



# Learning how to see and feel: Alfred Lichtwark and his concept of artistic and aesthetic education

Karin Priem & Christine Mayer

To cite this article: Karin Priem & Christine Mayer (2017) Learning how to see and feel: Alfred Lichtwark and his concept of artistic and aesthetic education, *Paedagogica Historica*, 53:3, 199-213, DOI: [10.1080/00309230.2016.1267779](https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2016.1267779)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2016.1267779>



Published online: 17 Jan 2017.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 357



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

## Learning how to see and feel: Alfred Lichtwark and his concept of artistic and aesthetic education

Karin Priem<sup>a</sup> and Christine Mayer<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>University of Luxembourg – Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH), Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg; <sup>b</sup>University of Hamburg – Faculty of Education, Department of General, Intercultural and International Comparative Education (EWI), Hamburg, Germany

### ABSTRACT

Focusing on Lichtwark's concept of museology, this article shows what role he envisaged for art in public life at a time when the rise of mass consumption and popular culture created new lifestyles. Lichtwark's concept of artistic and aesthetic education did not only extend to museums and classrooms but also to dilettantism as a basis for educating taste and developing an appreciation of the arts that would have a positive economic impact. The article looks at the contemporary entanglements and different contexts of Lichtwark's ideas and relates them to recent approaches to cultural learning. Generally speaking, it argues that concepts of cultural learning are a bundle of entangled threads that connect and concern not only the sphere of art but also contradictory values and norms, economic production, and the emergence of new important status groups such as consumers.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 5 April 2016  
Accepted 22 November 2016

### KEYWORDS

Artistic and aesthetic education; consumer education; cultural learning; popular culture; Alfred Lichtwark

### 1. Introduction

When Alfred Lichtwark (1852–1914) was appointed director of the *Hamburger Kunsthalle* in 1886, he soon took the initiative – in close collaboration with several Hamburg teachers' associations – in launching new endeavours in artistic and aesthetic education and museology.<sup>1</sup> In his inaugural speech, he emphasised the art museum's responsibility to help construct a new German identity by means of art and culture. This paper will explore how he envisaged artistic and aesthetic education as an instrument to bridge gaps between different population groups and to cultivate an overarching German identity through seeing as a cultural practice.<sup>2</sup> In Lichtwark's view, the adventure of looking at art meant educating

**CONTACT** Karin Priem  [karin.priem@uni.lu](mailto:karin.priem@uni.lu)

<sup>1</sup>In his writings, Lichtwark used the term *künstlerische Erziehung*. In its contemporary reading, *künstlerische Erziehung* was interpreted as "artistic education" with a strong reference to formal education. This reading also corresponds with the term's literal translation into English. However, in this article we use the term "aesthetic education" in accordance with the broader scope of Lichtwark's approach, which also included the spheres of production, consumption, aesthetic taste, and everyday life. See also Diethard Kerbs, "Kunsterziehungsbewegung und Kulturreform [Art education movement and cultural reform]," in *Schund und Schönheit: Populäre Kultur um 1900* [Trash and beauty: popular culture around 1900], ed. Kaspar Maase and Wolfgang Kaschuba (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001), 378–97.

<sup>2</sup>See also Karin Priem, "Facts for Babies: Visual Experiments at the Intersection of Art, Science, and Consumerism," *Sisyphus – Journal of Education* 3, no. 1 (2015): 18–36.

taste while developing a sense for modern aesthetic forms and material quality. Within this context, aesthetic education in particular became a reference point of national identity formation, consumption, modern industrial production, and economic growth. Generally speaking, Lichtwark expected his concept of museum education to pave the way for new imaginations about modern German culture and, related to this, new lifestyles. He explicitly warned against exposing audiences to traditional classification systems of art history and instead emphasised the artistic activity of amateurs and the aura of the original artwork, both of which, in his view, would stimulate the senses, fuel the imagination, and thus inspire a culture-driven change in behaviour and values. Seeing as a cultural practice, artistic activities, and aesthetic education were thus given a central role in reframing the nation.

In this article, we briefly introduce Lichtwark's concept of museology and show what role he envisaged for art in the creation of new lifestyles and go on to depict his concept of artistic and aesthetic education. We subsequently discuss his ideas on dilettantism as a basis for educating taste and developing an appreciation of the arts before relating this to his concept of artistic and aesthetic education as part of the work of museums and schools. In conclusion, we look at the contemporary entanglements and different contexts of Lichtwark's ideas on artistic and aesthetic education, also in view of recent concepts of cultural learning.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Lichtwark's approach to museology: the role of the arts in public life and the creation of new lifestyles

The work of Alfred Lichtwark initiated a new phase in the development of museology. Supervising the planning, construction, and expansion of the *Kunsthalle* as its director since 1886, he created a new type of art museum which was neither to concentrate on local specificities nor to systematically complete a collection of representative art but which focused on quality and systematically reached out to a larger population through its educational mission.<sup>4</sup> Presenting the guiding principles of his future work in his inaugural speech, Lichtwark pointed to the central task of "harnessing" (*Nutzbarmachung*) the art collection in his care. By this he not only meant to collect and display objects of art, but to make them accessible to the broader public through "a variously stimulating organism of instruction" (*vielseitig anregenden Unterrichtsorganismus*).<sup>5</sup> He stated succinctly: "We do not want a museum that merely stands and waits; we want an institution that actively engages in the artistic education of our populace."<sup>6</sup> For Lichtwark, artistic and aesthetic education was an overarching educational goal because of its decisive "impact on the external appearance, lifestyle and conduct of people, on their language, their creative labour, and their enjoyment in any form."<sup>7</sup> He regarded *künstlerische Erziehung* not as the cultivation of innate talents or

<sup>3</sup>See Natasha McNab, Richard Clay and Ian Grosvenor, "Cultural Learning: From Pedagogy to Knowledge Exchange" (AHRC position paper, Cultural Intermediation and the Creative Economy Symposium, University of Birmingham, 2012); and Kevin Myers and Ian Grosvenor, "Cultural Learning and Historical Memory: A Research Agenda," *Encounters/Encuentros/ Rencontres on Education* 15 (2014): 3–21.

<sup>4</sup>Margrit Dibbern, *Die Hamburger Kunsthalle unter Alfred Lichtwark (1886–1914): Entwicklung der Sammlungen und Neubau* [The Hamburger Kunsthalle under the direction of Alfred Lichtwark (1886–1914): The development of collections and the construction of a new building] (PhD diss., University of Hamburg, 1980), 5.

<sup>5</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, "Die Aufgabe der Kunsthalle [The Task of the Kunsthalle]," in *Drei Programme: Die Grundlagen der künstlerischen Bildung* [Three programmes: the foundations of artistic education], vol. 4, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Cassirer, 1902), 15. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the authors'.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>7</sup>Cited in Eckhard Schaar, "Einleitung [Introduction]," in Alfred Lichtwark, *Erziehung des Auges: Ausgewählte Schriften* [Education of the eye: selected writings], ed. Eckhard Schaar (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1991), 8.

a scarce good available only to the privileged, but as participation in a collective national patrimony that, supported by the spirit of a people, affected the soul of each individual.<sup>8</sup> As such, Lichtwark's theory of the museum went beyond conservation and exhibition in that it further stressed communication, education, mediation, sentiments, and lifestyles with effects in the social and economic sphere.<sup>9</sup>

Lichtwark's ideas about artistic and aesthetic education were mostly aimed at the German bourgeoisie which he considered to be lacking in taste and art appreciation. In his view, this found particular expression in the eclecticism of the Wilhelmine era with its insecurity about expressing independent taste and its uncritical *mélange* of different styles.<sup>10</sup> Through his artistic and educational efforts, he sought a return to greater simplicity and clarity of style and aimed to foster the ability to recognise, judge, and enjoy the quality of a work of art. Putting special emphasis on contemporary modern art, Lichtwark saw artistic and aesthetic education as having a national dimension, too, by creating both a cultural identity and economic value. Several of his writings focus on the artistically educated bourgeois as a consumer, especially as a buyer and collector of art and artisan craft products. In his view, the state and refinement of artistic production was determined by its consumers, which meant that the awareness and appreciation of quality on the part of potential buyers needed to be strengthened through artistic and aesthetic education. The future quality of both art and its mass production, which in turn were expected to affect the design of everyday objects, depended primarily on "whether we shall be able to educate discriminating, demanding and critical buyers in our own country".<sup>11</sup>

Consumer education as intended by Lichtwark was not a new idea. It had already been proposed by the *Verein deutscher Zeichenlehrer* (Association of German Art Teachers).<sup>12</sup> Similar ideas also emerged in the context of a broader (international) normative and economic debate on aesthetic taste in everyday life before and after 1900 – that is, at a time that saw the rise of industrial production, international markets, mass consumption, urbanisation, popular culture and the entertainment business, and that was characterised by an often contradictory mix of modern and anti-modern positions.<sup>13</sup> Seen against this background, aesthetic education took on a quite common, "popular" form through its association with ideas of national economics and identity formation.<sup>14</sup> The stress on national identity and economics was also due to ongoing public debates and German industrialists' concerns about negative publicity in the wake of the 1876 Philadelphia World Fair, when German products had been labelled as cheap, of poor quality and bad taste and thus had come to represent an economic risk.<sup>15</sup>

Lichtwark's concept of artistic and aesthetic education was not limited to a narrow definition of the fine arts (architecture, sculpture, painting, drawing, engraving, and skilled crafts), but also extended to photography, which he valued as a form of artistic expression and to which

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, Anke te Heesen, *Theorien des Museums* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 2012); and André Desvallées and François Mairesse, eds., *Key Concepts of Museology* (International Council of Museums: Amand Colin, 2010).

<sup>10</sup>See, for example, Alfred Lichtwark, "Makartbouquet und Blumenstrauß [Makart bouquet and bouquet of flowers] [1905]," in *Erziehung des Auges*, 59–72.

<sup>11</sup>Lichtwark, "Die Aufgaben der Kunsthalle, 1886 [The task of the Kunsthalle]," in *Drei Programme*, 29.

<sup>12</sup>Henrike Junge-Gent, *Alfred Lichtwark: Zwischen den Zeiten* [Alfred Lichtwark: between the times] (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2012), 126.

<sup>13</sup>See Gudrun M. König, *Konsumkultur: Inszenierte Warenwelt um 1900* [Consumer culture: the staged world of commodities around 1900] (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009).

<sup>14</sup>See also Maase and Kaschuba, *Schund und Schönheit*, 9–28.

<sup>15</sup>See König, *Konsumkultur*, 43–6. König also points out that the label "Made in Germany" was a result of the Merchandise Mark Act (1887) designed to warn British buyers of German products and to exclude these foreign products from the market.

he gave public recognition by assembling a collection of photographs and holding annual exhibitions at the *Kunsthalle* from 1893 to 1903 (with the exception of 1901). In addition, he carried out artistic and cultural studies of interiors, furniture, and gardens. His desire to spread and improve artistic and aesthetic education among a broad segment of the population found expression in his popular and well-attended lectures, lessons in observing artworks, and a large number of publications. He was particularly interested in artistic and aesthetic education in schools, but he also supported and encouraged the spread of fine arts and photography as a serious hobby, seeing these artistic pursuits as fundamental to the “education of the eye”.<sup>16</sup> His publications, which were based on his lectures at the *Kunsthalle* and published in a book series entitled *Die Grundlagen der künstlerischen Bildung* (Foundations of Artistic Education), sold widely. Several associations and clubs supporting the arts were also founded in the context of his work and reorganisation of the *Kunsthalle*, among them the *Vereinigung für die Sammlung von Bildern aus Hamburg* (Association for the Collection of Paintings from Hamburg, founded in 1889), the *Gesellschaft Hamburgischer Kunstfreunde* (Association of Hamburg Friends of the Arts, 1894), the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Amateurphotographie* (Association for the Advancement of Amateur Photography, 1895), and the *Lehrervereinigung für die Pflege der künstlerischen Bildung* (Teachers’ Association for Fostering Artistic Education, 1896).

### 3. Lichtwark’s concept of artistic and aesthetic education

Scholars have not yet systematically examined Lichtwark’s idea of artistic and aesthetic education nor have they explored its theoretical foundations. His thoughts, which he expounded in lectures, essays, and articles, are scattered widely. At the heart of his ideas lies the concept of an “education of the eye”, referring both to the overarching objective of his activities and to his new approach of looking at art. Lichtwark was introduced to the “education of the eye” during his studies in Leipzig by his then teacher, art historian Anton Springer (1825–1891). Springer had sought “to work towards the greatest possible training of the eye” and called for a detailed study of each individual work of art.<sup>17</sup> The works of Conrad Fiedler on the theory of art also show close parallels to Lichtwark’s views. Though Lichtwark does not refer to them explicitly in his writings, a letter written to the administrative commission of the *Kunsthalle* in 1893 shows that he was familiar with Fiedler’s books, particularly his work on the perception of art (*Kunstanschauung*).<sup>18</sup> Fiedler based his theory on the assumption that art was autonomous and endowed with innate meaning and saw the perception of art prefigured in the artist’s creative process. This view underpinned his thoughts on the perception and understanding of artworks that he laid out in his 1876 book *Über die Beurteilung von Werken der bildenden Kunst* (On Judging Works of Fine Art). Fiedler strictly distinguished between a historical understanding of a work of art and its aesthetic reception, since he was convinced that a historical study of art could never arrive at an “understanding of the whole” (*Verständnis des Ganzen*).<sup>19</sup> Therefore, it was no longer

<sup>16</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, *Übungen in der Betrachtung von Kunstwerken* [Exercises in observing works of art], 7th ed. (Berlin: Cassirer, 1909), 17.

<sup>17</sup>Cited in Junge-Gent, *Alfred Lichtwark*, 379.

<sup>18</sup>Lichtwark visited Fiedler in 1893 and in a letter to the administrative commission remarked that Fiedler had written a book on the perception of art “that is far too fine and good to be understood by German journalists, but is regarded as an important document abroad”; see Alfred Lichtwark, *Briefe an die Kommission für die Verwaltung der Kunsthalle* [Letters to the administrative commission of the Kunsthalle], ed. Gustav Pauli, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Westermann, 1924), 135.

<sup>19</sup>*Conrad Fiedlers Schriften über Kunst* [Conrad Fiedler’s writings on art], ed. Hans Marbach (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1896), 23.

necessary “to study the historical position of a given work of art within a circle of artistic activity or its historical significance for the development of art”, but rather to “understand the work of art as a result and simultaneously as an element of cultural life as a whole”.<sup>20</sup> The ability to perceive art and the possibility of training this faculty to apply it regularly and consciously was central to Fiedler’s theory of art.<sup>21</sup> Lichtwark, too, pursued the idea of a direct, immediate view unprejudiced by the precepts of art history and norms derived from contemporary criticism. His goal was to enable an encounter with art as a given reality (*ein an sich Gegebenes*) and to understand it on its own terms, unencumbered by aesthetic rules and preconceptions.<sup>22</sup> This new, unprejudiced mode of seeing as a primarily sensory-emotional process and unmediated encounter allowed him to be open towards works of modern art (especially by French and German Impressionists) that were widely criticised and misunderstood by contemporary art experts.<sup>23</sup>

The recognition that a work of art existed as a given reality and had to be understood on its own terms formed the basis of Lichtwark’s notion of aesthetic education with its core precept of “educating the eye”. His view of the nature of art makes it clear why he rejected the aestheticising modes of contemporary art criticism as well as traditional forms of artistic education. In 1896, he wrote:

One primary obstacle [...] to a conscious and energetic connection with living art and thereby with nature is posed by the theoretical and historical element in our artistic education, to the extent that we can speak of something like that existing. We enjoy art with our minds far more than with our senses. Our sense of beauty is limited by historical concepts.<sup>24</sup>

In contrast, a true artistic and aesthetic education should primarily aim “to awake and foster the faculty of observation and the capacity for feeling as the foundation of developing taste and perceiving merit”.<sup>25</sup> In keeping with this goal, he also – as mentioned above – tied his educational intentions to the nation’s economic interests. His approach to education would help refine taste and create consumers capable of judging for themselves. He particularly focused on developing and fostering the perception and appreciation of colour, a subject which he treated in detail in his work *Die Erziehung des Farbensinnes* (The Education of the Colour Sense).<sup>26</sup>

Although Lichtwark was politically conservative and mostly moved among the educated and wealthy upper bourgeoisie, his ideas about artistic education were fundamentally

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 44–5.

<sup>22</sup>Hans Präffcke, *Der Kunstbegriff Alfred Lichtwarks* [Alfred Lichtwark’s concept of art] (Hildesheim: Olms, 1986), 30–42.

<sup>23</sup>This was not without conflicts though: see Carolyn Kay, *Art and the German Bourgeoisie: Alfred Lichtwark and Modern Painting in Hamburg, 1886–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); and Roger Niemann, *Le renouveau culturel et pédagogique à Hambourg de 1886 à 1914: Alfred Lichtwark et ses contemporains* [The renewal of culture and education in Hamburg, 1886–1914: Alfred Lichtwark and his contemporaries], 2 vols. (Lille: Université de Lille, 1991).

<sup>24</sup>“Ein Haupthindernis [...] des bewußten und energischen Anschlusses an die lebendige Kunst und dadurch an die Natur, bildet das theoretische Element unserer künstlerischen Erziehung, soweit von einer solchen die Rede sein kann. Wir genießen Kunst weit mehr mit dem Verstand als mit den Sinnen. Unser Schönheitsgefühl ist durch historische Begriffe eingeengt.” Alfred Lichtwark, “Theorie und Historie [Theory and history] [1896],” in *Erziehung des Auges*, 51.

<sup>25</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, “Die Anleitung zum Genuß der Kunstwerke [Instruction for the enjoyment of works of art],” in *Kunsterziehung: Ergebnisse und Anregungen des Kunsterziehungstages in Dresden 1901* [Artistic education: findings and ideas of the day of art education in Dresden, 1901] (Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1902), 183.

<sup>26</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, *Die Erziehung des Farbensinnes* [The education of the colour sense] (Berlin: Cassirer, 1901). This work is among Lichtwark’s best known and first appeared in 1889 as an essay in the journal *Pan*, which he co-founded. It was republished in an expanded form in 1901 and reprinted three times between 1902 and 1914; see Junge-Gent, *Alfred Lichtwark*, 381.

“democratic”. Aesthetic education was not only to be established as a core element of the curriculum across all subjects and school types; he also sought to bring the enjoyment of art to the working classes and specifically advocated for their direct contact with original works of art. No specifically designed lessons were needed, since, as he explained at the 9th Conference of the *Centralstelle für Arbeiter-Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen* (Central Office of Workers’ Welfare Institutions) in 1900, “there is no fundamental difference between the capacity for sentiment of a working man and an educated person”. Rather, it had to be seen as an advantage that workers, like the coming generation, were “not yet encumbered by the prejudices that tend to wither the immediacy of sentiment among the higher estates”.<sup>27</sup>

Lichtwark did not intend his conception of aesthetic education as a means of social distinction along the lines of Pierre Bourdieu’s *Theory of Art Perception*.<sup>28</sup> Rather, he posited an unprejudiced perspective not burdened by traditional or historical knowledge. According to Lichtwark, art perception should centre on immediate observation before engaging in interpretation; it should relate to the present and as such allow for “free” and open-minded encounters with art and aesthetic experiences in general.<sup>29</sup> At least at the conceptual level, his ideas represent an attempt to break through the circular structure of viewing art that Bourdieu outlines in his analysis of the social conditions of aesthetic experiences, of milieu-based education and elitist, culturally transmitted codes for deciphering and perceiving art.<sup>30</sup>

#### 4. Dilettantism and aesthetic education

As stated above, Lichtwark’s mission and ambition was to develop and enhance a popular “modern”, twentieth-century German style that would be based on regional inspiration, simple forms and materials, and well-designed everyday objects that represented a perfect balance of form, function, and material quality. In Lichtwark’s view, artistic dilettantism was a basic instrument to foster good taste and create new lifestyles. In an article on dilettantism and folk art, he argued that educating the eye through amateur artistic activities would lead to economic and commercial growth, since these activities would help to develop good taste and thus also have a positive effect on the sphere of production and its expansion to global markets.<sup>31</sup> He explicitly stressed the positive effects of amateur photography. In three essays entitled *Zur Organisation des Dilettantismus* (On the Organisation of Dilettantism, 1879), *Die Bedeutung der Amateurphotographie* (The Importance of Amateur Photography, 1894), and *Bildnismalerei und Amateurphotographie* (Portrait Painting and Amateur Photography, 1897), he described how the *Kunsthalle*, in the winter of 1883–84, initiated a large-scale

<sup>27</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, “Erziehung des Volkes auf dem Gebiete der bildenden Kunst (Leitsätze) [Education of the people in the sphere of art (guiding principles)],” in *Die Erziehung des Volkes auf den Gebieten der Kunst und Wissenschaft: Vorberichte und Verhandlungen* [The education of the people in the spheres of art and science: preliminary reports and proceedings] (Berlin: Heymanns, 1900), 86.

<sup>28</sup>Pierre Bourdieu, “Elemente einer soziologischen Theorie der Kunstwahrnehmung [Elements of a sociological theory of art perception],” in *Kunst und Kultur: Schriften zur Kulturosoziologie 4* [Art and culture: Texts on cultural sociology], ed. Franz Schultheis and Stephan Egger (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2015), 51–88.

<sup>29</sup>See also Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Diesseits der Hermeneutik: Die Produktion von Präsenz* [The production of presence: what meaning cannot convey] (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2004); and Karin Priem, “Visual, Literary, and Numerical Perspectives on Education,” in *Educational Research: Material Culture and Its Representation*, ed. Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), 53–69.

<sup>30</sup>Bourdieu, *Kunst und Kultur*, 66–88.

<sup>31</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, “Dilettantismus und Volkskunst [Dilettantism and folk art],” in *Erziehung des Auges* [The education of the eye], 86–89.

international amateur photography exhibition that attracted a large public.<sup>32</sup> Contrary to professional studio photography, which he regarded as artificial and deceptive, he considered amateur photography an excellent tool to learn how to see and educate the eye. Lichtwark paid specific attention to amateurs of the younger generation who, in his view, were extremely successful in inventing new approaches to photography and had already influenced the development of artistic portrait photography and photographic technologies. He stressed the innovative character of amateur photographs of both children and adults, as amateurs usually abstained from retouching but instead captured characteristic and unbiased features. In contrast, professional studio photography in particular created images that mirrored the bad taste of their *nouveau riche* customers and therefore could not offer new artistic standards. In addition, Lichtwark stressed the importance of regular amateur exhibitions to develop a sense of quality and stress national and/or regional particularities of taste and aesthetics by means of international and/or local comparison. According to Lichtwark, amateur artistic production had the advantage of ignoring academic restrictions and the limiting categorisations of art history.

His notion of dilettantism therefore comes very close to Humboldt's idea of '*Bildung*'. It implies the individual's autonomous education of the self, as he or she engages in many different subjects without becoming a narrow-minded professional or inflexible academic expert. In Lichtwark's view, amateur photography, whether focused on portraits or landscapes, thus offered many opportunities to educate the eye – not by studying books but by improving aesthetic taste through artistic activities. In the process, amateurs would gradually gain a wider and deeper understanding of art and develop a uniquely individual style. Since amateurs were active at the local and regional levels, they could be expected to influence popular culture and consumerism. Lichtwark's concept of dilettantism was therefore positioned at the intersection of everyday aesthetic practice, popular taste, the production of goods, and consumption.

## 5. Museums and schools as places of artistic and aesthetic education

For Lichtwark, museums – by which he meant not only art museums, but also those dedicated to the arts and crafts, anthropology, or natural history – were educational institutions whose usefulness he meant to improve through lectures, outreach initiatives, and other activities in order to maximise their influence on the education of a large segment of the public.<sup>33</sup> Soon after he was appointed director of the *Kunsthalle*, he began giving lectures for a broad audience. Starting in 1888, he himself also offered regular practical introductions to the reception of artworks aimed especially at teachers.

Besides the museum, Lichtwark viewed the school as a key locus of education that could counteract a lack of aesthetic education by refining the younger generation's perception of colours and elevate popular culture. In his lecture on *Die Kunst in der Schule* (Art in School), held at the *Schulwissenschaftliche Bildungsverein* (Association for Pedagogical

<sup>32</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, "Zur Organisation des Dilettantismus [On the organisation of dilettantism]," in *Erziehung des Auges*, 90–5; Alfred Lichtwark, "Die Bedeutung der Amateurphotographie [The importance of amateur photography]," *ibid.*, 96–108; and Alfred Lichtwark, "Bildnismalerei und Amateurphotographie [Portrait painting and amateur photography]," *ibid.*, 110–19.

<sup>33</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, "Museen als Bildungsstätten [Museums as places of education]. Vortrag auf dem Mannheimer Museumstag, 21./22. September 1903," in *Alfred Lichtwark: Eine Auswahl seiner Schriften* [Alfred Lichtwark: a selection of his works], vol. 2, comp. Wolf Mannhardt (Berlin: Cassirer, 1917), 185–9.

Studies) in Hamburg in 1887, he outlined his ideas for aesthetic education in a school context.<sup>34</sup> He argued that in order to elevate what he saw as the German people's primitive artistic taste – with regard to the fine arts rather than music – to the same level as those of the English and French, the “artistic blindness” (*Kunstblindheit*) of the Germans had to be addressed as a matter of national importance. The Germans, Lichtwark said, taking his cues from painter and graphic artist Paul Friedrich Meyerheim (1842–1915), see with their ears, and that needed to change.<sup>35</sup> In line with his concept of artistic education, he saw the best opportunity to educate the faculties of observation in the coming generation – boys and girls from all types of schools – through direct encounters with objects and artworks, thereby producing an appreciation of simplicity and straightforward beauty and ultimately schooling artistic and aesthetic taste. Lichtwark's educational intentions aimed, at their core, at the “education of the eye” and the cultivation of taste, by which he understood raising a child's interest in art through thoroughly engaging with a work of art and thus moulding the child into a “seeing human being who takes pleasure in looking at things”.<sup>36</sup> This put him at a distance from traditional art education with its focus on history and technique and its outspoken preference for approaching art through the cognitive faculties rather than the senses. However, Lichtwark saw his approach as an overarching educational principle that, unlike art history, did not require its own subject but could be integrated into drawing, literature, history, or local history lessons.

To facilitate the implementation of his ideas in schools, he began to offer art observation exercises for trainee and active teachers in 1888. Initial attempts to have the teachers themselves carry out these exercises proved disappointing, since – in Lichtwark's words – their “habit of thinking and pondering got in the way of successfully using their eyes”.<sup>37</sup> Doing the same exercises with pupils in the presence of their teachers yielded very different results:

Once the children overcame their initial hesitation, it turned out that they observed more quickly, carefully and correctly than their teachers [...]. The same questions that the teacher had found difficult to answer were solved by the children readily and simply as if at play. Teachers again and again expressed their surprise that the children were capable of far more immediate observation than they themselves and concluded that the faculty of seeing had withered in adults for want of use.<sup>38</sup>

According to Lichtwark, the presence of the teachers posed no difficulties, and any initial shyness on the part of the pupils disappeared quickly after the first questions – an observation that held true for generations of children participating in these activities.<sup>39</sup> These exercises were carried out using works from the *Kunsthalle's* collection of paintings and engravings.

---

<sup>34</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, “Die Kunst in der Schule: Vortrag im Schulwissenschaftlichen Bildungsverein Hamburg am 12. März 1887 [Art in school: lecture held at the association for pedagogical studies in Hamburg on 12 March 1887],” in *Drei Programme*, 33–61.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 42–3.

<sup>36</sup>Lichtwark, *Kunst in der Schule*, 60, 52.

<sup>37</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, “Übungen in der Betrachtung von Kunstwerken [Exercises in observing works of art],” in *Versuche und Ergebnisse der Lehrervereinigung für die Pflege der künstlerischen Bildung in Hamburg* [Explorations and findings of the teachers' association for fostering artistic education in Hamburg], 2nd ed. (Hamburg: Janssen, 1901), 22.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.* “[N]achdem die Kinder die anfängliche Befangenheit rasch überwunden hatten, stellte sich heraus, dass sie schneller, treffender und eindringlicher beobachteten als ihre Lehrer [...]. Dieselben Fragen, deren schnelle und einfache Beantwortung den Lehrern Schwierigkeiten bereitet hatte, wurden von den Kindern spieled erledigt. Die Lehrer drückten immer aufs neue wieder ihre Überraschung aus, wie viel unmittelbarer die Kinder zu beobachten vermöchten als sie selbst, und sie kamen zu der Überzeugung, dass bei den Erwachsenen aus Mangel an Übung die Fähigkeit, zu sehen, zurückgegangen sei.”

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

Lichtwark used only selected originals in order to not only speak *about* objects, but *of* objects and in their presence, which is what, in his view, gave the museum its special meaning as a place of artistic and aesthetic education.<sup>40</sup> In a lively game of question and answer, seeking and finding, Lichtwark, who had been a schoolteacher in Hamburg for several years before studying art history, tried to direct the children's faculty of observation to the narrative and factual content of the individual picture while honing their sense of colour, light, and movement. His writings contain no rules or guidelines on the matter. He believed that discussing a picture had to "be a small drama whose attraction lay in improvisation and that had to allow for the free development of all faculties".<sup>41</sup> His endeavours aimed to promote the idea "that there is something else in a work of art beyond the factual content that can be described in words, something that can only be felt, and that this is the most important thing".<sup>42</sup>

The widely read *Übungen in der Betrachtung von Kunstwerken* (Exercises in Observing Works of Art), first published in 1897, went through several editions until as late as the 1920s and offers further insight into the way Lichtwark ran his courses.<sup>43</sup> The book was based on records and minutes of courses on viewing both old and contemporary artworks that Lichtwark carried out through the winter of 1897–98 with just one school class.<sup>44</sup> It is difficult to gauge whether and to what extent the method of unprejudiced observation that Lichtwark had made the foundation of his aesthetic education was adopted in schools. Julius Gebhard (1884–1966) has argued that the approach was met with scepticism, most likely because it required not only comprehensive knowledge of the artworks and the creative process behind them, but also considerable pedagogical skills.<sup>45</sup>

When Lichtwark was appointed director of the *Kunsthalle* in 1886, there was already a circle of reformist elementary school teachers who were openly critical of traditional forms of instruction. Their efforts were aimed mainly at the teaching of literature, but under Lichtwark's influence were soon extended to the whole aesthetic field. The meetings at the *Kunsthalle* led to the founding of the *Lehrervereinigung für die Pflege der künstlerischen Bildung* (Teachers' Association for Fostering Artistic Education) in 1896 whose various commissions dedicated themselves to drawing, painting, the decorative arts, general and juvenile literature, music, and gymnastics.<sup>46</sup> Many of its members were involved in the radical school reforms that were implemented in Hamburg after World War I.<sup>47</sup> Lichtwark's

<sup>40</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, "Die Aufgaben der Kunsthalle: Antrittsrede am 9. Dezember 1886 [The task of the Kunsthalle: Inaugural speech held on 9 December 1886]," in *Drei Programme*, 26.

<sup>41</sup>Alfred Lichtwark, *Übungen in der Betrachtung von Kunstwerken: Nach Versuchen mit einer Schulklasse*, ed. Lehrervereinigung zur [sic] Pflege der künstlerischen Bildung [Exercises in observing works of art according to experiments with a school class], 7th ed. (Berlin: Cassirer, 1909), 23–4.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 22–3.

<sup>43</sup>The *Übungen* were Lichtwark's most successful work, first published in book form with Lütcke & Wulff in Hamburg in 1897. The second (1898) and third (1900) editions were published by Kühnmann in Dresden, the fourth (1902) as well as an additional six editions (1904, 1906, 1909, 1914, 1918, and 1922) were all published by Bruno Cassirer in Berlin; see Junge-Gent, *Alfred Lichtwark*, 380.

<sup>44</sup>At a finishing school for girls from the upper classes (*höhere Töchterchule*) whose average age was 14.

<sup>45</sup>Julius Gebhard, *Alfred Lichtwark und die Kunsterziehungsbewegung in Hamburg* [Alfred Lichtwark and the art education movement in Hamburg] (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1947), 87; on the scope and impact of Lichtwark's approach to experiencing art, see Nabumasa Kiyonaga, *Alfred Lichtwark: Kunsterziehung als Kulturpolitik* [Alfred Lichtwark: Artistic education and cultural policy] (Munich: Kopaed, 2008), 416–25.

<sup>46</sup>An overview of developments in the various commissions can be found in *Versuche und Ergebnisse der Lehrervereinigung für die Pflege der künstlerischen Bildung in Hamburg* [Explorations and findings of the teachers' association for fostering artistic education in Hamburg], 2nd ed. (1901), which was published on the fifth anniversary of the association's founding; see also Gebhard, *Alfred Lichtwark*, 85–123.

<sup>47</sup>"Transnational Circulation of Reform Ideas and Practices: The Example of the Experimental and Community Schools (*Versuchs- und Gemeinschaftsschulen*) in Hamburg (1919–1933)," ed. Christine Mayer and Ian Grosvenor, special issue, *Paedagogica Historica* 50 (2014).

close connection to the *Lehrervereinigung* is demonstrated by the fact that he allowed the association to organise exhibitions in the *Kunsthalle*, which led to considerable public interest in the field. These exhibitions included a show of historical picture books and illustrated juvenile literature featuring loans from major libraries in Germany and abroad, which was held in tandem with the *Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerversammlung* (General German Teachers' Conference) in Hamburg in 1896, as well as an exhibition of murals for schools in 1897, which, in keeping with Lichtwark's programme, was to serve the development of taste.<sup>48</sup> Another such exhibition, very unusual for art museums, displayed children's drawings from Germany, France, Britain, and the United States to mark the congress of the *Deutscher Fröbel-Verband* (German Fröbel Association) in 1898.<sup>49</sup> Lichtwark continued his close association with reformist teachers in the Hamburg *Kunsterziehungsbewegung* despite his reservations about their social democratic leanings.

The *Kunsterziehungstage* (Days of Art Education) held in Dresden (1901), Weimar (1903), and Hamburg (1905) were influential in supporting nationwide efforts to promote aesthetic education in the school system. At these conferences, each dedicated to a different topic, government, civic administration and university representatives, primary and secondary school teachers, artists and poets met to share and exchange ideas.<sup>50</sup> It was above all Lichtwark's lectures on *Der Deutsche und die Zukunft* (The German and the Future), held at the first conference in 1901, and on *Die Einheit der künstlerischen Erziehung* (The Unity of Artistic Education), given at the second meeting in 1903, that not only sought to integrate art education into a greater national, social, and cultural context and to argue the need for a unified aesthetic education, but also called for a reform of the school system and the teacher's role.<sup>51</sup> In his introduction to a book on the *Kunsterziehungstage*, Ludwig Pallat (1867–1946), Head of the *Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht* in Berlin, wrote:

The most far-sighted among the organisers of the first *Kunsterziehungstag*, Alfred Lichtwark and Carl Götze [chairman of the *Hamburger Lehrervereinigung für die Pflege der künstlerischen Bildung*], recognised that the entire soil of the school needed to be tilled and overturned so that it could receive the seed of art. The method by which this is to be done, however, must at its foundation itself be artistic.<sup>52</sup>

Yet, although the school as a location of aesthetic education was an important focus of Lichtwark's work, he continued to view himself primarily as director of the *Hamburger Kunsthalle*. Art education in schools was merely one aspect of his wider efforts to elevate culture throughout Germany.

<sup>48</sup>*Katalog der historischen Ausstellung von Bilderbüchern und illustrierten Jugendschriften* [Catalogue of the historical exhibition of children's books and illustrated youth literature] (Hamburg: Diedrich, 1896).

<sup>49</sup>Carl Götze, *Das Kind als Künstler* [The child as an artist] (Hamburg: Boysen & Maasch, 1898).

<sup>50</sup>The conferences in Dresden, Weimar, and Hamburg were dedicated to the topics of "Fine Arts", "German Language and Poetry", and "Music and Gymnastics".

<sup>51</sup>*Kunsterziehung: Ergebnisse und Anregungen des ersten Kunsterziehungstages in Dresden 1901* [Artistic education: findings and suggestions of the first day of art education in Dresden 1901] (Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1902), 39–57; and *Kunsterziehung: Ergebnisse und Anregungen des zweiten Kunsterziehungstages in Weimar 1903* [Artistic education: findings and suggestions of the second day of art education in Weimar 1903] (Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1904), 234–49.

<sup>52</sup>Ludwig Pallat, "Einleitung [Introduction]," in *Kunsterziehung: Ergebnisse und Anregungen der Kunsterziehungstage in Dresden, Weimar und Hamburg* [Artistic education: Findings and suggestions of the days of art education in Dresden, Weimar and Hamburg], ed. Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht (Berlin: Voigtländer, 1929), 9.

## 6. Lichtwark's approach to artistic and aesthetic education as a bundle of entangled threads

Looking at Lichtwark's work, we can conclude that he not only acted as an advocate for direct and unfiltered engagement with art, but also aimed at inculcating German consumers and producers with innovative aesthetic norms that were thought to regenerate the entire nation. In addition, his work reveals different threads and historical constellations that he may have absorbed consciously or unconsciously and that shaped his approach. Indeed, Lichtwark's work involves a bundle of countless entangled threads connecting various human agents, organisations, associations, events, materials, technologies of communication and production, different places and spaces as well as conflicting rationales, interests, and values that formed a complex knot of modern and anti-modern trends emerging at the time.<sup>53</sup>

One configuration of threads concerns different human agents, their power to speak, their values and platforms, and the events in which they were involved. Lichtwark's approach to artistic and aesthetic education was closely connected with several Hamburg Teachers' Associations' ambitions to elevate the masses by means of education. Teachers at the time were eager to become respected agents of social and cultural change, and their engagement in related debates, events, associations, and movements – such as, for example, the *Jugendschriftenbewegung* (a movement that was concerned with the quality of youth literature) or the *Dürerbund* (an association founded in 1907 that fought for aesthetic reforms and also edited the journal *Kunstwart*<sup>54</sup>) – may have reinforced Lichtwark's rather pragmatic and eclectic approach to artistic and aesthetic education based on experience and direct interactions between teachers and children. The above-mentioned activities of teachers may also hint at anxieties that a popular culture based on mere entertainment and sensory enjoyment would undermine morality and that the producers' economic interests would have a negative effect on the quality of everyday life. Therefore, conferences on artistic education involving both teachers and cultural stakeholders like Lichtwark also served as platforms where cultural reformers could act as moral authorities of the nation, undertake efforts to control mass consumption, production, and markets, and position themselves as experts in a growing national and international capitalist economy that threatened to undermine their authority as a nationally and internationally respected cultural elite.<sup>55</sup>

Another configuration of threads concerns various places and spaces that range from the local to the global and are entangled with other threads of anti-modern trends, whether romantic, nationalistic, or authoritarian, and of modern socioeconomic rationales and values that not only related to consumerism, industrialisation, and economic growth, but also to social reform.

Lichtwark's approach to aesthetic education combined local, regional, national, and even global aspects in different ways. In his view, aesthetic education and learning how to see were mainly taking place at the local and regional levels, either through amateur artistic

<sup>53</sup>See Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 39–71. We would like to thank Françoise Poos for introducing us to Ingold's work.

<sup>54</sup>Kaspar Maase, "Krisenbewußtsein und Reformorientierung: Zum Deutungshorizont der Gegner der modernen Populärkünste 1880–1918 [Awareness of crisis and reform orientation: on the horizon of interpretation of the opponents of modern popular culture 1880–1918]," in Maase and Kaschuba, *Schund und Schönheit*, 290.

<sup>55</sup>Teachers and cultural stakeholders were forming a European network of reform in the sphere of artistic education. Therefore see Charles Maurice Couyba, Léon Riotor, Frantz Jourdain, Roger Marx, André Mellerio, Georges Moreau, Gaston Quénioux and Auguste Chapuis, *L'Art à L'Ecole* [Art in school] (Paris: Larousse 1908). The authors would like to thank Frank Simon for providing this information.

activities or direct interaction with the art objects in local museums and schools. These local dimensions were embedded in anti-modern romanticism that exalted the beauty of the German countryside, the pleasure of looking at pure nature and rural landscapes, and the appealing simplicity of folkloristic art or artisans' craft products. On the national and global levels, however, his concept was also a response to capitalist modernity such as the emergence of new global markets and the entertainment business, the rapid growth of industrial production and related changes in the work sphere, the rise of new social classes such as the nouveau riche bourgeoisie and an increasingly powerful working class. In Lichtwark's view, these societal challenges and related aesthetic transformations required adequate responses in the sphere of the arts. Therefore, it was his mission to firmly establish a new national cultural identity and new, culturally driven lifestyles that would enhance the aesthetic quality of economic mass production and consumption. While authoritative and often anchored in anti-modern ideas, Lichtwark's concept of artistic and aesthetic education in principle acknowledged the capacity of all people to learn and improve themselves culturally. On a European and global level, Lichtwark aimed to enhance Germany's status among its international competitors in the spheres of consumption and production. In Lichtwark's view, turn-of-the-century Germany urgently needed to foster artistic and aesthetic education in order to maintain its important political and economic role.

Finally, other threads concern the human body, material culture, and the quality of objects, which are, once again, entangled with economic and social aspects.

In his efforts to educate the eye and to stress seeing as a cultural practice, Lichtwark put a strong emphasis on the materiality of culture and on the impact of artefacts and things as social agents with which to interact and to enhance popular culture. According to Lichtwark, aesthetic education meant learning through cultural objects by being exposed to them and interacting with them with all one's senses. This sensory-emotional engagement with culture that neglected academic knowledge was expected to have both tangible and intangible effects that would also affect the social and economic sphere by shaping people's values and lifestyles.<sup>56</sup> Lichtwark therefore advocated an understanding of aesthetic education that was based on the immediacy of sentiment, on experience, and on sensory-emotional rather than knowledge-based intellectual encounters with cultural artefacts. Within the sphere of production and mass consumption, this meant advocating new products and objects of everyday life that represented simplicity and functionality. According to Baudrillard, functionality and mobility have "emancipated" modern objects "from ritual, from ceremonial, from the entire ideology which used to make our surroundings into an opaque mirror of a reified human structure".<sup>57</sup> They may thus, indeed, represent egalitarian values, social change, and participatory models that go hand in hand with the emergence of consumerism and consumer culture. As Gudrun König has pointed out, buyers were beginning to be perceived as a powerful force worldwide at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Consumer leagues – the German *Käuferbund* was founded in 1907 – were emerging internationally to enhance the economic and social responsibility of both consumers and buyers with regard to the quality of goods and ethical standards of production.<sup>58</sup> These aims were in line with the education of taste as advocated by Lichtwark.

---

<sup>56</sup>See the literature on cultural learning in note 3.

<sup>57</sup>Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. James Benedict, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2005), 16.

<sup>58</sup>König, *Konsumkultur*, 302–25.

Looking at these different threads, we can conclude that culture and more specifically the sphere of art are entangled with other spheres or threads in multiple ways. Culture is a flexible, fluid, and absorbing complex that, in Lichtwark's case, is interwoven with prevailing trends of occularism,<sup>59</sup> with practices and technologies, consumption, markets, production, material culture, different places, spaces and landscapes, nationalism, the social and political sphere (including formal and non-formal education), and a wide variety of (inter)national organisations and associations.<sup>60</sup> It is difficult to say where or when culture is not involved and/or affected. We can conclude, however, that the (often contradictory) norms and values of elites and mass consumers as well as the spheres of education, economy, and production play a crucial role within the cultural complex.

If we move from here to recent concepts of cultural learning, we may discover that Lichtwark's approach to artistic and aesthetic education and its entanglements offer an interesting case study that may reveal some biases of cultural learning. For Lichtwark, museums and schools remained key sites of learning. Into this traditional setting he introduced a rather pragmatic and eclectic concept of learning that was based on seeing and feeling art. These encounters and experiences with art were expected, in turn, to create attitudes and elevate aesthetic taste in the sphere of consumption. This allows us to conclude that learning through art by means of seeing and feeling was treated as a universal phenomenon or automatism that did not need further instruction or knowledge-based engagement. Likewise, recent concepts of cultural learning often fail to refer to the socially and culturally diverse meanings and symbolic layers of objects and the aesthetic norms they (re)present, which in turn would require a more intellectual and theoretical approach.<sup>61</sup> Presentism and occularism – that is, the immediacy of experience and the stress on seeing as a cultural practice – may, at first glance, be participatory and inclusive but they simultaneously neglect knowledge-based reflections about the symbolic, political, and social meanings of art and things, or objects, in general.<sup>62</sup>

As we have shown in Lichtwark's case, artistic and aesthetic education was embedded in a broader landscape of tremendous economic changes and the emergence of consumers as a new status group. Therefore, artistic and aesthetic education was given a rather instrumental role in the sphere of consumption and economics. The agenda of Lichtwark's artistic and aesthetic concept (and maybe also of recent concepts of cultural learning) may therefore be symptomatic of certain anti-intellectual and instrumental trends; in his case, it aimed at the immediate sentiments and gazes of the masses as consumers and, therefore, was designed to help cope with a bewildering and anxiety-producing crisis of cultural norms. As a consequence, future concepts of cultural learning should try to avoid these biases and explore alternatives to deal with pressing cultural, political, economic, and social issues. One

---

<sup>59</sup>The term "occularism" refers to the dominance of the visual in modern western thought and science. This western hierarchy currently is questioned by studies on the history of the senses; see, for example, Juhani Pallasma, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2005); Mark Paterson, *The Senses of Touch: Haptics, Affects and Technologies* (Oxford: Berg, 2012); and Mark M. Smith, *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting and Touching in History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

<sup>60</sup>See, for example, John Holden, *The Ecology of Culture: A Report Commissioned by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Cultural Value Project* (Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK: 2015).

<sup>61</sup>Karin Priem and Geert Thyssen, "Puppets on a String in a Theatre of Display? Interactions of Image, Text, Material, Space and Motion in the Family of Man (ca. 1950s–1960s)," *Paedagogica Historica* 49 (2013): 828–45.

<sup>62</sup>See, for example, Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

possible perspective could be not to suppress but rather help express subversive “dissensus” through and with art and to challenge, question, and bring to the surface the “paradoxes” and conflicting “politics” of cultural norms as well as the mechanisms with which these norms are made and used.<sup>63</sup> At the time when Lichtwark developed his approach of artistic and aesthetic education, these norms appeared as a conflicting mix of folkloristic romanticism, popular culture, and a rather elitist modernism, each of which carried ideological baggage. In Lichtwark’s case, the crisis was due not only to new but also powerful protagonists in the sphere of culture: mass producers and mass consumers who were the dominant group in the sphere of urban popular culture and its different spectacles, scenes, technologies, materials, and practices.<sup>64</sup> These groups were generally perceived as threatening and provoked action from an equally diverse, nationally and internationally oriented cultural elite whose cultural reforms aimed to reach the masses, enhance popular culture (also as an economic force), and thus shape people’s lifestyles and attitudes.

To understand the different threads and hidden agendas that built on and referred to culture and to further develop concepts of cultural learning, we therefore need theoretical input that critically analyses and acknowledges not only the junctions but also the disjunctions of spatial, political, ideological, historical, symbolic, social, technological, and economic dimensions. Inspiration may originate from concepts of cultural geography, social and cultural ecology, and participatory democracy.<sup>65</sup>

## Acknowledgements

An earlier version of this article was presented at the 2015 International Standing Conference for the History of Education (ISCHE) conference in Istanbul as part of a symposium on cultural learning initiated and organised by Ian Grosvenor. The authors would like to thank the organiser, the discussants, and the participants of this symposium for their ideas and inspiring comments. In addition, we are grateful for the feedback we received from the guest editors of this special issue of *Paedagogica Historica*, Frederik Herman and Siân L. Roberts. Finally, we would like to thank Manuela Thurner for her editorial revisions and comments.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Notes on contributors

**Karin Priem** is Professor of History of Education at the University of Luxembourg. A former president of the German History of Education Research Association (2007–11), she is currently Executive Secretary of ISCHE (International Standing Conference for the History of Education). Karin Priem’s research focuses on the history of educational theories; the social, visual, sensory, and material history of education; and the history of entrepreneurship and education. She is a member of the international advisory board of the *Revue Suisse des Sciences de l’Éducation* and co-editor of the book series *Beiträge zur Historischen Bildungsforschung* (Cologne: Böhlau) and of the *Jahrbuch für*

<sup>63</sup>See, for example, Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, ed. and trans. Steven Corcoran (New York: Continuum, 2010).

<sup>64</sup>See, for example, Don Mitchell, *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

<sup>65</sup>See, for example, Murray Bookchin, *Urbanisation Without Cities: The Rise and Decline of Citizenship*, rev. ed. (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1992); Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); and John Holden, *Democratic Culture* (London: Demos, 2008).

*Historische Bildungsforschung* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt). Karin Priem is principal investigator of two third-party funded projects on “Fabricating Modern Societies: Industries of Reform as Educational Responses to Societal Challenges”, FAMOSO part 1 and part 2. The FAMOSO projects focus on the impact that the steel industry and industrialisation had on societal transformations in Luxembourg and beyond during the first half of the twentieth century. They concentrate on sociocultural and body-sensorial technologies of modernity that have been mediated by various modes of (re)presentation (e.g. photography and film, but also scientific practices of experimentation, display, and visualisation) and involved different actors. Her most recent publications are: “Facts for Babies: Visual Experiments at the Intersection of Art, Science, and Consumerism,” *Sisyphus – Journal of Education* 3 (2015), 18–36; (with Kerstin te Heesen), *On Display: Visual Politics, Material Culture, and Education* (Münster: Waxmann, 2016); and “Seeing, Hearing, Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Things: On Silences, Senses, and Emotions during the ‘Zero Hour’ in Germany,” *Paedagogica Historica* (2016), 286–299.

*Christine Mayer* is Professor Emeritus of Theory of Education and Gender at the University of Hamburg. She was a long-standing member of the Executive Committee of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education (ISCHE) and the Board of the *Sektion Historische Bildungsforschung* in the German Educational Research Association (DGfE). Her current research focuses on the relationship between educational thoughts and gender anthropology as well as on the transnational and transcultural circulation and transfer of educational ideas and practices. She is a member of the editorial board of *Paedagogica Historica*, the international advisory board of *History of Education Review*, and the scientific board of the series *Storia dell’Educazione in Europa*. Recent publications include: “Zirkulation und Austausch pädagogischen Wissens: Ansätze zur Erforschung kultureller Transfers um 1800,” in *Zirkulation und Transformation: Pädagogische Grenzüberschreitungen in historischer Perspektive*, ed. M. Caruso, T. Koinzer, C. Mayer and K. Priem (Cologne: Böhlau, 2014), 29–49; and “Transnational Circulation of Reform Ideas and Practices: The Example of the Experimental and Community Schools (Versuchs- und Gemeinschaftsschulen) in Hamburg (1919–1933),” ed. with I. Grosvenor, special issue, *Paedagogica Historica* 50 (2014).