

1st Arcade: SURVIVAL



The subject of the first arcade is survival. 'Primitive' man's attempt to influence the hostile environment: Where technical means prove to be insufficient, magic provides strength. It is supposed to guarantee luck in hunting, fertility, protection from evil

spirits, and the like. Most of the examples focus on the universe of the archaic farmers, which began with the 'Neolithic Revolution' and which after ten thousand



years of continuity is coming to an end all over the world. Because of its complex nature the whole field of agriculture can only be hinted at as a universal phenomenon. Archaic objects are placed next to those of recent 'primitive' societies.



2nd Arcade: ORIENTATION



The second arcade presents several basic patterns of religious orientation. The mythic matrix of early advanced civilizations and great systems of faith is sketched: Images of deities of different backgrounds are placed in

relationship to one another, and reveal obvious phenomenal analogies and iconographic connections. A main focus is the image of Buddha as an important breakthrough to the image



of man. If the objects from the Buddhist world of forms predominate, there is yet another reason for it: the meaning of its repertoire for the development of art in Asia and Europe. Further emphasis is given to the animal picture as a significant image in myth and religion.



3rd Arcade: TRANSFER OF MEANING

The third arcade brings into focus messages in religious art which give meaning, and shows at which level the transfer of meaning takes place: 'symbol', 'written word', 'parable', 'devotional pictures' are some of the key words. Here the ancient magical element appears already with a theological superstructure, dogmatized



and transformed into mysticism: The intuitive approach has long been lost, so explanation and teaching become necessary.

The exhibits have liturgical origins or are objects used to spread word of the faith. Side figures such as praying figures, monks, Bodhisattvas appear on the scene, and show the progressive weakening of the taboo against making an image of man. The central pieces of this arcade are zoomorphic ceremonial vessels, some of which already reveal an 'enlightened' approach and announce the triumph of ornamental art.



4th Arcade: PRETENSION TO POWER

The fourth arcade deals with the subject of pretension to power as religious and secular arrogance: Conquest and defense as collective or individual efforts involve, besides brute force, also a spiritual component. Further-



more this arcade shows how elites use religious symbols to legitimize their rule by remodelling of artistic 'codes'. The field of tension

between defense and representation determines yet another important focus of this arcade: *Amulets and Jewellery*, hereby the stress on Islamic folkcraft and nomadic jewellery is due to its apotropaic character.



5th Arcade: ANTHROPOCENTRISM

The fifth arcade shows the fundamental secularization process characterizing all aspects of life hence also the artistic language of forms since the beginning of anthropocentrism. The great *systems of meaning* become increasingly forced to render rational explanations and begin to crumble, while



their artistic codes lose their general validity. Artists evolve from being servants of the idea and focus on the presentation of themselves. Mythological subjects are interpreted freely, divine poses are adapted for the image of man. The importance of the representation of animals fades and finds a

new genre in commercial art and kitsch. The work of art changes and becomes an autonomous carrier of meaning losing readability and style-forming power. The market becomes the parameter of art production.

