

"...*Imperium* refers to the theory of culture/history as an organism and as such bound to its seasons and the European culture as the "high culture" of our time stepping towards its winter.

Based on this idea there is another theory, that says if we dip deep into the past and view the former leading high cultures and look how they ended, they all, (except for the middle American culture which was interrupted by Spanish marauders) built, in a last rear up, an *imperium* with expansion, colonies, strong religious power, state and religion in unity, etc. etc. Not to be mistaken for a more economic community like the European Union or a democratic world power as the USA.

This sounds for now very far away and politically absolutely incorrect, as we grew up with enlightenment, democracy and humanism. But this is what interests me, as it deals with the fact that morals etc. are always changing and what seems to be good right now may not be right in 50 years, definitely not in a hundred from now. The theory has, of course, often been misused for political debates and right wing attitudes. But all this is not important, because definitely neither do I want to promote this vision of an *imperium* nor do I see it as a monition. It's more a play with something unexpected, something we should reckon on. The how, by whom or when, is of no importance. Just the fact that it is a "may-will-be", that has to be fulfilled to come to an end..

...And there we come back to the "Schlemihlium", where we have (civilized) man in a cloud of unknowing, searching but never finding (not really), man at the mercy of something superior.

This has something fatalistic, but I try to never clearly pronounce this in my work, it has to do with trying to see the great in the small and the important is that there is always a glimpse of hope and human.

Like the vanguards, as both some avant-garde or cultural pioneers and a military spearhead, have always something scary and something scared and something displaced and pathetic, or the masks, pierrots, etc...

For me these are all symbols for the human and his search for simple questions like: what is freedom? what peace? what foreign? life? new? silence? human?... and the answers are always changing..

I never try to invent (someone who thinks he could really "invent" something is mistaken and fake, the same is with "genius"). I always relate to found images more or less, which I try to revitalize and build with them something new. It also creates a concomitance..

I started studying early history and ethnology later, but changed to art after a few boring terms. In ethnology the ancient customs of the "corn king" are fascinating: at harvest time, the last sheaf was left on the field and cut in a ceremonial way, was brought to the barn in a procession and kept there in a special place to be mixed with the new seeds and reseed in the next spring.

The painting "Wayfaring Strangers" and "Die Minstrels (Die Kolonisten)" for example is an adaptation of one of J.C. Bingham's river paintings, which were described in a catalogue as "the frontier people, creators of a nation's future". Meant was of course the American nation, but its funny how it fits with the *imperium*-thing and the vanguards series.

I love the Hudson River School painters very much, the total explosion of what we know in Germany as "romantic painting", the idea of them as vanguards being part of the taking over of this huge land and landscapes. ...And I love the real feelings expressed in their paintings coming from the bottom of the heart, which is, for me, the best legitimation for art..."