

Internationale Konferenz und Generalversammlung der EOA 2023:  
Outsider Art und Tradition  
Open Art Museum St.Gallen  
11.-14.5.2023

12.5.2023

Performativer Dialog zwischen Rudolf Steiner (RS) und Barbara Meyer Cesta  
(Barbara Meyer Cesta) – aka Haus am Gern & Slideshow von Schnappschüssen aus  
der Robert Walser Sculpture

Aus dem Programmtext :

*Outsider Art und Tradition, ist das nicht ein Gegensatz in sich? Können Traditionen für eine Kunst, die abseits des Kunstbetriebes entsteht, eine Rolle spielen und welche? Oder bedingen sich Outsider Art und Kunstbetrieb vielmehr wechselseitig? Wo finden wir eine Tradition der Outsider Art bzw. „Outsider“-Positionen in der Kunst? Anstelle der sich ewig wiederholenden Diskussionen um die „Richtigkeit“ der Begriffe soll nach Traditionen der Kunstrezeption gefragt werden: Welche Kunsttraditionen spiegeln sich in der jeweils aktuellen Debatte? Mit welchem Verständnis widmet sich zeitgenössische Kunst Randthemen und der Outsider Art?*

Das Open Art Museum war an Thomas Hirschhorns Ansatz interessiert, sein Projekt in Biel Robert Walser zu widmen, an seinem Verständnis von Einschluss und „Outsidern“ und das Anknüpfen an eine Outsider-Tradition: „Be an Outsider! Be a Hero! Be Robert Walser!“

Die Einladung zur Tagung erfolgte, da wir die Robert Walser Sculpture begleitet, beobachtet, mitdiskutiert und Menschen für das Projekt zusammengeführt haben, und zwischen dem Grünschuhpharao Parzival‘ (als seine Verleger) und Thomas Hirschhorn (als seine Künstlerkollegen) genau an der Schnittstelle standen.

RS Where to start?

BMC Let's start with us.

RS We are artists.

BMC Are we?

RS As such, we have been invited to speak here.

BMC So we are artists.

RS But what is art?

BMC Old and difficult question.

RS Maybe Thomas can give us an answer.

BMC Thomas Hirschhorn? Is Thomas here?

RS (ins Publikum) Is Thomas here?

BMC No, Thomas is not here.

RS Then I guess we'll have to find an answer ourselves.

BMC Why not. How about: Art is the continuous and ongoing reconfiguring of reality.

RS Sounds good, at least logically.

BMC But what is Outsider Art?

RS Outsider art is the continuous and ongoing reconfiguring of reality.

BMC So there is no difference at all?

RS It depends on your point of view.

BMC Point of view?

RS Certainly, the point of view is crucial.

BMC My point of view?

RS Our point of view.

BMC As an artist?

RS Our point of view as artists, yes.

BMC Our standpoint as artists in society?

RS That's too vague and general for me.

BMC Why?

RS Because it is not we as artists who have chosen our standpoint in society.

BMC But who then?

RS These decisions and assignments were made without our intervention long before our time.

BMC Then we have no influence on them at all?

RS No, because the coincidence of our birth largely defines our standpoint.

BMC And not the coincidence of our death?

RS Death does not free us from our point of view.

BMC Nice – and bitter too.

RS It is bitter, but it is part of our being as humans and artists.

BMC Then there is no escape?

RS Nope.

**BMC** Not for you and me as autonomous artists who reconfigure reality ?

**RS** No.

**BMC** I feel unwell.

**RS** How comes?

**BMC** My goal was to be outside of that system to reconfigure it.

**RS** Never mind. You are inside, you are part of the culture. You are human. And the passing on of behaviour and action patterns creates ...

**BMC** ... culture – within a social group, I know!

**RS** Exactly.

**BMC** You mean instincts don't count?

**RS** No.

**BMC** Then animals have no concept of culture, even within their social groups?

**RS** No. Except for crows, dolphins and apes... who knows?

**BMC** All clear. They are outsiders then...

**RS** No, nothing is clear!

**BMC** Why?

**RS** Because we still haven't defined what is meant by Outsider Art.

**BMC** Isn't it comparable to religion: some are inside the church, others are outside?

**RS** And would the outsiders be those in the church – or those outside?

**BMC** It depends on the point of view.

**RS** Aha, there the snake bites into his tail.

**BMC** Exactly. And don't forget about the famous Klein Bottle, constructed in a way that its outer surface merges into its inner surface, which means that we are actually inside the bottle when it stands in front of us...

**RS** Good point! This, of course, makes the question of the point of view obsolete...

**BMC** Not quite, but this helps: Churches – like museums, ships, vacation camps and retirement homes – are all heterotopias.

**RS** Meaning?

**BMC** Heterotopias unfold a difference in relation to the remaining space.

**RS** And whoever is in the heterotopia is therefore an outsider?

**BMC** Yes.

**RS** Oh, so to say the Robert Walser Sculpture by Thomas Hirschhorn was a heterotopia?

**BMC** Exactly.

**RS** Conclusion: whoever got involved in it became an outsider?  
An outsider inside a Sculpture?

**BMC** The dentists, the rats, the dogs, the gunmen and the people of color?

**RS** The curators, the thieves, the sponsors??

**BMC** And when they left the sculpture, became they insiders outside the sculpture?

**RS** Im getting really confused...

**BMC** Don't worry! Thomas has made an ingenious solution to this problem...

**RS** Please tell me...

**BMC** Only the heroes became outsider...  
Everyone else was just a "visitor." Even us two.

**RS** Only the Heroes?

**BMC** Heroes in the figurative sense.

**RS** Oh, heroes like Robert Walser?

**BMC** Or Parzival'.

**RS** Ah, or Malik. Does being a hero require a mission, an addiction or a limitation?

**BMC** No, but it can't hurt to have one...

**RS** Didn't we say earlier that the coincidence of our birth,  
as well as tradition, determines our point of view?

**BMC** Yes, exactly – you did.

**RS** Then how can we decide for ourselves whether we can be a hero or not?

**BMC** Obviously we can't. But we can decide for ourselves  
whether to worship the ashes or pass on the fire...

**RS BMC** ... ..

**RS** What is a hero?

**BMC** Sorry, no more time left now.