



## **TRANSFIGURING PAIN POETICALLY EXPLORING THE LIBERATING POTENTIAL OF ARTISTIC CREATION**

**January 12, 2018**

Research seminar and PhD course

Organized by Cathrine Bjørnholt Michaelsen, Claudia Welz, and Mikkel Wold

### **Abstract**

Working across the disciplines of art theory, philosophical aesthetics, literary analysis, existential-hermeneutical psychopathology, psychoanalysis, theology, and philosophy of religion, the overall ambition of this research seminar and PhD course consists in developing and discussing an “ethico-aesthetic paradigm” (Guattari), which emphasizes the inextricability of ethics and aesthetics in approaching artistic creations by individuals experiencing psychopathological disturbances without reducing their idiomatic singularity.

Focusing chiefly on *visual arts*, *poetic language*, and their occasional overlapping, the development of such an ethico-aesthetic paradigm serves three coordinated aims to be pursued predominantly through analyses of various art works, first-person perspective texts, and anonymized clinical vignettes. *First*, the seminar aims at enabling a better understanding of artistic creation as an *ethos*, conceived not as a code of conduct or a set of moral beliefs, but as a resourceful way of *existing* and of *(re)making sense* of this existence (Jaspers; Heidegger). *Second*, the seminar explores if and how the creative act may be conceived as a *gesture of freedom* enabling a reinvigoration of a process of life, which may have become fixated or paralyzed by its subjection to disturbing, painful, or traumatic experiences, and thus reopening a *mode of the possible* within a reality that may appear devoid of all possibilities. *Third*, the seminar inquires into artistic creation as an *affirmative resistance*, which, on the one hand, *counter-acts* and *responds to* actualizations that may appear incomprehensible and ineffable to more ‘conventional’ discourses such as the clinical, the conceptual, or the critical, while, on the other hand, *affirming* a process of *auto-hetero-poiesis*, understood as a *reinvention of oneself* in the incessant exposure to becoming *other*.

Funded by the PhD School of the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen,  
and the Centre for Pastoral Education and Research, Church of Denmark

## Program

10.00 Words of welcome

### *First session: clinical experience*

- 10.15 – 11.00: Hanne Stubbe Teglbjærg, Kastedklinikken Aarhus: *“How art making can strengthen the sense of self and thereby reduce psychopathology in persons diagnosed with schizophrenia”*
- 11.00 – 11.45: Borut Škodlar and Kristijan Sirnik, University of Ljubljana and University Psychiatric Clinic Ljubljana: *“Transforming existential pain: Poet, mystic, and psychotic”*
- 11.45 – 12.15: Discussion
- 12.15 – 13.15: Lunch

### *Second session: PhD papers*

- 13.15 – 13.45: Erik Sandsten, Psychiatry East (Roskilde): *“Creativity and mental illness – brief overview of empirical studies”*
- 13.45 – 14.15: Casper Løwenstein, Copenhagen University: *“Cuts and wounds”*
- 14.15 – 14.45: Tina Folke Drigsdahl, Copenhagen University: *“Untitled”*
- 14.45 – 15.15: Coffee break

### *Third Session: art, philosophy and theology – between ethics and aesthetics*

- 15.15 – 16.00: Ferdinand Ahm Krag, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts: *“C. F. Hill – on the irregular cartography of attention in schizoid image formation”*
- 16.00 – 16.45: Cathrine Bjørnholt Michaelsen, Copenhagen University: *“Antonin Artaud and the counter-strategy of writing”*
- 16.45 – 17.30: Claudia Welz, Copenhagen University: *“The art of survival: Life-affirming auto-hetero-poiesis in poetry”*
- 17.30 – 18.00: Plenary discussion and closing remarks

### *Venue*

University of Copenhagen, South Campus  
Karen Blixens Plads 16, auditorium 9A.0.01  
DK – 2300 Copenhagen S

Participation is free, but online [registration](#) required by January 8, 2018

Everyone is welcome!