



ABOVE: Joe and Martha Zeltsman are pictured with Bob Bignell on their visit to his Everglades studio at Abermain.

Portrait 'master' visits Abermain

Australia's portrait photographers are ahead of their counterparts in Europe.

This is the verdict of Joseph Zeltsman, an American who is acknowledged as the top classical portrait photographer in the world.

Joe and his wife, Martha, also a renowned photographer, spent Wednesday afternoon this week at Abermain visiting Bob Bignell's Everglades studio.

Described as a 'teacher of teachers', Zeltsman is nearing the end of a four-week visit to Australia. He has spoken at three seminars in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane — a hectic schedule for the Zeltsmans who handle one seminar at a time in America.

Abermain's Bob Bignell came away from one of the Australian seminars newly inspired after hearing Zeltsman speak of his style of photography. He was elated when Joe and Martha Zeltsman spent a couple of hours at his studio on Wednesday, viewing his work and passing on "fantastic tips" on lighting.

The planned half hour visit finished up lasting hours. Zeltsman's style is to achieve the most natural possible reflection of the person he photographs.

He advocates photographing people in simple, natural poses with emphasis on expression reflecting character and personality.

He shies from fancy clothing, elaborate props and phony and contrived poses. He feels a portrait is not totally effective unless the viewer's eye is instantly attracted to the subject's face and expression.

Zeltsman has taught advanced portraiture in the U.S. and Canada for a number of years. He also conducts private courses from his home in Morris Plains, New Jersey.

One of first

The Zeltsmans studio was one of the first to use direct colour on a regular basis.

In September, the Zeltsman will teach in Switzerland, Germany and Austria. The trend in portraiture overseas, he said, is the same as in Australia.

He added however, that in some European areas the photographers are 'quite a bit' behind those in Australia. "the photographers I have been in contact with here are much further ahead of those in Europe", he said.