

Section Report

No: 05

Easter 2014

Dear Colleagues in the Art Section worldwide,

It is with pleasure that I write you once more, in this our Art Section Easter letter. In Europe we experience a fabulous spring, in these days of Lent. Nature is awakening and it truly nourishes ones soul. Birds singing, flowers blooming, the Goetheanum cherry trees are in full blossom, attracting thousands of insects. And at the same time one feels the approach of the holy week, culminating with Good Friday and Easter Sunday. When you read this, we will be celebrating the festival of Resurrection, and begin the 50 days towards Whitsun.

It is now that we prepare for our Conference at the Goetheanum, Ascension--May 29 till June 1.

This year we will focus on the forces of life and death, and their meaning for art. It is a challenge to see if we can manage to find the significance of those forces for our work. It can be looked at from a variety of perspectives. Every living process beholds the promise of death within it, and every dying includes rebirth. Every day has to end in a sunset leading to night and every night ends with the rising of the sun. Youth ends, adolescence begins, noise ends in silence. Every beginning has its end, every end has its beginning.

What is the power of those forces, and how do they work into our work? In a way, every new work begins with a process of dying. When I carve the stone with the first strokes of the chisel, it feels like damaging. This stone has been lying on the ground for thousands of years, formed by forces way greater than mine. And now I start working, trying to shape it into a form, to give it significance. It feels like a dance together in a 'ménage a trois': me, the stone and its future form. And so something new can grow. The sculpture that first was in the sphere above my mind, hardly noticeable but tenderly knocking on my awareness, now leaves that sphere and comes to life in matter.

The conference will take up questions that are able to strengthen our awareness about these forces of life and death, and see if those realms are able to add extra qualities to our process of making art.

We have the desire to bring "young forces" into our Section. Therefore, as you know by the invitational flyer you received, all participants are asked to bring along young colleagues to the Ascension Conference, at least one. A lot of people know about our Section work, but do not seem to find a way in. We would like to also invite them, and are able to help financially so

that this opportunity is not disturbed by means of finances.

As you know, since March this spring, Marianne Schubert has taken up the leadership of the Section of Visual Arts. Marianne has taken up the full load of work that belongs to the concern of the Section. Therewith she is also a full member of the Goetheanum Leadership (Board + Section leaders) and as such in responsibility of managing the Goetheanum and the Anthroposophical Society. It is a truly courageous task, which she has approached with great effort. Marianne started off with the visit of schools, and leading members within our Section. These first months will be used as a time to get to know the ways, people, habits, history and culture of our Section. Marianne immediately is involved with several groups and fields of work around the Goetheanum. Many talks, questions, initiatives and new ways of working come her way. We wish Marianne a very good start, and a future full of new space, forms, colors.

So again it is a time of change and things will look different within a year; for now nobody knows in which manner. Luckily we are on good speaking terms, and the transition time (March - September) will show some of those changes. As for one: this will be the last Section letter in the old way. It has been there for a little more than two years now. It proved to be a certain channel for communication, and it will find its way in the new future too.

Another change is that the Section Council will step back after Ascension too. Over the last years we coordinated the Section in good harmony, together with Christiane Schwarzweller, Frieder Löbert, Martin Zweifel, Michel Howard and myself. Of course we will be in the background, but we also have to make room and space for new forms. In this place again I want to thank these members of the Council for all the effort they have put in. It has been a great pleasure to work together.

Also I want to thank all other colleagues in the Section with whom I have been able to work. As I have always stressed: it is a work we only are able to do together, and we would not want to have it any other way.

Rik ten Cate.

Biographical sketch

of David Adams

Although I am now (a young) 65 years old, it is only in the last few years that, in addition to being an art historian and theorist, I have begun to think of myself as a visual artist – primarily in “newer” mediums like performance art, installation, and visual music (“light art”). However, I have been involved with related “artistic activities” off and on for decades. Here I will undertake a selective review from the point of view of “myself-as-a creative-artist.”

For my first eighteen years I was raised and educated in Lutheran schools in conservative Fort Wayne, Indiana. No one in my family was artistically inclined or interested, except for one aunt who was both a musician and painter, and our family visits to her house had a certain influence on me. Musically, I studied clarinet, played in the school band, and sang in both school and church choirs.

In secondary school 1963-1967 I was more interested in the literary arts than the visual arts, but in retrospect some of my activities there were relevant to my recent work in performance art. In addition to writing, costume-designing, and acting in extended, imaginative, humorous skits for sports pep rallies, school parties, audio recordings, and club meetings on various themes (The Odyssey, Batman, Noah and the Ark, etc.), I also wrote and presented to the entire school a plotless, avant-garde religious drama concerned with the contemporary meaning of the crucifixion. I also helped conceive, make, and serve as a “custodian” of the “Blue Weenie,” a large cloth-and-wire “hot dog” painted blue that was marched out by four of us in uniform to music (the Oscar Meier Wiener

commercial theme song) before every football and basketball game and presented as a “magic good-luck totem” to the audience. I should also mention the influence of attending a live “happening” (involving actors, costumes, film, props, live painting, etc.) presented by a small society of contemporary artists in Fort Wayne.

My undergraduate college experience took place at a very innovative and unusual private school called New College in Sarasota, Florida, during the height of the youth counterculture of drugs, sex, and rock ‘n’ roll. With only a minimal required curriculum (which included classes on philosophical aesthetics and the 20th-century development of the visual arts, music, literature, and film), this rather exclusive private college allowed students to specialize early (mostly in philosophy and psychology in my case), using a lot of independent study working one-on-one with professors, and gave students a huge amount of freedom in both social and academic life (for example, co-ed housing). There I was probably more interested in music than the visual arts, although, again, some activities helped form my present visual arts sensibilities. There both I and many of my friends seemed to seek ways to bring art and life closer together, to “live artistically.”

My first college roommate was an amateur art dealer from New York City and through him I learned much about the business of buying and selling works of art. Adjacent to the campus was the Ringling Museum of Art with its wide-ranging collection and traveling exhibitions (free admission for students). Adjacent on another side was the Ringling Brothers Circus Museum with a winter school for circus performers (clowns, acrobats, etc.). This was an unusual juxtaposition of influences from a later visual arts point of view! I studied musical composition my first year, and there was a strong musical presence at New College. Along with an annual classical music festival, I once was able to experience a very unusual concert by John Cage,

incorporating sounds from the street outside the theater as well as improvised sounds. I also studied jazz music, played clarinets for two years in a jazz band, and became immersed in the radical "free jazz" sound.

During college I was very active then in political causes (anti-war, anti-draft, civil rights, environmental), which led to several colorful examples of "guerilla theater" (including one "Yippie" event involving a gorilla costume and a live pig at the inauguration of President Richard Nixon in Washington, D.C. and one involving black costuming, coordinated silent group actions, and a poetic flyer for a speech of Vice-President Spiro Agnew in Tampa. I also attended a number of large outdoor rock festivals (including Woodstock), which also added a certain amount of visual creativity to my repertoire. Without yet knowing what "performance art" was, I presented at least three pieces related to social life on campus. One, called the "New Barbarian Book Burning," was a fiery outdoor commentary on the over-valuation of intellectual knowledge. Another was an elaborate evening ceremony related to the imaginary wizardly figure of "Capt. Nazz" (title and narrative subject of the college newspaper), involving costumed actors, music, sailing a candle-lit boat out into Sarasota Bay and back, chanting, and scaling the top of a tall bayside Ringling classical mansion.



One semester I helped to start a voluntary "free college" and "free store"

within New College, as well as editing an "alternative" newspaper titled "No. 9" that featured unusual layout designs and illustrations by several artist friends. The "free college" evolved into a group living-learning experiment (called "Freeco") where 13 -14 students lived together in one dormitory section. Among other group activities, we several times painted improvised "murals" on the walls and ceilings of both dormitory and public rooms at the college (I still have film footage of my girlfriend painting one wall with her hair!). Using closet doors borrowed from all of the other rooms in the dormitory, my roommate and I re-designed our room into an elaborate two-level maze with various objects and "stations" to meet on its lower level. At this time (1969-1970) I also read part of the book *Expanded Cinema* by Gene Youngblood, which helped introduce me verbally to some of the new, experimental, time-involved visual art modes, like performance art, installation, and "visual music."

At New College I first read a little about Rudolf Steiner. However, I first ended up a year or two later becoming a follower of the Indian boy "Guru Maharaji," traveling to India, and then joining an "educational ashram" in Denver, Colorado, for almost 3 years. At several Maharaji festivals I was able to experience a different kind of large-scale visual art (colorful devotional stage decoration and lighting effects as well as music), especially in India where I attended a huge outdoor festival with more than 1 million participants (more than twice as large as Woodstock!). Our ashram started an elementary school (Unity School) in Denver based on Waldorf principles, which we were learning about from several visiting Waldorf education. I taught music, visual arts, and other special subjects at the school. During this time I had my first experiences with traditional anthroposophical visual arts in the form of painting workshops with Anne Stockton in Colorado in 1974 and 1975 as well as courses on painting (Richard Hicks), music (Graham Jackson), eurythmy (Joanna van Vliet),

an architecture lecture (Walter Leicht), and a demonstration of Steiner's "Light Course" experiments with colored shadows - all in Spring Valley, New York, in 1974.

I soon realized that my true path was anthroposophy and moved to Detroit, Michigan, to both work for and study at the Waldorf Institute there for three years (1975-1978). This involved taking a year of "Painting for Teachers" and other painting courses from Barbara Glas as well as artistic workshops from various visiting teachers: sculpture with Eckhart Dönges), mural painting with Arne Klingborg, choreographed "movement stories" with Molly von Heider, etc. I also decided that I would train to become a Waldorf high school "aesthetics" and art history teacher in literary, visual, and musical arts. I undertook this intensively for two years as part of my unusual doctoral program in "Art History Education" with the Union Institute of Ohio, receiving my Ph.D. in 1978. I also taught several of these art history blocks at the Detroit Waldorf High School. Teaching art history seemed (and still seems) to me a particularly effective way to convey to almost anyone otherwise difficult anthroposophical ideas about the evolution of human consciousness as well as alternative approaches to the visual arts.

In 1979 my new wife Jane and I moved to the Threefold Community in Spring Valley (Chestnut Ridge), New York. During 1978 and 1979 I also undertook two extended trips to Europe - both in connection with my activities in the Youth Section, for which I also edited an unusually designed and illustrated newsletter, *Orc/Ark*. In Europe I specifically visited art and architectural works in England, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy (my "Grand Tour"). When my money unexpectedly ran out in Munich in 1979, In Dornach I visited the studios of many anthroposophical artists, but my most important experience came from meeting Albert and Erika von Baravalle and learning much more about Steiner's architectural work.

Fired by this new architectural knowledge, upon my return to Spring Valley I wrote three articles about Steiner's "organic functionalist" approach to design, engaged in a campaign to save or move a threatened 1927 carriage house anthroposophically designed by Fritz Westhoff, and



arranged and managed (with help from many friends) a North American tour of the large Järna exhibition, "Rudolf Steiner's Architectural Impulse." The tour consisted of ten showings from 1982 to 1985 (including the National Academy of Design, Harvard University, Rhode Island School of Design, Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, and the Washington University Art Gallery) with some accompanying lectures by Hagen Biesantz (at the Guggenheim Museum in New York), Rex Raab, Arne Klingborg, and others.

While in Spring Valley, I worked for a couple of years at the oldest stained glass and decorative arts studio in the U.S., the J & R Lamb Studios founded 1857. There I not only interacted with the artists who designed and undertook craftwork for the studio (including some who were anthroposophists), but I also researched the history of the studio and its artists, eventually publishing six articles about them in journals and books. I helped organize and participated in monthly meetings of a group of anthroposophical artists ("The Design Group"), which explored various aspects of anthroposophical design and art, with the idea of forming a possible interior design business.

With Michael Howard (whom I knew from our earlier work with the Youth Section) I co-taught for a year an

"artistic introductory course" for the "Foundation Year" program at the Threefold Educational Foundation. We experimented with experiential, artistic ways to present fundamental anthroposophical ideas to students. One practice, which we adapted from earlier youth work and from Marjorie Spock's writings on "Goethean conversation," we called "artistic conversation." This was a somewhat disciplined approach to group conversation with the idea of arriving as a group at deeper understandings of our topic out of the conversational process, considering it as a step toward a future form of "social art."

In 1981, in connection with the first-ever national conference of the Anthroposophical Society in America (which I also helped organize), Michael and I curated the first-ever exhibition (with catalog) of the history and range of anthroposophical art in North America, featuring works by 45 artists. Just after this I assisted Peter Stebbing in establishing and operating the "Gerard-Wagner-style" Threefold Painting School there. I mainly did administration and taught art history classes.

I left Spring Valley in the summer of 1986 to begin my university teaching career in art history at the University of Montana. This was followed by one-year teaching stints at the University of Minnesota at Morris (where I also managed the art gallery and gave talks on the various exhibiting artists), California State University at Fresno, and the University of Nevada at Reno. I gradually came to specialize in modern and contemporary American and German art. Realizing by 1991 that the field of art history was unusually overcrowded and competitive, I decided to return to Waldorf school teaching. Becoming a class teacher for three years and School Administrator for one, I had a rich variety of experiences, including many uses of the arts to support the education of the children, as well as events at school festivals, which could be related to my later work in performance art.

After my Waldorf educational experiences (9 years in all), I found my present employment teaching history of art at Sierra College in California in 1996. A couple of years before this I had begun to participate in efforts to form a "branch" of the Art Section in North America, which was finally realized at a conference in 1994 in Spring Valley with Christian Hitsch present. In 1998 I took over the editing of the English-language *Art Section Newsletter* from Maggie Salter, eventually sharing those duties with Marion Briggs and Gertraud Goodwin until last year.

It was at the large Allegheny Park Youth Conference in Pennsylvania in 1978 that I was first introduced to the artwork of Joseph Beuys through a slide presentation by a young student from Colorado. The next year I visited the large Beuys retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, and since then have been studying, writing, and lecturing about his varied artwork in both anthroposophical and mainstream artworld settings, particularly from the point of view of his ways of using anthroposophical understandings.

My art history research, teaching, and writing had made me very aware of many modes of artistic expression and theoretical viewpoints arising since the 1960s/1970s that seemed to have been completely unknown and ignored by anthroposophical artists. These included the development of the more-or-less new artistic forms of process art, installation, performance art, conceptual art, earth art (also called land art, site art, environmental art, etc.), and "visual music." Also steadily developing were a variety of uses for computers and digital imagery in the visual arts. In the 1980s and 1990s the overwhelming influence of Postmodernism as both art theory and artistic expressions forcibly captured my attention. I began to research it and try to relate at least some of its forms to anthroposophical approaches and ideas. I began to see some strong connections between certain aspects of

(non-materialistic) postmodernism and some key, but perhaps neglected, philosophical ideas of Steiner. My creative works from recent years are mainly attempts to give a contemporary artistic expression to living ideas from Rudolf Steiner as well as create artistic manifestations of some of Steiner's more neglected artistic ideas. For example, I have been involved in recent efforts in America to try to develop Steiner's unfulfilled 1918 initiative with Jan Stuten to create a new colored "light-play-art" as an alternative to the cinema.

Let me begin describing some more recent works with an example of one of my occasional "social sculpture" or guerilla theater political actions. On February 3, 1991, in connection with the "Great Basin Green Alliance" (a predecessor of the Green Party in the U.S.), I designed a protest action against the first U.S. war involving Kuwait and Iraq. It was called a "Funeral March for Peace in the Middle East," but I tend to think of it as "Action Black." It consisted of approximately fifty persons wearing black armbands or other black clothing, holding black flags, bearing a mock black coffin, and rhythmically beating on black metal barrels labeled "Oil" along with signs reading "No Blood for Oil," etc. The event began at a cemetery at the north edge of Reno, Nevada, and marched in a line a couple of miles into downtown Reno, where a rally with speeches and music was held. A theme of one of the



speeches was how the high-tech war that was killing thousands of innocent persons in Iraq and Kuwait was the path of the (first) Bush Administration from life to the cemetery (death), whereas our march, following the path

of peace, led away from the cemetery to the realm of life. Some years later this "action" was repeated in a modified form in the streets of downtown Sacramento, California, at the outbreak of the more recent U.S. invasion of Iraq, leading to a more general rally on the steps of the State Capitol Building.



This figure shows part of a large, floor-to-ceiling "decorative installation" I erected (with help from Michael Howard and advice from discussions of the Sacramento Art Section group) in Linden Hall at the Sacramento Waldorf School for three large summer conferences sponsored by the Anthroposophical Society in America held there during June of 2000. I prepared long cloth banners in the colors of the Goetheanum windows to use as tall, vertical, "column-like" elements between paintings by Famke Zonneveld of Steiner's planetary seals in gold on blue-stained loose-canvas (following the color scheme Steiner had used for the Stuttgart basement).

The Art Section-sponsored public art conference "Art = Capital" held in July of 2004 in Sacramento, California, included an afternoon artistic activity where individual artists could work on their own projects and also engage in dialogue about them within a "shared studio" setting. Having suggested in my conference lecture that postmodern art and theory needed to be spiritually transformed by anthroposophical work, I decided during the afternoons to try creating two experimental collages, largely composed of pieces cut from anthroposophical watercolor paintings that had been discarded from a previous workshop. My project was done with a somewhat postmodernist skeptical attitude about the continuing anthroposophical value of painting

watercolor pictures of only "beautiful colors." The two large collages, which featured pieces whose cut-out forms and patterns imitated typical forms repeated in anthroposophical designs (e.g., irregular pentagons, vortices, and human gestures) and were titled "A Fond Farewell to the Kingdom of Beautiful Colors".



As part of the "Mystery Wisdom Inspired Arts" conference at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 1907 Theosophical Congress artwork in Munich, I presented on August 18, 2007, a "performance art" version of Rudolf Steiner's fourth apocalyptic seal. While a narrator read from Steiner's notes on the two cosmic evolutionary forces represented by the Jachin and Boaz columns, participants helped establish these two polar forces by playing corresponding music from each side of the "stage" on recorder and lyre, moving back and forth with expansion and contraction symbols as well as blue and red cloths, and then settling into two pillar-like forms as a costumed "mighty sun angel" (me) holding an open book emerged and stood between them as the narrator recited the related verses from the Book of Revelation.



This piece concluded with an antiphonal speaking of the verses

Steiner wrote on the two columns at the Munich Congress.

I presented another, somewhat conceptual work of performance art in the summer of 2010 in both Sebastopol, California, and Hudson, New York. At the end of my slide lecture on "Postmodern Art and Anthroposophy" I presented, the lecture morphed into a concluding ten-minute piece of performance art (titled *Because Postmodernism Is*) involving my speaking, gestures, chanting, sharing dream images, projecting slides of related artworks, musical and rhythmic accompaniment on Manfred Bleffert instruments, and a bit of minor choreography with my assistants Joan Allen in Sebastopol and Laura Summer in Hudson.

In 2012 in Hudson, New York, at the "Beyond the Object, Beyond Sensation" art conference, Manfred Bleffert and I combined our workshop groups for a partial rehearsal of my group performance work, *Moving Mandala*, a piece that tries to create through coordinated group movement activities an outer picture of the differences between the etheric, astral, and ego levels of the human being. During the 45 minutes of our combined session I attempted to organize the participants to form outer and inner circles that would move, wave colored cloths, and sound in different but connected ways as a moving image of the human constitution. My plan was that a "breathing" outer circle represented the rhythmically repetitious and supportive qualities of the human etheric body, while the inner two circles (which rhythmically exchanged places) represented the more musical and colorful polar tendencies of the astral body (represented by alternation of sounding musical instruments and waving seven colored cloths), with the further idea of a "silent ego point" in the middle of the circle (which originally planned to be a "cross" of four Bleffert glockenspiels tuned to the four tones of the "Tao"). We didn't have enough participants for this idea to be

fully realized, but at least part of the "Mandala" piece could be explored.

Finally, at last summer's "Art Convergence" event in Philmont, New York, I created and presented an assemblage/installation titled "My Rose Cross Meditation." This was an artistic depiction of some of the experiences I have had over many years of working with Rudolf Steiner's rose cross meditation. I originally began (and am still) developing a group performance piece based on those experiences, but created the installation as a related "side piece" on the same theme. The

and act upon awareness of such ideas. Most recently, I have been researching how artists can incorporate in their process interaction with our fellow human souls on the after-death side of the threshold.



piece progresses through three stages of development, using different expressive or "symbolic" substances, including charcoal briquettes, a wreath of wild plants, red roses, many tiny loaves of bread in small gold-colored cups, a chalk drawing, and a long piece of golden cord. For a much more detailed description, see the *Art Section Newsletter*, issue no. 40, from late 2013.

In conclusion, I am primarily interested in exploring the ways the visual arts can help us grasp and make more real the living conceptions of anthroposophy rooted ultimately in the world of spiritual archetypes, and in how artistic work in contemporary forms can help develop our capacities to apprehend

Dates

Ephesus, Greek

Malen vor Ephesus mit Esther Gerster

vom 18. Mai bis 24. Mai 2014

in Ephesus, Dereli Hotel
selbständige Anreise,
Kontaktaufnahme erbeten mit Angabe
von E-Mail und Telefonnummer
an thomas.anderl@deutschebahn.com.
Weitere Informationen nach
Kontaktaufnahme.

Vaihingen, Germany Bolzano, Italy

Es gibt nur einen Tempel
in der Welt, und daß ist
der menschliche Körper.
Nichts ist heiliger als diese
hohe Gestalt
(Novalis)

Die Drei Grazien Maltagung an Pfingsten 2014

7. bis 14. Juni 2014
im Handelskontor Willmann,
Tafingerstr. 8,
71665 Vaihingen/Enz,
Deutschland

Die drei Grazien sind ein Motiv, das in
einer bemerkenswerten Einheitlichkeit
der Komposition, die Menschheit seit
der Antike begleitet.
Drei weibliche Gestalten, jede für sich
und doch in einer innigen Beziehung
zueinander - frei im Raum stehend.
Viele Maler haben dieses Motiv
bearbeitet, und immer wieder entsteht
dadurch eine Ahnung von einem

tieferen Sinn der menschlichen Gestalt.
Dieser tiefere Sinn ist durch die
künstlerische Gestaltung in Schönheit
gehüllt.

Auf dem Kurs wollen wir versuchen
durch geisteswissenschaftliche
Betrachtungen dem Sinn der
menschlichen Gestalt näher zu
kommen. Vor allem soll aber durch
zeichnerische und malerische Übungen
dieses Motiv der drei Grazien so
bearbeitet werden, daß ein
künstlerisches Begreifen möglich wird.
Der Kurs umfaßt 8 Tage, an denen wir
tagsüber ca. 6 Stunden künstlerisch
arbeiten und gemeinsame
Betrachtungen vornehmen. An drei
Abenden sind Vorträge zum Thema
geplant.

Information und Anmeldung:

Edgar Spittler

Via Piani d'Isarco 918

39100 Bolzano, Italia

Tel/Fax: 0039 0471973816

P.S. Der Kurs findet auch vom 23. bis
30.8.2014 in Bolzano/Bozen,
Südtirol/Italien statt.

Schweiz

Sektion für Bildende Künste

Bildende Künstler der verschiedenen
Kunstgebiete treffen sich seit sechs
Jahren zweimal jährlich zur
Hochschularbeit und Werkbetrachtung.
Information bei Esther Gerster
(esther.gerster@goetheanum.ch)

Colofon:

The section report is published by the visual art section at the Goetheanum.

Editing:

Christiane Gerges (Schwarzweiler)

The section report is published four times per year.

Please participate yourself by presenting your biography, your schools, projects or dates of your events. Submissions concerning the section report to the following email address:

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This will be the last section report in this style. The next will be created by Marianne Schubert.