

Henk Slager

Principles of Hope - Abstract

The topical artistic production reveals a world to us which is no longer unified. We have come face to face with relativity and contingency and life which no longer coincides with what is stable and lasting, but rather touches on events, dialogues and efforts of consensus.

A possible claim of validity of an artistic statement can only be judged from the horizon of the specific context in which one is. What is left is "communicative openness", dialogue. After all, participating in the dialogue presupposes implicitly the (moral) principles enabling the current relational art (e.g. the work of the Dutch artist Jeanne van Heeswijk).

Shouldn't aesthetics, as a cultural philosophy of art, question to what degree regimes of valuation and artistic strategies are entirely and how they will transcend (ontologically) such limitations?

Biography

Henk Slager (1960) studied philosophy, art history and literary theory at both the University of Amsterdam and Amsterdam's Free University. In 1989, he earned a Ph.D. (University of Amsterdam) writing an art philosophical thesis entitled Formalistic Temperament. From 1989 to 1993, he was involved in a project researching the foundations of art and cultural science for Brussels' Free University. His publications In the Twilight of the Sacred (with Hubert Dethier) and Archeology of Art Theory were in keeping with this line of research.

Afterwards, his interest shifted from academic (theoretical) aesthetics to an (experimental) theorizing related to the practice of contemporary art. In 1993 he established the Global Vernunft foundation which organizes and executes projects (exhibitions, symposia, publications) concerning the interface of philosophy and contemporary art. The journal L&B (Lier en Boog), Series of Philosophy of Art and Art Theory is an annual publication of Global Vernunft and the Dutch Society of Aesthetics edited by Henk Slager and Annette W. Balkema. L&B seeks to develop a parallel discourse investigating current themes related to contemporary visual art and theory involving philosophers, theorists, artists, curators and architects. Since 1994, Henk Slager has been teaching philosophy of art at the postgraduate curatorial training program (De Appel), Amsterdam. Since 2001 he is professor of Aesthetics at the Higher Institute of Fine Arts, Antwerp. He is a board member (Ass. Secretary General) of the IAA (International Association for Aesthetics).