

Contemporary Aesthetics (Journal Archive)

Volume 6 *Volume 6 (2008)*

Article 3

2008

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Recommended Citation

(2008) "Recent Publications," *Contemporary Aesthetics (Journal Archive)*: Vol. 6 , Article 3.
Available at: https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_contempaesthetics/vol6/iss1/3

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Recent Publications

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Postmodernism, Postsocialism, and Beyond
by Aleš Erjavec. (Newcastle: Cambridge
Scholars Publishing, 2008), 196 pp.

The book focuses on three interrelated issues; the relationship between modernism and postmodernism; visibility and visual culture; and the relation between the East (former European socialist countries) and the West as regards aesthetics, globalization, culture, and the mechanisms of the presentation and representation of contemporary visual art.

In the first part the author reflects upon some of the less noticed issues of modernism and its dominant theoretical narratives regarding art: its privileging of truth and its obfuscation of some segments of European art. The art and culture discussed throughout this volume predominantly concern the visual. For this reason, in the second part visual culture and its uneasy relationship with art and art history are an object of reflection, a topic which is then complemented with that of the embodied eye in the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty. Photography, its relation to truth, and the problematic expectation that an ontology of photography is possible or necessary is the theme of the closing chapter of this part of the book. In the third part the author offers a global view on philosophy of art, visual culture, and the institutions that disseminate them.

At the Edges of Vision: A Phenomenological Aesthetics of Contemporary Spectatorship, by Renée van de Vall.
(Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 179 pp.

In *At the Edges of Vision*, Renée van de Vall re-examines the aesthetics of spectatorship in terms of new-media art and visual culture. The aesthetic experience of visual art has traditionally been described in terms of the distanced contemplation and critical interpretations of the work's form and representational content. Recent developments in installation, video and computer art have stressed the bodily and affective engagement of the spectator and question the model of spectatorial distance for more traditional art forms as well. But what does this development entail for art's potential for reflective, imaginative, and experiential depth? Is art still capable of providing a critical counterpoint to the ubiquitous presence of sensation, the short-lived media imagery when it speaks to the senses rather than to the mind?

In a thorough examination of examples from painting, film,

installation art, interactive video, and computer art, van de Vall argues for a tactile and affective conception of reflection, linking philosophy and art. Looking at a Rembrandt self-portrait and navigating through an internet art work have in common that both types of work rely on a playful, rhythmically structured, sensuous and embodied reflexivity for the articulation of meaning. This sensuous dimension of playful reflexivity is just as important in philosophical thought as the transcendental condition for genuine, open-ended reflection. Drawing on the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Lyotard and Deleuze on the one hand and on new-media theory on the other, van de Vall develops a performative phenomenology of aesthetic reflection, visuality, and visual art, in order to rethink art's ethical and political relevance in present-day digital-media culture. [Adapted from publisher's release.]

Shakespeare's Ideas: More Things in Heaven and Earth, by David Bevington. (West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008) 234 pp.

This book examines the deep moral and intellectual commitment displayed in Shakespeare's plays and poems. The plays and poems have evoked debate about an array of topics: sex and gender, politics and political theory, writing and acting, religious controversy and issues of faith, skepticism and misanthropy, and closure. Indeed, what we call 'Shakespeare' means not only the plays and poems themselves but the body of responses they have elicited over four centuries, and we can explore the philosophy of Shakespeare as the work of a great poet, a great dramatist, and a great mind.

Aesthetics: Key Concepts in Philosophy, by Daniel Herwitz. (New York, NY: Continuum, 2008).

Aesthetics: Key Concepts in Philosophy offers an account of the central theories and ideas encountered in aesthetics. The text is thematically structured and covers taste, aesthetic judgment, aesthetic experience and the definition of art. The book stresses modern and contemporary problems, including the problem of new media, and considers the contributions of Hume, Kant, Hegel, Derrida, Nietzsche, Dewey, Wollheim, stressing the importance of their historical and artistic contexts.

Art and Ethical Criticism, edited by Garry L. Hagberg. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).

This is a collection of twelve essays on the complex network of interconnections between the ethical and aesthetic realms. Areas explored include ways of describing ethical content in the arts, the value of literary case-studies for moral understanding, distinct ethical issues that arise in connection with our exposure to visual art, artifacts, photography, and architecture, and the significance of moral relations as depicted in music and its performance.

Presence in Play: A Critique of Theories of Presence in the Theatre, by Cormac Power. (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2008), ix, 228 pp.

Theatre as an art form has often been associated with notions of presence. The 'live' immediacy of the actor, the unmediated

unfolding of dramatic action and the 'energy' generated through an actor-audience relationship are among the ideas frequently used to explain theatrical experience, and all are underpinned by some understanding of 'presence.' Precisely what is meant by presence in the theatre is part of what *Presence in Play* sets out to explain. While this work is rooted in twentieth century theatre and performance since modernism, the author draws on a range of historical and theoretical material. Encompassing ideas from semiotics and phenomenology, *Presence in Play* puts forward a framework for thinking about presence in theatre, enriched by poststructuralist theory, forcefully arguing in favor of 'presence' as a key concept for theatre studies today.

Online information can be found at

www.rodopi.nl/functions/search.asp?BookId=CLA+12

Movement as Meaning in Experimental Film, by Daniel Barnett. (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2008), xiv, 224 pp.

Using the analogy of the movie projector, Barnett deconstructs all communication acts into functions of interval, repetition and context. He describes how Wittgenstein's concepts of family resemblance and language games provide a dynamic perspective on the analysis of acts of reference. He then develops a hyper-simplified formula of movement as meaning to discuss the process of reference as it occurs in natural language, technical language, poetic language, painting, photography, music and, of course, cinema. Barnett then applies his analytic technique to an original perspective on cine-poetics based on Paul Valery's concept of omnivalence, and to a projection of how this style of analysis, derived from analog cinema, can help us clarify our view of the digital mediasphere and its relation to consciousness. Informed by the philosophy of Quine, Dennett, Merleau-Ponty as well as the later work of Wittgenstein, among others, he uses the film work of Stan Brakhage, Tony Conrad, A.K. Dewdney, Nathaniel Dorsky, Ken Jacobs, Owen Land, Saul Levine, Gregory Markopoulos Michael Snow, and the poetry of Basho, John Cage, John Cayley and Paul Valery to illustrate the power of his unique perspective on meaning.

Online information can be found at

www.rodopi.nl/functions/search.asp?BookId=CLA+13

Integral Drama: Culture, Consciousness and Identity, by William S. Haney II. (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2008), 184 pp.

Integral Drama critically explores modern drama in the context of Indian aesthetics described in the *Natyashastra* and the vast, new interdisciplinary field of consciousness studies. It also focuses on how Indian theatre aesthetics has influenced modern drama theories and practice, and the extent to which this has promoted the development of higher consciousness in actors and audience. According to Indian aesthetics, *rasa* or aesthetic rapture is refers to bliss innate in the Self that manifests even in the absence of external sources of happiness. Overall, this book explores the relation between modern theatre and higher states of mind and demonstrates that one of the key purposes of theatre is to help the spectator experience the pure consciousness event described

in consciousness studies by theorists such as Anna Bonshek, Ken Wilber, Robert K. C. Forman, Jonathan Shear, Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe, Ralph Yarrow and others. *Integral Drama* will appeal not only to drama theorists but also to teachers and students of acting, as well as an educated general audience interested in understanding the aesthetic experience of theatre. The book serves as a bridge between the ideas and experiences long understood through Indian philosophy and the many questions raised by modern theatre studies.

Cultural Appropriation and the Arts, James O. Young. (Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).

Cultural appropriation is a pervasive feature of the contemporary world. Works of art from indigenous cultures are held by many metropolitan museums. White musicians have appropriated musical styles from African-American culture; artists have appropriated motifs and stories from aboriginal cultures. Novelists and filmmakers from one culture have taken as their subject matter the lives and practices of members of other cultures.

Can cultural appropriation result in the production of aesthetically successful works of art? Is cultural appropriation in the arts morally objectionable? The practice of cultural appropriation has given rise to important ethical and aesthetic questions that have been widely debated by anthropologists, archaeologists, lawyers, art historians, advocates of the rights of indigenous peoples, literary critics, museum curators, and others. At root, however, these questions are philosophical. This book offers a systematic investigation of the moral and aesthetic issues to which cultural appropriation gives rise.

Leibniz on Art and Music: Their History, Theory, and Science (Leibniz, die Musik und die Künste: ihre Geschichte, Theorie und Wissenschaft), Ed. Sander Wilkens (München - Salzburg: Musikverlag Bernd Katzbichler, 2007), pp. 230.

Written mostly in German, this volume consists of an extended study by Sander Wilkens and Norbert Miller on the subjects in the title. This

is followed by six papers, two of which are in English: Patrick Riley, "Music as All-Embracing Metaphor: Leibnitz on Harmony," and Charles Nussbaum, "Aesthetics and the Problem of Evil."

Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology, Eds. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. (Blackwell Publishing: Malden, MA, 2008), 684 pp.

Covering nearly 2,500 years of theory and analysis, this massive anthology offers a comprehensive collection of readings on aesthetics and philosophy of art. From Plato's *Ion* to work by contemporary philosophers of art, *Aesthetics A Comprehensive Anthology* offers a broad array of classic texts that reveal the development of Western philosophical thought about art and the aesthetic. Its range of recent work is comprehensive although limited to analytic aesthetics.

Aesthetics and Morality, Elisabeth Schellekens. (Continuum International Publishing Group: New York, NY, 2007), 162 pp.

Aesthetic and moral value are often seen to go hand in hand. They do so not only practically, such as in our everyday assessments of artworks that raise moral questions, but also theoretically, such as in Kant's theory that beauty is the symbol of morality. Some philosophers have argued that it is in the relation between aesthetic and moral value that the key to an adequate understanding of either notion lies. *Aesthetics and Morality* explores the main ideas and debates at the intersection of aesthetics and moral philosophy. It inquires into such questions as: Must a work of art be morally admirable in order to be aesthetically valuable? How, if at all, do our moral values shape our aesthetic judgments and vice versa? Shellekens invites the reader to reflect on the nature of beauty, art and morality, and provides the philosophical knowledge to assist such reflection.

Everyday Aesthetics, Yuriko Saito. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 273 pp.

Yuriko Saito provides a detailed investigation into our everyday aesthetic experiences and reveals how our everyday aesthetic tastes and judgments can exert a powerful influence on the state of the world and our quality of life. By analyzing a wide range of examples from our aesthetic interactions with nature, the environment, everyday objects, and Japanese culture, Saito illustrates the complex nature of seemingly simple and innocuous aesthetic responses. She discusses the inadequacy of art-centered aesthetics, the aesthetic appreciation of the distinctive characters of objects or phenomena, responses to various manifestations of transience, and the aesthetic expression of moral values, and she examines the moral, political, existential, and environmental implications of these and other issues.