

**Teo Dascalakis and the art of Painting,  
or the Punishment of William Tell**  
Based on the painting *Passion*, 2010

by Denise - Chloe Alevizou, Dr. art historian

The painting refers to the known legend of the rebel William Tell. A national hero of Switzerland and a universal symbol against tyranny, William Tell had denied submission to the irrational demand made by the Austrian vögt Gessler by not bowing to the tyrant's hat on a raised pole, and was punished for his defiance with the sentence to shoot with his crossbow at an apple placed on the head of his own son, Walter. In the painting, a small white radiant egg-shaped form captivates our attention in an almost disturbing way. It is the apple which has been transformed into an egg. A symbol of rebirth and fertility in Near Eastern civilizations, of resurrection in Christianity and of the secret of the elixir of life, or the imprisoned powers of transformation of base metals into noble ones for the alchemists, we see it here, sitting on top of a dog's head. The large and hairy dog symbolizing unselfish love, faith and companionship and reminding us of Odysseus's faithful dog Argos, plays the role of Walter. It is represented lying down in a landscape setting, with a mountain rising in the background. Undisturbed by our presence, it is looking at us in trust and devotion, cast still by Dascalakis's paint brushes in perfect motionlessness. And thankfully so, since the egg is precariously balanced on the tilted head of the dog. The question now raised is whether, as spectators focused on the shiny white egg opposite us, we shall venture to shoot our arrows. Beyond the overt political message of a call for an awakening recalling the verses of the *Tellenlied* that 'in the hour of need the courageous rebel will always return', the reference to Tell's legend may also be seen as a metaphor for the role of the artist. Standing opposite his canvas which like the dog in the painting sits motionless awaiting his master's decisive move, the painter may thus be parallelized to the punished Tell who with quick judgment and faith in his eye-sight, uses careful manipulations as he courageously aims at the center of an *Ovum Philosophicum*, which when cracked open will let its lifegiving substance pour out, thereby setting free the powers of transforming the common mind into an enlightened one. It is for this reason then, that in this work, a small white radiant egg-shaped form captivated our attention from the outset, in an almost disturbing way...

The painter Teo Dascalakis (\*1968, Germany) studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich.  
He lives and works in Athens, Crete and Berlin.