

GARRY NEILL KENNEDY

OTTO GOLD
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MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN ART
TORONTO ONTARIO
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Mr. Otto Gold lives in Erfurt, Thüringen, Germany. He is 77 years old and has six daughters and fourteen great-grandchildren. His parents were born in Erfurt as were his wife and all their children. His wife died twelve years ago of a heart attack. They both worked at the same institution, The Polyclinic, the teaching hospital.

Mr. Gold worked for 34 years as a cabinetmaker and technical person helping with painters and glass workers build hospital furniture. He had been drafted into the army in 1943 and fought in France at Calais and in Hungary against the Russians. He was captured in 1945 in France and was kept in a prisoner of war camp nearby Paris. There he first studied with a French cabinetmaker before being moved close to Calais where he was put to work mining coal. He says the French treated them very well and he had no complaints. He was released from POW camp in 1948 and then went home to Thüringen. Mr. Gold feels he had a great deal of luck to have made it alive through the war.

He had to go back to school to finish learning cabinet making and then he worked at the city mission for homeless people in the 50s as a janitor and for the church as well, before he obtained the position at the hospital.

Mr. Gold always has a year round card to the Erfurt garden exhibitions, which he really enjoys. He was baptized and confirmed in the Luther church on Magdeburger Allee, Erfurt. His daughters are baptized but have all had the secular youth confirmation of the DDR young pioneer groups. Mr. Gold did not take part in the peaceful revolution in 1989 as he thought this was not something one should do if one worked at a hospital. He has been to Paris once after the fall of the wall, seen the Louvre and talked to some French people about his war experiences. Mr. Gold likes the French way of life and thinks there should be more exchange between France and Germany. Most of his comrades are now gone. He gets around with his daughters who all remain in Germany.

From a telephone conversation between Otto Gold and Lelah Ferguson in May 2004.

Mr. Otto Gold's name and number were an entry in my work, *Telephone Book (In Colour), Erfurt and Shawnee*, in the first presentation of *The Ironic Turn* exhibition at the Kunsthalle, Erfurt, 2003. Mark Bell of Toronto was responsible for the painting of this wall work.