

and appreciation of what is seen. Krüger insists that paintings do not act as mere images but rather as performance presentations in their own right. The volume is rounded out by “‘Hoc est enim corpus meum.’ Bild und Liturgie im gemalten Altaraufsatz des 13. Jahrhunderts,” “Hermetische Malerei und das Geheimnis des Opaken” and “Bild–Schleier–Palimpsest. Der Begriff des Mediums zwischen Materialität und Metaphorik.”

Overall, Krüger’s book does a good job of adding to the debate on how to properly engage with visual images. All eight essays touch on the framing and layering of the paintings and visual images in the different genres and media. Krüger discusses art from numerous time periods, which makes this book relevant for a broad range of scholars interested in debates on aesthetics and art viewing. The numerous black-and-white and color photographs of the paintings being analyzed allow readers to more easily follow Krüger’s arguments and conclusions. The essays also make the reader aware of the complexity of viewing art and how taking the different aspects introduced by Krüger into consideration creates a fuller viewing experience, generating excitement when looking at the images anew. The book is well written but at times extremely technical, making it hard for readers outside the discipline of art history to work their way through it. Nonetheless, Krüger is highly versed in art history and his eight essays are worth reading, since they will change how one looks, thinks, and writes about art.

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Fenster – Korridor – Treppen. Architektonische Wahrnehmungsdispositive in der Literatur und in den Künsten.

Herausgegeben von Lena Abraham, Kira Jürjens, Edith Anna Kunz und Elias Zimmermann. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2019. 219 Seiten + 35 s/w und farbige Abbildungen. €39,00 broschiert und eBook.

Fenster – Korridor – Treppen: Architektonische Wahrnehmungsdispositive in der Literatur und in den Künsten is a thought-provoking anthology of articles examining how architectural elements—and built landscape in general—create a way of seeing represented in literature and visual art. The everyday elements of the built world, such as windows, cracks, columns, balconies, and door frames forge visible networks manifesting as a unique environmental *gestalt*.

The built landscape is shaped by forces and constraints beyond the architect’s blueprints; our physical surroundings are suffused with our tactile presence. As Benjamin reflected in his essay on the work of art, “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit,” buildings are experienced collectively within a state of distraction [“Rezeption in der Zerstreuung”]. Rather than a curated experience, we perceive structures through the prism of our habits [“Gewohnheit”].

Such a field of study has a rich background; German-language cultural studies have long been interested in the relationship between architecture, place, and imaginary space. This current collection brings together eleven essays based on the provocative thesis that windows, stairways, and corridors create the framework by which we experience the built landscape, acting as paradigms of aesthetic-artistic world experience [“Paradigmen ästhetisch-künstlerischer Welterfahrung,” 7]. The visual and

psychological effects of windows are discussed by several contributors. Windows act as apertures to view the world as a lattice frame. Zimmermann reminds us that Alberti and Dürer both used the lattice window frame to devise the string grid that became essential for translating multi-dimensional forms into two-dimensional images, the foundation for pictorial representation in the West. As many contributors point out, windows are one of the paradigmatic sources of optical perspective. However, their meaning within literary narratives is always shifting. As several authors describe, windows are framing devices that isolate and accentuate certain visual qualities of the landscape. They organize the perception of our surroundings by emphasizing the tenuous relationship between the psychological world of interiors and the “natural world” outside, as Caio Yurgel discusses in his essay on Böll’s wartime stories (170). Windows embody the varied tensions of his narrative and the hopeless frailty of the soldiers and civilians during wartime (171).

On the other hand, hallways are transitional zones, as Zimmermann describes, “in-between spaces” [“Nicht-Ort”/“ein Dazwischen,” 12]. Long, sinewy hallways evoke anxiety, trepidation, or a sensation of stasis in motion. These passages evoke restless movement, the sensation of feeling lost exemplified by endless courthouse passageways entrapping Kafka’s protagonist or hallways that become landscapes of mental aberrations in Kubrick’s *The Shining*. Stairs imply ascent, transcendence, as discussed by Benedikt Tremp in his essay on Wolfgang Weyrauch’s personal account of Berlin, *Die Stufen der U-Bahn hinauf* (1948). The Berlin subway’s stairs are described as reminiscent of a Biblical ladder to a serene paradise.

The editors claim that architectural details in literature or visual art should not always be reduced to symbolic devices with a sign-like character [“Zeichenhaftigkeit,” 8], to a single meaning concerning the human activity occurring in their shadows. We risk reducing the rubble and pockmarked landscapes in Böll’s novels or the sleek glass windows adorning the vertiginous Chicago department stores in Nella Larsen’s *Passing* to static stage settings, objects only reflecting a fixed message. The concrete nature of the built landscape grounds our faculties of perception and creates paradigms for literary and artistic expression. In Zimmermann’s words, these architectural features contain “lebensweltliche Funktion,” (8) a quotidian materiality influencing our habits and practices of everyday life. Architecture is something we constantly experience through our continual perception of structures, or in Zimmermann’s words, a “paradigmatische[s] Dispositiv von Erfahrung oder eben Wahrnehmung” (9). However, these architectural paradigms are not to be confused with rhetorical tropes. Important elements of literary expression, such as ascent or descent, depend on our bodily perception of stairs. Our figurative language around transcendence or elevation requires tangible knowledge of a staircase. We could not speak concretely about vision and transparency without a relationship with windows. These primordial architectural elements create possibilities for the creation of literary devices juxtaposing a feeling/sensation with a spatial description, such as metaphors and allusions.

Zimmermann argues that the subject matter within this collection cannot be contained in specific academic disciplines, and instead needs to be approached “als ergebnisoffene Erkundung von Grenzen, Paradoxien und Problemen der Wahrnehmungsdispositive Fenster, Treppe und Korridor” (9). The breadth of this collection’s aims and range of contributions create an integrative resource of academic disciplines while maintaining rigor and focus. The volume includes essays on various literary

figures including Perec (Julia Dettke), Böll (Yurgel), and a comparative study on Borges, De Quincy, and Geiser (Elias Zimmermann). More contextualization of this interdisciplinary approach would have served as an introduction into the vast terrain this anthology covers. Reflection on the handful of German writers who have studied the correlation between the built environment and our lived experiences (especially art historian August Schmarsow in his late-19th-century study of Egyptian sacral architecture) would have further enabled readers to orient themselves within this burgeoning yet labyrinthine field of cultural studies.

Anja Gerigk creates a dialogue between Ernst Wilhelm Händler's *Sturm* (1999) and Siegfried Kracauer's *Ginster* (1928) to examine the ways novels depicted the "Transformation des Wissens" regarding the built landscape ["gebaute Räumlichkeit," 58]. The essay analyzes these two works as examples of *Architektenromane*, uniquely positioned to critique discourses shaping the way we perceive space. However, Gerigk's language and syntax can be overly diffuse as she critiques the idea of the architect as a fully autonomous "world-creator" (72–73).

The authors convey the narrative styles and descriptions of settings and architectural details as reflections of specific spatial discourses. They write about space and architecture within literature and visual art that surpasses a reductive symbolic reading. Windows, corridors, and stairs are analyzed as optical apparatuses, which, in Yurgel's words, work toward "framing a situation rather than hastily spelling out its contents" (172). However, several essays would have benefitted from clarification of the term "Wahrnehmungsd dispositiv," which is heavily used in this collection, assuming prior knowledge by readers. One wonders how its meaning might change among disciplines.

Furthermore, the programmatic intent of the collection occasionally overshadows the status of the discussed works as literary texts. For example, in Yurgel's discussion of Böll's 1949 debut novel *Der Zug war pünktlich*, emphasis is placed on how the author creates a tense dynamic between the "natural world" (171) of blossoming trees and fields of gleaming wheat and the internal world of men crammed into filthy trains heading towards the war front. The imagery of the train, timetables, maps, and methodical compositions of J.S. Bach accentuate how temporality has been transformed into spatial properties within modernity. However, Yurgel deemphasizes this aspect when he makes broad claims such as "the novella is about life" (168).

The diffuse array of topics covered makes it unclear whether this collection was intended to contribute to a specific discourse within literary studies or to function as a more general study on how the built landscape affects consciousness, manifesting distinct paradigmatic means of expression that can be seen in literature, architecture, and visual art. Even with the reservations concerning the broad terrain of subject matter and unclear terminology usage at times, *Fenster – Korridor – Treppen* is a valuable contribution to the expanding sub-field of spatial studies within literary and cultural studies.

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