

ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN ART, PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

– International Conference, 16-17 April 2014 –

Conceived within the context of the international exchange **Art & Philosophy** (2012-2014)¹ – and originally also linked to the Festival of Philosophy in Hanover in March 2014² – the Institut für Gestaltungspraxis und Kunstwissenschaft (IGK) hosts a conference exploring the link between art, philosophy and its reference sciences on 16-17 April 2014. This encounter serves as an introduction to the seminar 'The Abstract / The Concrete'³, which addresses, both from a theoretical and practical perspective, the socio-politically all-important lead question of the Festival of Philosophy, 'How does equity function?', in modified form, i.e. 'How can the various parts characterizing an individual be done justice in equal measure?'. This rededication of the Festival of Philosophy's lead question equally draws on theoretical and practical modes of perspective and perception and has to take into consideration a variety of contradictory impulses. The question derives from the educational mandate to support the 'uniqueness of the individual' and, thus, the free interplay of the 'many others'. This line of investigation continues from a previous seminar, dedicated to inclusion, diversity, and artistic changes of perspective. *Grosso modo* the aim of the conference therefore is to sketch the *equality* of thinking critically, viewing carefully, composing poetry and shaping forms and to simultaneously place their respective strengths into focus. In other words, the conference intends to examine words and images, forms, colors, and rhythms as torn between *theoria*, *aisthesis* and *poiesis* to unravel hidden contexts of meanings.

¹ Exchange visits to date:

CHINA:

- Yann Zhou (Xi'an) – visiting artist/scholar at the IGK from November 2011 to November 2012
- Eva Koethen (Hanover) – exhibition, lectures and research project in Xi'an, Chongqing and Lu'an in October 2014

USA:

- Clemens Weiss (New York) – workshop at the IGK in May 2012 and exhibition in the IGK exhibition space 'look&think' in October/November 2012
- Eva Koethen (Berlin/Hanover) – visiting artist/scholar in New York in September 2012; exhibition in the German Consulate General and lecture in the Deutsches Haus in October 2013

² The Festival of Philosophy is due to take place in Hanover from 13-16 March 2014; its lead theme is 'equity' ('Gerechtigkeit' in German), which the present international conference – Encounters between Art, Philosophy and Science – follows on from in variation with the lead theme 'equality' ('Gleichberechtigung' in German).

³ The seminar is meant to further elaborate and explore in greater depth the issues raised during the conference. E. g the print workshop 'Drucken', led by guest artist/scholar Claudia Niederberger (Lucerne) at the IGK around Pentecost 2014, will focus on the resource that tacit knowledge provides, in particular. See also the Seminar: 'The Abstract / The Concrete: One Century of Non-Objective Art', taught by Dr. Annegret Kehrbaum (Hanover).

Point of departure is an exhibition by and encounter with the Italian philosopher Dr. Marcella Tarozzi-Goldsmith (New York), much respected for her theoretical and literary texts. A selection of her artwork will be on view under the title **'Abstract Watercolors and Aphorisms – In Interplay with Philosophical Reflections'** in the lecture theatre of the IGK. The exhibition will be accompanied by four lectures to be delivered by four different speakers and a conversation, in English, between the philosopher/artist Marcella Tarozzi and the philosopher/psychoanalyst Prof. Dr. Hinderk M. Emrich (Hanover); also present will be the philosophers Prof. Dr. Wiebrecht Ries (Hanover) and Dr. Reinhard Knodt (Berlin), the latter also a writer in his own right.

To not only talk *about* the emerging issues at a theoretical level, the conference participants have the opportunity to explore the questions raised and their individual responses to these questions in a practical, hands-on watercolor workshop the following day. To this end the Swiss artist, art educator and art therapist Sabine Amstad (School for teacher education FHNW, Solothurn) invites all interested parties to follow their own ideas and thoughts in paint and to position themselves visually between the abstract and the figurative.

Complementing the watercolor workshop, Prof. Thorsten Schirmer (West-Anhui-University Lu'an) will offer a fascinating introduction to the East Asian art of ink painting, as influenced by both Daoism and Zen-Buddhism. A much respected expert on China and ink painter for more than thirty years, Schirmer will demonstrate this tradition, in particular finger painting, by way of examples and explain the attitude of mind underlying this artistic expression. The opportunity to be able to see an ink painter in action will provide the conference participants with a rare insight into the artistic philosophy and painting traditions as practiced in the Far East.

Equality between thinking critically, viewing carefully, composing poetry and shaping forms?

'Every individual is encapsulated in a personally defined 'process' consisting of the comic, the dreamlike, the terrible, and the scary – all in a more than disparate composition.'⁴

If one understands these states as culminating in plural identities, the questions emerge which weight each of the states has within one individual's overall identity and which reciprocal effects come into play between theoretical reasoning, on the one hand, and artistic perception and action, on the other

⁴ T. Mergen, *Einblicke in die thanatologische Welt des Gerichts und die Triebdynamik des Lebensgeflechtes* (Insights into the thanatological world of the judicial court and the instinctual-drive dynamism of the complexity of life), reviewing W. Ries, *"Maskeraden des Auslands". Lektüren zu Franz Kafkas "Process"* ('Masquerades of the Foreign'. Reflections on Franz Kafka's 'Trial') as published by Elfenbein Verlag, Berlin, in 2011; see http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez_id=16704 as published on 21.05.2012.

hand? Indeed, how can individuals pursue antagonistic strivings and time and again establish coherence? It is an important question to be answered as, according to the brain researcher Gerald Hüther, it is the ability to align the various states in harmony that allows individuals to perceive themselves as undivided wholes and to experience happiness.⁵

In literature, in turn, one can view Marcel Proust's obsessive writing and rewriting of *Remembrance of Things Past* as the honest account of a puzzling journey to an 'unknown, lost past', just as artists carry them within themselves. At first they attempt to approach these pasts by 'descending to the *moi profonde*, the inner self (...), to then make – employing all possible forms of artistic expression, colors, sounds and sentences – these almost inexpressible, internal structures visible to the external world.'⁶ But what does this mean for the individual, in particular when the process of artistic expression fluctuates between swift progress and frustrating stagnation, when the inner and outer worlds seem to inextricably interlock and when the 'ambiguous identity-building process simultaneously fails and succeeds' (Emrich)? And how may this struggle be affected by 'heterogeneous forms of identity construction' as common to today's transcultural forms of expression?

The 'educational philosophy of life', as Ries discovered in Franz Kafka's 'Trial', influences individual processes of cognition. 'One can thus find a kind of self-healing not only embodied in literature, but also in Friedrich Nietzsche's thought and philosophy' (Ries). It is on the basis of this existential line of argument that the Nietzsche experts Tarozzi-Goldsmith and Ries, led and supported by Emrich and Knodt, respectively drawing on extensive experience with psychological and artistic processes, will attempt to enter a meaningful dialogue.

Departing from the notion that there occur 'transformations of mental processes in physiognomic movement' (Torsten Mergen), we are being asked – on the basis of the visual and literary works presented – to determine the relationship between thought patterns and artistic expression. As Tarozzi-Goldsmith 'thinks' her visual and verbal aphorisms in Italian, but writes her philosophical texts in English, we hope to gain a better understanding of the quantitative and qualitative relationship between thinking theory, writing poetry and painting watercolors. The question of which role the rendering of the abstract and the figurative play in the various modes of painting and writing will be the focus of discussion on the second day of the conference.

⁵ cf. J. Grossart, 'Gerald Hüther. Hinaus in die Weite' in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12./13.01.2013

⁶ A. Isenschmid, 'Ballett der Ärzte am Totenbett' in *Die Zeit*, 14.11.2013

Program

Wednesday,
16 April 2014

Lectures and Vernissage

14:00 Welcome and Introduction of the Guests

14:15 **Art-Science**

Eva Koethen (Hanover/Berlin): 'The Motivation of Art and its Consequences
Reflections on the Leibniz-Lecture of the Art Historian Gottfried Boehm'

14:45 Break and Visit of the Exhibition ⁷

15:15 **Philosophy**

Reinhard Knodt (Berlin): 'Aesthetic Exchanges – An Alternative Approach to the
'Understanding' of Art'

Wiebrecht Ries (Hanover): 'Nietzsche and his Aesthetic Philosophy of Life'

16:30 Break and Visit of the Exhibition

17:00 **Psychology/Psychoanalysis**

Hinderk Emrich (Hanover): 'Synthesis. Beauty – Atmosphere'

Conversation (in English) with Marcella Tarozzi-Goldsmith (New York)

18:00 Snack

Thursday,
17 April 2014

Abstraction and Concretion: The Examples of Watercolor and Ink Painting

10:00 Sabine Amstad (Solothurn): 'Experimental Practice and its Reflection'

13:00 Break

14:00 Thorsten Schirmer (Hanover/Lu'an): 'The Chinese Tradition – Philosophical
Origins and Practical Exercises'

17:00 Break

17:15 Concluding Exchange about the Relationship between Theory and Practice

⁷ The breaks are meant to also allow the respective conference participants to link the discussion to the images displayed and to explore the exhibition step by step.