

57A Friends Colony East
New Delhi 110065
10th Dec. '82

My dear Raza,

It is 8.45 pm + I've just returned from my studio after a long day which began at 4 am. When I went to leave Rudi at the airport. I felt sad to see him go but really feel very grateful that he was able to spend nearly a month with us. We consider him to be a member of this family + he considers himself to be one. The farewell was early in the day which was later filled by working on drawings for a mural I have been commissioned to do. The first thing I saw was your letter which is truly beautiful + tired though I am, I have found renewed energy to respond to it immediately.

Rudi gave me a full account of your exhibition in Berne + made me wish that I could have been there too. Henning had written earlier sending me a catalogue + making a special mention about the reasonableness of your prices. There are very few who realise the importance of prices not being a matter of whim. There is any amount of loose talk on this subject + it ultimately does more harm than good. Rudi drew my attention to a report made in "India Today" on the high prices fetched by expatriate artists. It was a bunch of rubbish + I wonder what kind of satisfaction it gave the person who wrote it. There was a time when I would have written in reputation but I prefer to harness my energies to matters more important + more immediate.

I had been looking forward to seeing you last summer + it's a pity that you couldn't (for good reasons) visit London to see the exhibition.

I didn't see the show in Oxford either - the gap between the two being too much for me to bridge. As it is, my trip to London & the States deprived me of a great deal of valuable working time. I'm not complaining as I did benefit in so many other ways. I have so many old friends whom I hadn't seen in years, fellows who I had grown up with & it was a most heartwarming experience to meet them again. I made contact with a friend after forty years - Can you imagine my excitement.

Other than people, there are always some paintings which are old friends. I've been seeing them since I was twelve - The Piero della Francesca, a Sassetta & the great Uccello "The Hunt at San Romano" - these form a part of my personal heritage & are a continuous source of wonder to me. I spent time there in their presence. Yes I recall so vividly my introduction to the Petrus d'Avignon & the great Uccello in the Louvre. It's strange that I should have given you the impression that I was unmoved whereas the impression on me has been indelible. I think I even wrote about this in my memoir about you. All the same I do realise that what is a profound experience manifesting itself in silent ~~absorption~~ ^{absorption} could quite easily be mistaken for dumbness. Last year I went to see the alterpiece in Colmar & that was a great experience too. How marvellous life can be when one thinks that some painters gave so much & that their giving is so bounteous & so continuous. How Churlish it is to sit in judgement.

I agree that a small booklet with colour plates would be an excellent thing to produce. It would have great reach I'm sure. I admire your energy in pursuing all the catalogues you have laid (+ I have nearly all of them) but I have been so heavily involved with painting that there doesn't seem any time for anything else. My 2 shows last year were the result of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years work & I don't paint in a lazy or leisurely manner. It's one of the projects I have in mind — maybe after I have completed the mural.

Turning back to the London show. The reception was tremendous though the reviews of the first part, which are the only ones I've seen so far, were a bit too condescending. I talk about this reaction at the Serpentine Gallery & was fairly forthright. Akbar was there & maybe has talked to you about it. Sheikh, who is back has told people here that the reception given to the second part was terrific. A comparison was drawn with a large Italian show which was on at the Hayward & the Indian exhibition was rated superior. I haven't met Richard who said he'd show me the reviews. If there is anything interesting I'll let you have it.

Saw Sam briefly this morning. He's been working & is going to show at Purdolls next month. Gadi isn't doing any work & is a bit worried as his economic existence depends solely (~~as~~ as does ours!) on what he can do & what he can sell.

It is 27th March today & I haven't been able to complete
my letter to you & now I've just had news from Lucy
that Rudi died on 25th after a massive heart attack
in Vienna. This has made us all very despondent
and sad and I suddenly feel numb and
dislocated. I know how close he was to you too
and his sudden departure in the dark will
affect you in the same way as it has affected
me. He was with us so recently & I spent
a long time with him visiting his old and
much loved haunts & ~~to~~ as we sipped coffee
under his favourite Chhatra at the Jamal & Kamal's
tomb near the Kutab he said "I wonder if I will
ever come back here again" to which I said
"Oh Rudi you say that every year you come" He
laughed most genially, put his hand on my
arm & said "I feel so truly grateful that I'm
able to be here now" — He stayed with us &
without any sense of being an outsider or a
guest & was so truly warm & generous of
spirit. I'm afraid I can't write further. At
our age we should be getting used to such
exits but there is pain at such a wrench. If
you had been here I would probably have
embraced you & cried in common grief.

Much love to you & Janine.

As always,

Krishen

Rudolf von Leyden gestorben

In Wien ist vor kurzem — am 25. März 1983 — plötzlich und unerwartet Dr. Rudolf von Leyden in seinem 75. Lebensjahr gestorben. Er hat ein bewegtes und, vor allem für Indiens Kunstgeschichte, ein bewegendes Leben geführt.

Nur wenige Tage nach dem Abschluss seines Geologiestudiums in Göttingen hat 1933 der junge Dr. phil. Rudi von Leyden Deutschland kurzentschlossen verlassen und ist nach Indien zu seinem Bruder Albrecht emigriert, der in Bombay für ein deutsches Chemieunternehmen tätig war. Seinen erlernten Beruf hat von Leyden nie ausgeübt. Aber dafür kamen bald seine künstlerischen Fähigkeiten voll zum Zug. Er gründete mitten im Basar von Bombay ein «Leyden Commercial Art Studio». Seine Arbeiten gefielen allgemein, so dass er ab 1937 bei der «Times of India» zunächst in der Werbeabteilung, später auch beim Feuilleton angestellt wurde. Unter dem Pseudonym *Denley* (Silbenvdrehung von Leyden) hat er regelmässig über Jahre hinweg Karikaturen zu internationalen wie auch lokalpolitisch brisanten Themen gezeichnet.

Aus dem Erlös dieser sehr beliebten Originalzeichnungen wie auch der Oelbilder seines Bruders wurde ein *Hilfsfonds für indische Künstler* gegründet, der nach 1947 vor allem die offiziell ausjurierten «Progressive Artists» unterstützte — Maler wie K. A. Ara, S. H. Raza, F. N. Souza und F. M. Husain, der heute berühmten ersten Künstlergeneration des unabhängigen Indien. All diesen Malern hat von Leyden geholfen als sie noch unbekannt waren, sei es durch Ausstellungen, Käufe oder Besprechungen. Das von der Familie von Leyden in Bombay ins Leben gerufene «Artists' Centre» besitzt noch heute eine kleine Ausstellungsfläche.

1944 wurde von Leyden Publicity Manager für *Volkart Brothers* in Bombay und war später zuständig für alle Marketing-Unternehmungen, auch die der indischen Nachfolgesellschaft *Voltas*. Daneben schrieb er während mehrerer Jahre für die NZZ Berichte aus Indien. Nach seiner Pensionierung 1969 leitete er die österreichische Niederlassung eines amerikanischen Pharma-Konzerns.

Aber Rudi von Leydens Leidenschaft galt den «*ganjifa*» genannten Spielkarten Indiens, von denen er den ersten Satz auf dem Flohmarkt von Bombay 1939 erworben hatte. Er war von Sammelleidenschaft nach diesen selten gewordenen Miniaturen besessen, war bei allen Händlern, an vielen Fürstenhöfen und in den Museen Indiens als «Ganjifa-Leyden» bestens bekannt. 1949 erschien sein erster, grundlegender Aufsatz über indische Spielkarten in der angesehenen Kunstzeitschrift «*Marg*», deren Mit-herausgeber er für ein Jahrzehnt gewesen ist. Seither hat Rudolf von Leyden unermüdlich die alten Maler-Zentren in Orissa, in Jaipur, Mysore und Sawantvadi aufgesucht, um die verschiedenen Herstellungstechniken zu dokumentieren, hat Spielregeln aufgezeichnet und die kulturhistorischen Zusammenhänge erforscht. Seine Aufsätze im «*Journal of the Playing Card Society*» legen hiervon Zeugnis ab. Seine historischen Interessen gingen aber über Indien hinaus. Ihn beschäftigte der Ursprung aller Kartenspiele (vermutlich in der Tang-Zeit in China) und die Ausbreitung der Kartenfarben und Spielregeln über Persien und Ägypten nach Europa bzw. durch die Mogul-Kaiser nach Indien.

Das Museum Rietberg zeigte 1978 in Zürich

auch für alle Spielkartensammler. In Wien, wo er nach seiner Pensionierung lebte, hat er die persischen Spielkarten der Nationalbibliothek und die indischen Bestände des Völkerkundemuseums erschlossen. Er vermittelte modernen indischen Malern Ausstellungen, bemühte sich um indische klassische Tanz- und Musikaufführungen und war bis ins hohe Alter ein Mittler zwischen Indien und dem Westen.

Eberhard Fischer