

Jenny Brosinski

TOO FAT TO FLY

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Brosinski is one of the prominent figures of a new generation of contemporary abstract painters in Europe. The Berlin artist's aesthetic is unmistakably her own, setting a new standard in the styles of 'dirty minimal' and 'conceptual expressionism'. One adjective keeps coming up in connection to her painting style: cool. But what does the word 'cool', so exceedingly overused in everyday language, actually mean for a painter and her pictorial world?

In the Oxford Dictionary, this adjective is defined as follows: "always keeping calm, not being afraid, not getting nervous, not letting oneself get upset; calm, collected, casual". This describes Brosinski's hand precisely. Although her pictures can be riotous – yes, they are energetically charged and vibrant – at the same time a calmness emanates through them, a composure in each individual stroke, in the way they are painted over and rewritten. Her paintings exude confidence in the way figurative forms are expelled, the abstract retaining ambiguity in a few swift detours. This is exactly the drama of the works: Abstraction and figuration play off each other, one sometimes yielding more than the other, fighting yet laughing. Enveloped in a sovereignty that seems very casual, as if she were pirouetting on the ice while smoking a pipe.

Ghosts, dolphins, unicorns ... even airplanes and cars appear. Her spirit settles into splashes of colour, her presence reinforced by a few loose lines. Akin to childlike animism where stones or toys come alive, the abstract forms also come into a figurative life. The creatures live between the brushstrokes as if in their natural habitat. Like a matter of fate, the strokes, lines, and non-forms belong to their habitat. In the works on paper, Brosinski goes way out on a limb. This is how she refers to it when figurative forms emerge. Specifically, a skull or a horse rolling on its back. These are not typical works for her. Nevertheless, they were kept and honestly exhibited as a paper series. Curiosities, which nevertheless generated an impulse from which other more abstract works sprang forth.

The exhibition title 'Too Fat to Fly' is an endearing homage to bumblebees - animals favored by Brosinski. They are said to be too round and heavy to fly. The bumblebee, however, does not know this, and therefore tries again and again. Brosinski draws a parallel with being an artist. You never know whether something, i.e. a painting or a style, will work, but it is better not to think about it and keep trying.

The cephalopods also fall into this category of attempt and possible failure. Children draw their first human figures, and sometimes succeed in making them more or less recognisable. Brosinski's application of this drawing scheme into her own visual language allows for impact from both sides of the field: the cephalopods are painted over or disassembled into their individual parts, thus scoring abstract points, or they remain together as figurative beings. Classic colours like yellow, light blue or black also play an active role in her new works. Black particularly dominates, overriding earlier brushstrokes, sometimes in the form of a stick house, sometimes as an omitted stain. These rewritings not only testify to a confrontation between artist and canvas, but also to the fact that changes in life's course, as in a painting, are not a list of mistakes, but reflect an honest, human progression towards self-determination.

The play between abstract and figurative worlds is never clearly defined in Brosinski's work; as quickly as a ball bounces back, recognisable forms are called into question again. All this happens without fear, without hurry, and with a cool flick of the wrist.

— Dr. Larissa Kicol, independent art critic and art historian