

## Looking in the Mirror

### A Lifetime



Motif: The woman with the mirror, reflections

The little girl admiring Chors, the village painter, while he works. She tells him in her childlike voice, "when I grow up, I want to be a painter too."

And then the painter Dubbek in his studio with the huge windowpanes, a vista all the way to the neighbouring island of Amrum. She used to visit him secretly on Föhr's 'Südstrand' shore. He would tip her on the nose and tenderly say 'naa duuu', which means 'hello you'.

Some vivid memories of a youth spent in the small village on the island of Föhr. In the reconstruction period that followed World War II, her parents' motto was 'what counts in life is work', rather than 'what matters in life is learning'. Anyway, school was obligatory: first, primary school in Goting. Then after four years, secondary school at the modern languages grammar school in the town of Wyk. Excellent teachers, especially the art teacher v. Gerhardt with his stunted figure, his handsome face and his large and shapely hands, which when he boxed a pupil's ear almost reached from one ear to the other.

Music, painting and philosophy were clearly her favourite subjects, and finally the baccalaureate. Then the hesitant decision to study pharmacy. A three-month internship in Hamburg, an agonizing time, which ended with the desperate but determined decision to remain a member of the Guild of Saint Luke and to place her faith in being a painter, whatever the outcome. First studying under Morten Ravn in Daler, Denmark. Then the secret flight to London, beloved London, attendance of art school, 'Wilky', the Scottish professor who always had a suitcase full of autumn leaves and a zinc plate with him.

1967, marriage to Rainer Göhring and move to chaotic Berlin. Berlin, that cosmopolitan city with all those people whose careers had been anything but conventional—the place to meet people from across the social spectrum and from all walks of life. Attending the HdK university of the arts (today, Udk). Professor Bruno Merbitz and Prof. Dr. Robert Kudielka; the first exhibitions.

Birth of the son Morten in 1969, family life, a circle of friends, musicians and dancers, a rich life. The solitary work in the studio, plenty of parties and celebrations, enjoying concerts at the Philharmonie and operas at Deutsche Oper. Feeling like a fish in its element, avoiding all those intolerant political discussions and debates about new structures in society. PAINTING, MUSIC, DANCE: dreams do come true.

Then the house built in the home village of Nieblum on Föhr and 1987 the first exhibition in Josiaskoog, in a building still under construction. And the annual exhibitions with their festival events (except for 2005), together with her friends and Rainer's magnificent support.

Visitors to the exhibition know how things developed. Antje Rietz was there from the beginning, as a school girl, a student, as a performer in musicals. She will be there once again this coming July 15<sup>th</sup>, together with Bettina Erchinger, Florian von Radowitz and Jan Schulte-Bunert.

This was like looking in the mirror and zapping through memories; the woman with the mirror should look much older, then the image would ring true.

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