

Aesthetics as the Art of Relationship. Truth - Beauty - Goodness (VAS/SLAH)

Status: in preparation

Research Question and Background

Aesthetics is, as the Basel philosopher Heinrich Barth once put it, not only a discipline concerned with works of art, but one that fundamentally opens up 'what we are to understand by appearance'. Aesthetics thus makes a fundamental contribution to the 'knowledge of existence'. It examines the connection between the sense world and the spiritual as a unity and establishes a relationship to the world beyond the subject-object divide. Rudolf Steiner had already pursued a similar approach earlier in his engagement with Goethe. He called for the artistic process to elevate the material into the spiritual sphere.

Thus, how can the approach of Rudolf Steiner's aesthetics, based on Goethe, be made fruitful in its significance for the understanding of art and artistic processes in general, so that the perspective of this new aesthetics becomes an all-encompassing principle of life? To explore and present these connections is the aim of the research project, which brings together various scientific and artistic disciplines.

Relevance and Perspective

Steiner's concept of aesthetics is highly relevant and implies concrete starting approaches for medicine, agriculture, curative education and pedagogy. Through the reinterpretation

of the Platonic virtues of truth, beauty and goodness, the effects of artistic processes can be described down to the very structure of the limbs of the living beings. Physical aspects are brought into connection with moral-spiritual principles - which is an urgent requirement in our inwardly and outwardly disassociated world.

Approach, Cooperation and Time Frame

The research project moves in the field of tension between the visual, performing, and the literary arts and humanities, and in particular, between art history, aesthetics and philosophy. The reference to anthropology results from the effect of the aesthetic, which is understood here as an independent - scientifically no less accessible - approach to the world.

The project will have a two-pronged approach. First, the implied understanding of aesthetics would have to be summarised on the basis of Rudolf Steiner's remarks, which are scattered in many places, and then brought into relation with further perspectives on aesthetics, as well as contemporary phenomenological work. Second, the aim is to make the dimensions of this new aesthetics accessible to the individual disciplines. Roland Halphen has laid a foundation for this in his study of Rudolf Steiner's aesthetics *Kunst und Erkenntnis* [*Art and Cognition].