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## Recent Publications

*Contemporary Aesthetics* does not publish book reviews. However, to inform our readers of new publications of interest, we do publish brief descriptions extracted from information provided by the publishers. These notices do not necessarily represent the views or judgment of this journal. Readers are invited to send us such information about books they think will interest other readers of *CA*.

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*Black Sabbath and Philosophy: Mastering Reality*, edited by William Irwin (New Jersey: Wiley Publishing, November, 2012), 280 pp.  
ISBN 9780470657140

Ear-splittingly loud, for some, and with lyrics that speak of apocalypse, death, and destruction, listening to Black Sabbath is not for everyone. In fact, some would tell you that the band worships Satan and that their songs promote violence and even try to convince teenagers to commit suicide. But is that really true, or could it be that those who tune into the masters of heavy metal know something about themselves and life that those of us who find it a terrifying experience are missing out on? In his new book, William Irwin (die-hard Sabbath fan and philosopher) and his team of fellow contributors travel deep into the heart of the band's music and lyrics to reveal that there's plenty more to the dark masters of reality than a whole lot of noise.

Drawing on the works of philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, each chapter discusses and debates the range of thought-provoking topics and themes that tell us more about who Black Sabbath is, why they created the sound they did, and what lies hidden in the music and lyrics of their songs. Whether it's an analysis of war, pollution, poverty, drug abuse, or dealing with the problems of modernity, what emerges is that each song, like philosophy itself, is a quest to discover truth and a means of facing up to reality.

*The Critical Pulse*, eds. Jeffrey J. Williams and Heather Steffen, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 276 pp.  
ISBN 9780231161152

This anthology asks thirty-six literary and cultural critics to elaborate on the nature of their profession. Essays address literature and politics, with some focusing on the state of higher education and others concentrating on teaching and the fate of the humanities. All reflect the critics' personal, particular experiences. Reflecting on the past, looking forward to the future, and committed to the power of productive critical thought, this volume proves the value of criticism for today's skeptical audiences. These credos defend the function of criticism in contemporary society and exhibit its vitality in the era after theory.

Arnold Berleant, *Aesthetics beyond the Arts: New and Recent Essays* (Ashgate, 2012), 222 pp.  
ISBN 978-1-4094-4134-2

Taking the view that aesthetics is a study grounded in perception, the essays in this volume exhibit many sides of the perceptual complex that is the aesthetic field and develop them in different ways. The essays reinvigorate our understanding of such arts as music and architecture; they range across the natural landscape to the urban one; they reassess the place of beauty in the modern environment and reassess the significance of the contributions to aesthetic theory of Kant and Dewey; and they broach the kinds of meanings and the larger understanding that aesthetic engagement with the human environment can offer. Written over the past decade, these original and innovative essays lead to a fresh encounter with the possibilities of aesthetic experience, one that has constantly evolved, moving in recent years in the direction of what Berleant terms "social aesthetics," which enhances human-environmental integration and sociality.

David Boersema, *Philosophy of Art: Aesthetic Theory and Practice* (Westview Press, 2013), 360 pp.  
ISBN 9780813347196

This volume offers a range of mostly contemporary readings with introductions around three broad areas of philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology, and value theory. Concerns are raised about what is expressed, how it is expressed, and why it is expressed. Chapters on the artist, the audience, and the artwork are applied to the final chapters on the specific types of art. The differences between art and science as well as the relationship of art and society provide a refreshing discussion of overlooked areas in philosophy of art.

"Aesthetics and the Senses," eds. Cynthia Freeland and David Boersema, (*Essays in Philosophy*, Vol. 13, Issue 2, Article 1, July 2012).

This special issue of *Essays in Philosophy* reflects the intersection of recent epistemological and neuroscientific studies with more traditional areas of aesthetics, such as the nature of interpretation, definitions of beauty, audience responses to art, and art made in non-traditional media. The art forms mentioned in the discussions vary from installation art to dance, and from musical experimentation and modern literature to film. The subjects covered range from some of the "big questions" such as how to interpret meaning in art and the nature of beauty to more specific studies of the interaction among our senses or cross-modal perception. The issue closes with two articles focusing on the artistic medium of film, exploring, first, our vestibular responses to film, and second, how stereoscopic vision is employed and affected in viewing 3D films. Also included are some brief critical reflections on the preceding papers.

Jennifer A. McMahon, "Aesthetic Autonomy and Praxis: Art and Language in Adorno and Habermas," (*International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 19(2), 2011), 155-175.

Aesthetic autonomy has been given a variety of interpretations, which in many cases involve a number of claims. Key among them are: (i) art eludes conventional conceptual frameworks and their inherent incompatibility with invention and creativity; and (ii) art can communicate aspects of experience too fine-grained for discursive language. To accommodate such claims one can adopt either a convention-based account or a natural-kind account. A natural-kind theory can explain the first but requires some special scaffolding in order to support the second, while a convention-based account accommodates the second but is incompatible with the first. Theodor W. Adorno attempts to incorporate both claims within his aesthetic theory, but arguably each is cancelled out by the other. Art's independence of entrenched conceptual frameworks needs to be made compatible with its communicative role. Jürgen Habermas, in contrast, provides a solution by way of this theory of language. McMahon draws upon the art practice of the contemporary Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson in order to demonstrate this.

Robyn Ferrell, *Sacred Exchanges: Images in Global Context* (Columbia University Press, March 2012), 192 pp.  
ISBN 9780231148801

As the international art market globalizes the indigenous image, it changes its identity, status, value, and purpose in local and larger contexts. Focusing on a school of Australian Aboriginal painting that has become popular in the contemporary art world, Robyn Ferrell traces the influence of cultural exchanges on art, the self, and attitudes toward the other.

Aboriginal acrylic painting, produced by indigenous women artists of the Australian Desert, bears a superficial resemblance to abstract expressionism and is often read as such by viewers. Yet to see this art only through a Western lens is to miss its unique ontology, logics of sensation, and rich politics and religion. Ferrell explores the culture that produces these paintings and connects its aesthetic to the brutal environmental and economic realities of its people. From here, she travels to urban locales, observing museums and department stores as they traffic interchangeably in art and commodities.

Ferrell ties the history of these desert works to global acts of genocide and dispossession. Rethinking the value of the artistic image in the global market and different interpretations of the sacred, she considers photojournalism, ecotourism, and other sacred sites of the western subject, investigating the intersection of modern art and postmodern culture. She ultimately challenges the primacy of the "European gaze" and its fascination with sacred cultures, constructing a more balanced intercultural dialogue that deemphasizes the aesthetic of the real championed by western philosophy.

Ruth Illman, *Art and Belief, Artists Engaged in Interreligious Dialogue* (Equinox Publishing, Ltd., 2012), 235 pp.  
ISBN 9781845539665

*Art and Belief* explores communication between faiths through an examination of contemporary artistic practice. The book discusses how a range of artists, all active, formulate their worldview and what motivates them to engage in dialogue. The artists interviewed include Jordi Savall, Susanne Levin, Marita Liulia, Chokri Mensi, Cecilia Parsberg, and Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt. Together, these artists are engaged in a wide range of artistic forms and practice and come to dialogue from diverse religious positions. The aim of this book is to question the assumptions of interreligious dialogue as a largely intellectual exercise in defining the religious "other" and to explore dialogue as a manifestation of interpersonal ethics.

Paul Crowther, *The Phenomenology of Modern Art Exploding Deleuze, Illuminating Style* (Imprint: Continuum, July 2012), 296 pp.  
ISBN 9781441142580

As a philosophical approach, phenomenology is concerned with structure in how phenomena are experienced. *The Phenomenology of Modern Art* uses phenomenological insights to explain the significance of style in modern art, most notably in Impressionism, Expressionism, Cezanne and Cubism, Duchampian conceptualism and abstract art. Paul Crowther explores this thematic approach in a new way, addressing specific visual artworks and tendencies in detail and introduces a new methodology - post-analytic phenomenology. It is this more critical, post-analytic orientation that allows the book to utilize some unexpected phenomenological resources. Gilles Deleuze, rarely associated with phenomenology, in fact employs an overriding phenomenological orientation in his focus on modern art. Crowther uses Deleuze's important phenomenological insights as a starting point and goes on to develop arguments found in two other thinkers, Nietzsche and Merleau-Ponty, as well as addressing those figures and tendencies in relation to whom twentieth-century critical appropriations of Kant have been most influential. Accompanied by illustrations, the book offers the first sustained phenomenological approach to modern art.

Diana Boros, *Creative Rebellion for the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Public and Interactive Art to Political Life in America* (Palgrave Macmillan, April 2012), 222 pp.  
ISBN-10: 0230338798 ISBN-13: 978-0230338791

Employing political philosophy to argue the need for social and public art projects to be a part of the everyday lives of Americans, Boros creates a new synthesis of philosophical ideas to support the political value of public art. The author endeavors to add to the ongoing discussions regarding the foundations of democracy, engages in groundbreaking new ways the works of key political philosophers, and promotes public art as a way to re-invigorate our everyday public experiences, and to re-engage people in their communities

Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently- A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (Routledge, March 2012), 258 pp.  
ISBN 9780415543835 ISBN 9780415543828

*Seeing Differently* offers a history and theory of ideas about identity in relation to visual arts discourses and practices in Euro-American culture, from early modern beliefs that art is an expression of an individual, the painted image a "world picture" expressing a comprehensive and coherent point of view, to the rise of identity politics after WWII in the art world and beyond. The book is both a history of these ideas (for example, tracing the dominance of a binary model of self and other from Hegel through classic 1970s identity politics) and a political response to the common claim in art and popular political discourse that we are "beyond" or "post-" identity. In challenging this latter claim, *Seeing Differently* critically examines how and why we "identify" works of art with an expressive subjectivity, noting the impossibility of claiming we are "post-identity" given the persistence of beliefs in art discourse and broader visual culture about who the subject "is," and offers a new theory of how to think this kind of identification in a more thoughtful and self-reflexive way.

Ultimately, *Seeing Differently* offers a mode of thinking identification as a "queer feminist durational" process that can never be fully resolved but must be accounted for in thinking about art and visual culture. Queer feminist durationality is a mode of relational interpretation that affects both "art" and "interpreter," potentially making us more aware of how we evaluate and give value to art and other kinds of visual culture.

Jarmo Valkola, *Thoughts on Images: A Philosophical Evaluation* (ZetaBooks, March 2012), 374 pp.  
ISBN 9786068266220 ISBN 9786068266237

Assuming that images are not merely our projections onto the world, what are they? First of all, we are living in an era in which visual images and the visualizing of things that are not necessarily visual has accelerated so dramatically that the global circulation of images has become an end itself, especially through Internet. Related to this, the context of the images is now wide and open for new forms of interpretation.

Nowadays images are more prone to circulation, changed contexts, and remaking. An image can slip nimbly between the realms of desire and the everyday, dream and wakefulness, subjective and collective memory, but also an image can be a world whose experience of the real is, in actuality, constantly and imperceptibly shifting between these categories.

*Thoughts on Images* is a metatheoretical, and in some sense also metapractical account of how we can approach the role of the image in our contemporary visual and media culture. We are living in a visual and pictorial culture and the contemporary culture is deeply immersed in changing cultural

and technological forms. The important question is raised as how far new media and communication techniques do actually determine the culture they actually exist within. The significance of the images in today's world is greater than ever. Consequently, images have to be studied in a variety of ways and using a wide range of methods and approaches. Images are everywhere around us. In front of the images we have to make choices between the surface of the image and the virtual world it refers to. The perception of the images is not just the processing of the information but also a psychic experience and not straight comparative with the information contained in the pictorial image.

Jorge J. E. Gracia, *Painting Borges, Philosophy Interpreting Art Interpreting Literature* (SUNY Press, 2012), 322 pp.  
ISBN 9781438441771

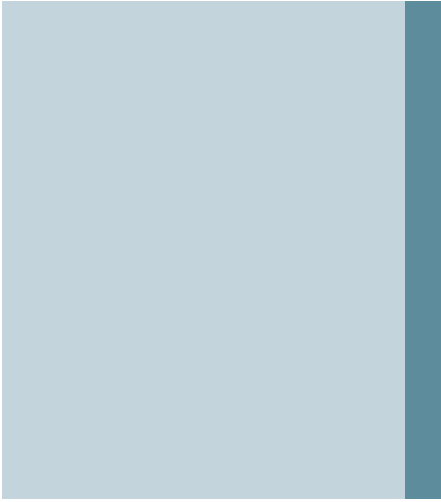
In *Painting Borges*, Jorge J. E. Gracia explores the artistic interpretation of fiction from a philosophical perspective. Focusing on the work of Jorge Luis Borges, one of the most celebrated literary figures of Latin America, Gracia offers original interpretations of twelve of Borges's most famous stories about identity and memory, freedom and destiny, and faith and divinity. He also examines twenty-four artistic interpretations of these stories—two for each—by contemporary Argentinean and Cuban artists such as Carlos Estévez, León Ferrari, Mirta Kupferminc, Nicolás Menza, and Estela Pereda. This philosophical exploration of how artists have interpreted literature contributes to both aesthetics and hermeneutics, makes new inroads into the understanding of Borges's work, and introduces readers to two of the most vibrant artistic currents today. Color images of the artworks discussed are included.

Noël Carroll, *Living in an Artworld* (Evanston Publishing, [2012]), 388 pp.  
ISBN 9781583742204

*Living in an Artworld* is a collection of reviews, overviews, and theoretical essays on dance, performance art, theater, and visual art. Written mostly between the mid-nineteen seventies and the eighties in publications such as *Artforum*, *The Soho Weekly*, and *Dance Magazine*, the essays cover the avant-garde arts in New York during that period as a complex, interrelated artworld. Carroll analyzes and describes the works on their own terms, but also places them within the context of larger movements, including artistic and cultural tendencies that influenced choreographers, performance artists, and painters alike.

Stephen Davies, *Musical Understandings* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 221 pp.  
ISBN 9780199608775

*Musical Understandings* presents an engaging collection of essays on the philosophy of music, including how music



expresses emotion and what is distinctive to the listener's response to this expressiveness; the modes of perception and understanding that can be expected of skilled listeners, performers, analysts, and composers, and the various manners in which these understandings can be manifest; the manner in which musical works exist and their relation to their instances or performances; and musical profundity. As well as reviewing the work of philosophers of music, a number of the chapters both draw on and critically reflect on current work by psychologists concerning music. The collection includes new material, a number of adapted articles which allow for a more comprehensive, unified treatment of the issues at stake, and work published in English for the first time.