

The Jewish modernist: Isaac Grünewald in Bertel Hintze's art history

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'Not for nothing is Grünewald a Semite.' (Bertel Hintze)

With these words the Finnish art historian and chief curator Bertel Hintze (1901–1969) explained the 'oriental colourfulness' and captivating rhythm that was the foundation of the art by the 'incomparable talent' Swedish artist Isaac Grünewald (1889–1946), an artist who, according to Hintze, could even occasionally surpass his teacher Henri Matisse (1869–1954).¹ This is one of several examples of Nordic avant-garde artists who are compared to the international avant-garde in Hintze's art historical handbook *Modern konst: 1900-talet (Modern Art: Twentieth century)*, published in 1930. Hintze's characterization above clearly reveals traces of a racial and anti-Semitic rhetoric, but in Swedish and Finnish art historiography Hintze has never been discussed in relation to the contemporary anti-Semitic discourse.² In this article, I will analyse the way in which Hintze includes and characterizes Isaac Grünewald into his modernist narration, and its relation to early twentieth century anti-Semitism. I use here the American sociologist Helen Fein's broad definition of anti-Semitism, as a term denoting a wide range of different historical manifestations of hostility towards Jews, in order to emphasize its historical continuity as a cultural phenomenon and to distinguish between different anti-Semitic manifestations on different levels.³

In Swedish and Finnish art historiography, anti-Semitism generally seems to be of almost no interest. Except for an article from 1988 by the art historian Lena Johannesson, where she analyses anti-Semitic caricatures in the Swedish fanatic radical press from 1845 to 1860, there are very few in-depth studies in the field.⁴

¹ Bertel Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, Stockholm: Lars Hökerbergs bokförlag, 1930, 75–78. All translations are mine unless noted.

² Bertel Hintze's biographer Erik Kruskopf briefly discusses Hintze's relation to the racial discourse in the 1920s and 1930s, but never enters into any kind of discussion of anti-Semitism in his biography *En konstens världsman. Bertel Hintze 1901–1969*, Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 1998.

³ Helen Fein, 'Dimensions of Antisemitism: Attitudes, Collective Accusations, and Actions', in Helen Fein, ed, *The Persisting Question. Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Antisemitism*, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987, 67.

⁴ Lena Johannesson, 'Schene Rariteten.' Antisemitisk bildagitation i svensk rabulistpress 1845–1860', in *Judiskt liv i Norden*, Gunnar Broberg, Harald Runblom and Mattias Tydén, eds, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1988. There are, however, other non-academic

Within other fields of study the situation is different, although art, artists or art historians are seldom mentioned.⁵ The only existing extensive study that can be described as an analysis of an anti-Semitic visual culture in Sweden is written by the historian Lars M Andersson in his dissertation *En jude är en jude är en jude...: representationer av "juden" i svensk skämtpress omkring 1900–1930* (*A Jew is a Jew is a Jew...: representations of the 'Jew' in the Swedish comic press around 1900–1930*) from 2000.⁶ Within a Finnish context, the historian of ideas Nils Erik Forsgård describes a similar situation in *Alias Finkelstein: Studier i antisemitisk retorik* (*Alias Finkelstein: Studies in Anti-Semitic Rhetoric*) from 2002.⁷

Analysing art historical handbooks or survey texts is especially revealing when it comes to understanding the historical, ideological and aesthetic foundations of art history. Due to its condensed literary character, which is necessary for the genre, this literature probably most clearly states the dominating selection criteria and established ideas concerning epochs as well as individual artists.⁸ As with all historiography, this genre is subject to its own internal logic and structure, and is by no means free from discursively associated rhetoric.⁹ This makes Bertel Hintze's art historical handbook interesting as a focal point in an analysis of the influence of

publications of great importance for the public awareness and as documentation of the anti-Semitism that Isaac Grünewald experienced during his lifetime, such as Anders Wahlgren, *Sigrid & Isaac*, Stockholm: Prisma, 2007; Bernhard Grünewald, *Orientalen. Bilden av Isaac Grünewald i svensk press 1909–1946*, Stockholm: CKM Förlag, 2011; Per I. Gedin, *Isaac Grünewald. Modernist och människa*, Stockholm: Bonnier, 2015.

⁵ See e.g. Henrik Bachner, 'Judefrågan'. *Debatt om antisemitism i 1930-talets Sverige*, Stockholm: Atlantis, 2009; Lena Berggren, *Nationell upplysning. Drag i den svenska antisemitismens idéhistoria*, Stockholm: Carlsson, 1999; Henrik Rosengren, 'Judarnas Wagner'. *Moses Pergament och den kulturella identifikationens dilemma omkring 1920–1950*, Lund: Sekel, 2007.

⁶ Lars M Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude...: representationer av 'juden' i svensk skämtpress omkring 1900–1930*, Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2000.

⁷ Nils Erik Forsgård, *Alias Finkelstein. Studier i antisemitisk retorik*, Vanda: Schildts, 2002. Anti-Semitism has not been studied as well in Finland as in Sweden, although we can see a clear change in interest during the last decade, see e.g. Simon Muir and Hana Worthen, eds, *Finland's Holocaust: silences of history*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, especially Simon Muir, 'Modes of Displacement: Ignoring, Understating, and Denying Antisemitism in Finnish Historiography', where he discusses the reasons for the lack of interest in anti-Semitism within Finnish historiography. For an introduction to nineteenth century anti-Semitism in Finland, see Tarja-Liisa Luukkanen, 'The Jewish Conspiracy Revealed (1897). Adolf Stöcker and the 19th-Century Antisemitism in Finland', *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History*, No. 7, July 2014, online access, retrieved 10 December 2015.

⁸ Dan Karlholm, *Handböckernas konsthistoria. Om skapandet av 'allmän konsthistoria' i Tyskland under 1800-talet*, Stockholm: Symposion, 1996, 65. See also Mitchell Schwarzer, 'Origins of the Art History Survey Text', *Art Journal*, 55:3, 1995.

⁹ My understanding of art historiography as literature is clearly inspired by Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

anti-Semitism on art historiography. Hintze's book is only one of numerous texts discussing Grünewald and his importance for Swedish modernism, though today it is a rather marginal text. But, that does not make the book less important; I will argue that Hintze's book, with its anti-Semitic rhetoric, is typical of the early reception of Grünewald's art. I will also argue that the book, published in 1930, is a good example of the way in which this anti-Semitic rhetoric managed to enter into 'normal' art historiography right at the moment when the early twentieth century Swedish avant-garde became institutionalized. In other words, this analysis is not only important for the understanding of the connection between art historiography and anti-Semitism in the early twentieth century, but can also become the starting point for an analysis of the way in which the anti-Semitic rhetoric affects later historiography. Although this article focuses on the historical situation around 1930, it enters into a discussion of relevance for twenty-first century art historiography.

Hintze's modern art history

Bertel Hintze studied art history under J. J. Tikkanen (1857–1930) and aesthetics under Yrjö Hirn (1870–1952) at Helsinki University during the 1920s. He wrote his PhD dissertation in 1927 on the nineteenth-century Finnish painter Robert Wilhelm Ekman (1808–1873) and a year later he became the first chief curator at the Kunsthalle Helsinki, a post he held until 1968. As curator, he produced pioneering work for modern art in Finland, developing an interest and great knowledge in contemporary art. He had a large professional network, especially within the Nordic countries, and was engaged as an advisor by several art collectors. In Sweden, his foremost contact was with Carl Gunne (1893–1979), artist and curator of modern art at Nationalmuseum (the National Gallery of Fine Arts) in Stockholm. They produced several exhibitions together and had a long-lasting professional relationship.

Hintze's two-part survey *Modern konst: 1800-talet* and *Modern konst: 1900-talet* (published in 1928 and 1930) is a unique work both among his other writings on art and in comparison to contemporary art historiography in Scandinavia. Since the first part of this survey was published in the same year he started his job at the Kunsthalle Helsinki, and the second two years later, these two books can be understood as a way for Hintze to establish himself as an authority on modern art. The first book is about nineteenth-century art and the second focuses on the first three decades of the twentieth century. The books are written in Swedish and, even though Hintze's focus was on the international, mainly Parisian, avant-garde, he has included several Nordic artists. As a narration of European modern art, these two books are unconventional since we seldom find Nordic artists other than Edward Munch in this kind of survey literature (Munch is included in Hintze's first book on the nineteenth century). *Modern konst: 1900-talet* is one of the first survey books on early twentieth-century art published in Swedish. During the 1920s, several other

books and articles were published with the aim of describing the Swedish art scene during the first decades of the twentieth century, but none are as ambitious or in the format of a survey of western avant-garde art, where the Nordic avant-garde is included and compared with the central European avant-garde.¹⁰ Later art historical handbooks on modern art either focus on the international avant-garde or the national avant-garde with clear references to international artists. It was not until 1955 that a more comprehensive handbook on Swedish modernism was written, when Rolf Söderberg's book *Den svenska konsten under 1900-talet* was published (later published in a shorter English version with the title *Modern Swedish Art*), a book that for decades remained the standard book on the first half of twentieth-century Swedish art.¹¹ Although Hintze was Finnish, or more precisely Finland-Swedish, his books on modern art were published both in Finland by the publisher Söderström & Co and in Sweden by the publisher Lars Hökerberg. They were never published in Finnish even though the Finnish publisher had plans for a translation.¹² The intended reader of the books was probably the culturally interested public in Sweden and the Swedish-speaking population in Finland. They received very positive reviews in both Sweden and in Swedish speaking press in Finland, and seem to have been wished-for books among the critics.¹³ The Swedish art critic Gustaf Näsström was overwhelmingly positive in his review.

As far as I know the literature on the field, no other more comprehensive and objectively written survey over the last 30 years art exists, other than the second part of Hintze's account.¹⁴

Even though much of Hintze's writings on twentieth-century art was based on his own observations, he was very well aware of the Nordic and international writing in the field. He especially mentions two important predecessors in the foreword to part one; the German art historian Julius Meier-Graefe (1867–1935) and the Norwegian art historian and museum director Jens Thiis (1870–1942). Also, the

¹⁰ Compare with e.g. August Brunius, '1909 års män: den nya linjen i svensk målarkonst', *Vintergatan*, Stockholm 1922; Erik Blomberg, *Den nya svenska konsten*, Stockholm: Norstedt, 1923. In Axel Romdahl's book *Det moderna måleriet och dess förutsättningar. En orientering*, Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 1926, both international and Scandinavian artists are discussed, but in separated chapters and very briefly.

¹¹ Rolf Söderberg, *Den svenska konsten under 1900-talet*, Stockholm: Bonnier, 1955. Söderberg's book was reprinted in 1961 and revised in 1970. There is also a brief version in English, *Modern Swedish Art*, Stockholm: Aldus/Bonnier, 1963.

¹² Kruskopf, *En konstens världsman*, 67.

¹³ Kruskopf, *En konstens världsman*, 65–66.

¹⁴ 'Såvitt jag känner litteraturen på området existerar det icke någon mer allsidig och objektivt hållen översikt över de senaste 30 årens konst än den som ges i andra delen av Hintzes framställning.' Gustaf Näsström, 'En bok om modern konst', *Stockholms Dagblad*, 28 December 1930.

Swedish art critic and writer Erik Blomberg (1884–1965) and the Danish art historian Emil Hannover (1867–1923) are mentioned as important for Hintze's understanding of modern art.

In the introduction to *Modern konst: 1900-talet*, opening with an illustration of Henri Matisse's *The Dance* from 1910, Hintze discusses the 1890s as a transitional period with artists as Paul Cézanne, Auguste Renoir, Paul Gauguin, Georges Seurat, Vincent van Gogh and Edvard Munch. The central figure for the young generation in early twentieth-century was, according to Hintze, Cézanne, and the mediator '[...] the complicated transient phenomenon, the limiting case between two epochs', was Matisse and his followers.¹⁵ The first chapter after the introduction has the headline 'Henri Matisse and his circle'. There is no question of the importance of Matisse for Hintze's modernist narration. This interest in French art reveals Hintze's reading of and dependence on the writings by Julius Meier-Graefe and Jens Thiis.¹⁶ Two decades before the publication of Hintze's book, very few of the art critics in Sweden or Finland supported Matisse Fauvism or any outspoken modernist movement.¹⁷ In Sweden, expressionism became connected early on with French art and especially with Matisse.¹⁸ The breakthrough of French-inspired expressionism in Sweden can be seen gradually during the 1910s, but is probably most clearly manifested in 1918 with the large *Expressionistutställning* (Expressionist exhibition) at Liljevalchs Kunsthalle in Stockholm, showing paintings by the artists Leander Engström and the artist couple Isaac Grünewald and Sigrid Hjertén. At the end of the first chapter, Hintze discusses several Nordic artists, many of them as direct followers of Matisse, and among them Grünewald and Engström, but not Hjertén. The exclusion of the female avant-garde artist Sigrid Hjertén is an important topic that has attracted the interest of several art historians since the 1980s,¹⁹ but my focus here is on the inclusion of Isaac Grünewald and in what way Hintze positions him in his art historical narration. Since the book had a widespread Swedish reception

¹⁵ '[...] det komplicerade övergångsfenomenet, gränsfallet mellan två epoker', Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, 11.

¹⁶ When the first book was published, Hintze's dependence on Julius Meier-Graefe was noted in his review by the Swedish art critic Gotthard Johansson. Gotthard Johansson, 'Modern konst', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 25 April 1929.

¹⁷ Gösta Lilja, *Det moderna måleriet i svensk kritik 1905–1914*, Malmö: Allhem, 1955; Bengt Lärkner, *Det internationella avantgardet och Sverige 1914–1925*, Malmö: Frank Stenvalls Förlag, 1984.

¹⁸ Although art criticism in the early 20th century was very attentive to the art scene in Paris, we have to remember that later Swedish art historiography has been clearly Francophile and has consequently enhanced the importance of French art in Sweden, a historiography that in recent years had been revised in Andrea Kollnitz, *Konstens nationella identitet. Om tysk och österrikisk modernism i svensk konstkritik 1908–1934*, Stockholm: Drau, 2008.

¹⁹ See e.g. Elisabet Haglund, *Sigrid Hjertén*, Stockholm: Öppna ögon, 1985; Katarina Borgh Bertorp and Lollo Fogelström ed, *Sigrid Hjertén*, Stockholm: Liljevalchs and Raster, 1995.

and my main case in this study is Hintze's reception of a Swedish artist, my analysis will mainly put Hintze's modern art history in a Swedish context.²⁰

The Jewish modernist

As already mentioned, Bertel Hintze introduced Isaac Grünewald in a very positive way as the 'incomparable talent', but then he characterized him as:

[...] of an Aladdin's nature, more receptive than creative, flowing with ideas, productive like no other, a fast painter like the Venetian eighteenth-century masters, at the same time an exoticist and fashionable cosmopolite, bold and ruthless in his art, and above all a fighting man, who not even in front of his easel could keep from being a polemist.²¹

Grünewald is here introduced as an *oriental* element in the western art world by describing him as 'of an Aladdin's nature', 'exoticist' and 'cosmopolitan.' He also characterizes Grünewald as exceptionally 'productive' and as 'a fast painter like the Venetian eighteenth-century masters', indicating that he is more interested in the quantity and speed of his production than in quality. Venetian artists from the eighteenth-century were at the time understood to be more of skilled producers of second-rate art than original artists. In the same line of thought we could understand the description of Grünewald as 'a fighting man' who is 'more receptive than creative', clearly questioning his creativity. At the same time, Hintze wrote that no other Nordic artist came as close to Matisse as Grünewald with his festal decoration, colourful fanfares, and rhythmical arabesque lines, occasionally even surpassing his teacher Matisse. 'Not for nothing is Grünewald a Semite,' Hintze concludes.²² Semite refers to members of a Middle Eastern language group, including Hebrew, and consequently once again points to Grünewald as of eastern or oriental origin, but, considering the conflation between language groups and racial and ethical classifications in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it also points at him as a Jew.²³ Hintze considered Grünewald's 'oriental colourfulness' and

²⁰ Bartel Hintze's wife Lilli Hintze noted in her diary that a group of Swedish art students had visited Helsinki and interviewed him, and that they had a 'Hintze club' with meetings discussing his book on modern art. Kruskopf, *En konstens världsman*, 66.

²¹ '[...] en Aladdinsnatur, mer receptiv än skapande, flödande av infall, produktiv som ingen annan, en snabbmålare av de venetianska 1700-talsmästarnas art, på en gång exotiker och mondän kosmopolit, djärv och hänsynslös i sin konst, och framför allt en stridens man, som ej ens inför sitt staffli alltid kunde undvika att förbliva polemiker.' Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, 75.

²² Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, 76.

²³ In the Swedish encyclopaedia *Nordisk familjebok. Uggelupplagan* from 1917 'semiter' (Semites) are in a narrow sense defined as Jews.

captivating rhythm as a natural outcome of his Semitic origin. While this *oriental* expression for Matisse was a cultivated skill it was, for Grünewald, according to Hintze, something unrestrained and primitive. His origin could also explain his productivity and the variation of the quality of his art.

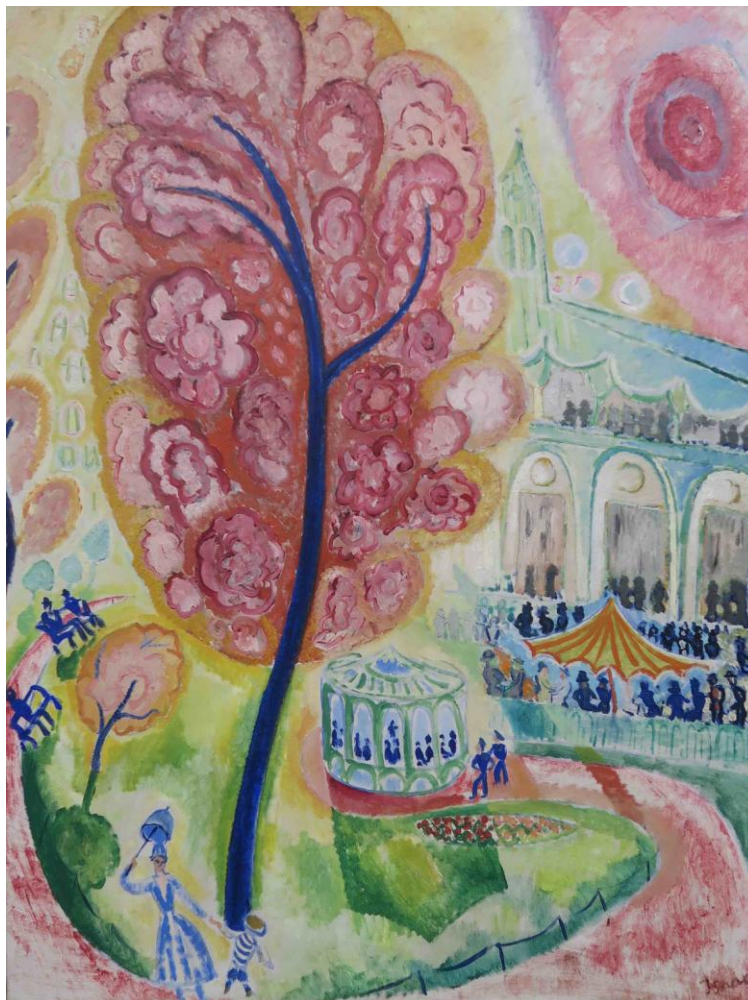


Figure 1 Isaac Grünewald, *Det sjungande trädet*, 1915, oil on canvas, 116 X 89,5 cm, Norrköping: Norrköpings konstmuseum. (Photo©Ludwig Qvarnström)

Of great importance here is that Hintze was predominantly positive to Grünewald's art. Hintze has included him into his art historical survey book, and compares him with one of the most important artists of that time. Matisse and Grünewald are presented in the classical art historical formula of father/son or teacher/student, and there is no doubt that he finds Grünewald an important contemporary artist. In 1934 he also invited Grünewald to participate in the exhibition *Modern svensk konst (Modern Swedish Art)* at Kunsthalle Helsinki, and Grünewald contributed with four paintings. But, even though Hintze was genuinely

positive in his characterization of Grünewald as one of Matisse's closest followers and presented him within a modernist narration, he denied that he possessed any individual creativity or originality. Nor could Hintze find any unifying line in his 'chameleon-like' development.²⁴ From that point of view Hintze describes Grünewald as one of the biggest question marks within contemporary art in Sweden. Herein lies his most damning critique of Grünewald. His chameleon character and lack of originality undermines any possibility of seeing him as genius in a Kantian sense, and within modernist art history it should be possible to identify a unifying thread running through the seemingly heterogeneous oeuvre of an artist. While the idea of a unifying subject has fallen into disfavour since the 1970s, it was a well-established modernist trope that art could only speak in the voice of the individual and original artist-subject, something Hintze had difficulties in seeing in Grünewald's oeuvre.²⁵

From a formal point of view, Hintze identifies Grünewald's colourfulness and captivating rhythm in the line of Matisse's modernism. As an internationally oriented artist, as cosmopolitan and exotic, Grünewald goes against the contemporary nationally oriented art, and is consequently positioned as an avant-gardist. But, in Hintze's characterization of Grünewald he also makes a clear connection between his temperament, expressive formal language and Semitic origin, revealing ideas of racial difference, and the use of an anti-Semitic rhetoric. When describing Grünewald as more of a highly productive fast painter than an original artist, he aligned himself with well-established ideas of Jews as greedy, commercial and lacking in creativity.²⁶ Helen Fein has listed the most common anti-Semitic stereotypes, and her first two examples are: 1) The Jew as a betrayer and manipulator, and 2) The Jew as an exploiter personifying usury or modern capitalism.²⁷ A 'chameleon-like' artist who is 'more receptive than creative' fits well into Fein's category 1, and Grünewald's productivity fits well into category 2. In Hintze's ambivalent characterization of Grünewald, there is thus a tendency to conflate the characterization of an avant-gardist and a Jew, at the same time undermining and strengthening Grünewald's position within his modernist narration.

²⁴ Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, 78.

²⁵ The well-known critique by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault of the unitary subject was a direct response to this modernist trope. Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author' (1968), in *Image, music, text*, trans. Stephen Heath, London: Fontana Press 1977; Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?' (1969), in Donald Preziosi, ed, *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. For a discussion on the modernist myth of originality, see Rosalind E. Krauss, 'The Originality of the Avant-Garde', in Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality and the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge & London: MIT Press, 1986.

²⁶ For a discussion of the Jewish lack of creativity, see Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, New York and London: Routledge, 1991, 128–129.

²⁷ Fein, 'Dimensions of Antisemitism...', 72.

The *oriental* Grünewald and *civilized* Matisse correspond with a dichotomy between east and west that is clearly expressed in Hintze's art-criticism from the 1920s. For Hintze, this was not a question of style but about civilisation, where the oriental culture risked replacing the classical tradition based on European culture. Even though the eastern way of thinking, which he also called 'Jewish-oriental', with its lack of nature, clarity and harmony, had enriched European art, he found it threatening.²⁸ From a Swedish point of view, Germany was in the early 20th century considered a sister nation with a shared cultural tradition, while France was considered the refined, but also foreign civilization, both of them important for the Swedish national identity.²⁹ Matisse is here representing this foreign but inspiring French civilisation, but, even though Grünewald is compared to Matisse, he could neither be French nor truly Swedish due to his Jewishness. In Hintze's art history, Grünewald enriches Swedish modernism with his colourful and exotic art, but as a Jewish modernist, this rootless character, he becomes aligned with the negative features of modernity – materialism and the mass market – and consequently endangers the social and national body.

Hintze often discusses different national artistic temperaments and in the first survey book compares, for example, French impressionism with German impressionism, a way of organizing art that is typical of handbooks.³⁰ Although this is an established practice in art historical handbooks, we have to remember that in the nineteenth century racism helped to give nationhood a basis in biology and art history was a cultural phenomenon that could be used to classify people into races or nations.³¹ In the first book, Hintze clearly states that his interest lies in what he called the 'pure human meaning' in art, and continues with a critique of contemporary formalism since, according to Hintze, art history is 'only superficially a history of formal development, but in reality a history of the human spirit.' The form is only the vehicle to bring forth the 'quinta essentia of life.'³² In his interpretations, there is a tendency to point to geographically and ethnically based 'essences' in line with the early formalists' connection between 'form' and 'mind'

²⁸ Hintze's art criticism from the 1920s has been studied by Pekka Suhonen, *Bertel Hintze ja moderni taide. Piirteitä 20-luvun kriitikontyöstä*, Taidehalli 77, Helsinki, 1977. Here I am referring to Kruskopf, *En konstens världsman*, 45.

²⁹ This is probably most clearly defined in the Swedish art critic August Brunius book *Färg och form. Studier af den nya konsten*, Stockholm: Norstedt, 1913. Especially the chapter 'Fransk färg och Tysk form' [French colour and German form].

³⁰ For a discussion on 'space and time created by the disciplinary gaze', see Robert S. Nelson, 'The Map of Art History', *Art Bulletin*, 79:1, 1997.

³¹ On the relation between culture and race, see e.g. Georg W. Stocking, Jr., 'The Turn-of-the-century Concept of Race', *Modernism/Modernity*, 1:1, 1994. On the relationship between racism and nationalism, see Etienne Balibar, 'Racism and Nationalism', in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, London and New York: Verso, 1991.

³² Hintze, *Modern konst. 1800-talet*, Stockholm: Lars Hökerbergs bokförlag, 1928, 7–8.

and its relation to the world, but Hintze seldom uses the openly racial rhetoric we find in his characterization of Isaac Grünewald.³³ When, for example, writing about the German impressionist Max Liebermann, he focuses on the sharp observations of reality and his ability to capture the moment, something revealing his connection to the northern German, Prussian tradition. He then discusses in what way Liebermann was influenced by French impressionism, but never abandons his German character.³⁴ Compared to several other art historians, as for example Josef Strzygowski (who was professor of art history at Åbo Akademi University in Finland between 1920 and 1925),³⁵ Hintze did not discuss Liebermann as an oriental character or as too cosmopolitan (a German maker of French art), typical of the anti-Semitic understanding of Liebermann as artist.³⁶ But, in the end, when comparing Liebermann with Max Slevogt, Hintze describes him as a 'Berlin Jew'.³⁷ When discussing another famous Jewish artist, Marc Chagall, Hintze immediately introduces him as a Jew from Liosno near Vitebsk.³⁸ According to Hintze, Chagall's art is '[...] mystical, surprising; it defies all western demands for logical unity and objectivity',³⁹ and in the end Hintze concludes that '[h]is artistically defects are, at least from a western perspective, obvious, but he has had what western people most of all have lost: the surprise at the wonder of life, that is not only the deepest vein for religions and philosophies, but also for art.'⁴⁰ Although Hintze does not use the word oriental, he clearly identifies Chagall as a non-western Jew. It seem as if Hintze cannot avoid reflecting on the artist's origin or ethnic background, and when it comes to Jews also their religion, but he does not consistently describe Jewish artists as cosmopolitan or oriental, as the case with Liebermann shows. Hintze never explicitly discusses Jewish art or defines any kind of Jewishness. But, by repeatedly pointing out the artist's Jewish background and describing Grünewald as oriental,

³³ David Summers has discussed the early formalists in 'Form', Nineteenth-Century Metaphysics, and the Problem of Art Historical Description', *Critical Inquiry* 15, 1989, 372–406.

³⁴ Hintze, *Modern konst. 1800-talet*, 146–148.

³⁵ For Josef Strzygowski's years in Åbo Akademi University, see Lars Berggren, 'Josef Strzygowski – en främmande fågel i Finland', in Renja Suominen-Kokkonen, ed, *The Shaping of Art History in Finland*, Helsinki: Society of Art History, 2007.

³⁶ Margaret Olin, *The Nation without Art. Examining Modern Discourses on Jewish Art*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001, 24.

³⁷ Hintze, *Modern konst. 1800-talet*, 149.

³⁸ Hintze introduces him as the 'lillryske juden' that is an old fashioned expression for 'Ukrainian Jew' although Chagall was from Belarus, Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, 252.

³⁹ '[...] gåtfull, överraskande, den trotsar alla västerländska krav på logisk enhetlighet och sakligt sammanhang.' Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, 253.

⁴⁰ '[h]ans konstnärliga brister äro, åtminstone ur västerländsk synpunkt sett, uppenbara, men han har ägt vad västerlandets människor mest av allt förlorat: den förvåning inför tillvarons under, som ej blott är religionens och filosofiens, utan även konstens djupaste källåder.' Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, 256.

he is connecting his line of thought with a long tradition of writing art historical handbooks. Nineteenth-century art historical handbooks often had a section explicitly devoted to Jewish art. The notion of Jews as 'Orientals' is found in the first art historical handbook, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* (1842), by Franz Kugler. The ancient Jews had an especial interest in external luxury, according to Kugler.

And so we know, that in their artworks, in greater or lesser degree, their main consideration was splendor and luxury, that namely they loved bright metallic decorations, and to cover their architectural interiors and also sculpture with expensive metallic materials; [and] that ornament of splendid colored, cleverly woven fabrics was continually found necessary to fit out these works.⁴¹

Although Kugler is discussing a different historical material, we can recognize the interest in ornamentation and splendid colours from Hintze's characterization of Grünewald. Albeit with modifications, the basic structure of Kugler's handbook prevails even today.⁴²

During the 1920s, Bertel Hintze was active within student politics, strongly attracted by right-wing ideas. Leaving his engagement in student life in 1931 Hintze also, according to his biographer Erik Kruskopf, left politics, which makes it difficult to follow his later political beliefs. But, according to Kruskopf, he later positioned himself politically increasingly towards a humanistic-liberal position.⁴³ Even though in his early writings in the 1920s Hintze could use a racial and nationalistic rhetoric, Kruskopf argues that he definitely refrained from using that kind of rhetoric from 1933 onwards. Later on in his career his international interest puts him in opposition to more nationalistically minded art historians in Finland, and later research has also showed that Hintze was much more politically engaged throughout his career than Kruskopf seems to be aware of.⁴⁴ Kruskopf's argumentation about Hintze's use of racial rhetoric is based on Hintze's engagement in the debate about the supposedly racial differences between Swedes and Finns. As I understand it, this is more a question about the position for the Swedish-speaking population in Finland and its relation to Sweden than a general discussion on racialist thinking. Although it seems to be difficult to follow Hintze's political beliefs or his personal views on Jews, it is clear from his writings on Grünewald, for instance, that he embraced the

⁴¹ Quoted from Margaret Olin, *The Nation without Art*, 12.

⁴² Karlholm, *Handböckernas konsthistoria*; Robert S. Nelson, 'The Map of Art History'; Mitchell Schwartz, 'Origin of the Art History'.

⁴³ Kruskopf, *En konstens världsman*, 45.

⁴⁴ Kruskopf, *En konstens världsman*, 76–77, 105. On Hintze's later political engagement, I am in debt to Maija Koskinen who describes Hintze as deeply politically engaged in her forthcoming PhD dissertation *Artistically regenerating and politically topical – Kunsthalle Helsinki 1928–1968*, at the University of Helsinki. Email correspondence with the author February 2, 2016.

widespread contemporary racial and anti-Semitic jargon. In his diary from 1935 he could call an impudent passport inspector a 'Jewish chinovnik',⁴⁵ and in another paragraph he describes how he had 'bargained as a Jew' in a negotiation.⁴⁶ Does this mean that Hintze was an anti-Semite? No, I do not think so. Hintze does not seem to use this kind of rhetoric later in his career, and he definitely took a stand against the Nazi regime when Norway was occupied in 1940. As part of his engagement for artists in Norway, he participated in arranging an exhibition of Finnish art in Stockholm in 1942, with the aim of sending the profit to Norway. The plan was to give the money to Landskommittén för Norgehjälpen, an openly anti-German organisation. Unfortunately, they never managed to send the money to Norway until 1947, after the war had ended.⁴⁷

Hintze's book was published in 1930, a couple of years before the role of anti-Semitism changed in the public debate in Sweden. Partly due to the political situation in Germany Swedish anti-Semitism was both radicalised within the extreme right wing politics, and severely criticised by others. During the 1930s, rhetoric similar to that found in Hintze's book became less obvious and later on, after the 1939–1945 war, more or less disappeared from Swedish art historiography. At the same time, the first written narration of early Swedish modernism with its specific structure of aesthetic and ideological values was in large part established and published in these years. This narration first takes form in the 1920s in the writings by art critics summarizing the first decades of the twentieth century.⁴⁸ Later, curators and art historians develop this narration in exhibitions, survey books (like the book by Hintze) and finally in the 1940s and 1950s the modernist narration is institutionalized in museums and academic writing.⁴⁹ But, how can we understand the anti-Semitic rhetoric in Hintze's writings, and in what way has it affected Swedish modernist art historiography?

Everyday anti-Semitism and the early reception

There is a strong link between the art critical and the art historical discourse that calls for a careful analysis. In mid-nineteenth century, the art historian and the artist departed on each other in their relationship to history, and soon art history emerged

⁴⁵ Chinovnik is a disparaging name for a Russian public servant or bureaucrat.

⁴⁶ Kruskopf, *En konstens världsman*, 31.

⁴⁷ Kruskopf, *En konstens världsman*, 116–117. Kruskopf is unclear in his description of this organisation, probably due to a conflation of two organisations, but I understand it as Landskommittén för Norgehjälpen, which in August 1942 affiliated with the new organisation Svenska Norgehjälpen.

⁴⁸ In, for example, Brunius, '1909 års män' and Blomberg, *Den nya svenska konsten*.

⁴⁹ The first article on early twentieth century Swedish art published in an academic journal was Johnny Roosval, 'Den levande konsten i historiens skåpfack', *Konsthistorisk tidskrift*, No. 1, 1938. In the 1950s several dissertations on early twentieth century art were published e.g. Lilja, *Det moderna måleriet*.

as an academic discipline. The professional art historians from that time onwards seldom work with contemporary art as part of their professional activity, even though they might show a great interest in contemporary art.⁵⁰ In Sweden, this professionalization of the art historian can be identified in the late-nineteenth century at the same time as we can see the emergence of a professional and influential art-criticism.⁵¹ This two-fold professionalization distinguishes art history from art criticism. The art historian lost his authority in the interpretation and evaluation of contemporary art, and instead the art critics became responsible for the description, analysis and evaluation of contemporary art. As the Swedish art historian Hans Hayden has expressed it: '[...] when it became necessary within, for example, education and the production of survey texts – art history became more or less dependent on the expertise within the field: in other words, the historiography of modernism itself.'⁵² When the art historians in mid-nineteenth century wrote the story of early modernism, they had to base their history writing on earlier art-critical debates and the art world's own gradual re-evaluation of the avant-garde. This is not the least important when it comes to the influence of nationalism and anti-Semitism on art historiography. Even though my analysis focuses on one individual, I understand this as being a structural phenomenon going back to the early academic institutionalization of art history, or, as Margaret Olin has described it '[...] the voice of anti-Semitism was built into the language along with nationalism and became part of the structure of art history, even where anti-Semitism was not the object.'⁵³ This is the reason why I find it very important to look carefully at the way in which the art historical discourse has taken over not only the aesthetic but also ideological system of norms from previous art critical discussions.

During the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, a widespread anti-Semitism impregnated European social life. This anti-Semitism knew nothing about Auschwitz-Birkenau and was in many cases ideologically and politically confused. In Sweden and also Finland this anti-Semitism is easily traced in for example the comic press with its more or less harmless and stereotypical ideas about Jews as liars, greedy, and incapable of creating anything original, etc. The Jew was, according to this conception, a nationally rootless individual, a cosmopolitan person threatening any national

⁵⁰ Hans Belting, *The End of the History of Art*, transl. by Christopher S. Wood, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, 13 f.

⁵¹ Lilja, *Det moderna måleriet*, 13.

⁵² '[...] då detta blev nödvändigt exempelvis inom undervisning och i framställning av översiktsverk – blev konstvetenskapen mer eller mindre hänvisade till expertisen på fältet: med andra ord till modernismens egen historiografi.' Hans Hayden, *Modernismen som institution. Om etablerandet av ett estetiskt och historiografiskt paradigm*, Stockholm: Symposion, 2006, 64.

⁵³ Margaret Olin, 'From Bezal'el to Max Liebermann. Jewish Art in Nineteenth-Century Art Historical Texts', in Catherine M. Soussloff, ed-, *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, 30.

identity. In his extensive documentation and analysis of the comic press in Sweden, the Swedish historian Lars M Andersson has argued for anti-Semitism as a hegemonic discourse in Swedish society during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Anti-Semitism was a self-evident part of the public debate and an important part of the construction of a cultural and national identity.⁵⁴ Although the political situation in Finland was different, especially the Finnish relationship with Russia, a similar anti-Semitic discourse is clearly visible.⁵⁵ The kind of manifestations Andersson studies can be called an everyday anti-Semitism or salon anti-Semitism, defined as the first level of anti-Semitism, which ends with the fifth level of holocaust, by British historian John C. G. Röhl.⁵⁶ Everyday anti-Semitism does not necessarily have to be connected to a specific economic, political or cultural sphere, but functions more on an unconscious level, as a general frame of reference visible in the turns of phrases in everyday communication. The anti-Semitic expressions in Bertel Hintze's handbook, and in the art critical discourse I will discuss below, I define as of the same kind of unreflecting everyday anti-Semitism.

The anti-Semitic rhetoric in Bertel Hintze's art historical survey of modern art is not unique and definitely not the only publication where Grünewald is described in this manner. Going through the art criticism about him, anti-Semitism is almost always lurking underneath the surface or an explicit part of the critical discourse.⁵⁷ We can find anti-Semitic expressions even in the earliest reviews of Grünewald's art, but the first big debate about his art and a debate where anti-Semitism plays an important part is the debate about the decoration of the civil marriage chamber in the Stockholm Law Courts 1912–1914. Grünewald was awarded a prize for his proposal for this decoration, but he did not win the competition. Instead, the much older and better established muralist Georg Pauli won, even though in the end none of them got the commission. This historical event has become very important as Grünewald's first major set-back among many other that followed him throughout his life, and the year when he became publicly known as one of our most radical avant-garde artists, the leading figure of Swedish expressionism.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Andersson, *En jude är en jude*, 14.

⁵⁵ In Finland, similar anti-Semitic manifestations can be traced in, for example, the magazine *Fyren*, see Forsgård, *Alias Finkelstein*, 89-113.

⁵⁶ John C. G. Röhl, *The Kaiser and his Court. Wilhelm II and the Government of Germany*, Cambridge 1994, 194 f; Andersson, *En jude är en jude*, 17. Andersson uses Röhl's term 'salon anti-Semitism', but I prefer the similar term 'everyday anti-Semitism' originating from Moshe Zimmerman and used in a Swedish context by Henrik Rosengren in Rosengren, *Judarnas Wagner*, 59.

⁵⁷ Isaac Grünewald's grandson Bernhard Grünewald has documented and presented the art criticism on Grünewald in *Orientalen. Bilden av Isaac Grünewald i svensk press 1909–1946*, Stockholm: CKM, 2011. Even though this clearly is not a scholarly work, it is a great source of ideas and empirical material.

⁵⁸ For a documentation and analysis of the competitions for the decoration of the marriage chamber in the Stockholm Law Courts and its historiography, see Ludwig Qvarnström,



Figure 2 Isaac Grünewald, *Triangel*, prize awarded full-size sketch for the decoration of the civil marriage chamber at Stockholm law courts, 1914, oil on canvas, 480 X 560 cm, Lund: Skissernas museum. (Photo©Skissernas museum)

In the art critical debate about the proposals for this decoration we find several expressions on the lack of originality in Grünewald's art. The well-known art critic Knut Barr described him as if:

[...] he seems in a high degree to lack fantasy, since everything he here achieves is an echo; where it is at its best, from antique vases and Pompeian painting, where it is at its worst, from the donkey Boronali's tail whisk, whose possibilities at the moment seem exhausted, that one could have the right to speak about her epigones.⁵⁹

The donkey Boronali refers to a joke made in Paris a couple of years earlier, and reported in the Swedish press. Some artists tied a brush to a donkey's tail and put it in paint. The painting this donkey made was later exhibited at the Independent

Vigselrummet i Stockholms rådhus och det tidiga 1900-talets monumentalmåleri. Historia, reception, historiografi, diss., Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2010.

⁵⁹ '[...] han i hög grad tycks sakna fantasi, ty allt vad han här presterar är efterklang; där det är som bäst från antika vaser och pompejanska målningar, där det är som sämst från åsnan Boronalis svansviftningar, vilkas möjligheter för närvarande äro så pass uttömda, att man kan ha rätt att tala om hennes epigoner.' Knut Barr, 'Giftasrummets dekorering', *Stockholms-Tidningen* 5 January 1914.

exhibition in Paris with the signature Boronali. In other words, Knut Barr is here pointing at Grünewald as not only lacking creativity but as also having the bad judgement to copy the work of a donkey. There are numerous examples like this criticising Grünewald for lacking originality, being too productive and obtrusive in promoting his art.

Not only the established art critics were engaged in the debate, but also the general public and some of the established intellectual leaders, like Axel Gauffin (1877–1964). He received his PhD in art history before he was appointed assistant at Nationalmuseum in Stockholm in 1908, and later, in 1925 he became superintendent at the museum, a post he held until 1942. Gauffin wrote three articles for the daily newspaper *Stockholms Dagblad* about Grünewald's proposal. Later, the well-known publisher and art historian Carl G. Laurin published the articles as an offprint, including a foreword by himself.⁶⁰ In the first article, Gauffin makes clear that Grünewald not only lacked originality but also advertised his art in the same way as ads for mass-produced wallpapers, clearly aligning Grünewald with materialism and mass marketing. In the third article, Gauffin starts out with an argument from a fictitious reader who says to Gauffin that '[d]on't you understand, that he [Grünewald] rubs his hands with delight every time you mention his name?'⁶¹ Even though Gauffin never speaks of Grünewald as a Jew, the idea of him as a mass-producing adman lacking the originality of a real artist is obvious and typical of the everyday anti-Semitism of its time. Rubbing his hands clearly indicates Grünewald as a salesman. Visually, Jews were often caricatured with special focus on their hands, usually big hands, indicating them as profiting middlemen.⁶² In Swedish, this becomes obvious since the Swedish word for 'middlemen' is *mellanhänder* (literal translation: middle hands).

But there is one more important element here. Grünewald never publicly answered Axel Gauffin, even though Gauffin was rather offensive. But, after the competition for the decoration of the marriage chamber was finished, in November 1914, Grünewald publicly complained about the negative result. With help from a lawyer, he complained about the voting system used by the competition committee.⁶³ This resulted in an outburst of reactions. In an article by one of the members in the committee, professor of literature Karl Warburg, Grünewald was criticized for seeking the help of a lawyer.

⁶⁰ Axel Gauffin, *Vigselrummet. En vidräkning med förord av Carl G. Laurin*, Stockholm: Norstedt, 1914.

⁶¹ Axel Gauffin, 'Vigselrummet III. Nämnden', *Stockholms Dagblad*, 1 Mars 1914.

⁶² Andersson, *En jude är en jude*, 106-108.

⁶³ This protest was published in a pamphlet, David Lewinson, *Vigselrummets dekorerings. Eva Bonniers donationsnämnds beslut, märkliga uttalanden, underlig omröstningsmetod och överraskande resultat*, Stockholm: Bröderna Lagerströms förlag, 1914.

It would have pleased me if with my vote I could have promoted a young ambitious artist's work. But, in any case, I wish he in the future could win his victories with his brush and not with his advocacy.⁶⁴

Grünewald is described as a bad loser who has to fight for his art with help from a lawyer and a loud voice instead of using his brush. The understanding of Grünewald as self-confident and a person always ready to fight for his art became a proof of his Jewish identity. This kind of reaction can be seen every time Grünewald opened his mouth throughout almost his entire career.⁶⁵ It also became an important part of Bertel Hintze's characterization of Grünewald when he, as already quoted above, described Grünewald as 'above all a fighting man, who not even in front of his easel could keep from being a polemist.'⁶⁶

In the negative reception of Isaac Grünewald's art there is a clearly traceable everyday anti-Semitism identifying him as a mass-producing, loud-voiced adman without any originality or creativity. This negative critique was, as I have argued elsewhere, an important part of nationalistic art criticism in early twentieth-century Sweden.⁶⁷ When Hintze included Grünewald in his modernist narration, and 'normal' art historiography, he used a similar description of him as an artist and a person. Hintze's text reveals the translocation of an anti-Semitic rhetoric from a basically negative and often disparaging art critical discourse to a well-received art historical handbook, and the creation of the narration of Swedish modernism. Even though Hintze, born in 1901, probably did not follow the art critical debate about the decoration of the marriage chamber in Stockholm Law Courts in 1913–1914, he definitely knew about the debate. In his handbook, he points out one genre where Grünewald could excel, and that was as a stage designer, a talent Grünewald showed already in his proposal for the decoration of the marriage chamber.

Already in his refused proposals for the decoration of the marriage chamber in Stockholm Law Courts (1912–1914) he had given a splendid proof of his decorative talent, and in them there was also 'an attempt at real monumentality' (Romdahl) [...]⁶⁸

⁶⁴ 'Det skulle glatt mig om jag med min röst kunnat främja en framåtsträvande ung konstnär's verk. Men i varje fall tillönskar jag honom att framledes vinna sina segrar med sin pensel, men ej med sin advokatyr.' Karl Warburg, 'Striden om vigselrummets dekorerung. Professor Warburg svarar hr Isaac Grünewald', *Dagens Nyheter*, 10 November 1914. The same article was also published in two other daily newspapers, *Stockholms Dagblad* and *Svenska Dagbladet*.

⁶⁵ Qvarnström, *Vigselrummet i Stockholms rådhus*, 348–353.

⁶⁶ Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, 75.

⁶⁷ Qvarnström, *Vigselrummet i Stockholms rådhus*, 212–235.

⁶⁸ 'Redan i de refuserade förslagen till utsmyckning av vigselrummet i Stockholms rådhus (1912–1914) hade han givit ett glänsande prov på sin dekorativa talang, och i dem fanns

As he clearly shows in this quote, Hintze was not the first to point to Grünewald's 'decorative talent' with reference to his proposal for the marriage chamber, a talent later released in his stage designs. Romdahl, whom he quotes here, is the Swedish professor of art history Axel Romdahl (1880–1951), who had published a popular introduction to modern art in 1926, where he makes the same reference to the marriage chamber.⁶⁹ Grünewald had a great success with his set designs for Saint-Saën's *Simson and Delila*, a drama from the Old Testament, at the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm in 1921. Hintze also mentions his set designs for *Anthony and Cleopatra* at Stockholm Concert Hall in 1926. In these stage sets, Hintze argued that '[...] Grünewald [got] unlimited play for the oriental richness of fantasy, and the exotic delight in colours that he had brought with him into Swedish art.'⁷⁰ A similar connection was made earlier by one of Hintze's role models Jens Thiis in his book *Nordisk kunst idag (Nordic Art Today)* from 1923. Thiis based his book on articles he had previously written about a large Nordic exhibition in Gothenburg in 1923. There he characterized Grünewald as an intelligent colourist, but not consistent when scrutinized in detail, and recommended that those who wanted to see '[...] Grünewald's decorative fantasy and orgiastic colourfulness fully developed' should go to the nearby exhibition for the Swedish textile industry where Grünewald had made large decorative and colourful woollen appliqués.⁷¹ No one can deny Grünewald's success as a stage designer and monumental painter in the 1920s, but when entering into the field of the scenographer, or decorative painter as it was called at the time, Grünewald entered into a more commercial part of the art field,⁷² a part of the field where Grünewald's 'showmanship', as Hintze described it, was more accepted.⁷³ Aside from Hintze's use of the words 'oriental' and 'exotic', I would disagree that the tendency in the texts by Thiis, Romdahl and Hintze to emphasize Grünewald's decorative talent in connection to his work as scenographer is part of an everyday anti-Semitism. At the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that, when they position Grünewald within this commercial part of the art field, the anti-Semitic preconception of him as aligned with materialism and the mass-market is strengthened.

därtill "en ansats till verklig monumentalitet" (Romdahl).' Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, 77.

⁶⁹ Romdahl, *Det moderna måleriet*. Hintze's quote is from page 108.

⁷⁰ '[...] Grünewald [fick] obegränsat spelrum för den österländska fantasirikedom och den exotiska färgglädje, som han bragt med sig i svensk konst.' Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, 77–78.

⁷¹ Jens Thiis, *Nordisk kunst idag*, Kristiania: Gylendalske bokhandel, 1923, 26.

⁷² Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, translated by Susan Emanuel, Cambridge: Polity press, 1996, 121 ff.

⁷³ Hintze, *Modern konst. 1900-talet*, 78.



Figure 3 Interior photography from the exhibition for the Swedish textile industry at the Gothenburg exhibition 1923. Three of Isaac Grünewald's woollen appliqués are visible on the right wall. (Photo©Region- och stadsarkivet i Göteborg)

Oriental Jew and/or avant-garde artist

In the early twentieth century nationalistic art-critical discourse, an artist representing foreign or international ideas, endangered the social and national body. Isaac Grünewald was not only challenging the establishment as a Jew but also as an avant-garde artist. His international orientation, lack of nationalistic expressions and attacks on the institution of art early positioned him as one of the foremost avant-garde artists in Sweden. He became a perfect target for anti-Semitic attacks by conservative critics in the service of nationalism. When pointing to him as an oriental, exotic and foreign element in Swedish art, the conservative critics not only dismissed him as anti-nationalistic, but also identified him as a Jew. At the same time, this identification of him as a foreign element in combination with the frequent comparison with international artists such as Matisse positioned him as an avant-garde artist. During the 1920s and 1930s when nationalism gradually lost its importance for artists and critics in Sweden and Matisse became an acknowledged and respected artist, the understanding of Grünewald also changed.⁷⁴ His avant-garde position in the 1910s was later acknowledged in a positive sense, especially in

⁷⁴ When Nationalmuseum in Stockholm arranged a large exhibition with Henri Matisse in 1924, he was met by almost all critics as a venerated modern artist. Lärkner, *Det internationella avantgardet*, 253.

the 1930s, in texts such as Bertel Hintze's handbook on modern art, exhibitions, and his appointment as professor at the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts in 1932. In this process, his earlier exposed position was to his advantage, due to the earlier connotations in the characterizations of an avant-gardist and Jewish artist, as expressed in the early criticism and later in Hintze's survey book. What makes Hintze's book especially revealing here is the mixture of anti-Semitic expressions with his appraisals of Grünewald's avant-garde and modernist position. In other words the translocation of the anti-Semitic rhetoric in Hintze's text is still easily recognised. Of great importance here is that the everyday anti-Semitism is basically unconscious and has not been considered to be problematic until recently. The effect is that, although the rhetoric has changed and the openly anti-Semitic expressions have more or less disappeared in Swedish art historiography, many of these problematic characterisations of Grünewald have remained.

Analysing later art historiography on Grünewald, we seldom find any directly anti-Semitic expressions or racial expression like Hintze's, but we still can trace similar ideas in the characterisations of Grünewald. When the art historian Bengt Lärkner in his dissertation from 1984 describes the debate about the decoration of the marriage chamber, he writes that this debate '[...] definitely placed Grünewald in the position as the best known Swedish painter' and then continued by saying that, in this debate, 'Grünewald managed through his energetic actions to make himself the central figure.'⁷⁵ But Grünewald never placed himself in this position, since he never directly participated in this public debate until after the competitions, and then he was rather forced into this position by contemporary art critics. When Lärkner later writes about Swedish artists as propagandists, he compares Grünewald with Gösta Adrian Nilsson, usually called GAN, and concludes that '[h]is marketing methods for himself and his art were more spectacular and much more effective than GAN's. Whatever Grünewald undertook aroused attention and most of the time battle.'⁷⁶ Although Lärkner gives examples of Grünewald and GAN as propagandistic artists, he never manages to show in what way Grünewald is more spectacular and effective, even though he points to Grünewald's own actions as the reason for this spectacular attention. But I would argue that here Lärkner is actually passing down a well-established characteristic of Grünewald that has lost its connection with its anti-Semitic origin.

We find an even later and also more problematic example in a very successful double biography of Sigrid Hjertén and Isaac Grünewald from 2007 by the author and documentary filmmaker Anders Wahlgren. On the cover of the first

⁷⁵ '[...] definitivt förde Grünewald upp till positionen som landets mest kände målare. [...] lyckades Grünewald genom sitt energiska agerande framstå som dess huvudperson.', Lärkner, *Det internationella avantgardet*, 123.

⁷⁶ '[h]ans metoder att marknadsföra sig och sin konst var mera spektakulära och avsevärt mera effektiva än GAN's. Vad Grünewald än företog sig väckte det uppmärksamhet och för det mesta också strid', Lärkner, *Det internationella avantgardet*, 132.

edition of this book we find a drawing made by Isaac Grünewald, and Wahlgren begins the book with following sentences:

'Today Mr. and Mrs. Grünewald open an exhibition at Hallin's art shop', was written under a small portrait of Sigrid Hjertén and Isaac Grünewald in Dagens Nyheter on April 12, 1913. Isaac early understood the importance of marketing. That is why he drew himself and his wife in profile.⁷⁷

Without any argumentation, Wahlgren identifies a small drawing over a brief unsigned article informing readers about the opening of the artists-couple's exhibition as marketing arranged by Grünewald. What is interesting here is that, even though Wahlgren in this book frequently discuss the anti-Semitic attacks on Grünewald, he cannot resist describing Grünewald as an excellent adman and a very, almost too, productive artist. Wahlgren seems to be totally unaware of the origin of the characterisations of Grünewald he is repeatedly passing down to us. I am certain that there is no anti-Semitic intention behind this kind of description of Grünewald. But it seems as if we have created a blind spot in our art historiography during the post-war era in the way that anti-Semitic rhetoric has become integrated within our 'normal' art history.

In conclusion, I would say that widespread everyday anti-Semitism played an important part in the early formation of the Swedish modernist narration, at least when it comes to one of the foremost Swedish avant-garde artists of the first half of the twentieth century. I also want to argue that anti-Semitism in a way has in retrospect contributed to our idea of Grünewald as the foremost avant-garde artist. My point here is that Grünewald of course suffered severely from contemporary anti-Semitism, but in retrospect this transformed or translocated anti-Semitic rhetoric has strengthened his avant-garde position, despite the obvious ambivalence in the evaluation of his art. Since the general characterization on Grünewald fits too well into our modernist narration, with its need of propagandistic leading figures, the voice of anti-Semitism seems unnoticed to have been built into the language and structure of Swedish art historiography. This article is the first attempt to ascertain what is of anti-Semitic origin within this vocabulary and what is an actual interpretation of Grünewald's artistic achievements. The voice of anti-Semitism still needs to be analysed and problematized, not least when it comes to the Swedish art historiography from the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century.

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⁷⁷ Wahlgren, Sigrid & Isaac, 9.

Ludwig Qvarnström

The Jewish modernist: Isaac Grünewald in Bertel
Hintze's art history

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