

Visual Art Section

# NEWSLETTER

No. 7 / Spring 2015

## Dear Friends of the Visual Art Section,

We began the year 2015 with shattering events and crises in many parts of the world. These continue to occupy me personally and in my work for the Visual Art Section.

While preparing for the memorial celebrations of the 100th birthday of Arne Klingborg this year I came across the following excerpts from a lecture that he held at the opening of the architectural conference of 1994 in Dornach:

„The hypothesis that the various nations can unite peacefully in friendship is in our opinion redundant and superfluous. These acknowledge only one form of hygiene for the world-war... They are in their essence cruel by nature and the technology that the human being has developed in order to conquer Nature is likewise cruel in its very essence... It is the law of the jungle that governs Art and cultural life as it does Nature. The strongest survive.“

This is what Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the Italian writer, fascist politician and founder of Futurism wrote in the year 1909. Klingborg compares this with a quote from Rudolf Steiner, formulated in 1907 to describe the arts of the future: „True harmony, a true peace of the soul, can only be experienced where there is mirrored to the human senses in form, proportion, shape and colour what the soul recognises as its most treasured thoughts, feelings and impulses of will.“

During my visits to artists, groups of artists and art schools (I write these lines in Järna, Sweden where I have been privileged to come to know many wonderful people) I noticed how important it is that we know about one another, that we meet and converse. Can we come to respect each one in his or her search, no matter how differently we have each pursued our biographical path, and take ourselves seriously in our striving „to allow the invisible to become visible through art.“

During our conference in May this year - The Sources of Art II - we should like to attempt to do so. The introductory lecture to our theme will be held by Roland Halfen: „Sense Experience as Source of Art: Do Rudolf Steiners Aesthetics Have a Future?“

In the mornings three artists will introduce their works, having each come to independent and quite individual expression in their art. The discussions that follow, initially in small groups, then in plenum, are designed to deepen what has been experienced, as are the artistic workshops in the afternoons.

The evenings will be devoted to the related performing arts of Speech, Drama and Music.

It is indeed something to look forward to!

In the coming year the Section wishes to undertake a further task of enormous proportions. We will lose more and more of the valuable originals from the early period of the artistic impulse of Rudolf Steiner if we do not increase our efforts to preserve and professionally archive and document these. To make this possible we have inaugurated the project „artist in residence“ to facilitate active research here at the Goetheanum. The Section will make rooms available and support artists and scientists in their research questions. The works in the archives and art collections at the Goetheanum, as well as the publicly available artworks of Rudolf Steiner and those that followed him offer a wealth of themes as yet unresearched. University Prof. Dr. phil. Heide Nixdorff, who held the chair for „Cultural History of Textiles“ at the University of Dortmund, is the first of these „artists in residence“ and will be doing field studies to the theme „Anthroposophical Clothing Design“ until the beginning of March.

We wish to invite professionals to a workshop discussion about the second Goetheanum building from 26 - 28 June. Peter Feger and Alexander Schaumann are directing this.

From 10 - 12 July we wish to meet with a small circle of experts to the question of the manufacture of plant colours.

All additional initiatives and exhibitions you will find in the program at the end of the newsletter. At [www.goetheanum.org](http://www.goetheanum.org) you will find any further updates on events and offers. Further information may be obtained by email from the Section: [sbk@goetheanum.ch](mailto:sbk@goetheanum.ch)

We shall increasingly utilise the magazine „Stil“ as organ for publications of the Section. In the present edition, for example, there is an outstanding article by Dino Wendtland, director of the Art Collection at the Goetheanum on the theme „The Venue for the Group.“ Also the „Goetheanum News“ and „Anthroposophie weltweit“ contain regular reports on our activities. We shall therefore only be sending out two or three newsletters from the Section so as to pool our forces.

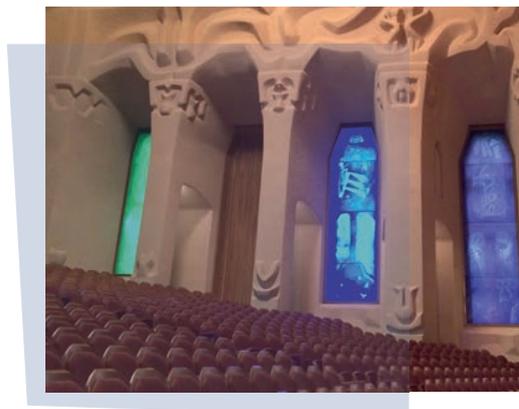
We look forward to an active contact and exchange and wish you all fruitful and peaceful work in your different areas.

*Warm regards to everyone,  
Marianne Schubert, Director  
Folke Gerstner, Secretariat  
Visual Art Section at the Goetheanum*

Bert Chase, Vancouver

## The Sources of Art I

Rudolf Steiner's Artistic Impulse in its Further Development; Summary of the Visual Art Section Conference, November 20-23, 2014



*"As the anthroposophical world conception is something that enters human development as something entirely new, it was therefore quite natural that in the style of the building, in all the sculpture and painted forms, one could not express something already in existence. No kind of artistic reminiscence was to be realized ... the anthroposophical world view had to prove sufficiently productive as to bring forth its own style in the visual arts."* Rudolf Steiner, Stuttgart, March 29, 1923

With this as an overarching theme, members of the Visual Art Section gathered for the opening of this conference. Accompanied by warm autumn light, clear skies and a crispness in the air, we were greeted by the Goetheanum well along in its major renovations. The ominous presence of the construction crane that had hovered over her during the past year is now gone. Only a mask of scaffolding conceals her western face where the completion of restoration draws near. Inside, a major exhibit of sculpture and paintings by Astrid Haueisen-Oelssner and Ulrich Oelssner - "Paths of Color – Imprints of Form" fill the ground floor with life. This exhibit is accompanied by another in the Edith Marion apartment which has now been restored for the office and small gallery of the Visual Art Section, and accompanying the conference itself the first sketch Steiner gave for painting exercises hung on the walls of the Schreinerei. The excerpt from Rudolf Steiner's 1923 lecture provided the focus for the questions to be taken up in this conference. Accompanying these Marianne Schubert, leader for this Section, gave an initial elaboration of what the intentions for the conference were. From a contemporary perspective, she pointed to the recent Venice Biennale and the observation of its coordinator Rem Koolhaas on the ugliness of our contemporary culture and the seeming failure of art to meet it. This ugliness challenges us as artists committed to the impulses of Rudolf Steiner to find both a deeper understanding of that impulse, and the language for connecting that impulse with our contemporary civilization. On the other hand this conference, grounded in the School for Spiritual Science, is intended to provide the opportunity for exploring these questions in preparation for the Ascension Conference when the Visual Art Section will host an open exploration of these questions with our contemporaries.

Seeking to build the conference firmly on our shared life within the School for Spiritual Science, sharing spiritual research questions out of the Section became the focus. This shaped the overall program and how the individual sessions evolved. To make this intention visible the first day was devoted to small working groups taking up areas of research that members of the Section have been carrying. Members brought research questions with them and invited others to explore them as a way of preparing both the content and the mood for the following days. There were varied areas of consideration related to aspects of anthroposophical art to the meditative path of artists and the esoteric foundations for the Section's work. On Friday afternoon, the formal program began with the holding of the sixth class lesson. The central themes from this lesson provided the orientation for approaching the questions we were to take up together. Special attention was given to aspects of the lesson that relate to

*Above: Impressions from the November conference*

the artist and their will organisation, attending to the specific hindrances of the counter forces that impede the student / artist on the meditative path. These challenges of counter forces and how we, as members of the School, meet them was the common thread running through the weekend.

This was taken up in a significant way by the evening presentation that followed this first class lesson. This was a continuation of one given by Dr. Reinhold Faeth in last year's Section conference. In that presentation he shared the detailed background of anthroposophical artistic impulse and its developments in the years leading up to World War II.

He carried on from that earlier history, taking his orientation from the title „Anthroposophical Art!?“ He began with fundamental questions, asking whether the term “anthroposophical art” is legitimate and what its source is. He contrasted that with our current tendency to avoid this term altogether – either distancing ourselves from the impulse or referring to it as “Michaelic Art”, “Goethean Art”, art inspired by Rudolf Steiner, to name just a few. Reinhold Faeth then clarified that it was Rudolf Steiner himself who named this, his own artistic impulse.

If we truly confront this phenomenon we must consider why we distance ourselves from identifying with this impulse, why we separate ourselves from the name given to this impulse by Rudolf Steiner. What does this all mean?

To find our way forward we are asked to seriously consider the importance of the relationship between a spiritual or philosophical perspective of an artist, or group of artists, and how that deeper impulse manifests itself in the work that arises out of it. All meaningful and lasting “stylistic” forms have their originals, their wellspring, in an underlying body of thought. The intentions and impulses of Rudolf Steiner are no different. Yet in our time we work to distance our own work from the spiritual-philosophical foundations of that impulse. If we recognize this in ourselves then we are confronted by our own intentions, how we direct our will impulses, and must ask what our relationship to Rudolf Steiner's art impulse is.

Having opened his reflections with these questions Reinhold Faeth provided an in-depth elaboration of the forces working against the anthroposophical art impulse arising out of World War II. Most significant was the role of National Socialism from two perspectives. One was the direct attack by the Nazi party on any art form that had a spiritual basis. Among others, artists and their work striving to develop this artistic impulse came under attack, their work declared “decadent”. At the same time, the core of the Nazi movement adopted pseudo-occult practices and a visual “artistic” language that supported those practices. Nazism and a decadent occultism became synonymous. Because of this shared perception, after the war any reference to a spiritual perspective towards art became questionable. In central Europe's struggle to excise the ghosts of Nazism anything that might be associated, even erroneously, with their practices was considered highly suspect. This deep suspicion has become so imbedded and unconscious that it still exists.

As a result a self censoring of any relationship to Rudolf Steiner's artistic impulse has become embedded in European culture. This process of distancing oneself from acknowledging a connection to anthroposophical art has become, and for the most part remains, embedded in the whole field of art and art criticism throughout Europe. In turn, this has inevitably had its affect in the art world at large.

This central European phenomenon of distancing from a spiritual impulse in art was further exacerbated by the Cold War. As during the war, once again artistic images became a propaganda tool for political ideologies. On the one side a heroic worker-warrior motif was actively cultivated as a representation of communism. This imagery was then adopted by Marxist societies worldwide. This influenced the perception and practice of art from Asia to Latin America. To meet this heroic imagery Western culture developed a counter imagery that was actively associated with the “free” west. The art world again became politically shaped and significantly financed by the CIA. The center for the art world was relocated from Europe to New York from which the focused promotion of “American Abstract Expressionism” took place. Art, and the artist, became inseparably enmeshed in powerful political forces working invisibly to shape arti-

stic images. This battle of “styles” continued the ostracism of any art impulse seeking a spiritual basis. As this spiritual / artistic impulse served neither Marxist nor Capitalist ideologies it was actively sidelined, seen ideologically suspect, even politically dangerous, in the wider art world. This battle of images lasted decades, embedding itself into the unconscious cultural perception of what art is – and is not, for generations of artists.

Dr. Faeth developed an detailed elaboration of the power and scope of forces working against a spiritual-artistic impulse. These forces work not only in culture but have insinuated themselves into our perceptions of ourselves and our work so that we also see ourselves as being “secondary” to what is taking place in the art world.

As a result of these influences throughout the twentieth century, contemporary artistic culture has fallen primarily into two extremes. On one side the legitimacy of an artists work is defined by the price it can command. Art is commodified. This is accompanied by the perception that the “value” arises from the concept associated with the product. This becomes an ahrimanisation of art. In contrast the Luciferic attack comes from the “elevation” of the art-personality as a “cult” figure. Here all that is extreme in the personality of the artists is exaggerated. The value of the work is based on the eccentricities of the artist. In both extremes the transformative impulse of a spiritual perception of art has no place. This exploration inevitably challenges us to look at ourselves, to see how we perceive ourselves and our work, how we present ourselves in our contemporary art world. Do we acknowledge our relationship to Rudolf Steiner and his anthroposophical art impulse, or as was illustrated by many examples, are we uncomfortable acknowledging this relationship.

With these as opening thoughts, the conference unfolded in a way so that we always worked together on the themes as they were brought. Rather than the accustomed process of breaking into conversation groups, the planning group of the conference saw these conversation periods as working sessions where the whole body of those present took up what had been brought and worked with it. The intention was to focus and strengthen the work presented. This intensification of the overall theme proceeded on the following days with two additional holdings of the sixth class lesson. As with the first, these lessons focused on the artist’s relationship to their will organisation. These were accompanied by two further areas of research; one on the “Formative Nature of Art” brought by Rolf Reisiger and the other on the “Goetheanistic Appreciation of the Sources of Art” given by Prof. Fritz Marburg.

Rolf Reisiger’s reflections on the formative nature of art, guided us through a process of observation that made it possible to experience the relationship of artistic form to our own inner experience. Step by step he explored the difference between what he called inner space and outer space. He likened outer space to the experience we have when standing in a wide valley. that, by its geography, invites us to live out into nature. We have the sense of moving out from our own center out into our surroundings. He contrasts this with an overarching space, what he called inner space, that awakens the experience of the forces in our environment streaming toward us rather than raying out from us. Through a series of examples he asked that we explore the relationship between these two conditions; or “will” streams. On the one hand, there is that which rays out from our “center” into our environment. In contrast there is that which streams from the world and rays toward our self experience.

Building on these interrelated and contrasting experiences, he then turned to a detailed exploration of sense perception and how a similar double stream is continuously at work that makes perception possible. On the one hand, we turn our senses toward the world and yet perception only arises when the manifest world reproduces itself within our constitution, we might say when the world “beholds” us. From this exploration it became apparent that perception is not unilateral, but only arises through this double stream, where the individual human being extends his sense activity into the world, and this is accompanied by the world reconstructing itself within the inner being of man. Gradually the perception arises that the human being is as much perceived by the world as the individual perceives the world.

When this principle, once grasped, is brought into the sphere of artistic practice, an awareness can arise that the observer is as much perceived by a work of art as we the person perceive it. To elaborate this point, Rolf Reisiger refers to an observation Rilke made of how a sculpture of Apollo affected him. What Rilke describes is being aware of being intently observed by the "presence" of Apollo that could not be separated from the sculpture. He felt that this gaze of the sculpture required him to confront what Apollo "sees" in him. Considering Rilke's observations what arises is a realization that art itself awakens questions or experiences within the viewer.

This "being beheld" can call us to attend to what lies beyond the sense perceptible world. Apollo's scrutiny awakens self reflection. Similarly a spiritually grounded artistic process can become a way toward our own divinity.

From this perspective, essential to a spiritually founded artistic practice is to seek for the gradual unfolding of a sensitivity and consciousness of this double stream; that what comes about through a spiritually based art is both what the viewer sees but also what the "eye of the world", through a work of art, beholds of the inner being of the viewer. Cultivating this as a practice is the basis for anthroposophical art with its relationship to the School for Spiritual Science, and as a central task of the Visual Art Section.

Each presentation brought an exploration of these themes from multiple perspectives.

From different perspectives the Rose Cross meditation entered our considerations. This meditation was seen as a guide toward balance in our lives and artistic work. We asked if working with this meditation specifically as artists can lead to a middle way between the domination of Ahrimanic influences that seek to negate artistic feeling, resulting in a materialized art form based on concepts or idea. While in contrast, there is the Luciferic domination of the arts arising from a focus on the personality of the artist.

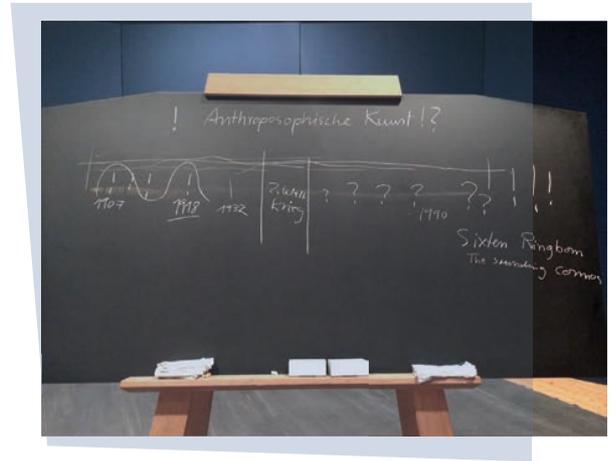
At the heart of the conference Thorwald Thiersch led us through a process of observation by focusing on the architrave in the great hall. We took this time to practice what we had been considering as thoughts by turning our artistic feeling toward the forms and movement of the architrave, seeking its inner language. At the same time we attempted to sense how we are being perceived by these forms and what is asked of us as members of the Section and School for Spiritual Science.

It is with these many considerations that the conference came to a close. At the same time it becomes a doorway leading to Ascension Conference where the intention is that this preparation, undertaken within the Section, enables a meaningful dialogue to arise within the wider context of the spring gathering. Gathering all that had been developed together, Marianne Schubert closed our meeting. She reminded and asked us to carry actively in our lives that we always stand in this double stream. That as members of the Section we have united ourselves with the anthroposophical art stream flowing from Rudolf Steiner, as a vehicle for cultural transformation. At the same time we stand as contemporaries in a world that, as Koolhaas reminds us, has lost its relationship with beauty. We ask ourselves if we can learn to live both with an affirmation of Rudolf Steiner anthroposophical art impulse, while also firmly standing as contemporaries in world culture. To hold to the reality of what the world can become and that the practice of art and the cultivation of artistic feeling is the domain where the integration of these streams is possible.

Peter Ferger

## The term “anthroposophical art”

Lecture at the Visual Art Section Conference,  
November 20-23, 2014



The term anthroposophical art as it was coined by Rudolf Steiner has been questionable for some time now. What does it actually mean? Can it be precisely defined at all? Or is it perhaps altogether a non-concept? This is an investigation into its use. Depending on how it is used the term has different levels with a different meaning in each case.

Is a work of art anthroposophical? Is it a work of art at all? Not until we actually acknowledge that it is a work of art does raising any further questions make any sense (Under exceptional circumstances the opposite may be true). The anthroposophical would then be a property of a work of art. In adopting this viewpoint we confront it with critical judgment. We believe that there are criteria by which we can determine a work of art treating it as an object that can be judged accordingly. To have an experience of the essentially artistic in a work of art, however, is not intended on this first level.

How do we determine what is the anthroposophical in a work of art? From the theme or motif, if it obviously stems from this source, or from its appearance, i.e. this work of art or parts of it resemble another, which is known to be an anthroposophical work of art and either originates from a certain school or is in its line of succession. There is no other way to determine its affiliation, anything else must be considered guesswork. A third possibility may be that it is known that the artist is an anthroposophist, irrespective of any theme and appearance.

In any case, knowledge of anthroposophical spiritual science, of typical aspects or of the individual artist is a precondition. It is a term for the insider with which to categorise, perhaps also in the context of a specific social background. It has lost much of the critical potential of the first level. Rudolf Steiner used it that way: everybody knew what was meant (albeit not exactly) and who belonged to it. – Almost 100 years later the internal situation is a different one both internally and for contemporaries unfamiliar with it. The field of anthroposophical art or art that claims to be anthroposophical has grown tremendously and has become much more varied. Proper knowledge has been replaced by partial knowledge or mere assumption. Forms of degeneration such as the “lopped off corners” in architecture or the so-called veil-painting are often presented as typically anthroposophical and are mocked with sarcastic comments. It is a circumstance to which we may have contributed our share and which we will have to change.

On the second level the term is also problematic, being more of a designation. So far the relationship to art was more of an exterior nature. What happens if we meet a work of art from within, experience it, and through our experience recreate it? To recreate it in this manner, this will become our spiritual life process.

Above image: Blackboard drawing to the lecture „Anthroposophical Art!?“ von Prof. Dr. Reinhold Fäth

No longer stand opposite it but are right in the middle of it, and whether it is anthroposophical or not does not matter anymore. We do not need any conceptual criteria but find everything readily available in the qualities of the work of art. However, two questions may arise: Is my ability to gain an experience from the work of art sufficient to fathom its depths? Or, in contrast: does the work of art have any such depth? (Questions that are not easily answered) On this third level the term seems elusive. The two questions change: How does the viewer develop the ability to gain an experience of the work of art, and, the artist the ability to bring spiritual depth into his work? Questions addressing the process of transformation, development.

*„From the intensity of the achievements of spiritual science a different human being will emerge who will perceive differently. He will give himself up to what has been put in him as impulse; another form of art will emerge from the springs of spiritual science, always taking the detour through the soul ...“ (3.11.1918)*

In this thought of Rudolf Steiner the term no longer refers to the works of art or criteria to be applied; he refers to the artist, but not simply to the artist as anthroposophist; what he refers to is the artist who achieved something through spiritual science. The artist forms himself and anthroposophy works as a force. From this his abilities develop; art is the result of it. This ability is rooted in striving, in training (and not merely schooling in art). It is a dynamic art, what has resulted being a step along the path which, however, does not necessarily imply that it is a secondary appearance.

The same holds true for the viewer. He can rise beyond it, reliving a work of art in his consciousness. Something new can unfold from this, so to say a spiritual work of art through the medium of the actual work of art. This, the soul-spirit which blossoms out of what has been recreated out of the sense world, can become an invaluable experience for the souls of the deceased and spirit beings, an experience that can be found nowhere else. Apart from the artist and the viewer, who now both act creatively, a third entity appears. The art has been expanded into the spiritual world, it contains some kind of informal ritual dimension.

Art that is created this sense, also in this sense of an experiential observation may be considered a spiritual assignment, as developing an awareness for the spiritual forces that work through art. Apart from that there are concrete tasks. The most important is the designing of rooms in which spiritual-scientific work takes place. These should support an understanding through one's thinking, keep away negative forces and create an "occult environment" where also the deeper forces within us can devote themselves to the spirit. Conscious spiritual work arises through "laborious physical thinking", at the same time an atmosphere comparable to the spiritual world opens up to the super-sensible part of our being whereby "the spiritual insights that await us are allowed to enter into us" (Rudolf Steiner on the occasion of the opening of the Zweighaus in Stuttgart, 16/10/1911). He points to an art that interferes transformatively with life, makes what is otherwise impossible possible – on a fourth level. The most accomplished expression of this art undoubtedly was the first Goetheanum.

Anthroposophical art on four levels: On the first level we seek the stringent term, even though it will probably never be fully comprehensible. It suits the purpose of differentiation, of judgment, but not of life. On the second level the term becomes vague, rather a designation than a term, however more adapted to life. On the third level art finds its way to the spiritual world, thus making accessible the quality which makes it anthroposophical in the first place. On the fourth it works in the sense of the task of anthroposophy, i.e. to open up the artistic world for the forces of the spirit, to transform worlds. In effect it is an organism on four levels. And what we consider the highest level and what requires the best of our abilities was the starting point for Rudolf Steiner. From the first steps of its inception, he brought this quality to bear.

Marianne Schubert

## History of the Visual Art Section Part II

Lecture at the Visual Art Section Conference,  
November 20-23, 2014



In the archives we find the following note: From May 1924 until January 1957 there was no activity in the Section. Those are 33 years!

I was, however, able to find a consistent series of reports on the artistic work in editions of the various newssheets and there are several publications worth mentioning in connection with the Section, for example, the magazine "Individualität" edited by Willy Storrer. Previously he had been the editor of a number of well-known daily newspapers and was active on behalf of the publisher Verlag Freies Geistesleben.

A remarkable list of authors wrote for this magazine: Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Werfel, Hermann Hesse, Maxim Gorki, Albert Steffen and others. Unfortunately Willy Storrer died very young at the age of 34 when the airplane he was piloting crashed.

The publisher later amalgamated with the Berlin magazine "die Horen".

Another noteworthy magazine in the artistic environment of Dornach, concerned mainly building questions was "Mensch und Baukunst" (1951 – 1974) followed after 1979 by its successor "Stil".

In 1930 the jewelry school moved to Dornach and that same year the "Anthroposophische Gesellschaft für Art und Kunst" (Anthroposophical Society for Style and Art) was founded. A centre for collaboration was to be established at the Goetheanum specifically for the visual artists. Those artists who, after the death of Edith Maryon had remained without any organisation to unite them, joined this society for, as has been stated, all attempts at re-enlivening the Section had failed up to that point. Primarily, it organised study groups and exhibitions, with meetings taking place nearly every week. The executive committee of the Association consisted of Günther Wachsmuth, Albert Steffen and Marie Steiner. In January 1953 a working group for the visual art was founded at the Goetheanum by Jerome Bessenich, Theodor Ganz, Raoul Radnowsky and Emil Schweigler. Bessenich and Schweigler then became joint leaders of the new Visual Art Section in 1957.

There was already quite a lot of building in Dornach during the time of the Second World War. A large number of houses were built around the Goetheanum in the Goetheanistic style. After the war, various art schools were founded, among others the sculpture and painting schools at the Goetheanum (1952) and a plant-colour laboratory in 1967. These attracted many students. At the same time, building operations continued in the Goetheanum itself. The architect Stefan Durach designed the foyer in 1952. Emil Estermann became the first director of the "Baubüro", the administration office.

In 1953 the room for the urns had been opened. The Western entrance remained boarded up until the early '60s.

In 1951 the Goetheanum News published an invitation to submit designs for the interior of the Great Hall. It was the plan of Professor Schöpfer that was finally adopted and carried out.

Above image: Hans Hermann, *Tones for what is hidden, Glaze on a green blackboard, 1987*

In 1954 this design became the subject of a considerable controversy, with the Nachlassverwaltung threatening legal action against carrying out the building.

The Architect Albert von Baravalle, who had worked on the first Goetheanum as a young man, writes, "... I found it very painful that the Goetheanum was now to be completed in a manner that disregards the indications and plans of Rudolf Steiner..."

Rex Raab and Arne Klingborg were commissioned to design and supervise the interior construction of the ground floor.

In the Visual Art Section itself there was, as outlined above, a new co-leadership of Jerome Bessenich and Emil Schwegler. Two completely divergent painters therefore led the Section together. Here is a short biography of each of them:

Bessenich was born on 16 June 1893 and grew up on the family estate, Glattbach, under a harsh and strict father. His education was strictly Catholic. Already as a child he had begun to paint within his rural environment. Unfortunately however, he was not permitted to study art after completing school. Instead, he studied Agriculture and Botany. He completed his doctorate in Botany at the university of Bonn where he got to know Helmut Macke, the cousin of the famous August Macke. Macke became his painting instructor and Bessenich enjoyed the artistic ambience of the family Macke, which also included August Macke's widow.

Through Anthroposophy, which he had come to know as an undergraduate in Munich, he was led to Dornach in 1933. Here he became close friends with Albert Steffen and his circle.

For the first time he could devote himself entirely to painting and only the floral and landscape motifs of his canvases reflected his natural scientific background. He died on 13 September 1973.

Emil Schwegler was born on 19 August 1897 in Basel. He studied at the academy of art and worked as a freelance painter. In the course of his walks across the Dornach hill, he witnessed the construction process of the first Goetheanum. This made such an impression on him that in 1922 he decided to move close to the building in Dornach in order. Rudolf Steiner gave him the task of doing guided tours for visitors to the first Goetheanum.

After the construction of the second Goetheanum in 1928 he continued his activities there.

Over the years he developed through his painting a particular interest in colour theory. In the sphere of painting and drawing Albert Steffen was also a role model for him whom he greatly revered. At the beginning of the '40s, Schwegler was asked to write a book on Rudolf Steiner as an illustrator. The resulting publication was remarkable, using each of the available originals of Rudolf Steiner. He felt it a particular honour to be asked to lead the Section together with Jerome Bessenich in 1957, a task he carried until 1971. He died on 10 March 1982.

Bessenich and Schwegler are reported to have had quite different characters. Schwegler was said to be rather silent, in quiet concentration on the spiritual, where Bessenich was more worldly and gregarious. The tragedy for both was that over the years they were not able to find real agreement as colleagues. Schwegler, who taught art in different places throughout Switzerland, as well as founding a painting school at the Goetheanum, was the teacher of Hans Herrmann. It was Hans Herrmann who in 1972 became the new leader of the Visual Art Section.

Hans Herrmann was born on 1 June 1922 in Pratteln near Basel. Under the sign of Gemini, he was the first of three sons, whose childhood was marked by the tension between his caring mother and the violent temper of his father, as Renate Schwarz writes. His father had worked his way up the ranks of the Swiss Bank Corporation to the level of safe manager.

As a teenager, Hans was given a set of paints as a present and soon won some early painting competitions. His early pictures deal with experiences in Nature, particularly the world of birds and plants, a world of Fairy Tales. On the subject of working with colour, he said, "If an ugly colour appears, I don't remove it. I place it in context, in its right position, then it becomes beautiful. I have always to live with the consequences of my actions."

He too, however, was not initially permitted to become a painter. At the instigation of his father, he started an apprenticeship as pastry chef at the age of sixteen. The paints and brushes of his craft were hence originally cake ingredients. At twenty-six years of age, he broke his ties with his father and left home. The two were never reconciled. After the war he was eventually able to study at the Academy of Art, financed by a bursary. There he joined the artists group called "Die 48er" and soon drew the attention of the art scene. But he was in search of transformation, of new mediums of expression, of new sources and thereupon soon came in touch with Anthroposophy. In 1955 he joined the Educational Seminar at the Goetheanum, and in 1956, having just married his wife Ruth, the newlyweds left for a curative home that he took over in Chur. Once again, painting took second place. There were tensions in the home, leading him to leaving for Dornach in 1960 to study painting at the school of Emil Schweigler in Dornach. Later, he took over the directing of this school from Schweigler.

According to those who knew him, Herrmann was more structured than his predecessor. He was a man of the world with a drive to bring people together. He attempted to get artists who up to that time had not appeared around the Goetheanum, to connect to the Section. There was an existing annual artists conference in Stuttgart in which architects, sculptors and painters took part. He attended this conference in 1968 and the following year arranged that they meet in Dornach. In Dornach he created a round table for representatives of the different arts. Within the Section, conferences were held, publications appeared and a lot of exhibitions took place. Even Joseph Beuys paid him a visit, but the two did not take to each other. In 1974 Hans Herrmann opened another art gallery in Basel. He built a sound studio and produced programs for the Basel radio. He was open to new techniques, even beginning to explore film.

Meanwhile life at the Goetheanum did not run smoothly. There were considerable tensions and despite attempts by the Section leader to mediate between the different viewpoints, the clefs could not be bridged. Within the Vorstand there were doubts about Herrmann's work and in 1982 he eventually had to leave the Section. Ilona Hermann, his wife, later told me of how he had suffered under all this, most particularly because he never discovered why he had been dismissed. After a long illness, he died on 26 May 2002 in Stuttgart.

If we compare the biography of Edith Maryon with those of the leaders that followed her, it becomes clear that the tremendous power of sacrifice based on her deep spiritual connection with Rudolf Steiner permeated her work and could not be replaced by anyone else. The new artistic impulse could only come about through the hard, but impressive corrections Rudolf Steiner made on the work of Edith Maryon. The series of models leading up to the Group can still exemplify this for us.

Bessenich, Schweigler and Herrmann were all intimately connected with Anthroposophy and all three developed their own work through Anthroposophy. The courageous new language of form, however, required the teacher and the immense power of sacrifice that individual artists around Rudolf Steiner were able to offer. On the other hand the work on the Hill had to continue without Rudolf Steiner. He died in March 1925, leaving many questions unanswered. A lot was achieved by the personalities that followed him, but they interpreted the texts of his talks, for example about the construction of the building and about the artistic impulse very differently over the coming decades. It led to intense confrontations, sometimes resulting in life-long conflict between individual members – as we know, to the exclusion of the most intimate co-workers of Rudolf Steiner in the difficult year 1935.

This much, for the moment, on the history of the Section.

Marianne Schubert

## Colour paths – Sensing form

Paintings by Ulrich Oelssner and  
sculptures by Astrid Haueisen-Oelssner



Both artists understand being an artist as being someone who asks questions. The questions raised will stay with them throughout the years of their artistic work; questions that touch on the subject of life, art, colour, stone, wood.

Astrid's comment regarding her own work: "There are many languages. Sculpture is but one of them. To explain them? Touch, look, feel is what helps. Sculpture is three-dimensional, occupies space, displaces space, creates a relationship to space and the surrounding space. It is dependent on light, on the opponent party that creates, or does not create relationship ..."

To explain my own observations on the work of Astrid and Ulrich Oelssner I would like to quote from Rudolf Steiner's esoteric lesson given on 16 January 1908 in Munich:

*"Today we raise far too many questions on the benefit of what we are doing. If we really want to foster development we must not ask about the benefits but rather whether something is beautiful and noble. We must not act only out of a utilitarian concept but out of sheer joy for beauty. Everything man creates to satisfy his artistic needs, out of pure love for what is beautiful, will also be invigorated in future and will contribute to man's higher development ... the greatest works of art should be there in the poorest public schools; this would be such a tremendous blessing for the human development ..."*

Dear Astrid, dear Ulrich, taking your example I have seen that this statement by Rudolf Steiner finds its fulfilment in the life you live. Working with you and getting to know your surrounding environment showed me how much beauty surrounds you, as you daily strive to create beauty, in everything you do – whether as artists who render services in architecture or the on-site sculpturing, free artistic work, at home or in your workshops – with much love you wish to create beauty.

Colour paths – Sensing form – use the title of the exhibition as a guide.

Mounting the exhibition we could perceive quickly how colour and form, motive and space, light and matter will hold a dialogue with each other or will frequently cause and will ultimately augment one another. Take the painting behind the sculpture off the wall or move the sculpture away from the space in front of the painting, every time we would miss a dialogue the two works of art have with each other.

Ulrich Oelssner is an architect, as is evident in all his paintings: A clear order – often symmetrical, however with different qualities from left and right – geometrically drawn lines – with great depth, and to merely give a description of the exterior.

There is an incredibly enthralling transparency and luminosity in his colour spaces; a thin layer

Above: Impressions from the exhibition „Colour paths – Sensing form“



of oil paint, applied using not a brush but a sponge or cloth to coat the canvas. It is worthwhile to compare the paintings, which were mounted according to spaces of colour, to look at them from different angles and to give oneself up to any questions that might arise, to vastness, a longing for deeper layers – qualities which they inherently have. On the one hand, after some extensive viewing varying metamorphoses of an underlying theme can be discovered; and then again, on the other hand, sometimes unexpectedly, there is a totally new colour space, a new theme as the title will tell us: Island Blue, In the Red, Green Awakening – or: Light Germ, Ray of Light, Morning Light, Autumn Light, Evening – or: Beginning, Prelude, Impulse, Time Eye, In the Mean Time, Far – or any of the various landscape impressions.

Astrid Haueisen-Oelssner has always been a sculptor working in various disciplines and different dimensions: On site, the exterior space defines a public space within the urban space, small sculptures for the interior space, however also in applied art, for instance in church halls, from the column to the door handle. She works with a vast array of different materials such as concrete, plaster, soap stone, marble, bronze, wood, to name just a few. Her works of art are unpretentious and originate from an inner peace. They have a feminine, poetic side to them. Here the titles again speak to us: Moon Skiff, Stone Flower (taken from a poem by Paul Celan), Cosmic Ear, Wrest, The Question ... They are very different but quite unmistakably one can make out a fundamental impulse after some time. Sometimes I even think they are entities that propagate a form of religiousness in the room. They are very humble in a way unfolding very sensitive involutions and protrusions, fold-ups, sometimes humorous, then again very serious, just like the big guardian outside in the foyer.

There is a suggestion by Rudolf Steiner which I may sum up in my own words: Leave aside any ideas and approach a work of art without any concepts you might have; slip into the gestures since the work of art is complete only when the viewer comes into play.

I wish you a lot of fun discovering the many things that are there to be discovered.  
Thank you very much.

## Calendar Events in and around Dornach



### Architectural walk

Observations on Organic Architecture

Mondays every two weeks 16.00 – 17.30

Meeting point: Goetheanum southern entrance

Beginning: 09.03.2015

Direction: Herbert Holliger, Association for the Architectural Walk and Marianne Schubert

Following dates: 23.03./13.04./27.04./ 11.05./01.06./15.06./29.06.

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### Monday conversations within the Section

Mondays every two weeks 18.00 – 19.30

09.03./23.03.: Roland Halfen, Dealing with Rudolf Steiner's Graphic Work

Venue: South Hall, right

Following dates: 13.04./27.04./11.05./01.06./15.06./29.06.

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### „The Sources of Art II“

May Conference of the Visual Art Section 14 – 17 May 2015

Introductory lecture by Roland Halfen: „Sense Experience as the Source of Art:

Do Rudolf Steiner's Aesthetics Have a Future?“

Keynote addresses by Dr. Claudia Schlürmann, Jochen Brehme and Cornelia Falkenhan on three mornings, followed by discussions and artistic workshops in the afternoons.

The Evenings will be devoted to the related arts of Speech, Drama and Music

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### 1. Workshop Discussion: The Second Goetheanum Building

Lecturers: Alexander Schaumann und Peter Ferger

26 – 28 June 2015

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### 2. Workshop Discussion: Manufacturing Plant Colours

10 – 12 July 2015

By invitation only. Interested persons please contact the Section.

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### Hannes Weigert, Painting Workshop

during the conference „The North in the Goetheanum“

17 – 26 July 2015

*Above image: Dr. Claudia Schlürmann, Detail of the Installation „way through stone“*

### The 5 Ethers as ennobling forces in Art & Architecture

A week of working together for architects and artists together with the „Internationale Forum for Mensch + Architektur“ (IFMA)

Lecturer: Johannes Schuster, Australia

31 August – 11 September 2015

Nature seems to have the magic touch of universal beauty. Her forms are always functional, beautiful and full of meaning. Yet nature cannot produce works of art in the way we humans can. Unlike nature we can create both, ugliness as well as beauty, yet our creations rarely reach the heights of universal beauty.

This seminar may hold some interest for artists, architects, designers, students and anyone else interested in exploring form creation through a spiritual/etheric paradigm. On the basis of Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science, we will look at the notion of „Universal Beauty“, the spiritual nature of the creative process and the forming forces that shape both nature and – potentially – our own creations. We will discover the creative tension that exists between physical and etheric forces and begin to identify a universal „LANGUAGE OF FORM“, capable of speaking out of the same forces that have shaped the forms of nature, including ourselves as human beings.

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### The Sources of Art III

November Conference for members of the School for Spiritual Science

Work on the 7th Class Lesson and reports arising out of our work.

20 – 22 November 2015

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### Summer workcamp to become Spring workcamp

Artists active, amongst others, in the areas of painting, drawing, stone sculpture, land art, performance and installation and video will be opening their studios on the grounds of the Goetheanum and its surroundings and invite those interested in art, particularly also young people, to sessions of work and exchange. Art appreciation, schooling one's faculties of observation and contributions to the artistic impulse will accompany the artistic work. They expand the direct exchange into a forum where personal questions and questions of our age can be addressed.

Please note the change of date! Early 2016 - you will still be notified of the final date.

## International Calendar Events

### Aenigma – A Hundred Years of Anthroposophical Art

19 March: Opening of Exhibition in Olomouc in the Czech Republic

Info and Flyer obtainable here: [http://www.karl-koenig-institute.net/aenigma\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.karl-koenig-institute.net/aenigma_flyer.pdf)

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### Journey to the Exhibition „Aenigma – A Hundred Years of Anthroposophical Art“

20 – 22 March 2015, with Doris Harpers and Francesco Grazioli

Bus tour from Mestre (Venice) via Trieste, Ljubljana, Maribor.

Overnight stay in Brno (near Olomouc)

Info: [doris-harpers@iol.it](mailto:doris-harpers@iol.it)

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Information and links to the flyers available at [www.goetheanum.org](http://www.goetheanum.org)

## Exhibitions at the Goetheanum



15. Februar – 29. März 2015

### Metamorphosen der Furcht

Werke von Rudolf Steiner, Jan Stuten, Arild Rosenkrantz, Maria Strakosch-Giesler, Hans Wildermann, Jacques de Jaeger

Kurator: Dino Wendtland, Kunstsammlung am Goetheanum

Vernissage: Samstag, 14. Februar 2015, 14.30 Uhr

Mittwoch bis Sonntag von 14.00 – 18.00 Uhr

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23. Februar – 19. April 2015

### Landschaften der Seele

Dorothea Templeton, Malerei

Vernissage: Sonntag, 22. Februar 2015, 16.00 Uhr

Vorstandsetage; täglich 8.00 – 22.00 Uhr

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12. April – 08. Mai 2015

### Ausstellung der Kunstschulen

Arbeiten der Studenten aus den umliegenden Ausbildungsstätten

Täglich 8.00 – 22.00 Uhr

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25. April – 25. Mai 2015

### Der Tierkreis

Werke verschiedener Künstler

Vorstandsetage; täglich 8.00 – 22.00 Uhr

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10. Juni – 06. September 2015

### Norden im Goetheanum

Werke skandinavischer Maler und Bildhauer und der Teppich „Draumkvedet“ von Torwald Moseid

Kuratorin: Marianne Schubert

Vernissage: Dienstag, 09. Juni 2015 um 17 Uhr

Täglich 8.00 – 22.00 Uhr

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14. November 2015 – 10. Januar 2016

### Bajorat und sein Schüler

Unter anderem Bilder aus dem Kalewala-Epos von Archibald Bajorat

Täglich 8.00 – 22.00 Uhr

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### Vitrinenausstellungen

zusammengestellt von Andrea Hitsch

2. Februar – 30. Mai 2015

Maria Strauch-Spettini (1847 – 1916); *Bühnenkünstlerin, Lehrerin von Marie Steiner*

1. Juni – 1. September 2015

Karl Thylmann (1888 – 1916); *Grafiker, Dichter*

Abbildungen oben: Dorothea Templeton, Malerei