

EU-MAN

universal colours

II/97

"How do the Universal Colours work?" In EU-MAN we are always looking forward to fruitful cooperation between us as members of our brand new organization.

Our bulletin Universal Colours contains topics, news, different views about issues concerning our future determination in EU-MAN. The basic equation that presents itself and that persists, demands always how we could offer the basic material for Universal Colours to keep it coming every three months. Surely it is not difficult for all of us to send our own news, topics, views and suggestions to EU-MAN's address. This bulletin which did touch the light last spring in its first issue, mustn't be limited to EU-MAN's Finnish members, although they have been the majority in the recent times. We in the board of EU-MAN have deep belief in our members' activities elsewhere, in the other EU-countries. Simply through our cultural activities we can certify our identities, and this matter is of major attention and priority for all artists living in exile.

We hope that all members of EU-MAN will cooperate by sending news, views about all migrant artists living in EU region. In this way we'll be able to know and to keep in touch with each others.

EU-MAN in the press

The daily newspaper "Turun Sanomat", the second largest paper in Finland, covered the facts of the first exhibition which EU-MAN organized

from 25th May till 6th June 1997 at Ateljé Kämpe in the city of Turku. The exhibition limited on the Finnish members of EU-MAN. The exhibition confirmed a good success of EU-MAN in terms of public attention for our activities. Turun Sanomat mentioned that this first exhibition of EU-MAN brought new flavours and new spices to the Finns.



Work by Abeer al Khateeb.

Under the title "Exile Article in Finland", Hufvudstadsbladet wrote a very favourable article about this first exhibition of EU-MAN and a brief introductory of EU-MAN. Hufvudstadsbladet is the largest paper of the Swedish speaking majority.

EU-MAN occupies an important corner of "Octavia", the only paper devoted to cultural affairs in Turku City. The paper mentioned the establishment of EU-MAN and its continuous work and as well as its future projects.

"Åbo Underrättelser" published on its first page on 2nd July 1997 a long report on EU-MAN and a journalist of Åbo Underrättelser made interview with the board of EU-MAN.

NEWS

The coordinator of EU-MAN in Holland, Mr. Abeer al Khateeb

responded to an invitation by the cultural authorities in UAE, United Arab Emirates to participate in the widest exhibition organized in UAE, last June. The artist Abeer has had a personal exhibition in the south of Holland and got the admiration of the Dutch public, especially for his theory of resurrection of Babylon.

The board of EU-MAN carries out preparations for a mutual exhibition for the Finnish members in the town of Vaasa. The contact was taken by the authorities of Vaasa, but we couldn't determine the time yet. Hopefully it shall be next spring.

A meeting was held between Mrs. Päivi Kiiski, the general manager of Wäinö Aaltonen Museum and the board of EU-MAN concerning the large mutual exhibition which is supposed to take place in August 1998 in Turku. Mrs. Kiiski welcomed the idea and promised to cooperate with EU-MAN to realize this project. EU-MAN agreed about a homepage in the internet, as well.

The board of EU-MAN decided in their last meeting about a membership fee to be considered from the beginning of next year. The fee will be 100 FIM and it should be paid in the bank account of EU-MAN. In the meeting Mr. Bela Czitrom said that 100 FIM is nothing if we compare it with the services we get as we participate in the exhibitions, correspondence and get Universal Colours sent to us every three months, not to mention other services that EU-MAN offers to its members and to other artists living in the EU-countries.

Mr. Amir Khatib added that we hope that all the members support us and cooperate in the continuing of our efforts to reach our aims concerning EU-MAN which needs support from inside more than from outside.

Nobody can prevent anybody from making art, just like no-one has the right to tell you what you must or must not like. You can be forced to eat fish, but you can't be forced to like it.

With fish it is easy to find reasons why you should eat it. With art it is easy to find

Can we keep up

AN HONEST PLURALISM?

reasons why you want to make it. Fish is (rather: used to be actually, before all these heavy metals were found in them) good for the health, and relatively cheap food - and you have to eat something. Art is an excellent channel for the human mind - for its joy and its pain, its bewilderment, for intellectual questions, for sorrow, anger, frustration, happiness - and everyone needs some channel.

I am sure no-one would set up a restaurant just because she or he likes to cook, even if the person would be an excellent cook. Cooking for paying guests is not the same as cooking for your friends.

With art it is somewhat the same. There is art which has no place in the 'establishment' but is good in other contexts. All art does not have to be "the big thing" - small is beautiful as well, in its special ways. The point is to appreciate things for what they are, without trying to force them into something that they are not.

EU-MAN has members of many kinds - in principle all are

professional artists, in other words persons who have a genuine education in art added to their personal qualifications. The members also have the most different traditions to fall back upon. Western culture has cultivated representation - mimesis - in art ever since its beginnings, while in i.e. the Jewish and Muslim cultures this was forbidden until recently and the artists had other challenges. Mimesis entered here when it began to dissolve in the West - in itself an interesting phenomenon.

change of concepts. To change from decorum to mimesis, though, demands such a change. A change that cannot be easy, not least because tradition - this of course goes both ways - is a product of so many culture-bound artistic and intellectual efforts. An artist grown in the one tradition has lots of work to do if she or he wants to integrate in another one.

If someone asked me how to cope with this problem, I would say: don't try too hard - but work hard, the blend of traditions and cultures develops best without forcing. And

It seems to me that artists all over the world get influenced by the Western tradition. The Western art, as well, gets influenced by other traditions, though seldom in a radical way; rather like a complement than a

don't deny your roots!

Bianca Gräsbeck

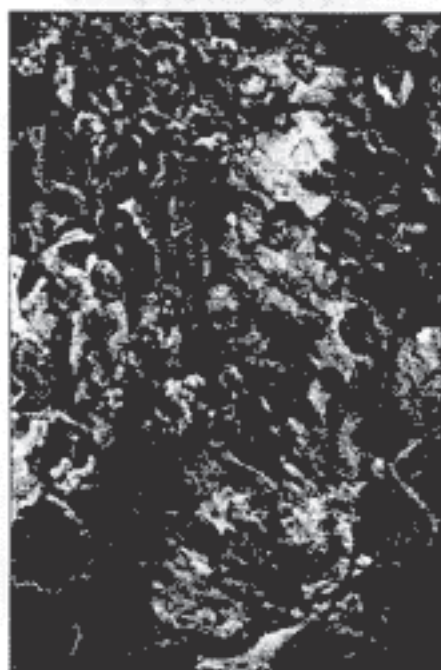


A work by Alla J. Issa

Aziz Selim

- artist of the issue

When you meet him for the first time you have a feeling that he is very near to you, or that you have known him for a long time. He was probably playing with you in



Aziz Selim: Life in Finland

the childhood days, or you met him in a festival, or a splendid occasion took you back to your first primitive stage. He is characterised by his magical primitiveness, as if he is an old child; when you are nearer to him, you touch his hard mountaineer spirit; it has a lot of reliefs and a lot of captivating landscapes, as the water of his spirit enters your system.

As you get nearer and nearer you have great feelings and a splendour fills you and a great happiness hugs you from inside. For moments you may not know all these feelings, but immediately you discover that you knew a real great man, an extremely true man, a man who contains all of the meaning of the word "man", briefly one of this age's panniers.

He did not change his pure Iraqi culture, he did not change his noble Kurdish manners, he did not turn to be with the group that empties the human being of his meaning as a human being. His first and last intention is human being. Human being who invented ideology, who

felt the beauty, even that human being who is going to destroy humanity with technology and machine guns. Human being who must return to spontaneity without the convulsions of the machine. So man who's back with beauty must one day be back with spontaneity and deny all the machines of destruction and disfiguration that he has developed.

When you meet him spontaneously you know that you are in front of an artist: invention wears him without permission, persistence wears him without designed consciousness.

As a very rare type of artists he is one of those who cure several kinds of sufferings to prove that eternity for the most beautiful, the most rising. As that type of artist he starts the art's journey in the Middle East and he's intention was only to tell how the man from Middle East can become stronger in building, development and prosperity.

It is true that he's extremely disappointed but he did not ever abandon his language, the language that joins him to this frustrated world, and he thinks that his project that he started when he was a nine-year-old boy should be continued.

This artist who grew up and thrived in the paradise of Iraqi Kurdistan. Not even for one minute did he forget his nation, this calamited nation. This artist who is full of love of life came recently to Finland running from the hell of his homeland, from the propagated dictatorship to become a refugee two years ago. This artist has put me in front of that puzzle, sadness, and those barren, when he introduced himself to me in the opening of my exhibition in Helsinki last spring.

Aziz Selim? ... One of the pioneers of the Iraqi Art movement, who has his own section in the Iraqi Pioneers' Museum in Baghdad. Aziz Selim, artist already as a child, museums of the world know him. There are his works in London, Paris, Moscow, Baku, Prague, Budapest, St. Petersburg, Damascus, Dowha, Cairo ... and elsewhere.

What happened to the dirty logic

of this world? What is happening to all of us? Is it reality? Or a whirlpool disguising from us what is really happening? Whole nations around the world have gratitude to and pride of their pioneers, they put their pictures in the national money, they make great sculptures of them, and so... not for a particular purpose, but boasting and valuating their roles in building and in rising.

Aziz Selim's works are full of faces, so it's very difficult to find any empty space in his pictures, even the stones and rocks are full of faces. So wherever you turn you eyes, you face a face, and sometimes the faces even frighten you. Aziz Selim does not pay attention to the academic rules of the art that is possible to call



Aziz Selim: In Tullikamarl

"science of art". He has his own style which distinguishes him from the others and that was since 1936 when he started to paint.

Aziz Selim combines two different styles, he empties the inside of his brain in the measure of reality, as if his unconsciousness always provokes screams of the Iraqi people's suffering. Aziz Selim poses a lot of questions. And surely he believes that the duty of art is to pose questions and not to give answers.

TINGUELY'S CYCLOPS

After two decades, Jean Tinguely's gargantuan sculpture *La Tête* (Le Cyclope) will finally be opened to the public. The 73-foot-high steel and concrete sculpture was Tinguely's life-work, his "dream-machine". The head was begun in 1969 on land belonging to Jean and Dominique de Menil in Fontainebleau first near Milly-la-Forêt, about 40 kilometres south of Paris. A collaborative effort, Tinguely's *Head* includes contributions by Arman, Jean-Pierre Raynaud, Larry Rivers, Daniel Spoerri and others.

Hidden in the forest, surrounded by trees, the work appears like an enchanted monster from a fairy tale.

Its interior is a multirveled maze of room, terrace and stairs built around a live oak tree. The Cyclop's face has a skin of mirror tile craft by Niki de Saint Phalles in 1987. Installed behind its single eye is an apartment complete with kitchen, dining room and sleeping space. Winding down through the vast interior from the cerebral hemisphere to the medulla oblongata is a mesh tube track carrying rolling cannonballs at 20-second intervals.

La Tête incorporates a number of works: Tinguely's theatre seats the audience on a motly array of chairs and benches that are motorized to rotate and squeak up and down; Spoerri's surreal *chambre de bonne* (servants room), a reconstructed

Paris attic maid's room titled at a 45 degree angle; and River's eight painted-plastic panels commemorating the May 1968 riots in Paris. Outside, on the top of the head, Tinguely built a square reflecting pool in memory of Yves Klein, who Tinguely said would insist that the world was flat and square.

Before his death in 1991, the artist donated the work to the French government. Since that time, however, a bitter battle has been waged between french bureaucrats on one side and the artist's assistants and collaborators on the other. At one point, government officials had even thought it necessary to cut down parts of the sculpture for safety reasons. Resolution of the dispute came with the appointment of longtime Tinguelyfriend and patron Pontus Hultén as curate of *La Tête*. Current plans call for the official opening to take place this fall.

AK

A DUTCH PAINTER

Henri Jacobs, a Dutch painter living in Brussels who, when he lived in Paris, accomodatingly changed his first name from something the French could pronounce. That flexibility seems inconsistent with his odd, almost obsessive paintings, blends of late Gothic flatness and Surrealism. Jacobs meticulously depicts complex, often airlessly compressed architectural spaces that are sometimes populated by bland and naked figures. His representations of architectural elements are realistic, but in case something is missing or the parts are incompatible or he use a pictorial device such as perspective to break up, rather than unify, a scene. And in several of the works shown he undercut representation by perforating the canvas to call our attention to its objectness and artifice. One has to make an effort to discuss Jacobs' work

in generalities, because it is easy to get lost in specifics - in the layering of planes and images that varies infinitely from canvas to canvas. *Quartet* includes most of his characteristic elements. In this work naked people of four different colours - biomorphs amid geometry - are entangled in an architectural space that follows perspectival conventions but is not understandable as a whole. Doors and windows are presented more as symbolism than as real, penetrable openings (there does not seem to be any space behind them). A latticed door and window, unattached to any wall, float in the foreground partly obscuring our view of the figures.

Another painting depicts only windows. The entire canvas is taken up by representations of various types, all pushed together to make an impossible composite, enclosed by a

painted frame that runs around the perimeter of the canvas - except for several inexplicable gaps. In addition, the canvas is punctured. Jacobs, working at the back, injected pigment by means of a syringe so that it emerged here and there to dribble on the front of the painting, interrupting his illusionistic game plying.

By using pictorial conventions but rendering them incoherent Jacobs eviscerates art's claim of connection to reality. The overall impact of his work is compelling and disturbing. There is little psychological comfort in the cooperative feeding in *Quartet* or, in another painting, the sexual union in melt into the other. It would seem that in every sense Jacobs has abandoned illusion.

AK

Secretary's Corner

Dear member!

Hope your summer is or has been a good one! Here it is coming to its end, schools begin and things are little by little returning to normal after the summer break.

So is EU-MAN - and what you have in your hands now is a bulletin containing a lot of things, so sit down and relax while reading it!

First of all, we would like you to contact each other, countrywise, and make up your own 'strategies' i.e. ways of working, plans, and tell us about them before the end of September! To make this easier we have included a list of members (and potential members) in this paper. We hope you have a possibility to use the telephone between you!

The other thing that we would like to ask you: please tell us about what you do yourself - professionally - exhibitions, courses, travels. Our intention is to collect as much information about the members, to spread it among you members through UNIVERSAL COLOURS (if you don't want it 'published' add this to your writings) You are also most welcome to write other letters to this little paper which we wish to function as the main information channel and a means of communication between all you members. So we will publish the facts and news about each member and each 'national committee' that you send us.

You can also tell us what you would like to see (=read) in the paper, or ask somebody in your surroundings to write about something interesting and up to date, or of course write yourself!

UNIVERSAL COLOURS will also provide you with more information about the EXHIBITION TOURNEE, that we plan for next summer: There will be a large exhibition for all you members in Turku in August; there are plans to



Ramaz Gojati: Once Upon A Time

get this same exhibition on show in Vaasa, Savonlinna, Lieksa (cave), Porvoo and Helsinki.

We hope that you can gather your forces, countrywise, for the practical details such as transports - of works and maybe also yourselves! We will coordinate the tournée from Turku and try to make no problem of the economy. But we hope you try to

find some financing channels on the more local level, too.

For the exhibitions we plan to make a book about all you EU-MAN members; as we probably cannot come to see you all, you will have to write yourself about yourself or find someone to do it. But more about all this later.

Last and least, EU-MAN has now reached a point where we can say it is worth it to join. This first year we have not had any membership fee, because we wanted us all to have the possibility to 'check first'. For the next year, though, we will introduce a fee (about 100FMK) which includes participation in exhibitions, the bulletin and other mail needed, and other service that we can offer. So we hope it is not too expensive (families will have a reduction!).

Though, before I stop, one more thing: we are trying to arrange some kind of symposium in Stockholm, the European Culture Capital 1998, during this cultural year, synchronizing with the exhibition tournée.

But now, do contact each other and write to us soon! That's all for this time, have a good autumn!

Bianca Gräsbeck
secretary

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TURUN SEUDUN OSUUSPANKKI

Do not lose the opportunity

