

Speech of Walter Lampe, welfare and social work pastor, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1996 at the exhibition opening

## **“Sculptures of Wilfried Behre”**

at the Ottmar- von – Reden- Park, Kunstverein Gehrden

As written in the “Neue Presse” on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1995, the sculptor Wilfried Behre works with hammer and chisel at the eternity. The work with stones became part of his personality. He says: “The stone is the eternal in me!”

Many altars in the churches are made out of stone. Furthermore altars and stones serve as the centre of holy places in different religions. The straightened up stone is not only representation of the personal divinity, but rather also serves as a memory of ancestors, to the memory of a victory or as a symbol of an agreement. In the biblical legend in which Jacob anoints a set up stone, one can see a memorial to the revelation.

The stone as a symbol is character of the eternal and additionally spreads an air of secrecy. It is not cold- no - it is also a creature that has life in itself. If the artist takes a stone out of the earth, he wants to grasp it as a living part of this earth.

One can say each person has this wish, this longing for eternity. The stone symbolizes it! Therefore Behre wanted to be a sculptor. By being a student of the Japanese prof. Makoto Fujiwara, he integrated the fascinating stones into his life.

For Wilfried Behre the stone is action and experience at the same time.

Behre made a sculpture out stone of a quarry at the base of the hill. He flew the processed marble sculptor on the top of the hill. He wanted to give something back. It has to stand on the top, because the base does not appeal to the human mental dimension as the top. There the sculpture is near heaven and therefore near eternity and far away from everyday life.

Since 1989 he works on the “global stone volume” at the Maschsee in Hanover. The first seven sculptures can be seen at the east and west bank. Behre has the idea of creating more of these sculptures in different countries so that they are connected symbolically to a “global stone volume”.

Art can produce a shape of sense and of vacuum or of sense void. Art can weigh in security and also can produce an outcry. What we have hung up at home is not frequently art, but rather decoration. Decorators are important persons, but the artist J. Beuys said that art always wants to announce something. Wilfried Behre wants to receive responsibility. Art and announcement mix themselves in Behre. Therefore his art could be combined with a social impetus.

From January to March 1991 Behre initiated a work of several sculptors by creating a memorial for the victims of the gulf war at the Opera Place in Hanover. These stones are also expression of the peace and admonition to the reconciliation, just always with the breath of the infringement of the daily.

In the beginning of 1990 passers- by in the pedestrian zone in Hanover have been amazed at a man that peeled Christmas trees with a hatchet. After a lot of work these trees were formed to a bed for homeless. Art on the one hand shows injustice but at the same time at the other hand demonstrates that there is something else, somewhat more beautiful. There are for example the fountains at the encounter site in the blind association in Hanover Behre created in 1992. The splashing water is an orientation for the blind and enables them to take part in the daily life. For me, that is the impressive on the encounters with the art of Wilfried Behre. Since then I have set stones and life together in the first time of my life.

Therefore Wilfried Behre works usually outside under the eyes of pedestrians, speaks with them and gets talking with them. Many of these people, the sales assistant, the computer expert, the assembly line worker or the doctor..., recognize for the first time, that a artist works hard, just as themselves. That creates connections and enables mutual understanding.

Water and stone, those two elements play a role in his works again and again. Just like this big solar fountain stone here in the exhibition. The concept for the stone is that water is driven when the sun is shining. Through the play of sun and clouds the water is regulated. The water only flows if there is daylight. It determines the bubbling water quantity through the stone from sunrise to sunset. Water and stones at the same time have an eternal character. We need this eternal in our daily life in order to deal with the reality.

Therefore his actions and activities as a 1<sup>st</sup> chairman of the "AuE- Kreativschule" in Hanover as well as a professor of the international summer academy in Salzburg in 1994 always contain a message next to the freedom of creating. Behre wants to mediate this to youths and trough his unobtrusive education also to children. Through the medium stone he wants the humans to realize their responsibility for the creation and at the same time wants to give them as created an honour you are not allowed to hurt.

Wilfried Behre does not understand art as a disoriented work but art rather brings the discussion and represents standpoints. The water of the fountains at the encounter site in the blind association in Hanover strokes the stone and marks a point of orientation. The different surfaces are not only visible but also perceptible. This is art with all senses, heart and mind. At this fountain you can hear and see freedom, you recognize ecological balance and that you can take be part of it without disturbing. By touching the sculpture you feel peace, you feel beautiful.

Something that lets us be, something, we feel, hear, see, maybe smell, all these images that put us in a context, that we experience as beautiful.

Gomez Davila says, where art is, there is no devil. The beautiful is the glory of the real. The bible contains the idea of the stone with a soul. Therefore you were not allowed to cut stones. But later there were cut stones, especially the stones for the altars. So in the religious language the stone has a soul. Through art we come in touch with the soul. But we don't cut the soul, the soul cuts us.

The work with stones is a slowly work. The artist is many times confronted with the stone's age. For Wilfried Behre the stone is a creature. All creatures have their time in order to live. If I give the creature time, I give the both of us honour. It's the same in relationship with stones which grows by cutting them. I give them time and they give me time. Therefore the stone represents the opposite to speed and superficiality. Working on stones with such an age, Behre realizes what a small personality and what a small appearance he is.

I am a little wheel in the world events and I am just a little visitor from the eternity that goes to eternity. The work on stones prohibits to hurry. For that reason Wilfried Behre doesn't work figurative. In the process of working on the stone there only come off little parts. That enables the artist to check on the form over and over again. These cut off might be a kind of meditation. When his work is done Behre feels silence and calmness inside himself. The sculpture lets feel him harmony.

The artist occupies the mediator role between the transcendental and the now- time. Working on the stone the artist often feels that he will never become as old as the stone. He realizes his own borders and his earthly mortality. This feeling at the same time gives an impulse to enjoy the moment. An American nun said: Today is the first day of the remains of my life and it becomes reality through the work with the eternal stone. And Wilfried Behre says: The more I think of the eternal or even perhaps of death by cutting a stone, the more lively I become! At the same time I get a new relationship to the entirely daily things. For example I don't complain about the rain but rather perceive the raindrops as something refreshing.

The stone I work sometimes exists 2 billion years and I perhaps will become 80 or 90. That's why I have to give the stone the chance to show the eternity it contains. Therefore the stone gives the artist a chance not the artist the stone. Behre says, that working on stones he has experienced that the stone touches his soul. Maybe we should let the stones touch our souls when we look at them.

Walter Lampe, welfare and social work pastor

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