

# The Vienna School of Art History from the 1960s to the mid-1970s: the renewal of art history and the influence of art schools

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This article gives a brief overview of a large research project dedicated to the role of art schools in the renewal of the discipline of art history, that I started in March 2023 at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, thanks to a Postdoc.Mobility Fellowship awarded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).<sup>1</sup> Some approaches and hypotheses that will be pursued over the next months are here presented and discussed.

## The 1960s and 1970s: the renewal of art history

In the 1980s, the philosopher Arthur C. Danto as well as the art historian Hans Belting developed the concept of the 'end of the history of art'. This term did not mean the end of the discipline per se, but referred to a crisis affecting art history from the 1960s onwards and calling for the elaboration of novel approaches. Although their respective theories were rooted in different fields, both noted an exhaustion of the discipline's traditional methods and saw the artistic currents emerging for twenty years as one of the main causes of this situation:

(...) I should like to believe that with the Brillo boxes the possibilities are effectively closed and that the history of art has come, in a way, to an end. It has not *stopped* but ended, in the sense that it has passed over into a kind of consciousness of itself and become, again in a way, its own philosophy (...). Suddenly in the advanced art of the nineteen-sixties and seventies, art and philosophy were ready for one another. Suddenly, indeed, they needed one another to tell themselves apart.<sup>2</sup>

To speak of the 'end of the history of art' can thus be understood as meaning that art has come to an end, or as meaning that the discipline has come to an end. Neither of these is the assertion made here. Instead, the title, which is deliberately designed for a double

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<sup>1</sup> Further information about the project is regularly updated on the data portal of the SNSF: <https://data.snf.ch/grants/grant/211171>. This article is a revised and expanded version of a paper I presented in April 2023 at the Czech Academy of Sciences, as part of the conference *The Vienna School of Art History III. Origins, modifications, and influences of its theoretical concepts* organised by Dr Tomáš Murár and Prof. Dr Tomáš Hlobil. I would like to thank Dr Edlyn Wu (Lausanne, Switzerland) and Dr Natasha Pittet (Scribe Ltd, Biel/Bienne, Switzerland) for proofreading this text.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace. A Philosophy of Art*, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1983 (1981), vii-viii.

understanding, implies two further possibilities, namely that today's art reflects on the known history of art, but does not continue it 'forward', and secondly that the discipline of art history today no longer produces a binding representation model of historical art.<sup>3</sup>

The 1960s were indeed characterised by new creative currents - such as pop art, performance or video art - that undermined the conventional definitions of art, among other things by annihilating the boundary between art and everyday life or by relegating the materiality of work to the background. In redefining art, its norms and practices, these trends made it necessary to develop novel approaches in art history. While the involvement of universities, museums, galleries and art criticism in art history's developments is acknowledged, the fundamental role of art schools in this momentum has to date never been studied. Interestingly, it was during this period that the teaching of art history became more important in art schools. From the 1960s onwards, art schools and academies in several European countries were gradually transformed into art universities or *Kunsthochschulen*. Consider, for example, the Coldstream Report published in 1960 by the National Advisory Council on Art Education in the UK, which was accompanied by the introduction of the Diploma in Art and Design and invited art schools to add art history as a compulsory subject.<sup>4</sup> In Switzerland, the Clottu Report on cultural policy in 1975 called for the transformation of art schools into institutions of tertiary education.<sup>5</sup>

My research hypothesis is that art schools not only participated in the growth and recognition of the new artistic movements pointed out by Danto and

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<sup>3</sup> Hans Belting, *Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte? [Überlegungen zur heutigen Kunsterfahrung und historischen Kunstforschung]*, Munich and Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1983, 11: 'Vom "Ende der Kunstgeschichte" zu reden, kann also so verstanden werden, als meine man, die Kunst sei zu Ende, oder so, dass man sagen wolle, das Fach sei am Ende. Keines von beiden soll hier behauptet werden. Dafür sind in dem Titel, der bewusst auf ein doppeltes Verständnis hin angelegt ist, zwei andere Möglichkeiten impliziert, nämlich jene, dass die heutige Kunst zwar die bekannte Geschichte der Kunst reflektiert, sie aber nicht "nach vorn" fortsetzt, und zweitens jene, dass das Fach Kunstgeschichte heute kein verbindliches Darstellungsmodell geschichtlicher Kunst mehr zustande bringt.' Belting confirmed his statement twelve years later; see Hans Belting, *Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte. Eine Revision nach zehn Jahren*, Munich: Verlag C.H.Beck, 1995, 22: 'The end of art history does not mean that art or the study of art has come to an end, but rather registers the fact that the end of a tradition is becoming apparent in art as well as in the mental images of art history, a tradition that has become the canon in the form we have known since modernity.' ('Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte bedeutet nicht, dass die Kunst oder die Kunstwissenschaft an ihrem Ende angelangt wären, sondern registriert die Tatsache, dass sich in der Kunst wie in den Denkbildern der Kunstgeschichte das Ende einer Tradition abzeichnet, einer Tradition, die seit der Moderne in der uns vertrauten Gestalt zum Kanon geworden war.') Translations by the author.

<sup>4</sup> Nigel Llewellyn, ed., *The London Art Schools. Reforming the Art World, 1960 to Now*, London: Tate Publishing, 2015, 13; Beth Williamson, 'Art History in the Art School' in Llewellyn, *The London Art Schools*, (75-86) 76.

<sup>5</sup> Gaston Clottu, ed., *Éléments pour une politique culturelle en Suisse. Rapport de la Commission fédérale d'experts pour l'étude de questions concernant la politique culturelle suisse*, Bern: Federal Department of Home Affairs, 1975, 146-147, 381.

Belting, but also allowed art history to digest the novel definitions of art and to overcome the alleged methodological crisis. In other words, I see the recent developments in art history not as the end of the (traditional) history of art or as the consequence of a crisis, but as the result of a renewal process, in which art schools have played a key role. I therefore start from the observation of a phenomenon similar to that described by Danto and Belting but consider it from a different angle that allows to take into account more actors and institutions as well as other disciplines. Specifically, my project will analyse how the Viennese *Kunsthochschulen* served as laboratories for the experimentation of new art histories and, in doing so, nuanced the university canon.

### **The transformation of Austrian art academies**

In August 1970, art academies became *Hochschulen* in Austria following the entry into force of the *Kunsthochschul-Organisationsgesetz* (KHOG)<sup>6</sup> (Art University Organisation Act), replacing the *Kunstakademiegesetz* of 1948<sup>7</sup>. The KHOG involved the bringing together of theoretical teachings - art history among others - in scientific institutes, distinct from practical workshops. It was updated several times; in 1978, *Hochschulen* were elevated to the rank of universities without, however, bearing the name.<sup>8</sup> The law was finally repealed in 1998 by the *Kunstuniversitäts-Organisationsgesetz*.<sup>9</sup> Until then, the *Akademie der bildenden Künste* (Academy of Fine Arts) in Vienna had its own dedicated regulation, the *Akademie-Organisationsgesetz* dating from 1955.<sup>10</sup> As for the universities, they were reformed in 1975 by the

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<sup>6</sup> 'Kunsthochschul-Organisationsgesetz (KHOG)', *Legal Information System of the Republic of Austria (RIS)*, [https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1970\\_54\\_0/1970\\_54\\_0.pdf](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1970_54_0/1970_54_0.pdf), accessed 15 August 2023. See also: Susanne Prucher, Silvia Herkt, Susanne Kogler, Severin Matiasovits and Erwin Strouhal, eds, *Auf dem Weg zur Kunstuniversität. Das Kunsthochschul-Organisationsgesetz von 1970*, Veröffentlichungen zur Geschichte der Universität Mozarteum Salzburg, Vienna: Hollitzer Verlag, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> 'Kunstakademiegesetz (KAG)', *Legal Information System of the Republic of Austria (RIS)*, [https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1948\\_168\\_0/1948\\_168\\_0.pdf](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1948_168_0/1948_168_0.pdf), accessed 15 August 2023.

<sup>8</sup> 'Kunsthochschul-Organisationsgesetz (KHOG)', *Legal Information System of the Republic of Austria (RIS)*, [https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1978\\_85\\_0/1978\\_85\\_0.pdf](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1978_85_0/1978_85_0.pdf), accessed 15 August 2023, amendments 1978, article 1.

<sup>9</sup> 'Kunstuniversitäts-Organisationsgesetz (KUOG)', *Legal Information System of the Republic of Austria (RIS)*, [https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1998\\_130\\_1/1998\\_130\\_1.pdf](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1998_130_1/1998_130_1.pdf), accessed 15 August 2023.

<sup>10</sup> 'Akademie-Organisationsgesetz (AOG)', *Legal Information System of the Republic of Austria (RIS)*, [https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1955\\_236\\_0/1955\\_236\\_0.pdf](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1955_236_0/1955_236_0.pdf), accessed 15 August 2023. See also the updating of the law in 1988: 'Akademie-Organisationsgesetz (AOG)', *Legal Information System of the Republic of Austria (RIS)*, [https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1988\\_25\\_0/1988\\_25\\_0.pdf](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1988_25_0/1988_25_0.pdf), accessed 15 August 2023. In 1998, although it legally became a university, the Academy of Fine Arts insisted on keeping its name of 'academy', an exception still in force today.

*Universitätsorganisationsgesetz*, which was the result of the May 1968 movements felt throughout Europe.<sup>11</sup>

This period of statutory and legal transition, 1970-98, forms the temporal framework of my research project. The theoretical outline adopted, inspired by the sociology of science, considers that the norms, rules, concepts and practices of a discipline depend on teaching and research institutions, their legal bases as well as on the positions and position-takings of their actors. As perfectly formulated by Peter Weingart, one of the focuses of the sociology of science is on the '(...) scientific community(ies) as the social organisations of science. What is the relationship between their social structure and the scientific contents they communicate?'<sup>12</sup> In other words, the project - and this article - aims to show that art historiography is not only informed by the concepts and writings of scholars and schools of thought, but also by the relationships between actors and institutions. Indeed, the study of the institutional aspect of the Vienna School of Art History deserves to be developed further, since it is above all the affiliation to the Institute of Art History of the University of Vienna that makes it possible to bring together art historians whose concepts and methods were sometimes very different from one another. The heritage of the Vienna School outside the university and in recent developments in art history is also a research blind spot.

So let's take a closer look at Vienna in the 1960s and 1970s (that is just before and just after the KHOG came into force, also the years leading up to the end of the history of art diagnosed by Danto and Belting) and observe the relationship between contemporary art and art history at the university and the two art schools, the *Hochschule für angewandte Kunst* (now University of Applied Arts) and the *Akademie der bildenden Künste*.

### **The Vienna School of Art History and contemporary art**

The Vienna School of Art History is best known for its work on the discipline of art history and for its openness to encompassing neglected fields and regions. Moreover, its representatives did not ignore the art of their time, even before the 1960s. Edwin Lachnit wrote his doctoral thesis on the relationship between the Vienna School and the art of the second half of the nineteenth century and the early

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<sup>11</sup> 'Universitätsorganisationsgesetz (UOG)', *Legal Information System of the Republic of Austria (RIS)*, [https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1975\\_258\\_0/1975\\_258\\_0.pdf](https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1975_258_0/1975_258_0.pdf), accessed 15 August 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Weingart, *Wissenschaftssoziologie*, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2013, 13: "Der Fokus liegt auf den wissenschaftlichen Gemeinschaft(en) (*scientific community/ies*) als den sozialen Organisationen der Wissenschaft. Welcher Zusammenhang besteht zwischen ihrer sozialen Struktur und den wissenschaftlichen Inhalten, die sie kommunizieren?" See also among others: Karin Knorr-Cetina, *The Manufacture of Knowledge. An Essay on the Constructivist and Contextual Nature of Science*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981; Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962; Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life. The Social Construction of Scientific Facts*, Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979.

years of the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup> Matthew Rampley also addressed this issue in his work on the first Vienna School of Art History.<sup>14</sup> The connections between contemporary art and the members of the Vienna School identified by these two authors can be classified into three categories. Firstly, the public stance on contemporary art can be exemplified by Franz Wickhoff's defence of Gustav Klimt in front of the *Philosophische Gesellschaft* in May 1900, when the artist's project for the ceiling of the university's auditorium, *Die Philosophie*, was strongly criticised. The second type of connection is the treatment of contemporary art in an individual's research. In this context, we can mention Josef Strzygowski's book, *Die bildende Kunst der Gegenwart*, published in 1907 and reissued in an expanded version in 1923.<sup>15</sup> The third type of link, which is more tenuous, is the influence of contemporary art on the new methods and concepts developed by the Vienna School. The example often cited is that of Max Dvořák, who was close to Expressionism and especially to Oskar Kokoschka, and used the questions raised by this artistic movement to approach the art of the past in a new way: 'Dvořák talked about El Greco but was referring to Kokoschka.'<sup>16</sup> Such connections and influences continued, in more or less individual forms, within the New Vienna School of Art History in the 1930s. Then, National Socialism and the 1939-45 war had a devastating effect on the activities of the Department of Art History, such that after the war, the Vienna School of Art History gradually became a legacy and less and less an active grouping. In the 1960s, the expression 'Vienna School of Art History' was hardly ever used to describe the members, students, concepts or methods of the then Institute of Art History. The department experienced a robust growth in student numbers during these years.<sup>17</sup> The individual attachment as well as the transhistorical and transmedial approach characterising the two historical chairs were replaced in 1971 by a definition of the professorships based on theme and then by period. It was not until 1994 that a chair was dedicated to modern art, with the role entrusted to Friedrich Teja Bach.<sup>18</sup>

So far I have found only one mention of contemporary art in courses delivered by professors at the department in the 1960s and 1970s: a lecture given by Karl Maria Swoboda in the summer semester of 1960. Swoboda, a full professor

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<sup>13</sup> Edwin Lachnit, *Die Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte und die Kunst ihrer Zeit. Zum Verhältnis von Methode und Forschungsgegenstand am Beginn der Moderne*, Vienna, Cologne and Weimar: Böhlau, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew Rampley, *The Vienna School of Art History. Empire and the Politics of Scholarship, 1847-1918*, University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Josef Strzygowski, *Die bildende Kunst der Gegenwart. Ein Büchlein für jedermann*, Leipzig: Verlag von Quelle & Meyer, 1907.

<sup>16</sup> Otto Kurz, 'Julius von Schlosser. Personalità - Metodo - Lavoro', *Critica d'Arte*, 11-12, 1955, 419, cited and translated in Rampley, *Vienna School of Art History*, 141.

<sup>17</sup> Golo Maurer and Raphael Rosenberg, 'Renaissance in der kunstgeschichtlichen Lehre aus Wiener Perspektive', *kunsttexte.de*, 3, 2012. doi: 10.48633/ksttx.2012.3.88125.

<sup>18</sup> Maximilian Hartmuth, Golo Maurer and Raphael Rosenberg, 'Geschichte des Instituts', *website of the Department of Art History, University of Vienna*, <https://kunstgeschichte.univie.ac.at/ueber-uns/geschichte-des-instituts>, accessed 15 August 2023.

(1946-62) and a member of Meyer Schapiro's New Vienna School of Art History<sup>19</sup>, worked mainly on late antique and early medieval architecture as well as Roman painting and non-European art. As the only active full professor at the institute, Swoboda had to teach many subjects and art encompassing many periods.

Although entitled *Die Kunst der Gegenwart* (the art of the present) and referring to 'unsere Epoche' (our epoch), Swoboda's 243-page course concentrates on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, before moving on to more modern art and ending in the 1950s with the works of the architect Max Bill and the sculptor Naum Gabo.<sup>20</sup> In these last pages, he deals with art that is recent but already recognised and institutionalised. Explaining the art of a period by relating it to that of an earlier era, or in other words explaining the contemporary through the ancient, is an approach found among several representatives of the Vienna School of Art History. In this course, however, the reference to the ancient supersedes and even replaces the treatment of the contemporary and disappoints the expectation created by the title.<sup>21</sup>

### **Art history at the Viennese *Kunsthochschulen***

Art history had been taught at the two academies since the end of the nineteenth century, thus long before the KHOG, but as a subsidiary or ancillary subject to the main training, the practice of art. At first, art history was taught very irregularly, depending on the needs of the students and the possibilities of the museums to offer object-based teaching. The situation remained unchanged during the first half of the twentieth century, as art history continued to be an occasional supplement, focusing mainly on the Renaissance and Classicism as historical models to be emulated in practice and taught by lecturers rather than professors.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, both academies offered art theory courses on more recent art. In 1970, the KHOG not only changed the status of the Austrian art academies but also revised their internal functioning and modulated their curricula. According to this new law, the art

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<sup>19</sup> Meyer Schapiro, 'The New Viennese School', *The Art Bulletin*, 18: 2, June 1936, 258-266.

<sup>20</sup> Vienna, Archiv des Instituts für Kunstgeschichte, Universität Wien, Swoboda 5, 7. Umschlag: 'Die Kunst der Gegenwart, Unterlagen zur Vorlesung 1960'.

<sup>21</sup> The term 'Gegenwart' (present time) that the professor chose for his title changed to 'modern' in the revised version of this lecture *Von der Romantik bis zur Moderne*, published twenty years later as the ninth and last volume in the series *Geschichte der bildenden Kunst*: Karl M. Swoboda, *Von der Romantik bis zur Moderne*, Geschichte der bildenden Kunst 9, Vienna: Verlag Anton Schroll & Co, 1984. According to the back cover, the book is based on the winter semester course 1948-49. However, I have so far found no trace of such a course prior to 1960 in Swoboda's archive at the Department of Art History of the University of Vienna. See also Hans H. Aurenhammer, '150 Jahre Kunstgeschichte an der Universität Wien (1852-2002)', *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für vergleichende Kunstforschung in Wien*, 54: 2-3, September 2002, 1-15.

<sup>22</sup> Walter Wagner, *Die Geschichte der Akademie der bildenden Künste in Wien*, Vienna: Akademie der bildenden Künste and Verlag Brüder Rosenbaum, 1967, 392; Viktoria Gitzl, 'Genealogien der Klassen. Die historische Entwicklung der Klassen/Studienrichtungen an der Kunstgewerbeschule Wien in den Jahren 1867 bis 1934', Master's thesis, University of Applied Arts, Vienna, 2016; Gerald Bast, Anja Seipenbusch-Hufschmied and Patrick Werkner, eds, *150 Jahre Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien. Ästhetik der Veränderung*, Edition Angewandte, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2017, 226, 420.

schools were now to concentrate on '(...) the cultivation and development of the arts and teaching of the arts as well as research and academic teaching.'<sup>23</sup> For the first time, art and science were placed on an equal footing. Theoretical instruction was no longer offered as an adjunct to artistic training and specialised scientific institutes had to be created, separated from master-classes and workshops and staffed not by artists but by university graduates appointed as professors. Research had to be encouraged and bridges needed to be built between artistic and scientific methods.

A *Lehrkanzel f  r Kunstgeschichte* (Chair of Art History) was established at the *Hochschule f  r angewandte Kunst* in 1974. After a two-year vacancy, Peter Gorsen was appointed as full professor and held the post until his retirement in 2002. Gorsen was a founding member of the German journal *  sthetik und Kommunikation*, created in 1970. 1970-73, he was a lecturer in the sociology of literature and art at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universit  t in Frankfurt and then until 1976 in art and visual communication at the Justus Liebig-Universit  t in Giessen. After studying philosophy, literature, art history, psychology and medicine and completing his doctorate in Frankfurt under Theodor W. Adorno and J  rgen Habermas, Gorsen practised an interdisciplinary and resolutely new art history,<sup>24</sup> as he himself put it in the text 'Zur Stellenausschreibung aus meiner Sicht' (On the job advertisement from my point of view) that accompanied his application to the *Hochschule f  r angewandte Kunst*:

I understand art history, especially with the requested focus on recent art history, as a necessarily interdisciplinary subject (...). Recent art (since the turn of the century) is characterised by its various theories of crisis, liquidation strategies (Dadaism, Surrealism, Futurism, etc.) and expansion into new mass-specific media such as comics, photography, television, film. (...). In my opinion, a modern history of art must take this expansion fully into account and also highlight signs of the breakdown of the traditional and scientifically sanctioned understanding of autonomous art. (...) Art history as a history of problems, as a problematisation and relativisation of its traditional

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<sup>23</sup> KHOG, article 1, paragraph 2: '(...) die Pflege und die Erschlie  ung der K  nste und die Kunstlehre sowie die Forschung und die wissenschaftliche Lehre.' Translation by the author.

<sup>24</sup> Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat, 'Kunstgeschichte als Kulturwissenschaft', in Bast, Seipenbusch-Hufschmied and Werkner, *150 Jahre Universit  t f  r angewandte Kunst Wien*, (226-229) 226. Concerning Gorsen's writings, see in particular: Peter Gorsen and Eberhard Kn  dler-Bunte, eds, *Proletkult 1. System einer proletarischen Kultur: Dokumentation*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1974; Peter Gorsen and Eberhard Kn  dler-Bunte, eds, *Proletkult 2. Zur Praxis und Theorie einer proletarischen Kulturrevolution in Sowjetrussland 1917-1925: Dokumentation*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1975; Peter Gorsen, *Kunst und Krankheit. Metamorphosen der   sthetischen Einbildungskraft*, Frankfurt: Europ  ische Verlagsanstalt, 1980; Peter Gorsen, *Sexual  sthetik. Grenzformen der Sinnlichkeit im 20. Jahrhundert*, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1987.

values, seems to me to be more important, i.e. more realistic, more functional (...).<sup>25</sup>

In contrast to his colleagues at the university, Gorsen presented his students with art that was contemporary to him and to them, namely with living, active artists, even familiar artists, since his wife, Hanel Koeck-Gorsen, was actively involved in Viennese Actionism, a movement in which Gorsen was to become a specialist.<sup>26</sup> As early as the mid-1970s, Gorsen offered a seminar on women's art history, a first in German-language academic field,<sup>27</sup> reflecting Gorsen's grounding in the political questions of the time.

In 1976, the *Akademie der bildenden Künste* set up an *Institut für Kunstgeschichte* (Institute of Art History), which the art historian Otto Graf headed until 2005. Graf had been working for this school since 1971, teaching art history at the *Institut für Kunsterziehung* (Institute of Art Education). Previously, he was a fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies and spent October 1963 to July 1964 in Chicago researching the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. Then he was an assistant at the *Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts* (now Belvedere 21), where he exhibited trends in international contemporary art.<sup>28</sup> In 1963, he completed his dissertation on the work of Otto Wagner at the University of Vienna, under the supervision of Swoboda and Otto Demus.<sup>29</sup> His research was mainly devoted to architecture and, in particular, to Wagner, an interest shared by several art historians at the University of Vienna - Josef Strzygowski among others. In his practice of art history, Graf assigned a very important place to drawing as a tool for scientific research.<sup>31</sup> He was also concerned with the various disciplines in the study of art and the links between art history and

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<sup>25</sup> Vienna, Archiv der Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien, PA-Gorsen/Aut, Personalakten: (Verwaltung und Lehre), application form by Peter Gorsen, 1976: 'Ich verstehe Kunstgeschichte, insbesondere in der gewünschten Akzentuierung auf neuere Kunstgeschichte als ein erzwungenermaßen interdisziplinäres Fach (...). Die neueste Kunst (seit der Jahrhundertwende) steht im Zeichen ihrer verschiedenen Krisentheorien, Liquidationsstrategien (Dadaismus, Surrealismus, Futurismus usw.) und ihrer Erweiterung auf neue massenspezifische Medien wie Comics, Fotografie, Fernsehen, Film. (...) Eine moderne Kunstgeschichte muss meiner Auffassung nach dieser Erweiterung voll Rechnung tragen und die Auflösungserscheinungen des tradierten und des wissenschaftlich wie immer sanktionierten Verständnisses von autonomer Kunst mit aufzeigen. (...) Kunstgeschichte als Problemgeschichte, als Problematisierung und Relativierung ihrer tradierten Wertvorstellungen scheint mir wichtiger, d.h. realitätsadäquater, funktioneller (...).' Translation by the author.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Gorsen, *Das Nachleben des Wiener Aktionismus. Interpretationen und Einlassungen seit 1969*, Klagenfurt, Graz and Vienna: Ritter Verlag, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Eva Kernbauer, 'In memoriam Peter Gorsen (1933-2017)', *VöKK Journal*, 34: 4, 2017, 13.

<sup>28</sup> Albert Massiczek, ed., *100 Jahre Hochschulstatut, 280 Jahre Akademie der bildenden Künste in Wien*, Vienna: Akademie der bildenden Künste, 1972, 138; Anja Weiberg, ed., *Die Akademie in der Zeitenwende*, Vienna: Archiv der Akademie der bildenden Künste, 2002, 239; Carl Pruscha, ed., *Akademie der bildenden Künste/Academy of Fine Arts*, Vienna: Academy of Fine Arts, 1989, 117, 125.

<sup>29</sup> Otto Graf, 'Otto Wagner 1882', PhD thesis, University of Vienna, 1963.

<sup>31</sup> Otto Antonia Graf, *Kompendium. Das Erklären des Zeichnens*, Vienna, Cologne and Weimar: Böhlau, 2007.



cultural history or art education, an interdisciplinary position which Graf will describe as 'sanfte Kunstwissenschaft' (soft science of art):

(...) how does truth emerge in the science of art: the truth about the science of art, what it is, what it should be, what it cannot be on the one hand and the truth of art, what it is, its essence and its existence among us on the other? (...) What is the point of dealing with art and, what's more, of dealing with it scientifically, that is, systematically, questioningly and in an informed manner?<sup>32</sup>

This methodological stance, as well as the treatment of new subjects by Gorsen, more so than that of many of their peers at the university at the time, are reminiscent of the common goal shared by all the representatives of the Vienna School of Art History to reflect on the history of art and to make it a professional, academic discipline, even a science of art: '(...) a group of very cultivated and sensitive young art-historians (...). They draw on contemporary writings in philosophy and psychology and welcome suggestions from neighboring fields in the effort to build up a "science of art"'.<sup>33</sup>

### Concluding remarks

In the 1970s, it was no longer a question of constructing and theorising a science of art but of renewing it in the face of the new questions posed by contemporary art. This was not to deny the discipline as such or its achievements but rather, as the positions of Gorsen and Graf show, to adapt and extend them in order to continue writing art history so that it does not remain stuck on modern art, among other things.

Universities and art schools have long functioned in a complementary way concerning art history. From 1970 onwards, the status of the field as a scientific discipline with specialist institutes became identical in both universities and art schools, leading to tensions and even competition. A gap opened up between the practices of the university and those of the *Hochschule*: the former did not offer extensive teaching and research on contemporary art but rather strengthened the foundations and methods of established art history, while the latter created chairs of interdisciplinary art history, focusing on contemporary art without ignoring the study of the past. In the light of these observations, we could formulate the following hypothesis: the Viennese *Kunsthochschulen* have participated in the constitution of a new, third Vienna School of Art History - continuing the innovation and self-reflection that characterised the first two schools, while developing new concepts and methods within a novel institutional framework. This

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<sup>32</sup> Otto Antonia Graf, 'Sanfte Kunstwissenschaft?', *Kunsthistoriker. Mitteilungen des   sterreichischen Kunsthistorikerverbandes*, 1-2: 4-1, 1984-85, 26-29: '(...) wie tritt in der Kunstwissenschaft die Wahrheit hervor: die Wahrheit der Kunstwissenschaft, das, was sie ist, was sie sein soll, was sie nicht sein kann auf der einen Seite, die Wahrheit der Kunst, das, was sie ist, ihr Wesen und ihr Dasein unter uns auf der anderen Seite? (...) Was hat es f  r einen Sinn, sich mit der Kunst und dazu noch wissenschaftlich, also systematisch, fragend und gebildet, zu befassen?'. Translation by the author.

<sup>33</sup> Schapiro, 'The New Viennese School', 258.

may explain the expansion of contemporary art history teaching at universities in recent years as well as the development of artistic research at art schools.<sup>34</sup>

Over the coming months, I intend to study both individual and institutional positions, in a sociological sense, between 1970 and 1998. A great deal of archival research lies ahead of me as the archives are only partially inventoried and classified, followed by the transcription of course documents and interviews.<sup>35</sup> What was the relationship between the professors from each institution? How did the position of the institution influence the positions of the actors involved and that of the discipline of art history? How to explain the absence of the teaching of contemporary art history in university education? Is the appearance of 'traditionalism' and 'renewal' confirmed when we delve into the details of the course notes and some other archives? These are some of the questions that will guide the research project.

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<sup>34</sup> See for example: Ruth Mateus-Berr and Jochum Richard, eds, *Teaching Artistic Research. Conversations across Cultures*, Edition Angewandte, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Swoboda's teaching notes in particular will have to be transcribed in order to decipher the sometimes complex handwriting and to distinguish between the original notes and later additions. In regard to decoding such works, it is worth mentioning Eleonora Gaudieri's interesting article based on Alois Riegl's lecture material on the Baroque. See: Eleonora Gaudieri, 'Alois Riegl and his lecture notes. A reconsideration of his concept of "Baroque"', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 22, June 2020.