

## A small ontology...

"In the beginning was Kokoschka, whom he copied when he was fourteen..." stood thirty years ago in the magazine "Boheme – the Viennese Scene". Now I believe that I have painted myself free from "...certain attitudes through his feeling for form and color", as Karl-Heinz Roschitz wrote in the newspaper "Kurier" in 1969.

Picasso once said that all painters since van Gogh, no matter how famous, are still naive painters or self-educated. Because today's painters no longer hold to tradition, each one of us must repeatedly create new possibilities for expression. Every modern painter has the right to invent his own language from A-Z.

Painting is speaking. Each type of art is based on people's need to communicate. The picture, the motif or symbols are poetical bearers of meaning to the viewer, particularly in abstract painting. The exactly portrayed object from earlier has been left out; no longer is "what" important, but "how". All that remains is the adventure of art without preconceived formulations. Actually, the same rules as in classic painting apply with the one advantage, that now one can deal with themes for which the representational art of painting was insufficient. This is certainly not always easy for the ordinary viewer to follow, especially since he doesn't deem it necessary to so involve himself. Paintings of the last decade present an additional intellectual challenge for people who are really able to ponder over art and its sociology. For me, the word abstract is not limited to formal analysis; it contains the supposition that there is more in a picture than what first meets the eye, and thus more to understand. A picture is an independent organism, parallel to- but not connected to- nature. Thus, the aesthetics of an artwork do not necessarily have anything to do with the aesthetics of nature. Pictures are a challenge for both the painter and viewer. We don't explain them but argue with them. That way one can depart from reality and enter the magic circle of art. The observation of true art leads through the vastness of thought and back to reality. The greatness of a work exists in interpretation, meaning, and the discernment of being, and in it the ability to gain more content and use for living. That is the reason for the positive influence of paintings in public buildings and in work- and customer- areas of hospitals, banks, insurance firms, and other companies. There reigns an interaction between the profane and the artistic: philosophy, science, religion, and culture – especially for me, painting – are the catalysts of a society and help safeguard its values.

The best advertisement for humanism is to paint as one wants. As Willem de Kooning said in a 1972 interview, "...I am an eclectic painter purely by chance; I can open any-old book with reproductions and will always find a painting that can influence me."

As far back as I can remember I, too, have largely been inspired to create new things through pictures, literature, or music – de facto, art. Apparently, I am in good company. Naturally, endeavoring to do justice to the inner content, I strive for new quality – without compromise and passionately – through my personal interpretation or speech. The ensuing sincerity is more important than the technical quality or the superficial impression of the paintings.

I live my life, because of my painting, in a special way – far from the impatient, non-personal, purely

capitalistic daily machinations of some rulers as well as the "common masses" (and that is not spoken without respect). Of course, it is impossible for art to induce changes. One can stimulate thought, which can't be wholly useless, but in this uselessness lays the freedom and anarchy of art.

Art, particularly painting, is for me one of the last refuges that allows me to linger on "one of my islands" – far enough away to be protected from the madness of business, science, and stultification of the masses. I consider myself in good company, which makes me happy and thankful: for people have painted for 35 000 years. It is assumed that painting developed before speech. One can say that art (painting) is man's meaning-giving, long-term memory, and thus should hold – or regain – a higher value in our society. For me, art – as long as it goes deeper than pure amusement, shallow entertainment, or arts and crafts – counterbalances the loss of orientation or suspected senselessness that prevails more and more today. However, much self-confidence is needed in order to live out both the realization of one's truths and soldering of depression, and to put both into perspective.

When painting, I have never felt myself bound to "-isms" or art movements. I don't care if I am "pigeon-holed" as a Fantastic Realist or as an abstract painter. I feel free from restraints and make use of the moment's need to increasingly find my way to myself. With great self-confidence I give rein to my spontaneous ideas, and paint the way I understand them. The paintings always tell me the way they want to be. My artistic character leans toward a strong immersion in color; I don't hold much with juiceless intellectual "word-plays". Painting in conceptual purity.

An adventure on the "Un-taken Sea Voyages of Odysseus"!

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