Beyond Art: What Art Is and Might Become if Freed from Cultural Elitism by Roger Taylor, and: *Art in Action: Toward a Christian Aesthetic* by Nicholas Wolterstorff (review)

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J. O. Geissert reported on safety conditions in an artist's studio at a time when *polyester* and *epoxy resins* were being used to make sculpture. The hazards of the dangerous substances were reviewed, the safety procedures employed were outlined and the results of air sampling (solvent fumes) were discussed. This paper is important because it reveals what precautions were observed to produce safe working conditions.

E. L. Baker and his colleague reported in some detail on the dangerous conditions produced in a workshop where personnel were being exposed to highly toxic *cadmium fumes* in working with silver solder. H. P. Blejer in another paper reviewed in greater detail the health hazards of cadmium fumes and recommended better warning labeling of cadmium-containing solders and brazing alloys and better dissemination of information both to users of these products and to the medical profession.

R. G. Felman discussed *lead* intoxication among workers engaged in making leaded-glass windows and among potters employing lead glazes. K. J. Kronoveter and C. R. Meyer reported on a stained-glass workshop providing conditions judged to be safe. S. Guffey *et al.* examined the production of lead-bearing dusts in a stained-glass workshop and presented designs of effective ventilation arrangements. A. E. Lang treated the dangers of lead fumes and other substances in potters' studios, and M. Rossol presented a comprehensive article on the safety of lead frits.

Other papers of particular interest concerned a survey of potential health hazards in some college art departments (C. D. Schott), the rock dust exposures to a sculptor (K. J. Kronoveter), and the labeling of art materials (M. McCann; J. M. Montgomery; C. Jenkins). The editors presented brief but informative papers on the history of the movement destined to reduce the hazards to health in the visual arts.

The discussions following the five sessions of the Conference are particularly informative. Many of the papers included helpful lists of references. The failure to print the date and location of the Conference was undoubtedly an oversight.

The Berlin Secession: Modernism and Its Enemies in Imperial Germany. Peter Paret. Harvard University Press, London, 1980. 269 pp., illus. £10.50. ISBN: 0-674-06773-8. Reviewed by **Gerhard Charles Rump***

Berlin Secession was the name of a group of artists who tried to establish modernism against the conservative (and sometimes reactionary) conservatism of the academy, the cultural bureaucracy and the Kaiser, William II, who was very outspoken against all forms of modernism in the arts. The Secession counted among its members such important figures as Max Liebermann, Lovis Corinth, Kaethe Kollwitz, and, later, Ernst Barlach and Max Beckmann. These artists prepared the ground for a new art, a new aesthetic sensibility. They met with fierce resentment, which reflected both cultural and political trends in Imperial Germany. The Secession had an international outlook, but the official side favoured a rather narrowly defined 'Deutsche Kunst' ('German Art'). At a time when nationalism ranked highest, this had to lead to intensive conflicts. A most notable conflict arose when it was decided that modern art should be presented in the German pavilion at the Saint Louis Exhibition in 1904. Art became a highly political matter and the struggle with the government resulted in a parliamentary attack on imperial autocracy that must be rated sensational. It did not, however, result in modern art being shown in Saint Louis.

The Secession played an important role in the frequent subsequent clashes between modern art, academic art and national policy. Most of the material treated by Professor Paret has been unpublished up to now, and the book also contains a number of illustrations, some of which are reproduced for the first time. But that is not the only reason for the high importance of Paret's study. We learn that the Secession constituted a major cultural force in Germany for a decade and a half, that it was responsible for eroding the prevailing parochialism and spirit of conformity from which art in Germany had suffered for generations (the exact point from which the suffering took off was the lost revolution of 1848). It was only through the activities of the Secession that the public in Germany was exposed to the full spectrum of both native and foreign avant-garde art. The Secession also became the centre of German impressionism and developed later towards Expressionism, a remarkable openness and flexibility. The battles with the emperor and his allies in the cultural bureaucracy, the established, art organizations and a public which was, for a large part, hostile to experiments, 'also proved to be a revealing phenomenon in the political history of the later Wilhelmine empire' (p. 1). This is all the more important, as only few of the artists who were members of the Secession were seriously engaged in politics or referred to sociopolitical facts in their work. The fine arts in Prussia were so dependent on the favour of the emperor and the government that even membership in an association which was devoted to the exhibition and sale of non-political art could become a political issue. The mere fact that the Secession was antagonistic to the established taste and the organizations which furthered established art made its foundation a political act. The history of the Secession therefore bears on the important subject of the relation of art and politics, exemplified by such matters as state patronage, access to (official) exhibitions, prizes, state purchases, etc. The history of the Secession is part of the history of Germany's encounter with Modernism, the reactions to which, both political and social, reached unusual intensity. In Germany before World War I, the critics of Modernism had succeeded in transforming the work of art 'into an ideological force' (p. 4f). Art did, in their eyes, demand a political response. So not only the artists, but also the reactions to them, and the implications of these reactions for German history, form the subject of this study. It is an important book on an important subject.

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Beyond Art: What Art Is and Might Become if Freed from Cultural Elitism. Roger Taylor. Harvester Press, Brighton, England, 1981. 183 pp. £18.50. ISBN: 0-85527-143-4. **Art in Action: Toward a Christian Aesthetic.** Nicholas Wolterstorff. William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1980. 240 pp. Paper. ISBN: 0-8028-1816-1. Reviewed by **Donald Brook***

These two books engage in different ways with the same important idea. It is the idea that works of art are independent 'worlds' (Wolterstorff) in which it is 'as if' (Taylor) things were other than they are in our ordinary experience.

The authors share a dissatisfaction with 'institutional high art'; in Wolterstorff's case because of its tendency to a narrow aestheticism and in Taylor's because of its expropriation by the bourgeoisie as an instrument of class oppression. That theme is developed more fully in his earlier *Art, and Enemy of the People*, and in Wolterstorff's case does not amount to a total rejection of 'high art' but rather to an insistence that other functions—especially the liturgical function— are more profound and abiding than the aesthetic function.

There is an apparent difference in the two ontologies: for Wolterstorff the 'worlds' of fictional art are real, while Taylor takes pains to contrast 'as-ifness' strongly with reality and argues toward a conclusion that sounds remarkably like Nietzsche's '... the only task of art [is] to deliver the "patient" by the healing balm of appearance from the spasms of the agitations of the Will,' Or, in Taylor's words: '... a total life devoted to the "as if" ... would be a world in which we were released from the dominance of reality and material adversity.' (p. 179).

Of course, 'reality' is a dramatically elusive conception, and writers whose views seem to readers to be identical are often disposed to express them each in terms of flat contradiction of the other. Both Wolterstorff and Taylor appear to the reader to be writing about pictures or models of things or states of affairs that might as well (from the artists' point of view) be non-occurrent or non-existent; so that one seems to find substantially the same entities under review, with different metaphysical credentials.

It is more interesting to find the two authors in agreement where one might least have expected it, about creativeness. The Calvinist Wolterstorff, rising at such moments into the pulpit style, tells us that we '... see our image of the artist as one who creates in sovereign freedom like unto our Divine Master' (p. 163). Taylor puts it to us that 'Without pragmatic justification our minds play with possibilities ... [that] fit or suit one way we have of conceiving of things. The question ... is akin to asking, if there were gods why should creations attract them, and the answer to this question is that a god's form of existence is to create ...' (p. 155). And '[the film] *Blow Up's* image suggests a world in which man's confrontation with reality is at an end, and that, as a consequence, the community of men becomes a community of gods; man moves from the "kingdom of necessity" to the

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"kingdom of freedom." ... In these circumstances man regains, or becomes, his species being from which for Marx he has been alienated.' (p. 179).

Wolterstorff devotes space to a firm polemic against humanism, especially as he discerns it in Malraux's *The Voices of Silence*, and one might expect him to disdain such bait as Taylor's 'The ultimate formula for the conquest of nature is a material world controlled by human volition', (p. 170) rather than to fish with it himself when he writes: 'the artist, when he brings forth order for human benefit or divine honor, shares in man's vocation to master and subdue the earth.' (p. 77). The theological niceties really lie outside the scope of art theory, and seem to have been settled by both writers independently of their present writings. The fact that such issues surface so conspicuously in the discussion of art testifies at least to the determination of both authors that art shall not be displaced to the periphery of major human concern.

In both books considerable attention is paid to the conception of representation in the 'worlds' of art and in the 'as-ifness' that goes (so it is claimed) beyond art. And if Taylor's ideological stance in *Beyond Art* is only fully comprehensible in the light of his earlier book, so too is Wolterstorff's position on representation only spelled out in full in his later *Works and Worlds of Art*. To sketch the main arguments of either book—or, more comprehensively, all four—is beyond the scope of a short review. It will have to be sufficient to remark that they contribute positively to the new literature of Art Theory as it has developed in the last five or ten years, between Art History and the traditional style of Aesthetics. Both writers combine philosophical sophistication with a more than casual acquaintance with art. Taylor is more appreciated of so-called 'popular culture', and when he refers to 'Reubens' we must assume that the printer could not read his manuscript. In any case, his argument proceeds as briskly 'as if' there had been such a painter.

A Giacometti Portrait. James Lord. Faber & Faber, London, 1981. 117 pp., illus. Paper, £2.25. ISBN: 0-571-1168-X. Reviewed by **Kenneth R. Adams***

This is a beautiful and unique book. Lord makes a portrait of Giacometti by describing how Giacometti made a portrait of Lord. Lord's narrative simply records the 18 times he sat for Giacometti, how Giacometti proceeded with the painting, and their sporadic conversations. He reveals a deep acceptance of Giacometti's often wayward acts, along with a ruthlessly realistic tact in countering Giacometti's apparently self-destructive tendencies. The relationship between the two men, their mutual affection and engagement in a joint enterprise becomes the subject of the book; and the credit for the completion of both the painted and written portraits seems to belong equally to both men.

Lord made unobtrusive records for this account. He took his photographs after each session with a casual air, and he seized on Giacometti's brief absences from the studio to write his notes. It is worth quoting his reasons: 'The somewhat surreptitious character of my note-taking was not motivated by a fear that he would disapprove of what I was doing. In fact, I think he will be very curious ... I did not want him to be able to feel in any way that I thought of him as a specimen under observation. I didn't. And yet somehow I did. To me Alberto is, of course, first of all a friend for whom I feel great affection and esteem. But he is also a great artist ... As for the written portrait, it's a paltry thing compared to the real person. But Giacometti is, after all, the first to understand that a portrait can achieve only a semblance of reality. Therefore, I hope that he will consider this one with indulgence' (pp. 115-117).

As for the painted portrait, Giacometti's repeated and compulsive reduction of his painting to a rudimentary state was ultimately terminated by Lord's game of first postponing and then refusing to postpone his departure for America, with his sudden plea of exhaustion at a critical moment on the last evening.

Lord admirably refrains from generalisation and speculation. His is a blow-by-blow account of a particular struggle. The reflective reader need not constrain himself. This was not the only portrait which Giacometti completed. If he notoriously played the game of 'inability to complete', was he not himself responsible both for his own game, and for any complementary games invented by his sitters, in *their* efforts to 'save him from himself'?

To understand Giacometti is to understand the balance of doubt and certainty in his work. That work is replete with doubts: a superficial glance at a painting by Giacometti, in comparison say, with one by Picasso, leads a majority of commentators to speak almost exclusively about Giacometti's doubts, isolation, loneliness, alienation and anxiety. It is always to be doubted whether a particular experience will be shared, has been shared, in making a painting. That is a starting point, not a conclusion. What is important is the positive and particular expression achieved despite the doubts. These are things which are different in Giacometti's different works, and which comparison one with another instantly reveals: the feeling about the sitter at a particular moment. The intimacy of the relation and the vitality of the expression, triumph over the anxiety; they justify the hesitancy, and finally transcend it.

And Giacometti relished his life work, despite his constant complaint that the task was hopeless. A week after the portrait was finished he wrote to Lord from Stampa: 'Always those heads! I certainly hope I can do yours again someday. I enjoyed very much all the time when you were posing for me' (p. 66).

My one regret about this book is that the photographs of the portrait, taken so casually by James Lord after each sitting, are too unclear to convey much more than the generic features of Giacometti's style—just those misleading indicators of doubt to which I referred above.

Color Manual for Artists. Arthur L. Guptill. Catherine Sullivan, ed. Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1980. 126 pp., illus. Paper, $8.95. Reviewed by **George A. Agoston***

This book, published in 1962, is now available in paperback. It is an outgrowth of the late A. L. Guptill's *Color in Sketching and Rendering*, which has been out of print since 1955 after numerous reprintings. 'In the present volume, the material on color has been brought up-to-date and expanded to include the medium of oil as well as watercolor. Chapters on sketching and architectural rendering have been dropped so that throughout the book the focus is on color in painting. ... Revisions and additions are, for the most part, drawn from Arthur Guptill's own work—his articles in *American Artist* magazine and his later books on oil painting and watercolor technique' (p. 5).

This well written textbook for beginning art students includes a lucid historical review of color theory, a discussion of the appearance of common artists' pigments and chapters on the tools and techniques of watercolor and oil painting. Numerous exercises are presented for learning painting techniques, means for making useful color charts and color wheels, and ways to use the latter to produce harmonious color schemes.

The subjects of complementary colors, afterimages and simultaneous contrast are discussed in a way useful to artists. The author considers pairs of complementary colors, say those of pigments A and B having hues a and b, respectively. Pigments A and B are said to have complementary colors, because, on mixture, they can produce a neutral grey. It would be a mistake to believe, however, that all other mixtures of A and B will produce colors of either hue a or hue b. Similarly, if a pigment of neutral color, say white, were mixed with pigment A to produce a series of tints, one cannot expect that the hue will be constant for the series. Indeed, for some pigments the addition of a small amount of white will produce not only a different hue, but a color of *higher* saturation ('intensity'). With the further addition of white the saturation will reach a maximum and then will decrease. (I have discussed behaviors of this kind in my book *Color Theory and Its Application in Art and Design* (New York: Springer, 1979), which is reviewed in *Leonardo* **13**, 333 (1980).) Art students will encounter such anomalies in the preparation of color charts, but the latter can be useful guides in the use of specific paints, nevertheless.

The Perception of Pictures. Two vols. Margaret A. Hagen, ed., Academic Press, New York, 1980. Vol. 1, 293 pp., illus. $27.00. ISBN: 0-12-313601-6. Vol. 2, 353 pp., illus. $35.00. ISBN: 0-12-313602-4. Reviewed by **David Carrier****

This anthology of original papers includes both work primarily about theories of perception and detailed discussions of issues of special relevance to art. In perception do we use experience to add information to the stimulus, organize that stimulus into a good gestalt, or perceive meaningful optical patterns? Hagen's very lucid summary of these three major contemporary positions provides perhaps the best starting point

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