

## **Wolfram Pichler, professeur d'histoire de l'art à l'Université de Vienne et directeur d'études invité à l'EHESS en mars 2013, donnera trois conférences dans le cadre du séminaire de Giovanni Careri.**

After his studies of art history and philosophy, mathematics and archeology, Wolfram Pichler did his habilitation in 1999 at the University of Vienna, followed by a research stay as visiting fellow at the Graduate School of Arts and Science at Harvard University in 2000. In 2003/04, he was a postdoctoral scholar at the Department of Art History at the Max-Planck-Institute in Florence. Furthermore, he was a member of the Research Project "Knowledge in the Making" of the Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science in Berlin and the Department of Art History in Florence from 2007 to 2011. Besides the organization of a multitude of conferences and lectures, Wolfram Pichler has been academic advisor for art exhibitions such as "Aby Warburg – Mnemosyne" in Hamburg and Vienna (1994). He also founded the Gesellschaft für Kulturwissenschaften und Bildtheorie of Vienna together with Werner Rappl and Gudrun Swoboda in 1996.

### **“The ring and the hinge: Some topological complications in the work of Leonardo da Vinci, Caravaggio, Lygia Clark and others”**

The three seminars proposed here are dealing, mostly from an art historical point of view, with the story of certain things characterized by (a) holes, (b) hinges, and (c) twists. Taken together, the three seminars form a kind of triptych, the central part of which is a piece on diptychs. All three of them are, in some sense or another, related to topology.

#### **Premier séminaire, Mardi 5 mars 9h-11h Salle Fabri de Pereisc INHA 2 Rue Vivienne**

The first seminar will be concerned with the history of the torus in Italian renaissance art. In the work of artists such as Paolo Uccello, Leonardo da Vinci or Vittore Carpaccio, torus-like forms were variously and sometimes ambiguously interpreted as abstract geometric bodies or rings, but also as fashionable headgears etc. In the seminar, I will focus an example found in Leonardo's Codex Atlanticus and described by the artist himself as a «corpo nato della prospettiva di Leonardo Vinci» [CA 520r (già 191 r.a)]. I shall interpret Leonardo's inscription, reconstruct the genesis of the complex forms drawn by him and try to clarify the difficult epistemological status of his so-called "corpo", the defining characteristic of which – a hole – escaped geometric knowledge of the time.

#### **Deuxième séminaire, Mardi 12 mars 9h-11h Salle Fabri de Pereisc INHA 2 Rue Vivienne**

The second seminar might be entitled "Caravaggio's Diptychs." For although Caravaggio doesn't seem to have painted any diptych in the literal sense, Hubert Damisch was right to suggest that some of his paintings may be described as latent diptychs for formal and

semantic reasons. They are characterized by certain kinds of symmetries and (imaginary) hinges. As a painter, he also seems to have been very fond of things consisting of two parts, especially if they were both symmetric and foldable (such as pairs of wings, opened books, faldistoria and so on), and he liked to play with intricate pairings and/or chiasmic correlations of such things, problematizing their unity. How should we describe and interpret these phenomena? Can we say that, in Caravaggio's art, something like a dissemination of the diptych-form is taking place? And that this happens in the context of a culture in which foldable images had become a marginal phenomenon?

**Troisième séminaire, Mardi 19 mars 9h-11h Salle Fabri de Pereisc INHA 2 Rue Vivienne**

A torus, cut in a certain way, may produce strange things. I shall illustrate this in the third seminar, shifting the historical context into the twentieth century. A number of important artistic practices which have been developed since the 1930s are in some way or another connected to topology, the modern mathematical discipline formerly known as Analysis Situs. References to, borrowings from and, in some rare cases, even critiques of topology (or what one imagined to be topology) are to be found, for instance, in concrete art since ca. 1935 (cf. the once hugely influential work of Max Bill) as well as in several post-WW II practices critically related to concrete art (Lygia Clark and Brazilian neoconcretismo, Dieter Roth, etc.); in the historically most significant (neo-)avant-garde movement of the time around 1960, i.e., Situationism (some writings of Asger Jorn, etc.); in different kinds of video art or, more generally, post-minimal art of the 1960s and 70s (Dan Graham ...); in the so-called topological trend in architecture since the 1990s (for instance, the architecture and writings of Peter Eisenman). In many of the different historical settings indicated by these names, one thing keeps re-appearing, namely: the Moebius band. Artists and architects didn't only design construct and/or manipulate sculptures, buildings, video installations et cetera which can literally or metaphorically be described as Moebius bands. They would also – and in some cases, exclusively – make use of the Moebius band as a conceptual model or as a weapon against certain kinds of conceptualizations.