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**The artist as 'magician' and 'alchemist' between production and perception
Occult traditions in European art history after 1945
A comparative research study – beginning with Joseph Beuys**

**Der Künstler als 'Magier' und 'Alchemist'
im Spannungsfeld von Produktion und Rezeption
Aspekte der Auseinandersetzung mit okkulten Traditionen
in der europäischen Kunstgeschichte nach 1945
Eine vergleichende Fokusstudie – ausgehend von Joseph Beuys**

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**abstract
(english version)**

The presented Phil. Diss. (Ph. D.) thesis follows the traces of a traditional "image of the artist" in late 20th century art and art history that can be found in art criticism, literature and science as well as in the self-staging of contemporary artists. The main focus is laid on the relationship between the image of the artist as 'magician' and 'alchemist' and artistic references to esoteric traditions, including their modern heritage (alchemy, magic, free-masonry, rosicrucianism, spiritualism and occultism, as well as related aspects of anthroposophy). Critical studies are being combined with source oriented research. Main chapters are devoted to Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer, Sigmar Polke, and Rebecca Horn.

catchwords: art history; artist's myths; authorship; self-staging / mise-en-scène; hermeticism; esoteric traditions; occultism; alchemy; magic; rosicrucianism; free-masonry; spiritualism; mediumism; anthroposophy

artists: Joseph Beuys; Rebecca Horn; Anselm Kiefer; Sigmar Polke; Marina Abramovic; Matthew Barney; Anna Blume; Bernhard Johannes Blume; Sylvie Fleury; Yves Klein; Jonathan Meese; Mariko Mori; Hermann Nitsch; Vettor Pisani; Ulrike Rosenbach; Niki de Saint Phalle; Daniel Spoerri; Gilberto Zorio a. o.