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## Recent Publications

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Monique Roelofs, *The Cultural Promise of the Aesthetic* (Continuum, March 2014), 224 pp.  
ISBN 9781472528834

Aesthetic desire and distaste prime everyday life in surprising ways. Monique Roelofs casts a much-needed light on the complex mix of meanings our aesthetic activities weave into cultural existence.

Anchoring aesthetic experience in our relationships with persons, places, and things, this book explores aesthetic life as a multimodal, socially embedded, corporeal endeavor. Highlighting notions of relationality, address, and promising, this study shows these concepts at work in visions of beauty, ugliness, detail, nation, ignorance, and cultural boundary. Unexpected aesthetic pleasures and pains crop up in sites where passion, perception, rationality, and imagination go together but also are in conflict. Bonds between aesthetics and politics are forged and reforged.

Cross-disciplinary in outlook, and engaging the work of theorists and artists ranging from David Hume to Theodor W. Adorno, Frantz Fanon, Clarice Lispector, and Barbara Johnson, *The Cultural Promise of the Aesthetic* lays open the interpretive web that gives aesthetic agency its vast reach.

*Analyzing Art and Aesthetics*, eds. Anne Collins Goodyear and Margaret A. Weitekamp (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2013), 297 pp.  
ISBN 9781935623137

This ninth volume of the *Artefacts* series explores how artists have responded to developments in science and technology, past and present. Rather than limiting the discussion to art alone, editors Anne Collins Goodyear and Margaret Weitekamp also asked contributors to consider aesthetics: the scholarly consideration of sensory responses to cultural objects. When considered as aesthetic objects, how do scientific instruments or technological innovations reflect and embody culturally grounded assessments about appearance, feel, and use? And when these objects become museum artifacts, what aesthetic factors affect their exhibition? Contributors found answers in the material objects themselves. This volume reconsiders how science, technology, art, and aesthetics impact one another.

*Gimme Shelter: Global Discourses in Aesthetics*, eds. Jos de Mul and Renée van de Vall, *International Yearbook of Aesthetics*, Vol. 15, 2011 (Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 217 pp.

ISBN 9789089645982

*Gimme Shelter: Global Discourses in Aesthetics* contains a series of reflections on the impact of globalization on the arts and the aesthetic reflection on the arts. The authors - fifteen distinguished aestheticians from all over the world - discuss a variety of aesthetic questions brought forth by the process of globalization: How do artistic practices and aesthetic experience change in response to these developments? How should we articulate these changes on the theoretical level? When reflections on the significance of art and aesthetic experiences can no longer pretend to be universal, is it still possible to lay claim to a wider validity than merely that of one's own particular culture? What type of vocabulary allows for mutual exchanges and understandings when different traditions meet without obliterating local differences? Is there a possibility for a creative re-description of globalization? And is there a meaning of 'the global' that cannot be reduced to universalism and unification? Can we seek shelter in a legitimate way?

*The Pursuit of Comparative Aesthetics. An Interface between the East and West*, eds. Mazhar Hussain and Robert Wilkinson (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2013), 264 pp.  
ISBN 0754653455

Comparative aesthetics is the branch of philosophy that compares the aesthetic concepts and practices of different cultures. The way in which cultures conceive of the aesthetic dimension of life in general and art in particular reveals profound attitudes and beliefs which themselves make up an important part of the culture in question.

This anthology of essays by internationally recognized scholars in this field brings into one volume important research in comparative aesthetics, from classic early essays to previously unpublished contemporary pieces. Ranging across cultures and time periods as diverse as ancient Greece, India, China, Japan, and the modern West, the essays reveal both similarities and deep differences among the aesthetic traditions concerned. In the course of these expositions and comparisons, there emerges the general conclusion that no culture can be fully grasped if its aesthetic ideas are not understood.

*20th Century Aesthetics in Poland. Masters and Their Followers*, ed., Krystyna Wilkoszewska (Warszawa: Semper, 2013), 292 pp.  
ISBN 9788375071399

Aesthetics understood as the philosophy of the fine arts has always been an object of lively interest in Poland. Although

the beginnings of academic aesthetics in Poland date back to the first half of the 19th century, it flourished in the period between the World Wars in the 20th century. This was when the giants of aesthetics – Władysław Tatarkiewicz, Roman Ingarden, Stanisław Ossowski, and Henryk Elzenberg – appeared and continued to pursue their interest in aesthetics after the Second World War.

Moreover, a lively interest in the problems of aesthetics was manifested by art and literary critics as well as by artists who combined their artistic practice with theoretical reflection. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz Jr. – called Witkacy – and Władysław Strzemiński were outstanding artists of the first half of the 20th century representing the formalist current, and were the authors of original theories of art – the theory of Pure Form and the theory of Unism, respectively. Leon Chwistek, a mathematician, an artist, and a philosopher, was the author of the conception of the plurality of realities in art. Through their works and lectures, they were all teachers of subsequent generations of Polish aestheticians. Their followers include Stefan Morawski and Tadeusz Pawłowski who reached high positions in aesthetics. Aesthetic theories were assimilated and further developed within their related domains: in the theory of music (Zofia Lissa), in architecture (Julian Żórawski), in pedagogy (Stefan Szuman), and in the history of art – Jan Białostocki. What is more, this contribution does deserve attention. In the 20th century, Władysław Tatarkiewicz, Roman Ingarden, and later Stefan Morawski enjoyed great fame. Some of their works were published abroad and translated into various languages. The output of other authors, however, is also important enough to be preserved from oblivion. Polish aesthetics is characterized by the fact that it was the artists themselves who formulated the theories. This book is a collection of essays on these and other central figures in 20th century Polish aesthetics.

*Nature and the City. Beauty is taking on a New Form*, eds. Jale Erzen and Rafaele Milani (Yearbook of the International Association for Aesthetics Proceedings of the Bologna Conference, June 2012), 475 pp.  
ISBN 9788860252753

The city, too, is landscape. We can leave it by going into nature and exchanging the urban for the rural, but we can also enter the city to live within the architecture and contemplate its forms. Every architectural structure is a landscape and promotes an educational or paedematic relationship between spirit and the environment. Our gaze and our bodies activate a certain way of contemplating that promotes the interchange between the external perception of the physical world and an internal seeing, which is the psychic perception of the visual image. There is a close relationship between the aesthetic experience of the natural environment and that of the urban landscape. In the same way that humankind lives on the earth so, too, it lives in the city.

This volume approaches the theme from various perspectives, such as 'nature/culture,' 'city as human nature,' 'ecology and the city,' symbols and metaphors, domesticated nature, nature interiorized, parks and natural environments, and other related

issues.

*Ethics, Design and Planning of the Built Environment*, eds. Claudia Basta and Stefano Moroni (Springer, 2013), 224 pp. ISBN 978-94-007-5245-0

*Ethics, Design and Planning of the Built Environment* consists of original contributions in research areas shared by planning theory, architectural research, design and ethical inquiry. The contributors gathered in 2010 at the Ethics of the Built Environment seminar organized by the editors at Delft University of Technology. Both prominent and emerging scholars presented their researches in the areas of aesthetics, technological risks, planning theory and architecture. The scope of the seminar was highlighting shared lines of ethical inquiry among the themes discussed, in order to identify perspectives of innovative interdisciplinary research. After the seminar all seminar participants have elaborated their proposed contributions. Some of the most prominent international authors in the field were subsequently invited to join in with this inquiry.

The book bridges these disciplinary domains without privileging any normative perspective, in doing so offering broad yet essential critical instruments to a wide audience. It establishes new lines of inquiry for, in particular, investigating values as design factors in a domain in which this theme has found less rigorous definition in comparison to others (e.g. IT technology and industrial design). It offers a set of rigorous theoretical perspectives on urgent topics with regards to planning (risks, aesthetics, duties and rights of users, etcetera) through which both scholars and practitioners can gain valid critical instruments to approach real planning cases.

Thomas M. Alexander, *The Human Eros* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 436 pp. ISBN 9780823251216

*The Human Eros* explores themes in classical American philosophy, primarily the thought of John Dewey but also that of Ralph Waldo Emerson, George Santayana, and Native American traditions. Alexander's primary claim is that human beings have an inherent need to experience meaning and value, a "Human Eros." Our various cultures are symbolic environments or "spiritual ecologies" within which the Human Eros seeks to thrive. This is how we inhabit the earth.

Encircling and sustaining our cultural existence is nature, yet Western philosophy has not provided adequate conceptual models for thinking ecologically. Alexander introduces the idea of "eco-ontology" to explore ways in which this might be done, beginning with the primacy of Nature over Being and including the recognition of possibility and potentiality as inherent aspects of existence. He argues for the centrality of Dewey's thought to an effective ecological philosophy. Both "pragmatism" and "naturalism," he shows, need to be contextualized within an emergentist, relational, nonreductive view of nature and an aesthetic, imaginative, nonreductive

view of intelligence.

Xin Wu, *Patricia Johanson and the Re-Invention of Public Environmental Art, 1958-2010* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 259 pp.  
ISBN 9781409435440

This book addresses the issue of translation between visual arts and landscape design in the 50-year career of Patricia Johanson, an important artist in the second half of the twentieth-century. Examining the artist's search for an "art of the real" as a member of the post-World War II New York art world, and how such a pursuit has led her from painting and sculpture to public garden and environmental art, Xin Wu argues for the significance of the process of art creation, challenging the centrality of art objects.

Following Johanson's artistic development, from its formation in the 1960s American art scene to the very present day, across the fields of art, architecture, garden, civil engineering and environmental aesthetics, it investigates the process of creation in a transdisciplinary perspective, and reveals a view of art as a domain of exploration of key issues for the contemporary world. The artist's concept of nature is highlighted, and particular impacts of Chinese aesthetics and thought unveiled. Based on extensive analysis of unpublished private archives, Xin Wu offers us the first comprehensive scholarly interpretation of Patricia Johanson's oeuvre, including drawings, paintings, sculptures, installations, garden proposals, and built and unbuilt projects in the United States, Brazil, Kenya, and Korea.

Jill Bennett, *Practical Aesthetics: Events, Affects and Art After 9/11* (I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2012), 256 pp.  
ISBN 9781780761459

Practical Aesthetics brings a pursuit, long seen as rarefied and indulgent, out of the ivory tower and down to Ground Zero. It is a new account of art's rootedness in the social world and of the value of aesthetics to contemporary society. Beginning with the cultural watershed of 9/11, Jill Bennett explores artistic developments in relation to current events to argue that understanding aesthetics is as vital to social and political theory as it is to the arts. Taking as its starting-point a definition of art as the critical, self-conscious manipulation of media, Bennett examines a wide range of events, from the "War on Terror" to the football World Cup, to elucidate how aesthetic perception works in a social field, a process that begins with the rich emotional content of the visual imagery with which we are constantly bombarded. Now more than ever, Bennett argues, understanding how what we see informs what we do is not merely an artistic endeavor but one that is fundamental to our very being.

Gordon C. F. Bearn, *Life Drawing: A Deleuzian Aesthetics of Existence* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 342 pp.

ISBN 9780823244812

In the lineage of Nietzsche, *Life Drawing* develops a fully affirmative Deleuzian aesthetics of existence. For Foucault and Nehamas, the challenge of an aesthetics of existence is to make your life, in one way or another, a work of art. In contrast, Gordon C. F. Bearn argues that art is too narrow a concept to guide this kind of existential project. He turns instead to the more generous notion of beauty, but he argues that the philosophical tradition has mostly misconceived beauty in terms of perfection. Heraclitus and Kant are well-known exceptions to this mistake, and Bearn suggests that because Heraclitean becoming is beyond conceptual characterization, it promises a sensualized experience akin to what Kant called free beauty. In this new aesthetics of existence, the challenge is to become beautiful by releasing a Deleuzian becoming: becoming becoming. In this context, Bearn's readings of philosophical texts by Wittgenstein, Derrida, Plato, and others are of interest in their own right.

Christopher Menke, *Force: A Fundamental Concept of Aesthetic Anthropology*, trans. Gerrit Jackson (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 111 pp.  
ISBN 9782823249732

This book reconceives modern aesthetics by reconstructing its genesis in the eighteenth century between Baumgarten's *Aesthetics* and Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. *Force* demonstrates that aesthetics, and hence modern philosophy, began twice. On the one hand, Baumgarten's *Aesthetics* is organized around the new concept of the "subject"—as a totality of faculties, an agent defined by capabilities, one who is able. Yet an aesthetics in the Baumgartian manner, as the theory of the sensible faculties of the subject, immediately faces a different aesthetics: the aesthetics of force. This conceives the aesthetic not as sensible cognition but as a play of expression propelled by a force that, rather than being exercised like a faculty, does not recognize or represent anything because it is obscure and unconscious: the force of what in humanity is distinct from the subject. The aesthetics of force is thus a thinking of the nature of man: of aesthetic nature as distinct from the culture acquired by practice. It founds an anthropology of difference between force and faculty, human and subject.

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.

*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.