

Hungarian University of Fine Arts  
Doctoral Program

**Elements of Deconstructing Traditional Mirror Interpretations**

**Metaphors of Mirror Reflection as Represented  
in Contemporary Fine Arts**

DLA Dissertation Abstract

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A relevant framework for interpreting my work of fine arts can be arranged around the following three dichotomies: mirror / mirror image; original / duplicate; hiding / unveiling. Having chosen the subject of mirror and mirror reflection as the topic of my research is part of a process in the end of which the hiding artistic behaviour gains new meaning: it develops into another form or it might even cease and so the act of self-contextualisation comes to an end.

The aim of my research is to examine contemporary artistic representations connecting to mirror reflection. The logic of my approach adopted in this dissertation is based on two considerations. Firstly, my study proceeds from the realm of objects towards the realm of humans. After discussing issues like the space reflected in the mirror, symmetries and the „as if” phenomena, the humane representations come to the front covering topics like copy, duplicate and hiding. So in the course of the dissertation the mirror gradually becomes animated by being filled with people. As for the other aspect of my approach the mirror-space and its environment are gradually narrowing down until the very essence remains in the mirror: the gaze / the pair of eyes themselves.

Tracing the *topos* of mirror the conceptual system will be analysed, made unsure and then reinterpreted. With this deconstruction game I deal with those works in contemporary fine arts that are carrying some extra meaning. During my process of observation I endeavour to create the paradox situation where the subject of observation (and that of comprehension) will alter.

### Thesis 1

As for the traditional representations the connection between the things on the two sides of the mirror are defined by quite well-known formulas. However, the fundamental proposition of my dissertation is that the original image and the reflected image can not necessarily be considered as corresponding entities. In other words, the mirror does not necessarily tell the „truth”.

### Thesis 2

Having compared the various considerations regarding mirror-space I have come to the conclusion that as for relating to real space the mirror-space can be *utopic* (i.e. space without real space), *atopic* and *heterotopic* (real space connected to unreal). With examining the mimetic theories of art the platonic “misunderstanding” is pointed out. Having considered the notions of reflection and representation I conclude that mirrors recall what can already be seen anyway.

### Thesis 3

The left hand – right hand problem, that is the misunderstandings and dissymetries in connection with chirality (i.e. a chiral phenomenon is one that is not identical to its mirror image), derive from the abstract operation quality of reflection.

### Thesis 4

Mirrors as boundary-phenomena have the unique property of giving an insight into unreal and *utopic* spaces and they also help our way through them. As a representation for self-reflection both the mirror-position of the monitor and the video become part of the mirror magic.

### Thesis 5

As far as the traditional mirror-representations are concerned the original image and the duplicate are present at the same time. However, I would like to present representations where the imitated mirror images (i.e. “as if” phenomena) are to question not only the mirror telling the truth (as it is something else in the mirror than it is in reality) but also the phenomenon of synchronicity.

### Thesis 6

The mirror is a means of self-cognition (and also self-miscognition). It can help to visualise double-motifs as being human duplicates and it can also serve as a revelation (cf. Doppelgänger-phenomenon).

### Thesis 7

Hiding, in my view, can be considered as the opposite of identity multiplications (that are the starting-points for double-motifs). In this case, self-identity and appearance are confronted. In my interpretation hiding is in fact a certain insistence to self-identity. That is, hiding is no other than a withdrawal strategy that is to ensure autonomy and self-assertion and it aims at self-salvation and self-regeneration. The hiding attitude can be unfolded, decomposed and resolved through the mirror-metaphor.

## Thesis 8

I have found that subjects become visible through the gaze (“I am who is seen by the another. So I need the others in order to be able to apprehend certain structures of my own existence” - Sartre). However, the I/thou relationship remains asymmetric concerning actions. (“To exist means to be seen” - Lacan) The key idea of my masterwork is the problem of hiding the gaze and representing interchanged gazes.

My works can be interpreted by the notions of mirror / mirror image, original / duplicate and hiding / revealing. By applying a mirror, the sculptures /objects in my masterwork create embarrassment in the process of perception. Issues like the interchange of gazes and the lack of gaze, the perception of a glance and guided attention are dealt with from various aspects. Again, the main principle of my dissertation is that the original image and the reflected image can not necessarily be considered as corresponding entities.