

# **Sexualized Suffering On Some Lithographs by Richard Grune**

**Thomas Röske**  
**Sammlung Prinzhorn, Psychiatrische Universitätsklinik Heidelberg**

## INTRODUCTION

The artist Richard Grune (1903-1983) from Kiel, Germany has been long forgotten.<sup>1</sup> His lithographs, depicting the suffering and murder of prisoners in Nazi concentration camps, have only been exhibited and re-published as part of projects on the subject since the beginning of this millennium. Here, they rightly take a prominent place. They stand out in relation to comparable works not only in their differentiated, sensitive representation, but also because they were the first works on this topic to be exhibited in 1945, and published in 1947 in two portfolios: *Passion des XX. Jahrhunderts* (Passion of the 20th Century), and *Die Ausgestoßenen* (The Outcasts).<sup>2</sup> When I write here about an irritation that can be triggered by some of these images, I am not questioning their cultural and historical value. Rather, I would like to point out that Grune involuntarily allows us additional insights into his personal suffering.

Some of his lithographs are more acute documents of the effects of trauma than others, I argue. Against his own intention, they reveal his struggle to cope with his experiences, the torture he had to go through and the horrible scenes he had to witness, as much as the fact that he survived this horrible experience. Unlike the strategies used by a lot of fellow prisoners, Grune's conscious artistic strategy in this attempt at coping is abstraction. With allusions to Christian iconography and formal features of hyperrealism, he lifts the depicted events onto another level. But at the same time the second form of abstraction results in a "distortion to recognisability" in that the depictions now seem to foreshadow gay sadomasochistic drawings of the last decades. This, by no means, is meant to doubt the suffering of homosexuals in concentration camps though. Instead, I would like to suggest an explanation of the uncanny phenomenon with a well-known psychological mechanism, the identification with the perpetrator, sometimes called Stockholm syndrome.

## AN IRRITATION

In 1995, in the newly curated permanent exhibition at the Neuengamme concentration camp memorial (near Hamburg, Germany), I encountered a copy of the lithograph »Bock« *Prügelstrafe im KZ* ("Trestle" *Corporal Punishment in the Concentration Camp*) by Richard Grune, from 1945 (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1**

Richard Grune, »Bock« *Priigelstrafe im KZ*, 1945, lithograph, 42,5 x 30,9 cm, Gedenkstätte Neuengamme

Visitors learned little about the artist; mostly that he had been imprisoned in German concentration camps from 1937 to 1945 because of his homosexuality. The print disturbed me. Four henchmen are about to abuse a man, who is bound face down to a small wooden structure. One holds his head, two stand on either side of him with canes (probably bullwhips), a fourth has raised his cane above his head, ready to whip the restrained man's naked buttocks. The background is filled with a dimly visible, but tightly packed group of men watching the act of violence. Not only is the abuse itself worrying; one is also concerned about the particular presence of the perpetrators and their relationship to the victim.

The abusing men fill the foreground completely, at some points their contours overlap even the delineated image borders. Dark shades are unevenly distributed on their bodies. Although the light is otherwise coming from the left, the perpetrators' bodies and limbs are largely freely modeled with light and dark shadows. Unusually muscular thighs, arms and buttocks seem to gleam with light. The clothing supports this accentuation. The fabric, which seems to be amazingly soft rests smoothly on the highlighted areas, while it plays around the moving body parts. The men's bodies are tense; repetitions of the contours at several points create the impression of vibration. Thus, an intense excitement seems to dominate the group. Furthermore, the accentuation of two of the men's

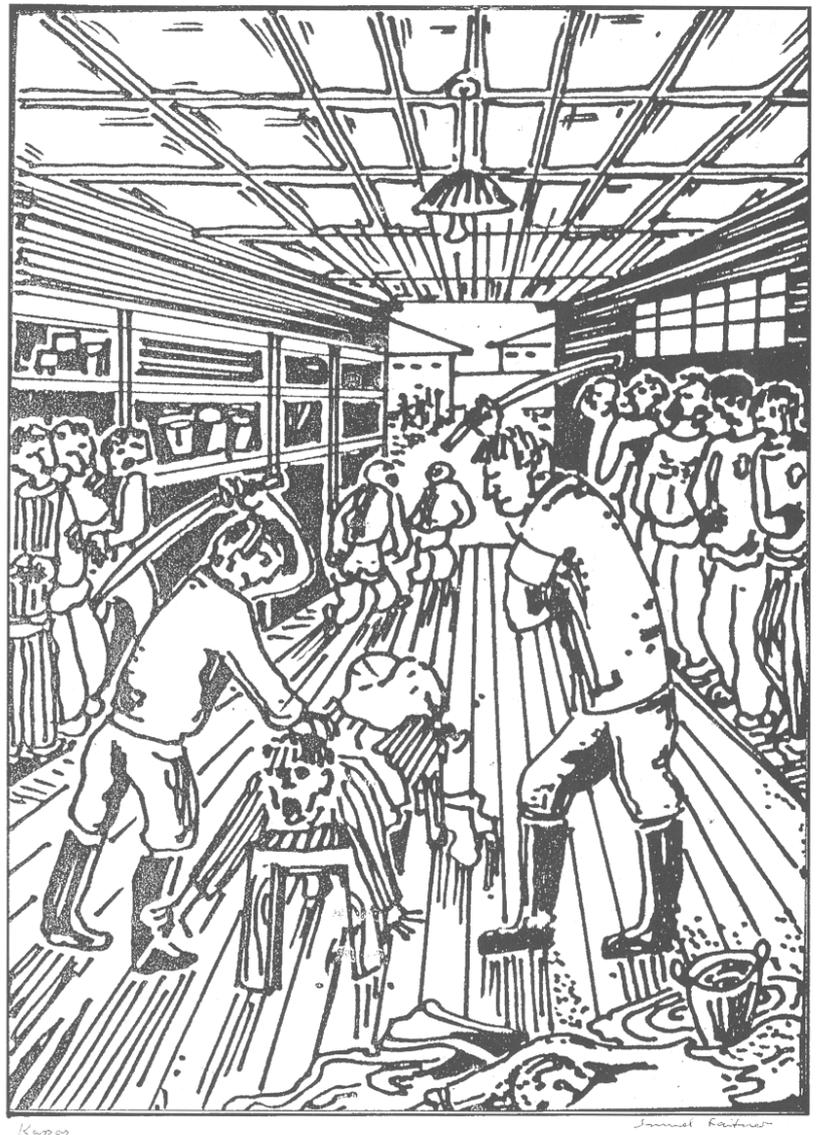
genital areas with dark triangles triggers thoughts of sexual arousal in the viewer. The disturbing effect of the representation is not only based on the moment before the first strike (the buttocks of the victim are still unharmed), but also on the articulation of sadistic pleasure.

## IMAGES OF OTHER VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

These characteristics stand out even more clearly when we compare Grune's print to depictions of similar scenes by other witnesses of fascist violence. The Israeli artist Szmuel Laitner (b. 1925), for example, drew a cycle of 29 images published in 2000, which are based on his experiences in the Bavarian concentration camp in Groß-Rosen.<sup>3</sup>

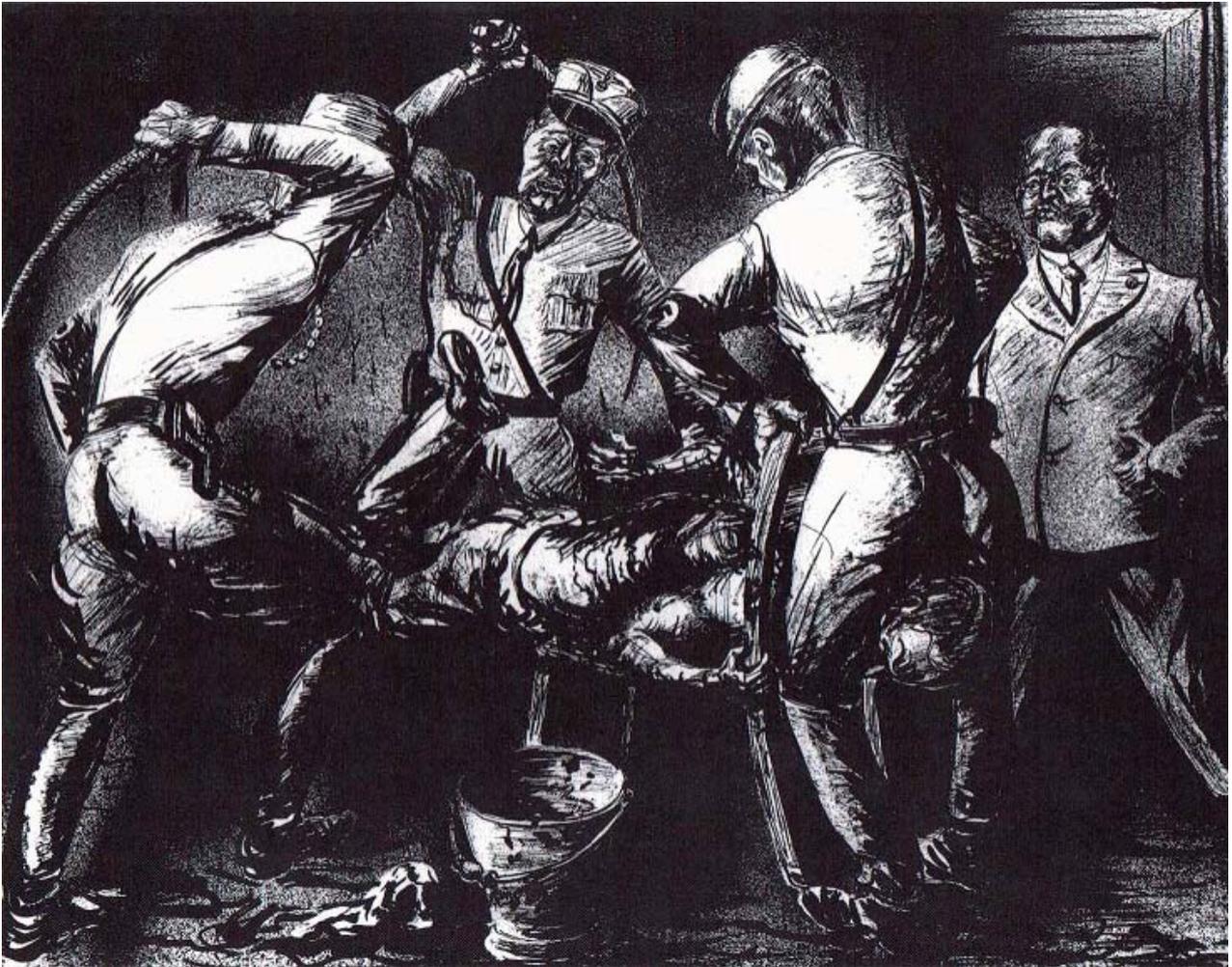
The drawing *Kapos* (Fig. 2), which depicts a similar scene to Grune's *Prügelstrafe* (Fig. 1), illustrates horror mainly through the rigidity and silent scream of the (still unharmed) victim on the "trestle;" through the visible fear of the onlookers and the lifeless body lying in the foreground. The power of the perpetrators over their victim is emphasised by their size and by the firm footing in their black boots. Because the raised hands holding the canes are depicted at the vanishing point of the image; everything is focused on the anticipated blows.

As early as 1935/1936, Karl Schwesig (1898-1955) documented the terrible events that took place during his three-day "interrogation" in the Düsseldorf National Socialist Assault Division (SA) quarters in 1933, which were the basis for a series of drawings entitled *Schlegelkeller*, made while he was exiled in Antwerp.<sup>4</sup> After the Reichstag fire, Schwesig participated in the production and distribution of communist leaflets and hid fugitive worker deputies in his studio. The eighth drawing in the series, *Das Verhör* (The Interrogation) (Fig. 3), shows the artist in a dark narrow space together with three tormentors in uniform and a man in civilian clothes. Here, brutality is evident in



**Figure 2**  
Szmuel Laitner, *Kapos*, undated, pen and ink.

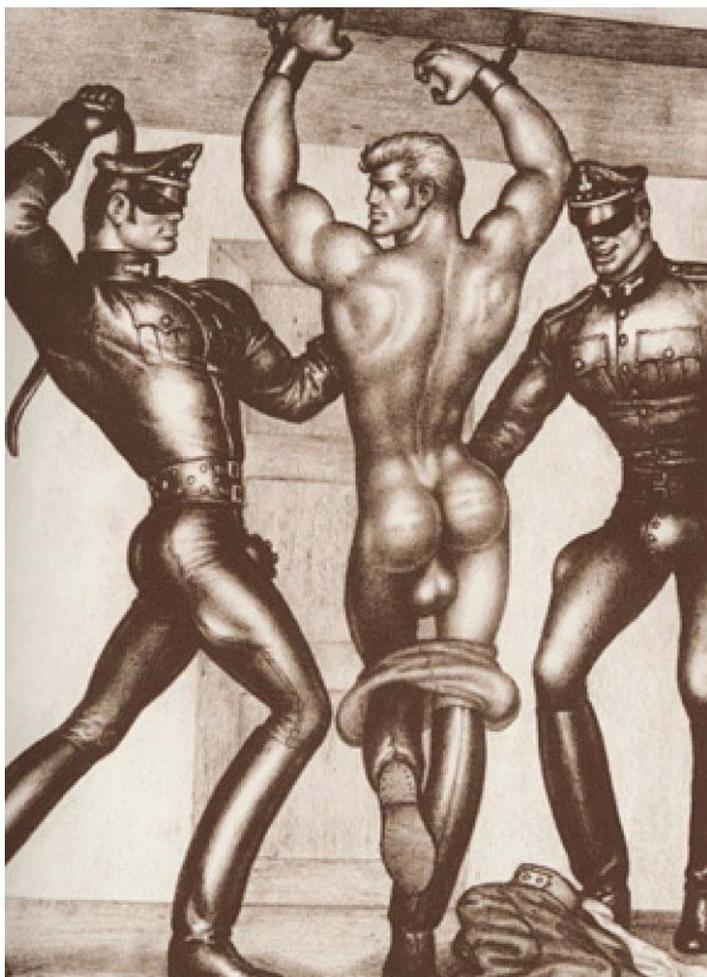
the bloody bare back and helpless twitching of the victim's arms and legs. The bodies of the torturers look powerful but plump; with the backswing of the whip on the left, as well as with the grasping of the chair back on the right, they are anatomically exaggerated. The two visible faces are ugly and distorted.



**Figure 3**

Karl Schwesig, *Erste Nacht: 2. Verhör* (First Night: 2. Interrogation), pen and ink, No. 8 of the series *Schlegelkeller*, 1935/36 (original lost)

Witnesses often reported the sadistic erotic pleasure Nazi perpetrators took from torturing others.<sup>5</sup> Laitner's expressive power depicts the pleasure of the perpetrators, but not sadistic arousal. Schwesig's drawing indicates arousal through the "erect" weapon of one of the perpetrators. But this indication is not only more minimized than it is in Grune's image. While Schwesig clearly uses it to emphasize the negative characteristics of the perpetrators, Grune's position on the zealotry of the tormentors is not clear. For the virile excited bodies he depicts are not ugly, but seem to be idealized, and thus can be read as erotically attractive.



**Figure 4**  
Tom of Finland, untitled, 1965, pencil, private collection

## HOMOEROTIC FASCINATION

When I encountered them unprepared, Grune's lithograph reminded me spontaneously of images from a completely different context. In his rich production of drawings for American and European gay magazines under the pseudonym "Tom of Finland" that began in the 1950s, the Finnish artist Touko Laaksonen (1920-1991) repeatedly depicted violent scenes between men (Fig. 4). They were inspired by sexual encounters with German soldiers in Helsinki during the war.<sup>6</sup>

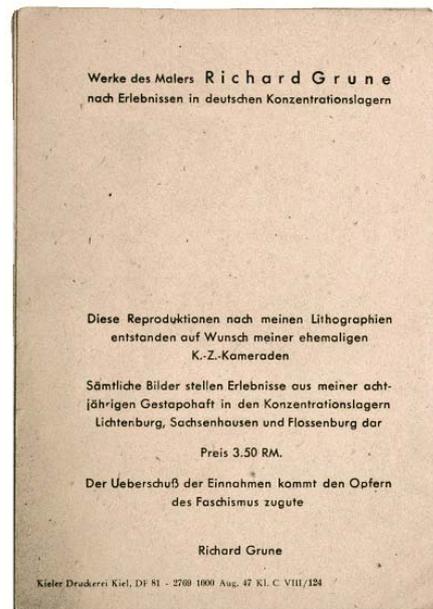
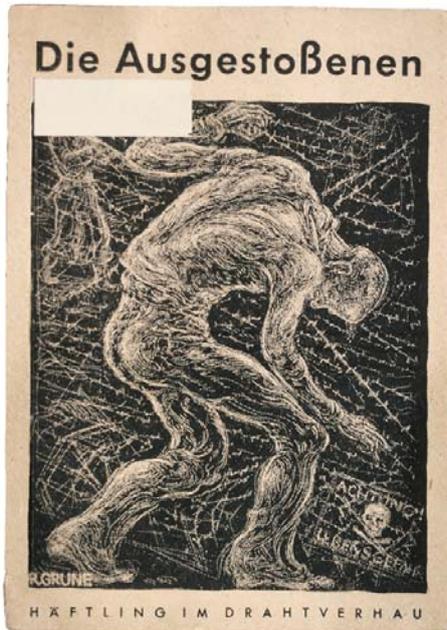
Like Grune, Laaksonen emphasizes the presence and engagement of the perpetrators' bodies through tension and *chiaroscuro* effects. However, his figures are more idealized and consistently exaggerated in their bulging contours. Here, it is not only the attractiveness-ideal of comprehensively muscled and trained male bodies that is heightened to an almost grotesque degree. With Tom of Finland, muscle strength also becomes a sign of a corporeality completely dedicated to sexual encounters, usually the erotic subjugation of one to the phallus of the other(s). Sadomasochistic scenes in which group or individual

physical force is always focused on a single individual drive these encounters to the extreme. With Laaksonen, the masochist's enjoyment seems to result from experiencing the sadists' violence as a concentration of their total physical energy onto him as an extreme focus of attention, resulting eventually in sexual satisfaction on both sides. The popularity of Tom of Finland's pornographic work long after his death proves that many gay men identify with this depiction of man-on-man sexuality.

But what about Grune's depiction? When I saw it in Neuengamme in 1995, I was bothered by the associations it gave me, especially in this context. I wrote to the Memorial administration and received the following reply: "When we exhibited the drawing, we were aware of the ambiguity it discloses; on one hand it is an image of violence against prisoners in a concentration camp, and on the other it transmits a sense of homoerotic fascination. After a long discussion, we decided to show the drawing, because initial responses to this work were more of horror, and because it is the document of an inmate whose ambiguous perspective must be accepted".<sup>7</sup>

## OTHER LITHOGRAPHS

Thus a “homoeerotic fascination” in the image is also noticed by others today. However, this is in contrast to Grune’s representational intentions. The artist staged exhibitions based on concentration camp experiences that included this and other prints and drawings in Nuremberg, Kiel, Frankfurt and Dachau in the years after the Second World War, in order to draw attention to the horrors of what had happened.<sup>8</sup> The context of Grune’s first publication of the *Prügelstrafe* lithograph also proves that it was intended to denounce brutal injustice and to commemorate its victims.



**Figure 5**  
Richard Grune, *Die Ausgestoßenen*, Cover of the portfolio with the image *Häftling im Drahtverbau*, Kiel 1947

**Figure 6**  
Richard Grune, *Die Ausgestoßenen*, Back of the portfolio, Kiel 1947

A small-scale reproduction of the lithograph appeared along with six others in A6 format under the title *Die Ausgestoßenen* (The Outcasts) in Kiel (Fig. 5).<sup>9</sup> The text on the back of the portfolio (Fig. 6) confirms the authenticity of the underlying experience and the seriousness of the concern: “works by the painter Richard Grune based on experiences in German concentration camps. These reproductions of my lithographs were created at the request of my former concentration camp comrades. All images represent experiences of my eight-year custody by the Gestapo in the Lichtenburg, Sachsenhausen and Flossenbürg concentration camps [...] Any profit to benefit of the victims of fascism.” In fact, in most prints the impression of suffering is overwhelming, for example in *SS foltert einen Häftling* (SS Tortures a Prisoner) or *Häftling im Drahtverbau* (Detainee in Barbed Wire) (Fig. 5).

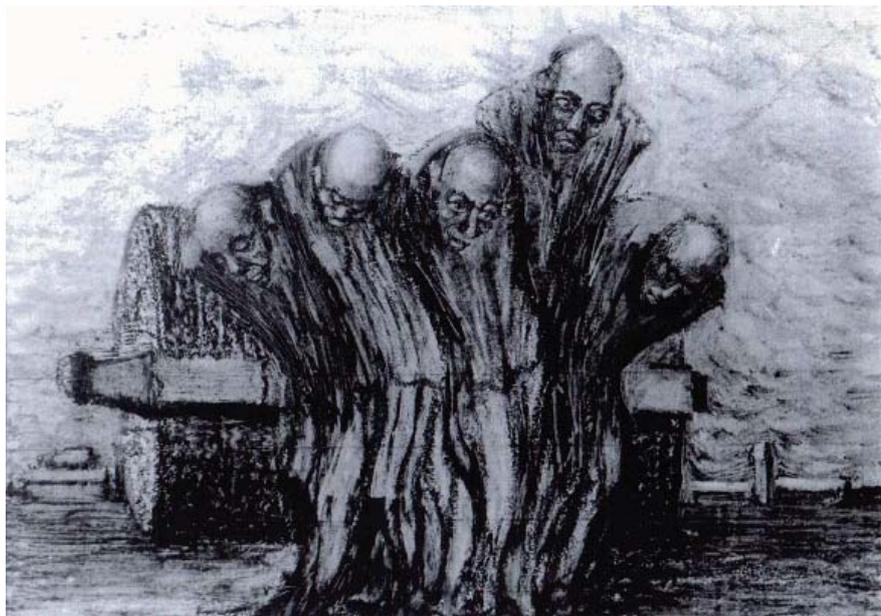


S K L A V E N A R B E I T I M K Z

**Figure 7**

Richard Grune, *Skavenarbeit im KZ*, 1945, lithograph from the portfolio *Die Ausgestoßenen*, Kiel 1947.

Meanwhile the print entitled *Skavenarbeit im KZ* (Slave Labor in the Concentration Camp) (Fig. 7), which depicts a group of six inmates forced by the blows of two uniformed men to pull a heavy stone roller, looks strangely ambivalent – especially because of the amazingly muscular bodies of the victims, who in spite of their subjection are undoubtedly superior in strength to their ‘masters’. One almost gets the impression that what has been depicted is not an asymmetrical power relationship, but only the role play of one.



**Figure 8**

Maurycy Bromberg, *Fünf Juden vor eine Walze geschirrt*, ca. 1945-1948, wax crayons, 27,9 x 38,1 cm, Żydowski Instytut Historyczny w Polsce

A counter-example of how to depict this scene is the wax crayon drawing by Maurycy Bromberg (1920-1982) *Fünf Juden vor eine Walze geschirrt* (Five Jews Harnessed in Front of a Roller) (Fig. 8), which must have been made in the early postwar years.<sup>10</sup> Here, the faces and bodies of the five concentration camp inmates, who in their elongation and blurred outlines are stylized into ciphers of suffering, speak of horror, agony and exhaustion. However, here too parallels can be found in later homoerotic sado-masochistic fantasy worlds, as with the Japanese artist Gengoroh Tagame (\* 1964) who trained himself on Tom of Finland's work.<sup>11</sup>



**Figure 9**  
Gengoroh Tagame, untitled, undated

Similar to Grune's forced labourers, in one of Tagame's images (Fig. 9), the naked body of a man forced to move a heavy millstone is idealized, pristine and unharmed, his musculature exaggeratedly tight because of his forward-thrusting forced labour. The man standing behind him is his double, apart from his hairstyle, and displays a comparably high muscle tone, although he stands waiting, holding the end of a lash, which he will probably use on his prisoner. In the logic of the image, the lash highlights the guard's genitals as it passes in front of them. As he is watching the back of the prisoner at the same time, the image inevitably triggers a pornographic fantasy of penetration *a tergo* (at least for a gay viewer). In the bodies on Grune's lithograph, excessive energy seems to be accumulated in a similar manner, pressing for release. Here too, a violent sexual act between the men seems to be a possible outlet.

Immediately after the Nazi era, probably no one perceived the two lithographs »Bock« *Priigelstrafe im KZ* and *Sklavenarbeit im KZ* in this way – which does not contradict the mentioned

view. After all, the impact of the recent past would then have been too powerful to react to anything other than the main content marker of suffering and brutality. Furthermore, homosexuality was still largely ignored by society, let alone its sado-masochistic variants. Only people who have at least not consciously experienced the period before 1945, and can at the same time take deviations from heteronormativity unconstrainedly into consideration, would thus be able to begin to perceive and problematize the erotic component in some of these images.

## DESIGN AND MEANING

But this can only partly explain why the artist himself was apparently blind to his own representations. His self-distancing from the erotic content in his images was also facilitated by his focus on a certain form of abstraction, a kind of hyperreal, dynamizing design. Born in 1903 in Kiel, Germany Richard Grune, after five terms of studying graphic design at The Kiel School of Applied Arts, was a conditional student at the Bauhaus in Weimar for two terms in 1922/1923 (and was then not admitted).<sup>12</sup> He studied in Johannes Itten's preliminary course, where – inspired by Futurism – the graphic ‘dynamization’ of objects was taught as a form of intensive appropriation. Itten aimed for a holistic education for his students, and integrated explicitly physical aspects into artistic design work. Some of Itten's figure drawings show elaborated bodies and clothes similar to the *Prügelstrafe* lithograph, only omitting the erotic aspect (Fig. 10). Similarly, the men pulling the roller in the print *Sklavenarbeit* could be compared to Umberto Boccioni's well-known futurist sculpture *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* from 1913, which is also about the visualization of bodily strength and kinetic energy (Fig. 11). Are the highlighted features of the bodies in Grune's lithographs therefore the result of the artist's attempt to give them the utmost presence and dynamic form, in the sense of Futurism and Itten's preliminary course? Have specific design intentions unconsciously taken precedence here and thereby undermined Grune's real representational intentions?



**Figure 10**  
Johannes Itten, *Man*, 1919,  
Lithographic.



**Figure 11**  
Umberto Boccioni, *Unique  
Forms of Continuity in Space*,  
1913, Bronze, Metropolitan  
Museum of Art, New York.

In fact, in other images based on his concentration camp experiences, Grune also distanced himself from their specific content, but with a different kind of abstraction. Significantly, they were gathered together in the second, larger portfolio of 1947, entitled *Passion des XX. Jahrhunderts* (Passion of the 20th Century).<sup>13</sup> Three of the ten prints are identical to those in the small portfolio but the two lithographs entitled *Prügelstrafe* and *Sklavenarbeit* are not included. In the portfolio preface, Richard Blunck writes: “But although the accusation emerging from these prints is so



**Figure 12**

Richard Grune, *Solidarität. Gefangener stützt seinen erschöpften Kameraden*, 1945, lithograph from the portfolio *Passion des XX. Jahrhunderts*, Hamburg 1947

strong, so inevitably demanding, a closer and more intimate look soon infiltrates the ‘representational’ and ‘topical’ and blends them into a wider ‘spiritual’ and ‘mental’ atmosphere, that goes beyond this representational aspect and makes other strings vibrate than the defensive and voluntary. Behind these drawings there is a deep silence and a kind of listening, that removes all hatred and all revenge from the accusation, but not weakening it in the process. They bring us into a nocturnal world, like the night He died on the Cross.”<sup>14</sup> As already suggested by the portfolio’s title, the images repeatedly allude to traditional motifs in Christian iconography. Thus, *Im Drahtverhau* (In the Barbed Wire) (Fig. 5) reminds one of Christ bearing the Cross; *Galgenabnahme* (Deposition from the Gallows) of the Deposition from the Cross, and *Solidarität. Gefangener stützt seinen erschöpften Kameraden* (Solidarity: Prisoner Supports his Exhausted Comrade) (Fig. 12) of the so-called “Mercy Seat” in which God the Father presents his dead Son; or of a Pietà group, especially the late work of Michelangelo.<sup>15</sup>

Through Blunck, we can understand this superimposing of concentration camp experiences with the Christian process of salvation from the perspective of someone for whom the “outer experience, the originating event itself has to a certain extent [...] lost its power.”<sup>16</sup>

## BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

We should try to imagine Grune's life situation at the time the lithographs were made and exhibited. In 1945, by joining the death march from Flossenbürg concentration camp, he escaped after eight years of imprisonment in different Nazi camps. He had been arrested in Berlin late in 1934. In the 1920s, Grune had often worked on social democratic projects; he had provided illustrations and photographs for party newspapers, and in 1927 he had taken over the artistic directorship of the Seekamp camping ground near Kiel, the first international camp for more than 2,300 workers' children, organized by the Social Democratic Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft (National Working Community).<sup>17</sup> In 1933/4, together with friends from Kiel, he had issued two anti-Nazi newspapers. But, the reason for Grune's arrest was not his political activities, but his homosexuality. It had been revealed to the police that he had not only had sex with other men, but in 1934 had held two extravagant gay parties in his studio. At the end of May 1935, he was released from preventive custody in Berlin, but was transferred to the authorities in Flensburg. There, in September 1936, he was sentenced to one year and three months in prison in Neumünster, because of "fornication" according to Article 175. As customary at that time with male homosexuals, he was set free, but was taken again into "preventive custody."<sup>18</sup> In October 1937, he was sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. He remained there until April 1940 when he was moved by prisoner transport to Flossenbürg on the northern edge of the Upper Palatinate, a notorious labour camp with a quarry. At that time, the camp held more than 2,500 prisoners; by the end of the war the number rose to 15,000. The prisoners were mainly "career criminals" and those considered "asocial," which at that time also included homosexuals, political and war prisoners, and from 1940 also Jews. During the war, there were more than a hundred satellite camps. From 1943, armaments were also produced in Flossenbürg, under the Messerschmidt company.<sup>19</sup>

Classified as homosexual, Grune belonged to the lowest rank in the camp system. Witnesses report relentless harassment by camp overseers (and by many fellow prisoners) against homosexuals, especially in Flossenbürg.<sup>20</sup> To survive there for years could not have been easy. How did Grune manage? He told his sister that once, seriously ill and left to die in front of the barracks in the evening, he had "kept himself alive by drawing" until morning.<sup>21</sup> From other victims of brutal captivity, we know that a creative involvement in their experience, for example in the form of written records, can contribute to psychological stabilisation.<sup>22</sup> Did artistic activity help Grune to overcome persistent torture? He died in 1983 in an old people's home in Kiel, unfortunately, without anyone being interested in his memories.

However, we know from the memoirs of longtime gay fellow inmate Josef Kohout (1917-1994), published under the pseudonym Heinz Heger and entitled *Die Männer mit dem rosa Winkel* (The Men with the Pink Triangle) that self-abasement and selling one's body were unavoidable, if you wanted to survive as a homosexual.<sup>23</sup> Through the protection and intercession of others, Heger would eventually even reach the position of Kapo and foreman in the camp's armaments production. Probably Grune was also a functionary prisoner in later years. His artistic talent could have helped to improve his position, because there were usually a variety of tasks in the camp for someone who could draw. Grune, for example, illustrated the camp songbook in Sachsenhausen. Additionally, his respected position with the political prisoners might have helped him – due to his coming from a social democratic-socialist environment in Kiel and his anti-fascist beliefs. In fact, it was mainly his friends in the Social Democratic Party in Kiel who helped him after 1945.

They supported him not least in his stubborn but futile effort to get financial compensation for his incarceration – ostensibly as a political prisoner. The postwar situation for homosexuals had in fact not changed significantly. Article 175, intensified by the Nazis, was still law after the war; the

carrying out of a prison sentence and preventive custody before 1945 was not considered wrong. And if renewed homosexual activities became known, this still led to severe penalties.<sup>24</sup> Clearly therefore, the “originating event” for the prints had certainly not “lost its power” for Grune.<sup>25</sup> On the contrary, an important reason for the publication of the two print portfolios and the organizing of exhibitions with lithographs would have been the artist’s desire to conceal, or at least downplay, his individual fate as a homosexual. *Die Ausgestoßenen* and *Passion des XX. Jahrhunderts* were to emphasize that he had been a victim among other victims, on an equal footing in accusation over suffered injustices – especially when he wrote that he had printed the small portfolio “at the request of my former concentration camp comrades.” Surely, therefore, he wouldn’t have dreamed of addressing his status as a gay man in the camp hierarchy and his own personal experiences of suffering, let alone homoerotic aspects of camp life.

## TRAUMA

Besides Grune’s conscious response to the conditions under which he was obliged to live before and after 1945, he may also, probably unconsciously, have manifested the effects of his ordeal under the Nazi regime. Especially since the situation in post-war Germany was anything but helpful in coming to terms with his experiences. One has to assume a severe trauma, “the vital experience of a discrepancy between threatening situational factors and individual coping mechanisms, which is accompanied by feelings of helplessness and unprotected exposure, thus causing a long-term disturbance in the understanding of the self and the world.”<sup>26</sup> This would not necessarily be contradicted by the fact that Grune was able to work after 1945. Occasionally, he received commissions for brochure designs,<sup>27</sup> as well as illustrations in books,<sup>28</sup> magazines and newspapers, but he had to make his living as a bricklayer. In the early 1950s, a doctor friend enabled him to go to Barcelona for ten years – probably not least because of the harsh and unchanged legislation against homosexuality in Germany.

The severe traumatization could however explain the disturbing ambiguity of the *Prügelstrafe* and *Sklavendarbeit* lithographs. The overlaying of real-life experience with moments from the Christian ritual of salvation in the *Passion des XX. Jahrhunderts* portfolio can already be connected to a process of abstraction characteristic of traumatized people. They insist on the meaningfulness of what happened, even if this sometimes means that it must be moved from reality to fantasy. Possibly also Grune’s Ego tried “to deny the real nature of his trauma in order to recover his original mastery over psychic functioning,” as Ehlert and Lemke state in their text “Psychodynamik der traumatischen Reaktion” (Psychodynamics of Traumatic Reaction).<sup>29</sup>

And in the specific hyperrealistic design of the scenes depicted in *Prügelstrafe* and *Sklavendarbeit* what these authors describe as “forced regression” probably becomes visible:<sup>30</sup> an identification with the perpetrators, or rather the introjection of the perpetrator.<sup>31</sup> In his overwhelmingly helpless relationship to those who possess and exert power, it remains a last resort for the victim to “return to the all-powerful, mainly narcissistically-charged objects of early childhood.”<sup>32</sup> The aggressors appear as “longed-for parental figures.”<sup>33</sup> The victim surrenders himself like a child to the all-powerful others, and thereby experiences “archaic fusion fantasies” that manifest themselves in the seemingly irrational emotions of love that victims can feel for their perpetrators<sup>34</sup> – Patti Hearst, who in the early 1970s identified herself with her kidnappers, is a famous example; Philipp Reemtsma writes in his report on his kidnapping in 1996 of similar impulses, even about a later occasional “longing” to go back to the place of his imprisonment, when “life seemed too difficult and, compared to the difficulties, not rewarding enough.”<sup>35</sup> It also seems important to me that, in Grune’s case, the victim

of such trauma can take over the viewpoint of the perpetrator. Thus, for example, rape victims often show a complex self-hatred.<sup>36</sup>

Envision the position of a gay man in a concentration camp who, already formerly persecuted by society and therefore with a damaged self-image, is now openly and continuously insulted for his inclinations, often severely punished and even threatened with death. His trauma may have been the reason why he, the tortured, accepted the aggressors' hatred of his sexual orientation as a precondition for the (sadistic) attention he longed for.

This constellation gains a duplicitous twist when we learn that there was a pronounced homosocial form of community bonding among the men in concentration camps – so much so that so-called “forced” homosexual activities were tolerated, but simultaneously defined homosexuality was violently repulsed. The torture of other men, but especially those who wore the pink triangle, is therefore likely to have often functioned as a way of preserving a homoerotic bonding and status quo.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, we should not merely think of the sexual stimulation of the perpetrators through their acts of violence – often reported especially for corporal punishment on the “trestle”<sup>38</sup> – as an indication of a “blind sadism.” The scene depicted by Grune was undoubtedly already objectively sado-masochistically charged, and in a complex way.

## PLAY AND REALITY

Did Richard Grune thus identify not only with the victims depicted in his lithographs *Prügelstrafe* and *Sklavenarbeit*, but also, and simultaneously with the perpetrators – as is probably always the case with those who take pleasure in Tom of Finland and Gengoroh Tagame's works? This is as impossible to clarify as the question of consciousness, on what level was the artist himself aware of the homoerotic aspects of his prints? Especially since “suddenly invading, erupting memories, thoughts, feelings and behavioral role-playing are a strong indication of the existence of trauma.”<sup>39</sup> However, the disturbingly misplaced sadomasochistic moments of these two lithographs in the larger context of Grune's portfolios and exhibitions make it clear that they cannot be reflexes of positive experiences. Undoubtedly, the scenes shown were not experienced with relish by the victims, and Grune was certainly no erotic beneficiary of his concentration camp experiences. The similarities with scenes depicted by Laaksonen and Tagame cannot blur the differences. These two draughtsmen of sadomasochistic cartoons, targeted at a contemporary homosexual audience, aim at an occasional, consensual and playful handling of violence and moments of power. In contrast, the victims of violence in the concentration camps were, without any consent whatsoever, continuously placed in real life danger, living out a mental endurance that they could only survive, if at all, as deeply traumatized human beings.

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**Thomas Röske** studied art history, musicology, and psychology at Hamburg University, where he earned his PhD in 1991 on the intellectual biography of the art historian and psychotherapist Hans Prinzhorn (1886-1933). From 1993 to 1999 he was assistant professor at the art historical department of Frankfurt University, where he functioned as deputy speaker of a graduate and postgraduate project about psychology of art. During this time, he also curated exhibitions for different art institutions in Germany and Great Britain. In September 2001, Röske became curator of the Prinzhorn Collection at the Psychiatric Clinic of Heidelberg University Hospital, a museum for the historic collection of art works by mentally ill people from all over Europe. Since November 2002 he is the director of this institution. He teaches regularly at the Centre for European Art History of Heidelberg University. In 2012 he became President of the European Outsider Art Association (EOA).

Thomas.Roeske@med.uni-heidelberg.de

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Grune, *Passion des XX. Jahrhunderts*, (Hamburg: Hans A. Keune, 1947); Richard Grune, *Die Ausgestoßenen. Werke des Malers Richard Grune nach Erlebnissen in deutschen Konzentrationslagern* (Kiel: Kieler Druckerei, 1947).

<sup>3</sup> Museums-Pädagogisches Zentrum München (ed.), *Das Gedächtnis öffnen. Zeitzeugenbericht von Szmul Laitner, einem ehemaligen Häftling des Konzentrationslagers Groß-Rosen* (Munich, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> See Galerie Remmert und Barth (ed.), *Karl Schwesig – Schlegelkeller* (Düsseldorf: Frölich & Kaufmann, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> See especially Heinz Heger, *The Men with the Pink Triangle: The True Life-and-Death Story of Homosexuals in the Nazi Death Camps* (Los Angeles: Alyson Publications, 1994), 46 ff. The German edition was published in 1972.

<sup>6</sup> F. Valentine Hooven III, *Tom of Finland. Sein Leben – seine Kunst*, (Berlin: Bruno Gmünder, 1992, pp. 38–40. In fact, there are few images with Nazi uniforms in Laaksonen’s work. Using them as a model, he designed men’s clothes with his own emblems in the 1960’s (see there, p. 38). Cf. Micha Ramakers, *Dirty Pictures. Tom of Finland, Masculinity, and Homosexuality*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), pp. 160–169.

<sup>7</sup> Letter from Herbert Hötte/KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme to the author, Hamburg, 20.11.1995: “Bei der Präsentation der Zeichnung war uns die Doppeldeutigkeit in der Aussage bewußt, einerseits das Bild der Gewalt gegen Häftlinge im KZ und andererseits eine homoerotische Faszination, die die Szene ausstrahlt. Wir haben uns nach längerer Diskussion entschieden, die Zeichnung zu zeigen, weil die Reaktionen auf dieses Werk eher ein Erschrecken zeigten, und weil es das Dokument eines Häftlings ist, dessen uneindeutige Perspektive akzeptiert werden muß.”

<sup>8</sup> See Karl Rickers, “Niels Brodersen und Richard Grune. Zwei vergessene Künstler aus Kiel, exh.cat., Kieler Stadtmuseum Warleberger Hof (Kiel, 1987), 7–45, here p. 40, and Andreas Sternweiler, “... er habe sich zeichnend am Leben erhalten.” Der Künstler Richard Grune.“ In: *Homosexuelle Männer im KZ Sachsenhausen*, ed. Joachim Müller, Andreas Sternweiler (Berlin: rosa Winkel, 2000), 204.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. fn. 2.

<sup>10</sup> For Bromberg, see Glen Sujo, *Legacies of Silence. The Visual Arts and Holocaust Memory*, exh.cat, Imperial War Museum, London (London: Wilson, 2001), p. 79.

<sup>11</sup> For Tagame, see Wim Lunsing, “Yaoi Ronsō. Discussing Depictions of Male Homosexuality in Japanese Girls’ Comics, Gay Comics and Gay Pornography,” in: *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Heft 12, Januar 2006 (<http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue12/lunsing.html> – accessed 3/2013); Anne Ishii, Chip Kido, Graham Kolbeins, *The Passion of Gengorob Tagame. The Master of ›Bara‹ Manga* (Brooklyn: PictureBox, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Information from the Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin, in a telephone conversation with the author, 12.3.2013, cf. Folke Dietsch, “Die Studierenden am Bauhaus,” Dissertation Weimar, 1991. About Grune’s biography see Rickers 1987 (as fn. 8), who assumes that Grune resumed his studies in 1926, and Sternweiler, “... er habe sich zeichnend am Leben erhalten.”

<sup>13</sup> Cf. fn. 2.

<sup>14</sup> “Doch so stark, so unausweichlich fordernd die Anklage aus diesen Blättern sich erhebt, ein näheres und innigeres Anschauen dringt bald über das ›Gegenständliche‹ und ›Aktuelle‹ hinaus und bezieht sie ein in eine seelische und geistige Atmosphäre, die dies Gegenständliche übergreift und in dem Betrachter andere Saiten zum Schwingen bringt als die abwendenden und willentlichen. Es steht hinter diesen Zeichnungen ein tiefes Schweigen und Lauschen, das der Anklage, die freilich darum nicht schwächer wird, allen Hass und alles Rächerische nimmt. Nüchtern ist die Welt, in die sie uns versetzen, wie jene Nacht, da einer am Kreuze starb.”

<sup>15</sup> Could this lithograph also be a response to the well-known relief *Kameradschaft* (Comradeship) (1940) by Arno Breker?

<sup>16</sup> “[...] das äußere Erlebnis, das Anlaß gebende Geschehen selbst, bis zu einem gewissen Grade [...] an Macht verloren hat.”

<sup>17</sup> See Andreas Gayk, *Die Rote Kinderrepublik. Ein Buch von Arbeiterkindern für Arbeiterkinder*, Illustrationen von Richard Grune. Berlin (Arbeiterjugendverlag) 1928; and Gustav Weber (ed.), *Das Weltenrad sind wir! Der 6. Deutsche Arbeiterjugendtag in Frankfurt am Main und das 2. Reichszeltlager der SAJ. auf der Rheininsel Namedy von der Jugend geschildert*, Illustrationen von Richard Grune Kiel (Berlin: Arbeiterjugend-Verlag, 1931).

<sup>18</sup> On the situation of homosexuals in the time of national socialism, see *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit. Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung*, ed. Günter Grau (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1993).

<sup>19</sup> On Flossenbürg see *Konzentrationslager Flossenbürg 1938–1945*, ed. Christa Schikorra (ed.), exh.cat. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008); Thomas Muggenthaler, *„Ich lege mich hin und sterbe!“ Ehemalige Häftlinge des KZ Flossenbürg berichten* (Stamsried: Ernst Vögel, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Heger, *The Men With the Pink Triangle*.

<sup>21</sup> Sternweiler, “... er habe sich zeichnend am Leben erhalten.”

<sup>22</sup> Jan Philipp Reemtsma, *Im Keller*, Reinbek (Rowohlt) 1998, reports which relief he felt to “objectify” himself with writing a diary while in custody of his kidnappers (p. 205).

<sup>23</sup> On Kohout, see Kurt Krickler, “Heinz Heger. Der Mann mit dem rosa Winkel,” in: *LAMBDA-Nachrichten. Zeitschrift der Homosexuellen Initiative* 23/June (Wien, 2001), 42–44.

<sup>24</sup> On the situation of homosexuals in West-Germany after the war, see Stefan Micheler, “... und verbleibt weiterhin in Sicherheitsverwahrung» – Kontinuitäten der Verfolgung Männer begehrender Männer in Hamburg 1945–1949,” in *Ohnmacht und Aufbegehren. Homosexuelle Männer in der frühen Bundesrepublik*, ed. Andreas Pretzel and Volker Weiß (Hamburg: Männerschwarm, 2010): 62–90.

<sup>25</sup> Richard Blunck in the portfolio *Passion des XX. Jahrhunderts*, cf. fn. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Gottfried Fischer, Peter Riedesser, *Lehrbuch der Psychotraumatologie*, 4th ed. (Munich: Reinhardt, 2009) 84, quoted in Günter H. Seidler, *Psychotraumatologie. Das Lehrbuch* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2013), 33.

<sup>27</sup> See Richard Grune, *Das Kinderbuch*, ed. Hauptausschuß für Arbeiter Wohlfahrt (Hannover & Hamburg: Tessloff, 1948).

<sup>28</sup> He illustrated, for example, with some of his lithographs from the portfolio *Passion des XX. Jahrhunderts*, Walter Poller’s book *Arztsschreiber in Buchenwald. Bericht des Häftlings 996 aus Block 39* (Hamburg: Phönix-Verlag Christen & Co, 1946).

<sup>29</sup> Martin Ehlert & Beate Lorke, “Zur Psychodynamik der traumatischen Reaktion,” *Psyche* XLII (1988): 502–532, here 504.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 507.

<sup>31</sup> On the phenomenon of introjection, see Seidler, *Psychotraumatologie*, 68–73.

<sup>32</sup> Ehlert/Lorke 1988 (as fn. 29), 508. On the origins of this psychodynamic concept, see Mathias Hirsch, “Zwei Arten der Identifikation mit dem Aggressor nach Ferenczi und Anna Freud,” *Praxis der Kinderpsychologie und Kinderpsychiatrie* 45/6 (1996): 198–205.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 511.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 509.

<sup>35</sup> Reemtsma, *Im Keller*, 172–222, quote, 221. I thank Ute Sommer (Kassel) for pointing this out to me.

<sup>36</sup> Even if the effect of eight years imprisonment in a concentration camp is hardly comparable to a sexual abuse by a single perpetrator. See Freihart Regner, “Unbewußte Liebesbeziehung zum Folterer? Kritik und Alternativen zu einer

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Psychodynamik der traumatischen Reaktion“; *Zeitschrift für Politische Psychologie* 8/4 (2000), and 9/1 (2001): 429-452. I consider the onset of this psychic reaction possible, especially because of the sexual component in the violence against homosexuals.

<sup>37</sup> See Heger, *The Men With the Pink Triangle*, 46 ff.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> This is how Werner Bohleber summarizes Mardi Jon Horowitz's observations in his book *Stress response syndromes. PTSD, grief, and adjustment disorders*. 2. Aufl. Northvale (Aronson) 1997, in: *Was Psychoanalyse heute leistet. Identität und Intersubjektivität, Trauma und Therapie, Gewalt und Gesellschaft*. Stuttgart (Klett-Cotta) 2012, p. 119.