

Exhibition Black & White meets Colour Municipal Art Gallery Heraklion, 2015

Arn Strohmeier

I have the great honour to say some introductory words at the opening of the exhibition Black and White meets Colour from Peter Foeller and Piero Meogrossi. My name is Arn Strohmeier, I'm a German writer and friend of the artists and also a companion and follower of their artistic work. In a time when the problems and tensions between North and South in Europe, particularly between Greece and the EU, especially Germany, are so great, and Greece is going through very hard times, it is a very special occasion, when two artists overcome these contradictions and come together here for an exhibition. One artist - the painter Peter Foeller - comes from the north, he loves the south and his intense colours; the other - Piero Meogrossi - comes from the Mediterranean sea, as a Roman he is a great lover of Roman antiquity and he is a very gifted draughtsman. He stands for black and white in this exhibition.

That this exhibition in Heraklion takes place, is certainly no coincidence. This city is a melting pot of cultures since thousands of years, a meeting place of people from north and south, from east and west. But not only that: Crete is the starting point of the European civilization - symbolized in the Phoenician princess Europe who was kidnapped by Zeus. And he brought her to this island. What a wonderful coincidence, if here now comes together art from north and south! Peter Foeller knows Crete for over 30 years, he has spent much of his life at his home in the village of Plora. With its unique style of painting, which I would call an abstract musical lyricism, he has painted Cretan motives - not directly realistic, but very typical and aptly. I know Crete very well and I can recognize in each of his paintings the shapes and colors of this island. Foeller is not painting from reality, but trying to make the essence of what he sees around him here in Crete.

I would describe his painting in this way: everything lives here by opposites. There is a clearly designed geometric architecture but that never exists in pure form, this geometrical architecture is always distorted and broken, often surprisingly deformed and fragmented. There are two-dimensional or sculptural formations and bodies of often surreal and suggestive beauty. But this solid and almost logical order is surrounded by other forces and energies - vague, diffuse, illogical, amorphous, they swarm around the geometric clarity, sometimes they seem to threaten and want to destroy it, but at the end the contrasts and the opposites come together to balance and harmony. Rhythm and dynamism of the picture elements remind us of musical compositions. At

the same time they have something Archaic, as if you visit ancient dream-landscapes of the soul.

Here is a parallel to the drawings of Piero Meogrossi. He is a very accurate detail-draftsman and with this extraordinary expertise in art he goes down with his drawings in the depths of myth and history. He wants to revive myth and history. As an archaeological architect he reconstructs mysterious axis-relations between Rome and Crete. His drawings seem to be quite realistic, but they are often dreamlike and surreal. This unreality is heightened by the black and white, because they seem to be from a former world. Therefore, they are often not so easy to understand. Piero Meogrossi firmly believes that we (who live in a time of tensions and uncertainties), the harmony and order can only come if we are guided by the great ideas of the ancient world. His paintings are an approximation to this Utopia.

There are two strange artistic worlds meeting here in the exhibition and meet the modern spirit of the Greeks and Cretans. I am very curious to see how you (the Cretans) take up these paintings and drawings. But I hope that from this encounter something very fertile will grow. Thank you very much!