and tension of which has been worked out over a long process.

Two series of works form the filigree ribbon-like bracket in the exhibition staging. One is the *Portrait of a Secret Landscape* series, which in portrait size opens up a cosmos of forms and colors that extend the relationship of basic forms such as rectangle, triangle and circle beyond the earlier series of works into the vertical (!) 'landscape space' and - one could say - spiritually charge it. There are occasional round, linear circular and

triangular forms that physically, but also metaphorically, overlay and charge the pictorial work. Associations of halos and the *Eye of God* arise (the triangular form is a symbol for this in Christian iconography) and can at least establish the spiritual character of this series of works, especially as the mysterious is already hinted at in the title of the work.

The most recent series of works, *Bianki*, which was only begun this year, is characterized by an opaque and brightly shimmering color materiality. Measuring 30 x 24 x 3 cm (thus clearly raised into the room), they have an unprecedented lightness. The author is almost inclined to say: elegance.

They appear weightless, even if the block-like appearance in this small format is diametrically opposed by the depth of the wooden support material. The all-encompassing and dominant white evokes discretion and purity, and subtly charges these works with mystery.

Only the square canvas measuring 1 m x 1 m, which consists of an infinite number of narrow vertical strips of color, breaks away from the cosmos of the previously described series of works and yet still fits in, as two self-confidently placed rings of color cut through the striped image.

And the *Eye of God (Triops #2)* is enthroned above it all, at least associatively. On the entrance wall, only visible upon entering the exhibition, is a smaller triangular painting that grows ever larger circular discs in the middle, starting from the lower part of the picture, which are imaginatively continued into the room and yet visually give the picture its painting ground in the outermost color ring through the radical cut of the canvas form. In the painting technique on canvas related to the tondi, they reinforce the mystical character.

The blue cabinet becomes a chamber of wonders and treasures. Just as the indescribable and mysterious were gathered together and exhibited in the historical cabinet of curiosities, thus creating a magical place, Bettina Weiß bundles and stages her abstract paintings against a blue background to create a unique, never-before-experienced visual experience that harbors tendencies of the sacred. The visual impression produces heightened gamma waves in our brain, as can be detected in vivid dreams and meditation.

The artist's act of creation is tantamount to a transfer of energy. Her energy (not only physical, but also mental and spiritual) is bound up in the work and radiates out into the room. We, the viewers, can, if we are open, feel the bundled energy and allow it to affect us. If necessary, it allows us to leave the exhibition space inspired and delighted. Gamma!

Semjon H. N. Semjon, Dezember 2023