

Thursday September 1-Sunday, November 13, 2016

Aby Warburg. Mnemosyne Bilderatlas Reconstruction – Commentary – Revision

The exhibition will open on Wednesday, August 31, 2016 at 7 p.m. The press conference will be held on Tuesday, August 30, 2016 at 11 a.m.

On the occasion of the 150th birthday of Aby Warburg (1866-1929), the ZKM | Karlsruhe is exhibiting a complete reconstruction of his *Bilderatlas* in original size. All panels will be provided with detailed commentary for the first time. In addition, two of the total 63 panels can be exhibited for the first time since 1929 as exactly as Warburg himself had in mind: with the original images from the Warburg Institute in London. Furthermore, 13 “artists’ panels” which have been exhibited by contemporary artists for this occasion can be viewed. Among the artists featured are Linda Fregni-Nagler, Andy Hope 1930, Sarah Lehnerer, Jochen Lempert, Jannis Marwitz, Paul McCarthy, Olaf Metzger, Matt Mullican, Albert Oehlen, Tal R, Elfie Semotan, Christian Vind and Peter Weibel. This revision demonstrates that the *Bilderatlas* found much greater acclaim and recognition in artistic circles than among art history experts. *Aby Warburg. Mnemosyne Bilderatlas* follows the exhibition *ATLAS – How to Carry the World on One’s Back*, curated by Georges Didi-Huberman, which was exhibited with great success in 2010 at ZKM.

RECONSTRUCTION: The Mnemosyne Atlas in the original format

The Mnemosyne Atlas, which was compiled between 1924 and 1929 by Warburg and remained unfinished, is named after Mnemosyne, the Greek goddess of memory, and Atlas, who is regarded as the progenitor of astronomers and geographers. At the same time, the term “Atlas” stands for demonstrative forms of knowledge: whether it is the compilation of geographical plans for a self-contained map series or whether it is a constellation of images which systematically and critically link entirely different references and areas. In the meantime, the Mnemosyne Atlas has the status of a legend with international fame and is at least just as well-known as Warburg’s Library, which has been domiciled in London since 1933. Although the atlas is of extraordinary importance for pictorial science, as experts also concede in the meantime, it found no practical application in art history, neither successors nor emulators. In fact, the atlas is still resting to a great extent unexplored in the archive of sciences, even if the interest in Warburg’s research activities has noticeably increased in recent years – as the international acclaim at the congress for the

Press Release

August 2016

Aby Warburg.
Mnemosyne Bilderatlas
Exhibition

Duration of exhibition
Thursday, Sep. 1-
Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016

Venue
ZKM_Atrium 1+2

Press contact
Dominika Szope
Head of Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49(0)721 / 8100 – 1220

Regina Hock
Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49 (0)721 / 8100 – 1821

E-mail: presse@zkm.de
www.zkm.de/presse

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe
Lorenzstraße 19
76135 Karlsruhe

ZKM sponsors



ZKM partner



Mobility partner




Exhibition in cooperation with

8. Salon Hamburg
Kulturraum St. Gallen

Colloquium in cooperation with

**Staatliche
Akademie der
Bildenden
Künste
Karlsruhe**

Staatliche Hochschule
für Gestaltung Karlsruhe 

celebration of the Hamburg cultural scientist's 150th birthday held in London in June 2016 revealed.

To some extent the surprisingly long ineffectiveness of the atlas probably has to be attributed to the unfinished state in which Warburg left behind his late work when he succumbed to a heart attack in October 1929. In the last years of his life he did his utmost to solidify his comprehensive knowledge of the picture story in this project and to render it in a publishable form. It was an unusual endeavor and the invention of an instrument for which there was no actual precursor. He himself had already come very far on his path, yet after his death the "original" panels "vanished" in the collection of photos in his library. Even the administrator of his scientific legacy had unsuccessfully tried until 1937 to bring the project to a conclusion and to publish the panels as a folio volume. Several decades passed by until Warburg's late work returned to the consciousness of research.

Since Warburg documented the atlas photographically, it was able to be published over 20 years ago in "diminished form". After that it remained for the most part unused, since the activation of this memory necessitates an indispensable prerequisite: the visibility of all details. Only the reconstruction in the original format of 170 x 140 cm makes it possible that the individual pictures (around 30 per panel / in total nearly 1,000) can be studied so that the constellations of each panel are legible. The reconstruction in the original format was implemented by the MNEMOSYNE research group at the *8. Salon* cultural center (Hamburg) on the basis of data from the *Daedalus* transmedia society (Vienna). In 2011, the research group (Roberto Ohrt, Christian Rothmaler, Philipp Schwalb, Axel Heil et al.) started to prepare panel after panel in the original format in order to research the 63 panels step by step in detail. By 2016 the research group was able to prepare commentary that decoded every single panel for the first time.

In addition to the reconstruction of these 63 panels of the atlas in the original format, for the first time since 1929 the exhibition at the ZKM is also displaying two panels (Panel 32 on the subject of "Carnival" and Panel 48 regarding Fortuna) with the images which Warburg himself used. These "exhibits" were able to be localized in the "Photographic Collection" of the Warburg Institute in London. Up to now researchers assumed that the original pictures of the atlas were lost.

COMMENTARY

The commentary on all 63 panels and the structure of the atlas prepared by the MNEMOSYNE research group is being put up for discussion for the first time with *Aby Warburg. Mnemosyne Bilderatlas* at the ZKM. The exhibition supplements the series of 63 panels with some proposals regarding how the atlas could be completed. The focus is also aimed at the research

Press Release

August 2016

Aby Warburg.
Mnemosyne Bilderatlas
Exhibition

Duration of exhibition
Thursday, Sep. 1-
Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016

Venue
ZKM_Atrium 1+2

Press contact

Dominika Szope
Head of Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49(0)721 / 8100 – 1220

Regina Hock
Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49 (0)721 / 8100 – 1821

E-mail: presse@zkm.de
www.zkm.de/presse

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe
Lorenzstraße 19
76135 Karlsruhe

ZKM sponsors



ZKM partner



Mobility partner




Exhibition in cooperation with

8. Salon Hamburg
Kulturraum St. Gallen

Colloquium in cooperation with

**Staatliche
Akademie der
Bildenden
Künste
Karlsruhe**

Staatliche Hochschule
für Gestaltung Karlsruhe 

community, in the midst of which the atlas emerged: the interdisciplinary team that came together in the *Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg* (Warburg Library of Cultural Sciences) in the 1920s: Fritz Saxl, Erwin Panofsky, Ernst Cassirer, Gertrud Bing, Edgar Wind, Raymond Klibansky – just to mention the most well-known members. As a laboratory for modern cultural science, Warburg’s library had a great importance similar to the Bauhaus in the field of art and design.

The Mnemosyne Atlas has been reconstructed since 2011 by the MNEMOSYNE research group (Hamburg, Karlsruhe and St. Gallen) at the “8. Salon” in Hamburg. Individual sequences of four to six panels were precisely analyzed in order to then explain them within the scope of public events. In addition to these events, 13 editions of the magazine series *Baustelle* [“construction site”] were published, in which the research results can be read. The magazine issues ensure that the decoding of the atlas can also be comprehended and updated beyond the events. The magazine issues were reissued in revised form for the exhibition.

REVISION: Warburg today!

The Mnemosyne picture series is mainly chronologically structured and follows the – as Warburg called them – “*Wanderstrassen*” [“migrating roads”] of “*Bilderfahrzeuge*” [“image vehicles”] on which the radical change took place in the Renaissance. They spread the new emotional pictorial language throughout Europe, a story replete with conflicts and confrontations which are restaged on the field of panels like on the stage of a theater. The open exhibition of all panels in Atrium 1 + 2 makes it possible to comprehend the complex links within the atlas. The transfer of artistic notions, which can be described as a kind of unpredictable picture story – **fragmentary, but also open at the same time – particularly links the exhibition with the research activities at the ZKM and the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design (HfG), which examine the history of art and media under current issues.**

The notion of “*Bilderfahrzeuge*” corresponds to an idea which is again popular today with keywords such as *iconic turn* or *pictorial turn*. Warburg’s notion of image carriers and pictorial media as “vehicles” on which messages, forms and figures can be carried through the different contexts is the focus of practical research by contemporary artists and art scholars. His research activities are not only of interest today as a precursor for the processes examined in the sphere of pictorial science, but also because with the Mnemosyne Atlas he established a system that portrays the path of images in different historical eras and cultures in an exemplary, interdisciplinary manner in its entire complexity.

Warburg’s Mnemosyne Atlas – in terms of its complexity a kind of pictorially historic ‘multipurpose weapon’ – is an instrument that can not

Press Release

August 2016

Aby Warburg.
Mnemosyne Bilderatlas
Exhibition

Duration of exhibition
Thursday, Sep. 1-
Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016

Venue
ZKM_Atrium 1+2

Press contact

Dominika Szope
Head of Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49(0)721 / 8100 – 1220

Regina Hock
Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49 (0)721 / 8100 – 1821

E-mail: presse@zkm.de
www.zkm.de/presse

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe
Lorenzstraße 19
76135 Karlsruhe

ZKM sponsors



ZKM partner



Mobility partner



Exhibition in cooperation with

8. Salon Hamburg
Kulturraum St. Gallen

Colloquium in cooperation with

**Staatliche
Akademie der
Bildenden
Künste
Karlsruhe**

Staatliche Hochschule
für Gestaltung Karlsruhe 

only be decoded but also applied. Events with lectures, comments and "Bilderfahrten" ["image journeys"] in front of the individual panels are the first step for this purpose. The goal of the exhibition at the ZKM is to make this instrument available to the international research community, to confront their level of knowledge with the atlas and to put its diverse opportunities to the test.

Curators: Roberto Ohrt and Axel Heil. Conception in cooperation with Christian Rothmaler and Philipp Schwalb. Contribution concerning the "Sprengrung der Burgundischen Larve" by Regine Steenbock.

Accompanying events

Thursday-Tuesday, Sept. 1-6, 2016; 11 am-4 pm

Mnemosyne Atlas: "Crash Course through the Panels" **[Durch die Tafeln]**

Detailed analysis of every single panel with Roberto Ohrt, Philipp Schwalb, Christian Rothmaler, Giovanna Targia, Axel Heil, Bettina Wollinsky and Marina Schütz. Registration is requested at aby.fuehrungen@zkm.de.

Thursday-Friday, Oct. 13-14, 2016; ZKM_Auditorium

Warburg's Atlas colloquium with guests

Please refer to our website (www.zkm.de) for the colloquium program. Registration is requested at aby.warburg@zkm.de.

ZKM | Museum Communication mediation offers

Friday, Sept. 2, 2016; 4 pm in the exhibition

Transgressions – theologians encounter contemporary art: **Aby Warburg**

Admission free

Dipl. Theol. Tobias Licht (head of *Bildungszentrum Karlsruhe* educational center) leads guests through the exhibition together with Barbara Kiolbassa (ZKM | Museum Communication) and stimulates conceptual transgressions.

Saturday, Sept. 24, 2016; 2-5 pm in the exhibition

"Grotesque Dances" [Groteske Tänze] Workshop

Cost from age 15: € 21

The workshop is led by choreographer and dance theater teacher Gabriela Lang. Registration is requested at workshops@zkm.de.

Press Release

August 2016

Aby Warburg.
Mnemosyne Bilderatlas
Exhibition

Duration of exhibition
Thursday, Sep. 1-
Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016

Venue
ZKM_Atrium 1+2

Press contact

Dominika Szope
Head of Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49(0)721 / 8100 – 1220

Regina Hock
Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49 (0)721 / 8100 – 1821

E-mail: presse@zkm.de
www.zkm.de/presse

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe
Lorenzstraße 19
76135 Karlsruhe

ZKM sponsors



ZKM partner



Mobility partner




Exhibition in cooperation with

8. Salon Hamburg
Kulturraum St. Gallen

Colloquium in cooperation with

**Staatliche
Akademie der
Bildenden
Künste
Karlsruhe**

Staatliche Hochschule
für Gestaltung Karlsruhe 

Thursday, Sept. 29, 2016; 6 pm, ZKM_Media Lounge

Medialounge um 6

Aby Warburg. Mnemosyne Picture Atlas

Lecture by Johanna Ziebritzki (Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design (HfG)).

Dates by arrangement, duration approx. 3 hours

School class workshop: *Pathos pur! – Bildersprache zwischen Antike und Gegenwart* ["Pure pathos! Pictorial language between antiquity and the present"]

From grade level 7; cost: € 135/270 + € 1 admission per person

What are the pathos gestures of our time? Present-day gestures in advertising, social networks, etc. will be investigated. Registration is requested at workshops@zkm.de. The number of participants is limited to 15/30 people.

Press Release

August 2016

**Aby Warburg.
Mnemosyne Bilderatlas**
Exhibition

Duration of exhibition
**Thursday, Sep. 1-
Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016**

Venue
ZKM_Atrium 1+2

Press contact

Dominika Szope
Head of Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49(0)721 / 8100 – 1220

Regina Hock
Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49 (0)721 / 8100 – 1821

E-mail: presse@zkm.de
www.zkm.de/presse

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe
Lorenzstraße 19
76135 Karlsruhe

ZKM sponsors



ZKM partner



Mobility partner




Exhibition in cooperation with

8. Salon Hamburg
Kulturraum St. Gallen

Colloquium in cooperation with

**Staatliche
Akademie der
Bildenden
Künste
Karlsruhe**

Staatliche Hochschule
für Gestaltung Karlsruhe 

ANNEX

Aby Warburg biography

(* June 13, 1866 in Hamburg; † October 26, 1929 *ibid.*)

Aby Warburg is born in 1866 in Hamburg, well over 20 years before the generation from which the driving forces of the modern age will emerge. He is the first son of a Jewish family which runs a major bank, but cannot acquire a taste neither for a future as businessman nor with the religious regulations of his family, and offers his one-year-younger brother Max the primogeniture to take over the bank in exchange. His demand: every book that he needs for his studies shall be paid all his life. The Warburg Library will emerge from this.

Warburg studies art history and in 1892 he submits a doctoral thesis about Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* and *Primavera*, the first example of a modern concept of this science. The "border police bias" of his peers initially drives him from his field of research; he considers starting a second course of studies, but in 1895 he arrives in the USA, where a trip to the Hopi Native American tribe dispels his doubts. The compact, virtually striking clarity of the Native American culture, its direct association of myths, images and rituals brings him back to his main topic of research: the afterlife of antiquity in the Renaissance, primarily examined in the time of conflict in the middle of the 15th century, i.e. long before the acknowledged great masterpieces of the High Renaissance.

In 1897 he marries the artist Mary Hertz; they spend the first years of their marriage in Florence. He studies the city's archives and comes into contact with important researchers such as Giovanni Poggi, Herbert Horne, Jacques Mesnil and André Jolles. Warburg and Jolles jointly formulate a study on the nymph, this refreshingly animated figure which fleet-footedly enters the territory of the Early Renaissance and was a remarkably strange apparition in the circle of Christian modesty.

In 1902 Warburg returns to the city of his birth with wife and children. He is extraordinarily active in Hamburg cultural life and expands his collection of books. In a lecture on "Dürer and Italian Antiquity" he coins the term "*Pathosformel*" ["pathos formula"]; soon he also speaks of "*Bilderfahrzeuge*" ["image vehicles"], the mobile carriers such as carpets, graphic reproductions or oil paintings with which images become mobile and define international communication on the "*Wanderstrassen der Kultur*" ["migrating roads of culture"], another of his coining of terms. He comes across the writings of Franz Boll, which open up the field of astrology to him and show the long pathways through the Arab world which the knowledge of antiquity left had been

Press Release

August 2016

Aby Warburg.
Mnemosyne Bilderatlas
Exhibition

Duration of exhibition
Thursday, Sep. 1-
Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016

Venue
ZKM_Atrium 1+2

Press contact

Dominika Szope
Head of Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49(0)721 / 8100 – 1220

Regina Hock
Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49 (0)721 / 8100 – 1821

E-mail: presse@zkm.de
www.zkm.de/presse

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe
Lorenzstraße 19
76135 Karlsruhe

ZKM sponsors



ZKM partner



Mobility partner




Exhibition in cooperation with

8. Salon Hamburg
Kulturraum St. Gallen

Colloquium in cooperation with

**Staatliche
Akademie der
Bildenden
Künste
Karlsruhe**

Staatliche Hochschule
für Gestaltung Karlsruhe 

through before it entered the European cultural sphere again. On this basis, he is able to decode the mystery of the frescos at Palazzo Schifanoia (Ferrara).

The library in his house in Hamburg is in this time already an institution which is available to other researchers and is supervised by Fritz Saxl. Before the First World War he perceives with great concern how massively superstition takes hold of people in a crisis. In a publication about the Reformer Luther and his handling of astrology, he presents the problem as an example. The war increasingly upsets him; he already suffered from depression beforehand. He transforms his house into monitoring station for war propaganda, plans to exhibit his material in a "Museum of Lies" and suffers a mental breakdown as the war ends with Germany's capitulation. This crisis keeps him in various mental institutions for six years. Since 1921 he has been treated at Sanatorium Bellevue, which is operated by Ludwig Binswanger in Kreuzlingen on Lake Constance.

There he slowly regains his stability, whereby he himself takes an important step as he delivers a lecture on the "Hopi snake ritual" at the sanatorium in 1923. This later legendary attempt to bring himself back into the role of scientist is on the one hand the description and visualization of a rather unusual – not to say frightening – ceremony, a definition of its function in the context of Native American culture; on the other hand, it is a self-analysis and reminiscence of his own expedition to the Hopi. Visits by Fritz Saxl, who developed the Warburg Library into an important institution during these years, and an engagement with philosopher Ernst Cassirer are also helpful for his recovery.

Warburg is able to return to Hamburg in 1924. He assumes the leadership of the *Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg* (KBW, Warburg Library of Cultural Sciences) and starts a compact series of lectures which he combines with the presentation of picture series. On the basis of this technique he forms his last great project, the Mnemosyne Picture Atlas. A highly modern equipped building, in which the KBW is accommodated, is opened next to his home in 1926. A working group which will later go down in history as the "Hamburg School" emerges in the coming years: Erwin Panofsky, Edgar Wind, Gustav Pauli, Ernst Cassirer, Fritz Saxl and Gertrud Bing – just to mention the more well-known individuals and the inner circle. In the middle of this discussion Warburg designs the Mnemosyne Picture Atlas, which he regularly examines, expands and defines more precisely in a practical test. It shall be made available to the general public in an elaborate publication. In the autumn of 1928 Warburg travels to Rome in order carry out the dress rehearsal of this project at the Bibliotheca

Press Release

August 2016

Aby Warburg.
Mnemosyne Bilderatlas
Exhibition

Duration of exhibition
Thursday, Sep. 1-
Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016

Venue
ZKM_Atrium 1+2

Press contact

Dominika Szope
Head of Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49(0)721 / 8100 – 1220

Regina Hock
Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49 (0)721 / 8100 – 1821

E-mail: presse@zkm.de
www.zkm.de/presse

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe
Lorenzstraße 19
76135 Karlsruhe

ZKM sponsors



ZKM partner



Mobility partner




Exhibition in cooperation with

8. Salon Hamburg
Kulturraum St. Gallen

Colloquium in cooperation with

**Staatliche
Akademie der
Bildenden
Künste
Karlsruhe**

Staatliche Hochschule
für Gestaltung Karlsruhe 

Hertziana. The third version of the atlas comes into being in the summer of 1929; it is not yet definitively worked out to the last detail when Warburg succumbs to a heart attack on October 26 of the same year.

Biography written by Roberto Ohrt.

Press Release

August 2016

Aby Warburg.
Mnemosyne Bilderatlas
Exhibition

Duration of exhibition
Thursday, Sep. 1-
Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016

Venue
ZKM_Atrium 1+2

Press contact

Dominika Szope
Head of Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49(0)721 / 8100 – 1220

Regina Hock
Press & Public Relations
Tel.: +49 (0)721 / 8100 – 1821

E-mail: presse@zkm.de
www.zkm.de/presse

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe
Lorenzstraße 19
76135 Karlsruhe

ZKM sponsors



ZKM partner



Mobility partner



Exhibition in cooperation with

8. Salon Hamburg
Kulturraum St. Gallen

Colloquium in cooperation with

**Staatliche
Akademie der
Bildenden
Künste
Karlsruhe**

Staatliche Hochschule
für Gestaltung Karlsruhe 