trópos • anno V • numero 1 • 2012 — ISBN 978-88-548-5420-8
DOI 10.4399/97888548542084 — pag. 47–73 (2012)

'Disegno' and the Signs of Artistic Creativity

Some Cultural–Historical Reflections on the Education of Artists in Europe

Hans Ulrich Reck
Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln

abstract: The modern conception of art has radicalised the *dispositif* that originally initiated the contemporary understanding of the liberal arts, but has not substantially changed it. Unlike the pictorial and stylistic forms of painting, one finds that over the past 500 years there has been a high degree of continuity in the meta–theoretical conception of the 'signs' of art: the signs of art can only be adequately defined and evaluated as iconography, but not with regard to any internal requirements for a creative work. Thus the question remains as to how the signs of art and the qualification as art are constituted. In the light of 20th century experience, the following reflections on an art history of creativity shaped by institutions explore core relationships and links flagged by the keywords ambivalence, dogma, destroying, and unlearning.

keywords: Creativity, fine arts, intentionality, academy, semiotics.

1. Differing Assessments of Creativity and the Creative: Profanisation and Everyday Sacralisation of the Artist as Transgressor of Limits

According to leading design theorists, founders of academies, educators, and 'programmatists' — from Federico Zuccari to the Bauhaus and the Ulm School of Design — the fundamental essence of art does not change; it is hermetic, unfathomable, and unknowable as a matter of principle. The signs and indications of art and the qualification as art are held to be ambivalent. This has two sides — a public and an internal one. The internal side is that even without meta–linguistic verbalisation or substantiation, any connoisseur is capable of recognising the signs of qualification as art, including gradations, graduations, and foundations, which is what makes him or her a connoisseur. The other, public side stands fast by its opinion, firmly and ostensibly unswervingly, that no theory exists for this, no doctrine, nothing overarching, and there is scant evidence for any generalisation heuristics or at least none that could enable an inductive determination.

In line with this is the genealogy of the concept of the academy, which has exerted such influence on the modern era, the outlines of which were laid down by the first major institutions of this type: the Accademia del Disegno established 1563 in Florence by Giorgio Vasari, and the Compagnia di San Luca artists' guild in Rome that Federico Zuccari reorganised into an art academy in 1593, the Accademia di San Luca. In the beginning formulas and concerns were surprisingly simple. The effective reduction of the debate about art that has taken place since then, in which there has been a partitioning–off of the precepts of connoisseurship from, by contrast, a proliferating discourse about the aesthetics of art and the rhetoric of its works against the outside, is only comprehensible if one considers the entire context in all its facets. Vasari's sole concern was to advance the appreciation and recognition of artists in a public sphere that had changed while at the same time preserving the artists' obligation to a relatively limited circle of powerful people and an elite that commissioned artworks. Put differently, Vasari sought the emotive participation of the public in an altered concept that was never properly brought to their conscious attention. This had an enduring impact on the image of the artist as well as on the artist's role, but particularly on the 'new' claim, justified on the grounds of innovation or acceleration, to a changed and expanded range of action within society.

Function, design, characteristics, and casting of the artist's role were redefined and established for the ultimate purpose of upwardly re–evaluating the artist, who then became effectively disengaged from artisanry. The public role of the artist autonomised art, although half of the academicians' training in materials and techniques still had to be done in workshops. This autonomisation consciously tied the new ambiguity of the image of the artist to rendering the signs unclear through which art is recognised. Here, as mentioned above, the discourse of the connoisseur was predominant. The ambivalence of the signs of art in the public sphere masqueraded an unambiguity; with the aid of which, as part of the aesthetics of power, a doctrinarian or at least a rather dogmatic definition of art was laid down at the Academy. Just a few decades after Vasari's initiative in Florence, Federico Zuccari pursued the same course in Rome.

Vasari and Zuccari were not only first–class artists active in various fields, they were also excellent writers and theoretical conceptualists. With his *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* from Giotto to Michelangelo — the first edition of 1550 was just a single volume — Vasari invented art history as a canon of artworks and upon this future expectations would be oriented, schooled by a virtually unlimited abundance of mechanisms and attitudes, safeguarded by sophisticated 'cover stories' or 'legends,' a cornucopia of fictions and rhetorical stylisations that had to support, and indeed did support, the posited genealogy of the origins of

art as located in inexplicable genius. By contrast Zuccari engaged with the theoretical structuring of artists' training, with the endeavour of academic programming in the form of the first institutionalised course of studies in the modern era, with the artistic wellsprings of the imagination, as well as with the conditions for the formation of aesthetic artefacts. These efforts truly constituted the beginning of internal differentiation in artists' education and training.

This went hand in hand not only with the building and elaboration of artists' education that would be canonical for centuries, experiencing the gradual development of drawing from objects to the human anatomy, of composition from the sketch of an idea to the finished *bozzetto*, as well as the theoretical grounding of the functions of art. To the extent that the artist was recognised by society as freelance, so too the discourse on quality became strictly the preserve of professional authorities on art. This social generalisation was linked to a rigid particularisation of who was responsible for making evaluations and to a hierarchy. This hierarchy reduced the observer of an artwork to aesthetically enjoying the object and to experiencing the reconstruction of the artistic decisions manifested in the work (conditions and issues related to the specific form of the work and its execution as the aesthetic realisation of an idea), and relegated the observer to a subordinate position *vis à vis* the inventions of the programme– and decision–making powers — from the impresarios to the artists themselves. (Heilkamp, Winner 1999)

A parallel development was that this institutional art sphere spawned a real interest in questions of 'creativity' in a modern sense. It was at this point that creativity entered the stage in a powerful way together with the fine arts' stylisation of its rhetoric and content. (Saxl 1957) Creativity then became the exclusive province of the professional art sphere. It was not until the deconstruction of the academic canon by artists such as Goya, Blake, and Cézanne and the idiosyncratic reformulation of artistic self–assertion in the 20th century that the ground we know today was prepared for the drifting apart of art and creativity. As a result art that appeared only hermetic, arbitrary, and singular (Wittkower, Wittkower 1963) — independent of how it was evaluated — was obliged to make way for a view of creativity devoted to enhancing the status of the everyday outside of art. In other words it was of the opinion, and also propagated it, that it could dispense with the effort of transforming and transgressing — that is, the conditions of heretofore exclusive, so–called 'creativity'. (Blumenberg 1981) Thus what an artist is, can now only be identified via mediation; art cannot be taught or learned. This argument proved successful; however, ever since Cézanne all it actually means is that contemporary art no longer follows any aesthetic institutions, norms, or exclusive monolithic theory.

Just as the visual language of later, self–referentially enhanced painting since Cézanne appeared solely as the internal enrichment of a systems–theoretical operation, namely, a sealing–off of the subsystem of art from other subsystems, so too the social usefulness of creativity was detached from art and extended to embrace a secular, inner social postulate, and ultimately also to intra–psychological, universally random promises of the creative life in general. Thus it was rendered elementary and devalued at the same time. By contrast, in the modern construction of the emancipated 'liberal arts' the universal view was undisputed that the creative act in art was based on the transformation of reproducibility and, above all, on the transcendence of the conditions of 'ordinary' life. Since the time of J.P. Guilford, Gordon, and Taylor (Guilford 1950; Guilford 1968; Guilford *et al.* 1959; Gordon 1956; Taylor 1964; Taylor, Barron 1963; Taylor, Williams 1964), the exactly contrary view is championed by the psychological approach to creativity. This approach is typical for the 20th century and for the re–valorisation of a normatively unified facticity of the 'personal' (and thus of a fictional construct that again remains non–transparent; Heubach 1988). It asserts as a normative fact that the conditions of the self are the order of creativity in the immanence of the empirical.

The paradigm of self–realisation that is grounded in this therefore originates primarily from corrections to the biometrics of abilities prescribed by strategic considerations, which in the era of the U.S. Sputnik crisis were attributed to the intangible inventory of the personality in parallel and analogous to cognitive intelligence. (von Hentig 1998) In effect, this universalisation abolished the sectorial and territorial boundary with art. It no longer has any function with regard to paradigmatic and the exemplary nature of creativity, but instead coexists as a societally insignificant variant of the type of life perception, which — without any effort, work, or necessity to transgress — seeks to endow purely vegetative existence, and particularly one's own existence, with added aesthetic value.

Analysis of the various signs and indications for constructing the immanence model of creativity on the one hand, and of the transcendence model of the creative arts on the other gives insight into the extended and consequential instrumentalisation of the fine arts in the 20th century. In the following I shall give an outline of this with respect to certain historical caesuras and ideal–typical shifts in the *dispositif* of discussing art.

2. The First Programmes: Vasari and Zuccari

Giorgio Vasari pioneered art historiography that bases on technical innovations and the personality of the artist. Thus he is regarded as the father of

modern art historiography. Against conventions that became established later, Vasari had no problems in combining art criticism and art history. He argued critically but ran no risk of being accused of propagating normative and unempirical aesthetics. Nor did his discussion of the quality of artworks detract from his authority as a scholar. Vasari's art history is based on the depiction of legends about individual artists, that is, on deliberately eulogising rhetoric. It is a narrative that pre–dates the branch of knowledge and praxis that was subsequently moulded and controlled by academies and institutions of higher education. Vasari's historiography follows the rules of the classical rhetoric of panegyrics and *ekphrasis*. It is about establishing a canon based on judgements which are always and explicitly substantiated subjectively.

Vasari followed the potent model of the artist's biography that constructs legends (see also Kris, Kurz 1980; Wittkower, Wittkower 1963) and that cannot be measured against historical values and insights. By contrast, later scholarly art historiography introduced irreversible changes: from norm–setting philosophical speculations to empirical research aimed at developing historical scholarship. However, the emotive model of centring art and its theories in the practises of artists survived and remains the standard. As a corrective, since Vasari this has run contrary to the scholarly and scientific notion of objectivity. Objectivity comes up against its limits when confronted by artworks' claims to possessing a quality that is paradigmatic and timeless. This quality formed within the artworks, and from them it emanates. In the lineage descended from Vasari's narratives promoting the creation of legends, each qualitative opinion or judgement of an artwork, an epoch, or a style had to refer exclusively to the manifestation of the exceptional artistic quality that the outstanding works placed before the observer which served at once as orientation and as binding. For then as now the concept of art continues to be based on quality judgements as expressions of art's power to move and affect. There is not one style concept that remains untouched by this, not one formal analysis that is objective in a rigorous sense.

The historiographical background, the grounding of art history as poetology of the artistic life, however, is just one dimension of Vasari's oeuvre and achievement; he is a figure of seminal importance for the entire *dispositif* of the modern visual arts with his exceptional talent for organisation and necessary 'will to power.' As founder of an art academy and as impresario Vasari relied on a specific conception of artistic design and at the same time saw in it an aesthetic justification of art's 'will to power.' Art as a blueprint and a method became concrete in the models of *concetto* and *disegno*, whereby at that time 'design, art of design, draw, draughtsmanship' (English translations of *disegno*) always remained tied to mastery of the

aesthetics of power. This was the most important concern of the first truly modern art academy, the Accademia del Disegno founded by Vasari in 1563 in Florence. The school had, like the concept of the academy itself, a long prehistory. At around the same time that Leonardo da Vinci initiated and directed his legendary albeit hermetic or arcane academy in Milan (of which we at least know that contrary to his earlier position, Leonardo insisted on a complete separation of training in skills and art and thus also on separate roles and functions), Lorenzo il Magnifico, who also encouraged Marsilio Ficino's foundation of the Platonic Academy, founded "the first small and informal school for students of painting and sculpture, a school independent of all guild rules and restrictions" in Florence in 1490. (Pevsner 1940: 38)

Naturally, Leonardo takes pride of place at the beginning of the history of modern art education, even though it remains uncertain whether he actually founded his academy. Unlike the institution of the pragmatic public relations strategist and author of conceptual programmes Vasari, Leonardo da Vinci's academy disappeared in the vague and contradictory details of later descriptions. Parallel to a romanticised reception of Leonardo and his oeuvre, these accounts exhibit a strong tendency to project a bias toward science and art theory onto his educational establishment. Clearly Leonardo's academy could not escape the Maestro's aura, even though he consistently and firmly rejected efforts calculated to achieve public effects with art. For Leonardo the only acceptable public art was the orderly array of infrastructure, technology, fortifications, and machines used for military purposes. Accordingly, it remains an open question whether Leonardo's establishment should be regarded as an institution for education or a laboratory for sophisticated research and experiment. Be that as it may, around 1550 the designation 'academy' for an art school was unusual.

To understand what Vasari sought to achieve one must take into account the decline of the guilds in late 14th century Florence. Like elsewhere in medieval Europe painters and sculptors belonged to guilds. Sculptors had to join the Arte dei Fabbricanti because they worked with stone. Painters were members of the Arte dei Medici, Speziali e Merciai because they worked with pigments. As early as 1360 the painters formed an association with its own council within the guilds. The Compagnia di S. Luca for painters, sculptors, and other artists was probably founded in the early 14th century. The statutory obligations were of a liturgical–religious and social nature.

Towards the end of the 15th century it was obvious that this organisational principle was in decline. Although the Compagnia di S. Luca guild was formally protected because membership was compulsory for practitioners of the professions it represented, it had ceased to be a source of fresh artistic momentum. By Vasari's time, in fact, it had lost all significance.

The donation of a 'tomb for future burials of artists' in 1562 gave Vasari an opportunity to act. Assuming that this burial site would be open to all artists, irrespective of which guild they belonged to, Vasari proposed a new system of organisation that would both enable artists to break free of the guilds and to attain higher social status. To this end he secured the support of Cosimo de' Medici. On January 13th, 1563 detailed statutes were laid before the Grand Duke. After he had given his approval, the constitutive assembly was held. The appointed heads of the association were Cosimo de' Medici and Michelangelo, who was at that time well advanced in years and living in Rome, "a combination of prince and artist, eminently characteristic of the state now reached in the development of the artist's social position." (Pevsner 1940: 45)

The original goal was to establish a prestigious centre of artists who could lay claim to a higher social standing than skilled artisans. Vasari's second goal, which Zuccari was to pursue later, namely, the reform of artists' education, after a few decades became the main focus of the Academy, which indelibly marked its success and its image over the course of history. The original, elaborate programme of instruction quickly became reduced to drawing from nature.

With its public declaration of pride in the profession the Academy endeavoured to compensate the artists theoretically for the independence they could never attain *vis à vis* the members of the Medici court. With this academy the artists could achieve on a symbolic level equality with the sciences and an equal status with poets and philosophers who had leading roles (in Florence, e.g., the influential Poliziano und Ficino). The statutes did refer to the functions of teaching and provided for a library and collections of plans, models, and drawings. Lessons in geometry were also mentioned. However, in reality the teaching programme was mainly confined to a well–meaning instruction of beginners (*dilettanti*). In its early phase the academy was an expression of a new public image of the artist as well as a changed self–image on the part of the artists themselves. One could define this as self–referential and autopoietic; as defining art by means of its own praxis. Correspondingly, the emphasis was not on the learnability of art, but on trust in the power of an art system that was self–supporting and self–regulating, as well as capable of self–modification and self–assertion. (Wittkower, Wittkower 1963) The external rules of technical instruction and also the normative orientation of the aesthetics either faded into the background or was absorbed into the system.

The programmatic rationale can be summarised as follows: Vasari in Florence and, a little later, Federico Zuccari in Rome, attempted with the aid of an enhanced concept of the artist as genius to secure for artists the singular, individual, quasi divine right to imagination and, at the same time,

to commit them, as a mediating, productive force, to the organisational premises of imperial, neo–aristocratic hegemony beyond theological propaganda. It is in this power–political orientation that the real significance of Vasari's foundation of an academy lies. It was not only an art school but also the materialisation and expression of the institutionalisation of a systematic historiography of art, established and stabilised in the presence of the founder of art history, in which *disegno* reigned supreme. The primacy of the concept — the drawing, the brilliant design, the perfection of the finished picture that was already discernible in the detailed sketch — has its origins here, with all the momentous consequences, and up to the present day still represents the most profound attestation of the ability to create art.

On this magic quality of the line, accentuated as *disegno* (which was taken up later most emphatically by John Flaxman, William Hogarth, and of course by Jugendstil and Art Nouveau), Vasari concludes:

> Seeing that Design, the parent of our three arts, Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, having its origin in the intellect, draws out from many single things a general judgement, it is like a form or idea of all the objects in nature, most marvellous in what it compasses, for not only in the bodies of men and of animals but also in plants, in buildings, in sculpture and in painting, design is cognizant of the proportion of the whole to the parts and of the parts to each other and to the whole. Seeing too that from this knowledge there arises a certain conception and judgement, so that there is formed in the mind that something which afterwards, when expressed by the hands, is called design, we may conclude that design is not other than a visible expression and declaration of our inner conception and of that which others have imagined and given form to in their idea. (Vasari 1907: 203)

One has to keep this theory of *concetto* and *disegno* in mind in order to recognise that, in the contemporary context, the concept of *maniera* was forward–looking. Vasari used the concept of *maniera*, which employed in a derogatory sense was current in circles that increasingly regarded artists as whimsical, eccentric, and above all as unreliable and obstinate. However, Vasari did not use the term either to challenge or signal innovation, but rather to point to continuities and traditions. For Vasari it was not a question of whether a work was — in the modern sense — a testimony to the supreme individual caprice that is the hallmark of a masterpiece. (see Hocke 1987; Hauser 1964) Rather, it was the fact that individualisation ensues and, with it, the negative, regrettable consequence that art theory is no longer supra–individual and binding. Vasari endeavoured to release *maniera* from the aura, from the autonomy, and also from the hubris of the artist. For him, *maniera* represented working practices in the sense of late medieval workshop traditions that did not require any inordinate talent but could be learned or reproduced by anyone through frequent repetition, acute observation and adaptation, and by virtue of the specific teaching and

working environment of the workshop.

Vasari's concept of *maniera*, in contrast to all later usages of the term (Kemp 1974) which have an understanding of the individual that is precisely the opposite, does not yet distinguish between artisanship and art. Creativity is still identical to following comprehensible rules to generate and transform; their continuity was guaranteed both by the authority of the master as well as the discipline that excluded anything deemed non–conforming or deviating from the laws and norms imposed by the autonomous realm of the medieval workshop. Such veneration of tradition, however, was decidedly a thing of the past in the second important modern academy, Federico Zuccari's reorganised St. Luke's Guild of 1593 in Rome. In the Roman visual arts school it was not craft traditions that were the central focus but the supra–factual, spiritual, imaginative exclusivity of the artist–genius; this represented a decisive caesura in the modern intellectual history of creativity.

Yet the same historical conditions framed Zuccari's endeavours in Rome and Vasari's in Florence. Artists were obliged to belong to a guild; which reduced their aspirations and pretensions to the level of artisans. Many attempts were made to form associations that flouted the classification in guilds; for example, the foundation of an association solely for artists in 1543, the Virtuosi al Pantheon. Also, the first attempt at reforming the Accademia del Disegno in the 1570s failed. It was not until Federico Zuccari secured the support of Cardinal Federigo Borromeo that he succeeded in establishing a new space for a changed understanding of art: on November 14th, 1593 the Accademia di S. Luca opened marked by the celebration of mass in the church of St. Martina. By contrast, the inaugural meeting afterwards took place in a shack. Zuccari was elected president and given powers to appoint his own *coadiutori* und *consiglieri*.

As mentioned above, the main purpose of this academy was the same as discussed in connection with Vasari, but with a different accentuation of internal aspects of the artists' training. Great importance was attached to drawing from plaster models and from nature; special emphasis was placed on the subjects of landscape and animals — an anticipation of developments to come in the 17th century. In the programme of Zuccari's academy the institution of the modern art academy seems to have been planned and realised at a stroke. There were appointed professors, course appraisal at regular intervals, an aesthetic canon, a hierarchical order of subjects, methods, and genres as well as the non–regular awarding of prizes plus a vast reservoir of sponsorship and patronage. Public funding was obtained and a market came into being. Well–known architects, sculptors, and painters taught there. Zuccari set up a lecture series on theory, albeit with considerable effort, which explored art concepts on all levels, particularly *disegno*.

Although the Academy did not play a major role in the later lives of any of the painters who studied there, it did initiate the later form of art education with its hierarchical structure that has been authoritative, canonical, and standard for centuries: drawing models, objects, landscapes, still lifes, then animals, nudes, people in action and in groups, variable and ever more complex situations. At the top, the consummate achievement was the allegorical picture, usually a history painting, a visualisation of a classical or Christian subject from the repertoire of Western themes arranged according to significance and levels of difficulty.

One can summarise the innovations in the education and training of artists of the 16th century as follows:

> Leonardo has not founded nor conceived an academy of art, but his theory together with Michelangelo's personality have done more than anything else to prepare the ground on which Vasari and Zuccari could erect the first art academies. Vasari by chiefly emphasizing the representational and Zuccari by placing foremost the educational purpose of an academy have clearly mapped out the two principal tasks which academies of art were to set themselves in the future. That this occurred under the auspices of Mannerism, the most schematic and the most 'totalitarian' of all modern styles, and moreover the one most devoted to taking over compositions, figures, details from the works of great classic masters, has determined the character and the destiny of academies of art down to the twentieth century. (Pevsner 1940: 66)

Even more crucial and enduring has been the influence of the Mannerist cult of *disegno*, of the design, of the initial consummate idea, of the drawing and the concept, on the future. The *disegno* or drawing — elaborated prominently by Federico Zuccari, as aforementioned, with considerable theoretical effort[1] — sacralised the *disegno interno* as the medium of a 'segno di dio in noi,' as a solemn divine vision, as the aesthetic incorporation of god–like creativity in the artist. *Disegno* such as this is realised in the line, in its form and outline, which executed confidently and masterfully up to and including Picasso is considered as the expression of an artist's skill, command, and genius. At the same time these contours merely express an internal, more seminal complement to expression; namely, the meaning of a complete mental concept of an artwork that is yet to be realised. *Disegno* marks the origin of artistic judgement and selects, evaluates, and indicates who belongs among the masters of aesthetics, the art connoisseurs. (Hocke 1987)

Additionally, *disegno* marks the final form brought forth by the artist,

1. The theory of *disegno* (*disegno primo*: *interno, intelletivo*; *disegno secondo*: *esterno, pratica*; where *disegno esterno* is divided into *disegno naturale*, *disegno artificiale*, and *disegno fantastico–artificiale*) as a creative process coherently connecting and controlling the aggegation of nature and art was developed by Federico Zuccari, *inter alia*, in his work *L'idea de' pittori, scultori et architetti*.

the end point of a sequence of steps to knowledge, the beginning of which Vasari sees as a synthetically imagined *disegno* that is at work even before the actual mental concept. *Disegno* retains the source of the general judgement, enables the synthesis of the powers of imagination, guarantees the procedure of 'common judgement,' and, with its ability to imagine the form of things, also the endurance, aptness, and proportionality of this judgement as a yardstick for the coming into being of the concrete, individual artwork (the medium as well as the example of objectification). It is upon *disegno* conceived in this way that knowledge of things and their interrelationships builds, both epistemologically and cosmologically. Applied *disegno* becomes the rhetorical art of *concinnitas*: skilfully put together or joined, where the parts harmonise perfectly with the whole, and the whole with the parts. (Baxandall 1972) Knowledge of things always takes the form of certain ideas or conceits (*concetti*), which are captured by the drawing and given a form that can be universally experienced. In the history of art, *disegno* plays the role of an absolute, given measure that comprises all things and all relations. It remains, however, an ideal construct or precept. Any single work of art can only approach this ideal; it can never truly achieve it.

3. Forget and Un–learn: Opening Up to the Paradoxical after the 'Classic' Painters (Reynolds, David, Goya, Friedrich)

Later artistic praxis that embraced improvisational and aleatoric techniques, (Reck 1999, 2003b) which continually arose over the course of the centuries from the interplay of mannerisms and resistance to aesthetic, particularly institutional doctrines, demonstrates that regardless of the precise designation of the issues involved, improvisation is about finessing one's own consciousness that seeks to instigate programmes and compositions as well as the attendant practices of designing. For although during the genesis of an artistic form — in order to gain an area of freedom won in opposition to applying the learned norms and conventions — it is necessary to remember what has just happened to continue playing through the possibilities, the paradox is that this has then to be forgotten again immediately in order to continue playing through 'freely.' This paradoxical circumstance is not a coincidence; it indicates a decisive change. With this the paradoxical becomes programmatic, is deliberately included, shaped, and enhanced in discourses within academia.

The new conceptions have to do with individual variability of aesthetic norms, which no longer conceive of objectives solely on the level of style, but above all as methods and procedures. The result was that the art academies, which had actually stagnated, became capable of regeneration

on a higher plane. (Yates 1947) They always remain modern and yet at the same time 'classic.' Since the late 18th century, un–learning, destroying, and disintegration have been part of the academy's programme: learning through deviating, un–learning how to learn in order to open learning from which rules have been banished. In this way a meta–level has entered institutional practice: one needs to have learned an awful lot before one can put un–learning into one's work as an enhanced readiness to innovate. First and foremost all learning has to be already concentrated in the power to problematise, in empowering learning to continual virtuosity so that it can retain its vitality. In this sense art has nothing to do with 'higher levels' and even less with ability. And not at all with routine or virtuosity in the technical command of means of expression. This kind of art only involves the capacity to perceive something as a problem that is otherwise not regarded as such; quite frequently because it is supposedly too trivial. Running counter to the common suspicion of hermeticism, the proximity of the arts to the self–evident and 'ordinary' binds modern art to the ability to un–learn and to radical aesthetic and form–creating innovation by de–automatising, displacing, and de–objectifying or 'alienating' what is habitual.

Seen from this viewpoint, the later, allegedly so new radicality of Johannes Itten's 'preliminary course' at the Bauhaus (Wick 1982: 77–111) is neither radical nor new. In Itten's view, all images that have come down to us, including their traditions and roots in individuals' life histories, must be destroyed in order to void or break down identity and to overcome fixations by forgetting; however, already in the 18th century the awareness of the power of aesthetically enhanced liveliness to subvert norms played a prominent role. It did not appear as a positive artistic norm, but had to proceed indirectly via subversion and destruction. The concept of the genius as a decontrolling resource of 'nature' seemed like a strategy for opposing the academic taming of talent and its ossification through routine. To avoid preconditioning, artistic dogma, and canonisation of designs, Itten only recognised the sensual experience of materials as the teacher of form to personalities that had been 'cleansed' of all previous feeling. This is reminiscent at once of the 18th century and of a similar, albeit overtly religious programme of de–memorialisation of one's previous life and older identity, as outlined and perfected by Bernard of Clairvaux in the *Meditations* in the 11th century. (Coleman 1991)

Bernard of Clairvaux founded a religious identity wholly dedicated to serve religion using a kind of artistic method. Johannes Itten established a religious practice, an array of instruments (which included standardised hairstyle and clothing, in other words, a uniform) that was wholly dedicated to nurturing future artistic talent. These two methods are at once

symmetrical and, with regard to the wider context, a synthesis: the indissolubility of art and religion, which in its entirety elucidates art's theological and metaphysical heritage and, in addition, the problem of its continuation (with reference to art as a genuinely independent epistemology; Picht 1987). Other evidence supports these findings, for example, Goya's reasoning in 1797 for his *Caprichos* insisted on the right of the artist to establish the truth of his reality completely autonomously through fragmentation and deconstruction of immediate reality, even when this appeared to the outside as pure caprice and hubris; thus Goya insisted on the creative necessity of destroying recognised forms and designs at any time.

A noteworthy example of the artist's increased intention to achieve self–determination, of insistence on a creative process that opposed aesthetic conventions and the objectified artwork, of that the artist was obviously obliged to deviate from the customs and practices of the academy in the design of artworks, is the case of Caspar David Friedrich. Against the same cultural backdrop Caspar David Friedrich subordinated the appearance to a coherent artwork in such a manner that he was able to try out rather singular methods in the painting and clearly highlight these. To appreciate this fully, it must be remembered that Friedrich's vehemently anti–academy stance developed in an environment in which once again a triumphant high point of traditional, standardised academic painting was starting to emerge. Friedrich studied at the Copenhagen Academy of Arts. This institution paid close attention to what was going on at the Paris École des Beaux Arts and immediately transmitted any news to other places, even as far as Russia. Friedrich was fully aware of this imminent new 'Golden Age' which was just beginning in Denmark. This circumstance is important because it necessarily leads to a differentiated view of Friedrich's anti–academy sentiments. It must be concluded that he was not in revolt over a declining and stagnant academicism, but above all he was angry about the intention to launch a new Golden Age of painting, promoted particularly by the French painters Jacques–Louis David and Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, with the aid of a new doctrinarian academy and to institutionalise it as a totalitarian art programme (Hofmann 2000). On the other hand Friedrich also fought against the art of the Nazarene movement, which he considered as art from art and therefore weak and feeble.

The emotion that forbade Friedrich from becoming part of a succession of religiously inspired, merely retrogressively oriented traditions was evidently iconoclastic. Perfection of technique in the academic tradition was for him, who was himself a past master of the art of painting, simply 'waggling a paintbrush.' A comparison of his drawings and paintings evidences that Friedrich was supremely capable of operating within the tradition of academically schooled *concetto*. His paintings exhibit a deliberately exag-

gerated and hardened variant of this, a conscious brutalisation of his own conceptual capabilities on canvas. His chief concern was the impression of 'honest artlessness,' the establishment of a different, other code of credibility. The previous virtuosity of dissemblance of naturalism, the entire repertoire of dexterous artistic feats left him cold. For the code of a new credibility he was willing to accept that, compared to the older, virtuosity–addicted generation's appetite for demonstration that showed no sign of abating, his ice floes looked as though they had been painted on cardboard for the theatre by a scenic painter.

Admittedly, Friedrich did not stand alone or exclusively for Romanticism with his primitivistic gestus. Surprisingly, Jacques–Louis David and Joshua Reynolds, who was frequently vitriolically criticised by William Blake, both spoke of an art of unlearning, *désapprendre*, for which there was topical demand and which the various arts should develop. In a speech to the academy on December 14th, 1770 Joshua Reynolds said:

> And, indeed, I cannot help suspecting, that in this instance the Ancients had an easier task than the Moderns. They had, probably, little or nothing to unlearn, as their manners were nearly approaching to this desirable simplicity; while the modern Artist, before he can see the truth of things, is obliged to remove a veil, with which the fashion of the times has thought proper to cover her. (Reynolds 1842: 47)

Clearly, this is not only a reference to a coherent, 'true' style, but represents a foray that anticipates a view of modernity regarded not as a truth that is in contrast to something else, but only in relation to itself, as became explicit with Chateaubriand. Jacques–Louis David, who was enormously influential through his workshops, his art politics, and the training of generations of his successors, used the slogan of *désapprendre* to underline forcefully that frivolous Rococo should be stamped out. However, not everything should be forgotten, only the false doctrines.

Here the modern impetus of self–imposed iconoclasm is not yet absolute and only applied to itself in an elaborated and totalised manner, as in Arthur Rimbaud's watchword "Je est un autre," which signifies that 'one's own' is always an Other and does not exist 'as such.' In the case of David, iconoclasm was absorbed into reactivation of the art of classical antiquity as a model. One of his students, the later literary critic E.J. Delécluze wrote in his memoirs that David systematically practised the technique of forgetting what was old and untrue. Everything that had merely been learned superficially, everything that was untrue, needed to be forgotten to create a contemporary living space for the classical. This went so far as to demand that everything the art academies taught should first be unlearned.

4. Polyvalent Interpretants, Open Codes: The Problem of Reference and the Extension of Artistic Creativity from the Work to the Conditions of its Reception

In the process of modernity, artistic creativity has been formed essentially as the installation of the random, (Reck 1999) encoding of the new, generating elements of surprise, and modifying perception and reception that is not retrievable in a stereotyped way. (Reck 2003b) This cultivated a median sphere of creativity (or to be more precise, a generative conception of creativity as oriented on innovation and the above–average) for which art has outstanding models, experience, and proposals to offer. Something that lends itself to presentation as an interface for the entire image–rhetorical effects and ramifications of complex and polyvalently encoded works, can always be looked at and described from both sides: from the viewpoint of reception and of production. The decisive factor is that in the 20th century, particularly since 1950, all work aesthetics has become reception aesthetics, which, in the process of completion and appropriation of the polysemous and polyvalent artwork, organises the ever more complex relationships between author, work, and recipient as a continually changing web of regulated and partly de–regulated factors; that is, develops within the work and as the work by means of the constant back–and–forth of regulation and de–regulation.

In this way the artistic experience set into the work articulates conceptually the problematic (of metaphysics) of the referent, outlined at length in semiotic theory. The place of the no longer tenable, ontologically naive embodiment of the real — image, reference, incorporation, etc. — is taken over by polyvalent and ambivalent interpretants, and in masses at that. The function of the interpretant to interpret, that is, the organisation of the sign function that passes over to the interpretament necessitates the opening up of the material constituting the work that was hitherto oriented on the ideal of the perfect form. The artwork 'opens' itself commensurate to the multiple layers of its conceptual predispositions (by means of corresponding encodings by the author), but is activated as 'real,' as valid, each time a recipient appropriates a work.

The recipient's perception is the prerequisite — as has always been — not only for the vivid effect of an artwork; here it is also decisive for the specific semantic organisation of a reference of the artwork because its message orients itself on the recipient's predispositions and disposition, interests, predilections, and capabilities in a certain situation, and arises only at the actual moment that the artwork has an effect on the recipient. (Reck 2004: 131–136, 190–202, 219–222) The theory of the 'open' work of art (Eco 1973) is an important proposal that offers the possibility to describe the consequences that result from this as well as the associated requirements.

Against this theoretical backdrop, art can be defined as a process and method for generating improbability; that is, asymmetry, deviation, and disequilibrium. All forms of art, as art works or objects, derive their aesthetic validity from the fact that they can be viewed from many perspectives. Trivially, an artwork is considered as being realised exclusively through the act of contemplation, even when this takes place virtually. The conceptual and semiotic system of reference established through the advent of land art, minimal art, conceptual art, and especially happenings, Fluxus, and action art (on a meta–level) implies that the understanding of 'open' art has changed. At issue is the constitutive circumstance that poetic elements first generated in the act of interpretation have been introduced which are prefigured in but are indeterminate or 'open' parts of an artwork or musical score.

According to this view, aesthetic information always originates through the difference between what is determined and what is not under the condition that there is, as far as possible, a majority of non–coded compared to known signifiers. Aesthetic innovation of significative improbability, therefore, conflicts deliberately with established codes and rules of communication, particularly with the recipient's habitually encoded knowledge of rules. Taking the 'new music' scores by Luciano Berio as an example, which leave the arrangement of some of their constituents to the improvisation of the performers, Eco explains:

> The new musical works [. . .] reject the definitive, concluded message and multiply the formal possibilities of the distribution of their elements. They appeal to the initiative of the performer, and hence they offer themselves not as finite works which prescribe specific repetition along given structural coordinates but as 'open' works, which are brought to their conclusion by the performer at the same time as he experiences them on an aesthetic plane. (Eco 1989: 3)

Analogously, works of visual art are seen as the sum of interpretations enabled by the work's formal organisation: "*Informal art* is open in that it proposes a wider range of interpretative possibilities, a configuration of stimuli whose substantial indeterminacy allows for a number of possible readings." (Eco 1989: 84) This is true of "an 'open work' in an even more mature and radical way," as "its signs combine like constellations whose structural relationships are not determined univocally from the start, and in which the ambiguity of the sign does not [. . .] lead back to reconfirming the distinction between form and background. Here the background itself becomes the subject of the painting or, rather, the subject of the painting is a background in continual metamorphosis." (Eco 1989: 86) In general the work of art is changing into an "epistemological metaphor." (Eco 1989: 87) But actually this is a rather vague definition because the recursive performance of art (that is, its feedback association with the permanent

reorganisation of the term in the course of the 20th century that tied the work of art to meta–theoretical assertions or at least to comparable suppositions and allusions) consists in the continuous shift, including of metonymic strategies, as well as the inexhaustible interplay of the polyvalent interpretants that runs the risk of being repetitive. In the face of infinite semiosis of ultimately unsatisfactory metaphorising, Eco thus elects to attribute to art the ability to incorporate epistemological shifts: "The open work assumes the task of giving us an image of discontinuity. It does not narrate it; it *is* it." (Eco 1989: 90)

Eco's reflections on the open work of art represent an important pre–stage for the later post–modern accentuated theorisation of that increasingly essential entity — the observer. Even before the euphorically greeted installation of alleged or real 'interactive' possibilities, the 'emancipation of the observer' was decisively accentuated in terms of art theory. It appears to be a consequence of all metaphysical bonds of art disintegrating as well as of an 'erudite irony' that delights in contemporary mannerisms and succeeds in transcending the doctrines of the modern era in favour of polyvalence, inconsistency, and various types of ambiguities. Whether as a celebration of eclecticism or, stronger, as paying tribute to the indissolubility of the antagonism of codes and rhetoric, as a demand for immanence in which polyvalence persists intact albeit under the sign of 'the return of the sublime,' Jean–François Lyotard sees the emancipation of the observer from the work of art as marking a definitive turning point in the development of contemporary art and, therefore, also as a paradigm of a regenerated critical philosophy after the modern period, which he describes as having abandoned self–reflection and self–editing.

While preparing for the ground–breaking exhibition *Les Immatériaux* (*The Immaterials*, Paris 1984) Lyotard wrote the following:

> The purpose and even the destiny of artworks is questioned. The dominance of *techné* placed works of art under multiple regulations — that of the studio model, the schools and academies, shared taste among the aristocracy, a finiteness in art that had to do with illustrating the glory of a name, divine or human, and attaching to it the perfection of a cardinal virtue. The idea of the sublime put all of this harmony into disarray. (Lyotard 1984: 38f.)

Decisive was the new orientation on the recipient, the changeover from the work to the audience:

> Thoughts on art would no longer have much bearing on the dispatcher of artworks, whom we would leave to the solitude of genius, but on the recipients of these artworks. It would henceforth become necessary to analyse the ways in which audiences could be affected; how the recipient receives and experiences works of art; and how works of art are judged. This is how aesthetics, the analysis of the

> amateur's feelings, came to replace poetics and rhetoric, which were didactic forms intended specifically for the artist. The question was no longer: How does one make art? But: What does it mean to experience art? (Lyotard 1984: 39)

Thus, engaging with works of art in general is fraught with many difficulties for internal reasons; that is, because of the specific endeavours of modern artists and the corresponding qualities of their works. These difficulties are of the variety that are to be expected as well as those that come as a surprise; they may be part of exploring the rules of art or belong to the type that unceasingly seeks to redefine the limits of the rules. Firmly established conventions, developed over the course of centuries by small circles of art connoisseurs, render the notion plausible that art has an essence, conceived as its nature, and that this makes an appearance solely at the level of the individual artwork, but without really being comprehensible to the ordering and classifying intellect.

It follows from this that the work of art clearly and always has to be a provocation of the senses; it must preserve and attest the order of the harmonious interplay of senses and reason, and at the same time breach their fixation on the beautiful from time to time in order to attain the sphere of the transcendental, conceived as the sublimity of a world above human beings which is essentially inaccessible to formalistic orders. The sensual presence of the work delineates a realm of immanence but one that instrumental rules cannot be inscribed in. (Genette 1994; Genette 1997) These and many other difficulties have a hidden common denominator, a constitutive vanishing point: the well–established conviction that what art is comes about through the chain of generations of empirically existing artworks, and everything which can be made accessible to theoretical understanding, evidenced through the life of the works, has to be derived as an absolute principle from the singularities of their empiricism. This also has a trivial side: with the materiality of the things, what does not exist divests the rules of their objectifying opponent which renders them accessible to view for others.

Not trivial, however, is the reverse, which operates in this argument as subreption: only that which occurs as an empiric totality, a separately identifiable entity, or characterisable dimensions is meaningful. Following this assumption art's knowledge — in the double sense of *genetivus subjectivus* and *genetivus objectivus*; its cognitive achievement and its penetrating reflection — is reduced to perception. The plea for empiricism proceeds on the theoretical presumption that the reception and apprehension of works of art primarily, or even exclusively, takes place on the level of perception. In this way a type of human interpretation is privileged to such an extent that other modes of cognition are effectively dismissed.

However, if — and this approach follows the semiotic construction described here from which the theory model 'art' develops systematically, and which can be observed historically, step by step, in the 19th century on the trajectory of autonomisation of modern art and aesthetics as the reflection of execution and representation that ranges as far as self–positioning as genuine, irreducible cognitive faculty — if works of art can articulate and meet cognitive demands at all, then they definitely transcend the sphere of perception. If perception, communication, and consciousness are exclusively mechanisms of observing and interpreting, then there is no reason for a paradigmatic commitment of the interpretation of works of art to perception. It would then be perfectly appropriate to look at the effects exerted by art in the light of the theories of semiotics, rhetoric, and communication — as articulation of appropriation, as reception, but also from the prefabricated elements and intention of the influence of one or several combined drawing models/sign models on the perceptive apparatus of the observer of art.

In our analysis, in terms of creativity theory the extension of the work to include receptive dispositions and the entire arrangement of the effects on the observer is both central and significant; that is, the semiotic change in the relationship author–work–reception also changes the 'intention' that was formerly ascribed to the author, the genius of the invention and disposition of an idea and a work. At the modified level of polyvalent interpretants one can no longer understand 'intention' as the act or the mindset of the artistic consciousness with regard to an object that is to be formed and elevated to a sign of art. Intentionality and intention are not factors of consciousness, and particularly not of any individual mind.

Intentionality is a fabric of conditions that can be understood as interpretive formulations of solutions to problems the precepts of which are none other than the cultural conditions obtaining at a particular moment in time, in so far as these are conceptualised in terms of semiotics/sign theory and prepared as objects that have undergone a complex process which works towards polyvalence. Thus intentionality references more than a binary relation. In this context signs of art are intuitive and synthetic, but at all events they are communicative form precepts for possible interpretations of a cultural problem complex that can only be effected through construction (of a model, notion, anticipation), which in turn — obviously — cannot emerge without an interpretive definition. Intention is a process of mediating between these form precepts and problem precepts. This also means that nothing is more important or tangible for the development of art than that which is commonly known as 'tradition;' tradition as a model of the handing down of elements whose continuance cannot be changed through this instrumentalisation, indeed, cannot even be affected.

This process requires sustained objectifications not only of the aesthetic

components (taste, etc.) that can be installed in the work, but also of rules, codes, designations, and methods. Accordingly, the works of art and images can themselves at times be regarded as apparatuses that ensure contextual variations. (Reck 2003a: 224f.) The contexts are not created in a general history of culture or non–specific environment and then transferred to images; they are present in these, and not only as the condition of the possibility of actualisations for the outside, but are themselves an incorporation of it. It is for this reason that art can be considered as a medium of communication, which communicates through images and as images and not simply through its transmission and translation into verbalised content or gestures. This capacity leads to a specific 'linguisticality,' but it is by no means incomparable or confined to art. On the contrary: its particularity is especially suitable to elucidate what underlies all communicative processes that operate via strings of images and signs.

A further consequence results from this: the binding, multiple, flexible, and polyvalent relation between work, author, perception, and interests of the recipient is not only epistemically dominant but also in terms of the genesis of the work and the aesthetics of reception, has implications for the hitherto leading views concerning the artistic image and its mimetic ability with regard to its visual representation of reality. For this multiple relation can no longer be substantiated as the reference or representation for the model of identificatory vision, that is, the interrelation between the visible world and the visualisation of a world understood iconically and in respect thereof, is also no longer productive. Whereas Nelson Goodman critiqued this view of an iconic identity or 'strong reference' through deconstructing the concept of realism, (Goodman 1968: 27–43) the break–up of the synthesis between the visual order and the visualisation of a depiction by means of the epistemically false suggestivity of identificatory vision leaves an empty space behind, which categorically forces the reference to be abandoned.

The 'painting as a window,' a stereotype of artistic design praxis ever since Leon Battista Alberti, but also the contemporary historically most 'advanced interpretation,' gave way to a complementarity of the constructive setting–in–motion by means of increasingly polyvalent interpretants. This results in permanent opportunities for a stronger, meta–theoretically more significant feedback between the recipient's horizon and the opening of the work. *The indeterminate appears to be nothing less than the substitute/proxy for the referentially vacated empty space*, and marks a complementarity that is at least ambivalent. With this the process of encoding and decoding the elements of the work takes up the central position in aesthetic reception.

In light of the evolution of the indeterminate opening of the work of art, the models of the genius of the artist and the nobility of the image of the artist in the coordinates of mimesis and virtuoso illusionism, ap-

pear obsolete. Historical interest in the artist as genius gives way to the individualisation of concepts, the multiplicity of artist–roles, as well as the expectation of a performative presence of the artist in the work for the purpose of continual and explicit conveyance of the 'authentic' by the artist. Not least the generative, creative process, the development of artistic praxis, is also opened polyvalently just like the models of expression, the concepts of the work and its effect. The idea that works are adapted to a certain form of praxis is an essential prerequisite for modern art. However, their particularity, which combines exemplarily with the strengths of the individual artist, has always been absorbed and synthetically reinforced in universalist poetics and sign theories, that is, in a modern period/modern art that is generalisable. And now the empty space of the shattered reference is assumed by the 'register,' as a linguistic term and a generative concept.

For our purposes here, Roland Barthes noted, decisively with regard to an a priori of the work, the medium, that authorship is important per se and the individual author is a dispositionally integrating factor for the unity of language, writing, and signs: "Once the Author is distanced, the claim to 'decipher' a text becomes entirely futile. To assign an Author to a text is to impose a brake on it, to furnish it with a final signified, to close writing." (Barthes 2008: 124) Thus the open work systematically rejects the last *signifié*. 'Reading' must now be done without either *telos* or a vanishing point. The implications in a creativity theory context can be expressed in the following formula: For the strong author of a 'closed' work of art, the more emphatic the author the stronger the text; for the weak author of an 'open' work of art, the less visible the author the more open the text.

Now it is no longer the author but the web of signs, their linking and flowing, that in the final analysis is decisive. According to Barthes the written, hitherto the most influential medium of authorship– and subject–determined language, has been replaced by *écriture* and inscription. Inscribing permanence arises in a new way. Or at least texts and images from authorially generated works do not mean the retroactive notations of speaking or living that has gone before, but are and remain the decisive act of writing itself. An authority outside of the text or image does not exist.

Once again this results in a shift — this time of greater magnitude — of the coordinates between medium and author. Using the cited example of language, in an incisive fashion that has frequently been misunderstood, Roland Barthes drew consequences for all concepts of 'the work' from the circumstance that the form and process of semioses, language, image, and medium now implement the determinations and indeterminations in a work and relegate the author to being merely a co–participating organ or organon of language. However, this does not effectuate constraints on nor does it mean an affront to the authority of the author, which is often

accentuated incorrectly. Rather, as Felix Philipp Ingold has explained with admirable clarity on a number of occasions, the author has undergone a poetic radicalisation through becoming aware that he/she is the decisive material of the linguistic, visual, or media process. (Ingold 1992: 345–436; Ingold 2004: 39–81, 299–373)

The 'media–tised' author and the open work of art are two sides of the same coin in a process where a shift in the poetic construction and poetological constitution of a work is effectuated by the reader or observer. The self–understanding of the author is as a rite of passage and as custodian of the realisations that run through him/her:

> The disappearance of the author consists in the fact that the mute things of the extra–literary world are no longer discussed in the transitive form, as in the styles of realism; rather, they are made to speak through the intransitive form by the author adapting himself to them, in a sense lending them his voice. (Ingold, Steiger 1996: 112)

The poetological arguments of the open work of art confer an importance on the recipient that cannot be mistaken for the obsolete view of a sheer illimitable interpretation by polyvalent interpretants. It concerns a media–related reflection, which has turned away from the instrumental artist who knows and calculates everything beforehand, and now sees the realisation of a work as consisting in the artist merely divesting him or herself of what had been thought up ahead.

It is in this post–classical aesthetics that we find the root of the tendency to valorise the observer–reader. This is not random; it belongs to the poetological *disposif* of the development of art since the late 19th century.

> One does not have to go so far as Maurice Blanchot, for whom the recipient of an artwork is actually its creator. The process of the creation of a work, its endless coming–into–being, would then be left entirely to the observer or reader. "The reader makes the work; in the act of reading it, he creates it; he is its true author." [Blanchot 1980: 298] Thus according to this the 'true author,' *l'auteur veritable*, is the active and creative 'art participant' who realises the meaning of the work, or the work as constitution of meaning, whereas the *actual* author, disempowered by Blanchot, is designated as the person who keeps the work and its meaning in the subjunctive open for the recipient as an artistic text. (Ingold, Steiger 1996: 165)

Yet this is only justified because in the text or the image the organisation of signs is designed with respect to this openness. It is this that corresponds to the differentiated intention of the 'open artist.'

> In general poetic discourse tends to avoid unambiguity, to obscure meaning, and to weaken statement and message or avoid them altogether. However, when meaning vanishes, there is a growing need for interpretation, and therefore, the authority of

> the reader increases, who then assumes responsibility for the formation of meaning and thus for the ultimate justification of the work as open and non–conclusive. (Ingold, Steiger 1996: 152)

The media that transport these linguistic, visual, or media–generated processes, however, are no longer generalisable, only determinable situationally and casuistically on a case–by–case basis. Artistic creativity, viewed along the trajectory of this decisive dynamic, necessarily realises itself from a certain point of development (the attainment of a certain maturity) in the installation of the random. No wonder, then, that chance has become the logo of the modern age/modern art. Art still — this is the lesson learnt from the fact that it continues to be the paradigmatic field of creativity — metonymically adheres to its own initial conditions and refuses to admit the iconic reference, the metaphysics of the referent, as well as the self–sufficient, recursive, non–finite metaphor.

5. Creativity as a Paradox and the Re–orientation of Art as an Epistemological Basis for Exploring the New: A Brief Outlook

If we draw conclusions or 'lessons from history' as well as from the above outlined transition from modern to post–modern art theory against the background of the 'open' work of art, and if we give our findings more pointed emphasis, then it can be said that:

a) The expectations placed in the 'creative' have been detached from the arts and have become broadened, habitualised, and standardised in everyday life, whereby the creative is now a resource for social, semiotic, and media distortions/registrations of all kinds; (Heubach 1988) the role of the aesthetic recipient of artworks, which was continually enhanced and expanded in the 20th century, is the most important prerequisite for this; the sphere of art is increasingly becoming a resource for everyday stylisations, encodings, and recodings in mass culture;
b) The question posed by the arts as to the intrapsychological vitalisation of the individual has passed over to reflections on innovations with respect to the sciences; that is, to changed horizons of expectation; (Hofstadter 1995) in line with this is the historically earlier, thus definitely preparatory, transition from the work to the observer as the most important poetological, not only interpretive but also constructive authority;
c) It is not a matter of an intrinsic order that has split off from all other orders; order and disorder are relative and aspectually connectable;

> they can be valid situatively as arguments and as heuristics; they cannot be separated clearly or ontologically. For the issue is always the re–organisation of hybrids of order and disorder; (Bohm 2004: 8–21) in this view creativity is not something substantial but a practice and a method that one can understand in the focus of the visual arts as ambivalence–stabilisation for a time, integrated in a process of de– and re–structuring, de– and re–contextualising, de–hierarchisation and re–hierarchisation; creativity is tied to structure as well as being momentarily an enemy of habitualisation; however, it is not evidence of the absence of order per se. (Bohm 2004: 11)

Therefore, indicators of creative processes are: disregard for perceptions and evaluations that were hitherto applicable, deferment for a period of time, virtualisation, trials and rehearsals. "Only when obscurity and ambiguity prevail does one remain alert [. . .] as in a labyrinth [. . .]. Only then does one ponder *what comes next* instead of asking about origin and meaning." (Ingold, Steiger 1996: 153)

For this the experiments of the arts are still one of the primary resources, whose fundamental function is not distinguishable from the not–yet–paradigmatic regulated and reglemented processes of basic research in the sciences. (Kuhn 1962; Kuhn 1977) However, the paradox remains that is always a hallmark of creativity, the new, the original, the surprising, the continuative. "Indeed, to define originality would in itself be a contradiction, since whatever action can be defined in this way must evidently henceforth be unoriginal." (Bohm 2004: 4) Yet as the visual arts possess outstanding experience with such self–contradictoriness, with the transition of works and hybrids to paradoxes and processes, they continue to be a framework of orientation as well as a resource for the issues discussed here regarding a creativity–theoretical irresolvable ambivalence of the work of art. In the field of the arts the only danger factor is the intentional consigning of practices to quiescence in overarching fetishes or end products.

Paradoxes cannot be avoided, only demonstrated, staged, or 'completed/processed.' On a temporal level it is paradoxical to think simultaneously of before and after as reverse sides of something. When paradoxes are irresolvable, then each paradox is also a starting point for modifying the edifice of knowledge. The transition from paradoxical to hybrid — and, vice versa, in the other direction — is unavoidable and characteristic of new play spaces for artistic experiments. The evolvement of the paradoxes of culture in the form of theatricalisation is without doubt connected to the crisis of representation, the crisis of certain aspects of signs.

The transition from paradoxical to hybrid, which is viewed here as inevitable, suggests that the authority of the observation should be abandoned

and the participation in changeable parameters of stagings/*mise en scènes* should be instated in place of a dissociated sphere of non–tangible processes. Thus the place of registering distinctions should be taken by experimental (and interactive) action from which ever more distinctions emerge than from those that have just been observed and can be organised within an isolable sphere of objects. Ambivalence does not come about of its own accord, but only as a dynamic and property of real action in the field of experiments itself, which in the area of the visual arts are always at once theory experiments, conjoined with the design or *disegno* since time immemorial.

reck2@khm.de

Translated by Gloria Custance

Bibliographical References

Barthes, R., 2008, *The Death of the Author* (1968), in N. Badmington, J. Thomas (eds.), *The Routledge Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*, London, New York, Routledge, pp. 121–125.

Baxandall, M., 1972, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth–century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Blanchot, M., 1980, *La Part du Feu*, Paris, Gallimard.

Blumenberg, H., 1981, *"Nachahmung der Natur." Zur Vorgeschichte der Idee des schöpferischen Menschen*, in *Wirklichkeiten, in denen wir leben*, Stuttgart, Reclam, pp. 55–103.

Bohm, D., 2004, *On Creativity* (1998), with a new preface by L.L. Bear, edited by L. Nichol, London, Routledge.

Coleman, J., 1991, *Das Bleichen des Gedächtnisses. St. Bernhards monastische Mnemotechnik*, in A. Haverkamp, R. Lachmann (eds.), *Gedächtniskunst. Raum–Bild–Schrift. Studien zur Mnemotechnik*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, pp. 207–230.

Eco, U., 1989, *The Open Work* (1962), translation A. Cancogni, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press.

Genette, G., 1994, *L'Œuvre de l'art. Tome 1: Immanence et transcendance*, Paris, Seuil.

——, 1997, *L'Œuvre de l'art. Tome 2: La relation ésthetique*, Paris, Seuil.

Goodman, N., 1968,*Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, Indianapolis, The Bobbs–Merrill Company.

Guilford, J.P., 1950, *Creativity*, "American Psychologist," 5, no. 9, pp. 444–454.

——, 1968, *Intelligence, Creativity and Their Educational Implications*, San Diego (CA), Knapp.

——, 1977, *Way beyond the IQ: Guide to Improving Intelligence and Creativity*, Buffalo (NY), Creative Education Foundation.

Guilford, J.P., Christensen, P.R., Kettner, N.W., 1959, *A Factor–analytic Study across the Domains of Reasoning, Creativity, and Evaluation*, Washington (DC), American Psychological Association.

Hauser, A., 1964, *Der Ursprung der modernen Kunst und Literatur*, München, Beck.

Heikamp, D., Winner, M. (eds.), 1997/1998, *Der Maler Federico Zuccari: Ein römischer Virtuoso von europäischem Ruhm*, "Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana," 32, supplement.

Heubach, F.W., 1988, *Das Konstrukt 'Kreativität' oder Ein Ideal aus der Kartoffelkiste*, "Zwischenschritte. Beiträge zu einer morphologischen Psychologie," 7, no. 1, pp. 31–41.

Hocke, G.R., 1987, *Die Welt als Labyrinth. Manierismus in der europäischen Kunst und Literatur*, edited by C. Grützmacher, Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt.

Hofmann, W., 2000, *Caspar David Friedrich. Naturwirklichkeit und Kunstwahrheit*, München, Beck.

Hofstadter, D.R., The Fluid Research Group, 1995, *Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies*, New York, Basic Books.

Ingold, F.P., 1992, *Der Autor am Werk. Versuche über literarische Kreativität*, München, Hanser.

——, 2004, *Im Namen des Autors. Arbeiten für die Kunst und Literatur*, München, Fink.

Steiger, B., 1996, *Unter sich*, Graz, Droschl.

Kemp, W., 1974, *Disegno. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Begriffs zwischen 1547 und 1607*, "Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft," 19, pp. 219–240.

Kris, E., Kurz, O., 1980, *Die Legende vom Künstler. Ein geschichtlicher Versuch* (1934), Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp.

Kuhn, T.S., 1962, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

——, 1977, *The Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Locher, H., 2001, *Kunstgeschichte als historische Theorie der Kunst 1750–1950*, München, Fink.

Lyotard, J.–F., 1984, *The Sublime and the Avant–garde*, "Art forum," 22, no. 8, pp. 36–43.

Pevsner, N., 1940, *Academies of Art. Past and Present*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Picht, G., 1987, *Kunst und Mythos* (1986), Stuttgart, Klett–Cotta.

Reck, H.U., 1999, *Aleatorik in der bildenden Kunst*, in P. Gendolla, T. Kamphusmann (eds.), *Die Künste des Zufalls*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, pp. 158–195.

Reck, H.U., 2003a, *Kunst als Medientheorie. Vom Zeichen zur Handlung*, München, Fink.

———-, 2003b, *Vom regulären Spiel der Einbildungskräfte zur Suggestivität des offenen Kunstwerks, Aspekte zu einer Kunstgeschichte des Improvisierens*, in Walter Fähndrich (ed.), *Improvisation V*, Winterthur, Amadeus.

———, 2004, *Singularität und Sittlichkeit. Die Kunst Aldo Walkers in bildrhetorischer und medienphilosophischer Perspektive*, Würzburg, Königshausen und Neumann.

———, 2010, *Spiel Form Künste. Zu einer Kunstgeschichte des Improvisierens*, edited by B. Ternes, Hamburg, Philo Fine Arts.

Reynolds, J., 1842, *The Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, edited by J. Burnet, London, Carpenter.

Saxl, F., 1957, *Science and Art in the Italian Renaissance*, in *Lectures*, London, Warburg Institute.

Vasari, G., 1907, *Vasari on Technique, Being the introduction to the three arts of design, architecture, sculpture and painting, prefixed to the Lives of the most excellent painters, sculptors and architects* [1550], translated by L.S. Maclehose, edited by G. Baldwin Brown, New York, Dutton, London, Dent.

von Hentig, H., 1998, *Kreativität. Hohe Erwartungen an einen schwachen Begriff*, München, Hanser.

Wick, R., 1982, *Bauhaus–Pädagogik*, Köln, DuMont.

Wittkower, M., Wittkower, R., 1963, *Born under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists. A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution*, New York, Random House.

Yates, F.A., 1947, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century*, London, Warburg Institute.