

From Bauhaus to Social Sculpture.
The Shaping of Humane Societies as an Aesthetic Challenge

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Course Leaders:

Shelley Sacks and Hildegard Kurt

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Claudia von Knorr studied eurythmic dance and completed her MA in Interdisciplinary Arts/ Social Sculpture at Oxford Brookes University in 2008/09.

In the course twelve participants met, with the multicultural background of 9 countries.

During two weeks the site of Weimar inspired the studies as well as the individual practice. Places like the Bauhaus University, the Master Houses in Weimar and Dessau, enriched our studies through experiencing them.

The organisation of Burkhardt Kolbmüller and the Europäische Jugendbildungsstätte Weimar ideally supported the course.

The tutors Hildegard Kurt and Shelley Sacks opened a space for an intense work as a group, as well as for individual work. A process, balanced on their collaboration and rich experience.

It started with a question: how to connect our inner resources of skills, abilities, ideas with the world? How to connect inner and outer work?

Every participant started with this question on a journey into the space of his memories, thoughts and questions. Exchanging them in the group, the method of deep and active listening opened as a field.

Based on this method, we tried to be aware of, and differentiate: the content, the feeling, the impulse in the words, through listening.

After our exchange, Shelley Sacks asked: Try to picture what everybody said. Does it *connect* with me?, encouraging so the element of reflection.

On the second day, the inner journey continued, going to a place of one's childhood. We worked in pairs, sharing images: the listener with opened eyes, the speaker with closed eyes

A new level of outer and inner communication arose.

Moments of "intentional silence" as a group was a further element of meeting the inner space.

The introduction of Hildegard Kurt into questions and concepts of *shaping society as an aesthetic challenge* gave a foundation, on which the further studies could built:

the concept of sustainability as a challenge in times of globalization,
the concept of the Bauhaus: shaping modernity from the field of art,
Schiller's idea of the aesthetic education of the human being.

Listening, her words resonated with warmth and encouragement.

Building upon Schiller's questions, Joseph Beuys developed his art concept:

How can we choose means that allow our ideals to become reality?

We must first reach the heart of the people.

Beauty - is connected with living in connection with the soul.

The studies of texts of the Bauhaus masters (W. Kandinsky, W. Gropius) in small groups, as well as in discussion in the plenum, was a chance to develop insights about the concepts and to connect with own questions.

In her *Notion of Social Sculpture* Shelley Sacks built upon this, outlining Social

Sculpture: as a field of questions, a field of interrelationship, a field of transformation.

Listening to her, I sensed a balance between words and acts, words and experience, words and intention.

Many thoughts she put into questions: What can make change / transform our view? What is this darkness? Is it about difficulties, richness of the space, to go into?

Speaking about experience, she used images: "I am part of the field. In the field everything is changing ...with this, panic disappears." "No one is out of the field."

Summarizing the further aspects:

Warmth work.

Entering the inner and outer darkness.

The force of imagination.

The dynamic relation of questions

- organs - forms.

Re-drawing the image of Beuys' blackboard drawing *The Evolution of the human being*, Shelley Sacks developed the context:

of the *placenta* of myths, stories, collective certainty. The death point as a condition of freedom and individuality, and the *new placenta* - an organ, arising out of questions, doubts, longings, ideas, and a process of finding new kinds of connectedness, forms of dialogue, of exchange, arenas to work with oneself and others.

We entered the *arena* in our process, questioning own strategies and going beyond; then sharing and reflecting the individual works in the group.

A rich image of individual colors arose.

The process and the image crossed: the field opened and we were part of it.

My individual work developed in this course:

UND - creating a dialogue in movement