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MAX ACKERMANN

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Introduction

(author: Dieter Hoffmann)

Max Ackermann belongs to the generation whose background is still that of academic realism; at the same time he is one of those who, as children, were exposed to the reflexes of the founding fathers of Modern Art, of Cezanne, van Gogh, Gauguin, Seurat, Matisse.

Artists who, like Ackermann, were born in 1887 - the year in which Matisse died - spent their formative years at the end of the Century in which Goethe and Beethoven had lived and entered the new Century as sensitive adolescents. In the same year, 1887, Alexander Archipenko, Hans Arp, Le Corbusier, August Macke, Marc Chagall were born. Macke was killed in 1914, at the beginning of the First World War, 27 years old. Archipenko, Arp, and Le Corbusier reached a remarkable age. Marc Chagall and Max Ackermann are the only ones whom we are privileged to see living among us today. - They are all artists of the pure dream. At the turn of the Century they experienced their own puberty and also the puberty of the world, with all its anxieties and its hopes.

Before Ackermann wholly dedicated himself to the utopias of an art emancipated from objects his art, too, flourished in the tangible Arcadian areas in which the art of August Macke, of Marc Chagall lives - where couples are promenading in front of villas or are gliding through the skies, accompanied by animals. Ackermann's Arcadia consisted mainly of the dance and the beach. As late as in his thirties he joined the youth movement and drew the dance scenes he could observe during the long hikes - he presented them either as a great dynamic double-form, one might say, of one dancing couple or as a combination of many dancing groups that, in terms of form, amounted to a sum of many small individual parts strewn together. The beach as an expression of a way of living - familiar to the impressionists and the expressionists as well - had become something of a discovery to Ackermann even before he settled (in the early thirties) at the Lake of Constance for decades.

All the great artists had been impressed, even beaten down by the aesthetic unworthiness of the industrial mass products which made it appear impossible to present them through works of art; by the lack of aesthetic qualities of the landscapes dominated by them; by the same lack that made itself visible, so it seemed, even in the human beings who felt compelled to live in such a framework. A new approach in the twenties - in the tendencies of Social Realism, Magic Realism, »Neue Sachlichkeit« - made itself felt with many, including Ackermann. The critical fascination inherent in this was similar to that of Pop Art in the early sixties. Now, after four decades, Ackermann would not go along with those trying to create a »New Figuration«; just because its model, its first appearance was a matter of the past; to him it was something closed; besides his art is - as the Renaissance, in the words of Albrecht Dürer, put it - »full of figure from within«.

The human figure gave Ackermann the scaffolding for his non-objective paintings. That was the heritage of the sculptor he had been in his early beginnings. In addition to this he made use of possible derivations from the artifice of the human face: the mask. To the mask he had been led by an intermezzo one might call rather strange to his true nature: in the chaos following the First World War Ackermann turned to motifs of social criticism - like inflation and prostitution; to be sure, he became a master in this field, too, particularly in drawings and etchings; the collision of Arcadian elements and those of verism could only be grotesque, and

it was the grotesque that brought him the mask and, along with it, a wealth of possibilities for a long time to come.

Max Ackermann is from a Thuringian family, but he was born in Berlin and came back to Thuringia as a child. He grew up in Ilmenau and Weimar. Berlin was the capital, but Weimar was a German Parnassus. Here Henry van de Velde became Ackermann's first teacher, followed by the Dresden and Munich academies; more, however, than he could gain in these institutions he was to owe to the experience of culture these cities bestowed upon him - cities in which, for example, he could, at that time, observe the development of such famous groups of artists as the »Brücke« and the »Blauer Reiter«.

More than fifty years ago Ackermann came to Stuttgart, the city that was to become the place of his life in every sense of the word. It was then just about to become a center of Modernism.

Many an impulse leading to the Bauhaus movement can be traced back to Stuttgart. In 1928 Ackermann had an exhibition there - with George Grosz and Wassily Kandinsky -, and it showed him, as one might say in a somewhat simplifying sense, in a position between the two, for in his work there was, again and again, an alternation from the non-objective to the objective and back. Non-objective art to this spirit - with his ways of feeling, thinking, and painting, with his background of classical Ideals - was an experiment begun in order to purify the means of expression. Today we might consider these studies - these »keys«, as he calls them - as independent pictures; when he made them they did not fulfill the vision he had of them.

Counterpoint in painting is Ackermann's magic word. He has it at his disposal; he could well produce pictures in a computerlike way. This does not mean, however, that the counterpoint might be used like a »recipe«. It is only in a few cases that Ackermann's work is of a formally instructive character; mostly his pictures reflect a convulsion or an elevation of the soul.

Ackermann's art has some of the qualities of a diary, and while being far superior to any temptation of subjectivism it is of an autobiographical nature (perhaps the most praiseworthy achievement of art since the cult of genius we know from the Renaissance and the 19th Century). Like Paul Klee, Ackermann is a careful diarist, and when - to some later generation - these diaries will become accessible their readers will, by comparing the dates of the notes and those of the pictures, realize the emotions which influenced the respective creative processes. It is true, there is a sentence of Ackermann's, ten or perhaps even fifteen years old - : »The privacy of the soul must be overcome without throwing it into a process at the end of which it would be like ice; then we have the pure air of the classics« - but this is not a contradiction in itself. To a person looking at these pictures the privacy of the soul is overcome just by the formulation of its life in pure de-objectified forms.

»Counterpoint« - from the Latin »punctum contra punctum«, note against note - produces a balance within the asymmetric, also a balance between basic geometrical forms (Ackermann despises pure symmetry as well as pure geometry; he does not subscribe to the illusion that a life situation could be symmetrical, and he knows that if it were it could but lead into boredom; besides he simply wishes to make order between a theme and its counter-part).

Ackermann instinctively avoids the danger of formalism implied in the handling of counterpoints which, in itself, is so very conducive to productivity; he avoids it by throwing himself into psychological contradictions. What the women and the friends around him often find it difficult to interpret is the situation of conflict chosen by himself: it exists only in order to be mastered by way of counterpoints. Even if sometimes in his life this tendency may have made things somewhat difficult, he certainly has, by applying this principle, found the central theme for his art.

The unusual intensity of his love for his work - which sometimes became almost dangerous to the external human being - reminds us of Nietzsche-Zarathustra's visions of superhuman possibilities (the young Ackermann once planned to glorify him by a monument that was to show him side by side with Christ and Goethe). Ackermann has always made workshops out of the places where he lived, »living« - in a bourgeois sense of the word - does not mean much to him. The idea of a transpersonal place has always been more important to him - of a central building of cult and culture in which he has believed since the days of his youth: particularly so when, after the Second World War, everything was beginning anew. Even defeats did he manage to transform into art, just as the playwright Friedrich Hebbel once had told himself: »Artist, do never meet the enemy with words, meet him with actions! If he throws stones at you, make statues out of them!«

From the days of his youth one of Ackermann's drawings has survived: a young man using a pole to catapult himself out of a swamp. Desires have always been the theme, no matter whether he might call a picture »Bridged Continents«, »Colour Tower«, or »Radiating Gate«. The more difficult it appeared to him to bridge the gap separating human beings from one another the more intensely the uttered, one might almost say, the two non-objective forms that

are combined by lineaments or by streams of colour. The farther remote he was from being »in« the more jubilant were the colour-towers he erected. The more he found of a waste of misunderstanding around his work the more radiant became the gates he opened in his pictures - a well-drawn line can make the surface of an area explode!

Ackermann's language of forms has its own erotic aspects: »playing around«, »opening«, »inserting«, »entwining« - all of these are activities he considers possible even for things non-objective and things not alive. (Of Goethe's »Theory of Colours« it is known that it had both a religious and an erotic meaning.) Ackermann has avoided temptations - he preferred his work, in his pictures he makes the forms and colours fight and love like a demiurge: sublimated life. In this Ackermann's painting follows the laws of music. They are by no means accepted as being of a self-evident value to painting. Ackermann applies - to give but an example - invertible themes and themes of a cancrizant character in both a strictly formal and a symbolic sense of the word, but, thanks to the former, not in a literary sense: an invertible theme may mean some self-sufficiency - in a Narcissus-like manner -, a cancrizant theme may mean encirclement, or a falling back on something. - In his essay on »Landscapes and Travels« a particularity of his style is apparent - what seems to be a monotonous vocabulary is the consequence of a restricting intention, landscapes »enchant« and »bind« the artist again and again; both words mean fascination in terms of lyric or dramatic emotion which may be tender as well as grand. That also explains the polarity of small and large sizes which Ackermann loves so much. Max Ackermann once admitted that ever since his childhood he has been full of a »basic sadness«. Franz Roh, however, could call him »the always joyful Ackermann«. Art is his anti-world gifted with the capability to overcome the world. Gaston Bachelard has pointed out that there is a basic human desire for weightlessness, and he distinguishes Ikaros and Homer's messenger of the gods - the engineer and the dreamer, the one building wings, the other just having ambrosial soles. - The Kineticists work with motors, at least with the wind that moves their works of art. Ackermann produces the phantom of movement instead of the movement itself, and he thinks that that is more attractive, more sublime, even more artistic. Thus the picture remains static and yet insinuates dynamics - in other words, it implies itself, it is its own double. Ackermann also does not choose the tondo form for his pictures (which in the renaissance was esteemed by Michelangelo, Raffael, Botticelli). There the circle symbolizes absolute rest - with Ackermann it has always to mediate between rest and unrest. In his youth Ackermann loved the filled egg-form, now, in his old age, he loves the open form of the circle. Ackermann's cosmic experience can come close to that of the primitives, to the classicists, to the romanesque, gothic, barocco, rococo forms of expression. There is no imitation of styles, but why should not, in one individual human being, the changes recur that took place in various eras of mankind? Richard Hamann, like Nietzsche, spoke of the return of the like. (Even Ackermann's love for the great composers was open to change, from Wagner he came to Mozart, Bach, Beethoven; in his own work one can find corresponding impulses.) - The problem of rotation can, with Ackermann, mean happiness as well as grief - what else could, at the age of 80, when so much wisdom is won, so much of life is given away.

When looking at the pictures one may call back into memory sentences once found in classical poetry - in Schiller's »Ode To Joy«, for instance: »Joy, the spring / of all contriving, / In eternal Nature's plan, / Joy set wheels on wheels a-driving / Since earth's horologe began; / From the bud the blossom winning / Suns from out the sky she drew, / Spheres through boundless ether spinning / Worlds no gazer's science knew . . . «*

Or one may think of what Shakespeare's Richard II. Says - »For now hath time made me his numbering clock: / My thoughts are minutes; and, with sighs, they jar, / Their watches on unto mine eyes the outward watch, / Whereto my finger, like a dial's point, / Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.«

* This quotation follows the translation of Norman Macleod

Max Ackermann: »On my painting«
Written Easter 1952

I greatly admire "Ur" and love Giotto. I approach with humility and admiration so many of the great works of art of the past which often appear to me as miracles. How can we who live in the middle of this Century find to ourselves to begin something new? Who wants to select one of the old masters for imitation? I need no examples, I am free through my own effort. I became free through uninterrupted work knowing nothing but the constant change from drawing to painting to thinking. I have explored the powers which lie hidden in the sacred means of the dynamic counterpoint. I know the sound-quality and the radiance of colours, and the force of the contrasts of dark and light move me deeply. Coldness and warmth of colours make me drunk. The hammering and raging of the active elements as well as the calmness of the passive means rejoice inside me. And its simultaneousness excites me and calms me down at the same time. To give to intensity and quantity of colours their place in the hierarchy - in a sum, but never-theless in manifold shades – this demands a daily concentration, like a game of chess. I risk resounding passages of high cinnabar and answer them provokingly with light yellow and flowing blues. Colour with its spiritual expressiveness grand and manifold, its magic fountain, is by no means exhausted yet, and every day of his life the artist has to aspire to its highest perfection. A painter's message, however, is always most deeply related to his predisposition. Whether he is more inclined towards mysticism, philosophy or poetry, he will always scent the suitable colour and form in the right moment. The time in which we live always has a secret rule over us. And we are children of this century, people of our own age. Every age is good and bad. Beautiful madonnas and lovely angels were painted while human beings were quartered, hanged and burnt. A painter can only serve the good pole of his time in finding artistic expression for it.

What does the manifestation of good look like in our time? We painters do not have an easy stand in the age of technical reason. It will take a long time until we have overcome all our innate romanticizing emotions. The sooner, however, we realize the responsibility we have towards our time, the sooner we will dare the jump and endure the cold shower which iron-works and nuclear energy bestow upon us.

The physicists will show us the world-picture of our time to which alone we are bound. The coming of a new metaphysics based on a new physics may lead and comfort us.

Biography of Max Ackermann

(author: Dieter Hoffmann)

1887

October 5th, Max Ackermann is born in Berlin. His family comes from Thuringia where they soon return to live at Ilmenau. Max Ackermann is then 4 years old. He is the second child of five brothers. Two become trades-men, one becomes an architect, the eldest one, who dies young, a musician. Ackermann makes woodcarvings in the workshop of his father who is a sculptor. Drawing is among his earliest childhood memories. His father makes use of the boy's ornamental designs for carvings on furniture, notably those huge thermometer-frames then on the market. — Ackermann breaks off his apprenticeship in porcelain-modelling.

1905

In February his father dies aged 47.

1906 to 1907

He studies at Weimar. At first he is pupil of Henry van de Velde in the »Prellerhaus«, afterwards masterpupil in the »Kunstgewerbliches Seminar«. At the same time he takes part in the life-painting courses of Hans Olde, Ludwig von Hofmann, and Sascha Schneider. He is given a scholarship by the grand duke of Sachsen-Weimar. The dramatic producer, Professor Paul Quensel, sponsors him and frequently provides him with free tickets for performances in the grand ducal court theatre. He is also supported by Generalmusikdirektor Krycanovsky. He mainly listens to Wagner operas. One of his fellow students is Theo Champion who remains a friend of his.

1908 to 1909

He is a Student at the Dresden Academy of Arts and pupil of the drawing class of Richard Müller. He is sponsored by Gotthard Kuehl and attends lectures on literature by Oskar Walzel. In the spring of 1908 he visits the exhibition »Vincent van Gogh / Paul Cezanne«. He lives at 10, Moltkeplatz. His fellow-students are Richard Flesch, August Wilhelm Dressler, Wilhelm Rudolph. Ackermann visits Max Klinger in Leipzig. He goes to Berlin where he sees the Marees exhibition and listens to Beethoven's IXth Symphony conducted by Arthur Nikisch. In his parents' house at Ilmenau he paints one room raven black, another one sky-blue.

1909 to 1910

He participates in the painting class of Franz von Stuck at the Munich Academy of Arts, but he escapes very soon. He has lodgings at 26, Ainmillerstrasse. His thoughts are occupied by Pidoll's book on Marees and the theories on colour of the chemist Michel Eugene Chevreul. At Schleissheim Castle, near Munich, he meets Julius Meier-Graefe in front of Marees' pictures. In Frankfurt/Main he visits his Student friend Flesch and stays for a month. Flesch takes him to Artur Volkmann and Fritz Bohle.

1911

He spends the whole year with his parents, uncertain as to his future as an artist.

1912

He finishes his studies at the Stuttgart Academy of Arts and joins Adolf Hoelzel. They remain friends until Hoelzel dies. By now two of his brothers have settled in Stuttgart and a year later they are all joined by their mother. At first Max Ackermann lives with her at 16, Tulpenstrasse, later he and Raimund Mossmayer share a Studio at 31 b, Urbanstraße. Stuttgart is very attractive for young artists in these days. The »Kunstgebäude am Schloßplatz« is being built by Theodor Fischer and the Gemälde Galerie is reorganized by Adolf Hoelzel and Christian Landenberger co-operating within a team.

1913

He starts a frieze on muslin which can be rolled up and which he calls his »Tempelrolle« (temple-scroll).

1914

First contacts with the »Wandervogel« movement through his brother Hermann.

1915

He is drafted for the veteran reserve but after a prolonged stay in a military hospital he is finally discharged in 1917 as unfit for service.

1917

He attaches himself more closely to the »Jugendbewegung« (Youth Movement) and remains with it up to the beginning of the twenties.

1920

He is a guest of the Stuttgart Üecht-Gruppe. For the first time in his life he is given a proper opportunity to exhibit his own pictures. He begins etching and takes up themes of social criticism in dry point technique, views of the new Stuttgart, and portraits of the architects Hans Schöpfer and Gustav Schleicher, the painter Heinrich Altherr, the art historian Heinrich von Weizsäcker, the writer Julius Bab, the conductor Seber van der Floe, the actresses Hilde Koerberand and Erika Beilke, and the actor Curt Elwenspoek. At the beginning of the thirties Ackermann gives up etching.

1921

Rudolf van Laban, the originator of abstract dancing, comes to Stuttgart, they exchange visits and discuss choreography and counterpoint. Max Ackermann makes blind rythmical drawings. In his Studio he opens a »Lehrwerkstätte für Neue Kunst« (Apprentices' workshop for New Art) and holds six-day summer courses. The theoretical basis of his teaching are Hoelzel's theories and his own ideas on painting. The order of the lectures: »The knowledge of the rational artistic means and their importance as basic working tools for the artist. The abstract, non-representational picture seen as a development of rational artistic means. - Nature as an artistic object, developed out from the knowledge of irrational artistic means. Synthesis of picture and nature.« The practical part includes: »Exercises in abstract composition such as: construction of pictures, light and shadow, shades of colours, cold and warm floodings, division and addition of colours. Contrasts of quantity and intensity. Thorough studies in the simultaneous use of artistic means. Experiments in painting aiming at a development of penetrated nature. - Nature studies. Exercises in observation. The two dimensions of nature in the New Picture.«

1924

His first one man show takes place, comprising concrete and abstract pictures: paintings, pastels, drawings. - In the same year his mother dies.

1926

He is in Paris frequenting the Cafe du Dome, where he meets Piet Mondrian and makes friends with Adolf Loos. He goes on to Normandy and for the first time in his life experiences the sea at St. Vallerie en Caux.

1927

He begins a series of sport drawings for the »Stuttgarter Tagblatt« (from 1924-1928 he is a member of the light-athletic team of the »Stuttgarter Kickers«). - Joachim Ringelnatz takes part in a party improvised by Ackermann in his studio. - In Stuttgart the »Weissenhof-Siedlung« is being built. Le Corbusier, Gropius, Mies van der Rohe are among the architects.

1928

He meets Wassily Kandinsky in Stuttgart on the occasion of an exhibition which unites paintings by George Grosz, Kandinsky, and Ackermann. He makes the acquaintance of the dramatist and non-medical practitioner Friedrich Wolf. Friendship with the anarchist Gregor Gog, author of »Vorspiel zu einer Philosophie der Landstrasse« (Prelude to a Philosophy of the Highway). He visits the Gauguin exhibition in the Basel Kunsthalle.

1929

A »Vagabundenkongress« (Congress of the Vagabonds) takes place in Stuttgart (Germany counts about 70,000 tramps in those days). Here he meets Alfons Paquet, the poet and Journalist, who informs him about the strange event. Some tramps stay overnight in his study. - Ackermann illustrates a novel by Anni Geiger-Gog »Heini Jermann, der Lebenstag eines Jungen« (Heini Jermann, A Day in the Life of a Young Boy).

1930

He spends the autumn in the Tessin painting at Ascona, Ronco, and Brissago, makes friends with Karl Vester, the great enthusiast of nature, and the Parisian sculptor Moisse Cogan; he also meets Marianne Werefkin. - He founds the Department of Absolute Painting at the Stuttgart Volkshochschule (Adult College). The classes are: »Means of creation. - The seven contrasts (rational). The four-toned quality of light and dark. - Form-construction. Pictorial architecture. - Goethe's Farbkreis (Goethe's colour chart). The rational shades of colours and colour floodings. - Irrational: Simultaneousness of means. - Error of judgment in light and shadow. - Border contrasts. - Simultaneousness in the cold-warm. - Division and Addition of colours. - Intensity and quantity of colours. - Numerical proportions in all the artistic means. - Vibration of colour. - Space construction with the help of artistic means. - Black, white, greys »non-colours«, butasimpor - tant energies. - Development of the original cubic forms as the beginning of concrete painting.«

1931

Otto Fischer buys etchings for the Basel Kunstmuseum. Willi Wolfrath, author of Dix' biography, begins to show interest in Ackermann.

1932

He visits the Picasso exhibition at the Kunsthaus in Zürich. In Hornstaad on the Lake of Constance he makes the acquaintance of Gertrud Ostermayer, violinist and teacher of gymnastics, sister of the sculptor Walter Ostermayer. - Gustav Hartlaub plans an Ackermann exhibition in the Mannheim Kunsthalle, a plan which does not materialize because the Nazis come into power in 1933.

1933

As late as 1933 an essay by Theodor Musper on Ackermann, the graphic artist, appears in Vienna. During the Adolf Hoelzel exhibition in the Stuttgart Galerie Valentien, Max Ackermann holds several lectures on Hoelzel's teachings on painting.

1934

He buys the »Wiesle«, a small meadow near the Frauenkopf estate on the hills of Stuttgart. His pupil and friend Erich Schurr helps to finance the project by buying some of his pictures.

1935

He builds a summer-house on the site (called »das Häusle«) which is to serve as a studio.

1936

From 1936 on he is forbidden to teach but he continues unperturbedly painting non-representational pictures. The Stinnes Collection which already contains six of his graphics is dissolved. - Max Ackermann and Gertrud Ostermayer marry. At first they live for a short period in Stuttgart, then they move to Hornstaad to live in the Ostermayer house. On the »Höri« peninsula a painters' community gradually develops. In the course of time Otto Dix, Helmuth Macke, and Erich Heckel also settle here.

1937

Graphics and the painting »Ruhende« (Resting Female) in the Württembergische Staatsgalerie are confiscated as decadent. Through the help of the architect Hans Bert Baur, Ackermann nevertheless gets an order for a glass picture for the Revenue Office in Völklingen, near Saarbrücken, probably the only abstract work of art publicly risked in those days. (It was later removed and destroyed only after 1945 because individual parts were stolen.)

1938

He makes two more glass pictures for Neunkirchen and Sulzbach, both places near Saarbrücken.

1939

His Studio in Urbanstrasse, Stuttgart, is bombed out. Many of his earlier paintings are burnt.

1944

He takes his pictures to a safe place. On this occasion he sees for the last time his native place in Thuringia.

1945

Willi Baumeister arrives at Hornstaad where he stays with the Ackermanns until the end of the war. Walter Kaesbach and Werner Gothein organize the important post-war exhibition in Überlingen where Ackermann shows several pictures.

1946

He makes the acquaintance of Richard Hamann on the occasion of the Constance Kunstwoche inspired by Bruno Leiner. Will Grohmann pays Ackermann a visit in his home on the Lake of Constance and selects several pictures for the great Interzonal Exhibition in Dresden. - Hilla Rebay (Guggenheim Museum, New York) helps with the food.

1947

Ottomar Domnick, the Stuttgart doctor and collector, edits the book »Die schöpferischen Kräfte in der abstrakten Malerei« (Creative Forces in Abstract Painting) in which Fritz Winter, Otto Ritschi, Willi Baumeister, Max Ackermann, Georg Meistermann are presented. In the same year Domnick organizes a set of exhibitions with these painters. At one of the accompanying lectures Kurt Leonhard speaks about Ackermann.

1948

Ackermann exhibits for the first time in the »Salon des Realites Nouvelles« in Paris.

1949

He is represented in the exhibition »Kunst in Deutschland 1930-1949« in the Zürich Kunsthaus.

1950

He is awarded one of the Ströher prizes for abstract art (donation of the Darmstadt manufacturer Karl Ströher).

1951

He is awarded a prize from the National Olympic Committee (for one of his earlier sport drawings).

1952

In co-operation with Wolfgang Fortner he organizes a seminar on painting and music at Hornstaad.

1953

The first seminar at Hornstaad is followed by a seminar on painting and architecture organized in co-operation with Hugo Häring and Kurt Leonhard. (Plan of a Central »Kultbau«). In the same year he participates in an excursion to the Provence, France. He exhibits in Paris, Galerie Arnaud, visits Henri Laurens, Sonia Delaunay, Hans Härtung, Cesar Domela, and Roberta Gonzales (who shows him the Studio and sculptures of her father.)

1954

An attempt is made on his pictures at the University of Tübingen: three of his paintings are damaged.

1955

The first monograph on Ackermann appears, written by Will Grohmann.

1956

He travels by air and sea to the Canary Islands.

1957

The title of a Professor is bestowed upon him. - Since the end of the war he has been living alternately at Horn-staad and in his summer house in Stuttgart. In 1957 he leaves Hornstaad for good because he feels too isolated there; his marriage is divorced. He moves to his brother Hans, 8 Witthohstaffel, Stuttgart.

1960

He goes to Milan, pays a visit to the frescoes of Giotto in Padua and to the Biennale in Venice.

1963

He has a look at his new pictures, shown in the »Kuppelsaal« of the Stuttgart Kunstgebäude. The combination of his pictures with the architecture finds his approval.

1964

During the spring time he is a guest of honour of the Villa Massimo in Rome. He prolongs his time in Italy at Ischia where he stays another month. He returns home with an abundance of pastels, the »Römische Serie« (Roman Series).

1967

In the Spring of 1967 he goes for a treatment to Bad Ditzgenbach near Stuttgart where he meets the actress Marlis Schiffbauer, whose recitals of Sophocles (Antigone), Hebbel (Maria Magdalena), Rilke, and Brecht occupy his mind deeply. He experiments with the new acrylic colours and gains even subtler effects from them. The first great retrospective exhibition takes place: »Gemälde 1908-1967« (Paintings 1908-1967). On the occasion of the celebration of his 80th birthday the city of Stuttgart holds a reception in the town-hall. Towards the end of autumn he breaks his right hand. For a quarter of a year he is condemned to uncertainty and inactivity.

1968

He spends the spring of 1968 at Bad Teinach where he makes the first attempts to paint again. During the summer he returns to large canvasses. The Galerie Kröner at Freiburg shows his newest works; the exhibition is opened with the performance of Hans Ludwig Schilling's Music »Zeacis Hafis«.

1975

He died at Unterlengenhard.