

BIG FORMATS

“A full-fledged man”

He really was, Fischer Johann, whom Leo Navratil invited to live in the “Centre for Art and Psychotherapy” in Gugging, which he founded in 1981, since there was a free spot available. Inspired by the artists around him, Johann Fischer began to draw and, at the beginning of his artistic career, always put individual figures on paper, which he described in one sentence. This was also the case with this particular drawing, which was extraordinarily monumental for Fischer. One day, Leo Navratil offered him a roll of wallpaper, since large drawing papers were too expensive. In 1982, his largest and longest work was created on maculation paper, which in my opinion depicts a self-portrait. You can find a man, who similar to Johann Fischer, is dressed very elegantly. He wears boots and a hat, has a walking stick, and a beard on his chin. “A full-fledged man” enjoys his cigarette ... just as Johann Fischer himself did.

“LAND ON, PLANET MERKURIUS.?”

August Walla was a master of the large format. His former room in the *House of Artists*, the “Little Sixtina” from Gugging, as well as the ceramic wall “Paradise” created in 1984, testify to the fact that he was able to skillfully translate his private mythology and philosophy from small to large format. He loved to paint canvases and tell his stories on them. “LAND ON, PLANET MERKURIUS.?” depicts houses, paths, trees, and a bus in unusual colours for Walla and shows a possibility of what it might look like on this planet. Especially his longing for distant countries, for a different life, is expressed in this work particularly well, whereby he was not sure whether this planet existed at all, which he underlined by the question mark. Like most of his works, the back of this canvas was designed with writing. In this case: an enumeration of planets and stars.

“Tyrannosaurus Rex”

This work combines the colours and shadows of the desert that François Burland loves so much with the legends and myths of bygone times. With this expressive depiction of animals, he returns to the fables that accompanied him during his childhood and fascinated him even then. Inspired by the summer months filled with legends and magic, which he spent with his grandparents as a child in France, he picturesquely puts a dinosaur and a smaller lizard on paper. He himself experiences the creative process as if someone else were at work and is convinced that everything that once existed is collectively present in us and that something new can emerge from it.

“=Himel”

Oswald Tschirnter wanted to become a priest, but through war and its horrors his life took a completely different career. He is the minimalist among the *Gugging Artists* and is known for his “head-footer” and abstract depictions of themes, which he mainly reduced to small formats until 1980. The south façade of the *House of Artists*, on which he drew two house-high “head-footers” in 1983, shows impressively that he was effortlessly able to change from a small to a large format. In the former children’s home, which now houses the *gallery gugging*, the *museum gugging*, and the *open studio*, there is a chapel and Oswald Tschirntner, whose artistic work was often inspired by his faith, was asked to design it, which he did in 2001. “=Himel” is a collection of ideas, a sketch for the design of the chapel, and as such an absolute rarity. People are depicted in the chapel and on the cross, and the question arises as to whether the illustrated individual with implied wings might even portray an angel.

“Forest”

Johann Korec loved women, nature, and animals and in this work on canvas he skillfully combines all themes. After a visit to the Schönbrunn Animal Garden, he absolutely wanted to design a large canvas – the size of the park – and started after some time – equipped with apron and gloves. As much as he was fascinated by the size of the elephant, which can also be seen in this work, and by many other animals, which he enumerates ... the sloths, which can be found in the trees above the lying lovers, were particularly appealing to him. For a while, he just wanted to do nothing, like a sloth. After some time, he decided to continue and imbedded two couples of lovers and animals in several trees and gave his greatest work the name “Forest”. When visiting the *gallery gugging*, you can also admire the “Korec trees” on the façade of the building.

“Humans and bicycle”

Arnold Schmidt delights with an expressive depiction of his main themes: human, airplane, bird, and bicycle. Skillfully and with a lot of verve, he brings the motive, he has previously defined, onto paper, canvas, or even onto the façade of the *House of Artists*. The canvas illustrated is his greatest work so far and unites the themes of a man, a bicycle, and a bird in a harmonious way. It is also interesting that in this case he has created a floor with applied lines consisting of several colours, which makes this work appear very compact. This work by Arnold Schmidt, who always signs with “Andi”, shows his picturesque talent and his preference to use plenty of water to mix the colours.

“thatishowitis!”

When I told Alfred Neumayr that the next exhibition would be devoted to the “BIG FORMATS”, he took the opportunity to take up another – large – canvas. It became one of his most important works and it was a mental, physical, and technical challenge for him to complete it. Alfred Neumayr, whose works are created in the *open studio*, started working as an artist eight years ago and initially concentrated on the representation of “nothingness”. Shapes, beings, floral-looking shapes, and lines made of delicate strokes with Indian ink or acrylic pen determine his work. He developed this canvas from the left side and finally connected the resulting forms and figures with decorated chains. It seems as if the central main figure carries and connects everything with each other over a net. Like all his works, it is advisable to look at them closely in order to grasp the many details. With a glance from a little distance, women’s bodies, ghostly-looking creatures, and animal bodies and heads appear. After Alfred Neumayr had worked about 250 hours on the work and made the last stroke with the same feeling as the first, he thought: “thatishowitis!” and thus created the title of the work.

“Cordoba’s solution”

After Simone Pellegrini visited the *gallery gugging* in November 2018 and being allowed to see some of his works, I knew that I would love to show them someday. “BIG FORMATS” is the perfect exhibition, because Pellegrini, who feels a connection to art brut and whose work curator Guiseppe Frangi compares to that of Adolf Wölfli, consistently produces large works on paper that seem very organic. “Cordoba’s solution” was created by the artist especially for this exhibition and is one of his greatest works so far. Since he never uses “virgin” papers and his works are supposed to have a certain patina, it is an own process for him to create “his” work base by tearing and reassembling paper. He only uses black and red natural colours and brings the previously made matrix onto the large sheet with a little oil and an iron object, with which he can exert sufficient pressure. That is how a work like this develops – matrix for matrix. He found his inspiration in one of the largest sacred buildings on earth, the mosque and church later rededicated to the cathedral of Cordoba, where Muslims and Catholics could practice their faith together for many centuries. On the far right, a form based on one of the columns of the building appears. According to Simone Pellegrini, the other structures originated from the depths of the ocean and the field of abstraction.