

Christmas letter 2016

Dear friends of the Visual Arts Section,

Again a fulfilled year is coming to an end.

That which one imagined would never happen, did happen: Donald Trump coming in from the right wing was elected to become the next US president. In that experts and polls got it all wrong, you remembered „Brexit“. It seems as if a new era called the „post-truth era“ was born with this election. But what does „post truth“ really mean? If one puts it simply, candidates talk about political thinking and action, with no concern about facts and truth. This is the opposite of the principles of the age of enlightenment. Instead of using facts to convey insight, people lie, deceive and manipulate. So it is not surprising that the Oxford Dictionary chose „post-truth“ as the word of the year 2016.

Marina Abramovich, the serbian performance artist told us in an interview shown by „3Sat Kulturzeit“, a cultural TV magazine on 9th December: *„Donald Trump has more to do with us than we are prepared to accept. There's nothing wrong with Trump. He is as he is. But it's us who are up the wrong street. We are to blame, because we elected him to office ...“*

In doing so Marina Abramovich throws us back on ourselves. What can we do? Could we investigate where and how this hardening plays a role within ourselves? How can we contribute to the state of the world and contribute to its healing? Is working artistically a factual contribution?

Rudolf Steiner says in a lecture in June 1914: (17.06.1914 GA286. The house of speech). *„However much study may be given to the elimination of crime and wrong-doing from the world, true redemption, the turning of evil into good, will in future depend upon whether true art is able to pour a spiritual flow into the hearts and souls of men. When men's hearts and souls are surrounded by the achievements of true architecture, sculpture and the like, they will cease to lie; and if they are untruthfully inclined; they will cease to disturb the peace of their fellow men. Edifices and buildings will begin to speak. They will begin to speak a language, which today is hardly imaginable.“*

That means that art has an important task. We need it to act as an intermediary to the realities of the spiritual world. In seeking truth, art can dissolve hardening and bring dead zones to life. Art is capable of revealing another reality.

The Art Section will start a new initiative in the in autumn 2017 to come nearer to the sources of „the New Art“, which Rudolf Steiner left us as a heritage. „Art at the Goetheanum - Rudolf Steiner's Architecture, Painting and Sculpture.“

Here an extract from the article I wrote for the Christmas number of Anthroposophy Worldwide:

„(...) The artistic study year which will begin in Autumn 2017 is designed as an experiment. Its aim is to enhance the discussion of Rudolf Steiner's work in the context of contemporary art, because this is – in my view – essential, not only for the Visual Arts Section but also for the development of the School of Spiritual Science as a whole. I hope that the course will breathe new life into the Visual Arts at the Goetheanum – with exciting in-depth discussions, ideas and approaches. We wish for artists and designers, who come with their own questions and research ideas and who are keen to further their art and would like to share their experiences with others.

Perhaps we could create a lively campus, where active artists and a diversity of ways of working can come together, exchange their views without prejudice and especially without the tiresome query as to what is really meant by anthroposophical art and who might represent it in the right and proper way.“

You will find more information and an exact curriculum from the end of January onwards on our website: www.sbk.goetheanum.org.

If you want particular information about formalities and costs etc please turn to our website menu: „Studium und Weiterbildung“ or contact us at: sbk@goetheanum.org

In reviewing the past year certain conferences come to mind especially those concerning „The Sources of Art“ IV, in May and V, in November. The theme of the November conference dealt with the planetary forces and their consonance, in May it was about painting and its development. This is why we invited three artists to allow us insight into their work.

Another important event was the world conference at Michaelmas, to which all the 11 Sections of the School for Spiritual Science together with the executive Council invited members to participate. Christine Gruwez, who took part in the group around the Visual Arts Section:

„What moves us today to find new forms of expression? It's neither the form nor the substance, but the relationship between the two which has changed. In the old mysteries there was a clearly defined connection, then an inversion took place. Now it's the individual artist as well as the artistic process process defining the work. Every artist experiences the tension between what has been expressed in form and how something new might enter the world. (...)

Today the development of art has reached its final destination. One can hardly find a relationship between substance and form. The substance remains neutral and waits to take on new forms. The coming into being is the potential for developing essence. What we have to develop today is inter-human relationships and that is where we see the future of art.“

A selection from the Section work:

- Workshops about the second building and observations led by Alexander Schaumann and lectures by Peter Ferger.
- Seminars about the creation of plants colours with Robert Wroblewski.
- Workshop on the theme „as you do to me, I will do to you“ with Heide Nixdorf, Reinhold Fäth and Ronald Templeton. How do you design the world around you, in textiles, in jewellery.

- About the moral impact of art and architecture. The 2015 summer seminar about the etheric forces with Johannes Schuster (Australia) was carried a step further.
- Several exhibitions: For example, there was an exhibition with 80 sculptures by Gerd and Chrysanthus Hellmers from Badenweiler/Lipburg.
- The series of Monday talks with mainly regional artists were continued
- Workshops for invited guests on the original drawings by Rudolf Steiner, in cooperation with the Goetheanum documentation

You can find text and photographs showing the conferences and workshops on our newly designed website, which is intended to show the present and forthcoming events of the Section: www.sbk.goetheanum.org.

We look forward to your interest in our work in your participation in exhibitions, conferences and in section workgroups.

I wish all of you a really true and quiet Christmas with a lot of inspirations full of light and peace for the new year 2017.

Marianne Schubert
Section leader



Abbildungen von links: Motiv des Flyers „Umraumgestaltung im 3. Jahrtausend“ von Gerald Wagner, Skulpturen von Gerhard und Chrysanthus Helmers.

Images from left to right: Flyer motif: „How to shape your surroundings in the third millennium“, by Gerald Wagner. Sculptures by Gerhard and Chrysanthus Helmers.



Abbildungen von oben: Motive der Flyer der Sektionstagungen „Blick ins Atelier“, Foto von Otto Rietmann, Werke von Hannes Weigert und Torsten Steen "Da muss man in der Ebene das Rätsel des Raumes lösen." *Images from the top. Flyer motif of the Section Conference „Atelier Insight“, Foto Otto Rietmann. Paintings by Hannes Weigert and Torsten Steen. "One would have to solve the riddle of space in the plain."*