**The “Theater of Man”**

The paintings of the Wiesbaden artist Anna Bieler can be viewed periodi-cally in our region - recently during the „Tour Of The Open Studio“ in Octo-ber this year and in a solo exhibition at the Thalhaus (Nov. 2015).

Many art lovers should, therefore, know her oevre, and we may be confi-dent that her intensive artistic activities will produce many more original works.

She chose the title of „The Theater of Man“ for this solo exhibition. -

I was immediately struck by her paintings during her first exhibition at „NKV“, in 1997. Very soon after completing her studies at the arts college in Mainz, it was noticeable that she possessed her own pictorial expres-sion and did not follow any artistic models.

This attitude has not changed – it has developed. Her treasure of images is being brought into the world step by step.

We see extremely colourful and mostly two-dimensional (con)figurations. They are serene (but not only!) and never one-dimensional.

It is an extremely lively art, existentially relevant, presenting mysterious puzzles.

The paintings revolve around the issues: Being a Woman, Love, Eros, Preg-nancy, Man and Woman.

The number of living things is increasing in her paintings: they include op-posing pairs of animals, fish and birds, in many transitional forms (inter-mediate forms). These creatures represent universal human moods and anthroposophic attitudes. They fill the paintings up with a special life. -

We see mixed techniques on paper and oil paintings in large formats.

How do you start such a picture?

This artist does not make sketches or pre-studies. She simply begins.

The colour planes (the paint layers) fill the pictorial place as if they were „cut out“ – but figures and faces become gradually apparent.

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High colour contrasts, mostly of the primary colours Red, Blue, and Yellow – with White mixed into - contribute to the bright (luminous) effect of the paintings, which do not simply express cheerful, fairytale moods: There is, sometimes, a gloomy undercurrent in these pictures, even without the addition of Black.

The yellow “Player” (“Gambling Woman”) holds up two masks stitched together. She holds them up out of water, and the flower in her mouth does not make the scene more cheerful.

In the picture „No Play“ we see the heads of a couple swimming back-stroke, milky white, with the sun in a light blue sky. But from the right side a kind of a crocodile is approaching – Punch and Judy show? - and the idyll is marred.

Here, in „The Theater of Man“, puppets appear repeatedly. They are sym-bols for human beings (see „Bühnenstück“, „Selbstbetrachtung“). We all play a certain role in our community: a joyful one in “Garten” on a swing-set, but finally as the stupid ones, while „the universe in expanding“. -

Now I have assembled a few titles which could be regarded as suggestive; but that should not deceive us to “read” the pictures from their endings, i.e. from the invention of the title. The picture first – and only then the meaning we try to give it! The paintress allows that, she never decrees a meaning. She leads us to a changeable world where the elements - not by pure accident – are water and air. This „Theater of Man“ does not play on the wooden planks of a theater. –

Let us take a closer look at one picture: the canvas “Die verlorenen Bilder”, which we also see on our written invitation.

The large format shows a woman with a yellow head and windblown hair. She cradles a red-hot bird to her blue body, saving it. The background is deep blue, and from there a doglike animal is jumping right through the

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picture, in the direction of the woman. She is standing on a red ground, which sharply distinguishes from the horizon. –

Anna Bieler grew up in Greece and Portugal, and her explosions of colour pay witness to this fact. She has called herself „a child of light, sea, and sun.“

On the left-hand side is a small tree which sprays white (!) leaves in all directions, symbolizing the loss of paintings which were destroyed by mould in the wet basement of her studio.

Even if we do not know all this, we observe a scene of a tragic event, images of loss, but with the simultaneous knowledge that the tree will bear fruits.

The German ruminating and brooding is added to the bucolic mood (which Albert Camus describes in his philosophy of the mediterranean citizen): an attitude which asks for the meaning behind things.

Therefore, we are not only pleasantly entertained in this „Theater of Man“, but are confronted with our own character depth or – as one of the titles suggests: kissed by lunacy.

Bernd Brach