

Reader

Abstracts of Participants

**Graduate Workshop
Illnesses – The Antitypes of Health**

Institute of Art History, University of Cologne

14th – 15th June 2019

Organisation

Meike Eiberger & Tobias Linden

Illnesses

The Antitypes of Health



14th and 15th June 2019
Lecture Hall XII



Graduate Workshop

Institute of Art History University of Cologne

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Miniature from the Toggenburg-Bible: Bubonic Plague. Ten plagues of the Exodus story. Book illumination, Parchment, 36,0 x 23,6 cm, 78 E 1, fol. 80 verso. Swiss 1411. Public Domain License: Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

Michael Ancher: The ill Girl (Den syge pige). Oil on Canvas, 80 x 85 cm, Denmark 1882. Public Domain License: The Yorck Project (2002), Zenodot Verlagsgesellschaft mbH.

Organisation

Meike Eiberger
Tobias Linden

Panels and Presentations

Friday, 14th June 2019	Saturday, 15th June 2019
09:00-11:30 Opening Meike Eiberger / Tobias Linden (Workshop Organisation) Keynote: Dr. Ekaterini Kepetzis (University of Cologne) "I'm inspired by a depraved energy, a morbid power" – Constructions of El Greco between Madness and Illness in fin-de-siècle Art Criticism and Popular Art History	09:00-10:15 Opening Keynote: Dr. Véronique Sina (University of Cologne) Popular Graphic Illness Narratives – Representations of Illness and Dis/Ability in Sequential Art
Jenny Lehl (Philipps University of Marburg) „Man schaut eben genau in die Augen des Malers" Ophthalmological Examination of Paintings	Iris Haist (Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne) Marvel's THOR – Divine Power and Deadly Cancer in Comic Books
12:00-13:00 Early Modern Period / Disability Elena Babich (Charles University, Prague) The Fascination with a Person Affected by Hirsutism. Portrait of Helena Antonia from the Velké Losiny Castle Collections Lucas Vanhevel (Ghent University) The Art of Malingering: Feigned Illness in 16th Century Netherlandish Culture	10:30-12:30 Modern Period / Fin de Siècle Lisa Hecht (Philipps University of Marburg) The Death of Pierrot, or the Personification of Tuberculosis in the Work of Aubrey Beardsley Felix Hüttemann (Ruhr-University Bochum) Blurring into the Surroundings – Aesthetic Psychasthenia of Dandyism Johanna Johnen (University of Cologne) Dorian Gray and the "leprosy of sin": Immorality as a Disease
14:30-15:30 Early Modern Period / Illnesses Giulia Longo (Strasbourg University) «Marks of weakness». The Syphilitic Body through Visual Arts: 17th - 19th Century Marek Kwaśny (University of Wrocław) Imaging the Illness. Silesian painter Johann Jacob Eybelwieser (1666-1744) and his Drawings to Matthias Gottfried Purmann's Chirurgia Curiosa (1699)	14:00-16:00 Modern Period / 20th Century Lisa Warring (University of Cologne) The Photographer Miroslav Tichý - Outsider as Marketing Argument Eszter Óze (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) Representing Illness and Biopolitics. A Case Study on Modernism, Hygiene and the Exhibitionary Complex Nina Christine Dusartz de Vigneulle (University of Bonn) Illness and Its Perception in Transition: The Representation of HIV and AIDS in Photography since the 1980s
16:45-18:30 World Café Get Together and Discussion	16:30-17:00 Final Discussion Get Together and Talk
19:00-20:00 Evening Lecture Dr. Irina Metzler (Swansea University) Disability in J.R.R. Tolkien's World: Between Modern Theory and Medieval Theology	Workshop Venue: University of Cologne, Main Building, Lecture Hall XII (Hörsaal XII) Contact: Meike Eiberger meike.eiberger@gmail.com Tobias Linden tobias.linden117@gmail.com

**„Man schaut eben genau in die Augen des Malers“
Ophthalmological Examination of Paintings**

When the ophthalmologist Richard Liebreich declared William Turner's late work to be the consequence of a visual disorder in front of the Auditorium of the Royal Society in March 1872, he initiated a comprehensive ophthalmological art discussion that continues to this day. Liebreich's lecture not only interpreted the artist's late style and modernist works as a result of eye diseases. He also construed the works of art as scientific images and made them fruitful for medical research. At the same time as psychopathological analysis, which understood innovation as a consequence of mental illness and staged the artist as an insane genius, ophthalmological art observations drew a completely different pathological picture of art. The assumption that all pictorial expressions are direct reproductions of visual impressions makes non-naturalistic works of art into the expression of a visual disorder of the artist. In the struggle to explain creativity and the artistic impulse, medical analyses and measurements of the artist's bodies and works represent a distinct path of explanation. My paper focuses on the beginnings of this discourse at the end of the 19th century. By examining a specific medical discourse, it investigates the phenomenon of the diseased artist as construct and topos and traces the genesis of cliché and pathologization as discursive, interdisciplinary scientific events. The paper also discusses to what extent medically-based art discourse is present within contemporary art historical questions. Thus, in their examination of the diseased artist, the ophthalmologists offer presumptive objective and scientific answers to questions of connoisseurship, critique, restoration, and exhibitions that are simultaneously highly topical. Examination of the visually impaired artist offered a field of experimentation for the still young discipline of ophthalmology and represented a possibility to proclaim art as a sovereign territory of medicine.

The Fascination with a Person Affected by Hirsutism.

Portrait of Helena Antonia from the Velké Losiny Castle Collections

The main aim of this paper is to show how the phenomenon of hirsutism, was reflected in Czech visual art in the early 17th century. It studies Helena Antonia's portrait from Velké Losiny castle and examines the reasons why the girl diseased with hirsutism was a kind an inspiration for artists. It also examines how medical knowledge influenced this phenomenon from the late 16th century to the beginning of the 17th century.

This interdisciplinary paper focuses on different aspects that have had the influence of perception of the unknown Velké Losiny artist. On the one hand, the iconographic motive of bearded woman was often associated with the legend about St. Wilgefortis, whose cult was popular in Central Europe at the end of the 16th century. On the other hand, 16th-century physicians tried to explain the reasons of existence a bearded woman "scientifically".

This topic intervenes into several scientific fields and links art history and the history of medicine. It opens space for researching the history of mentality.

Part of this paper is iconological and an iconographic analysis of the portrait of Helena Antonia and researching how 16th and 17th century physicians perceived the hirsutism affected person.

The Art of Malingering: Feigned illness in 16th Century Netherlandish Art

The question of how to discern real illnesses from feigned ones was a tremendously hot topic in 16th century Netherlandish culture. The *Liber Vagatorum* (1504), featuring a woodcut of a man feigning disability on its cover page, warned gullible Christians about the practices of 28 types of ‘false-beggars’, able-bodied vagrants and impostors. The book was incredibly popular in renaissance Europe with many reprints and translations throughout the century. Even Maarten Luther was a great supporter of the book, supplementing the 1528 edition with a foreword. Another contemporary bestseller addressing the topic was Desiderius Erasmus’ *Colloquia* (1518). In the chapter titled *ptochologia* (or beggar-small-talk), two of these false beggars marvel at the artfulness with which one has deceived the other, simulating ulcers and open wounds on his skin by means of sulphur, incense, paint and blood.

Similarly, in the visual arts, as a recent paleopathological study of an early 16th century drawing of cripples (formerly attributed to Hieronymus Bosch) in the Vienna Albertina collection has shown, at least four imposters simulating disability seem to be discernable, intermixed with the depicted. Two versions of this drawing are known, as well as several late 16th century print series based on it, again guaranteeing it being very popular and widespread. With the Albertina-drawing as the starting point of my presentation I want to further address the cultural-historical outlines of the iconography of feigned illness and contextualize its visual exponents in contemporary aesthetic theory.

«Marks of weakness». The Syphilitic Body through Visual Arts: 17th - 19th Century

As an extremely changing, hardly definable and always evolving disease, syphilis influenced numerous social fields throughout the early modern period. Even if many in-depth studies have been made on its cultural history, a comprehensive analysis of its representations in European visual arts is still missed to this day.

And yet, the history of syphilis representations offers to the researcher a unique perspective on the different ways of perceiving and visualizing sexuality and marginal bodies in ancient societies. We can argue that from the earliest representations of syphilis (15th century), to the beginning of the 19th century, the physical body of the sick subject is considered as a unity with its moral identity: in other words, the visual stigmata of syphilis were interpreted as an exterior proof of an internally corrupted soul.

Therefore, the depiction of the same clinical symptoms differs significantly depending on many factors, such as the artist's sensitivity, but also the geographical origin of the artwork, its historical period or even the gender of the characters depicted. For instance, we observed that the depictions of sick masculine bodies always differ from the feminine ones. The purulent, deformed and explicitly suffering masculine bodies express their status of victims of the contagion, whilst the seducing, desirable representations of women indicate their role as responsible for the infection.

These latter, and in particular the prostitutes' bodies, usually seem to spread their corruption on the surrounding objects and spaces, hence giving the viewer a clear sign of their moral and physical decadence, in spite of their luring appearance.

Through a choice of European works of art from different production contexts (academic, scientific, « popular ») we propose to demonstrate to what extent the representations of the syphilitic body is a changing vector of contemporary scientific beliefs, fears and moral preconceptions.

Imaging the illness. Silesian painter Johann Jacob Eybelwieser (1666-1744) and his drawings to Matthias Gottfried Purmann's *Chirurgia Curiosa* (1699)

Born in Wrocław in 1666, Johann Jacob Eybelwieser is primarily known as a skillful painter, author of many portraits, especially those presenting members of Wrocław patriciate, as well as large-scale altar paintings for Catholic orders like Jesuits, Cistercians, the Knights of the Cross with a Red Star or the Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. However, in his work he also appears as an excellent draughtsman and designer of prints engraved by the most outstanding printmakers working in Silesia at that time, such as Florian Bartholomaeus Strachowsky, Johann Tscherning and Johann Oertl. Among the many projects, there is one in particular which deserves a special attention. In 1699 Eybelwieser designed a series of fourteen prints for the book *Chirurgia Curiosa* by Matthias Gottfried Purmann, the chief surgeon of the city of Wrocław. Copperplates, engraved by active in Leipzig Johann Christoph Oberdorffer, show patients in various medical conditions, some surgical instruments along with the methods of their use, as well as the surgical procedures. The very careful presentation of the characters and the details allows us to think that the drawings were a little more than only the artistic vision of Eybelwieser. Perhaps some of the sketches could have been created in one of the city's hospitals – All Saints Hospital or St. Job Hospital in which Purmann acted as a superior. The graphics were presented in a rather schematic, simplified form – their mission was to facilitate the reader's understanding of specific medical conditions and procedures. It is worth mentioning that the prints were also published in the second (1716) and third (1739) edition of the book. Furthermore, in 1706 the book appeared in English under the title *Chirurgia Curiosa: or, The Newest and most Curious Observations in the Whole Art of Chirurgery* (London, 1706).

The main objective of this paper is not only to present the prints, but also to attempt to interpret them, examine their connection with the content of the book, as well as to try to define the professional relationship between the artist and the author himself.

Marvel's THOR – Divine Power and Deadly Cancer in Comic Books

First and foremost, American superhero comics work with exaggeratedly perfect body design as a visualizing agent for virtues and positive character traits. One particularly succinct example of this is the Marvel Comics superhero Thor, based on the Norse deity of the same name

After decades of on-going publication, the story of the mighty god Thor suffered a brief turn of events in 2015: instead a partially disabled human male doctor, a woman, doctor Jane Foster, becomes the Goddess of thunder. But Jane Foster is diagnosed with breast cancer. When she becomes Thor, she temporarily receives the same divine powers as her male predecessors. She undergoes chemotherapy, which is absorbed by the transformation into a god and her health worsens considerably when she returns to her human body. But instead of rescuing herself she chooses to sacrifice her life for the world. She ultimately accepts her imminent death on behalf of a higher goal.

In the comic Jane Foster is portrayed as an emaciated woman wearing a headscarf to hide her hair loss, dark circles under her eyes, and a nightgown that completely annuls her feminine contours. As a result, her illness is manifested in her physical appearance. However, as soon as she picks up Mjolnir, Thor's Hammer, and prepares to fight, she suddenly emerges with long blond hair again, a muscled physique and an oversized bust. Her posture also changes from slightly bent over to straight and upright, reaching out into the surrounding space.

Another difference between these two levels of being lies in the interpretation of the backgrounds and the sceneries. While Jane Foster can be seen in dark streets, in bleak house entrances and street corners, or in hospital, the Goddess of thunder acts in a colorful and at times psychedelic fantasy world.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze and explain in detail the differences between "healthy" and "sick" in American superhero comics and the visual artistry applied to them, using the example of Jason Aaron's *The Mighty Thor* (2015) with artwork by Steven Eptings, Russel Dautermann and Matthew Wilson.

The Death of Pierrot, or the Personification of Tuberculosis in the Work of Aubrey Beardsley

The draftsman, illustrator and author Aubrey Vincent Beardsley (1872-1898) is collectively known as one of the leading figures of the English fin de siècle. Not only his morbid and frivolous illustrations for Oscar Wilde's play "Salomé" (1893) shaped the popular notion of this decade. Beardsley's persona as a sickly artist who died of phthisis pulmonalis (also known as tuberculosis of the lungs) at the age of just 25 is part of the decadent myth, too.

In his oeuvre, Beardsley establishes an imaginary pedigree of historical or fictional personalities, which represent physical and artistic deviance through their infirmities. Among them is the "devil's violinist" Niccolò Paganini, Alexander Pope or Molière. It is hard to deny that his fragile health is a central source for his own artistic creation, given the considerable numbers of invalids among Beardsley's archetypes.

In Beardsley's drawing „The Death of Pierrot" (1896), a figure who returns again and again in the artist's work, is shown in her deathbed. As I will show in my presentation, Beardsley anticipates in this work both the varied traditions that the white clown from Bergamo evoked in art history, as well as the artist's own physical suffering. Himself tied back to bed and suffocated from coughing fits, the young Englishman repeatedly identifies himself with the figure from the commedia dell'arte, which in his work, according to my thesis, becomes the personification of the illness called "consumption" or "white death".

In the course of the 19th century Pierrot became more and more morbidly connoted artistically and literarily, as I shall show in several examples (Gautier, Verlaine, Gérôme, etc.). A starting point for this narrative has always been Antoine Watteau's famous painting

"Pierrot, dit Gilles" (1718/19). Repeatedly, the pain and suffering of the painter are equated with the melancholy depiction of Pierrot. Watteau's tragic death at the age of 36 years of tuberculosis may have strengthened the equation of artist and work in the 19th century. Thus, when the dying Pierrot in Beardsley's drawing discarded Gilles's ribboned shoes and hat to lay down exhaustedly, we face the death of a figure of identification that Beardsley uses consciously to emphasize his affinity to Watteau and to cultivate his own suffering.

Blurring into the Surroundings **Aesthetic Psychasthenia of Dandyism**

Mimicry theorist and Surrealist author Roger Caillois established in his essay *Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia* a pathologic, along with an aesthetic, condition of depersonalization as an „assimilation to the surroundings”, by claiming the disease pattern of psychasthenia to be an aesthetic process.¹

By aestheticizing the disease pattern of psychasthenia, Caillois describes a condition of fatigue, lethargy, which is generally a phenomenon of depersonalization. This reminds of coherences between ennui (boredom), neurasthenia and the blasé attitude as aesthetic-pathological complexes of dandyism, that were established approximately one hundred years before Caillois' utilization of these terms.

This aesthetic complex as deprivation of the subject-state, as a seduction by the surroundings, in which the subject blurs into these surroundings, has already been developed in 19th century dandyism, which I will point out in my talk by the examples of Joris-Karl Huysmans novel *À Rebours* (1884) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminist horror story *The yellow wallpaper* (1892). Following questions will be significant to the talk:

In what way is a blurring into the surroundings visualized? How could a disease pattern of the alienation of the subject be fruitful for the aesthetic utilization of dandyism? Which surroundings are imagined and what do they tell us about an aesthetic of depersonalization not only in literature but also in psychiatric text production?

¹ Cf. Roger Caillois: *Mimese und legendäre Psychasthenie*. In: *Méduse & Cie*. Berlin 2007, 25-39, 37.

Dorian Gray and the “leprosy of sin”: Immorality as a Disease

Sinfulness and Illness have been intertwined for quite some time within art historical discourses. Integral part of this discussion is the concept of physiognomic, the idea that a person physical appearance was highly linked with his/hers character and moral values. This idea was highly popular in the 19th century. In Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) though, the traces of Dorian's sinful life are not visual in his own but in the portrait's appearance. Ivan Le Lorraine Albright painted such a portrait of the aged and sickly Dorian in 1945 for Albert Lewin's film version of Wilde's scandalous novel. Dorian Gray is depicted as both repellent and attractive at the same time in the novel itself. As a kind of “*homme fatal*” he plays the role of the irresistible yet ominous seducer, which usually was reserved for women only. In the painting Dorian's face is covered with blisters and pustules which can be associated with “sinful” illnesses like syphilis or herpes. But it doesn't stop there, furthermore Dorian's clothes and the whole interior are sickened with the same disease as the person in it. Even there one can see blisters and boils. To show the interior as morally sick as the protagonist, is a genuinely new method of Albright to visualize the evilness and the danger that emerge from the body. In my presentation I would like to analyse this way of using disease to visualize a immorality regarding Albright's painting and the iconography of ageing and illness in the 19th and 20th century.

The Photographer Miroslav Tichý - Outsider as Marketing Argument

The Czech photographer Miroslav Tichý (1926 - 2012) is traded on the art market as an outsider photographer. However, he cannot be seen only as an outsider. There are various aspects that speak against this classification; for example, his studies of painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague or his membership in a artist group. His neighbour and later representative on the art market, Roman Buxbaum, seems to ignore these aspects and concentrate above all on what Tichý makes an outsider. He emphasizes Tichý's stays in psychiatry and prison, his external appearance, and his amateurism in the field of photography.

The lecture puts forward the thesis that Buxbaum pushes Tichý into the role of the outsider in order to be able to sell his photos on the art market at all and, in the next step, to enrich himself with them. Tichý's photographs do not correspond to the typical aesthetics of art photography. The photographs Tichý took with his homemade camera and developed in his darkroom are almost ever out of focus. He trimmed the photographs, drew into them, and made colorful frames out of cardboard or old book covers. He stored the photographs on the floor of his unheated apartment, which made them damp and began to mold. Tichý saw the photographs not only as works of art, but lived with them; they were cracked and stained by Tichý running over the photographs, sitting and eating on them. They developed their typical appearance, which is described as unhygienic and makes them uninteresting for the typical art photography market. The artist himself neither wanted to exhibit nor sell his photographs.

The lecture will show how far Buxbaum ignored Tichý's wishes and exploited them for his own purposes. In addition, it should become clear how works by artists become interesting for the art market primarily because of their mental illness and with regard to their outsider status, and how others enrich themselves through sales.

Representing Illness and Biopolitics. A Case Study on Modernism, Hygiene and the Exhibitionary Complex

My research traces the cultural history of public health and hygiene education museum network – with a specific focus on the Budapest based *Social Museum* and a St. Petersburg based *Hygiene Museum* – in the early-20th century. As I argue, the Museum promoted ideas about hygiene and a biological theory of human improvement based on modernist concepts of purification and rejuvenation of the human and national body. A distinctive feature of the Social Museums was that it primarily served the hygienic, moral and political education of a specific social class (the working class).

In my presentation, I am going to analyse the Museums' collections and representation's policies with the framework of cultural representation and techniques of display. My aim is to answer the question: What role did the museum's spaces have on the representation of the hygiene discourse? How did public hygiene and the medicalization of the population become instruments in the repertoire of political power? The biopolitical policies and ideas (which were presented in the museums) rooted in the period's political situation and new scientific discoveries (e.g. Darwinism) or were there any 'agents' behind the migrant narratives?

I argue, that this top institution of representation merges two different strategies of power. Not only does it work as a space for education – and thereby also as a space for exercising self-control –, but also as a representational or propaganda instrument of biopolitics, demonstrating degeneration (i.e. whatever deviates from the state of 'homeostasis'), singing the praise of the welfare system and presenting the general rules of hygiene that are key to a long and healthy life.

The conceptual framework follows Marius Turda's terms of the relationship between nationalism, modernism and racial hygiene. I am going to analyse the museum institution as an institutional articulation of power and knowledge relations, following the Foucauldian terminology of Tony Bennett.

Illness and its Perception in Transition: The Representation of HIV and AIDS in Photography since the 1980s

HIV and AIDS have not only caused global horrors since their pandemic outbreak in the early 1980s, they have also changed the visual and socio-cultural notion of disease itself.² As a suffering, which in the true sense is not a disease, but a syndrome that makes the immune system vulnerable for opportunistic infections, the virus is particularly associated with such fatal diseases as plague, syphilis or tuberculosis.³ The still existing incurability, the potential for invisibility due to the long latency period, as well as the transfiguring myths surrounding the virus, are the cause of this imagination of horror.

Because of the initial prevalence in homosexuals, later in drug addicts and hemophilia patients, the virus became known as 'marginalized disease'. This assumption has been reinforced by art and media since the 1980s / 90s, but by no means corresponds to the visualization of AIDS since the turn of the millennium. A new picture of HIV and AIDS was created: as a disease of socially disadvantaged and developing countries, associated with poverty. Thus, as Brigitte Weingart has aptly formulated, AIDS is not only an epidemic in the linguistic sense, charged with meanings: the inherent (and modifying) stereotypes and metaphors significantly influence the artistic representation.⁴

The lecture will present this extremely heterogeneous development process in the representation of HIV and AIDS in photography, which is often difficult to understand in terms of its artistic design. The focus here is on the emergence and pictorial formation of various main metaphors and their context of meaning, as an example the changing representation of sexuality, death and eroticism.⁵

² Paula A. Treichler: *How to have Theory in an Epidemic. Cultural Chronicals of AIDS*, Durham (u.a.) 1999; Vladimir Čaijovac: *AIDS – die Krankheit als Medienereignis*, in: *AIDS. Nach einer wahren Begebenheit*, hrsg. v. Vladimir Čaijovac, Ausst.Kat., Deutsches Hygiene-Museum, Dresden 2015, S. 12-15; Jörn Ahrens/Lutz Hieber (Hrsg.): *Kampf um Images. Visuelle Kommunikation in gesellschaftlichen Konfliktlagen*, Wiesbaden 2015; Avram Finkelstein: *After Silence. A History of AIDS through its Images*, Oakland 2018.

³ Kari Köster-Lösche: *Die großen Seuchen. Von der Pest bis Aids*, Frankfurt am Main (u.a.) 1995.

⁴ Brigitte Weingart: *Repräsentationen von AIDS*, Frankfurt am Main 2002, S. 7-20.

⁵ Vgl. Sander L. Gilman: *Rasse, Sexualität und Seuche. Stereotype aus der Innenwelt der westlichen Kultur*, Hamburg 1992; Sander L. Gilman: *Images of Difference*, London 1995.