

## Interview

with Dr. Rotraut Krall, art historian  
at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

SARAH IRIS MANG: I deal with the topic of perception in my artistic work. As a visual artist, who previously worked mainly in the visual field, I have been dealing with the “unseen” for some time now. Through my performances in public spaces, I realized that a lot of things cannot be shown but can certainly be experienced. You know my interview “The adventure of perception” with Dr. Susanne Buchner-Sabathy. She is blind. In the conversation she tells me how she perceives art.

Since when have you been working with the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna with art communication for blind and visually impaired persons?

DR. ROTRAUT KRALL: Since 2010.

SARAH IRIS MANG: About one year ago I came into contact with the Blindenverband Wien and through their support, could conduct my first interviews with blind people. The conversations have changed my way of perception and also my artistic work. How did you personally approach the subject of teaching art for the blind and visually impaired?

DR. ROTRAUT KRALL: I have experience, thanks to many discussions with the target group. Whatever I developed for VI people in the Kunsthistorisches Museum was done together with them.

SARAH IRIS MANG: You are engaged in several projects making art accessible for people with different needs. Can you briefly tell me about these projects?

DR. ROTRAUT KRALL: I developed tactile reliefs in order to make the composition of paintings tangible for VI people (2010), I wrote the inclusive museum book „Gemeinsam anders sehen“,

where printed texts in big letters as well as in Braille, tactile foils and audio information about four paintings of the Kunsthistorisches Museum are available (2014), I create swell paper foils to explain the compositions of paintings. For the Bruegel exhibition a tactile station was developed to explain the composition “Carnival and Lent”. The most recent project is the development of a Museum App for people with disabilities which should enable them to visit the Kunsthistorisches Museum as independently as possible (funded by Horizon 2020).

SARAH IRIS MANG: I went with you through the Kunsthistorisches Museum. You have shown me selected works of the collection that are prepared for blind people: by touch images, Braille texts or with palpable image parts (Breughel). You have published a very interesting book for blind persons. What is important for you as an art historian in art education? Are there big differences in the instruction of sighted and non-seeing persons?

DR. ROTRAUT KRALL: For each kind of art education you need joy and empathy. The one difference is the verbal description of the art objects because VI people need an exact description where different details are located because they cannot see them.

SARAH IRIS MANG: For this book I had to find out, how many female artists are in the KHM collection. I found out that there are eight artists and ten of their works. Very few female artists for such a big collection. Why is that? And how many male artists does the collection include?

DR. ROTRAUT KRALL: Nobody can give me an answer as to the number of male artists. But female artists did not obtain recognition because they were women. Not until the 16th century do we know female painters such as Sofonisba Anguissola. Most of them worked under the name of the workshop.

SARAH IRIS MANG: This book wants to reveal a different approach to pictures in general and women artists, who also appear to be invisible in art history at times. It is for sighted and non-sighted people. I created, in resonance to the female artists, drawings. Drawing is a process that lets me re-understand the work of the artists and at the same time creates something completely new. I have a strong personal connection to the work of Sofonisba