



Hyperimage. Cultural analysis about the motive of the bearded woman

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This dissertation examines the cultural model 'woman with beard' (from the fields of art and visual culture) within the framework of a curatorial project. Using cross-medial exemplifications, the cultural model is placed in the inclusive framing of a hyperimage and is analysed in a transdisciplinary way based on the analytical category gender. The autonomous images within a hyperimage allow constantly renewable intellectual positions which can generate new contexts and ordering of knowledge. Past and present can be brought into meaningful connections; cultural orientation can be thus illustrated and consolidated through examples.

The hyperimage in art education is defined as a heuristic tool in the sense of providing a visualized space for thought and knowledge. Visual knowledge is conveyed through the senses and becomes a stimulus for a discursive transdisciplinary exchange. The subject 'woman with beard' has become a global icon through the fictional persona 'Conchita Wurst'. Analysed from a mediological perspective one has to consider the massive circulation in mass media and on the internet and the concomitant discourses as necessary factors in this highly successful economy of the image. The epistemological function of the hyperimage of the 'woman with beard'

is more than the sum of its parts. It could be considered as a visual super sign (sign system); its metadiscursive potential developed by way of linking with individual images.

This dissertation can also be considered as a form of art-based research as the construct of hyperimage is here being applied to the research method as well as to the result of this research. Following Henk Bordorff's definition of artistic research (Bordorff 2009) the present proposal can be understood as research about art or, due to the extended research field, as research about art and visual culture. I propose the absence of a fixed construct that simultaneously illustrates exemplifications and conveys knowledge for cultural orientation and consequently have developed a model which can be defined as a contribution to solving this practical problem.

I examine, reflect upon and interpret the model from a multi- and trans-disciplinary perspective. There are aesthetic and discursive points in both the research object and the research result. The model is understood as a format which conveys meaning in the context of cultural and visual education. From the author's point of view the hyperimage is a meaningful format for art education and cultural studies to enable orien-

tation in a plurality (profusion) of images.

The ubiquitous presence of images and their communicative function in everyday practice have changed the status of the image. In order to enhance the importance of images in areas of knowledge and education it will be indispensable to develop new and instructive ways to convey meaning and knowledge which can deal appropriately with the diversity of the visual resources. Looking at visual communication and practice in this light it is therefore necessary to design transdisciplinary methods and practices for the production of meaning and knowledge. This dissertation is intended as a contribution to this debate.

KEYWORDS

**Gender,
Visual knowledge,
Mediological perspective,
Trans-disciplinary perspective**