

Scaling Back “Style and Spirit” in the Time of Corona

Van James, Honolulu, Hawai'i, USA



Examples of paintings by members of the Aenigma art group.

Style and Spirit, a major art festival planned for the Lake of Constance area of southern Germany (Sept. 24-26, 2021) was cancelled like many other cultural activities due to Corona restrictions and repercussions of the pandemic. Because of shutdowns in so many fields of activity, delayed permit and lack of building materials prevented the renovations necessary to house the main exhibition, conference center and workshop spaces at the main venue Schloss Hohenfels. Nevertheless, it was possible for scaled down activities to take place at alternative sites.

Originally the Art Festival was to feature exhibitions, lectures, discussion groups and artistic workshops with international presenters from diverse backgrounds. And as the brochure states: “The Festival is aimed at artists, art lovers, art therapists, art collectors, gallerists, aesthetes and philosophers of art, for whom every form of art can be a bridge to the heavenly, to the beauty of a divine-spiritual world.” This Art Festival was meant to stand in contrast to the widely publicized commercial art fairs and be another attempt to bring the true historical importance of largely ignored anthroposophical art into public view.



Reinhold Fäth, festival creator, lecturing on Apotropaic Art at an alternative venue, Andreashof.

The idea for *Style and Spirit* arose following the 2015 exhibition *Aenigma: One Hundred Years of Anthroposophical Art* which displayed the work of little-known anthroposophically-inspired artists. The highly successful exhibits in Germany and the Czech Republic which featured an impressive 600-page, coffee-table sized catalog made clear that the long-ignored anthroposophical artists are an art historic force to be reckoned with. (One of the exhibited artists, Hilma af Klint, went on recently to have the largest attendance record for a show at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City). Reinhold Fäth, co-curator of the *Aenigma* exhibition is also creator of *Style and Spirit*. As an artist-craftsman himself and author of *Dornach Design*, a compendium on anthroposophical furniture design, he appears to be on a mission to get proper recognition for anthroposophically-inspired art and also to awaken a larger audience to the spiritual scientific importance of art as a medium of self-development and inner transformation.



A painting representing polarities coming together, by the Aenigma artist, Waldemar Volkmer, and shown as an example in Reinhold Fäth's lecture on *Apotropaic Art*.

Although the larger festival had to be cancelled it was possible to work within government restrictions with smaller events. For instance, a sampling of the art group Aenigma's paintings was shown at the Andreashof, a biodynamic farm and cultural center in Überlingen, together with a lecture by Professor Fäth on *Apotropaic Art*. In his lecture Fäth characterized art as having a profound influence on the observer. True apotropaic art turns away bad influences and deflects negativity. It brings about good energy and promotes positive effects. This, of course, is how

indigenous peoples have always experienced art and is something greatly needed during a pandemic where fear has become the greater illness.



Schloss Hohenfels in the Bodensee, Lake Constance area of Germany, under renovation.

Another off-shoot exhibit of the festival, *Seen in Another Light*, featured the work of Arlene Möller and Alexander Winter (1951-2019) at the Galerie Collot d'Herbois. This was the first time other artists were shown in this exclusive small museum to the late English painter Collot (1907-1999). The gallery holds a permanent collection of 45 Collot pictures, the largest assemblage of her work outside of Holland, many examples of which were also on view. Geraldine Winter, Alexander's widow, spoke about her late husband's work at the opening and characterized his work as a bridge between styles utilizing both veil painting techniques (thin washes of transparent color) and attention to "painting out of the color" (a method of weighing and measuring color qualities characterized by Rudolf Steiner).



Artist Arlene Möller and Geraldine Winter at the alternative exhibition space, Galerie Collot d'Herbois which presented the showing of *Seen in Another Light*, paintings by Arlene Möller and Alexander Winter.



The Galerie Collot d'Herbois, featured several works by Collot (left) and the exhibition, *Seen in Another Light*, displaying the work of Arlene Möller (above right) and Alexander Winter (below).



Other exhibitions and presentations in connection with the *Style and Spirit* impulse are planned throughout the winter and spring in the Lake Constance area, a region of Europe with many anthroposophic initiatives. One visitor to the exhibition commented that this area of southern Germany is the heart chakra of Europe.

Organizers are evaluating and rethinking the situation, looking at this not as a cancelation of the festival but as a postponement with thoughts of a two-year preparation time for a reemergence of a proper full-scale event. Therefore, 2023, an eventful centennial year for the anthroposophical movement, will likely see a rebirth of the Lake Constance Art Festival and a scaling-up again of *Style and Spirit*.