Philosophers' Encounters with Art.

Markku Koivusalo

Philosophers and paintings

Wednesday 27.4.2019, 9-16

Part Two: Michel Foucault and archaeology of paintings 13-16.

Lecture in the University of Aalto

Dialogues with X: Art, Film and Theory Workshop (2 cr)
Michel Foucault

Archaeology of paintings
Historical conditions of images
Visual conditions (visibility)
Embodied knowledge (savoir)
Material history
Painting as peculiar historical system of thought
Not art history
But art archaeology
“What pleases me precisely in painting is that one is truly constrained to look at it. There it is, it is my rest. It is one of the rare things on which I write with pleasure and without fighting with what it is.”

“There is materiality that fascinates me in painting.”
Beginning and origin (arche ἀρχή)

Merleau-Ponty and beginning of perception

The lived perception, formation of perception

Philosophy as endless beginning

Cézanne to paint matter as it takes on form

Cézanne painting the Montagne Sainte Victoire again and again

Original lived experience

Foucault Cézanne
Archaeology of paintings

The painting is a certain peculiar way of ‘meaning’ or ‘saying’ because it dispenses with words.

Painting as embodied “discursive practice” of visibility in the historical field of visibility

Not as a pure vision transcribed into the materiality of space

Not as naked gesture whose silent meanings had to be freed from further interpretation

Archeology does try to reconstitute the latent discourse of the painter or the murmur of his intentions

Tries to discover whether space, distance, depth, colour, light, proportions, volumes, and contours were embodied in the field the positive knowledge (savoir) of historical period independently from the conscious knowledge (connaissance).
Painting the childhood?

Philippe Ariès: L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime 1960

Painting as historical document in social history
Children's Games, Bruegel, 1560
Images of madness and mad images

Folie et déraison. Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique 1961

Madness and unreason. History of madness in the classical age.
Oneiric flotilla

“A new object made its appearance in the imaginary landscape of the Renaissance, and it was not long before it occupied a privileged place there; this was the Ship of Fools, a strange drunken boat that wound its way down the wide, slow-moving rivers of the Rhineland and round the canals of Flanders.”

Narrenschiff a literary invention

New cultural symbolic meaning

“Naturally, Bosch’s painting belongs to this same oneiric flotilla.”
“A long dynasty of images, from Hieronymus Bosch with The Cure of Madness and The Ship of Fools, down to Brueghel and his Dulle Griet, woodcuts and engravings transcribe what the theater, what literature and art have already taken up: the intermingled themes of the Feast and of the Dance of Fools.

Indeed, from the fifteenth century on, the face of madness has haunted the imagination of Western man.”
Dance of Death

Taking the place of the grinning imagery of Death.
The departing of words and images

“Between word and image, between what is depicted by language and what is uttered by plastic form, the unity begins to dissolve; a single and identical meaning is not immediately common to them.

And if it is true that the image still has the function of speaking, of transmitting something consubstantial with language, we must recognize that it already no longer says the same thing; and that by its own plastic values painting engages in an experiment that will take it farther and farther from language, whatever the superficial identity of the theme.”
Hieronymus Bosch. The temptation of St. Anthony. Triptych

Markku Koivusalo: Foucault and paintings
The dawn of madness on the horizon of the Renaissance is first perceptible in the decay of Gothic symbolism; as if that world, whose network of spiritual meanings was so close-knit, had begun to unravel, showing faces whose meaning was no longer clear except in the forms of madness.

The Gothic forms persist for a time, but little by little they grow silent, cease to speak, to remind, to teach anything but their own fantastic presence, transcending all possible language (though still familiar to the eye).

Freed from wisdom and from the teaching that organized it, the image begins to gravitate about its own madness.
The madness of the images get loose

“The vain images of blind foolishness turned out to be the truth of the world, and in this grand disorder, this mad universe, the cruelty that lay in the day of judgement began to appear. These mad images are an expression of hidden Renaissance worries about the menacing secrets of the world, and it was those fears that gave the fantastic images such coherence and lent them such power.”
The revelation of madness

“It is enough to look at Dürer's Horsemen of the Apocalypse, sent by God Himself: these are no angels of triumph and reconciliation; these are no heralds of serene justice, but the disheveled warriors of a mad vengeance. The world sinks into universal Fury.

Victory is neither God's nor the Devil's: it belongs to Madness.”
Madness becomes Temptation

From temptation of the flesh to the temptation of the phantasies and images

Embodies of the impossible, the fantastic, the inhuman, all that suggests the unnatural

Gryllos strange power

“The freedom, however frightening, of his dreams, the hallucinations of his madness, have more power of attraction for fifteenth-century man than the desirable reality of the flesh.”
The legend of the year 1793, 1795
The return of madness

The Goya who painted The Madhouse, in all probability, faced with that flesh swarming in the void, and those naked forms on naked walls, must have felt something that resembled a contemporary pathos: the symbolic faded finery on the heads of mad kings showed begging bodies, bodies offered to whips and chains, and contradicted the delirium of their faces not so much by the misery of their nudity as by the human truth that radiates from their intact flesh.

The man with the three-pointed hat is not mad because he has stuck that battered headgear atop his total nakedness, but from the madman in the hat leaps out, by virtue of the silent language of his well-muscled form and the wild, marvellous freedom of his youth, a free human presence who affirms his birthright as though this were the beginning of a new era.

The Madhouse speaks less of the madness of those strange figures to be found in the Caprichos than the great monotony of those new bodies, brought into the light in all their vigour, and whose gestures, if they call up their dreams, sing above all of their dark liberty: its language is close to the world of Pinel.
Los disparates (The Follies)

“The Goya of the Disparates and the Quinta del sordo addresses another madness altogether: not that of the mad who were thrown in prison, but that of man cast into his own night.”
The subjective experience of madness

No landscape, no walls, no background
No star illuminates the night of bat people
“The desert of Bosch’s Saint Anthony was infinitely peopled; and even if it was the work of her imagination, the landscape through which Dulle Griet ran was still criss-crossed by human language.

Goya’s Monk, with that hot beast on his back, its paws on his shoulders and its snout panting in his ear, is alone, and no secret is told.

All that is present is the most interior, and at the same time the most savagely free of all forces: the one that dismembers bodies in the Gran Disparate, the one that runs wild and gouges out eyes in Raging Madness. “
“Madness has become the possibility in man of abolishing both man and the world – and even these images that challenge the world and deform humanity. It lies deeper than dreams, well below the nightmare of animality, a last resort: the end and the beginning of all things.

Not because it was a promise, as in German lyricism, but because it is the ambiguity of chaos and apocalypse: the Idiot who screams and twists his shoulder to escape from the nothingness that surrounds him – is that the birth of the first man, and his first movement towards liberty, or the last spasm of the last dying man?”
“It is in “The Regents” of the hospital that my historical research on madness is illustrated best. There around a table are these five old women whose job it is to hold, to run this house of imprisonment, where during the 17th and later during the 18th century, all socially worthless people, the troublemakers were imprisoned. These women are actually the expression of our society’s rationalization that sets madness apart.”
“At the center of the painting we see a closed hand-held fan. This is the symbol of all pleasures, of society’s futility folded up on itself, excluded. Looking at both sides [of the painting], we can also see on the right a woman holding her big register under her hand; that’s the accounting of life, of things. And on the left, we see a woman holding coins in her hand; that is, basically the West’s accounting economy. Together they hold back the experience of madness. And it is from here on that the science of madness was able to develop.”
The imaginary now resides between the book and the lamp.

Flaubert is to the library what Edouard Manet is to the museum.

They erect their art within the archive.

Flaubert and Manet have made books and paintings exist in art itself.

“Le Déjeuner sur l’herbe and Olympia were perhaps the first “museum“ paintings, the first paintings in European art that were less a response to the achievement of Giorgione, Raphael, and Velasquez than an acknowledgment (supported by this singular and obvious connection, using this legible reference to cloak its operation) of the new and substantial relationship of painting to itself, as a manifestation of the existence of museums and the particular reality and interdependence that paintings acquire in museums.”
Seeing the death

The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception (Regard)

Book about space, language and death; it is about seeing/gaze (regard)

The birth of a clinical anatomical knowledge
Word and things 1966


The Order of Things (english)

The displacements in the order of knowledge and the structure of finitude as the foundation of human sciences

Les Suivantes (1966)

• Le Mercure de France, n° 1221-1222, juillet-aôut, pp. 368-384.
Las Meninas 1656

The masterpiece of Diego Velázquez

- Theology of painting (Luca Giordano)
- True philosophy of art (David Wilkie)

Michel Foucault

- Visiology of the (classical) thought
- True art of (classical) philosophy
- The painting of classical thought
- The ideal representation of classical representation
- Pure representation
The Family of Philip IV

La Familia

The Family of Philip IV
Infanta Margarita

Five-year-old daughter of Philip & Mariana
Maried Leopold I, Holy Roman Empress
Las Meninas (ladies-in-waiting, court-ladies)
doña María Agustina Sarmiento de Sotomayor
doña Isabel de Velasco
José Nieto Velázquez Queen’s chamberlain and keeper of the royal tapestries.

At the door
The light
What they see?
Mirror
“Perhaps there exists, in this painting by Velázquez, a kind of representation of Classical representation, and definition of the space it opens. Representation tries to represent here itself in all its elements, with its images, the eyes to which it is offered, the faces it makes visible, the gestures that call it into being.

But there, in the midst of this dispersion which it is simultaneously groups together and spreads out before us, essential void is indicated compellingly from every parts: the necessary disappearance of that which is its foundation - the person it resembles and the person in whose eyes it is only a resemblance.

This subject itself - which is the same - has been elided. And finally free from this relationship that chained it, representation can give itself as pure representation.”
Representation: identities and differences

Naming and classifying - Mathesis and taxonomy

“The existence of language in the Classical age is at the same time sovereign and unobtrusive. “

“The manifestation and sign of truth are to be found in clear and distinct perception. It is the task of words to translate that truth if they can; but they no longer have the right to be considered a mark of it. Language has withdrawn from the midst of beings themselves and has entered a period of transparency and neutrality.”

Nothing is given that is not given to representation

Signifier and signified - No essential act of signification

Table as an ideal representation and center of knowledge

“The relation to Order is as essential to the Classical age as the relation to Interpretation was to the Renaissance.”
Renaissance knowledge

SIMILITUDES
Up to the end of the sixteenth century, resemblance played a constructive role in the knowledge of Western culture.

- Convenientia (convenient)
- Aemulatio (emulation)
- Analogy
- Sympathy

SIGNATURES
Resemblances require a signature, for none of them would ever become observable were it not legibly marked.
The prose of the world

The writing of the things.

God deposited in the world written words

Language as opaque, mysterious thing, closed in upon itself

Knowledge as interpretation

“Sixteenth-century knowledge (savoir) condemned itself to never knowing (connaître) anything but the same thing, but knowing it only at the unattainable end of an indefinite journey.”

Modern literature finds again the material being of language
Man and his double

Figure of man takes the place of king

• New epistemological figure

Analytics of finitude

• Possible as figure of finitude

Empirical and transcendental

• Odd empirico-transcendental double

• Being, whose knowledge (connaissance) makes possible all knowledge

Cogito and unthought

• The other of man had to become the same

Withdrawal and return of origin

• Origin the way how man in general and in individual takes place in the work, life and language, that had already begun.
A Bar at the Folies-Bergère

The analysis of the relationship between discourse and the visible.

- The complexity of their relationships: intercrossing, isomorphism, transformation, translation

- The festoon of the visible and the sayable that characterizes culture in a given moment of its history

Discourse not the common interpretative basis for all cultural phenomena.

- The discourse and the figure each have their mode of being; but they maintain complex and entangled relationships

The representation is not external nor indifferent to the form.
“The words Resemblance and Similitude permit you forcefully to suggest the presence-utterly foreign of the world and ourselves.”

Magritte dies 15.8.1967

Words and images
This is not pipe

Lec̦on de choses - Lesson of things
No contradiction
Plastic representation implies resemblance
Linguistic reference excludes it
Calligram never speaks and represents at the same moment

Verbal signs and visual representations are never given at once.
This is not a pipe.

Leci n'est pas une pipe.
"Les Deux Mystères", 1966

Common place

No common space (Lieu commun)

Classroom - pedagogic space
Teacher: This is not a pipe
“A pipe, a pipe,” cry the students

Resemblance and affirmation
Multiplicity of pipes

Freeing similarity from resemblance
Figure ↔ discourse

Traditional hierarchy of order
Figure → Discourse
Discourse → Figure

Discourse ↔ Figure
Paul Klee

Juxtaposition of shapes and the syntax of lines in an uncertain, reversible, floating space (simultaneously page and canvas, plane and volume, map and chronicle)
Arrow at the nexus of figures and signs

Paul Klee: Wild Man (1922)

Paul Klee: Birds Swooping Down and Arrows, 1919
Resemblance and affirmation

Traditionally representative bond

- Cannot be dissociated.

What you see is that

Wassily Kandinsky

Naked affirmation without resemblance

What is it?

Gesture: “improvisation”, “composition”

What is there: “a red shape”, “triangles” “purple orange”

Tensions or internal relations:

“a determinant pink”, “upwards“, "a yellow milieu" "a rosy balance."
Magritte: resemblances
Magritte: separation of graphic and plastic, words and images
Simulacrum

Non affirmative painting
Magritte: Similar against resemblance
Paintings of the “same” made free from “as if” principle
Are the birds like leaves
Or the leaves like birds

“Is it the plant whose leaves take flight and become birds, or the birds that drown and slowly botanize themselves, sinking into the ground with a final quiver of greenery”
"A day will come when, by means of similitude relayed indefinitely along the length of a series, the image itself, along with the name it bears, will lose its identity. Campbell, Campbell, Campbell, Campbell."
Philosophical theatre

Gilles Deleuze
Difference and repetition (Différence et Répétition)
Logic of sense (Logique du sens)
The philosophy of Phantasm and Simulacrum
The materiality of incorporeal phantasies
Maigrette and Manet
Manet and modern visibility

Lecturing on Manet


Manet as founder of modern visibility

“There are things that fascinate me, that absolutely intrigue me, like Manet. Everything saw me at his place. Ugliness, for example. The aggressiveness of ugliness as in The Balcony. And then inexplicability as he himself did not say anything about his own painting. Manet did a number of things in painting that the “impressionists” were absolutely regressive of.”
Manet as the precursor of Impressionism

Modified the techniques and the modes of pictorial representation

The use of colors and lights

New kind of luminosity

All that made Impressionism possible

Yet Foucault is not interested in this

Something else – more profound
Manet made possible all modern painting

The deep rupture (rupture en profondeur) in the “archeology” of painting

Did not invent non-representative painting, everything is representative

Yet representational play of the fundamental material elements of the canvas.

Uses and plays with, at the very interior of his paintings, even at the interior of what they represent, the material properties of the space on which he paints.

Object-painting, the fundamental condition for the modern paintings
The window to the world

Effort to sidestep the fact that the painting was inscribed on a certain fragment of space (wall, panel, canvas, paper)

Material space (rectangular surface in two dimensions)

Represented space (hiding material space, light, place)

Three dimensions by hiding two dimensional material plane.

Oblique lines and spirals to hide the material fact.

Represent interior or external lighting to the canvas

Hiding that it is lit by real light source (natural, artificial etc.)

Try to fix certain ideal place to the spectator

Hide the material space around which the viewer could be displaced and even go around
Object-painting  (le tableau-objet)

To make reappear at the very interior of what was represented in the picture the material properties and limitations of the canvas (Re)invents the object-painting (le tableau-objet) The painting (tableau) as materiality, as colored thing (chose), clarified by external light, as an object around viewer revolves.

1. Problem of the space
   • Playing with material and spatial properties of canvas in the painting itself

2. The problem of light
   • The light that clarifies not from the inside but from the real outside of painting (lumiere exterieure reelle).

3. The problem of spectator
   • The place of the viewer /spectator in relation to the painting (tableau)
The problem of the representation of space
Still very classical canvas
Yet the privilege given to the great vertical lines which are represented by the trees

Two organizes axes organize the canvas:
Horizontal: The last line of the figures' heads
The large vertical of the trees
The small triangle of light from which all the light which illuminates the front of the scene spills out.
Two vertical pillars and enormous vertical bar frames the painting
Doubles inside the picture the vertical and the horizontal lines of the canvas - closes the depth of the picture
Wall and dresses closes the space – only packages of space
Only opening, in the curious opening right at the top
Not opening of real space or perception but play of surfaces
All the figures on the same narrow little rectangle
No distance between the firing squad and victims
Archaic technique of diminishing the size
Symbol of distance which is not represented
Distance cannot be given to perception; one does not see distance
Port de Bordeaux (1871)

Markku Koivusalo: Foucault and paintings
Argenteuil (1874),

The play of tissues of vertical and horizontal lines
From one part of the canvas to another, you have two spectacles which are seen by the two figures but at its root the canvas, instead of showing what is to be seen, hides and conceals it.

The surface with its two faces, recto verso, is not a place where a visibility manifests itself; it is the place which assures, on the contrary, the invisibility of what is seen by the figures that are in the foreground of the canvas.
The spectacle that the figures in the picture are watching, we know it, we see it, it is given in the picture.
Actually not as Foucault claims.
The problems of lighting

Painting is light (Caravaggio)
“Here, on the contrary, you see that there is absolutely no light coming from above or from below, or from outside the canvas; or rather all the light comes from outside of the canvas, but strikes it absolutely at the perpendicular.”

The face presents absolutely no modelling, simply two little hollows either side of the nose to indicate the eyebrows and the hollows of the eyes.

The shadow, practically the only shadow which is presented in this picture, is this tiny little shadow here under the hand of the fifer and which indicates that in effect the lighting comes from absolutely opposite since it is behind the fifer, in the hollow of the hand, that the only shadow of the picture is drawn,

So we have an entirely perpendicular lighting, a lighting which is the real lighting of the canvas if the canvas in its materiality was to be exposed to an open window, in front of an open window.”
Traditional lighting

Frontal brutal lighting

Two systems of manifesting lighting juxtaposed in the very canvas

This gives its discordant character, its internal heterogeneity.
What was the scandal of Olympia

- Huge scandal
- Cannot be tolerated
- Moral scandal?
- Aesthetic scandal?
- Ugliness
- Foucault: Light scandal
  Sandal in the lighting?
“If the body of Titian’s Venus is visible, if she gives herself to our gaze, it is because there is this space, this luminous, discrete, lateral and golden source which surprises her, which surprises her in some ways among her and among us, Here is this nude woman, dreaming of nothing, looking at nothing, and there is this light which, indiscreetly, strikes or caresses her, and us viewers who surprise the game between this light and this nudity.”
“If the body of Titian's Venus is visible, if she gives herself to our gaze, it is because there is this space, this luminous, discrete, lateral and golden source which surprises her, which surprises her in some ways among her and among us, Here is this nude woman, dreaming of nothing, looking at nothing, and there is this light which, indiscreetly, strikes or caresses her, and us viewers who surprise the game between this light and this nudity.”
Olympia is visible because a violent light strikes her here, full shot.

Not nudity, lighting and we
Not a game of nudity and lighting

Light comes from our gaze
We make Olympia nude
We are not bystanders
We are responsible for this nudity
This caused the bourgeoisie moral scandal
The place of the spectator

Why there is something strange and uneasy here?

Bar aux Folies Bergères (1881)
Classical elements

The elements of paintings are very well known.

The presence of a central figure of whom one makes the portrait in a sense for her alone, and then behind this figure, a mirror which reflects to us the very image of this figure.
Double negation of depth
Frontal full shot lighting
Mirror reflection ≠
What is represented in it
Incompatible places
Exclusion of every stable and defined place where we could locate the painter or viewer
Absence of the fixed normative space
Power, body and struggles

Foucault 1970’s

From structures of knowledge to the forces of power
Visibility as a trap

Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison. 1975
Discipline [Observer] and Punish. The Birth of the Prison.

Ordering gaze, disciplinary perception, power as visibility

Architecture as power
• From monumental architecture to the ordering and functional architecture
Les Prisonniers


Line of flight (ligne de fuite)
“You have entered [...] in prison, like the dogs you see priming themselves and pushing up against the bars? [...] the Dogs belong to neither a determinate time nor a specific place.

It is not about the prisons of Spain, of Greece, of the USSR, of Brazil or Saigon; it is about prison.

But prison – is today a political place, which is to say a place where forces are born or become manifest, a place where history is formed and where time surges up.”
“Do not say: a history appears thanks to the juxtaposition of canvases; but rather: the movement that initially trembles, then breaks free from the canvas, really passes beyond its limits to inscribe itself, to continue itself in the following canvas and to make all the canvases shudder with a great movement that ends up escaping them and leaving them there in front of you.

The series of paintings, instead of recounting what has happened, gives rise to a force whose history can be recounted as the ripple of its flight and its freedom.

Painting has at least this much in common with discourse: when it gives rise to a force that creates history, it is political.”
Painting the power (puissance)

“These white squares do not indicate a sky and an earth that one could see from afar, they denote that one is here and nowhere else.

In classical painting, windows allow an interior to be re-placed in an external world; these unseeing eyes fix, nail and anchor shadows to walls that would otherwise know only night. Emblems of stark impotence.

Power, obstinate and immobile power, rigid power: such are the woods in the paintings of Rebeyrolle.

Woods superimposed on canvas, glued to it by the strongest glue that one could find (‘one cannot uproot them without uprooting the canvas’), they are simultaneously in the painting and outside its surface. In the middle of these hourless nights, in this darkness without direction, fragments of truncheons are like clockhands, but which mark height and depth: a timepiece of verticality”
“In the world of prisons, as in the world of dogs (‘lying
down’ and ‘upright’), the vertical is not one of the
dimensions of space, it is the dimension of power.

It dominates, rises up, threatens and flattens [...] above and below; orders barked out from up high and
down low; you are forbidden to sleep by day, to be up
at night, stood up straight in front of the guards, to
attention in front of the governor; crumpled by blows
in the dungeon, or strapped to the restraining bed for
having not wanted to go to sleep in front of the
warders; and, finally, hanging oneself with a clear
conscience, the only means of escaping the full length
of one’s enclosure, the only way of dying upright.”
Encounter with Fromanger

Photogenic Painting (La Peinture photogénique)

Gérard Fromanger (1939-)

Le désir est partout 1975
“Prisoners revolted on a roof: a press photo everywhere reproduced. But who has really seen what happens there? What commentary has ever articulated the unique and multiple event which circulates in it?

In scattering of multicolored marks whose position and color are not calculated in relation to the canvas, Fromanger draws countless celebrations from the photo”
“By covering the photograph, investing in it triumphally or insidiously, painting does not say that the photo is beautiful. It does something better: it produces the beautiful hermaphrodite of the cliché and the canvas, the androgynous image.”
The madness of illustrations.

1860-1880 the new frenzy of images

Perversion, travesty, disguised difference of the images.

The birth of realism cannot be separated from this great flight of multiple and similar images.

The madness of freedom contemporaneous with the birth of photography?

Imaginary games between photographs and paintings
Photograph as painting
Photo as engraved illustration

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Reijlander’s response to Raphael

Oscar Gustave Rejlander: Two ways of Life 1857
Photogenic

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Desire for the image

On the borders of painting and photography a common practice of the image

The Puritan codes of art disavowed it in the twentieth

The greatest of all these smugglers

Henry Peach Robinson
Pop and hyperrealism = love of the images

After the formalistic puritanism of the modern art

Teach us to love again images as such

Not by a return to figuration or object but in connection of indefinite circulation of images.

Not painting the idea, not painting the thing, but painting the image of thing - to put it circulation
Not a picture that makes a painting
Anonymous movement of what is happening
Streets - where images are born, images themselves.
Not painting what happened but the event that takes place in the image - event interior to the image.
“Fromanger’s paintings do not capture images; they do not fix them; they pass them on.
Not anymore specific streets, but any streets, roads, paths across continents, to the very heart of China or Africa.”
An event - repetition as difference

Markku Koivusalo: Foucault and paintings
Two focal points of desire

Bulteau at the Versailles

Amateur peasant painter in Hu-Xian

“From court to discipline, the greatest poet in the world to the seven hundred millionth docile amateurs escapes a multitude of the images.”
The experience of modernity

The modern painter is the one who can show the dark frock-coat as 'the necessary costume of our time,' the one who knows how to make manifest, in the fashion of the day, the essential, permanent, obsessive relation that our age entertains with death.
“Constantin Guys is not a flâneur; what makes him the modern painter par excellence in Baudelaire's eyes is that, just when the whole world is falling asleep, he begins to work, and he transfigures that world.

His transfiguration does not entail an annulling of reality, but a difficult interplay between the truth of what is real and the exercise of freedom; 'natural' things become 'more than natural,' 'beautiful' things become 'more than beautiful,' and individual objects appear 'endowed with an impulsive life like the soul of their creator.'

The dandy makes of his body, his behavior, his feelings and passions, his very existence, a work of art.

The modernity does not liberate man for his proper being; it compels him to face the task of elaborating himself.

Baudelaire does not imagine that these have any place in society itself, or in the body politic. They can only be produced in another, a different place, which Baudelaire calls art.”
Encounter with Duane Michals

Duane Michals (1932-) American photographer

Experience of the emotion and self

Thinking the emotion

Photographs as experiences

“They attract me as experiences.”

Experiences that only he made, but which, I do not know how, glides towards me - and, I think, to whoever looks at them - arousing pleasures, anxieties, ways of seeing, sensations that I already had or will feel one day and so I always ask are they his or mine, even I know well that I owe them Duane Michals, who says “I am the gift I offer you.”
Invisible experiences

"Everything is matter to photography, especially the difficult things in our lives: anxiety, big sorrows of child, desire, nightmares. The things you can not see are the most meaningful ones. We can not photograph them, only suggest them.” (Duane Michals)
“People believe in the reality of photographs but not in the reality of paintings. This gives an advantage to photographers. The trouble is that photographers also believe in the reality of photographs“ (Duane Michals)

The photograph. A soft sculpture of sleeping boy.

Painted part of the photograph: Cookies as intensely real figures.

“Go and find out if these “cookies” are the dreamer’s message or the indubitable object of our perception.”
Because we think that photo is reality, it actually gives it more dream like power than painting.

“It is the photo that makes reality escape itself, whereas painting has no other secret than the ability to produce it.”
From seeing the visible to the thinking of invisible

For a long time the metaphor of the gaze (regard) captured the photographer’s practice and imposed on him a law: to be an eye, an impeccable and imperious eye that prescribes to others what they should have seen.

To get away from the heavy ethics of the eye

To cancel the ocular function of photography.

Complex games where the visible escape, while the invisible arises, passes and leaves its traces on the film
& Rene Maigritte

Duane Michals met Magritte and loved it.

Magritteal processes’

Polishing and perfecting the form to its highest point of accomplishment.

Then emptying it of all reality and to removing it from its familiar field of visibility by contextual effects.
As long as I can remember, my father told me that one day he would write me a very special letter. But he never mentioned what the letter would be about. I used to speculate about what great secret the letter would reveal, what surprise, what intimacy we would share. I knew what I hoped the letter would contain. I wanted him to tell me where he had hidden his affections. But then he died, and the letter never arrived, and I never found that place where he had hidden his love.
“It is difficult to imagine greater proximity, more affirmative communication, and more readable image for the usual decoding of desire.”

“And, suddenly, the image is as lightened of its weight of reality, sucked by the words; all reciprocity disappears, complementarity break down.”

“There remains the solitary and secret sensation of a fleeting pleasure that burns the body of one of the two; while the other motionless, arms folded, eyes fixed on the hand that approaches his face, does not know, or does not want to know.

Unless, however, he knows. But the pleasure of one in the ignorance of the other is perhaps only the thought of the photographer who is moved by this pleasure that we do not know, in the face of this light ignorance.”
The art of the series

Markku Koivusalo: Foucault and paintings
Series that lets the events escape
“Even time and experience ceaselessly play together, they are not part of the same world. Time may bring changes, ageing, death, but thought-emotion is the stronger; it, and only it, can see and show others its invisible wrinkles.”
Art as a scandalous truth

Modern art as of Cynicism

Anti-Platonic and anti-Aristotelian modern art: reduction, laying bare the basics of existence; permanent refusal and rejection of every form of established art. In these two aspects, modern art has what could be called an essentially anti-cultural function.

The consensus of culture has to be opposed by the courage of art in its barbaric truth.

Modern art is Cynicism in culture; the cynicism of culture turned against itself.