



Opposite page
The 100 Bestones!
1971, acrylic on canyas, 140 × 110 cm

Above Cotton Factory

1971, silkscreen on paper, 77 × 60.5 cm

Below

Theory and Praxis (At the Beginning Was Ideology) 2003, silkscreen print, cardboard paint, pencil, 45.5 × 52.5 × 10 cm



Born in Berlin, Germany, 1937. Lives and works in Frankfurt, Germany Selected Solo Exhibitions: 1968: 'Produzione Bayrle', Galleria Apollinaire, Milan 2002: 'Thomas Bayrle Airplane', Museum Ludwig, Cologne 2006: '40 years of Chinese Rock 'n' Roll', Museum of Modern Art, Frankfurt Selected Group Exhibitions: 1963: 'Writing and Picture', Kunsthalle Baden Baden, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam 1964: Documenta, Kassel 1977: Documenta, Kassel 1984: 'From here', Messe, Düsseldorf 1984: 'Promams and Nightmares: Utopian Visions in Modern Art', Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC 2003: Venice Biennale 2005: 'Art Unlimited', Art 36: Basel 2006: 'Of Mice and Men', berlin biennial of contemporary art Selected Bibliography: 1969: Adam Seide, Thomas Bayrle, Egoist 1981: Masaomi Unagami, Cities Accumulations and Eros, Simul Press 1994: Jean-Christophe Ammann, The Intensity of Thomas Bayrle, MMK, Frankfurt 1997: Kasper Koenig, Thomas Bayrle Works, China Youth Press, Beijing 2001: Kasper Koenig, Thomas Bayrle/Rodys Isek Kingelez, Koenig

Thomas Bayrle has produced graphics, silkscreens, textiles, wallpaper, sculptures, objects and films. Adopting a mixture of futuristic enthusiasm and instantly obsolete technology, he has built a complex universe in which the central themes are seriality and the multiple relationships connecting the individual to the mass, the particular to the whole. His works are based on an obsessive, almost microscopic attention to detail, which turns even the simplest icon into an image swarming with minuscule figures, like a Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527-93) painting. Cars, highways and alienating social spaces are recurring elements in Bayrle's visual grammar, while common, everyday images such as cups, cans, shoes, but also faces and found pictures, are piled up to compose kaleidoscopic and dizzying forms. Out of these repeated motifs, made up of identical shapes and subtle variations, Bayrle develops a "Superform", in which the individual elements are not hierarchically subordinate to the whole, but preserve their own individual quality. In spite of this mechanistic, almost robotic process of accumulation, his works retain a humanistic tension, as though they were drawing the genetic code for a futuristic life form.

Who are you? Organically, I feel I am a creature like a sea cucumber, lying on the ground, where water lingers through me. Technically I am like a tube - a component of a long-distance pipeline. What do you do? With such a void body centre, material is concentrated only in the skin. You inhale and exhale differently from other methods. You select by osmosis, Millions of little pores both soak in and eliminate tiny information particles. In an energy field, all points are important or not important. Decisions about whether a particular element should be extracted from the Universe of Possibilities or left to submerge need to be initiated in ways other than were possible within the value scales of analogue hierarchies. In a field of rye, the question as to which is the most beautiful blade of grass is obsolete. You necessarily get a different sorting process and other forms of accumulation here. Similar conditions obtain in mass production/consumption/communication, ever since the porridge bowls overflowed and quite literally inundated everything. The best/worst car/lipstick/set of A Level results needs to be evaluated in ways different from before, I think that choosing from the limitless means somehow the collapse of detail into that very universality from which it has been derived/of which it is a constituent part. Why do you do it? It's passive! I am not driven by any fresh, chirpy creativity, nor complete 'free intuition', but rather by a mass body of diesel, water, imaginings - particles. When did it start? It started early. Gottfried Semper's phrase 'All construction comes from weaving' really bowled me over. All of a sudden, the material/canvas in front of me was more than just a textured, flat, woven surface. Now this texture was a relief, a three- dimensional flat sculpture. Long before I'd heard these words, I'd been amazed by the rigid binding structures of woven materials; simple sequences of endless, rhythmically repetitive ups and downs, rendering the most delicate single threads into a firm, integrated collective structure. The body, an atlas, linen, etc were all fabrics, the sight of which would trigger images in me of endless cityscapes with myriad dwellings and little streets, in which I could and would lose myself. Mentally, these fine structures also provided an acoustic connection to the great big lilting 'singsong', which was even more important for me: the rosary, the rhythmic time signature of railway sleepers, Steve Reich and the beat of heavy diesel engines. Where will it end? Hopefully it ends where the next tube begins. * The Wrong Gallery



Opposite page Red Stalin 1970, silkscree 83 × 61 cm

