



**Verband österreichischer  
Kunsthistorikerinnen und  
Kunsthistoriker**

20th Conference of VÖKK

3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Studio Building (Semperdepot), Lehargasse 8, Gate 1, 1060 Vienna

## ***On the Threshold. Liminality in Theory and Art Historical Practice.***

Thursday, 3rd October, 2019

2:30 pm – 3:00 pm: Registration and Coffee

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm: Address of Welcome: Johan Frederik Hartle, Director of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

Introduction: Elisabeth Priedl, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and Vice-Chairwoman of the VÖKK

### ***Liminality in Museums and Collections***

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm:

#### **Alice Hoppe-Harnoncourt**

(Research Assistant, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna)

#### ***The liminale view of the painting in the change of the gallery history.***

The "Carrying the Cross of Christ" by Pieter Bruegel the Elder was atypically presented on the occasion of the exhibition at the KHM last year in a specially built showcase, thus allowing a special view of the painting. The question is discussed whether the novelty of the respective presentations, which can be explained in the context of museum history, represent threshold states that make a new reception possible.

#### **Theresia Hauenfels**

(Research Assistant, Center for Museum Collections, Danube University Krems)

&

#### **Andreas Liška-Birk**

(Provenance researcher for the Provincial Collections of Lower Austria, Danube University Krems)

#### ***Liminal objects using the example of provenance research***

As liminal objects, objects of provenance research are subject to a process of change with regard to their status themselves. Based on the ownership history of Rudolf von Alt's watercolour "Dürnstein

an der Donau", which was identified as a Nazi loot, it can be shown that a work of art had to remain in a liminal state several times within a few decades.

4:30 pm – 5:00 pm: Coffee Break

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm:

**Alexandra Marraccini**

(Postdoctoral research associate, The Bilderfahrzeuge Project, The Warburg Institute London)

***Between Nature and Art: Liminality and Representation in the Early Modern English Cabinet***

The paper examines the dual liminalities of engraved nautilus shells, natural historical printed books, and related objects in the Early Modern English collection, and Anglo-Dutch Still Life painting of English collections. In considering the problematic *Englishness* of the English Cabinet as opposed to the Continental *Wunderkammer*, the paper exams how the Cabinet is represented by largely Dutch artists working as immigrants and refugees.

**Lisa Moravec**

(PhD candidate, Royal Holloway, University of London)

***Writing in between the Histories of Performance and Art***

The paper will critically discuss Claire Bishop's divide between "visual art performances" and "performing arts" (2018), in light of Victor Turner's anthropological theory, and analyse a number of contemporary performances that have operated with such a threshold. How do the histories of performance art resonate with the increase of performative works commissioned by museums to draw people inside their institution?

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm:

**Public Keynote Lecture**

**Eike Schmidt**

**(Direttore delle Gallerie degli Uffizi di Firenze and future Director General of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna)**

***The Museum as Liminal Site***

Afterwards:

**Welcome Drinks!**

Friday, 4th October, 2019

9:00 am – 9:30 am: Registration and Coffee

### ***Liminal Theories / Specific Examples***

9:30 am – 11:00 am:

#### **Christian Janecke**

(Professor of Art History, Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach)

#### ***Centrifugal forces of meaning. Over factory edges as threshold spaces***

Where there is talk of thresholds or transition zones in art, one first thinks of corresponding representations, possibly atmospheric scenes or subjects with meaningful back figures. Yet it is also possible for works of art to go against themselves, as it were, namely against their own edge as the threshold to their outside. We are dealing here with an emphatic push of the artworks against their own outside within the framework of this very outside.

#### **Tobias Frese**

(Postdoctoral researcher, Department of Medieval Art History, University of Heidelberg)

#### ***Crossing Borders and Transformation. To the picture dramaturgy of the Jacob fight in the Viennese Genesis***

In the lecture a division of the miniature of the "Jacob fight" of the Viennese Genesis into three phases will be proposed, which does justice to the specific pictorial dramaturgy of border crossing and transformation – the liminal character of the representation. It will be shown that the sequence corresponds to the phase structure of the so-called "transition rites" (rites des passages).

#### **Flavia Hächler**

(PhD student, Institute of Art History, University of Zurich)

#### ***Representation and function of thresholds on Cassoni and Cassone panels of the Florentine Early Renaissance***

During the wedding rite, picture carriers represent family boundaries and thus objects of a rite-de-passage. In their liminal aesthetics, they subdivide different historical strands on the one hand, while on the other they connect the depicted contexts of action. Within the framework of the conference, the representation of thresholds and boundaries on selected Cassoni and Cassone panels will be studied.

11:00 am – 11:30 am: Coffee Break

11:30 am – 12:30 pm:

**Maximilian Hartmuth**

(Research Assistant, Institute of Art History, University of Vienna)

***Stagings of the Threshold? Orientalizing buildings of the late 19th century on the former Habsburg-Ottoman border***

In northern Bosnia, in the border area with Croatia, there is a striking density of buildings in an exotic style, which is generally referred to as "pseudo-Moorish" in national literature. This article examines the laws concerning the accumulation of oriental buildings in this region. Were they intended as memories of the traditional liminality of the area – namely as the "civilisation border" of Christianity and Islam?

**Stefanie Kitzberger**

(PhD student and Assistant for Contemporary Art History, Institute for Art History, University of Vienna)

***Against selfishness. Scenarios of border crossing in early Russian constructivism***

Russian constructivism can almost be described as a paradigmatic example of a liminal artistic practice, since its aim was to transform artistic activity from its social autonomy and lack of consequences into social operability. The contribution will explore various phenomena by means of Close Readings of the probably best-known collection of constructivist objects at the first public exhibition of the working group in May 1921.

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm: *Lunch Break (individual)*

***Liminal Bodies***

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm:

**Lynn M. Somers**

(Adjunct Assistant Professor, Drew University, New Jersey)

***Sculpture as Liminal Object: Louise Bourgeois's Janus***

In 1968, amidst critical debates about objecthood in the history of postwar sculpture in New York, Louise Bourgeois fashioned five bronze sculptures hung from wire and titled *Janus*. Included in Lucy Lippard's pivotal *Eccentric Abstraction* exhibition in 1966 – focused on the liminality of anti-sculptural and sensuous materials, the radical nature of such work announced Bourgeois as a figure to watch during that unstable decade.

**Barbara Ursula Oettl**

(Lecturer, University of Regensburg)

***Existential borderline experiences: Becoming aware of one's own mortality***

When artists such as Hannah Wilke, ORLAN or Gregor Schneider create images of violence with their works, they certainly do not underestimate the violence of the images, which they are able to exert on their viewers. Rather, they put into practice what Antonin Artaud had already recommended in 1936 as the basis for a gain in knowledge about our temporally limited body-having and body-being: "The Theater of Cruelty".

**Thomas Moser**

(PhD student, Institute for Art History, Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich)

***Rite de Passage Montmartre***

Today, the *Esprit Montmartre* is associated with several generations of renowned artists, confronted by the mass of marginalized female muses. The American serpentine dancer Loïe Fuller in particular resisted this stereotypical hierarchization in a retrospective. Qua artistic media reflection based on "la Loïe" led to intellectual emancipation from the increasingly pansocial crowd at Montmartre in order to constitute oneself as an outsider in the same breath. The modern Paragone around 1900 must therefore be read as a rite de passage.

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm: Coffee Break

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm:

**Raffaella Perna**

(Research Fellow, La Sapienza University, Rome)

***Art and Feminism in Italy: Tomaso Binga's Liminal Actions***

The paper focuses on the work of the Italian artist and performer Tomaso Binga (Bianca Pucciarelli), active in the 1970s in the field of visual and phonetic poetry and close to feminist ideas, under the perspective of liminality. The aim of the paper is the analysis of the ways in which Bings's work on identity and the body challenged the stereotypes of femininity through a radical critique of social rituals and on dominant artistic languages.

**Doris Guth**

(Assistant Professor, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna)

***Erotization of religion and sacralization of love. Contemporary art "on the thresholds"***

Religion has experienced a changed role and attribution at the beginning of the 21st century. Happiness experiences that cross thresholds no longer refer to faith in a God. An example for the sacralization of fields far removed from religion lies in the cultural meaning of the emotion "love". The sociologist Eva Illouz describes in "Love in the Age of Late Capitalism" with Victor Turner's theory of liminality how love makes threshold experiences possible.

**From 6:00 pm:**

**Joint dinner for all conference participants**

**&**

**Meeting of the members of the Austrian Society of Art Historians VöKK (for members)**

Saturday, October 5th 2019

9:30 am – 10:00 am: Registration and Coffee

### *Liminal Spaces*

10:00 am – 11:00 am:

#### **Steffen Zierholz**

(Postdoctoral fellow at the KHI, Max Planck Institute for Art History, Florence)

#### *On a Jesuit Aesthetics of the Liminal*

The lecture tries to answer the virulent question about the "Jesuit" of Jesuit art not in a long disproved "Jesuit style", but with regard to an aesthetics of liminality. The basis for this are first of all the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, in particular the so-called "composition of space" (*compositio loci*) and the application of the senses (*applicatio sensuum*), which both operate with inner images of the imagination.

#### **Tobias Kämpf**

(Istituto di studi sammarinesi, Università degli studi, San Marino)

#### *Lively remembrance: Liminality as artistic delimitation of the tomb*

Although all works of art with a memorial function seek the state of limbo that is also captured in the concept of liminality, the architecturally-plastic defined genre of the tomb is the one that enriches this aesthetic dimension with a ritually-formed one: Not only does the monument as such oscillate in a controversial temporal location, but it also perpetuates a phase of transition between the act of saying goodbye and the unknown as well as the final.

11:00 am – 11:30 am: Coffee Break

11:30 am – 12.30 pm:

#### **Katarína Kravčíková**

(Master Student at the Department of Art History at the Masaryk University Brno)

#### *Walking Towards the Threshold*

The contribution wishes to dwell on the notion of liminality on two levels. On the one hand, it considers the corporeal as well as intellectual experience of the modern scholar pilgrim, crossing the line between theoretical and empirical scientific research. On the other hand, this theoretical basis will then be applied to the case of the Cathedral Notre-Dame du Puy-en-Velay (France) and its surrounding landscape, an exemplary case of liminal interactions in pilgrimage art.

**Daniel Tischler**

(Student of Art History and Comparative Literature at the University of Vienna)

***Steps. On the aesthetic function of the threshold between nave and choir in Salzburg's Franciscan Church***

Two steps, barely noticeably fixed in the triumphal arch of the Franciscan church, function as a place of separation and communication in equal measure. Both symbolically and spatially, this threshold controls the transition from Romanesque architecture to the diaphanous structure of the late Gothic spatial concept. In and through this liminal border area, the gaze is transferred from darkness into light, into a bodily experience of the sublime.

**12:30 pm – 1:00 pm: Final Discussion and Summary**