

## Book Presentation

***Silence Turned Into Objects. W.H. Auden in Kirchstetten***

**Saturday, June 7, 2014, 4 p.m.**

**In the annex of Auden's house**

Not so long ago, the famous British-American poet W.H. Auden was revived in global cultural memory when one of the characters in the movie *Four Weddings and a Funeral* recited the poem "Funeral Blues" to commemorate a friend who had passed away all too soon. Some may be surprised to know that in rural Lower Austria W.H. Auden has long been a familiar figure. He bought a house in the late 1950s in Kirchstetten, near the town of St. Pölten (not far from Vienna), where he spent his summers. His poetry is both famous and revered in the English-speaking world, and he is thought to be one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century. Lines such as "Lay your sleeping head, my love, Human on my faithless arm" continue to move the hearts and minds of many, while many poems in Auden's rich and diverse oeuvre still shape the literary landscape today.

The book *Silence Turned Into Objects. W.H. Auden in Kirchstetten* is based on an idea by the artist Ricarda Denzer, who cooperated with Monika Seidl, an expert in English literature, to collect a number of works exploring Auden's creative practice within the context of his relationship to Austria and the community of Kirchstetten. The book in English and German revolves around Auden the man while also exploring Auden's work. Adopting an artistic and academic perspective, it illustrates how different approaches are able to cross-inseminate to enrich our reading with new aspects, while artistic interventions and philosophical exegeses create space for new angles.

The backbone of the book is the exhibition "About The House – Silence Turned Into Objects" – also curated by Ricarda Denzer – which was shown in Auden's house and in the town of Kirchstetten. The book portrays the international artists who participated in the exhibition and presents their artistic projects, which range from a blend between art and political activism in the installation *Politics (in Private)* by the art collective Ultra-red, to the music-text crossover called *Klavier (un)translatable* (Piano (un)translatable) by Fatih Aydoğdu. Other participating artists include Simone Forti, Sharon Hayes, Olga Karliková, Pamela Kurstin, Brandon LaBelle, Jonathan Quinn, Annette Stahmer, Imogene Stidworthy, Marcel Broodthaers, and Ricarda Denzer.

Combining artistic with academic aspects, the book also includes Ferdinand Schmatz's musings on W.H. Auden as well as a conversation between Fouad Asfour and Ricarda Denzer about the latter's art and exhibition project. The more literary and academic part of the book includes American Auden specialist Susannah Young-ah Gottlieb's essay about Auden's understanding of history as well as the German literature expert Hermann Schlösser's analysis of Auden's complex relationship with Josef Weinheber. Finally, essays by Michael O'Sullivan, who did much for Auden's popularity in Austria already in the 1980s, as well as Rainer Emig, and the co-editor Monika Seidl are also featured.

***Silence Turned Into Objects. W.H. Auden in Kirchstetten***

**Editors: Ricarda Denzer & Monika Seidl**

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