

Francesco Leonelli

The contribution of History of Ideas to History of Art

The German History of Art has been particularly generous about speculating on the possibility of finding a good and permanent method of the analysis of works of art. In particular, Hans Sedlmayr and Otto Pächt wrote interesting essays in relation to identifying a rigorous method in art history. For instance, Pächt, in *Methodisches zur Kunsthistorischen Praxis*, wonders how it would be possible for us to recognise the exact moment in which we could finally assert that we are observing and understanding an object in the right way (whatever this "right way" may be)¹. Moreover, according to Pächt, the same large amount of philosophical, iconological and theological interpretations that art historians sometimes believe they see behind a work of art leads, on the contrary, to misinterpretations (Pächt takes as an example the many abstracted philosophical and theological theories extracted from the works of Hyronimus Bosch)². In this case, Pächt considers a key issue of art history and aesthetic, namely if an "objective way" could be found to observe and correctly interpret a work of art. This question gives rise to many others: To what extent is the creation of theories and conjectures in the History of Art a result of our scrupulous analytical observation? And to what extent are our personal a priori ideas and idiosyncrasies actually responsible for the creation of a theory? Is there an objective reality and independence of the work of art which interacts somehow with the subjectivity of the observer? Hans Sedlmayr, in his essay *Zu einer strengen Kunstwissenschaft* [Toward a rigorous study of Art], wrote:

"However it would be a mistake to conclude from all of this that aesthetic products are entirely "subjective" entities. On the contrary: just as works of art are repeatedly re-created and formed anew by viewing subjects, each work of art is itself, in its totality, an objective reality, a separate object world that can be examined and accepted like any other concrete reality and that

can be penetrated through contemplation or conceptualization".³

According to these words, the work of art has an objectivity independent of the observer, but represents at the same time a subjective entity being constantly re-created. In this respect, the creation of a historical-artistic theory brings to mind that which Stephen Toulmin called a "two-way affair"⁴, with regard to the observation of a scientific object in post-modern science. The observer and the object being observed are personally involved in a kind of reciprocal influence, in which the scientist loses the aura of positivistic „neutral spectator" and becomes part of an intellectual osmosis. More recently, Bruno Latour stressed how this kind of osmosis generates considerable confusion in this "modern era", since our society is no longer able to categorise and circumscribe all the "hybrids" caused by the observation of nature and the creation of new scientific, ethical and sociological issues⁵. This confusion is even greater if we think about the History of Art per se. Normally, art historians find themselves face to face with a huge number of paintings, sculptures, engravings, miniatures etc. and are often unable to identify the origin or precise date of a piece. In this case, the art historian's work is similar to that of a scientist. Indeed, we can find in both cases an attempt to bring order through observation into an otherwise disorganized universe of data, as Erwin Panofsky highlighted in his *Meaning of Visual Arts*:

"Thus, while science endeavors to transform the chaotic variety of natural phenomena into what may be called a cosmos of nature, the humanities endeavor to transform the chaotic variety of human records into what may be called a cosmos of culture. [...] In both cases the process of investigation seems to begin with observation. But both the observer of a natural phenomenon and the examiner of a record are not only confined to the limits of their range of vision and to the avail-

able material; in directing their attention to certain objects they obey, knowingly or not, a principle of pre-selection dictated by a theory in the case of the scientist and by a general historical conception in the case of the humanist".⁶

Moreover, we can find another similarity between Humanities and Science. The methodological process of theory-formation is, in any case, a psychological process and therefore is exposed to a multiplicity of factors which are often completely independent from mere objective observation. Karl Popper expressed himself clearly against the possibility of the logical reconstruction of the processes which underlie the formation of a scientific theory⁷, and this is even more true for that which concerns Humanities. Nobody would be able to reproduce exactly the creative process of a scientific theory. Similarly, no-one would have the ability to reconstruct the procedures that scholars, artists and historians adopt in order to create or re-create a cultural epoch. For instance, what do we mean when we use the word "Mannerism?" To this day, we are still unable to reach a real agreement as to what constitutes the definition of "Mannerism". In this sense, the History of Art has not been able to give clear stylistic coordinates of what is meant by this term, sometimes creating semantic hocus-pocus ad hoc as the linguistic short-circuit „stylish style"⁸, or even trying to invent macro-categories to include the various manifestations of Mannerism in Art, Literature and Poetry, as in the case of Arnold Hauser⁹. However, a substantial difference occurs between the methods of humanistic disciplines and those of the scientific. In the creative process of a theory, the scientists must determine their goals collectively and endeavour to achieve them, providing results that should then be accepted by the scientific community. Although Paul Feyerabend has convincingly demonstrated how the scientific method is often the result of misinterpretation, deceptions and recycling of theories previously considered incorrect¹⁰. Science seems, at least apparently, to possess a more rigorous structure and a better knowledge of its purposes in comparison to Humanities. It is questionable whether the "means justify the end" if a group of chemists, physicists or lab technicians reach their pre-fixed goals, in order for the results to be accepted by the scientific



Abb. 1: Hagesandros, Polydoros and Athenodoros, *Laocöon and his sons*, 1st Century b. C., Marble, 208 x 163 x 112, Vatican Museums, Rome.

community. A new step in scientific knowledge has been taken, as well as a contribution to scientific theories. Even though the epistemological debate is always fervent, we can claim, with approximation, that in the sciences a theory is given credence only when empirically tested and approved by a large proportion of a community.

In the humanistic disciplines, and primarily in the various branches of historical disciplines, the procedures don't seem to be so straightforward, and neither the results. Actually, we can say that the world of Geisteswissenschaften, which Wilhelm Dilthey first separated from Naturwissenschaften, appears fragmented and random. Historians study events, facts or items belonging to the past in an attempt to determine historical occurrences or, in the case of art historians, try to recreate the cultural and stylistic climate of a place and time through a work of art. But there is actually no reliable test to validate or invalidate a theory or conjecture, as happens in sciences. A well-known example in Art History could be the famous sculpture of Laocöon and his sons (Abb. 1).

During the entire course of the 18th Century and beyond, this piece was regarded as the exemplification of the calmness and balance of Greek Art. This was due to the theories of Johann Joachim Winckelmann who saw in this Roman copy of a Hellenistic sculpture the ideal of "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" (*edle Einfalt und stille Größe*)¹¹. Winckelmann's theories

and descriptions of sculptures shaped the aesthetic of a whole century but nowadays, since the antiquarian infatuation with the Greek past is in reality confined to archeology, we are generally prone to see in the Laocoon a typical example of intense and pathetic "Hellenistic Baroque", that is, quite the opposite of what Winckelmann (and together with him the 18th Century scholars), saw in this work. This is an instance of an art object assuming two diametrically opposed meanings in two different epochs, simply because research methodologies and horizons of aesthetic expectations have changed radically. But can we claim beyond all doubt that the 18th Century interpretation of the Laocoon was completely wrong and, on the contrary, ours is the correct one? Actually, it can't be claimed. It would be impossible for instance to speak about scientific evidence that the movements of Laocoon and his sons recall the typical Baroque pathos, instead of Winckelmann's "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur". Even if we try to observe the statue from all angles and endeavour to find convincing arguments to confirm our theses, we must deal with the fact that for someone else the same sculpture will have a totally different meaning and appearance. This complexity of finding an agreement and a common method in the Arts has been well explained in the book *An Introduction to Reasoning* by Stephen Toulmin, Richard Rieke and Allan Janik:

*"In the law, all sorts of rational considerations finally come together in courts, the only place where disputed issues can be definitively decided. In science, too, the soundness and significance of novel arguments is finally decided in a collective debate, carried on among those who have a professional grasp of the relevant scientific problems. But in the fine arts, there exists no single collective forum within which the "rational adequacy" of new products and procedures – whether those of the working artist or the critic, the historian or the theorist – must finally be weighed".*¹²

This reasoning has been taken somewhat too far. The tradition of History of Art studies in itself establishes somehow the coordinates of a, though variable, "rational adequacy" within the discipline, which should be followed by art historians and critics when study-

ing an artistic period or art object. Often it is far more difficult to go "off the rails", writing something really "revolutionary" and challenging a well established tradition of studies. For example, very few art historians would dare to undermine a secular tradition of iconological or stylistic studies behind artists like Michelangelo or Leonardo da Vinci. Nevertheless, this doesn't deter more daring scholars from giving personal interpretations which sometimes become an integrant part of Art History. This is, for instance, the case of Mona Lisa's description as a femme fatale by Walter Pater in his studies on the Renaissance. Since the days of Aestheticism are gone, today it would be difficult to have the same perception of Leonardo's masterpiece. This is actually possible thanks to the beautiful descriptions of Pater, through which we can glimpse a ratio into his interpretation, enabling us to understand why the Mona Lisa could also be observed as a vampire:

*"Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed! All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the mysticism of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands".*¹³

We can see here another methodological aspect of the History of Art in its purest form, and generally of historical discipline, that should be emphasized: the narrative aspect. The History of Art is often written by

scholars not directly involved in the creative process of a work of art. The admirably concise and sarcastic quote generally attributed to Picasso („When art critics get together, they talk about forms, structures and meanings. When artists get together, they talk about where you can buy cheap turpentine“) stresses how the world of "speaking of arts" seems unavoidably separated from the world of "creating art". To quote an Italian intellectual from the first half of the 20th Century, Renato Serra, the historical account of a fact differs from the fact itself. That is what Serra calls with the Latin expression „opus superadditum operi“, a work added above and beyond another work¹⁴. This discrepancy between the existence hic et nunc of an indisputable fact and its survival in history in the form of a mere account causes many difficulties in finding an effective method of study in the historical discipline. Concerning the History of Art, on one side we have a concrete work of art in its material consistence, and on the other side we have a sort of "parallel existence" of the same work through the ideas, research and essays of art historians translated in the form of a text. Hans Belting, in *The End of the History of Art* [Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte], has remarked how the process of writing about Arts represents an „analogy of mimesis“, since the work of art is supposed „to reproduce either something which was considered real, such as nature, or a truth, such as beauty“. The critic or art historian is supposed after all „to reproduce the work by describing its relation to the content or model it reproduced, [...] transferring its visual statement to the verbal system of the text“¹⁵. This writing about art and artists, according to Belting, was sometimes interpreted as a challenge for the critics to imitate the artists and consequently re-create a work of art with words, which is not a viable solution to the discrepancy:

“But the imitation of the artist is far from a simple solution and may not even be desirable. In our discipline, moreover, it is frustrated by the inconsistency between verbal language and visual imagery, at least in those instances where this distinction (which is being undermined by the integration of verbal signs into art) still holds true. Art history has not even reached a stage

*where such a mimesis (the critic or historian as artist) could be an issue”.*¹⁶

At this point, it is questionable whether a connection between works of art and Art History could be really found, as well as between artists and art historians. Moreover, would it be possible to speak about a valid art-historical hermeneutic method, which is always adaptable and applicable? It is neither really easy to answer these questions, nor is it possible to find a practical solution to them. Nevertheless, in our opinion, a unique contribution to the History of Art could come from a too-often neglected discipline, that is the History of Ideas.

In the beautiful and memorable introduction to *The Great Chain of Being*, Arthur Lovejoy explains his conception of the History of Ideas. From Lovejoy's words comes an adaptable discipline, able to analyze in depth the formation of the ideas and doctrines in the same way as the structure of chemical combinations. It is worth quoting here a lengthy but extremely significant excerpt:

“The total body of doctrine of any philosopher or school is almost always a complex and heterogeneous aggregate – and often in ways which the philosopher himself does not suspect. It is not only a compound but an unstable compound, though, age after age, each new philosopher usually forgets this melancholy truth. One of the results of the quest of unit- ideas in such a compound is, I think, bound to be a livelier sense of the fact that most philosophic systems are original or distinctive rather in their patterns than in their components. When the student reviews the vast sequence of arguments and opinions which fill our historical textbooks, he is likely to feel bewildered by the multiplicity and seeming diversity of the matters presented. Even if the array of material is simplified somewhat by the aid of conventional – and largely misleading – classifications of philosophers by schools or -isms, it still appears extremely various and complicated; each age seems to evolve new species of reasonings and conclusions, even though upon the same old problems. But the truth is that number of essentially distinct philosophical ideas or dialectical motives is – as the number of really distinct jokes

*is said to be – decidedly limited, though, no doubt, the primary ideas are considerably more numerous than the primary jokes”.*¹⁷

Lovejoy presents as examples the ideas of God and Nature in the History of Philosophy, concepts which are able to be analyzed through a systematic breakdown of the doctrines in the philosophical traditions. With regard to Art History, it would be really useful to apply a similar analytical method for artistic periods. For instance, when we speak about “style” or “manner” in regard to an artist or artistic epoch, we should place these terms in a wider context, attempting to understand in primis which meaning these two terms could have for the men of the period. We should consider not only the impact on visual arts, but also on poetry, literature and even science. Of course it doesn't imply that an art historian should have huge amounts of knowledge in many different areas. It would only be desirable that he could be witty and adventurous enough to search in distant fields for those „unit-ideas”, as Lovejoy calls them, which are the cornerstones of cultural and artistic periods. To do this, in our opinion, the art historian should try to identify himself, as much as possible, with the epoch at the center of his studies. He should not forget, however, that he is a man who belongs to another era, and therefore his personal education, beliefs, taboos and idiosyncrasies, which sometimes cause an irreparable fracture between him and the object of his studies. In this case, the History of Ideas could be a very good help to the History of Art in understanding how much the ideas of the past look like or differ from the ideas of the time in which the art historian is living. The philologist Bruno Snell demonstrated with rare subtlety and a good interdisciplinary approach how the idea of Man and a human body in the *Ilias* of Homer consists of a "federation" of limbs and motions with no idea of a higher unity, like a puppet made of articulated parts with no direct verbal unifying expression (there is no term in the whole homeric poems for "body")¹⁸. This lack of unity can be seen also in the Greek archaic painting (Abb. 2), as in the famous Dipylon Vases, in which men are represented like puppets, whose parts seem easily separable.

These considerations lead us to think that our ways of observing and regarding the human being and his re-



Abb.2: *Sketch of a man painted on a Dipylon Vase.*

lationships with the world around him, are completely different from those of the men of the Homeric Epoch. We will probably never be able to understand them completely without looking syncretically at the various expressions of art and culture as testimony of a different world view. Paul Feyerabend, who often quotes the essays of Snell, reaches a really interesting conclusion in the meaning of these cultural patterns:

“The argument (which can never be conclusive) consists in pointing to characteristic features in distant fields. If the idiosyncrasies of a particular style of painting are found also in statuary, in the grammar of contemporary languages (and here especially in covert classifications which cannot be easily twisted around), if it can be shown that these languages are spoken by artists and by the common folk alike, if there are philosophical principles formulated in the languages which declare the idiosyncrasies to be features of the world and not just artifacts and which try to account for their origin, if man and nature have these features not only in paintings, but also in poetry, in popular sayings, in common law, [...] then we may assume that we are not just dealing with technical failures and particular purposes, but with a coherent way of life, and we may expect that

*people involved in this way of life see the world in the same way in which we now see their pictures. It seems that all these conditions are satisfied in archaic Greece: the formal structure and the ideology of the Greek epic as reconstructed both from the text and from later references to it repeat all the peculiarities of the later geometric and the early archaic style”.*¹⁹

This article is actually valid for many other cultural periods. For instance, it would be extremely interesting to observe, with a History of Ideas approach, why in the art and literature of the 15th Century, especially in Nordic countries, it is possible to find a constant tendency (indeed coming from the Middle Ages) to accentuate every detail and develop „every thought and image to the end, or give concrete form to every concept of the mind”²⁰. This tendency to minutely describe the world is visible in the painting "Adoration of the Mystic Lamb", created by Hubert and Jan Van Eyck (Abb. 3), as much as a kind of Horror Vacui in the many examples of contemporary poetry, theology and even scientific text, reflecting a „coherent way of life” as Feyerabend calls it, very distant from ours.

This is to say: when we observe a work of art and use such terms as "space", "order", "proportions" or even "style", are we really aware that our ideas have radically changed from those men whose creations are the center of our attention? Are we aware that we are dealing with "epistemic structures", which reflect an entire world view with countless links to other contemporary cultural products? When we are aware of that, we will also understand that our way to analyze a work of art or an artistic period is strictly personal, and that an absolutely valid method for the History of Art is not really possible. Indeed, the encounter between an observer and a work of art has the same value as that between two distant world views, and therefore would be at least really difficult to find a generally acceptable sort of agreement to observe, describe and re-create the account of this encounter in a text. We have merely attempted here to suggest a more open approach to the History of Art, which takes into account how the ideas are distributed in the various fields of knowledge, and how the art historian

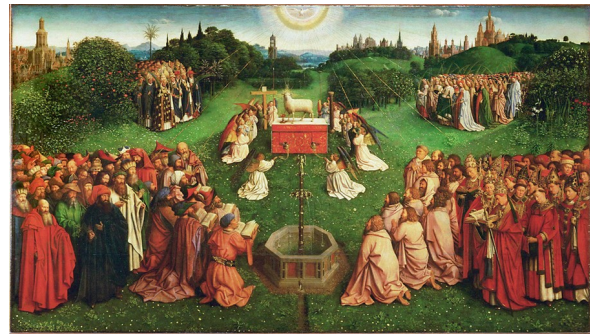


Abb. 3: Hubert and Jan van Eyck, *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* (central panel of the Ghent Altarpiece), 1426-1432, Oil on panel, 134 x 237, Sint-Baafskathedraal, Gent.

has to sometimes become a kind of "dowsing" in order to discover them.

Endnoten

1. Otto Pächt, *Methodisches zur Kunsthistorischen Praxis*, München 1995, S. 192-195.
2. Pächt claims that the works of Bosch caused an "Ausfluß oder Manifestation bestimmter philosophischer oder theologischer Konzeptionen [...], ohne daß diese Deutungen, diese Lesungen überzeugt hätten". Pächt 1995, *Methodisches*, S. 195.
3. Hans Sedlmayr, *Toward a rigorous study of Art*, in *The Vienna School Reader. Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s*, hg. v. Christopher S. Wood, New York 2000, S. 145.
4. "As we now realize, the interaction between scientists and their objects of study is always a two-way affair. There is now way in which scientists can continue to reduce the effects of their observation on those objects without limit. [...] As a result, during the twentieth century scientists have had to change their interpretive standpoint not merely in the human sciences but elsewhere. In quantum mechanics as much as in psychiatry, in ecology as much as in anthropology, the scientific observer is now – willy nilly – also a participant. The scientist of the mid-twentieth century, then, have entered the period of postmodern science." Stephen Toulmin, *The Construal of Reality: Criticism in Modern and Postmodern Science*, in *The Politics of Interpretation*, Nr. 1, 1982, S. 99-111, hier S. 97.
5. See particularly the first chapter "Crisis" in Bruno Latour, *We have never been modern*, Cambridge 1993, S. 1-10.
6. Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the visual arts*, New York 1955, S. 6.
7. "[...] My view of the matter, for what it is worth, is that there is no such thing as a logical method of having new ideas, or a logical reconstruction of this process. My view may be expressed by saying that every discovery contains an 'irrational moment', or a 'creative intuition', in Bergson's sense. In a similar way Einstein speaks of the 'search for those highly universal laws...from which a picture of the world can be obtained by pure deduction. There is no logic path', he says, 'leading to these...laws. They can only be reached by intuition, based upon something like an intellectual love ('Einfühlung') of the objects of experience". Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London 1959, S. 32.
8. "Stylish style" is a definition used several times in John Shearman, *Mannerism*, London 1990.
9. Arnold Hauser, *Der Ursprung der modernen Kunst und Literatur: die Entwicklung des Manierismus seit der Krise der Renaissance*, München 1973.
10. Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method: outline of an anarchist theory of knowledge*, London 1978.
11. Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst*, Dresden-Leipzig 1756, S. 21-22.
12. Stephen Toulmin, Richard Rieke, Allan Janik, *An introduction to reasoning*, 2New York 1984, S. 350-351.
13. Walter Pater, *The Renaissance. Studies in Art and Poetry*. The 1893 text, hg. v. Donald H. Hill, Los Angeles-Berkeley-London 1980, S. 98-99.

14. "L'uomo che opera è un fatto. E l'uomo che racconta è un altro fatto. Anche il racconto è una volontà; una creazione, che ha in sé la sua ragione e il suo scopo. L'uomo che racconta, opera: su chi lo sta a sentire, su se stesso, sul passato, sull'avvenire. Ogni testimonianza testimonia soltanto di se stessa; del proprio momento, della propria origine, del proprio fine, e di nient'altro. E' un fatto che s'aggiunge ad altri fatti, nella serie infinita. Opus superadditum operi [...] Il fatto nuovo non è una reliquia, una scheggia del fatto precedente. Ognuno è uno, unus et alter. Ogni lettera non è un riassunto, ma un momento della vita". Renato Serra, Partenza di un gruppo di soldati per la Libia, in *Scritti letterari, morali e politici*, hg. v. Mario Isnenghi, Torino 1974, S. 286.
15. Hans Belting, *The End of the History of Art?*, Chicago-London 1987, S. 59.
16. Belting 1987, *The End of...*, S. 62.
17. Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being. A Study of the History of an Idea*, Cambridge-London 222001, S. 3-4.
18. Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind. The Greek Origins of European Thought*, Oxford 1953, S. 1-22.
19. Feyerabend 1978, *Against the Method*, S. 177.
20. "Art and letters in the fifteenth century share the general and essential tendency of the expiring Middle Ages: that of accentuating every detail, of developing every thought and every image to the end, of giving concrete form to every concept of the mind. Erasmus tells us that he once heard a preacher in Paris preach during forty days on the Parable of the Prodigal Son, so that he devoted all Lent to it. He described his journeys on his setting out and on his return, the bill of the fare of his meals at the inns, the mills he passed, his dicing, etc. torturing the texts of prophets and evangelists to find some that might seem to give some support to his twaddle". Johann Huizinga, *The Waning of Middle Ages*, London 191987, S. 265-266.

Abbildungen

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Abb.2: Bruno Snell, *La cultura greca e le origini del pensiero europeo*, Einaudi (Verlag), Torino 1963, S. 26.

Abb. 3: Foto: Artbible.info. Keine Lizenz angegeben.

Zusammenfassung

Zwei Fragen bilden den Ausgangspunkt: Ist es möglich, eine allgemeine und 'wirksame' Methode zur Kunstgeschichte zu finden? Welche sind *die* geisteswissenschaftlichen Disziplinen, die besonders herangezogen werden können, um die Forschungsarbeit eines Kunsthistorikers zu unterstützen und zu bereichern? In diesem Beitrag wird eine kurze Analyse der Praxis der Kunstgeschichte vorangestellt – und 'versucht', indem sowohl Berührungspunkte mit als auch Unterscheidungen zu anderen wissenschaftlichen Forschungsmethoden diskutiert werden. Kann man etwa, da Kunstgeschichte normalerweise in Form von wörtlicher „Erzählung“ erscheint, wirklich über eine Übereinstimmung zwischen der konkreten Präsenz des Kunstgegenstandes in der Realität und seiner Existenz im Text sprechen? Im Beitrag wird auch der

Vorschlag gemacht, die Kunstgeschichte konsequent in einem ideengeschichtlichen Kontext zu betrachten, vornehmlich in der Richtung, die Arthur Lovejoy in seinem berühmten Essay *The Great Chain of Being* vorgeschlagen hat. Im Grunde schlägt die Ideengeschichte stets eine Brücke zwischen verschiedenen Disziplinen und kann immer neue Aspekte einer Epoche beleuchten, die ansonsten in fachspezifischen Forschungen verbannt oder sogar vernachlässigt bleiben würden. Die Ideengeschichte sollte so idealerweise die Kunstgeschichte immer begleiten und sie dabei unterstützen, etwa das Moment der „schöpferischen Intuition“, im Sinne von Henri Bergson, der Prägung einer Theorie oder einer neuen Kunstepoche zu ergreifen, um darüber eine Art Osmose zwischen den Standpunkten von Gegenwart und Vergangenheit zu fördern.

Autor

Francesco Leonelli wurde 1984 im Ancona (Italien) geboren. Er hat Kunstgeschichte in Rom und Berlin studiert und im Juni 2016 an der Universität „Roma Tre“ über die Briefwechsel römischer und europäischer Gelehrter, Sammler und Künstler des 18. Jahrhunderts promoviert. Seine Interessen richten sich besonders auf die Beziehungen zwischen Literatur und den bildenden Künste sowie auf die Erkenntnistheorie und Methodologie der Kunstgeschichte.

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