

*The Guide to San Diego
Galleries and Art Events*

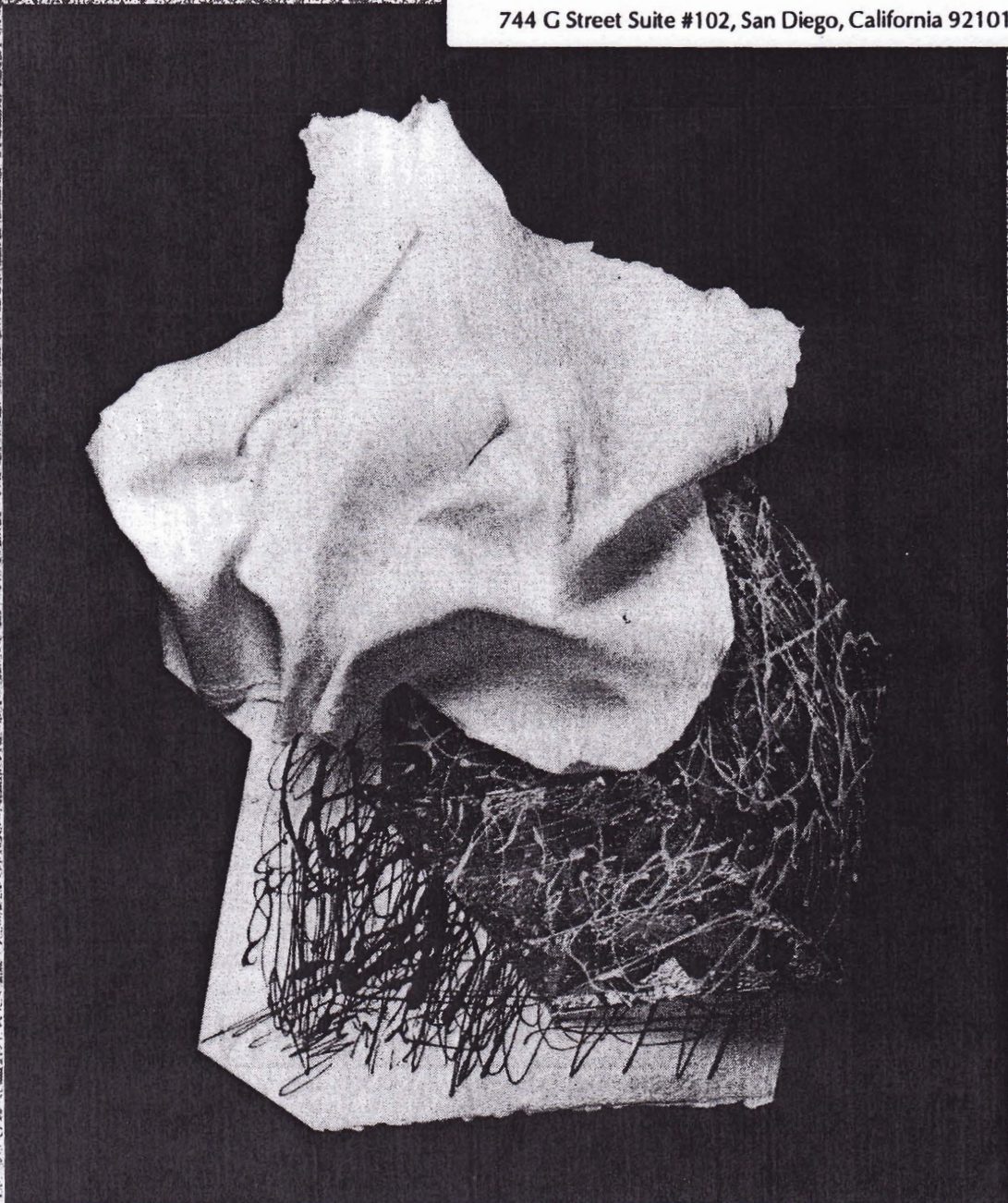
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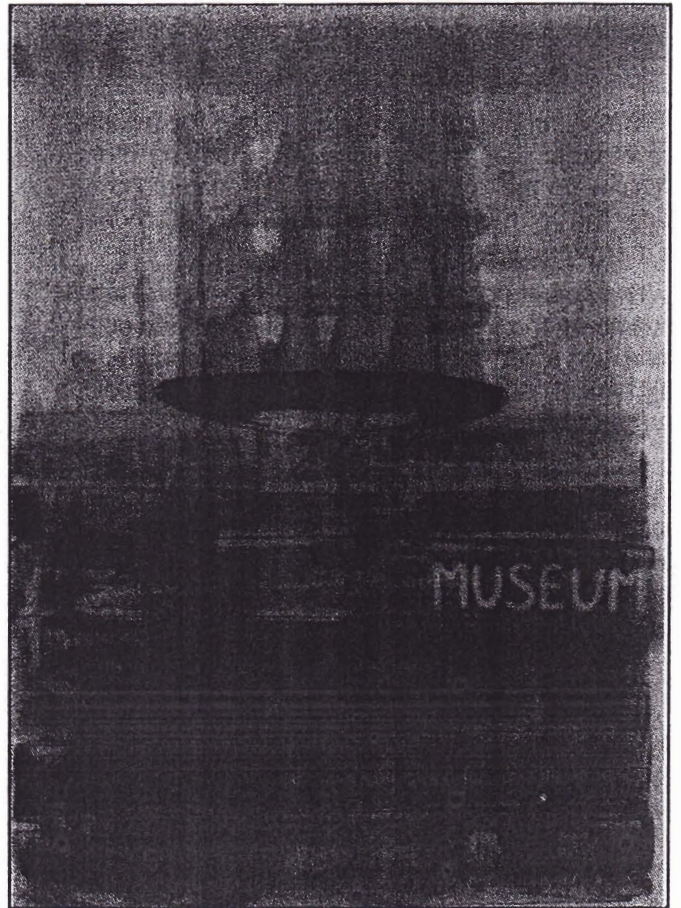
Wilhelm Roseneder Painting Words as Myth

By Neil Kendricks

From being a carpet seller in the markets of Turkey to becoming a painter showing his work in galleries, Wilhelm Roseneder has made quite a career move. For this 29-year-old Austrian painter, being an artist is "a job" as his paintings are developed from their initial beginning to completion, through the application of orange paint onto canvas, corrugated cardboard and aluminum surfaces.

Roseneder doesn't paint landscapes or figures. The territory of his work is language itself; words floating over the orange pigments provide an archive of buried mental images. But he doesn't see himself as a kind of writer. Like the California painter Ed Ruscha, Roseneder is simply curious about the nature of words as their definitions cross linguistic lines. The artist also incorporates specific photographic imagery through the use of off-set printing plates.

"You can find them (words) nearly everywhere," Roseneder said during a short interview at Options Gallery, where his current show, "In Tradition," is on display. "For example, words like 'simple,' 'absolute,' 'idea,' 'motive' and 'moment'... For me, they become myth. Every word tells different stories and everybody has another interpretation."



"MUSEUM" Glasochrom on paraffin-paper Wilhelm Roseneder

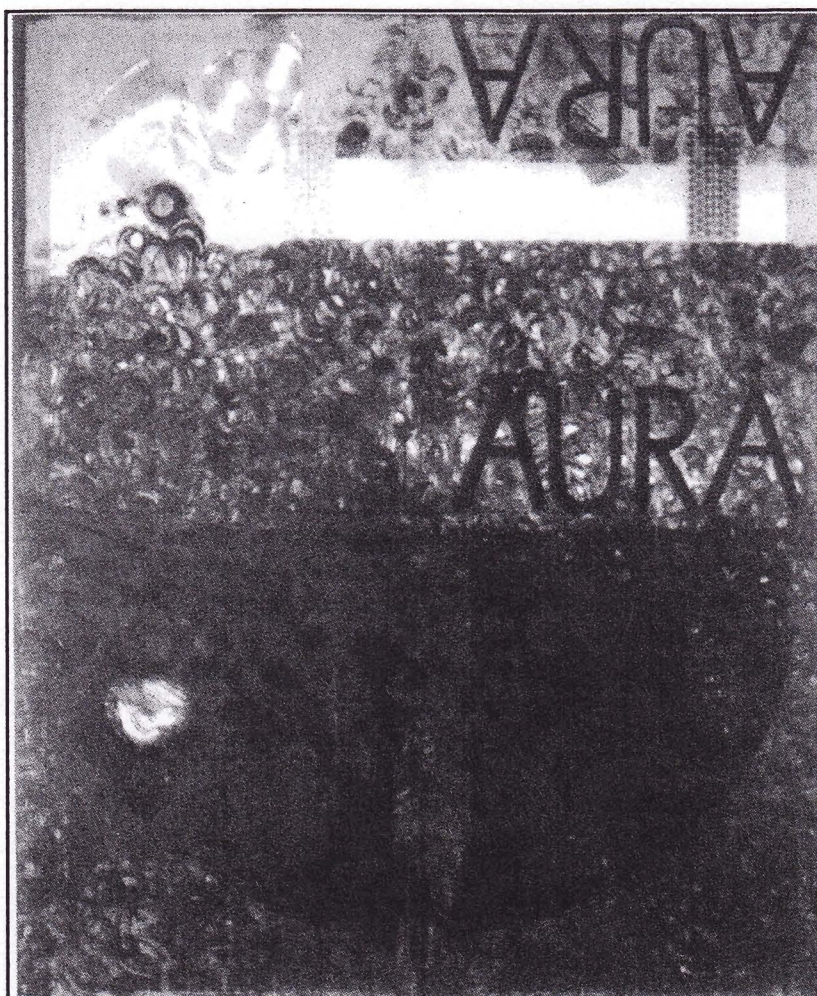
"The title of a picture was always very important for me. I didn't want to banish the title to the backside of the paintings."

Most words are charged with multiple meanings, but there are certain expressions that are universal. Once painted on whatever material Roseneder is using at the time, the chosen word becomes an image, a vernacular icon that no longer simply functions as a part of speech, but is elevated into a kind of personal symbol.

The color orange is another important facet of Roseneder's particular way of seeing. The paintings begin as fragments; bits and pieces that he reassembles on the actual painted surface.

"I started five years ago with the orange color," Roseneder said. "It's like a film; when I start a painting... I see the picture in orange."

Sure enough, there have been plenty of artists who have limited their palette to one or two colors. But once aesthetic decisions are made, one is drawn back to the primary question of content: Why paint words?



"AURA" Oil on aluminium.

Wilhelm Roseneder

The importance of the titles of Roseneder's paintings took on more significance than simply dealing with solitary images. The words were packed with a bounty of associations.

"The title of a picture was always very important for me. I didn't want to banish the title to the backside of the paintings," Roseneder said.

The small drawings of Roseneder also utilize words as their central image, but they feel much more spontaneous and less planned. There's something about drawing on paper that's less inhibiting for most artists, versus working straight on canvas. The urge to experiment and to really let go is much stronger.

"When I started drawing, it's not for me," Roseneder said. "It's more spontaneous."

But when Roseneder decides to commit himself to a painting, the process becomes a mixture of spontaneity and a planned strategy to approaching the work. Attracted to working with different surfaces, Roseneder plans to continue focusing his attention in the pursuit of grappling with the Word as myth, as he finds new sources for visual images buried within the building blocks of our everyday language.

"Wilhelm Roseneder: In Tradition" will run through October 13th at Options Gallery, 744 G Street, Suite 102, downtown San Diego. The gallery will hold an open house on Friday, October 12th, 5 to 9 pm in conjunction with the G Street Arts Corridor. For information, call 239-0511 or 239-1143. □