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## Introduction

### »Aura« as an Operative Concept

#### I. The »aura« and its challenge – nostalgia or potential for the future?

The »challenge of the object« is linked to the challenge of the aura. The very concept, often misused to describe some hidden, ontological qualities of an art work, was invented to seize the potency of cultural artefacts within varying contexts and media. Is the concept still useful to understand the impact of an object that we encounter in a museum or in the media? The history of how the concept was used brings us closer to an answer than an all too ready attempt at defining it.

Walter Benjamin's essay »The artwork in the age of its technical reproducibility,« written and rewritten between autumn 1935 and 1939 and passed on to us in four different versions, one of them in French, had to wait until the 1960s before widely being discussed.<sup>1</sup> Some of his friends, such as Bertolt Brecht, were not interested in the text, and the only one who commented on it to the author at length, Theodor W. Adorno, saw it as an attack on the autonomy of art, the only stronghold of a truly critical media practice.<sup>2</sup> In the late 1960s, authors such as Helmut Heißenbüttel and Hans Markus Enzensberger read it in order to sharpen their strategies of creating a politically interventionist art, far from Adorno's utopias of autonomous art as a realm of freedom.<sup>3</sup> Today, Benjamin's essay is one of the most fundamental readings for art historians interested in media theory, but also one of the most controversially debated and, in that sense, still one of the hardest to understand.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the most salient ideas seem to be beyond discussion – but they are not the reason why the text is still so powerful.<sup>5</sup> Let us begin with these ideas generally attributed to Benjamin, in order to try to go beyond them in a profitable way. For Benjamin, the most radically reproducible artwork was a photograph and a film, thus a technical image that exists only as a copy, having no original, only visible as a reproduction. Benjamin opposes it to an original, handmade piece and its claim to authenticity. In the era of reproducibility – from the invention of the woodcut and other graphic techniques to the spread of photography to a media system dominated by film – also the original artefacts are seen as »potentially« reproducible. Thereby, they tend to lose their »aura.«

Benjamin did not lament the loss of the »aura.« For him, film, discussed as the last step in a de-auratization of the medium, was an efficient way of democratizing art. Although he was aware of the increasing power of the media industry, for him, in the hands of the masses, especially in a communist society, film could be a means to re-appropriate a form of life otherwise marked by all the capitalist forms of estrangement, in a Marxian sense. His decision to underline the emancipatory instead of the disciplining effects of the medium – if we consider the invention of the sound film, still relatively new at that time – was more than a naïve form of adhering to Soviet proletarian culture, which pretended to link the producers to the spectators. Instead of describing an effect of film, he incited the working class to exploit its potential – in a Brechtian sense. Up to the »Arab spring« and before the recent discoveries of worldwide data espionage, the Internet had also often been idealized as a primarily democratizing instrument of mass communication. Similarly, Benjamin did not yet see the movies as part of the »cultural industry,« later attacked by Horkheimer and Adorno as an organized way of integrating the dark side of man, suppressed since

the Enlightenment, into capitalist, fascist or Stalinist disciplines of life.<sup>6</sup> To him, Chaplin was more important – he demonstrated that film could attack a form of life dominated by the capitalist treatment of work as merchandise and by the fetishism of commodities. When he spoke about film, Benjamin did not mean the Hollywood system, Griffith, the continuity montage and its power to inscribe the spectator into the collective singular of a uniform mass of »one-dimensional« consumers, but rather the Soviet movies by Dziga Vertov or by Sergei Eisenstein.<sup>7</sup> His ideal was film, considered in a certain sense as a non-auratic, democratized medium, guaranteeing, in principle, to every worker the right not only to see a movie, but to figure in it.<sup>8</sup>

Benjamin developed his concept in the context of a media system established only since the 1920s. It was marked by the weekly news in cinema and by the invention of reportage in the illustrated press, thus, by images existing only as reproductions. In order to sharpen the instruments linked to the notion of the aura, we have to reinsert the most famous text, »The artwork in the age of its technical reproducibility,« into the context of his oeuvre.

Benjamin never defined what the »aura« is. For him, it is an operational concept he uses in order to describe something that relates an art work – or simply a picture, such as a photographic portrait, or an artefact – to a media system and that »appears in moments of change« of personal and collective perception. He agreed with analysts such as Paul Valéry or Siegfried Kracauer in historicizing perception and considering it as conditioned by the media and by what Foucault would call the visual dispositive of a given period. Before Foucault and Foucauldian authors such as Jonathan Crary, Benjamin was one of the first to understand the historicity of media cultures and the discursive contexts of perception.<sup>9</sup> It is thus just as important to consider the notion of »aura« within the context of media cultures as to oppose an original art work to its reproductions.<sup>10</sup>

Sometimes, the notion of the »aura« is simply reduced to certain fetishist properties of art works exploited in commercialised museum politics. Some critical historians of art use this as a reason to fight the very notion. While preparing this section together with Régis Michel, we had controversial discussions on the issue. In a world marked by biopower and ever more systemic forms of exclusion – genocide being the ultimate consequence – it is understandable that the discussion on the »aura« seems too »auratic« in itself to bolster fights for political ethics even in the realm of institutions such as museums and media. Is the concept of the aura useful for sharpening the functions these institutions have in fulfilling society's needs for mimesis – radically understood as the way a community imagines itself and its own conditions –, instead of commercializing leisure and infotainment? When we planned the section together with the CIHA and the colleagues responsible for its institutions, we wanted, from the beginning, to include a world marked by biopolitics into our discussions. Contemporary art, operating with video and other media, was to be considered as a critical forum for dealing with systemic forms of global injustice and exploitation. Furthermore, we saw Nuremberg, the city where the international congress for art history was planned to take place, as a challenge to discuss the Nazi past, also of art history, and the actuality of genocide, actual or cultural. When cultural and artistic heritage is destroyed

for political reasons – at the time, the remembrance of the destructions in Timbuktu was still fresh –, when other forms of exclusion even from »global conceptual art« have to be taken into consideration, we did not want to merely focus on selected (mis-)conceptions of the »aura.« Unfortunately, the differences concerning not the direction of our work but the intellectual equipment informing it were, in the end, so great that Régis Michel and some other colleagues felt unable to bring the cooperation to an end. Considering Benjamin's »aura« as a superseded concept, compatible, as we were told, only with a diluted understanding of biopolitics, was only one aspect of the conflict. Another aspect was cooperating with a world organisation of art history such as the CIHA which most of the speakers in the section consider as necessary, even desirable, although nobody suffers from the illusion to think that the CIHA is more perfectly democratic than other world-wide organisations. We were very lucky when Bordeaux-based philosopher Guillaume Le Blanc, a specialist in questions of Foucault, biopolitics, and »care,« was prepared to co-chair the section – and to enrich the discussions in a sense we agreed about from the beginning.

## II. Time inscribed into presence: three aspects of the aura

### II.1. Awakening: auratic experience at the threshold between media systems

In general, Benjamin's notion of the »aura« is not ontological, but operative.<sup>11</sup> From its first appearance in »A small history of photography« (1931), it is linked to change, whether in individual experience or in the collective ways of perception.<sup>12</sup> Benjamin's repeated definition of the aura in spatial terms as »the unique appearance of a far distance, as close as it might be« has obscured the equally important temporal aspect of the notion.<sup>13</sup> »Aura« first designates what is new in the early photographs by David Octavius Hill, in the »Fisherman's wives in New Haven.« Benjamin uses the term to describe the difference of experience, such as that condensed in photographs, to earlier forms of aesthetic experience, such as that conveyed through painted portraits. He sees the early photographers as accomplices of their models while both realize the new form of presence conferred to them by the new medium, capable, so to speak, of burning a hole for reality into the picture. When the women avoid looking into the camera, they seem to feel something like their being present beyond interpretation, outside the traditions of signification conveyed through earlier media and the established codes of cultural semiosis these are linked to. Benjamin first described what he experienced during his drug experiments in terms of the »aura:« under the effect of opiates, the things appear to be embedded in their surroundings like in a veil. Also in his reading of Van Gogh, he stresses the harmony of things within their almost ornamental ambiance. What is decisive, however, is that this experience, under drugs, is visible only in the moment of »awakening.«<sup>14</sup> In the same way, it is only when an old media system – such as portrait painting, for example in small vignette portraits – is substituted by a new one – such as photography – that its original context survives as the »aura« of the objects belonging to the context which is about to fade away. At this very moment, the ways of perception, the aesthetic potentials of the older as well as of the newer media system suddenly become apparent. Both reveal themselves as historically contingent ways of »aisthesis« – a quality not of the thing, but of its appearance in its medium and in conscience. The historical time of the medium and its context inscribes itself into what a spectator sees, as the difference between the older and the newer form of encountering what he actually perceives. Benjamin already developed these ideas in his theory of surrealism and the way it arrives at »profane illuminations« by recurring to things and media that have just gone out of

fashion.<sup>15</sup> »Aura« is linked to change: of the mood of experiencing, of the medium.

### II.2. Aura in relation to trace: the non-auratic and the wrongly auratic

The second notion of the aura is also linked to photography, as well as to film. In »The artwork in the age of its technical reproducibility,« Benjamin describes the loss of the »aura« in film – a medium lacking an original – without any form of nostalgia. The loss of the aura is linked to the capacity of photography and film to confer visibility to things hitherto unseen, by transforming the image into a description of the scene of a crime, into the autopsy of a social situation, into the protocol of the unconscious. Bettine Menke has inscribed the »aura,« used in this sense, into a dualistic tension with the notion of »trace.« Whereas the aura marks the afterlife of something gone, a trace leads us to something previously invisible.<sup>16</sup> Menke's trace leads to a radically positive aspect of the loss of the aura: the democratization of the media – and of a form of aesthetic experience that allows to seize and to deal with aspects of social and psychic life hitherto out of reach. Benjamin understands that any artificial attempt at reconstructing the »aura« by just re-using traditional forms of expression has to be opposed: whether in attempts at aestheticizing photography or in a form of aestheticism he knew from the symbolists and from Proust. Also strategies of »aestheticizing politics« had to be fought by »politicizing aesthetics« instead. What we often describe as »auratic« in an art work in a museum, Benjamin defines as its »exhibition value.« It is linked to practice: first to mere transportability, thereby to visibility for many people, then to the possibility of interpreting the work within many possible constellations – or, more precisely, to use it as a »piece of evidence in the historical process« –, finally to adding efficacy to the object in the context of diverging interests. The opposite of the »exhibition value« is the »cult value.« Exhibition value thus is the contrary of restoring or commercializing the »aura« of the work through aesthetic rituals! Exhibition value is an objectifying – not an »auratic« – notion. In each concrete case, it is defined through a form of practice uniting aesthetic and political aspects.

### II.3. Latency and the »dialectic image:« potentials and readings

A third aspect of the »aura« can be found, in a more diffuse way, in some of Benjamin's late essays, gravitating around the »Arcades project,« as well as around Charles Baudelaire – most prominently in the essay »On some motifs in Baudelaire« (1939). Here, Benjamin reads the poet as operating beyond all the obvious foundations of his art, as the most revealing analyst of his time. The tone is primarily pessimistic: when looking onto the merchandise – or into the early camera – the prolonged gaze of the beholders is no longer turned back. The photographer who had still been an accomplice of Hill's »Fisherman's wives in New Haven« in a common discovery of modernity, has, so to speak, become silent. Baudelaire, thus, lived the Paris of the Second Empire as a period of the loss of the aura. However, even the late Benjamin links the aura to Proust's »mémoire involontaire.« There is still the latent potential, in the objects, to provide a different impulse than the stimuli of publicity, linked to an »eternal return of novelty.« This potential at providing illuminations beyond any expectation is auratic.<sup>17</sup> However, it is now linked to his notion of the dialectic image, again an operative concept.<sup>18</sup> The »dialectic image« is the meaning an image can take when it is put into a »constellation« with another. The »constellation« is meant to inspire a new reading that opens up the way for political practices hitherto unknown. Adorno criticized Benjamin because he seemed to allow for psychological dialectics only within collective consciousness, not for objective dialectics in reality (in a Marxian sense),



Fig. 1  
A view of the exhibition »Degenerated Art,« Munich 1937, showing Wilhelm Lehmbruck's sculpture *Great kneeling woman*, 1911, placed in front of Lovis Corinth, *Ecce homo*, 1925, today in the Kunstmuseum Basel

thereby reducing dialectics to a form of psychological ambiguity instead of taking the process of capitalism creating the conditions of its own abolishment as the basis.<sup>19</sup> For him, there is no Hegelian »third« in the »constellation,« and thus no dialectics, no development in terms of thesis, synthesis and anti-thesis. Indeed, Benjamin operates against this thinking linked to evolution, development and progress, and in favor of a philological approach. He means what Didi-Huberman, in a synthetic reading of Benjamin, Kracauer and Carl Einstein, defined as anachronism: the appearance of something unfitting in the stream of traditions, cutting through discourses and ideologies instead of affirming their continuity.<sup>20</sup>

It is important, however, that the »dialectic image« is more than just a »constellation,« it implies the sudden activation of a practical potential. In that sense, in a moment of increased presence, a moment of the past can have more actuality now than it had for the people who lived it, so to speak before »awakening« from a dream. Anselm Haverkamp rightly insists that the »dialectic image« has to be read, not just seen.<sup>21</sup> When an image interacts with another in such a binary, dialectic constellation, it becomes effective in a new and unforeseen way. Although the notion of the »aura« faded into the background in Benjamin's later essays, the tension that is conferred to the present through being correlated to a historical past can be described as auratic. We might insist that whereas the »aura« is a figure of »latent« meaning – in the sense that Haverkamp gave to »latency« –, the »dialectic image« is a figure describing the activation of that latency through reading – a reading, however, leading to free action. Latency is not a transcendental quality of the object, it is a potential revealed to what we might define as the political aspect of its fortuna critica. Again, the auratic element is the inscription of concrete, historical time into what is experienced as the present. And again, the aura is hereby connected with a sort of awakening, like the one from the drug experiments: however, it is a political awakening. We know that the potential to redeem the present through opening it up for action, for Benjamin, was »messianic:« there is always the possibility to rearrange the circumstances by taking just the small step which is required to make them livable...<sup>22</sup>

Are we, thus, beyond the aura? As one of the first historians not of art, but of »aisthesis,« of the historical conditions of perception, Benjamin analyses the different historical and media conditions that participate in experience, also the experiencing of an (art-)work. If

the context of the work fades, it remains captured in the aura. A superseded media system lives on in its objects, like phantom pain can be felt after the amputation of a limb. If what is lost is substituted by superseded aesthetic rituals, the »aura« has to be destroyed. »Aura« finally also stands for the connection between aesthetic experience and political action. In the »dialectic image,« the vivid configuration of present experience and a concrete past comes to a flash of consciousness prompting to act: an awakening, an interface between dream and future. »Aura« can be read as the »latent« capacity of an artefact to make us wake up. Here lies the strength of the notion.

### III. Aura against fetishism: unravelling phantasmagoria

Contemporary artists following in the footsteps of Duchamp and Warhol often exploit the interplay of a commodity and a work of art. Already Benjamin's use of the term »aura« is characterized by a tension which it has with what Marx has described as commodity fetishism.<sup>23</sup> In his last writings, notable in the essay he wrote, in 1939, to publicly announce the »Passagenwerk,« he coined the term »phantasmagoria« to define the ensemble of dreams and promises inscribed not only into a single commodity, but into a capitalist ensemble, such as Paris as a built dreamscape.<sup>24</sup> The notion of a wrong »aura« that needs to be destroyed seems to be close to the fetishism of those objects making up the »phantasmagoria« of commercialized biotopes.<sup>25</sup> Wrongly auratic objects parade in the theatres of desire, thereby increasingly revealing their deceptive character. The more the commodification of work spreads spleen, annoyance and the type of malaise Freud spoke about in »Civilisation and its discontents,« the more the commodities were charged with imaginary satisfactions – substitutions for the very desires suppressed by the system of commodification the product was part of.<sup>26</sup> Benjamin was one of the first cultural analysts to correlate economical with psychological fetishism. Cultural scientists such as Hartmut Böhme recently have increased our sensibility for the omnipresence of fetishism – considered as the survival of magic as the other side of cultures marked by the Enlightenment – in contemporary culture.<sup>27</sup> Benjamin insists on the role a collector can have if he withdraws objects from their everyday context. The decontextualization can make the beholder reflect on the status the object has in the phantasmagoria we usually unconsciously participate in.

Ever since Duchamp, the destruction of the aura has driven contemporary art beyond its limits. A video by Aernout Mik entitled »Touch, rise and fall« and first exhibited in 2008 at the New Orleans Biennial may stand for a contemporary way of dealing with commercial fetishes in art.<sup>28</sup> The artist introduces us into the transit zone of an airport, one of the most typical non-places of biopolitics. People are controlled; some of them have to undress. The security personnel search their bags, bringing their belongings into total disorder. However, there are also views of beautiful commodities on the shelves of a gift shop. But then, shopping and searching are combined in a rhythm of degrading and upgrading. The whole video is about things, plundered and destroyed, and about people who are deprived of them and thereby reduced to their mere corporeality – what Giorgio Agamben labels their »bare life.«<sup>29</sup> However, there is no primeval scenario of an original or, in Marxist terms, of a »non-estranged« way of dealing with these objects. They are the link between the people and the complex, globalized, industrial world, not with some idyllic life in a lost paradise. If, for example, we see the clothes through the perspective of a person who has been forced to get undressed, they are no longer commodities fetishized through imaginary promises, but the most personal belongings of that person. Here, the commodity, seen as an item satisfying primary needs such as clothing, is reduced, against Benjamin's orthodox view, to its use value.<sup>30</sup> The mere need makes the difference with phantasmagoria. The difference between the fetishist promises and the usefulness of a commodity resides not in an ontological quality, but in the operative use of the notion. The ongoing presence of things caught, by Aernout Mik, within a nightmarish process of being transformed into garbage is in itself revealing, not only of phantasmagoria, but also of something like a primordial right to get what is needed in order to cover one's »bare life.«

#### IV. Display, Nazism, genocide

When we look at Aernout Mik's video, we experience how the playful destruction of objects turns into a serious deprivation of men, an allusion to the systematic exclusion of people in transit – a segregation reminding us of the reality of a silent genocide, taking place, for example, in the Mediterranean sea in front of Malta or of Lampedusa.

What seems to be a playful interference with the aura of an art work can also turn into a disastrous infamy (figs. 1–2). In 1911/12, Wilhelm Lehmbruck realized one of his most famous works, entitled »The great kneeling woman.« Her head is slightly inclined, while she is kneeling down, absorbed not by an object of reverence but caught in a meditative moment, maybe even while bathing.<sup>31</sup> In 1937, the Nazis placed a painting that Lovis Corinth had painted several months before his death in the Munich exhibition of degenerated art. Entitled »Ecce homo,« it shows Christ, crowned with thorns, between a knight and a doctor. In this religious travesty of three friends posing for the figures, Corinth invites us to painfully confront the human condition.<sup>32</sup> In 1937, some Nazi »curator« had the idea to make Lehmbruck's sculpture kneel down in front of Corinth's Christ, thereby mocking the expressive style of the painter, whom the Nazi politicians declared to have »degenerated« after having suffered from a stroke in 1911. However, also the inward reflection of »The great kneeling woman« is ridiculed through the arrangement, as well as a whole artistic system marked by »decay exploited in favor of a special evaluation in literary and commercial terms« – thus the inscription on the wall in the room in which the works were exhibited.<sup>33</sup>

The very act of inserting Lehmbruck's meditative figure into a narrow-minded form of narration is already part of a devastating mockery directed against everything that is not biologically trium-

phant in life. However, such narrative contexts are not limited to fascist art. Recently, in the Haus der Kunst in Munich, in an exhibition »Geschichten im Konflikt« destined to commemorate Nazi strategies of staging art, Lehmbruck's sculpture had to kneel down in front of another art work.<sup>34</sup> Used for what was presented as an attempt at staging the artistic politics of the Nazis, she was placed in front of a »masterpiece« by Adolf Ziegler, one of the most famous Nazi artists, a triptych showing four racially Germanic women with different hair color allegorizing the four elements. The arrangement was certainly not more than a faux pas. But how could it happen? Let's read the staging in 1937 and the one in 2012 as a »dialectical image« according to the sense Benjamin conveyed to the term. Evidently, the curator, the Swiss concept artist Christian Philipp Müller, had recycled the Nazi pathos in a way to stimulate the interest of the visitors by confirming their cliché conceptions of Hitlerism. In an attempt at reviving the wrongly aestheticizing aura of Nazi art, he recurred, probably unconsciously, to a genuine Nazi strategy. It is an unlucky mistake, but it is symptomatic: wrong aurization is not excusable as a way of striving for effect. The fetishist staging of a commercial blockbuster exhibition, even if it is supposed to commemorate the Nazi past of the site it is staged in, can operate as an echo of Nazi rhetoric. The marketing attractions of infotainment, instead of commemorating the places' past in the sense of »it happened in this very place,« appeal to what survives

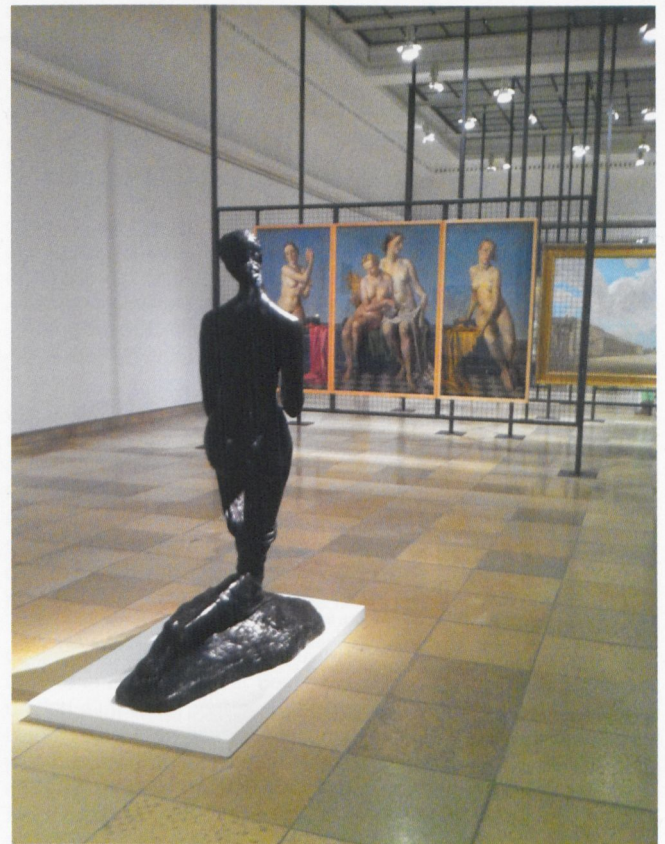


Fig. 2 Lehmbruck's Great kneeling woman placed in front of Adolf Ziegler, *The four elements*, 1937. Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, in the exhibition *Geschichten im Konflikt*, Haus der Kunst, June 10, 2012–January 13, 2013

of Nazism in the collective unconscious, and thus in an unspecific, nightmarish dreamscape. True commemoration has to identify the concrete places we still live in as the places of Nazi crimes in a factual way. However, even a public used to the generalized pathos of the »never again« very often opposes inscriptions in the public places, the railroad stations, the buildings and the museums where

these crimes took place. Installations such as Müller's risk to operate as a repressed form of cultural biopolitics, reactivating what has been suppressed instead of documenting the wrongly auratic.<sup>35</sup> Lehbruck's sculpture kneeling down in front of Ziegler – that is an echo of cultural genocide, instead of a critical reflection about it.

#### Notes

- 1 First version, fall 1935, in: Walter Benjamin: *Gesammelte Schriften*. Ed. by Rolf Tiedemann/Hermann Schweppenhäuser. Frankfurt a.M. 1972–1989, vol. 1, pp. 431–469. – Second version: fall 1935 to early February 1936: *Gesammelte Schriften*. 1989, vol. 7, pp. 350–384. – Translation into French by Pierre Klossowski: vol. I, 1974, pp. 709–739. – Third version, early 1937 – April 1939, vol. 1, 1974, pp. 471–739, there erroneously treated as the second version.
- 2 Bertolt Brecht: *Arbeitsjournal*. Ed. by Werner Hecht. Frankfurt a.M. 1973, vol. 1, 1938–1942, p. 16. – See Adorno's letter from March 18, 1936. In: Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin: *Briefwechsel 1928–1940*. Ed. by Henri Lonitz. Frankfurt a.M. 1994, pp. 168–177.
- 3 On the critical reception of Benjamin in the 1960s, see: Thomas Küpper/Timo Skandries: *Rezeptionsgeschichte*. In: *Benjamin-Handbuch. Leben – Werk – Wirkung*. Ed. by Burkhard Lindner. Stuttgart/Weimar 2006, pp. 17–56. – See also: Hans Markus Enzensberger: *Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien*. In: *Kursbuch*, 20, 1970, pp. 159–186.
- 4 Susan Buck-Morss: *Aesthetics and anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's artwork reconsidered*. In: October, 62, 1992, pp. 3–41, a critical appreciation of the essay in the context of the rise of fascism; Burkhard Lindner: *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*. In: *Benjamin-Handbuch 2006* (note 3), pp. 229–251.
- 5 One of the first serious discussions of Benjamin in an art-historical context: Wolfgang Kemp: *Fernbilder. Benjamin und die Kunstwissenschaft* [1978]. In: *Walter Benjamin im Kontext*. Ed. by Burkhard Lindner. Königstein 1985, pp. 224–257. – One of many post-internet discussions: *The work of art in the digital age*. Ed. by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht/Michael Marrinan. Stanford 2003.
- 6 Max Horkheimer/Theodor W. Adorno: *Dialectic of enlightenment* [1944]. Stanford 2002.
- 7 Walter Benjamin: *Zur Lage der russischen Filmkunst*. In: *Gesammelte Schriften*. 1977, vol. 2, pp. 747–751.
- 8 Andrea Gnam: *Der Kameramann als Operateur. Benjamins Beitrag zu einer Theorie des frühen Films*. In: *Walter Benjamins Medientheorie*. Ed. by Christian Schulte. Konstanz 2005, pp. 171–186.
- 9 Jonathan Crary: *Techniques of the Observer. On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, Mass. 1991. – Jonathan Crary: *Suspensions of Perception. On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, Mass. 2001.
- 10 Samuel Weber: *Mass mediauras. Form, technics, media*. Stanford 1996.
- 11 Boris Groys: *Topologie der Aura*. Munich 2003.
- 12 Walter Benjamin: *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie*. In: *Gesammelte Schriften*. 1977, vol. 2,1, pp. 368–385, esp. 378.
- 13 Walter Benjamin: *Gesammelte Schriften*. 1977, vol. 2,1, p. 378; 1974, vol. 1,2, p. 440; 1989, vol. 7,1, p. 355; 1974, vol. 1,2, p. 479.
- 14 Josef Fürnkäs: *Aura*. In: *Benjamins Begriffe*. Ed. by Michael Opitz/Erdmut Wizisla. Frankfurt a.M. 2000, vol. 1, pp. 95–146, sep. 106–108. – Heiner Weidmann: *Erwachen/Traum*. In: *Benjamins Begriffe 2000* (note 17), vol. 1, pp. 341–362.
- 15 Walter Benjamin: *Der Surrealismus. Die letzte Momentaufnahme der europäischen Intelligenz* [1929]. In: *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1977, vol. 2, pp. 295–310. – See also the article of Karlheinz Barck in: *Benjamin-Handbuch 2006* (note 3), pp. 386–398, esp. 390–391.
- 16 Bettine Menke: *Sprachfiguren. Name – Allegorie – Bild nach Benjamin*. Weimar 2001, pp. 477–488 (ch.: *Spur und Aura*).
- 17 Walter Benjamin, esp.: *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire* [1939]. Also: *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* [1939]; *Das Paris des Second Empire bei Baudelaire* [1937]; *Zentralpark* [1938–1939], in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, 1974, pp. 605–653, esp. 643–648; 691–704, 511–604, 655–690. – Cf. Christine Schmider/Michael Werner: *Das Baudelaire-Buch*. In: *Benjamin-Handbuch 2006* (note 3), pp. 567–584, esp. 569–580.
- 18 Ansgar Hillach: *Dialektisches Bild*. In: *Benjamins Begriffe 2000* (note 14), vol. 1, pp. 186–229.
- 19 See: Adorno/Benjamin 1994 (note 2), pp. 366–371. – See: Hillach 2000 (note 18), pp. 206–210. – Christoph Gödde/Henry Lonitz: *Das Institut für Sozialforschung/Gretel Adorno, Adorno und Horkheimer*. In: *Benjamin-Handbuch 2006* (note 3), pp. 92–106, esp. 97–98, *Das Paris des Second Empire bei Baudelaire* [1937].
- 20 Georges Didi-Huberman: *Devant le temps*. Paris 2000.
- 21 Anselm Haverkamp: *Dialektisches Bild. Die Konstellation der Geschichte* [engl. 1992]. In: *Haverkamp: Figura cryptica. Theorie der literarischen Latenz*. Frankfurt a.M. 2002, pp. 44–60.
- 22 Richard Wolin: *Walter Benjamin. An aesthetic of redemption*. New York 1982, pp. 48–63, 226–238.
- 23 On fetishism and the illusion of continuous progress in history: Susan Buck-Morss: *The dialectics of seeing. Walter Benjamin and the Arcades project*. Cambridge, Mass./London 1989, pp. 78–109 (ch.: *Mythic history: fetish*).
- 24 Walter Benjamin: *Paris, capitale du XIXème siècle*. In: *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, pp. 60–77.
- 25 Karl Heinz Bohrer: *Benjamins Phantasma-Stadt: Labyrinth zwischen »Ereignis« und »Interieur«*. In: *global benjamin*. 3 vols. Ed. by Klaus Garber/Ludger Rehm. Munich 1999, vol. 1, pp. 478–493.
- 26 Sigmund Freud: *Civilisation and its discontents* [1930]. London 2002.
- 27 Hartmut Böhme: *Fetischismus und Kultur. Eine andere Theorie der Moderne*. Hamburg 2006.
- 28 Aernout Mik, *Communitas*. Exhb.cat. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam 2013, catalogue also accompanying previous exhibitions in Essen and Paris: Göttingen 2011, with contributions by Leontine Coelwijn, Sabine Maria Schmidt and others.
- 29 Giorgio Agamben: *Homo sacer. Sovereign power and bare life* [1995]. Stanford 1998.
- 30 Sigrid Weigel: *Passagen und Spuren des Leib- und Bildraums in Benjamins Schriften*. In: *Leib- und Bildraum. Lektüren nach Benjamin*. Ed. by Sigrid Weigel. Cologne/Weimar 1992, pp. 49–64.
- 31 Dietrich Schubert: *Wilhelm Lehbruck. Catalogue raisonné der Skulpturen, 1898–1919*. Worms 2001, pp. 142–144. – Sabine Maria Schmidt: *Kniefall der Moderne. Rezeption und Zerstörung der »Großen Knienden« von Wilhelm Lehbruck*. In: *Das verfemte Meisterwerk. Schicksalswege moderner Kunst im »Dritten Reich«*. Ed. by Uwe Fleckner. Berlin 2009, pp. 227–244, esp. 239–240.
- 32 Charlotte Berend-Corinth: *Lovis Corinth. Die Gemälde. Werkverzeichnis* [1958]. Munich (2nd ed.) 1992, pl. XXII, n. 970 c. – The painting was not acquired by the Kunstmuseum Basel in the auction of the Fischer Gallery in Luzern, as Corinth's widow believed, but directly by the National Gallery in Berlin. At the exhibition of »Degenerated Art« in Munich, it was shown only for the first three days – after the opening on July 19; it was not exhibited in the Berlin venue of the show. See: Katrin Engelhardt: *Die Ausstellung »Entartete Kunst« in Berlin 1938. Rekonstruktion und Analyse*. In: *Angriff auf die Avantgarde. Kunst und Kunstpolitik im Nationalsozialismus*. Ed. by Uwe Fleckner. Berlin 2007, pp. 89–187, esp. 98, 140, 148. – Esther Tisa Francini: *Ein künstlerisches Vermächtnis. Verfemung und Rettung von Lovis Corinth's »Ecce Homo«*. In: *Das verfemte Meisterwerk 2009* (note 31), pp. 197–224.
- 33 Mario-Andreas von Lüttichau: *»Deutsche Kunst« und »Entartete Kunst«: Die Münchner Ausstellungen 1937*. In: *Die »Kunststadt« München 1937. Nationalsozialismus und »Entartete Kunst«*. Ed. by Peter-Klaus Schuster. Munich (2nd ed.) 1988, pp. 83–118, esp. 108.
- 34 *Geschichten im Konflikt. Das Haus der Kunst und der ideologische Gebrauch von Kunst 1937–1955*. Exhb.cat. Haus der Kunst, Munich. Ed. by Sabine Brantl/Ulrich Wilmes. Munich 2012.
- 35 Heiner Weidmann: *Erwachen/Traum*. In: *Benjamins Begriffe 2000* (note 14), vol. 1, pp. 230–259.

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