

# >Essay: What can be called *Alter Ego* (in art production and biographical development of personality and society) as existential challenge of the post-digital present

In my art production and biographical development often another part of my personality suggests something as realization and concretization than what we as Ratio are used to define as 'it is me'.

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When I consciously registered this phenomenon for the first time at the age of eighteen, I decided at the same time to take the risk of this kind of art production and general approach to biographical development and to investigate it; and it has remained so to this day that I realize the impulses of this *Alter Ego* in a long-term mode of "step by step" in the reality of everyday life and in art production, and I systematically reflect it.

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This may sound a bit unusual and not very convincing for people who are above all rationally educated, and they could easily reproach me, and art as a whole, for not really tackling this matter of art and general living in the sense of economics, and that one only hides behind this *Alter Ego*

story, which seems mystical and unclear for their perception, and that one does not want to take position and responsibility, and that in this procedure one delegates the latter only to this *Alter Ego*.

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As a society in the post-digital age, we live in a period of social history that thinks of man in the simplest, pragmatically banal and rational way: YOU are seen and dealt with as the one who rationally decides about your life and measured by whether YOU make something out of your life and yourself, that is, whether YOU can lead yourself to success in the sense of material prosperity and a respected social position, or whether YOU end up more on the sidelines of art society or social life in general, on the losing side and, in the worst case, on the social garbage dump.

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But 'being successful in life' has always meant something a little different to me. And that's what it has meant for Western culture as a whole, and not

only for it. It meant and means wanting to experience the most possible meaning in life and the highest possible degree of self-identification, no matter whether it is about art, work or everyday matters in general.

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My works in the visual arts refer to this central social need for identification and experience of meaning, and I think this is also what characterizes 'the art of socio-ethical co-responsibility' in general. It is the moral ability to relate oneself to the social challenges of a time, a living world and the present in a differentiated way, and not simply wanting to lead an optimum functional life, but to raise the question of the good life, which presupposes commitment to the experience of friendship, the meaning of life, being fulfilled, interest, gratitude and the ability to perceive happiness as values of social prosperity.

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In the sense of a widening of the field of vision and contrary to the economist assertion

in the social orientation of the post-digital present, it is probably a matter of learning to understand what this fact means in the context of Western knowledge and information culture that everyone is increasingly confronted with his or her *Alter Ego* in his/her 20th or 21st century biography of self-determination, and we seem to be challenged to pursue this phenomenon of individual as well as social history in our everyday biographies and in art practice, to study it and to urgently advance it to public discourse in art and society.

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Both formally and cognitively it is about the essence of the idea, of chance, of instinctive knowledge and of the question who is responsible for them and who presides over them in their developing history, which, playing in the subconscious, evades directive rational control. It is characteristic that their appearance feels as if you were not yourself, but someone else or something else. However, this Other as instance is obviously just as real as that rational part of

a personality of which we are accustomed to speak as “it is me”. It is as if this *Alter Ego* were your Self, too, but in a different field of our real existence.

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This *Alter Ego* seems to be decisively involved in a constitutive formation process within the sphere of the activity of the collective Subconscious, which occurs, among other things, precisely because of our concretely lived lifestyle practice, its orientation, its attitude and its specific commitment. In a cyclical sequence, an ‘output outside of direct controllability’ is generated in this formation process, which expresses itself via ideas, coincidence, perhaps also accident and certainly the most diverse coincidences, which often determine life, work and art production in a trend-setting and essential way.

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As contemporary artists and wakeful contemporaries we seem to be explicitly challenged to take a stand and to adjust to a somewhat more

complex reality- and adventure story in the realities of art and society. It can be reliably assumed that this *Alter Ego* reality can be continuously taken into account. It can be observed that the integration of this reality in art production and life-design drives an evolutionary personality-forming and contemporaneous societal developing process, which in its historicity opens up a maximum of sense-experience and enables a reliable access to individual and social questions of ethical free self-orientation and self-identification.

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