

*Discours Sweeney - Munich 1961*

Your Excellency, Professor Maunz; Fellow Members of the International Association of Art Critics; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen:

It was a heart warming experience last evening to come out of a gusy sky by 'plane and to feel oneself suddenly in the embrace of the smiling Bavarian countryside. We, members of the International Association of Art Critics, have several notable welcomes to recall. I remember, for example, our arrival at the Golden Horn for our Istanbul meeting, just at the moment when the sunset was throwing its mellowest light on the mosques and minarets and that busy, storied harbor. I remember our arrival in Naples on the night of the Fiesta di Pied di Grotta. The streets were thronged with singing, laughing, jostling crowds; and the skies soon became alive with bursting, soaring, showering fireworks from Capri to the northern mainland. But the smiling welcome of the Bavarian country side last evening had a warmth and humanity that equalled the charm of both these earlier experiences in quite another way, but I am confident that it will remain as thoroughly fixed in my recollection for the years to come as they have from the past.

Too, this sense of smiling, warm humanity seemed to me perhaps also a token, a foretaste of the general impression we would likely carry away with us from Munich and Bavaria on our departure. For I had gone carefully over the program that Professor Grohmann had worked out for us. From my slight, earlier acquaintance with Bavarian Rokoko I had kept a live recollection of its gaiety and charm overlying that exacting order, which gives the base to its richest expressions. And I have always remembered the warmth and hospitality of Bavaria and particularly of those of its people whom I have had the good fortune to know as friends.

Today, we members of the International Association of Art Critics are on the edge of a brief, intense and what will certainly be a rewarding venture into a world rich in those experiences which we all particularly prize. We have already, had a foretaste of the atmosphere which will invest the next several days in the stimulating address of Dr. Maunz. His words were at once inspiring and gratifying - gratifying in the fact that they make us feel, so thoroughly, our welcome to Munich and to Bavaria. We are most appreciative of all that Dr. Maunz has said to us.

I would like to thank His Honor, Dr. Vogel, the Mayor of Munich, for his invitation to Munich and for all he has done for the Assembly here.

We are aware that the German Section has received every possible aid from the Bavarian Government. And I would like to take this occasion also to express the Association's gratitude to the Government of Bavaria for the consideration and generosity that made this assembly in Munich possible.

Our thanks likewise go to Professor Grohmann, to Mr. Gert Schiff, and to all who have collaborated in the organization of this XIII general assembly of the International Association of Art Critics.

I would like also on this occasion to say how deeply appreciative we are of the presence here of Baron Michel Dard, Chief of the Division of Arts and Letters of Unesco who represents that organization among us. The members of the International Association of Art Critics know how thoroughly Mr. Dard has always taken our Group's interests to heart and looked after them. Each time he has joined us at a meeting there has been a happy and beneficial sequel for the Association. To put it mildly he has only friends among the Art Critics.



And now for the future: Two days of Association work and discussions and the rest of our visit to be devoted to acquiring a fuller acquaintance with Munich, Bavaria, their arts and their people. We look forward to Professor Schoenberger's introductory lecture this morning on Bavarian Rokoko. We anticipate eagerly a concert in the perfect Rokoko setting of the Cuvillies Theatre - - - as well as our visit to that gem of Bavarian Rokoko, the Church of Wies and to the Abbey of Ottobeuren. And I trust that all these treasures of Bavarian Rokoko will not distract our twentieth century minds too completely from the rich opportunity Professor Klaus Lankeit is going to afford us to make a thorough acquaintance with the work of the painters of the Blaue Reiter Group in this city of that group's nativity, Munich.

Fellow members of the International Association of Art Critics, we are truly fortunate in this opportunity which our colleagues of the German Section and the Bavarian authorities have afforded us. And in conclusion I want to take this opportunity to thank them, for all of us, from the bottoms of our hearts, for their hospitality.

James Johnson Sweeney