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C. Raman Schlemmer

*Or movi, e con la tua parola ornata e con ciò c'ha mestieri
al suo campare, laiuta sì ch'i' ne sia consolata.*

Dante Alighieri, Divine Comedy,
Inferno II, 67–69, 1308–1320 [1]

*Arise, therefore, and help it with your artful word
and with what it needs for its salvation, so that I may be reassured.*

CELEBRATING OLYMPIAN EXHILARATION

Reflections on the Ancestors

“Ein Kunstwerk ist eine Verkündigung der Freiheit. Für die Menschen hat es nie etwas Unerträglicheres gegeben als die Freiheit.”

“A work of art is a declaration of freedom. For mankind, there has never been anything more intolerable than freedom.”

Diary, 1913 [2]

“Once you reject classical painting and art, the sky is the limit. Everything opens up: the mystical, colour, intrepidity—the result must be glorious. [...] Liberation means embracing the unlimited possibilities.”

Diary, 7 November 1915

“[...] The accomplishments of all significant men are rooted in a simple but comprehensive insight into the nature of things. To have found this means to have found oneself, and thereby the world. [...]”

Diary, September 1916

These quotes my grandfather, the artist Oskar Schlemmer (1888–1943), noted down in his diaries. He was a painter, dancer and artist who used his own body to express himself artistically.

The oeuvre of Oskar Schlemmer was as versatile and multifaceted as his talents, visions, vocations, teaching courses, theatre and architecture projects.

Schlemmer's accomplishments spanned numerous spheres. He was a painter, including murals; sculptor, draftsman and printmaker; graphic designer; and photographer. He was a teacher, writer, dancer and choreographer, stage and costume designer, musician and composer. As well, he designed furniture, lamps and jewellery.

He served as master of ceremonies for the legendary *Bauhaus Feste*, the thematic parties at the Bauhaus school,

His stage and theatre works are distinguished by his own creations, *The Triadic Ballet*, *The Figural Cabinet*, *The Bauhaus Dances* [3], *Variété – A Comic Ballett*, as well as collaborations with theatre directors, composers and music conductors: stage and costume designs; set to the music of contemporary composers, including Paul Hindemith, Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg.

At the centre of his œuvre is the image of *der Mensch*, the human being, the eternal subject of art. He creates and depicts the human being in its spiritual purity and beauty, a vision and talent only very few of his contemporaries shared. It is the consciousness of the magic, the commitment towards an ideal, which underpins the strength, dignity, intensity and wisdom of his work.

His creative period, which started around 1910, was interrupted by two World Wars and lasted barely three decades. He survived WW1, unlike some of his contemporaries such as August Macke and Franz Marc who died on the Western Front. Schlemmer was wounded and sent to a military hospital. Other artists, among them painters Max Beckmann, George Grosz and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and the novelist Erich Maria Remarque, were also on sick leave. None of them recovered from their horrific wartime experiences.

Egon Schiele, back from the front, as well as the novelist Guillaume Apollinaire who was of Polish-Belarusian descent, fighting for the French, wounded by shrapnel on the front, in 1918, succumbed to the Spanish flu pandemic. The sculptor Wilhelm Lehmbruck committed suicide in his studio in 1919.

Still shaken by his wartime experiences and with the threat of more bloodshed with the Nazis coming to power, Oskar Schlemmer, in a courageous act of resistance, wrote a letter of protest to Joseph Goebbels, the minister for public enlightenment and propaganda, on 25 April 1933:

Deeply shocked by reports from various cities of the Reich, such as Dessau, Mannheim, Dresden, where the museum's holdings of modern paintings are being

brought together in "chambers of horrors of art", provided with the sums paid for them at the time, and exposed to the ridicule and indignation of the public. and provided with the sums that were paid for them at the time, are exposed to the ridicule and indignation of the public, I take the liberty of addressing you with the urgent request to put a stop to this. Allow me to direct your attention briefly to the time before the war, to the years 1910 to 1914, when in all artistically alive nations such as Germany, Russia, France, simultaneously, without knowing about each other, a spiritual revolution took place in the arts and gave rise to works that could not possibly have anything to do with the November system and Marxism, because these concepts did not yet exist!

We went to war for the ideals of art, out of genuine enthusiasm for a great cause! In the name of my fallen comrades, I protest against the defamation of their will and their works, as far as they are in museums and are to be desecrated today [4].

That was not the meaning of their dying! The survivors, today forty years old, have continued after the war the interrupted work in the pre-war spirit, to a large extent in ignorance and indifference to the political events, which happened next to them.

Today, the images of the dead and living moderns are defamed! They are ostracized as alien, un-German, unworthy and unnatural. Political motives are imputed to them, which could never be the case with the majority of the works concerned.

Is it presumptuous for us to ask in the summer of 2021 what succeeding generations have learned from these wartime horrors and the narratives and fates of the artists? Have they not read the diaries of men serving in the two World Wars? In the light of the wars currently raging, is it not time to reread the 1928 novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* [5] by Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970) about the terrible brutality of war that I read this summer 2021. The weapons in the Donets Basin, in Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Myanmar, and other conflicts, are far more sophisticated than in 1913 and in 1939. But the physical and mental suffering of the soldiers and the conflict victims are no less than in the two World Wars.

Schlemmer's creative period between the Wars and at the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau, at the academies in Breslau [6] and Berlin, was abruptly and brutally interrupted when the National Socialists in Germany seized power in the beginning of the 1930s. He was expelled from the "Reichskulturkammer" [7], banned from working and living freely as an artist.

He died too young to complete what he had set out to accomplish at the beginning of the 20th century. During those 30 years, Schlemmer created an œuvre of painting and sculpture, which remains unique and cannot be clearly attributed to any of the trends and “isms” of modern and avant-garde art of the early twentieth century. His œuvre, as a dancer, choreographer, his stage experiments, stage sets and costumes, continue to surprise us today. They may appear to us to be equally, if not even more utopian and visionary, than his work as a painter. These works for the stage have profoundly influenced subsequent generations of artists and have remained a source of inspiration to theatre and performance artists ever since. Schlemmer can quite rightly be recognised as being the originator of Performance Art. The painterly œuvre and the dance creations are inseparable. Thus, his experience as a painter, as a dancer, choreographer and stage designer is in a constant enriching and stimulating dialogue within his œuvre.

As the political polarisation in Germany intensified during the Weimar Republic, posters were published in the state academy in Berlin in which Schlemmer and other professors were accused of being “a destructive, Marxist-Jewish element”. He was dismissed and forced to leave the Berlin academy by the fascist National Socialists in 1933. The same year that Adolf Hitler seized power, an Oskar Schlemmer exhibition was closed in Stuttgart and from 1934 Schlemmer retreated with his family to “inner immigration” in South Germany. During the last decade of his life, the dramatic political changes conditioned his life and the fate of his wife and three children. Germany had declared war on its neighbouring countries, and the onslaught of World War II and the Holocaust began. His attempts to migrate to the United States were fruitless. For his own and his family’s survival and in order to avoid more severe war-related mandatory labour, from 1940 Schlemmer was forced to work in paint factories. He was made to paint façades and camouflage bombing targets. Though malnourished, he had to do physically strenuous work on scaffolding.

In a Wuppertal factory, which produced camouflage paints for the military, Schlemmer carried out lacquer technology trials that involved highly toxic substances. His health deteriorated. Resignation, despair and illness lead to Schlemmer’s premature death in Baden-Baden in 1943 at the age of 54.

Schlemmer was a prolific writer. He kept diaries, was an assiduous epistolist, writer of subjects on art and art theory, playwright. Some of his writings consist

of short entries in notebooks, records on accession cards, lectures and extensive essays on dance and stage works, dance notations and music scores.

Diaries and letters are a chronicle of an artist's life. Vincent van Gogh's letters had been selected and published by his sister-in-law Johanna van Gogh-Bonger in 1914 [8]. Schlemmer's writings span from 1910, before and between the two World Wars, life at the Bauhaus until the "inner exile," and illness, to 1943.

When Schlemmer's wife Tut published a selection of his letters and diaries under the title *Oskar Schlemmer Briefe und Tagebücher* in 1958, he had been dead for over 12 years [9]. She struggled to survive on a meagre pension and had to rent their studio house near Badenweiler. Some of Schlemmer's correspondents were alive and had migrated from Nazi Germany. Others died in Nazi concentration camps. Some of the artists, whose work had been declared "degenerate," after the War were able to pick up the pieces of their lives and their art, some got to teach at academies. Others never recovered. Many former Nazi Party members, though, remained in leading positions.

Letter post during that period was the most efficient communication form and often messages were transmitted on special postcards provided by the post office.

Tut Schlemmer sorted through hundreds of writings, diaries, notebooks, carbon copies of Schlemmer's letters typed or handwritten, partly in Suetterlin script. These she transcribed with carbon copies on Oskar's typewriter. Conscious of his at times critical comments about his contemporaries, she chose judiciously and included letters to herself.

As she told me in my childhood, in occupied post-war Germany in the 1950s, it continued to be difficult for publishing houses to procure sufficient paper for printing. A similar situation arose decades later when Andreas Hüneke in the German Democratic Republic completed a paperback edition of Schlemmer's letters and diaries. Its publication was delayed for years due to a lack of paper supplies. To support the edition, I had provided the East German publishing house high-quality images for additional reproductions.

When first published in 1958 [10], Schlemmer's writings were a revelation to post-World War II generations and established the painter and dancer further as a writer. The writings reminded readers who were contemporaries of Schlemmer of the times they had shared, memories that had been erased under the impact of

war, horror, loss, injuries, and death. The writings accompany the reader through Schlemmer's life and thinking. The Bauhaus and Schlemmer stage workshop student Albert Mentzel Flocon told me shortly before he passed away that this book was for him the best narrative documentation about the life, festivities, concepts, and conflicts at the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau. For Mentzel, it also closed a gap of his own suppressed, sad memories. After escaping to France with his wife, the Bauhaus student Charlotte Rothschild, and their daughters, the family was finally arrested in the Midi. His Jewish wife and eldest daughter were later deported and killed in Auschwitz.

Being *Zeitzeuge* – contemporary witnesses – Mentzel and other *Bauhäusler* told me that Schlemmer's writings were the only authentic accounts of the Bauhaus. By listening to the passionate stories of family members and Schlemmer's contemporaries, in my childhood, I created a precious personal image of the man who was my maternal grandfather, and as a *Zweitzeuge* – second witness – I continue the oral tradition talking to friends and students all over the world.

Schlemmer wrote with surprising wit. A prolific reader, he developed his own descriptive literature style with his own word creations. In his letters, he described performances of his dance creations, new works, contemporaries, the reception of works in gallery exhibitions, discussions and developments at the Bauhaus. He talked about his heroes – the masters of the Greek Kouros, the great masters Leonardo da Vinci, Albrecht Dürer, Philipp Otto Runge, Paul Cézanne, Georges Seurat, Johann Sebastian Bach, Friedrich Schiller, Friedrich Hölderlin, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Nietzsche. He also discussed Russian contemporary theatre, creations and emotions and narrated daily life. In his diaries, Schlemmer becomes author and philosopher. In different diary passages, he expresses personal insights and ideas and cautiously foretells visions. He reflects on *The Triadic Ballet* and the Bauhaus festivals in a literary style that could have been meant for later publication.

About the theatre in Russia, Oskar Schlemmer wrote in an article in "Das Neue Frankfurt" 1928 under the title "Piscator and the Modern Theatre":

The decisive innovations in stagecraft undoubtedly came from Russia. Starting with the cabaret-style of the "Blue Bird", [...]; Stanislavsky [11]'s theatre, which had an effect on Reinhardt [12]; Habima [13], Tairov [14], Nemirovich-Danchenko

[15], who exerted their influence on opera and drama; Meyerhold [16], who now found his German emissary in Piscator [17] – this is the proud series of essential theatrical events, which unfortunately have no equal in Germany in such clarity and unambiguity.

Schlemmer was appointed to the State Bauhaus art academy in Weimar by its founder, Walter Gropius, in 1921. Two years later, he was appointed master of the stage workshop. When the Bauhaus moved to new buildings in Dessau in 1926, a stage was part of the design by Gropius. Here, Schlemmer could realize his dance visions on stage. The *Bauhaus Dances* by Oskar Schlemmer, rehearsed with his students, have had a continuing profound influence on performance art and contemporary dance. The experimental dances were originally informal manifestations of instructional courses Schlemmer taught during his tenure as professor of the stage workshop at the Dessau Bauhaus between 1926 and 1929. Schlemmer's abstract stage concept necessitated the transformation of the human being through costume and mask by changing the body shapes into metaphysical forms of expression. Part of his stage workshops, and a precondition for the students and performers, was Schlemmer's course *Der Mensch | Man*. As one of the students, T. Lux Feininger [18], wrote to Jaina Schlemmer, the artist's daughter, it was mandatory for Bauhaus students to attend this course before they could practice with Schlemmer on *Babü, Bauhausbühne*, the Stage of the Bauhaus. As in his paintings and sculpture, Schlemmer balanced a dynamic between emotion and scientific rationale, the Dionysian and the Apollonian. In painting, he imposed rigid rules, with the human being at the centre. In performance, he explored the boundless freedom of space.

Based on the original choreography, dance notations, and music by Oskar Schlemmer, in 2019, I produced, adapted, and directed a performance of the *Bauhaus Dances*, striving to faithfully stage the authentic dances, costumes, masks, props, and music. Three movement artists performed in unitards in yellow, red, and blue, masks in bronze, silver, and gold, and with forms in the prime and metal colours [19], on a silver dance floor. This version of the performance of *Bauhaus Tänze | Bauhaus Dances* saw its world premiere in London at the end of September and in October 2019 [20].

For this premiere in Germany, the dancer Triad performed under my direction and orchestration to a full house in an Osnabrück 17th century church, which now serves as an exhibition space of the Kunsthalle Osnabrück. It was part

of the solo exhibition by artist Filip Markiewicz's *Celebration Factory*. As in the performances in London, the music by Oskar Schlemmer was played on piano and percussion by the musician Vincenzo Pasquariello [21].

In 2017, Markiewicz (1980) asked me to select passages from Schlemmer's diaries for *Fake Fiction*, a performance at Theater Basel, the edition of the *Celebration News* newspaper [22] at Casino Luxembourg (2018), the publications of *Fake Fiction* (2019) [23] and *Celebration Factory* [24]. I suggested taking text fragments of Schlemmer's philosophical reflections, noted by the artist in his diaries, catapulting these thoughts into a contemporary 21st century context, and proving their timeless, not time-bound, meaning and significance.

Contemporary performance and visual artists are fascinated by Schlemmer's descriptions of costume parties and festivals at the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau, the legendary *Bauhaus Feste*. At the Bauhaus, he set the themes, was the orchestrator and the master of ceremonies, roles that suited him so well. Without the detailed writings by Schlemmer and his costume designs, little would be known about these ephemeral festivities, as photography was a rare medium at the Bauhaus and film footage hardly exists. They were an expression of an *Olympian exhilaration* [25], which he was searching for in his paintings, in balance with the well-tempered mind.

Some of Schlemmer's artworks have become icons of the 20th century and are part of the cultural heritage:

For the dance performance, *The Triadic Ballet*, he designed utopian, masked costumes. This creation originates in 1912 and was first performed in 1922. It is a symphonic dance, divided into three sections that develop from jest to earnestness. The triadic theme is embraced on all levels. Schlemmer considers the numeral three to be an eminently dominant number in which the monomaniac ego and the dualistic opposite are overcome and the collective originates. In *The Triadic Ballet*, it is the costume, not the dancer that determines the movement, reducing the dancer's mobility. The costumes become ambulant architecture.

The *Bauhaus Signet* of 1923 became the official emblem of the Bauhaus School in Weimar and Dessau, and later in Berlin (1919–1933) and even at the New Bauhaus in Chicago.

Schlemmer's theoretical drawing on "*Der Mensch im Raum*" (The Human Being in a Space) and *Mensch and Kunstfigur* (Man and Art Figure) along with

his utopian vision of new dance and theatre were all published in “Die Bühne im Bauhaus” (The Stage at the Bauhaus) in 1925 in Volume Four of a series called Bauhaus Books.

The *Bauhaus Dances* are experimental dances he created with his students at the Bauhaus Stage in Dessau.

One of his masterpieces is the painting *Bauhaustreppe* (Bauhaus Staircase), 1932, that has been housed since 1943 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York [26].

His last artworks, the 1942 visionary cycle of “Window Pictures,” were painted in oil and tempera on paper as he had no access to paint and canvas from 1932, being banned as an artist. These nineteen small paintings were views from his attic chamber window in Wuppertal. The views were his microcosm, seen through the microcosm of a depressed and belligerent world. They lead into the microcosm of windows opposite in the neighbourhood in the evening before the lights had to be switched off to conceal the houses from British bomb squadrons that were attacking German cities [27].

The year before, he wrote these notes in his diary on 9 July 1941:

“Remain true to my theme of “figures in space” by humanizing, bringing to light, immerse in colour, intensifying the imaginative element.

Humanizing = releasing from abstract, geometric rigidity. ‘bringing to light = emerging from the darkness, and also rendering the miracle of optics (Seurat’s drawings). Immerse in colour = instead of buzzing “tones”, consistent colour. Intensifying the imaginative element = never again sinking into banalities; instead, consistently striving to capture the inner image, the visions.”

His precision continues to surprise and encourage me, his precision in communicating, be it as an artist, a dancer, as a painter or a writer. Schlemmer expresses the subjectivisms of knowledge through colour and dance and therefore through his perception and movement. The true nature of his art is his experiences as a dancer, being so aware of his own self. The consciousness of himself, which, by nature is dynamically subjective, helped him to create his own image of man (*Körperbild*).

His wit and humour, talent to perform, also continues to surprise and encourage me. Those traits faded only in the last year, when sadness and illness weakened his stamina and resilience.

Less than two months before he passed away he noted in his diary on 9 February 1943:

*“To perceive and to further:
Purest feeling
Purest emotion
Purest thought
The purest heart
And likewise: what is uniquely one’s own ...”*

His last entry in the diary on 1 April 1943, was a quote from the German romantic poet Rainer Maria Rilke:

“ ... to consider art, not a piece plucked out of the world, but the complete and utter transformation of the world into pure glory ...”

After Schlemmer’s death and grieved by the loss of her son Tilman in 1945 in the last, hopeless battles on the Eastern Front, my grandmother, Tut (1890–1987), carried on his legacy. Struggling to reclaim some of the artworks which had been lost or stolen in the confusion of the war, she catalogued his artworks and published his letters and his diaries. She travelled in Germany to give lectures on his work and life at the Bauhaus, placed important artworks in museum collections, encouraged exhibitions and made his oeuvre known to a larger audience. She carried on well into her nineties. When her older daughter Karin passed away, at the age of 91 she entrusted the legacy to her only surviving child, my mother, U. Jaïna Schlemmer, and me. She wanted to be sure that the oeuvre stayed together for humanity. Jaïna, a stage and costume designer, catalogued and researched the theatre, dance and performance artworks. She created reconstructions of the figurines for exhibitions internationally. This legacy I continue. The Bühnen Archiv Oskar Schlemmer (The Oskar Schlemmer Theatre Estate and Archives), Secretariat Schlemmer and Archives are a research-oriented, non-profit organisation.

Artworks by Oskar Schlemmer are part of major international museum collections and are displayed in pioneering international exhibitions on 20th-century art. Adhering to the artist’s desire for large audiences to experience and enjoy his paintings and sculptures, I have placed deposits of important works in major museums collections in Europe and the US, continuing a tradition started by my grandmother Tut and my mother Jaïna. My highest endeavour is that ever-increasing audiences can enjoy and experience the oeuvre of Oskar Schlemmer, even

outside the classical world of art centres and institutions. Over the past decade, nowhere in the world have so many people seen works by Oskar Schlemmer daily as at Museo “Reina Sofia” in Madrid. In pre-pandemic times, the museum had 3.000 to over 5.000 visitors, numbers that museums in Germany with works by Schlemmer can only dream of. In February 2020, several thousand visitors to the Walt Disney Concert Hall could view figurines from *The Triadic Ballet*. The La Phil concert hall was designed by the architect Frank Gehry and is a downtown Los Angeles landmark. The exhibition of the figurines was part of a series of concerts, *Weimar Variations*, directed by Esa-Pekka Salonen, a programme of concerts, installations, performances, cabarets, and a film marathon, commissioned by LA Phil. The life size Oskar Schlemmer figurines for *The Triadic Ballet* were installed in a setting designed brilliantly especially by Frank Gehry.

Oskar Schlemmer had decided to send the figurines for *The Triadic Ballet* with numerous other artworks to New York when he was invited to exhibit a few works in the legendary Bauhaus exhibition at MoMA in 1938. Following the exhibition of “degenerate” art in Munich and other German cities, and being ostracised by the Nazis, Schlemmer tried to send many of his artworks out of Germany to New York and other places. Faced with an occupational ban and without any income, his hope was that these artworks, and in particular the figurines of *The Triadic Ballet*, would open the immigration doors to the United States to him, his wife Tut and three children. He began working on improving his English. However, he could not find two sponsors, a mandatory condition to receive a US visa. Even his Bauhaus colleagues, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Josef Albers, László Moholy Nagy, and former students, some in well-established positions in the US, would not support his migration. As a result, he and his family were unable to realize their dream of getting to safety in the United States. The figurines and other artworks, though, did make it to New York and survived the war and the danger of being destroyed by the Nazis as “degenerate” art. Some 83 years later, together with the LA Phil, we could realize his dream in a spectacular installation in the New World on the coast of the Pacific.

We continue to research the work and life of Oskar Schlemmer, his contemporaries, the Bauhaus School and related art historical and socio-political phenomena. We maintain the archival database of documentation regarding artworks, writings and documents by Oskar Schlemmer. This includes continuously

updating the work catalogues records, Catalogue Raisonné, the bibliography of publications on or including artworks and texts by Oskar Schlemmer, as well as updating the list of exhibitions. Part of our work also involves the authentication of artworks so far not documented and reporting fakes to the Investigative authorities.

Another element of my work involves being in continuous contact and exchanges with other artist families, second and third-generation descendants, among them the Pablo Picasso estate, acting as Administration Picasso in Paris; the Joan Mirò family, represented in various foundations in Spain; the Alexander Calder Foundation in New York; the Marc Chagall grandchildren; descendants of Kazimir Malevich and Camille Pissarro; and members of the family of our friend Sigmar Polke. As different as every artist's biography and family history might be, we share a common cause and these are precious friendships.

Our work and collaboration related to the œuvre of Oskar Schlemmer consist of initiating, collaborating and advising on exhibitions of his artworks. In the 1980s and 1990s, we initiated numerous exhibitions and publications with the works of Oskar Schlemmer. Finally, we staged the first US retrospective exhibition in four American museums in 1986; in Amsterdam, ten exhibitions and publications alone in the year of his centenary 1988; the first retrospective exhibitions in Spain in 1996; and in France in 1999 accompanied by a symposium organised by the National Centre for Dance [28]. There were also Bauhaus exhibitions in Tokyo, New York and London along with avant-garde dance exhibitions in Düsseldorf, Hannover, Vienna, Austria, Rovereto, Italy, Paris and Metz, France. As well, I gave lectures and seminars in universities in China, Japan, the United States and Europe. In 2005, a project by Oskar Schlemmer for "Les Noces" set to music by Igor Stravinsky was performed at the Stresa Festival on Lake Maggiore in Italy, 70 years after it was conceived on the shores of the same lake further north in 1927/1928. As artistic director, I created together with Italian technicians a video using state-of-the-art software, which was projected according to the artist's concept above the musicians and singers on stage [29]. This project, possibly the first concept of a music video created originally in 1927/1928, brought the work of Oskar Schlemmer to new international audiences. Some art historians in Germany, unfortunately, ignore the international attention to the œuvre of Oskar Schlemmer and important retrospective exhibitions, acknowledging and referring, narrow-mindedly in

our view, only to the few retrospective exhibitions and publications during the post-war decades in Germany. Believing that cultural exchange improves communication and contributes to reducing conflict, we sent a group of works by Schlemmer on loan to the National Gallery of the GDR in East Berlin in 1988, when West German museums, as part of the Cold War policy, refused loans.

I continue to research and investigate artworks by my grandfather that were displaced during the Nazi period in Germany. A number of his artworks have not yet been rediscovered. Others, as recently as at the beginning of 2021, were discovered in a German state museum, without any proof of acquisition. Other lost artworks appear in the art market with invented provenance.

Having grown up with contemporary art, architecture, theatre, dance and music, part of my legacy is to continue to encourage emerging artists, participate in juries and travel to exhibitions in different parts of the world.

The Indian legacy is the other counterpole. My paternal grandfather, C. Unni, was Indian. In an anti-British gesture, he was sent to study in Germany. At the Stuttgart Academy, where my maternal grandfather, Oskar Schlemmer, had studied a few years earlier, C. Unni met and married the daughter of the academy professor, Paul Haustein (1880–1940), an influential designer of “Jugendstil,” and the pianist Johanna Haustein – part of the circle of the poet Stefan George.

Liesel and Unni had one son, C. Paran, born in Calicut (Kozhikode), Kerala. C. Unni’s father, C. Krishnan Vakyil, an advocate, member of the Madras assembly and a social reformer invited Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Annie Besant and young Krishnamurti to his mansion in Calicut. After his parents’ separation, his mother returned with her son to Germany. C. Paran miraculously survived Nazi Germany, hidden outside Berlin. He studied art at the Stuttgart Academy under Willy Baumeister, a close friend of Oskar Schlemmer, where he met fellow student Jaina Schlemmer. Jaina and Paran then moved to Berlin, where they joined the Berlin Academy, Jaina was studying stage and costume design and Paran became a student of the expressionist painter Karl Schmidt-Rotluff. They married and I was born in Berlin. As a toddler, I posed as a model in Schmidt-Rotluff’s art classes, earning my first wage.

In South India, the ancestors are worshipped, the Achan or Muthappan, in family temples, located close to the oldest family house, the Tharavad. Our family has its own centuries-old ancestor temple in the ancestral village. In accordance

with this belief, Oskar Schlemmer is one of my Achans, to whom, out of my own volition, I have dedicated my life.

On the initiative of Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), the first exhibition of Bauhaus artists was held in Calcutta, India, and not in Germany. Records are incomplete and it seems that no works by Oskar Schlemmer were included. Tagore received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 and visited Europe in the early 20th century frequently. More of his writings were translated from Bengali and were published more in German than in English at the time [30]. Oskar Schlemmer and his colleagues read Tagore. Yet the art of Oskar Schlemmer is still to be experienced by audiences in India, Ukraine, China and many other parts of the world.

I believe in cultural exchange. It might not alter political systems but it can build bridges. However, art can enhance people's lives and enchant. The Festival of India in the 1980s was a vehicle to contribute to the understanding and tolerance between peoples. The Indian government grasped this aspect of culture and at the same time its potential for commerce and trade. As one of the appointed commissioners, we brought important exhibitions of Indian art, tribal, classical and contemporary, and crafts to the erstwhile Soviet Union, the UK, France, the United States, Japan, Switzerland and Germany. In the 21st century this would no longer be a valid concept. Biennales and international art fairs have become commonplace worldwide. These exhibitions, including documenta in Germany, as well as awards without barriers or restrictions, offer artists from all parts of the world new opportunities. At the same time, this development also reduces narrow minded focus on national and regional aspects.

It is crucial that artists in countries lacking institutional infrastructures and cut off from the high-end international contemporary art circuits are offered equal opportunities and platforms for exchange and to get their art seen.

What Oskar Schlemmer wrote in his diary on 20 March 1912, is still valid today about the contemporary art scene internationally, including Ukraine as well as the current exuberant Indian art world along with the enthusiasm, success and at the same time hype associated with contemporary art:

A tremendous amount of patience is required. The ability to wait, temperance, restraint, in favour of something superior. There are so many examples. particularly among modern artists, whose early work, through which they established their reputation, was meaningful, but consequently became part

of rational art production, far apart from the early works created in an atmosphere of humility. There are such numerous cases of decline as a result of sudden fame, producing towards grandeur, that these examples should be a warning, teach us to strive for capturing these early moments, and thus our youth and the quality of the artworks.

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2. Oskar Schlemmer, Diary June 1913, as WWI was brewing. All translations in this text are by the author.
3. *Das Triadische Ballet (The Triadic Ballet)*, *Bauhaustänze (Bauhaus Dances)*, *Bauhausbühne*, *Das figurale Kabinett*, *Bauhaus Signet (image)* and *Oskar Schlemmer* are registered trademarks ® of C. Raman Schlemmer.
4. Joseph Goebbels, Reich Minister of Propaganda under Adolf Hitler, propagandist of the Nazi Party since 1933. Started writing diaries in 1923, part of which he published in 1935 and later in English as *My Part in Germany's Fight*. After the war, the glass plates of the diaries were kept in Moscow, and when discovered partly published after 1992. Following Hitler's suicide on 30 April 1945 Goebbels succeeded him for one day as Chancellor. He committed suicide together with his wife on 1 May 1945 in Hitler's bunker under Berlin, after poisoning their six children.
5. Remarque *Nichts neues im Westen* As in the first edition, Cologne 2018.
6. Now Wrocław, Poland. See catalogue *Von Otto Müller bis Oskar Schlemmer, Künstler der Breslauer Akademie*, National Museum of Schwerin, Wrocław National Museum, November 2002 / 2003. See also Norman Davies and Roger Moorhouse, *Microcosm, Portrait of Central Europe*, London, 2002.
7. Reich Chamber of Culture, founded by Goebbels on 22 September 1933. Standardization (*Gleichstellung*) of culture and all cultural activities in Germany, compulsory membership for all artists in Germany. Total control of access to material for artists.
8. Conversation between Willem van Gogh, the artist's great-grandnephew, and the author in February 2020 in Los Angeles.

9. Oskar Schlemmer *Briefe und Tagebücher*, ed. Tut Schlemmer (Munich: Müller Langen Verlag, 1958). Paperback edition (Stuttgart: Gerd Hatje Verlag, 1977). Oskar Schlemmer. *Idealist der Form. Briefe, Tagebücher, Schriften 1912–1943*, ed. Andreas Hüneke (Leipzig: Reclam-Verlag, 1990). Published in English as *The Letters and Diaries of Oskar Schlemmer* (1972).
10. In 1950, the diaries of Anne Frank, *Das Hinterhaus*, were published in a first German edition and in 1952 in an English edition.
11. Konstantin Sergejevich Stanislavski (1863–1938), Russian, actor and theatre director, founder of the Moscow Art Theatre in 1898 together with Nemirowitsch-Dantschenko. Stanislavski developed the pedagogical theatre method "System", which influenced generations of actors in Russia, Europe and the United States of America. He toured with his company Western European countries in 1906 and again, in 1922 starting in Berlin and continuing in 1923 to the United States.
12. Max Reinhardt (1873–1943), Austrian actor, theatre and film, director in Vienna, founder of the Reinhardt Bühnen in Berlin
13. Habima, founded in 1912 in Grodne Governote, then Russia today, Bialystok in Poland, started as a theatre in Hebrew. After moving to Moscow, Habima toured in 1926 European countries and the United States. The company migrated in Palestine in 1931.
14. Aleksandr Tairov (1885–1950), Russian, theatre director, developed the "synthetic theatre" method. Grew up and studied in Kiev. His writings on theatre Alexander Tairoff *Das entfesselte Theater* was published in German in 1927. Oskar Schlemmer had a copy of the book.
15. Wladimir Iwanowitsch Nemirowitsch-Dantschenko (1858–1943 Georgian, theatre director, together with Stanislavsky founder of MChAT in Moscow.
16. Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874–1940), actor, theatre director, producer, theatre reformer. Founded the Meyerhold Theatre in Moscow. Developed his own acting teaching. Executed in 1940 under Stalin. The author visited the Moscow apartment of Meyerhold in November 2018, which is kept, rather poorly, as a museum.
17. Erwin Piscator (1893–1966), German theatre director and producer, directed the Volksbühne Theatre in Berlin and the Piscator-Bühne (1927). Worked in Moscow from 1931 and stayed after Hitler seized power in 1931,

before moving to France, the United States and returning to erstwhile West Germany in 1951. Walter Gropius designed a spherical “Total Theatre” for Piscator, which Gropius had copied from Bauhaus student Andor Weininger. Schlemmer had considered moving from the Bauhaus in Dessau to Berlin to work with Piscator as a stage designer.

18. T. Lux Feininger (1910–2011), son of the American painter Lyonel Feininger, was a student of Oskar Schlemmer at the Bauhaus stage workshop and a photographer. Born in Berlin, he migrated in 1936 to the U.S. At Schlemmer’s request, he documented some of the Bauhaus Dances. Oskar Schlemmer then altered, inscribed, and mounted these photographs for exhibitions, documenting and publicizing his pioneering stage work.
19. Forms and props Boris Gil and the author.
20. London: Co-production of Bühnen Archiv Oskar Schlemmer | The Oskar Schlemmer Theater Archives, together with Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac. Dancers: Kennedy Junior Muntanga, Olivia Grassot, Oscar Jinghu Li. Costume consultant: Ilaria Martello.
21. Based on the original scores and recorded.
22. Which included Filip Markiewicz’s interview with the author (Luxembourg: Casino Luxembourg – Forum d’art contemporain, 2018).
23. *Fake Fiction* (Luxembourg: Hyde Éditions, 2019).
24. Hatje Cantz, 2020, including essay by the author.
25. Diary, 4 February 1928.
26. In March 1933 Oskar Schlemmer was given a solo exhibition at the public exhibition space Kunstverein in Stuttgart. During that period, Alfred Barr, the then director of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and his wife Margaret, stay for an extended period in Stuttgart. He visits the Schlemmer exhibition and there sees the painting “Bauhaus Staircase”, 1932. Ten days after the opening, the exhibition was forcefully closed by fascist National Socialist forces. Barr looks at the paintings once more in storage and cables the architect Philip Johnson to purchase the painting “Bauhaus Staircase” for the Museum of Modern Art. After an exchange of cablegrams, Oskar Schlemmer sends the painting across the Atlantic into safety to New York. Johnson never pays for “Bauhaus Staircase” and a second painting “Wettlauf” (“Race”), which Johnson 1939 sold to the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford,

Connecticut, without ever informing the artist. He gifted “Bauhaus Staircase” to MoMA after being informed that Oskar Schlemmer passed away in 1943. A dance project on the story of “Gulliver’s Travels”, which Schlemmer sends to Johnson, remains lost. Numerous works of Oskar Schlemmer were destroyed by the National Socialists starting in 1930.

27. Seventeen “Fensterbilder”, passed from Tut Schlemmer on to the author, are on loan to Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland.
28. “Oskar Schlemmer”, Musée Cantini, Musées de Marseille/RMN, 1999; “Oskar Schlemmer: l’homme et la figure d’art”, Centre national de la danse, Paris, 2001.
29. Repeated at Theater Basel, Switzerland, in 2006 and again at Stresa Festival in 2015, then together with “Renard” by Schlemmer.
30. Mainly published by Kurt Wolff, Leipzig and Munich between 1914 and 1923.