

color), in which cross-references are drawn between juxtaposed pieces; and the fine photographs of Andreas Pfeiffer.

Sculptures and environments

Big exhibitions often facilitate spectacular sculptural installations. The numerous pieces exhibited notably at Beaubourg, are far from good. The Norwegian haybarn transported by Marianne Heske would have been more suitable in an ethnographic exhibition than at the Biennial. A great deal of room was wasted by Martial Thomas (France). The British sculpture was particularly boring—the only interesting pieces being those by the English artist Briggs, presented by France.

Although they were not great pieces, two constructions of the type of Oppenheim or Aycock attracted my attention: those of Nahum Tevet (Israel) and Torben Ebbesen (Denmark). The fact that Oppenheim exhibited in Paris in late 1979 certainly influenced the work of Bazile.

The work of the Koreans Chung and Kim, and above all two works of Christahe Möbus and Micha Laury raised the overall standard among the other sculptors. Una Maye (Belgium) lacked space and Massey (Canada) had planned an area to be visited by one person at a time, which condition was not respected. Their work will probably be misunderstood as a result.

A retrospective analysis of the last ten Biennials shows that the great majority of artists and the more significant movements have been represented without always having been the most important feature of the exhibition.

Although the larger selection of artists by the Biennial is a good thing, the conditions in which their works are shown and the organization leave much to be desired. There is much to be said for the attitude which allows a mixture of the paintings, sculptures, and photographic works to be exhibited together; however, a lack of intellectual coherence is indeed a grave fault. Only the sections with several biennials to their credit had the know-how to choose pieces that had some kind of relationship with the exhibition as a whole. The others should have had access to a more flexible system, which would have allowed for their incomplete comprehension of the organization. The articles in the catalogue are equally deceptive. There should have been at least two or three pieces covering the entire international situation, putting the works of art chosen in their context. The articles are in fact conventional, even provincial.

By way of conclusion, specific mention should be made of a factor that this Biennial and the general situation in

France: the post-Beaubourg phenomenon.

The creation of the Pompidou Centre has effectively drained much energy since 1972 and has particularly enfeebled the wisdom of the observers, the art critics. For some years now the situation has been characterized by a guilt complex vis à vis the U.S. and the few art capitals in Europe. With the exception of a rapidly institutionalized avant-garde, no new ideas seem to have come to the fore. In 1979 the ARC reviewing the previous ten years in France obliged the members of the French selection committee to search for artists other than those who could easily be classified according to the traditional artistic schemes. It became obvious that large numbers of young artists worked with a far greater depth of vision than some of their predecessors.

Not all the work is of exceptional quality, in this year's Biennial but it would seem that the situation has loosened up. On account of the large number of artists chosen, this younger generation was able to pass through the sieve of the selection committees. Unfortunately, it was necessary to catch up on the considerable backlog of artists ignored for the last ten years before any new talent could appear.

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