

# Temenos Academy at Cowdray Park

## **The Head, the Heart and the Hand: Geometry, Philosophy and the Music of the Spheres**

A weekend workshop of sacred geometry combining philosophy and practice

TOM BREE, DANIEL DOCHERTY, VALENTIN GERLIER

Saturday 7th October– Sunday 8th: Sat. 10.30am – 5.30pm Sun. 9.30am – 5pm

In the chair Dr David Cranswick & Emma Clark

Venue The Tower Room, Cowdray Heritage Site

### **INTRODUCTION**

This collaboration between the Temenos Academy and Cowdray Heritage unites philosophy and poetry with its practical expression through craft practice and music. After the success of our first workshop (October 2016) this second one is also dedicated to exploring how the perennial philosophy may be understood first theoretically by the intelligence, then absorbed and known by the heart and finally expressed and embodied through the hands. The value of harmoniously combining activity of the head, the heart and the hand is one of the central tenets of the teaching of Professor Keith Critchlow, the guiding light of this joint endeavour and one of the principal founders of the Temenos Academy.

The practice of sacred geometry and the traditional arts and crafts requires not only full engagement of head and heart, but crucially a close relationship with hands and craft tools – for example, the compasses and ruler used for geometry, which symbolize the celestial and terrestrial realms. In the words of Titus Burckhardt, ‘The tools used to shape the crude materials ... symbolize the divine “instruments” which “fashion” the cosmos out of the undifferentiated and amorphous materia prima.’ This method of integrating an outward process with an inner transformation of the soul lies at the heart of all true traditional and sacred arts.

### **Geometry, Philosophy and the Music of the Spheres**

In the ancient world, the Music of the Spheres, or *musica universalis*, expressed the principle of cosmic unity, referring to the movement of the stars, but also to the rhythm, harmony, proportions and relationships between all things in the universe. The cosmos was thereby understood to be a dynamic whole, held together by a unifying principle that wove and tied all things together in mutually nourishing relationships. Whether expressed in terms of a great harmony, a chain of being or a cosmic dance, this rich metaphysical idea inspired tremendous creativity and vision in philosophy, poetry, music, geometry and mathematics.

Though inaudible to human ears, the Music of the Spheres expressed this idea of a fundamental harmony, a cosmic order which philosophy and poetry attempt to express and sacred geometry endeavours to make visible. This cosmic order is what Shakespeare calls ‘the harmony in immortal souls’ which unites the human being as a microcosm to the universe’s macrocosm.

This workshop will be grounded in the spoken word as well as the artistic drawing process and will combine philosophical talks and discussion with slide-show presentations and the practice of drawing geometric patterns with compasses and ruler. The talks will draw from the philosophy of Pythagoras, Plato and Boethius and show how the ideas of cosmic harmony became expressed in the poetry of Dante, Spenser and Shakespeare. The drawing classes will elaborate these themes, relating these ideas to geometry and music; and by using pencil, ruler and the orientation of the compasses, participants will become attuned to the inner silence of the heart from whence all harmony is revealed.

TOM BREE is a geometer-artist, teacher and writer who specialises in the use of geometry in sacred art and philosophy. He teaches at the Prince's School of Traditional Arts in London as well as on his own teaching projects in the United Kingdom and abroad. He is currently researching the underlying geometric design of Wells Cathedral.

DANIEL DOCHERTY received his MA from The Prince's School of Traditional Arts in 2004. He has since undertaken extensive research into how the philosophy and practice of sacred geometry and the other 'quadrivial' arts/ sciences inform the cultural traditions of the world. He currently lives and works at Tablehurst Farm and regularly teaches for 'Sacred Art of Geometry'.

VALENTIN GERLIER is a writer, novelist and musician, a tutor for the Temenos Academy and member of its Academic Board, and has lectured for the Temenos Academy, the William Blake Society and The Prince's School of Traditional Arts. He is currently completing a PhD Thesis on Shakespeare, Poetry and the Language of Grace at the University of Cambridge.

### **Admission**

The cost of the weekend workshop is £225 inclusive of tools and materials and coffee/tea. A non-refundable deposit of £70 will be required by July 31st 2017 in order to secure your place and the remainder of the fee (£155) payable by September 30th 2017. Places are limited to 14 students. Full details of the workshop will be forwarded to participants in advance of the weekend.

For enquiries and bookings please contact [cranswickart@gmail.com](mailto:cranswickart@gmail.com)

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