

Marius von Brasch

OEDIPUS DIVING

The Magical Forest Press
2007

Introduction

Oedipus Complex - Organised body of loving and hostile wishes which the child experiences towards its parents. In its so-called positive form, the complex appears as in the story of Oedipus Rex: a desire for the death of the rival – the parent of the same sex – and a sexual desire for the parent of the opposite sex. In its negative form, we find the reverse picture: love for the parent of the same sex, and jealous hatred for the parent of the opposite sex. In fact, the two versions are to be found in varying degrees in what is known as the complete form of the complex. According to Freud, the peak period for the experience of the Oedipus complex lies between the ages of three and five years [...It] plays a fundamental part in the structuring of the personality, and in the orientation of human desire.

Laplanche/Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*

Time is a child at play, moving pieces in a board game; the kingly power is a child's
Heraclitus, *Fragment*

Flashing her needles, glancing round about her, out of the window, at James himself, she [Mrs Ramsey, James' mother] assured him, beyond a shadow of a doubt, by her laugh, her poise, her competence (as a nurse carrying a light across a dark room assures a fractious child) that it was real; the house was full; the garden flowing. If he put implicit faith in her, nothing should hurt him; however deep he buried himself or climbed high, not for a second should he find himself without her.

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

He often went round about the enchanted castle, but never too near, and one night, after so walking. he dreamt that he found a blood-red flower, in the middle of which lay a fine pearl. This flower, he thought he broke off, and, going therewith to the castle, all he touched with it was free from enchantment [...]

Brothers Grimm, *Jorinde and Joringel*

I was always dreaming about very powerful people. Dictators and things like that.
Arnold Schwarzenegger

Oedipus Diving

Series of 44 images. Acrylic (mainly Alizarin Crimson) on primed wood panels.
Each appr. 25 x 22 x 2,5 cm. Painted October 2006 - February 2007.

The Story of Oedipus

The legend in itself is very detailed and only the key subjects can be mentioned here. The most known version is Sophocles' play *King Oedipus*, written about 2400 years ago.

Laius, King of Thebes exposed his son Oedipus as an infant because an oracle had warned him that he would be killed by his own child. The god Apollo in his function as the protector of young boys had roused this curse after Laius had abused the son of a befriended king. Oedipus the child was rescued and grew up in an alien court. Uncertain and teased about his own origins, he too questioned the oracle and was told that he is destined to murder his father and marry his mother. Deciding to avoid what had been home to him he travelled away and encountered on a narrow path King Laius who was on the way to the oracle again, this time to find out about the Sphinx, a monster terrifying Thebes. In a sudden quarrel about who had to clear the way Oedipus killed his father.

He travelled on to Thebes where he could solve the riddle of the Sphinx and thereby liberate the city. As the saviour he was made king and married Laius's widow Jocasta his mother. After a period of peace

and abundance Thebes seemed cursed again with a plague. The oracle announced it would only end when the murderer of Laius had been expelled from the land.

When after intense investigations Oedipus discovers that he is himself the unwitting murderer, he blinds himself and leaves his kingdom behind.

His sons killed each other subsequently in the fight about power, fulfilling a curse cast by Oedipus himself.

Painting Practice

Being a visual artist and psychotherapist is for me the result of a long investigation into an urging force within myself I wanted to understand. Painting is and has been a response to this force and the resulting creative dialogue a gateway to unexpected aspects and resolutions.

As a starting point I use a technique that is comparable to the Surrealists' concept of 'autographic' or 'automatic' signs, with the difference that I can't agree on limiting these signs and the subsequent work to the 'return of the repressed' from a solely personal 'unconscious'.

The marks and signs build the first draft of an image. After experimenting in previous series with tactile metallic surfaces underlying the images, I decided for the series that would develop into *Oedipus Diving* to use the process of smooth priming i.e. simple brushmarks as a starting point.

The work - recognizing and developing the visual and narrative possibilities of those signs - results in serial

projects and is a dance between intuition, discovery and painterly decision, between passive and active openness.

The serial form allows a once established theme to be fractioned into associative angles and different visual and content related perspectives.

As the painting process has been connected from start to the bodymind I always felt drawn to reflect it in making the human body the main visual subject.

Concepts Related

Oedipus Diving is an associative approach to the subject of childhood and basic family dynamics.

The title refers to Freud's controversial concept of the Oedipus complex as a crucial psychological process in the early stages of the child's (more precisely and in this case a boy's) development in the middle of these dynamics.

Linked directly to questions about what it means to become a man, the stage is characterized by strong desire and devoted love, rivalry and jealousy, anxiety and somewhat powerless claims to ruler ship over the parents.

The images were painted with the intention of giving enough space and spontaneity to such an almost non-verbal voice.

The colour red seemed to fit the vitality of the emotions, allowing certain grades between tenderness and violence to unfold, broken up by the occasional use of a complimentary green highlighting the ordinariness of the child's swimming trunks.

Wood panels as image carriers made sense as they were traditionally reserved for icons i.e. for dealing with and painting realms that transgress rationalization.

The child in this series is a multitude, it is at times the observer and at times the observed and observation takes place within or outside of its world. Some of the images pick up material that belongs to the visual language of the subconscious mind amplifying these shifting perspectives. The series quote elements of the Oedipus legend that both underlies Sophocles' play and Freud's concept, the latter still being highly influential considering the fact that the discussion about its position as the 'cornerstone' of psychoanalysis is still going on.

An important aspect in this story is to see the function of the 'curse', and how a an unresolved issue within the male lineage that claims power to ruler ship is passed over like an invisible complex from generation to generation.

The beginning of the legend shows that in the heart of this complex is an adult man in power hurting the integrity of a boy. How would the story read if this boy was standing for the man's relationship with his own childhood?

Both, myth and modern theory of psychosexual development raise questions around the genesis of masculinity - and by doing so around concepts and realities of gender images and their links to the understanding of power.

Images





























































































Artist's acknowledgement:

I would like to thank
all who have supported, taken interest and taken part in the development of my work and particular vision - friends and family, teachers, colleagues, visitors of my exhibitions and workshop participants, and especially
Jan Williams and Chris Teasdale from The Caravan Gallery for their invaluable help and advice manifesting this book,
Amei von Brasch, a true mentor of my artistic development for as long as I can think,
Jenni Shell for guiding me safely through the gates I needed to open,
Mike Eastwood for loving, knowing, sharing.



Marius von Brasch (born 1958 in Cologne, Germany) is based on the Isle of Wight, England. He works as a visual artist and runs a practice for psychotherapy in Southsea, Hampshire.

After an apprenticeship in publishing and editing at Suhrkamp Verlag/Frankfurt he started to study German Literature, Philosophy and Musicology at J.W.Goethe University/Frankfurt in 1983, gained an MA in 1989 and worked in freelance editing.

Marius started to paint in 1982 and did, after private tuition with his relative, artist Amei von Brasch, a course at Summer Academy Salzburg with Prof. Josef Mikl, Vienna. He studied 1986/7 at Städelschule Frankfurt with Prof. Johannes Schreiter and designed stage set, poster drawings and programme illustrations for P.P.Pasolini's Orgia for Theatre Bohemien in Bonn, Germany in 1988.

He gave up a PhD project for training in Gestalt Therapy (Dipl) and Postural Integration (Dipl) at the Ecole de Communication Creatice in Strasbourg, France with Eliane Jung, Claude Vaux and Paul Rebillot and started 1993 to work as Gestalt- and Body therapist. He became as well a qualified Reiki Master and began a course in practice and theory of the Tree of Life (Qabalah) with Jenni Shell, Portsmouth (1993-2005). Between 1992 and 96 he worked on a novel 'Der Verschlungene'.

Marius moved permanently to England in 1995 and made a serious commitment to painting whilst continuing to run a Gestalt therapy practice in 1997. He was accepted as member of ArtSpace Portsmouth studio group and was actively involved in management of organisation and group activities between 1998 and 2004.

In 2000 he founded and became director of the Studio for Creative Communication, Southsea (a centre for workshops, exhibition and therapy) as a means of integrating professional interests in art and psychotherapy. At the Studio he developed and ran the art therapy workshops 'Experiential Painting' and 'The Art Within'. Since 2000 he is co-owner of AristiA, a holistic centre and shop in Southsea. In 2004 he established a new studio for his own art practice on the Isle of Wight, continuing to run activities in the Studio for Creative Communication.

www.mariusvonbrasch.co.uk

Solo Exhibitions

1985	'Neue Horizonte', Frankfurt
1998	'Transitions', On the Seventh Day, Art Space Portsmouth, Mile End Chapel, Portsmouth
2000	'In Search of Paradise', Ether Gallery, Southsea (2 person show with Jan Williams)
2003	'Pathworks', Studio for Creative Communication, Southsea
2006	'New Works', Studio for Creative Communication, Southsea
2007	'Oedipus Diving', Studio for Creative Communication, Southsea

Group Exhibitions

(Art Space Portsmouth projects)

1998-2003	Regular Open Studios, Art Space Portsmouth
1998	'See Red', Square Tower, Portsmouth
1999	'Various Properties', The Red Gallery, Southsea
1999	'inc.', Aspex Gallery, Southsea
2001	City Museum & Art Gallery, Portsmouth
2002	'Latitude', Historic Dockyard, Portsmouth
2002	'Fresh Art', Business Design Centre, London

Work in public and private collections

'Gaps' series purchased by Klinik in der Zarten (clinic for psychosomatic disorders) in Hinterzarten, Germany
Numerous works in private collections

Quotes on page 5 taken from:

Heraclitus, *Fragment* Diels/Kranz B 52, transl. by John Burnet (1912), revised by Randy Hoyt (Internet version)

Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, Karnac Books London 2006, p. 282

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, Hogarth Press London 1927, p. 63

Arnold Schwarzenegger, as quoted in: Ernst van Alphen, *Francis Bacon and the Loss of the Self*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1993, p. 164

The Complete Illustrated Stories of the Brothers Grimm, Chancellor Press, London 1986, p. 282

Published in May 2007 by

The Magical Forest Press,
Rookley Manor, Isle of Wight, PO38 3NR, England,

supported by Arts Council England, South East.

© 2007 Marius von Brasch

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any
manner without the written permission of the publisher.

Photographer: Terry Mulineaux from Vision, Portsmouth
www.visionsigns.com

Design: Marius von Brasch

Print: PPG Design & Print
www.ppgdesignandprint.co.uk

ISBN 0