

Indirekt zeigt Wagner mit ihrem Buch, dass materialhistorische und bautechnikgeschichtliche Übersichten zur Herstellung und Verwendung der Materialien der Architektur des 20. Jahrhunderts weiterhin ein Desiderat darstellen. Zu nennen wären allenfalls für die USA Thomas C. Jester (Hg.) *Twentieth-Century Building Materials. History and Conservation*, New York 1995; für Belgien die umfangreiche Studie von Stephanie Van de Voorde, Inge Bertels und Ine Wouters, *Post-War Building Materials in Housing in Brussels 1945–1975*, Vrije Universiteit Brussel 2015 (online: <http://materiaux.deconstructiondapresguerre.be/>); sowie für die Schweiz Uta Hassler (Hg.), *Vom Baustoff zum Bauprodukt. Ausbaumaterialien in der Schweiz 1950–1970*, München 2018.

Zu fragen bleibt, ob die Beschränkung auf ein einziges Material und dessen Betrachtung über alle Brüche des 20. Jahrhunderts hinweg nicht ertragreicher gewesen wäre. Tatsächlich ist Glas (in

seinen verschiedenen Varianten und Sonderformen als Opak-Glas, Schaufenster-Glas, Glas-Paneele, Glasmosaiksteine, „Plexiglas“, Bildschirmfronten, Vitrinen usw.) das einzige Material, das sich in allen Kapiteln des Buches wiederfindet. Gerade Glas ruft in vielfältiger Weise Themen wie Zurschaustellung, Ausgrenzung, Distinktion oder (vorgebliche) soziale Transparenz auf, und es erlebte im letzten Jahrhundert mehrfach technologische Weiterentwicklungen. Jedenfalls verweist Glas aus Sicht des Rezensenten auf eine vielfältige Materialität, die sich in Berlin – Petrischale und Spiegelkabinett der deutschen Architekturgeschichte der Moderne – durchaus facettenreich reflektieren ließe.

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Self-reflective art history: Griselda Pollock on Charlotte Salomon

Griselda Pollock
**Charlotte Salomon and the
 Theatre of Memory.**

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The work of Charlotte Salomon (*Berlin, 16.4.1917, † 10.10.1943, Auschwitz-Birkenau; *fig. 1*) raises profound challenges for an author. How might an author take into account all of its complexity? What form might be used to do so? Reviewing a book that addresses its complexity leads to an equally

challenging but equally stimulating task. *Charlotte Salomon and the Theatre of Memory* by Griselda Pollock provides a highly detailed close study of Charlotte Salomon's *Leben? oder Theater?*, and, at the same time, takes into account the varied contexts in which the work was produced and received. Historical, political, gendered and ethical frames are employed to unpack why the work is the way it is: what is the narrative of the work? Why this narrative? How has it been produced? Why in this format? And so on. Pollock draws out the ambiguity of the focus of her study, the “unusual ‘thing’ that is at once artwork, document, testimony, history, fiction, performance, memorial book, philosophy and a text creatively registering its ‘unnatural’ historical moment in an utterly novel artistic form” (484). Rather than focus on finding answers to all of



Fig. 1 Charlotte Salomon, Self-Portrait, 1940. Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte_Salomon#/media/File:Charlotte_S.jpg)

reproduced in book format in 1963, the work entered the collection of the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam (not the Stedelijk) in 1971. Further partial exhibitions followed in Europe and the United States with the 1992 exhibition at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in the Centre Pompidou marking only the second display of Salomon's work in a major modern art museum, while its

the questions raised by the work, Pollock acknowledges that some remain unresolved. *Charlotte Salomon and the Theatre of Memory* provides an extensive analytical study and opens up the scope for further research whether on the implications of Salomon's practice or on the work of other artists in applying the model introduced by this book to other subjects. In this way, Pollock offers a new format for a monograph in which all of the various frames in which the work was produced and received are fully explored.

LIFE? OR THEATRE?

Charlotte Salomon is best known for her compilation of 769 gouaches in a book format, *Leben? oder Theater? (Life? or Theatre?)*. Produced between 1941 and 1942, the work combines painted images with painted words, theatrical, cinematic and musical allusions. First partially exhibited with some other works by Salomon in 1961 in the Fodor Museum (an annexe of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam), and first partially

inclusion in *Inside the Visible: an elliptical traverse of twentieth century art in, of and from the feminine*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, in 1996, located her practice alongside that of some better known female artists. Both of these exhibitions can be considered signs that her work and that her name as an artist were increasingly valued.

The Royal Academy exhibition in 1998, that toured to major art institutions in Toronto, Boston and New York, and included over 400 of the gouaches, decisively situated both *Leben? oder Theater?* and the artist Charlotte Salomon in the public domain. Subsequently, some of the work (*Leben? oder Theater?* is rarely exhibited in its entirety) have been shown in both Jewish historical or Holocaust institutions as well as within the framework of art exhibitions. A selection of the series was included in dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel, in 2012, firmly signalling its significance to a contemporary art audience too, while 450 gouaches were reproduced in German, Dutch, French and English editions by Taschen in 2017 at an afford-

Fig. 2 Charlotte Salomon, *Leben? Oder Theater? Ein Singespiel*, chapter 7, fol. 4596 (Charlotte Salomon. *Leben? Oder Theater?*, ed. by Edward van Voolen, exhib. cat., Munich 2004, p. 216)

able price, indicative that a general reader market now exists for her work. In recent years, numerous other exhibitions have taken place, both substantial and smaller, and noteworthy publications have appeared.

Since the first book on *Leben? oder Theater?* in 1963 many publications have followed, the number increasing exponentially in recent years in line with the increased number of exhibitions. Although these publications have contributed to scholarship on *Leben? oder Theater?*, the recent book by Griselda Pollock is perhaps the first to address the challenges and complexities faced by an author in doing so. Part of the strength of this remarkable, extensive and beautifully produced book of 544 pages, including 383 colour and black and white illustrations, is the way in which it interweaves new scholarship on Salomon's work with the author's reflections on doing so. Not only does Pollock's voice appear throughout the book, with her use of the first person drawing the reader into her analysis and into the difficulties faced by the researcher in unravelling the many facets of Salomon's work, but a six page Appendix (in a smaller font than that used in the rest of the book) sets out "A Personal History across *Leben? oder Theater?*".



This Appendix is structured according to key years in Pollock's research on and writing of her book on Salomon's work in which conference papers were given, exhibitions were visited, and so on. The author's openness with regard to the challenges faced by the endeavour are striking and will resonate with other art historians facing comparable tasks. The author's account of her 'academic journey' thus ties back into the writing of the book; Pollock's book did not just happen but related to a series of other books, of exhibitions and of encounters with fellow academics. Just as Salomon's work emerged out of a particular set of circumstances in unexpected ways, so Pollock's engagement with Salomon's work was, to some extent, contingent upon particular personal and cultural events and possibilities. The invitations Pollock

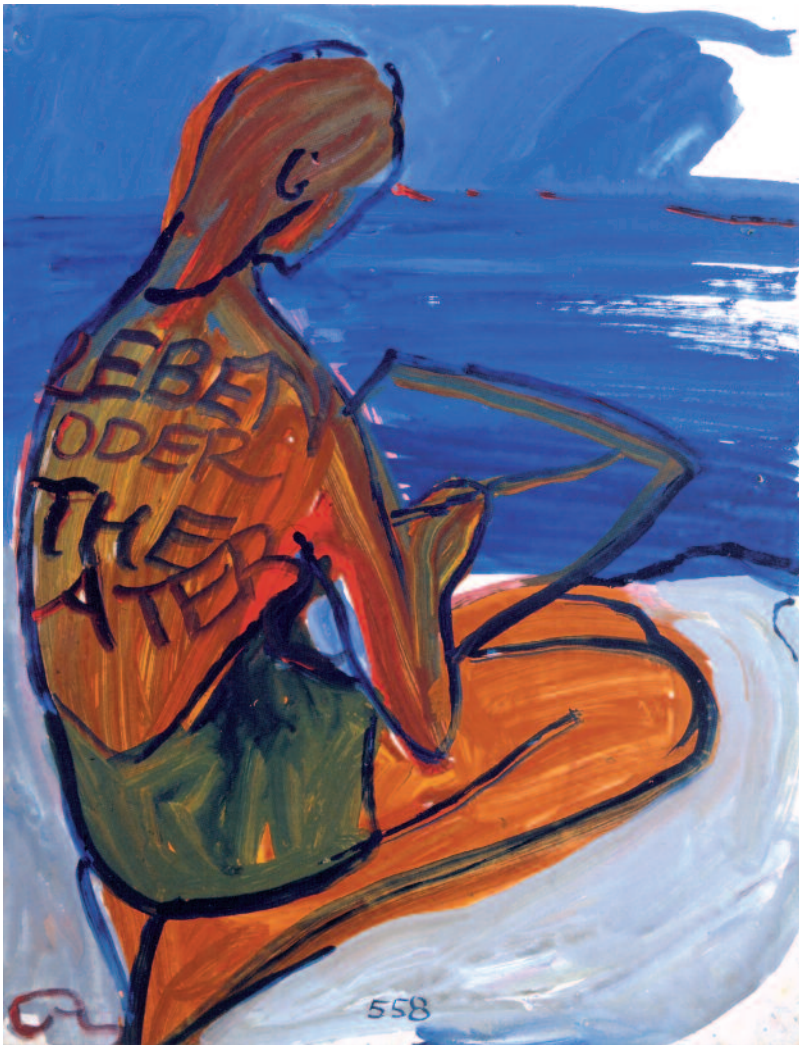


Fig. 3 Charlotte Salomon, *Leben? Oder Theater?*, fol. 4925 [Charlotte Salomon. *Leben? Oder Theater?*, Munich 2004, p. 391]

used today? To what extent do contemporary methods equally limit the visibility and legibility of some works of art?

THE NAME(LESS-NESS) OF THE ARTIST

In order to take into account the complexity of *Leben? oder Theater?*, Pollock has structured her book according to various themes. One of the key themes concerns the name of the artist which operates on a number of different levels. The first name of

received, for example, to contribute to various publications and conferences signal interest in Salomon's work, while her contributions have led to further interest in her work. Both academic and wider cultural developments in recent years have made Salomon's work not only more visible but also enabled it to become more legible. As Pollock argues, the work "has awaited the resources of later twentieth- and now twenty-first-century feminist, Jewish, literary, film, visual, cultural and trauma studies to provide us with the tools to begin to read its multi-threaded project" (483). This raises further questions relating to the discipline of art history: How did Charlotte Salomon produce something that could not be understood at the time? What might this tell us about the methods of analysis that were used in the past and that are

the main subject of *Leben? oder Theater?* is complicated by the fact that it is shared by that of the artist. One of the major difficulties faced by scholars exploring *Leben? oder Theater?* lies in distinguishing between the author/artist of the work (Charlotte Salomon) and the main character included in it (Charlotte Kann). Sharing the same first name, and numerous aspects of their life stories, Kann is often interpreted as Salomon with the complexity of *Leben? oder Theater?* as a modernist work of art reduced to a diary-like narrative in which the life of the artist is conflated with that of the main subject of the work. This is easily done; the narrative of *Leben? oder Theater?* is highly complex and by mapping it onto the life of the artist some of the puzzles seem to find answers. However, Salomon's treatment of her subject sets

up her distance from it too, whether in the subtitle (*Ein Singespiel*, which translates as A Musical Play or, literally, A Sing Play), in the cast list (in which the characters are given symbolic names), or in the numerous theatrical and cinematic allusions employed throughout. As Pollock notes, some of the publications on and exhibitions of sections of *Leben? oder Theater?* use a self-portrait by Salomon for the cover image or for publicity, thereby confusing the matter further by conflating the artist with her painted image and with the main character in her painted series.

The issue of the name of the artist also relates to the reputation of Charlotte Salomon. Completely unknown as an artist during her lifetime, Pollock explores the ways in which the reception of her work has been complicated not only by its complexity but also due to the artist's gender and ethnicity. Had Salomon already been a name as an artist in 1943 she may even have survived the Holocaust. However, she was, in art historical terms, nameless, and so her name was not included among those of known artists who were aided in emigrating and escaping the Holocaust. The name or namelessness of the artist thus affects not only the reception of the work but also the conditions in which it was produced. Pollock discusses the ways in which *Leben? oder Theater?* is viewed in light of the history of the artist whose life story and whose murder at Auschwitz have been bound into its fabric as well as in light of the conventions and expectations that have been and, to a greater or lesser extent, remain, part of the discipline of art history.

THE EVENT AND THE EVERYDAY

The structure of Pollock's analysis of *Leben? oder Theater?* is thus based on a number of key themes that are interwoven throughout *Charlotte Salomon and the Theatre of Memory*. The ways in which Pollock has done so are striking and effective. In some places these themes direct the dominant subject of a chapter, for example, the name or namelessness of the artist features strongly in the

Preface and Introduction as well as in Chapters 1, 4, 8 and 11. Various perspectives are also employed to explore issues relating to gender and ethnicity regarding both Salomon the artist and the content of *Leben? oder Theater?*.

Two other key themes focus on the Event and the Everyday. In this context, the Event refers to the Holocaust, or the Shoah, and its impact on life at the time as well as subsequently. The Event can be seen as big history, tied into the meta-narratives that seem or seemed to give structure and meaning to human existence, while the Everyday can be related to the smaller narratives of daily life that are, arguably, of equal significance. The Event and the Everyday are, of course, interrelated, with the Event appearing to have the greater public impact although the Everyday shapes life as it is lived and can be considered to have an equally profound effect on human life. Pollock's book helps to bring out the importance of the Everyday, not only through Salomon's work but more broadly by addressing the myth of the "eventless private sphere" (as largely inhabited by female subjects) in relation to the supposedly more "eventful public space" (15).

The final chapter highlights some of the difficulties involved in analysing *Leben? oder Theater?*. The chapter explores the missing pages of the Postscript that were not included when the work was presented to the Jewish Historical Museum. These pages first became known in the public domain through the 2012 film directed by Frans Weisz. Titled *Life? or Theatre?* (the title of Salomon's painted work) in contrast to the title of Weisz's 1981 film, *Charlotte* (the first name of the artist and of the main character), the 2012 film was a documentary rather than a feature film. Weisz had been given access to the missing painted pages of the Postscript which he and Judith Herzberg transcribed into a typed text. Those originally withheld pages from the Postscript have since been lost. The content and status of these pages thus raise a number of important questions regarding how they relate to the main body of *Life? or Theatre?*. For

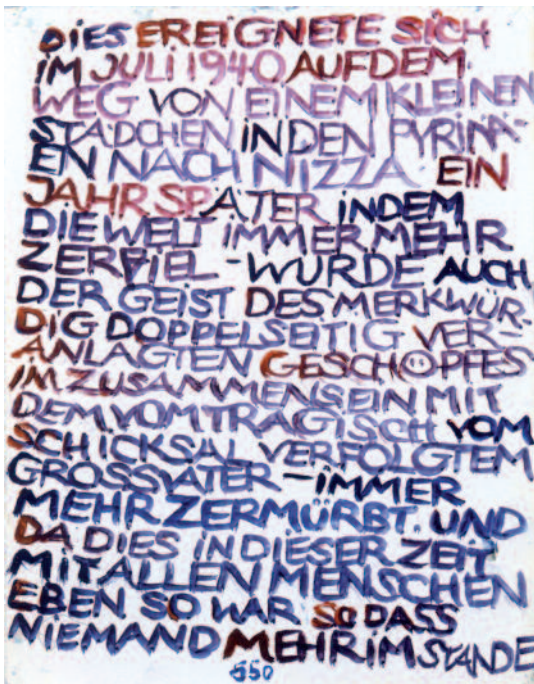


Fig. 4 Charlotte Salomon, *Leben? Oder Theater?*, fol. 4921r and v (Charlotte Salomon. *Leben? Oder Theater?*, Munich 2004, p. 386)

the researcher, the lack of direct access to the original pages raises further questions and presents new challenges. Although most art historical research projects involve access or lack of it to archival material, the ambiguity of these pages presents a particularly tantalising challenge. With the missing pages seemingly addressed to Amadeus Daberlohn, the singing teacher in *Life? or Theatre?* who survived the First World War traumatised, and whose philosophy inspired Charlotte Kann to live. So, should the Postscript be read in the voice of Charlotte Kann (the character), Charlotte Salomon (the person) or CS the artist who signed the work in the same paint used to produce its visual words and images? The profoundly ambiguous status of these now missing pages from the Postscript seems to highlight the ambiguity running through the whole project, encapsulated by the double punctuation in its title; the project, notably, is not titled *Life or Theatre?* but *Life? or Theatre?*.

CLOSE READING

Throughout *Charlotte Salomon and the Theatre of Memory*, Pollock provides an extraordinarily detailed study of *Leben? oder Theater?*. Indeed, the author herself aptly terms it a “slow and close art historical reading” (23). Chapters scrutinise

individual paintings with regard to their material substance as images (the use of colour, the composition, the working processes of the artist and so on) as well as their conceptual placement within the body of the work. The artistic innovation of *Leben? oder Theater?* is brought out through this innovative close study of its many different forms, from Salomon’s use of multiple small images on a page (fig. 2), to the striking large images that fill a page (fig. 3), to her use of semi-transparent sheet with text as well as her painting of words (fig. 4) around, over and between painted images (fig. 5). How, Pollock seems to ask, might the artist find the appropriate aesthetic forms to communicate within difficult and restrictive circumstances? What part did the artist’s use of erasure play in her creative practice? Pollock’s close study of the visuals is paralleled by an equally detailed exploration into the layers of cultural, artistic, musical and cinematic references that fill Salomon’s project. To these Pollock adds more references, enriching her discussion by applying relevant political and philosophical theories as well as taking tangents to other artistic works, both from Salomon’s time and by contemporary artists. Thus, Pollock builds on the complex and dense richness of *Leben? oder Theater?* to provide a book that not only contributes



Fig. 5 Charlotte Salomon, *Leben? Oder Theater?*, chapter 11, fol. 4756–4759 [Charlotte Salomon. *Leben? Oder Theater?*, Munich 2004, p. 292]

to scholarship on it but also makes a highly significant contribution to the discipline of art history.

The author of this review co-curated with Erik Riedel the exhibition *Erinnerung – Bild – Wort: Arnold Daghani und Charlotte Salomon [Memory – Image – Word: Arnold Daghani and Charlotte Salomon]*, Jewish Museum, Frankfurt a. M. (12 October 2012 to 3 February 2013; see also Deborah

Schultz/Edward Timms, *Pictorial Narrative in the Nazi Period: Felix Nussbaum, Charlotte Salomon and Arnold Daghani*, London 2009).

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Wiederentdeckte mittelalterliche Wandmalereien aus Artins (Frankreich) im Deutschen Burgenmuseum auf der Veste Heldburg

Die 25 Kilometer westlich von Coburg gelegene Veste Heldburg in Thüringen verfügt zwar über viel Platz; dennoch stellte sich für die Planer des im Jahr 2016 eröffneten Deutschen Burgenmuseums das Problem, für einige mittelalterliche Wandmalereien ausreichend große Ausstellungsflächen zu finden. Dieses Konvolut von sieben großformatigen Wandmalereifragmenten, die sich zum Teil seit Herbst 2017 im Museum befinden, deren erst jetzt geklärte spektakuläre Provenienz sowie ihre Restaurierung sind Gegenstand dieses Beitrags.

SCHLACHTENGETÜMMEL

Das größte, 6,5 m x 3 m messende Fragment weist typische Gliederungselemente hochmittelalterlicher Wandmalerei auf (*Abb. 1*). Begrenzt von zwei farbigen Bändern sowie von einer den unteren Bereich zierenden Vorhangmalerei ist auf der Mittelfläche in zahlreichen narrativen Details eine Reiter Schlacht dargestellt. Die beiden sich bekämpfenden Scharen haben sich bereits durchmischt.

Mit Lanzen und Schwertern stechen und schlagen die Berittenen aufeinander ein. Bedingt durch zahlreiche Fehlstellen ist die Szene unvollständig. Auf dem kleineren Fragment links von der zentralen Darstellung bekämpfen sich zwei mit Ringpanzern gerüstete Krieger. Ein Reiter auf braunem Pferd wird von seinem Gegner auf gelbem Ross mit der Lanze attackiert. Wie die Blutströme andeuten, hat diese nicht nur den roten Schild, sondern auch den Oberkörper des Reiters durchstoßen. Auf dem nur teilweise erhaltenen roten Dreieckschild des Sterbenden sind die Buchstaben ‚G I E R‘ oder ‚C I E R‘ zu erkennen. Seinen Sattel ziert zudem ein kleines weißes Kreuz. Hinter dem braunen Pferd stakt der Vorderleib eines rosafarbenen Rosses hervor.

In dem rechts anschließenden Bildfragment waren ebenfalls eine Vielzahl hinter- und nebeneinander gestaffelter Reiter dargestellt. Eine große Fehlstelle in der Malschicht oberhalb des rosafarbenen Pferdekörpers gibt den Blick frei auf eine tieferliegende ältere, in Eisenoxidrot angelegte Malerei. Ob es sich hierbei um eine Sinopie – also die Entwurfszeichnung – eines später nicht ausgeführten Freskos oder Reste einer früheren Malerei (mit Darstellung eines Zeltlagers?) handelt, lässt sich nicht sagen. Im anschließenden, besser erhaltenen Bereich der Wandmalerei schirmt sich ein