

times, Panofsky could not demand that the art historian re-create the objects of their studies in the sense described above. Instead, he might have concluded that every historical interpretation necessarily contributes to the object of its study and develops its meaning, not as an addition to the re-creative process, but as integral to it.

If Panofsky's method does not achieve its goal of a voyage into past mentalities and to approximately recreate the artwork with its historical meaning, without bringing forward anything new, this does not mean that we are condemned to sticking to whatever prejudices we have at the moment. It does not mean that interpretation is left to arbitrariness, as Panofsky feared.<sup>51</sup> It also does not mean that we should not engage in the process of studying artworks and historical documents. Rather, it leads to the question of what else actually happens in this process. This question has already been asked by the philosophical hermeneutics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which I believe is worth reconsideration within the self-reflection of the discipline of art history.<sup>52</sup>

## SUMMARY

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### UNKNOWN PREMISES OF ICONOLOGY? A CRITICAL REVIEW OF PANOFSKY'S PROPOSAL FOR A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF HISTORICITY

Erwin Panofsky's iconographic-iconological method aims to enable the interpreter to get rid of an involuntary contemporary bias in interpretation by applying certain corrective principles. Panofsky implicitly answers the philosophical question of whether and why it might be possible to overcome historical distance and approximate an original historical meaning. The paper argues that his answer is dependent on two presuppositions that have not been identified as such so far. These presuppositions are the concepts of a non-historical nature of man and of perception. This essay explores the function they necessarily, if implicitly, fulfill in Panofsky's model of interpretation. Moreover, it shows how Panofsky uses a concept of pure perception in his texts from 1915 to 1955. Having found a self-contradiction in Panofsky's model, the essay concludes that the definition of the possible goal of interpretation should be rethought.

<sup>51</sup> On the role of prejudices in the process, see e.g. G.W. BERTRAM, *Hermeneutik*, p. 56 (as in note 45).

<sup>52</sup> For a commentary on the reception history of philosophical hermeneutics in art history, see C. VOLKENANDT, 'Hermeneutik', in *Metzler Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft. Ideen, Methoden, Begriffe*, ed. U. Pfisterer, 2nd ed., Stuttgart, 2011, pp. 167–170. The classical account is O. BÄTSCHMANN, *Einführung in die kunstgeschichtliche Hermeneutik*, 5th ed., Darmstadt, 2001, which was originally published in 1984. For a review see H.R. JAUSS, 'Rezension zu, Oskar Bätschmann, Einführung in die kunstgeschichtliche Hermeneutik', in *Ästhetische Erfahrung heute*, ed. J. Stöhr, Köln, 1996, pp. 52–58. See also O. BÄTSCHMANN, 'Beiträge zu einem Übergang von der Ikonologie zu kunstgeschichtlicher Hermeneutik', in *Bildende Kunst als Zeichensystem 1. Ikonographie und Ikonologie. Theorien, Entwicklung, Probleme*, ed. E. Kaemmerling, 6th ed., Köln, 1994, pp. 460–484.