

FRITZ KOENIG 1924-2017

was rooted in his Bavarian heritage, landscape, food, home, tongue, and soul.

His self was forever branded as a front-line soldier in Russia.

His art was influenced by Germany's war and post war history,
and driven by his own extraordinary talent
and relentless search for form, content, and his own truth.

He was genuinely modern.

His drawings are equals to his sculptures.

He bred Arabian horses as if he was sculpting them.
He collected African cult objects as if they were his own work.
He built a home, a studio, a stable, surrounded by meadows and woods
as his kingdom - highly ambitious and humble at the same time - where he
worked and died.

Sensuality, angst, and death were his main themes.

Man and woman. Men and horses.

Epitaphs represent death.

No individual expressions. Faceless fate for us all.

He and his wife, Maria, had no children,
friends were always welcome with an open heart.

Percy Adlon, June 1, 2018

*written and displayed as the entrance tablet for the FLORENCE RETROSPECTIVE at
the GALLERIA DEGLI UFFICI from June 20 to October 7 2018.*

Percy Adlon

Dear Fritz,

I'd like to describe to you what touches me so deeply when I look at your recent drawings. Of all your works these are the ones that move me most. Maybe because for me as a storyteller there is so much about you and your experiences, your dreams and wishes to see in them and learn from them.

With the thick piece of chalk before the dark paper
you challenge your images,
open yourself up to your images.
You woo them,
you coax them out of their depths,
you tolerate no charlatanry,
no light amusement.
In the primordial core of your own nature you evoke them,
you rouse them.
The chalk digs into the surface,
the image wants to come out,
but first it must prove itself, it must be true
– as if it needed a password to proceed –
It has to be this way.

Then, like a sleight of hand,
a horseman suddenly appears, calmly relaxed,
then two, one with arms raised,
the other, deeply fused with his horse,
then many, frolicking about, the way you used to
have your Arabian horses around you.

All of a sudden there is something else.
A new creature. A horse-man.
He rears up, struts, flexes his muscles,
waits for the signal
to charge across summer meadows beneath storm clouds,
under the moon.

He calls others.
The wild chase.
Bodies separating, reuniting, tempestuously,
in a thunderous rush.
Then simmering down, standing, calm.

Man and animal are one. It's how you lived it as a child. Now
you discover your young days again, as elder.
Inventions, no, experiences!
Your hard-won works still sustain you,
though they are long past,
while the memory of sweet sensuous dreams of being close to the animal,
its smell, its velvety nostrils,
of being connected on his back,
galloping with it, becoming one,
body of its body, all this is here and now.
Memory is now.

The thick, red chalk. The dark paper.
The next one. The next. The next.
And again and again the next one.
Because the images deep down inside once aroused
now take on a life of their own.
Your chalk follows their command.
Set loose, it sweeps you into the dance!
You run, fly, fight, play, woo, wrestle, revel.
Yes, this is how the boy felt when he became a horse,
when his little body merged with that of the mighty beast,
great bulging muscles and slender fetlocks,
men's games, boys' escapades.
Desiring, embracing. Yes, many embraces!

You are all of them. Rider, horse, hero, group, individual, couple,
stallion, mare, lover, and beloved.
In one, a skeleton leads the way.
In another, someone holds the world up in the air like a light, round wafer.
And in the end – a hobbyhorse rider from your childhood.
“Now I remember as clear as day things
I had forgotten for so long,” you say.

In the wonderful sequence of endless possibilities
in which you show us your strong, tender,
wistful dreams and wishes
you invite us to take part.

Percy

Berlin, February 8, 2009