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CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Fees will only be refunded in exceptional circumstances when an administration charge will be levied. All refund requests should be made, in writing, to the Manager of Public Programmes.

Speakers:

ANTHONY MCWATT

is the only person in the world with a PhD in the Metaphysics of Quality. In 2005 he organised the conference on the Metaphysics of Quality at the University of Liverpool, with Pirsig in attendance. Dr McWatt is presently working on a series of films devoted to Robert Pirsig's life and work. He also set up and administers the official Robert Pirsig website at <http://robertpirsig.org/>

DAVID BUCHANAN

is a postgraduate student at the University of Colorado at Denver. He spoke at the Liverpool conference on the Metaphysics of Quality in 2005.

PATRICK DOORLY

was Acting Director of Studies for Art History at the Department for Continuing Education in 2001-02. Since then he has taught part-time in the department while writing his book The Truth about Art. (forthcoming)

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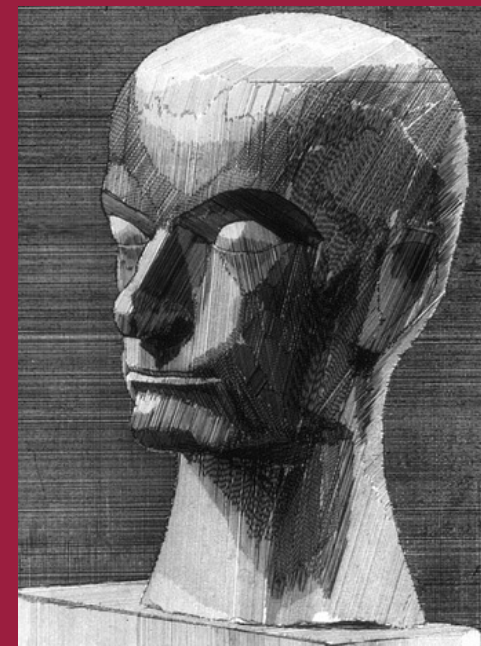


Art and the Metaphysics of Quality

in the writings of E H Gombrich and Robert M Pirsig

Saturday 24 October 2009

A day school to be held at Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford



Art and the Metaphysics of Quality

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E H Gombrich and
Robert M Pirsig

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held at Rewley House
1 Wellington Square
Oxford

Robert M Pirsig's classic examination of Quality in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974) and *Lila* (1991) has still to make a visible impression on an academic discipline, despite the high regard in which his work is held by many academics. This study day will review his achievement, and test it against the approach to art history advocated by Sir Ernst Gombrich (1909–2001), perhaps the leading art historian of his day.

Recommended reading:

Robert M Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, An Inquiry into Values* (1974; London: Vintage, 1999).
Robert M Pirsig, *Lila, An Inquiry into Morals* (1991; London: Alma Books, 2006).

Accommodation is sometimes available in Rewley House for those who wish to stay on the night before a course. Please telephone our Residential Centre for further information on 01865 270362.

SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER 2009

9.15am *Registration*

9.30am **Robert Pirsig's Quality**
DAVID BUCHANAN

Common sense and the Western philosophical tradition both tell us that quality is simply a characteristic of good things or that it is the subjective impression of one who perceives those things as good. Pirsig's *Metaphysics of Quality*, however, turns this notion on its head. This revolution is accomplished on an empirical basis, which can be explained by way of the Radical Empiricism of William James.

10.45am *Coffee/tea*

11.15am **E H Gombrich's Mastery**
PATRICK DOORLY

Throughout his long and distinguished career, E H Gombrich maintained that there is no such thing as Art (with a capital A), which is a concept invented by Romantic philosophers. In its place he advocated a return to the original meaning of the word as 'mastery' or skill, a usage that survives in everyday speech. This talk compares Gombrich's 'mastery' with Pirsig's Quality.

12.30pm *Lunch*

2.00pm **Art and the Metaphysics of Quality**
PATRICK DOORLY

How can Quality be real when its manifestations are so various, and trying to grasp it is as futile as trying to catch your own shadow? While the experience of Quality is immediate and dynamic, Pirsig found that we interpret it according to patterns left by previous Quality events, which survive on four discrete levels. These static patterns of value include the schemata shown by Gombrich to form the starting point of every artistic undertaking. Indeed the *Metaphysics of Quality* resolves many hitherto intractable problems in contemporary fine art and art history.

3.15pm *Tea/coffee*

3.45pm **Robert Pirsig on Quality**
ANTHONY MCWATT

In 2005 Anthony McWatt commissioned several extended video recordings of Robert Pirsig discussing his work on Quality, most of which have yet to be broadcast. He has compiled some extracts from these tapes especially for this study day, each of which he will introduce, and allow time for questions after showing them.

5.00pm *Course disperses*

ENROLMENT FORM



ART AND THE METAPHYSICS OF QUALITY

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