



Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design

Doctoral School

Art Theory (Design Theory) / Design Culture Studies PhD

Art, Religion, and Spirituality in the Design Culture of the Postsecular Age

Doctoral Dissertation

Zoltán Körösvölgyi

Supervisors:

Dr. Márton Szentpéteri PhD, Full Professor

Dr. Bálint Veres PhD, Habilitated Associate Professor

Budapest, 2022

Abstract

In today's postsecular world, the increased focus on religion and spirituality is also tangible in the field of art. At the same time, not even the concepts involved are clear: the reception of works and artists generally considered as belonging to the category generally defined as contemporary sacred, receive varied judgments in theory, criticism, artistic and institutional practice, education, institutionalised religious as well as secular approaches, and, accordingly, is the subject of recurring debate. The research serving as the basis of this doctoral dissertation undertakes to map aspects of the wide horizon of this issue, to present related approaches, international and local discourses in Hungary, as well as artistic practices. To this end, the author presents the open-minded approach of inclusive Design Culture studies as a framework for research and interpretation. In order to apply the theoretical framework developed in the research, the author examines empirical research, educational programs, art and curatorial programs, and practices promoting the sharing of information and transcultural networking. Aware of the unfinished nature of the research process, the author aims to foster dialogue between actors in the field, and to point out that art related to religious and spiritual experience can suitably support futuring with its different modes, approaches and attitudes.

Keywords:

art, religion, spirituality, design culture, postsecular

Author:

Zoltán Körösvölgyi

Title of Dissertation:

Art, Religion, and Spirituality in the Design Culture of the Postsecular Age

Supervisors:

Dr. Márton Szentpéteri PhD, Full Professor

Dr. Bálint Veres PhD, Habilitated Associate Professor

The Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design

Budapest

2022

Theses

- (a) Art generally referred to as ‘sacred’ exists, and—similarly to other phenomena related to religious and/or spiritual experience—is decisive in our postsecular era.
- (b) The notion of ‘contemporary sacred art’ is more precarious: the works of art categorised or signified by the term are heterogeneous—from liturgical or ecclesiastical art to art related to communal or private religious and/or spiritual experience.
- (c) The shared language enabling communication between the actors of the field (i.e., artists; curators; professionals at artistic, religious, and educational institutions; as well as recipients/audiences) seems to have been lost. Nevertheless, recurring attempts have been and currently are being made to rediscover it—both in theory and practice.
- (d) Design Culture studies, with its open-minded and inclusive nature, offers a suitable framework and basis to investigate the subject.
- (e) Art related to religious and spiritual experience—in several fields, with distinct modes, approaches, and attitudes—can support thought, research and work on ways of futuring.