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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*.

Jos de Mul, *Destiny Domesticated. The Rebirth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Technology* (SUNY Press, 2014), 358 pp.
ISBN 9781438449715

Destiny Domesticated analyzes contemporary technological society through the lens of Greek tragedy and investigates three ways Western civilization has tried to tame fate: the heroic affirmation of fate in the tragic culture of the Greeks, the humble acceptance of divine providence in Christianity, and the abolition of fate in modern technological society. Against this background, Jos de Mul argues that the uncontrollability of technology introduces its own tragic dimension to our culture. Considering a range of literary texts and contemporary events, and drawing on twenty-five centuries of tragedy interpretation from philosophers such as Aristotle, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, literary critics George Steiner and Terry Eagleton, and others, de Mul articulates a contemporary perspective on the tragic, shedding new light on philosophical topics such as free will, determinism, and the contingency of life.

Daniel Yacavone, *Film Worlds: A Philosophical Aesthetics of Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014),
311 pp.
ISBN 9780231157698

Film Worlds unpacks the significance of the "worlds" that narrative film creates, offering a new perspective on cinema as art. Drawing on aesthetics and the philosophy of art in both the continental and analytic traditions, as well as on classical and contemporary film theory, it weaves together multiple strands of thought and analysis to provide new understandings of filmic representation, fictionality, expression, self-reflexivity, style, and the full range of cinema's affective and symbolic dimensions.

Arts and Terror, edited by Vladimir L. Marchenkov (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 155 pp.
ISBN 978-1443841610

This book examines the manifestations of terror in the arts. From classical tragedy to post-9/11 responses, terror as an emotion, violent act, and state of the world has been a preoccupation of artists in all genres. Using philosophy, art history, film studies, interdisciplinary arts, theatre studies, and musicology, the authors included here delve into this perennially contemporary theme to produce insights articulated in a variety of idioms from traditional philosophical humanism to phenomenology to feminism. Their approaches may vary, but together they reinforce the notion that terror is a thread in the fabric of artistic expression as much as it has always been and, alas, remains a thread in the fabric of life.

Disagree. A New Magazine on Arts and Society (Many Variations Publishers, 2014)

This magazine is a new proposition in the vast sea of magazines, books, papers and online platforms that unleash texts and images. Yet this initiative has grown out of an urgency: in times of growing populism, right-wing sentiments, conservative reflexes and the famous TINA-statement ("there is no alternative"), we need to create a multiplicity of texts that critically respond to the current landscape and look for progressive alternatives. Time to Disagree! The Disagree. magazine is a result of the cooperation between a changing group of artists, curators, and theoreticians. They join forces under the name of the Disagree. Art assembly. Those who write for the Disagree. magazine automatically become part of the editing team and thus of the assembly. The Disagree. Art assembly operates fully independently and does not receive any support for its activities from official, non-official, private, or public bodies. You can order the first (free) issue (one or many) by writing to mv@mvpublishers.eu. The editors of the first issue are Jeff Poak, Jean Gotthard, Harald Pogel, Nazim Besikci, Jana Tupivic, Anna Siegel

Anthony Lack, *Martin Heidegger on Technology, Ecology, and the Arts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 110 pp.
ISBN 978-1137495303

This reading of Heidegger's work on technology, art, and ethics provides unique angles on specific works of modern art and architecture. Lack begins with a discussion of Max Weber's analysis of the disenchantment of the world and proceeds to develop Heidegger's philosophy in a way that suggests a "re-enchantment" of the world that faces the modern condition squarely, without nostalgia. The relationships between Heidegger's philosophical analyses of technology, art, and ethics are clearly articulated and connected in a framework for analyzing the modern human condition.

Raymond Tallis with Julian Spalding, *Summers of Discontent: the Purpose of Arts Today* (London: Wilmington Square Books, Dec. 2014), 192 pp.
ISBN 978-1-908524-40-9

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, philosophers have pondered on the nature and purpose of the arts, but artists have gone on making them and philosophers and audiences enjoy their work regardless of these musings. None of their theories has met with universal or even popular acceptance. But here is theory that places the arts—all the arts—firmly and squarely within everyone's everyday experiences. *Summers of Discontent* is an examination of why artists create art in the first place and why we all feel the need for art in our lives. The author, Raymond Tallis, writes that the arts spring from our inability as humans to fully process our experiences and from our hunger for a more rounded, more complete sense of the world.

Tonino Griffero, *Atmospheres: Aesthetics of Emotional Spaces* (Ashgate, 2014), 180 pp.
ISBN 978-1-4724-2172-2

Originally published in Italian in 2010, *Atmospheres: Aesthetics of Emotional Spaces* examines the role of atmospheres in daily life and defines their main characteristics. Outlining the typical phenomenological situations in which we experience atmospheres, Tonino Griffero assesses their impact on contemporary

aesthetics. Griffero puts forward a philosophical approach which systematizes a constellation of affects and climates, finds patterns in the emotional tones of different spaces (affordances), and assesses their impact on the felt body. He also critically discusses the spatial turn invoked by several of the social sciences, and argues that there is a need for a non-psychologistic rethinking of the philosophy of emotions. This book provides a history of the term 'atmosphere' and of the concepts anticipating its meaning (*genius loci*, *aura*, *Stimmung*, *numinous*, *emotional design*, and *ambiance*), and examines the main ontological characteristics of atmospheres and their principal phenomenological characteristics.

Atmospheres concludes by showing how atmospheres affect our emotions, our bodies' reactions, our state of mind and, as a result, our behavior and judgments. Griffero assesses how atmospheres are more effective than we have been rationally willing to admit, and to what extent traditional aesthetics, unilaterally oriented towards art, has underestimated this truth.

Ben Blumson, *Resemblance and Representation: An Essay in the Philosophy of Pictures* (OpenBook Publishers, 2014), 212 pp.
ISBN 978-1-78374-073-4

Whereas words are connected to what they represent merely by arbitrary conventions, pictures are connected to what they represent by resemblance. The most important difference between my portrait and my name, for example, is that whereas my portrait and I are connected by my portrait's resemblance to me, my name and I are connected merely by an arbitrary convention. The first aim of this book is to defend this platitude from the apparently compelling objections raised against it, by analyzing depiction in a way which reveals how it is mediated by resemblance.

It's natural to contrast the platitude that depiction is mediated by resemblance, which emphasizes the differences between depictive and descriptive representation, with an extremely close analogy between depiction and description, which emphasizes the similarities between depictive and descriptive representation. Whereas the platitude emphasizes that the connection between my portrait and me is natural in a way the connection between my name and me is not, the analogy emphasizes the contingency of the connection between my portrait and me. Nevertheless, the second aim of this book is to defend an extremely close analogy between depiction and description.

The book argues that the apparently compelling objections raised against the platitude that depiction is mediated by resemblance are manifestations of more general problems, which are familiar from the philosophy of language. These problems, it argues, can be resolved by answers analogous to their counterparts in the philosophy of language without rejecting the platitude. So the combination of the platitude that depiction is mediated by resemblance with a close analogy between depiction and description turns out to be a compelling theory of depiction, which combines the virtues of common sense with the insights of its detractors.

PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art, 107, special issue: *Performance Drawing* (PAJ Publications, 2014).

A special issue devoted to performance and drawing, PAJ 107 opens up new possibilities and ways of thinking for performance. Each artist in the issue has a four-page portfolio of performance drawings and text on artistic process. Artists include: Morgan O'Hara, Tony Orrico, Jonah Bokaer, Graeme Miller, Caroline Bergvall, Romeo Castellucci, Anne Bean, Carolee Schneemann, Francisco-

Fernando Granados, George Quasha, Kirsten Justesen, Brennan Gerard and Ryan Kelly, Clifford Owens, Tim Etchells, Warren Neidich, and Meredith Monk. Dick Higgins's fascinating "Graphis" scores are also published in the issue. The issue features a long interview with visual artist Joan Jonas, who will be representing the U.S. in the 2015 Venice Biennale.

Lutz Koepnick, *On Slowness: toward an Aesthetic of the Contemporary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 319 pp.
ISBN 9780231168328

Speed is an obvious facet of contemporary society, whereas slowness has often been dismissed as conservative and antimodern. Challenging a long tradition of thought, Lutz Koepnick instead proposes we understand slowness as a strategy of the contemporary -- a decidedly modern practice that gazes firmly at and into the present's velocity.

As he engages with late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century art, photography, video, film, and literature, Koepnick explores slowness as a critical medium to intensify our temporal and spatial experiences. Slowness helps us register the multiple layers of time, history, and motion that constitute our present. It offers a timely (and untimely) mode of aesthetic perception and representation that emphasizes the openness of the future and undermines any conception of the present as a mere replay of the past. Discussing the photography and art of Janet Cardiff, Olafur Eliasson, Hiroshi Sugimoto, and Michael Wesely; the films of Peter Weir and Tom Tykwer; the video installations of Douglas Gordon, Willie Doherty, and Bill Viola; and the fiction of Don DeLillo, Koepnick shows how slowness can carve out spaces within processes of acceleration that allow us to reflect on alternate temporalities and durations.

Intensities and Lines of Flight: Deleuze/Guattari and the Arts, edited by Antonio Calgano, Jim Vernon, and Steve G. Lofts (Rowman & Littlefield International), 240 pp.
ISBN 978-1783480326

The writings of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari offer the most enduring and controversial contributions to the theory and practice of art in post-war Continental thought. However, these writings are both so wide-ranging and so challenging that much of the synoptic work on Deleuzo-Guattarian aesthetics has taken the form of sympathetic exegesis, rather than critical appraisal. This collection of essays, authored by both major Deleuzian scholars and practicing artists and curators, offers an important critique of Deleuze and Guattari's legacy in relation to a multitude of art forms, including painting, cinema, television, music, architecture, literature, drawing, and installation art. Inspired by the implications of Deleuze and Guattari's work on difference and multiplicity and with a focus on the intersection of theory and practice, the book represents a major interdisciplinary contribution to Deleuze-Guattarian aesthetics.

Peter Lamarque, *The Opacity of Narrative* (Rowman & Littlefield International), 230 pp.
ISBN 978-1783480173

What is narrative? What is distinctive about the great literary narratives? In virtue of what is a narrative fictional or non-fictional? This book explores these and related questions to bring new clarity and insight to debates about narrative in philosophy, critical theory, and narratology. He highlights 'opacity' as a feature of literary narratives and examines the implications for our understanding of fictional worlds and fictional characters. He challenges received views about narrative,

questioning the indispensability of narrative in an individual's self-conception and the importance of both truth and emotion as measures of literary greatness. He reflects on the 'non-fiction' novel arguing that it does not weaken the distinction between fiction and no-fiction.

Environmental Aesthetics: Crossing Divides and Breaking Ground, edited by Martin Drenthen and Jozef Keulartz (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 252 pp.
ISBN 9780823254507

Environmental aesthetics crosses several commonly recognized divides: between analytic and continental philosophy, Eastern and Western traditions, universalizing and historicizing approaches, and theoretical and practical concerns. This volume sets out to show how these perspectives can be brought into conversation with one another. The first part surveys the development of the field and discusses future directions. The second part explains how widening the scope of environmental aesthetics demands a continual rethinking of the relationship between aesthetics and other fields. How does environmental aesthetics relate to ethics? Does aesthetic appreciation of the environment entail an attitude of respect? What is the relationship between the theory and practice of environmental aesthetics? The third part is devoted to the relationship between the aesthetics of nature and the aesthetics of art. Can art help "save the Earth"? The final part illustrates the emergence of practical applications from theoretical studies by focusing on concrete case studies.

Doris Berger, *Projected Art History: Biopics, Celebrity Culture, and the Popularizing of American Art* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 350 pp.
ISBN 9781623560324

Biopics on artists influence the popular perception of artists' lives and work. *Projected Art History* highlights the narrative structure and images created in the film genre of biopics, in which an artist's life is being dramatized and embodied by an actor. Concentrating on two case studies, *Basquiat* (1996) and *Pollock* (2000), the book also discusses larger issues at play, such as how postwar American art history is being mediated for mass consumption. This book bridges a gap between art history, film studies, and popular culture by investigating how the film genre of biopics adapts written biographies. It identifies the functionality of the biopic genre and explores its implication for a popular art history that is projected on the big screen for a mass audience.

Ruth Ronen, *Art before the Law: Aesthetics and Ethics* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 188 pp.
ISBN 9781442647886

Ever since Plato expelled the poets from his ideal state, the ethics of art has had to confront philosophy's denial of art's morality. In *Art before the Law*, Ruth Ronen proposes a new outlook on the ethics of art by arguing that art insists on this tradition of denial, affirming its singular ethics through negativity. Ronen treats the mechanism of negation as the basis for the relationship between art and ethics. She shows how, through moves of denial, resistance, and denouncement, art exploits its negative relation to morality. While deception, fiction, and transgression allegedly locate art outside morality and ethics, Ronen argues they enable art to reveal the significance of the moral law, its origins, and the idea of the good. By employing the thought of Freud and Lacan, Ronen reconsiders the aesthetic tradition from Plato through Kant and later philosophers of art in order to establish an ethics of art.

Anne Emmanuelle Berger, *The Queer Turn in Feminism: Identities, Sexualities, and the Theater of Gender*, trans. by Catherine Porter (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 228 pp.
ISBN 9780823253869

More than any other area of late-twentieth-century thinking, gender theory and its avatars have been to a large extent a Franco-American invention. In this book, a leading Franco-American scholar traces differences and intersections in the development of gender and queer theories on both sides of the Atlantic.

Looking at these theories through lenses that are both "American" and "French," thus simultaneously retrospective and anticipatory, she tries to account for their alleged exhaustion and currency on the two sides of the Atlantic.

The book is divided into four parts. In the first, the author examines two specifically "American" features of gender theories since their earliest formulations: on the one hand, an emphasis on the theatricality of gender; on the other, the early adoption of a "queer" perspective on gender issues. In the second part, the author reflects on a shift in the rhetoric concerning sexual minorities and politics that is prevalent today. Noting a shift from efforts by oppressed or marginalized segments of the population to make themselves "heard" to an emphasis on rendering themselves "visible," she demonstrates the formative role of the American civil rights movement in this new drive to visibility. The third part deals with the travels back and forth across the Atlantic of "sexual difference" ever since its elevation to the status of quasi-concept by psychoanalysis. Tracing the "queering" of sexual difference, the author reflects on both the modalities and the effects of this development. The last section addresses the vexing relationship between Western feminism and capitalism. Without trying either to commend or to decry this relationship, the author shows its long-lasting political and cultural effects on current feminist and post-feminist struggles and discourses. To that end, she focuses on one of the intense debates within feminist and post-feminist circles, the controversy over prostitution.

Practicing Pragmatist Aesthetics: Critical Perspectives on the Arts, edited by Malecki Wojciech (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2014), 224 pp.

ISBN 9789042038363

This is the first English collection of works devoted exclusively to pragmatist aesthetics. Its main aim is to employ the resources of this tradition in studying artistic phenomena such as film, sculpture, bio-art, poetry, the novel, cuisine, and various body arts. It also attempts to provide a broader background for such studies by sketching the history of pragmatist reflection on the aesthetic and by discussing the aesthetic conceptions of C.S. Pierce, William James, John Dewey, Joseph Margolis, Richard Shusterman (somaesthetics in particular), and others.

The Analysis of Beauty (London, U.K.: Strange Attraction, 2003), 50 pp.

Featuring a critical essay by Richard Humphreys, *The Analysis of Beauty* is an illustrated paperback that documents the activities of the installation art and electronic music project called, "Disinformation." The book focuses on the evolution of Disinformation's content and strategies, including numerous concerts, gallery installations, and solo exhibitions.

Falk Heinrich, *Performing Beauty in Participatory Art and Culture* (Routledge, 2014), 220 pp.

ISBN 9780415745291

This book investigates the notion of beauty in participatory art, an interdisciplinary form that necessitates the audience's agential participation and that is often seen in interactive art and technology-driven media installations.

After considering established theories of beauty, for example, Plato, Alison, Hume, Kant, Gadamer and Santayana through to McMahon and Sartwell, Heinrich argues that the experience of beauty in participatory art demands a revised notion of beauty; a conception that accounts for the performative and ludic turn within various art forms and which is, in a broader sense, a notion of beauty suited to a participatory and technology-saturated culture.

Through case studies of participatory art, he provides an art-theoretical approach to the concept of performative beauty; an approach that is then applied to the wider context of media and design artefacts.

Discourses of Space, edited by Judit Pieldner and Zsuzsanna Ajtony (United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 331 pp.

Ever since the emergence of the spatial turn in several scientific discourses, special attention has been paid to the surrounding space conceived as a construct created by the dynamics of human activity. The notion of space assists us in describing the most varied spheres of human existence. We can speak of various physical, metaphysical, social and cultural, and communicative spaces as structuring components providing access to various literary, linguistic, social and cultural phenomena, thus promoting the initiation of a cross-disciplinary dialogue. The essays selected in this volume cover a wide range of topics related to space: intercultural and inter-ethnic spaces; linguistic, textual space formation; the narratology of space, spatial-temporal relationships, space construction in literature and film; space in contemporary art; inter-art relations and intermediality; spaces of cultural memory; nature and culture; cultural geography; cross-cultural connections between the East and the West; Central and Eastern European geocultural paradigms; the relationship between geographical space and cyberspace; and relational spaces. The approaches used in this volume range across various discursive practices related to space, outlining the shifts and displacements concerning existence and identity in the continuously changing, restructuring, always transitory, in-between spaces.

The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating, edited by Jean-Paul Martinon (London, England: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 255 pp.
ISBN 9781472525604

This book starts from a simple premise: thinking the activity of curating. To achieve this it distinguishes between 'curating' and 'the curatorial.' If 'curating' is a gamut of professional practices for setting up exhibitions, then 'the curatorial' explores what takes place on the stage set up, both intentionally and unintentionally, by the curator. It therefore refers, not to the staging of an event, but to the event of knowledge itself. In order to start thinking about curating, this book takes a new approach to the topic. Instead of relying on conventional art historical narratives (for example, identifying the moments when artistic and curatorial practices merged or when the global curator-author was first identified), this book puts forward a multiplicity of perspectives that range from the anecdotal to the theoretical and from the personal to the philosophical.

Forest Pyle, *Art's Undoing: In the Wake of a Radical Aestheticism* (Bronx, New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 312 pp.

ISBN 9780823251124

Radical aestheticism describes a recurring event in some nineteenth-century British literature, offering us a way to reckon with what takes place at certain moments in texts by Shelley, Keats, Dickinson, Hopkins, Rossetti, and Wilde. This book explores what happens when these writers, deeply committed to certain versions of ethics, politics, or theology, nonetheless produce an encounter with a radical aestheticism that subjects the authors' projects to a fundamental crisis.

A radical aestheticism offers no positive claims for art, whether on ethical or political grounds or on aesthetics grounds, as in "art for art's sake." The radical aestheticism encountered in these writers, in its very extremity, takes us to the constitutive elements, the figures, the images, the semblances, that are at the root of any aestheticism, an encounter registered as evaporation, combustion, or undoing. It is, therefore, an undoing by and of art and aesthetic experience, one that leaves this important literary tradition in its wake. *Art's Undoing* embraces diverse theoretical projects, from Walter Benjamin to Jacques Derrida. These become something of a parallel text to its literary readings, revealing how some of the significant theoretical and philosophical projects of our time remain within the wake of a radical aestheticism.

Jennifer A. McMahon, *Art and Ethics in a Material World: Kant's Pragmatist Legacy* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 234 pp.
ISBN 9780415504522

McMahon argues that a reading of Kant's body of work in the light of a pragmatist theory of meaning and language (which arguably is a Kantian legacy) leads one to put community reception ahead of individual reception in the order of aesthetic relations. A premise of the book is that neo-pragmatism draws attention to an otherwise overlooked aspect of Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment," and this is the conception of community that it sets forth. While offering an interpretation of Kant's aesthetic theory, the book focuses on the implications of Kant's third critique for contemporary art. McMahon draws upon Kant and his legacy in pragmatist theories of meaning and language to argue that aesthetic judgment is a version of moral judgment: a way to cultivate attitudes conducive to community, which plays a pivotal role in the evolution of language, meaning, and knowledge.

Dr. Gregory Victor Loewen, *The Use of Art in the Construction of Personal Identity: A Phenomenology of Aesthetic Self-Consciousness* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2012), 180 pp.
ISBN 9780773439290

This book combines research in philosophy, sociology, art theory and psychology to create the concept of human aesthetic self-consciousness. Topics include construction of aesthetic selfhood, art as projection, art as memorialization, art as the uncanny, and art as identity.

Gimme Shelter: Global Discourses in Aesthetics, edited by Jos de Mul and Renée van de Vall (Amsterdam: 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 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 experiences 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?

Tiger C. Roholt, *Key Terms in Philosophy of Art* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 147 pp.
ISBN 9780826435279

Tiger C. Roholt provides detailed summaries of core concepts in the philosophy of art. An introductory chapter provides context and background, while the following chapters offer detailed definitions of key terms and concepts, introductions to the work of key thinkers, summaries of key texts, overviews of philosophy's approach to the major art forms, and advice on further reading. Designed specifically to meet the needs of students and assuming no prior knowledge of the subject, this is a useful reference tool for those coming to philosophy of art for the first time.

Policarp Hortolà, *The aesthetics of haemotaphonomy* (Alicante, Spain: Editorial Club Universitario, 2013), 92 pp.
ISBN 9788499489919

Knowing the aesthetics of a science plays a key role in deciphering its underlying cultural framework. Haemotaphonomy is the science that deals with the morphology of the blood cells in bloodstains, which is revealed when a blood smear is examined under a scanning electron microscope. This essay intends to provide insight into the aesthetics of haemotaphonomy by identifying its stylistic parallels with literature and the visual arts. An additional interest of this work is to serve as an example of a procedure for approaching the aesthetics of other sciences. Moreover, this work focuses the aesthetics of science from a novel perspective. It is conceived from a neutral point of view, unbound from the compulsive search for a supposed ideal of beauty. Hence, this essay does not consider beauty but rather aesthetic movements: those that have been found to be self-evidently significant and analytically productive in explaining the aesthetics of the science under examination.

A previsualization of this book can be found at:

http://www.google.com/books?id=bILXXA6tSpcC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ca&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

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.

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.

Ethics, Design and Planning of the Built Environment, eds. Claudia Basta and Stefano Moroni (Springer, 2013), 224 pp.

ISBN 978-94-007-5245-0

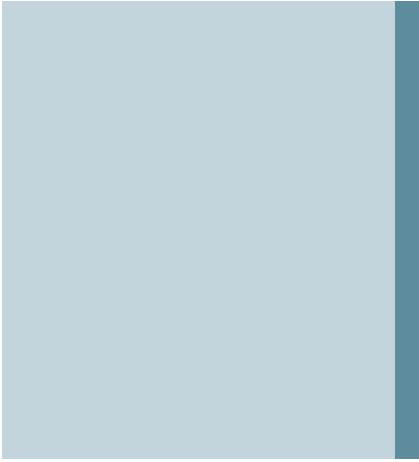
Ethics, Design and Planning of the Built Environment consists of original contributions in research areas shared by planning theory, architectural research, design and ethical inquiry. The contributors gathered in 2010 at the Ethics of the Built Environment seminar organized by the editors at Delft University 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.

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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.