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ASPECT : ART AND LITERATURE, ed. Rudi Krausmann. Published quarterly by Aspect Publications, 9 Cambridge Street, Paddington, N.S.W. 2021. Volume 2, Numbers 2 (1976) and 3 (March 1977).

At first glance, *Aspect* seems to be a little magazine of high quality. It is printed on better paper than most, with a clear type-face and is wealthy enough to reproduce photographs, letters and MS. versions of poems. But the first impression is deceptive.

The rather imposing title gives a misleading impression of the contents. While each of the two issues devotes approximately equal space to art and literature in the form of interviews, reviews of exhibitions, articles and original works in prose and poetry (some in translation), the magazine does not treat art and literature in general but confines itself to contemporary Australian and rather surprisingly German works. Concentration on the former is to be expected given the fact that *Aspect* is assisted by the Visual Arts and the Literature Boards of the Australia Council, but the presence of the latter is unexplained. One presumes from the editor's comments in his role as interviewer that he feels Australians need to widen their cultural horizons, but why is the foreign material drawn exclusively from the German-speaking world? Lacking any direct statement of editorial policy, the magazine seems unbalanced.

There is a kind of editorial. Epigraphs are printed in each issue opposite the List of Contents under the heading "Instead of a Foreword", but there seems to be a contradiction between the ideas expressed in the quotation from Camus, beginning Vol. 2/2, and the magazine itself. Camus asserts that the artist must tread a path between isolation and political involvement in order to preserve a "content of reality" in his work. But, he says, to share "the misfortune of his time" the artist must distance himself from his time and hence gain a perspective on it. If an artist were to follow this advice he wouldn't be reading magazines such as *Aspect*.

In common with most little magazines the content of *Aspect* is of varying quality. Some things are very good indeed, like the short piece by Cynthia Nolan, "Learning to Write", and Jurgis Janavicius brings a welcome touch of humour to a magazine whose writers on the whole take themselves very seriously.

Interviews with people like Mirka Mora, Bruce Beaver, David Perry, Andrew Sibley and Otto Nemitz are prominent in each issue. John Tranter's interview with David Perry is a model of its type. He lets his subject do the

talking and by asking pertinent and intelligent questions allows David Perry to give a clear and thorough account of himself, his views and his work as Artist in Residence in Film and Video at Griffith University. The other interviews, though informative, tend to be on a superficial level. For example, in Vol. 2/3 Rudi Krausmann interviews the German painter Otto Nemitz, who mentions a current movement in German art which he calls New Realism, but tells us very little about it other than that it is not the same as Photo Realism. Similarly the reader is left puzzling over sentences such as "the capitalist Realism is no metaphysical confrontation, rather a poster-like presentation of capitalist reality".

Verbal obscurity and dullness are not confined to the interviews, but extend to some of the longer articles. Ian Milliss, "Radicalism as Conservatism", in a format more suited to the textbook, repeats the often made point that the avant-garde ultimately maintains the status quo, while Ken Bolton's turgid review, "Some works in 'Self-Images' ", typographically daunting, contains such gems as:

The work shown generally operated at some point on this spectrum – from a kind opacity & low historical-psychological-ideological information . . . to the more public & generalised content characterised by Sue Ford's work, which pole most tended towards.

The reviews themselves vary from the self-indulgent ramblings of Rudi Krausmann in response to an exhibition by Brett Whiteley, which convey little about the works or the artist, to a stimulating appraisal of Colin Lanceley by Gary Catalano.

The poets and prose-writers are a mixed bunch. In prose there are some sensitive pieces by Anna Couani and Antigone Kefala but many of the poems are slight or obscure, coming alive only in a striking phrase or image. However Donovan Clarke and Jeremy Nelson catch the attention. Consider this haiku by Jeremy Nelson titled "Seaweed", for example:

Loyal to each tide,
Seaweed – sown in slime – floats up,
Swings in the shallows.

In "Poetry Festival" Hans Magnus Enzensberger introduces a refreshing emotional force compared with the insipid offerings of most of the other poets.

On the technical side, *Aspect* would be greatly improved by a layout which used more of each page (at present a third of each page is blank), and by more rigorous proof-reading. For example, there are at least three misprints on page 18 of Vol. 2/2. Identification of some of the illustrations would help the reader, as, for instance, those works reproduced on pages 19 and 23 of Vol. 2/3, and appropriate page numbers should be included

in the List of Contents. Finally, this reviewer, at least, would have appreciated some short notes on the German writers whom *Aspect* introduces to Australian readers.