

Prof. Dr. **Günter Figal**, University of Freiburg, Germany

Günter Figal is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Freiburg. His philosophical work has mainly been devoted to three topics. Figal's philosophical concern is a realistic version of hermeneutics. As he has extensively pointed out in his book *Gegenständlichkeit* (2006, second edition 2018), in English, *Objectivity* (2010), interpretation and understanding are not to be taken as merely subjective achievements or as events of meaning, but primarily as responses to the potential and challenge of hermeneutic objects. Figal's notion of hermeneutic objects is phenomenological. He conceives the correlation between hermeneutic objects and interpretation respectively understanding as a structure, in which the appearing is prior to its experience. He also shows that and how appearance is enabled by space. He discusses the spatial foundation of appearance in *Gegenständlichkeit*, but elaborates it further in *Unscheinbarkeit. Der Raum der Phänomenologie* (2015). Space is the "inconspicuous" that allows things to appear and thus to become objects of intentionality. In order to conceive and describe the very status of such objects more concretely, Figal, develops his version of philosophical aesthetics, predominantly in his book *Erscheinungsdinge* (2010), in English, *Aesthetics as Phenomenology: The Appearance of Things* (2015). As Figal emphasizes it, one character of art is particularly relevant for phenomenology: artworks are primarily perceptible and, as such, primary, primordial appearances because as such, they withdraw from easy ascriptions of meaning and allow experiencing the primordial perceptibility of things, which mostly is concealed by everyday life in a world dominated by meaning.

In recent years, Figal has further elaborated his hermeneutic, phenomenological, and aesthetic philosophy by concentrating on the problem of primordial appearance and exploring more concretely the spatiality of such appearance. This, again, has led him to an in-depth occupation with artworks, the spatial character of which is particularly distinctive, namely vessels and buildings. He has published a book on Japanese ceramics, namely *Gefäße als Kunst* (2019), and three books on architecture, *Ando. Raum Architektur Moderne* (2017; English version as e-book), *Japan und der Westen. Kengo Kumas Meditation House im Kranzbach* (2020) and *Ästhetik der Architektur* (2021). These books include Figal's own photographs and thus present him also as a photographer.

Since 2015 Günter Figal's manuscripts have been archived by the German Archive for Literature (Deutsches Literaturarchiv), Marbach am Neckar.