

HANS MOGENS VOIGT STEFFENSEN

B. COPENHAGEN 1941

Hans Voigt Steffensen started out as a carpenter and attended the Copenhagen Advanced College of Building Technology (Byggeteknisk Højskole) from 1971 to 1972, after which he went on to train as an architect at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen until 1974.

He is self-taught as a painter, but he exhibited for the first time in the Kunstnernes Efterårsudstilling in 1965. At that time he was painting somber cityscapes of the Nørrebro and Vesterbro districts in Copenhagen. However, he soon developed his delight in bright colors by adding elements of yellow, orange, and green, concentrating more on reproducing the green areas of his city neighborhoods rather than their shabbiness.

In 1976 Voigt Steffensen visited the United States. On his return he included photograph collages in his exhibitions, but it was visits to Hungary and later in the 1970s to Poland, the Soviet Union, and Bulgaria that gave him the greatest inspiration and developed his artistic universe to the stage it has reached. Voigt Steffensen was fascinated by the life and dress of the people of the Balkans, and his palette underwent a total transformation. Blue, violet, and numerous shades of red and yellow were applied to the canvas in pastose layers, and clear primary colors, inspired by the early German Expressionists and the French Fauvists, were begun to be used.

It was now the human figure in movement that became the pivotal point in Voigt Steffensen's artistic universe. He has painted folklore from the Balkans, Spanish flamenco dancers, and circus acrobats. At the same time he has gradually extended the circle of his motifs also to include depictions of more exotic regions, for instance Bali.

In the 1980s Voigt Steffensen's motif took on a rather lighter shade, but in both his watercolors and his sometimes large-scale paintings he retained a sensuous expressionistic relationship to color. Hans Voigt Steffensen has undertaken several large decorative commissions for places, including the TV-byen television center in Gladsaxe, the Citroën factories in Copenhagen, and the passenger ferry Kong Olav V.

He has exhibited in numerous places in Denmark and abroad, both with other artists and on his own. Exhibitions in this latter category were in Den frie Udstilling in 1970, 1972, and 1975; Galerie Asbæk in Copenhagen 1978, 1980, 1983 (when the Loeb collection painting was purchased), 1987, and 1991; Sønderjyllands Kunstmuseum 1980; Djakarta, Indonesia, 1993; Kunsthaus Lübeck 1995, and the Herbert von Karajan Center, Vienna, 1998. Voigt Steffensen has received many grants and marks of distinction, beginning with the Statens Kunstfond Working Grant in 1969. In 1987 he was awarded the Danish Labour Organisation's Culture Prize and in 1990 the Danish Master Painters' Color Prize.

S.L.

LITERATURE: Sam Besekow (foreword), *Hans Voigt Steffensen*, Viborg 1991; Alex Steen, *Hans Voigt Steffensen*, Galerie Asbæk, undated; Ulla Grut in *Weilbach*, vol. 9, Copenhagen 2000.