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Aufzeichnung eines Interviews mit Otto Nemitz über seine Arbeiten und seine Ausstellung im allgemeinen

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Interviewer: Mr. Nemitz could you tell our listeners how the exhibition of your works which is at present showing here in Australia has become reality?

O. Nemitz: It all started with a German art historian Dr. Rüdiger Joppin who showed slides of my works during a lecture cycle. Amongst the audience were some people from the Power Institute of Art in Sydney. And then, somehow a connection was established to the Hogarth Gallery and the exhibition was opened on February 1st 1977.

Interviewer: Mr. Nemitz you have been in Australia for a few weeks now. Is it possible for you to describe how your works have been received by either the Australian artist or the Australian public in general?

Nemitz: Perhaps I should answer that by describing a small episode which I experienced a few weeks ago. I was present at an editorial meeting of the art journal "Aspects" which is edited by Rudi Krausmann in Sydney when all of a sudden a man appeared on the scene whom I had never seen before and yet I had the feeling that somehow I knew him. This man who welcomed me like an old friend very warmly, was John Olsen. It was quite a surprise for me to find out that one can travel around the whole world and nevertheless, find out that there is an astonishing agreement in questions of artistic quality and the attitude towards creative work. Even though my paintings are entirely different from those of John Olsen. I think that such an experience is very rare. Perhaps there is such a thing as an international understanding of visual and human sensibility.

Interviewer: You have just told us how your work is received by an Australian artist. Could you also describe your impressions of the public which is interested in visual arts, the people who attend exhibitions and perhaps compare them with their counterpart in your country.

Nemitz: Basically, I would say there is little difference as far as the so-called art public is concerned. It is a minority just like in my country which is extremely well informed, open minded and capable to absorb. However, this group is relatively small at present and one should ask oneself why this is so. Is it due perhaps to the role of the schools, museums or perhaps also to the role of the galleries?

If all these institutions would reflect on how they could increase their didactic functions then perhaps this would be a help for all parties concerned. I think it is an important task to improve the visual sensibility of men to make them more critical,

Interviewer: How do you see your own work? Could you name a few characteristics of your artistic work?

Nemitz: It will always be difficult for a painter to judge his own work. I think the fact that he takes his own work for the most important artistic event is quite normal and one should not judge him too harshly for that. A qualified art critic is probably much more competent to give such an answer. If I, nevertheless, came to characterize my own work then I would like to mention the following factors: I attempt to present systems of order which contain the nucleus for the doubt in this order itself. Our reality is continuously threatened by disturbances, irritations, mistakes. This is my basic feeling, this I try to express in my art. Order which is a harmonistic principle is spread like a thin skin across the chaos which leaves its trace in that order. I think my work can be classified among the constructivists, my forms are abstract and the organising principle is based on analytical structure. Contrary to my own art, the constructivists have not developed their own cycle of forms. Their works are based on simple geometrical structures. I have developed my own language of forms which grows in three dimensional pictorial space. One could describe my method as a folding of pictorial space. The canvas is drawn over a frame and stretches over a graph which divides the rectangle vertically and horizontally. These spatially bulging ridges in the picture produce a sophisticated irritating spectacle that does not let the eye rest.

Interviewer: Mr. Nemitz, could you envisage living in Australia continuing your own work, or would this be quite out of the question?

Nemitz: I would very much like to live and work in Australia for a certain time. Possibly there will be a chance to do that in two years time. The light and the peculiar colours of Australia have a great attraction for me and I am certain that there will be traces of this experience when I continue my work in Germany. But it would, of course, be highly fascinating for me to work here in Australia for a certain time.

Interviewer: Mr. Nemitz, you will leave Australia in about a week. Perhaps you could summerize in a few words what impressions you have of Australians in general.

Nemitz: I would like to say that it was very good to be here. Australians have impressed me with their human sincerity. One is helpful and open-minded and this goes particularly for Australian artists and for me personally that was particularly valuable.