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Abstracts

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Body and the Arts: The Need for Somaesthetics

Richard Shusterman

This essay examines how somaesthetics is related to the field of fine arts, though the scope of somaesthetics is indeed wider, extending into all practices of life in which we can enhance our perception and performance through improved somatic self-use and self-knowledge. I first explain the project of somaesthetics and why it is needed to counterbalance the strong tendencies in modern aesthetics, beginning with its founder Alexander Baumgarten, to neglect or reject the body's role in aesthetic experience. Because Hegel is a crucial figure in this anti-somatic tradition, I then critically examine his ranking of the arts in terms of their relation to material embodiment. Using his classificatory scheme heuristically to highlight the body's wide-ranging role in the different arts, the essay demonstrates how somaesthetics can improve our understanding and performance of that role and thereby improve the arts and our aesthetic experience.

The Faculty of Feeling

Ken-ichi Sasaki

The paper attempts to elucidate the nature and action of feeling: a subject corresponding to the original conception of aesthetics by Baumgarten. It analyzes several different uses of the verb "to feel" in order to bring out the difference between simple perception and feeling. Feeling, it emerges, is an overtone given to a perception that has something particular, or ineffable, about it. With reference to Nelson Goodman's notion of exemplification, and the Kantian conception of reflective judgment, feeling is defined as a resonance that arises spontaneously in us, in response to the perceptive stimuli of an object, from the depth of our memory as the store of past experience. Lastly, the paper explains the basis of freshness of feeling, and the individuality and universality of feeling.

The (Bio)technological sublime

Jos de Mul

The notion of the sublime, which since the nineteenth century is one of the dominant aesthetic categories, is strongly connected with (the artistic representation of) overwhelming nature. In this article it is argued that in the course of the 20th century the sublime increasingly becomes entangled with the experience of technology. However, in the age of biotechnologies, such as genetic modification and synthetic biology, the sublime regains a natural dimension. Taking Eduard Kac's

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Alba fluo rabbit (a 'transgenic' bunny, that resulted from the injection of green fluorescent protein of a Pacific jellyfish into the egg of an Albino rabbit) as an example, it will be argued that in the age of biotechnology the difference between nature, technology and art will gradually vanish, and new dimensions of the sublime will become manifest.

Body, Brain and Beauty: The Place of Aesthetics in the World of the Mind

Zdravko Radman

This article represents a programmatic attempt to relate the subject of aesthetics to the wider scope of issues concerning the nature of the human mind. In addition to a criticism of the aesthetics' isolationism, it provides an outline of orthodox cognitivism and also of the more recent philosophy of embodiment, and sees the latter as a natural context for aesthetic concerns. The author argues that not only may the results of brain research be instructive for a more profound understanding of beauty but also that the subtlety and richness of aesthetic studies can be insightful for empirical studies of the neural system. That beauty is not reducible to brain processes does not mean that a possible lesson from neuroscience has no explanatory value for aesthetics; at the same time the article affirms the stand that the aesthetic, being one of the most profound traits of the human mind, cannot be fully captured in empiricist terms. What is needed is a multidisciplinary exchange that requires a shift from the comfort of the traditional views and an opening that might prove potent for the aesthetics of the present times which should not deprive itself of an ambition to participate in deciphering the 'mysteries' of the mind, cognition, and action.

The Art in Knowing a Landscape

Arnold Berleant

The arts can contribute to an intimate, engaged experience of landscape, and this process can itself be construed as an art. Experiencing landscape through the arts and as an art, the art of environmental appreciation, offers a clearer understanding of landscape, of environment, and of art, as well as what it is to "know" in the context of environmental experience. This essay offers a new fabric for understanding the relation of art and landscape by combining a fresh understanding of four threads: art, environment, landscape, and knowing through appreciation. It shows how the loose-knit texture they form can be spread metaphorically over a particular landscape in such a way that the landscape will fill the fabric and the fabric integrate the landscape.

Aesthetics of Urban Design

Heinz Paetzold

In the essay Aesthetics of Urban Design it is argued that contemporary aesthetics should have a base in the design of the city. It is in the everyday life of the city that people can train, exercise, improve and enlarge their aesthetic sensibilities. Given this context, two different approaches have to be distinguished. On one hand Lewis Mumford praised the medieval city as leading to the "dilation of the senses". This is the historical approach to the question. On the other hand, however, urban design could play an important role in reconstructing the aesthetic sensibility especially

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today. Different reasons are relevant here. Since we can' t presuppose that in the time after postmodernity people easily find access to the aesthetics, urban life could function as a new beginning. City life in many ways makes us acquainted with the aesthetic. The architecture of the houses, the layout of the street pattern or the atmospheres of a square have to be mentioned here. The relevance of urban design for the foundation of aesthetics can in different ways be argued from pragmatism' s connecting the art more closely with the everyday life. John Dewey did so. But also neo-Marxism' s idea of "sublating" art by realizing its promises in everyday life is relevant here. The essay argues that the slums, which are to be found all over the world sets some limits to the thesis that aesthetics, today, originates from urban design.

Contemporary Meaning of European Landscape

Raffaele Milani

Landscape is analyzed here principally in terms of its aesthetic value and function. As an expression of a sentimental response it is concerned not only with natural beauty but also the world of human beings, since it has always been integral to the creativity of our visionary sensibility. In it we find ethical truth since we celebrate not only the wildness of nature but also the life-space that unifies human beings and the site of the contingent and the possible, that which Aristotle referred to as endekhomenon. Modern history serves as a starting point for an examination of the present significance of the landscape in Europe. The image of its countless particulars and nature's "spiritual physiognomy" seem to respond to the full spectrum of our most intimate emotions; we are convinced that something that transcends the vast panorama of discrete elements must exist, namely the landscape. It is more than the sum of the parts, the individual fragments of our perception scattered along the continuum of our sensibility or the attraction of mental processes. It is the spirit of an infinite and magical connectedness of forms. The notion of landscape and beautiful landscape develops both in history and in individuals, bound up with the rhythm of lines and surfaces that human beings invent almost instinctively. It is the outcome of the art of culture, the poesis of individuals and communities.

Philosophy and Art: Changing Landscapes for Aesthetics

Curtis L. Carter

Part I of this essay will examine how the interplay between philosophy and art over the past century is reflected in the aesthetic theories of four leading Twentieth century aestheticians: Walter Benjamin, Merleau-Ponty, Gilles Deleuze, Arthur Danto. The philosophers' theories are linked to the developments in art most directly related to their respective approaches to problems in aesthetics. Part II will explore selected non-philosophical social and technological developments that are in the process of altering the course of contemporary art today. Among these are globalization, the art market, social/political issues, popular culture, virtual reality, and new manifestations of the *avant-garde*. Key factors that warrant consideration for future developments in aesthetics are identified in the hope that today's and future aestheticians will begin to consider what changes are required in aesthetics to address these new developments in art.

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The Wheel of Fortune vs. the Mustard Seed: A Comparative Study of European and Chinese Painting

Jianping Gao

The difference between European and Chinese traditions of painting has been widely discussed. This study argues that this difference can be seen in the different use of copybooks: a source from which many interesting theories can be developed. The paper compares several medieval European books, including Villard de Honnecourt's Constructions: The Wheel of Fortune, with the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting from China, and argues that, while the Europeans lay emphasis on geometric forms and the mathematical laws behind them, the Chinese learn painting in the manner of practicing calligraphy, paying more attention to the way of making lines and dynamic structures. The author argues that this divergence between the Chinese and Europeans in painting is based on their different views on the nature of creation.

Aesthetics and *Bildung*

Pauline von Bonsdorff

The article approaches the educational potential of aesthetics and the arts by reviving the notion of *Bildung* and suggesting an interpretation that emphasizes both its social character and the role of artworks and other aesthetic expressions. *Bildung* is a dialogic process where human relationships are crucial both for the exchange and the birth of insights. Artworks are described as images (*Bilde*), which act as intermediaries and points of reference in expressing, communicating and negotiating cultural values. In developing the argument, Immanuel Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgment is read together with his ideas on enlightenment, highlighting the social and political character of judgment. Wilhelm von Humboldt's discussion of the aesthetic and social dimensions of *Bildung* provides another starting point. Two examples of contemporary artistic processes are used to indicate the educational and political relevance of art in our time.

The Sense of Earthiness: Everyday Aesthetics

Katya Mandoki

A lady, a mare, a lire and a vase are the examples chosen by Hippias Major to reply Socrates' questions on beauty. These illustrate the fact that the debate on issues related to aesthetics began from the most concrete situations and basic items we may encounter day by day. In this paper I will consider two rudimentary events lacking any of the qualities traditionally considered aesthetic; items that have no elegance, grace or style and are not original, creative or expressive. These plain, simple objects and situations do not intend to incite contemplation because they do not conform to any model of art or beauty nor manifest syntactic or semantic complexity. I am referring to the most prosaic and yet capable of inducing a deep aesthetic response akin to that conveyed by traditional aesthetic objects. A difficult case to argue but for a quality which, despite being entirely ignored by western aesthetic theory, is still worth of regard. This quality may be defined as earthiness or the tellurian, a sensuous and symbolic celebration of sheer materiality in everyday life.

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Aesthetics and Art: From Modern to Contemporary

Aleš Erjavec

The author sketches the development of the relationship between art and aesthetics in the past four decades. He takes as his starting point the change that artists established in the sixties in relation to philosophical aesthetics. He argues that 1980 represented a historical threshold as concerns transformations both in art and its philosophy. He then discusses three theories of art and aesthetics—Nicolas Bourriaud's "relational aesthetics" from the nineties, Jacques Rancière's aesthetic project from the following decade, and the very recent "theory of contemporary art" developed by Terry Smith. In the author's opinion, these three aesthetic or art theories not only disprove the pervasive opinion that contemporary aesthetics understood as philosophy of art is once more separated from contemporary art and the art world, but also manifest their factual import and impact in contemporary discussions on art.

The role of art in history and the Art of Future

Gerhard Seel

The main thesis of this paper is that art has an important role to play in the fulfillment of the promises of historical progress and that this progress is the necessary condition of the flourishing of the art of the future. We make progress in economic history because we improve the productivity of our labor by inventions and cooperation. Its aim is the liberation from the necessity of labor. However, the leisure time we thus gain has to be filled with meaningful activities. Here art has to play a central role.

To show this I have to determine what art is. In my view, art is a close cousin of playing games. Arts and games have in fact a common ancestor: the feast. Both are executed freely according to self-invented rules. This explains why arts and games yield us extraordinary, quasi divine, pleasures.

Therefore indulging in art and playing games allows us in the best possible way to fill our ever larger leisure time with meaningful activities. However, this role belongs to the art of the future, i.e. the art after the end of the history of art. I explain the features of this art and its role in my last chapter.

The Artistic Disenfranchisement of Philosophy

Carole Talon-Hugon

After modernist formalism, contemporary artworks are often assigned a critic function: they are said to "question", "reconsider", "call for reflection" on the world… Such formulas refer to the Socratic foundation of philosophy, whereas the philosopher was the one who brought to light the fragility of opinions, discovered prejudices, undid ordinary beliefs and convictions that were not grounded in reason.

Thus, after the preeminence of philosophy on art, as in the philosophical systems that dominated the 19th century, we observe nowadays a predominance of art on philosophy's very task, that is, critical questioning. This paper attempts to reconstruct the historical origin of this new theoretical attitude, and to evaluate its pertinence through an examination of the conditions under which art can carry out such critical programme.

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Aesthetics Without the Aesthetic?

James Kirwan

The following paper highlights the way in which contemporary analytic or Anglo-American aesthetics neglects the topic of aesthetic experience. The paper briefly examines the historical background to this situation. It also looks at how analytic aesthetics' preoccupation with the topic of art is largely responsible for this neglect. It concludes by arguing that most of the fundamental problems in aesthetics, including those that contemporary analytic aesthetics does concern itself with, must remain intractable without a better understanding of aesthetic experience per se.

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