



Six Posters by GERT SELLHEIM

REFLECTIONS ON APPLIED ART IN AUSTRALIA

BY GERT SELLHEIM

Australia — "the coming country".

This youngest continent down in the south — fringed by gigantic oceans, bathed in light and sun, removed by thousands of seamiles from the world we know. Its life is a life in the open — under ever clear and smiling skies, amidst the cool waves of the surf, on burning hot bush tracks, in tropical valleys clothed with luxuriant vegetation, on the wide, treefringed streets of its cities. Its people are a nation in the making — full of happiness and laughter, healthy and strong in their straight and upright beauty — but children in mentality — young and unspoiled. Anglo-Saxons by blood — but much more easy-going and more excitable, a type of its own already, which has developed on this southern soil, that has been theirs for a century and a half.

How are the people and the country reflected in their art and — this interests us here most — in their applied art?

Apart from those influences resulting from surroundings and character, we have to consider two external ones which are extremely strong. First and foremost the influence of the mother country England. The feeling of the Anglo-Saxon — rooted in tradition, a little cold-blooded, but very sure of its taste — that accepts more slowly and with reservations everything new, has left its mark on its children. The result is a marked reserve in the realm of composition — all the more remarkable for the progressiveness displayed by the Australian in every other walk of life. The economic development of the last decades has, on the other hand, brought about a close approach to the United States. Films, machinery, fashions have found their way into the Commonwealth, and have brought in their wake a noisy kind of advertising. This rather blatant style which is, after all, not in the least congenial to the true Anglo-Saxon, has also left its mark, because it has appealed the new side in the