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Ritual Space

The sole purpose of ritual garments in the church service is to be a vocal part of the ritual and to serve its enactment; it is for this that they are conceived, designed and made. Their sole mission is descriptive—to describe the text of the ritual, to arrange it into symbols.

A homeless man, in his naïveté and simplicity of soul, would without a moment's thought use these garments for his everyday needs. Exactly the same approach (the homeless man's approach) is displayed by our consciousness in relation to the world. The world in its original sense serves as a ritual space, where every single phenomenon appearing in it serves the process of development of the ritual whole and has meaning only within this.

In our case, from the very first moment the world impinges on it, human consciousness begins to impose purely utilitarian value judgements on the phenomena that populate the world, thereby obscuring their real meaning; they are never now perceived by us as linguistic elements ordering the text of the global ritual.

Thus we become participants and also take part in the development of ritual only as its mechanical components—without comprehending ritual itself. Tragically, we must admit that we find ourselves in a value-based reality, not a ritual-based reality.

Artists (with varying degrees of success and on different levels) endeavour to restore the true state of affairs—to give back to existential symbols (things, phenomena) the real status referred to. They attempt to reduce the level of recognition of a value-based understanding of symbols to a minimum and thereby to acquire the

chance of comprehending them as linguistic elements of a global ritual that is constantly developing around us. This is the fundamental but still not recognised task posed by modern art.

Duchamp sets symbols free from the alluvium of utilitarian values, but with him, once they are freed they do not acquire their natural quality—that of being descriptive elements of global ritual ("depicting the Name"), as no matter where they are found, space itself is not portrayed as ritual. In ritual space, freed symbols take on their real function, which is linguistic, ordering the text of the ritual. My installations too are (in the main) an attempt to organise such a space; they are a call to restore to space its ritual reality.

Experiencing the rituality of the world (and that is the same as experiencing its meaning) rouses in man a feeling of spontaneous happiness—a merging with the global stream of ultimate meaning. In the situation described where consciousness is polluted, my installations must be the breath of the space of global ritual.

I learnt about this feeling of experiencing spontaneous happiness from visitors to my installation on Venice Biennial. Of my work in Haus der Kunst and Tate Gallery, I was told many times that they represent a new, modern concept of the church (one that has real influence). I treat this as affirmative for indeed the church had the same mission as art does now.

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