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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*.

Giacomo Fronzi, *Philosophical Considerations on Contemporary Music: Sounding Constellations* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 260 pp.
ISBN 978-1-4438-1698-4

The musical universe of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is a force-field in which styles, instruments, personalities, and stories can be found that are ascribable to conceptual frameworks that may differ greatly one from another. Such complexity cannot be traced back to single theories or all-encompassing interpretations, but may be tackled, philosophically, starting from certain characteristics. This book identifies nine such characteristics: namely, extremes, noise, silence, technology, audience, listening, freedom, disintegration, and new media. Each of these permits us to open up unforeseen philosophical-cultural paths and interpret, in its multifarious variety, the developments of contemporary music, profoundly interwoven with the history of thought, culture and society.

Pavle Levi, *Jolted Images: Unbound Analytic (Eastern European Screen Cultures)* (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 216 pp.
ISBN 978-9462983618

Jolted Images brings together a large cast of mainstream and avant-garde cineastes, artists, photographers, comics creators, poets, and more to reflect on a wide range of phenomena from the realms of cinema and visual culture in the Yugoslav region, Europe more broadly, and North America. Far from a staid monograph, the book takes a cue from filmmaker Dušan Makavejev, who once wrote that there are times when it is necessary "to jolt art, no matter what the outcome." To that end, the book infuses its analysis with a playful, creative transfiguration of its material.

Constance Classen, *The Museum of the Senses: Experiencing Art and Collections* (Bloomsbury, 2017), 184 pp.
ISBN 9781474252447

Traditionally sight has been the only sense with a ticket to enter the museum. The same is true of histories of art in which artworks are often presented as purely visual objects. In *The Museum of the Senses*, Constance Classen offers a new way of approaching the history of art through the senses, revealing how people used to handle, smell, and even taste collection pieces. Topics range from the tactile power of relics to the sensuous allure of cabinets of curiosities, and from the feel of a Rembrandt to the scent of Monet's garden. The book concludes with a discussion of how contemporary museums are stimulating the senses through interactive and multimedia displays.

Will Daddario, *Baroque, Venice, Theatre, Philosophy* (Springer, 2017), 261 pp.
ISBN 978-3-319-49522-4

This book theorizes the baroque as neither a time period nor an artistic style but as a collection of bodily practices developed from clashes between governmental discipline and artistic excess, moving between the dramaturgy of Jesuit spiritual exercises, the political theatre-making of Angelo Beolco (aka Ruzzante), and the civic governance of the Venetian Republic at a time of great tumult. The manuscript assembles plays seldom read or viewed by English-speaking audiences, archival materials from three Venetian archives, and several secondary sources on baroque, Renaissance, and early modern epistemology in order to forward an argument for understanding the baroque as a gathering of social practices. Such a rethinking of the baroque aims to complement

the already lively studies of neo-baroque aesthetics and ethics emerging in contemporary scholarship on (for example) Latin American political art.

Culinary Turn: Aesthetic Practice of Cookery, eds. Nicolaj van der Meulen & Jörg Wiesel (Germany: transcript, 2017), 324 pp.
ISBN 978-3-8376-3031-2

Kitchen, cooking, nutrition, and eating have become omnipresent cultural topics. They stand at the center of design, gastronomy, nutrition science, and agriculture. Artists have appropriated cooking as an aesthetic practice, and cooks, in turn, are adapting the staging practices that go with an artistic self-image. This development is accompanied by a crisis of eating behavior and a philosophy of cooking as a speculative cultural technique. The volume investigates the dimensions of a new *culinary turn*, combining contributions from the theory and practice of cooking.

Yuriko Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World-Making* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 246 pp.
ISBN 9780199672103

Aesthetics of the Familiar explores the nature and significance of the aesthetic dimensions of people's everyday life. Everyday aesthetics has the recognized value of enriching one's life experiences and sharpening one's attentiveness and sensibility; however, Yuriko Saito draws out its broader importance for how we make our worlds, as citizens and consumers. Saito urges that we have a social responsibility to encourage cultivation of aesthetic literacy and vigilance against aesthetic manipulation and argues that ultimately, everyday aesthetics can be an effective instrument for directing humanity's collective and cumulative world-making project for the betterment of all its inhabitants.

Everyday aesthetics has been seen as a challenge to contemporary Anglo-American aesthetics discourse, which is dominated by the discussion of art and beauty. Saito responds to controversies about the nature, boundary, and status of everyday aesthetic and argues for its legitimacy. *Aesthetics of the Familiar* highlights the multifaceted aesthetic dimensions of everyday life that are not fully accounted for by the commonly held account of defamiliarizing the familiar.

Carsten Strathausen, *Bioaesthetics: Making Sense of Life in Science and the Arts* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 305 pp.
ISBN 9781517900755

In recent years, bioaesthetics has used the latest discoveries in evolutionary studies and neuroscience to provide new ways of looking at both art and aesthetics. Carsten Strathausen's exploration of this emerging field is a comprehensive account of its ideas, as well as a timely critique of its limitations. Strathausen familiarizes readers with the basics of bioaesthetics, grounding them in its philosophical underpinnings while articulating its key components. He delves into the longstanding "two cultures" problem that separates the arts and the sciences. Seeking to make bioaesthetics a more robust way of thinking, Strathausen critiques it for failing to account for science's historical and cultural assumptions. At a time when humanities departments are shrinking and when STEM education is on the rise, *Bioaesthetics* makes vital points about the limitations of science while lodging a robust defense of the importance of the humanities.

Wittgenstein on Aesthetic Understanding, edited by Garry L. Hagberg (Springer, 2017), 394 pp.
ISBN 978-3-319-40909-2

This book investigates the significance of Wittgenstein's philosophy for aesthetic understanding. Focusing on the aesthetic elements of Wittgenstein's philosophical work, the authors explore connections to contemporary currents in aesthetic thinking and the illuminating power of Wittgenstein's philosophy when considered in connection with the interpretation of specific works of literature, music, and the arts. Taken together, the chapters presented here show what aesthetic understanding consists of and the ways we achieve it, how it might be articulated, and why it is important. At a time of strong renewal of interest in Wittgenstein's contributions to the philosophy of mind and language, this book offers insight into the connections between philosophical-psychological and linguistic issues and the understanding of the arts.

World Building: Transmedia, Fans, Industries, edited by Marta Boni (AUP, 2017), 396 pp.

ISBN 9789089647566

Thanks to modern technology we are now living in an age of multiplatform fictional worlds, as television, film, the Internet, graphic novels, toys and more facilitate the creation of diverse yet compact imaginary universes, which are often recognizable as brands and exhibit well-defined identities. This volume examines media theory and explores this phenomenon from both theoretical and practical perspectives, uncovering how the construction of these worlds influences our own determination of values and meaning in contemporary society.

Jacques Derrida, *Artaud the Moma*, translated by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 94 pp.
ISBN 9780231181679

In 1996 Jacques Derrida gave a lecture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York on the occasion of the exhibition *Antonin Artaud: Works on Paper*. Derrida's original title, "Artaud the Moma," is a characteristic play on words. It alludes to Artaud's calling himself Momo, Marseilles slang for "fool," upon his return to Paris in 1946 after nine years in various asylums, while playing off of the museum's nickname, MoMA. For Derrida, what was at stake was what it meant for the museum to exhibit Artaud's drawings and for him to lecture on Artaud in that institutional context. Derrida addresses the multiplicity of Artaud's identities to confront the modernist museum's valorizing of originality. He channels Artaud's specter, speech, and struggle against representation in order to hold the museum accountable for its attempt to confine Artaud within its categories. *Artaud the Moma* is an interjection into the museum halls, a crucial moment in Derrida's thought, and an insightful, unsparing reading of a challenging writer and artist.

Federico Vercellon, *Beyond Beauty*, translated by Sarah De Sanctis (SUNY Press, 2017), 164 pp.
ISBN 978-1-4384-6587-6

The American abstract expressionist painter Barnett Newman famously declared in 1948 that the impulse of modern art is to destroy beauty. Not long after that, Andy Warhol was reconciling the world of art with the world of everyday life, painting soup cans and soda bottles. In this book, Federico Vercellone provides an account of the decline of beauty as a Platonic ideal from early German Romanticism to the twentieth century. He traces this intellectual trajectory from Goethe, Dilthey, and Nietzsche, through modernism and the avant-garde movement, to the work of Adorno and Heidegger. Rather than the death or destruction of beauty, Vercellone argues instead that beauty in the twentieth century came back to live in reality and everyday life. He suggests this is a new edition of the classical ideal rather than an abandonment of it, and further makes the case for the ecological significance of this orientation and outlook.

Bryan Reynolds, *Intermedial Theater: Performance Philosophy, Transversal Poetics, and the Future of Affect* (Springer, 2017), 314 pp.
ISBN 978-1-137-50837-9

This book explores relationships between intermedial theater, consciousness, memory, objects, subjectivity, and affect through productive engagement with the performance aesthetics, socio-cognitive theory, and critical methodology of transversal poetics alongside other leading philosophical approaches to performance. It offers a sustained analysis of the work of Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Jean Baudrillard, and Friedrich Nietzsche in relation to the contemporary European theater of Jan Lauwers and Needcompany, Romeo Castellucci and Societas Raffaello Sanzio, Thomas Ostermeier, Rodrigo García and La Carnicería Teatro, and the Transversal Theater Company. It connects contemporary uses of objects, simulacra, and technologies in both posthumanist discourse and postdramatic theater to the transhistorically and culturally mediating power of Shakespeare as a means by which to discuss the affective impact of intermedial theater on today's audiences.

Nathan Ross, *The Philosophy and Politics of Aesthetic Experience: German Romanticism and Critical Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 253 pp.
ISBN 978-3-319-52303-3

This book develops a philosophy of aesthetic experience through two socially significant philosophical movements: early German Romanticism and early critical theory. In examining the relationship between these two closely intertwined movements, we see that aesthetic experience is not merely a passive response to art, it is the capacity to cultivate true personal autonomy, and to critique the social and political

context of our lives. Art is political for these thinkers, not only when it paints a picture of society, but even more when it makes us aware of our deeply ingrained forms of experience in a transformative way. Ultimately, the book argues that we have to think of art as a form of *truth* that is not reducible to communicative rationality or scientific knowledge, and from which philosophy and politics can learn valuable lessons.

Perceptual Illusions: Philosophical and Psychological Essays, edited by Clotilde Calabi, (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2002), 304 pp. ISBN 978-0-230-34790-8

Although current debates in epistemology and philosophy of mind show a renewed interest in perceptual illusions, there is no systematic work in the philosophy of perception and in the psychology of perception with respect to the concept of illusion and the relation between illusion and error. This book aims to fill that gap.

Saam Trivedi, *Imagination, Music, and the Emotions* (SUNY PRESS, 2017), 205 pp. ISBN 978-1-4384-6717-7

Imagination, Music, and the Emotions articulates an imaginationist solution to the question of how purely instrumental music can be perceived by a listener as having emotional content. Both musicians and laypersons can perceive purely instrumental music without words or an associated story or program as expressing emotions such as happiness and sadness. But how? In this book, Saam Trivedi discusses and critiques philosophical approaches to this question, including formalism, metaphorism, expression theories, arousalism, resemblance theories, and persona theories. Finding these to be inadequate, the author advocates an "imaginationist" solution, by which absolute music is not really or literally sad but is only imagined to be so in a variety of ways. In particular, Trivedi argues that we as listeners animate the music ourselves, imaginatively projecting life and mental states onto it. Bolstering his argument with empirical data from studies in neuroscience, psychology, and cognitive science, Trivedi also addresses and explores larger philosophical questions such as the nature of emotions, metaphors, and imagination.

Christian Julmi, *Situations and Atmospheres in Organizations. A (New)Phenomenology of Being-in-the-Organization* (Milan-Udine: Mimesis International, 2017), 154 pp. Series: Atmospheric Spaces n. 2. ISBN 978-88-6977-081-4

Although situations and atmospheres are omnipresent in organizations and have a significant influence on the behavior of the members of the organization, they are only seldom regarded as relevant research subjects in management and organization research and investigated systematically. This book enters unknown territory in that it elevates situations and atmospheres to the most fundamental and everyday features of being-in-the-organization and investigates their development dynamics systematically. The new phenomenology of the German philosopher Hermann Schmitz, and critical supplements from his follower, Guido Rappe, serve as the theoretical foundation of the reflections. Human corporeality and subjectivity are at the center of the reflections.

Gernot Böhme, *Critique of Aesthetic Capitalism*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Milan-Udine, Mimesis International, 2017), 105 pp. Series: Atmospheric Spaces n. 1. ISBN 9788869770296

Gernot Böhme's *Critique of Aesthetic Capitalism* presents the atmospheric based interpretation and critique of our capitalist age by one of the prominent figures in research on atmospheres. Böhme starts from the assumption that the true origin of the capitalist form of economy is an aesthetical one: luxury. He claims that the present phase of capitalist development has established it as a universal standard of living. This is the cause of the well-known *discontent in prosperity*. That is the affective situation in which, even though our standard of living is very high in comparison to earlier times and to the global standard, no one is truly satisfied. Böhme claims that the *mise-en-scène* of commodities is what puts a person on show, has given rise to a stressful performance society that has provoked such discontent. One must therefore rediscover a minimalist asceticism – a form of non-dependence on our emotions, and in particular on those elicited by the *mise-en-scène* of commodities – in order to win back our serenity.

Atmospheric Spaces is a new book series that aims to become a point of reference for a community that works together on the philosophical and

transdisciplinary subject of 'Atmosphere,' a sensorial and affective quality widespread in space. What an atmosphere is and how it determines the way one experiences her surroundings is its proper purpose.

Santiago Zabala, *Why only Art Can Save Us: Aesthetics and the Absence of Emergency* (Columbia University Press, 2017), 216 pp. ISBN 9780231183482

The state of emergency, according to thinkers such as Carl Schmidt, Walter Benjamin, and Giorgio Agamben, is at the heart of any theory of politics. But today the problem is not the crises that we do confront, which are often used by governments to legitimize themselves, but the ones that political realism stops us from recognizing as emergencies, from widespread surveillance to climate change to the systemic shocks of neoliberalism. We need a way of disrupting the existing order that can energize radical democratic action rather than reinforcing the status quo. In this book, Santiago Zabala declares that in an age where the greatest emergency is the absence of emergency, only contemporary art's capacity to alter reality can save us.

Why Only Art Can Save Us advances a new aesthetics centered on the nature of the emergency that characterizes the twenty-first century. Zabala draws on Martin Heidegger's distinction between works of art that rescue us from emergency and those that are rescuers *into* emergency. The former are a means of cultural politics, conservers of the status quo that conceal emergencies; the latter are disruptive events that thrust us into emergencies. Building on Arthur Danto, Jacques Rancière, and Gianni Vattimo, who made aesthetics more responsive to contemporary art, Zabala argues that works of art are not simply a means of elevating consumerism or contemplating beauty but are points of departure to change the world. Radical artists create works that disclose and demand active intervention in ongoing crises. Interpreting works of art that aim to propel us into absent emergencies, Zabala shows how art's ability to create new realities is fundamental to the politics of radical democracy in the state of emergency that is the present.

Thijs Lijster, *Benjamin and Adorno on Art and Art Criticism* (Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 368 pp. ISBN 9789462981409

This book brings together two figures of twentieth-century criticism, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, to consider a topic that was central to their thinking: the place of and reason for art in society and culture. Thijs Lijster takes us through points of agreement and disagreement between the two on such key topics as the relationship between art and historical experience, between avant-garde art and mass culture, and between the intellectual and the public. He also addresses the continuing relevance of Benjamin and Adorno to ongoing debates in contemporary aesthetics, such as the end of art, the historical meaning of art, and the role of the critic.

Tonino Griffero, *Quasi-Things: The Paradigm of Atmospheres*, trans. Sarah De Sanctis (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 2017), 189 pp. ISBN 9781438464053

In this book, Tonino Griffero introduces and analyzes a pathetic aesthetics based on an ontology of sensibilities he calls "quasi-things." These do not exist fully in the traditional sense as substances or events, yet they exercise a powerful influence on us. He offers an original approach to the study of emotions, regarding them not as inner states of the subject, but as atmospheres, that is as powers poured out into the lived space we inhabit. Griffero first outlines the general and atmospheric characters of quasi-things, and then considers models of sensibility such as pain, shame, the gaze, and twilight, which he argues are responsible for penetrating and suggestive moods precisely because of their indeterminate boundaries. With frequent examples from literature and everyday life, *Quasi-Things* provides an accessible aesthetic and phenomenological account of feelings based on the paradigm of atmospheres.

Urban Encounters: Art and the Public, edited by Martha Radice & Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 352 pp. ISBN 978-0-7735-5006-3

Public art is on the urban agenda. Given recent claims about the importance of creativity to urban prosperity, opportunities for installing or performing art in the city have multiplied. As cities strive to appear

culturally dynamic, the stakes of artistic production rise higher than ever. Exploring the interaction between art and the public in Canadian cities, *Urban Encounters* features writing by artists, architects, curators, anthropologists, geographers, and urban studies specialists. They show how people and places affect the structure and content of public artworks, what kinds of urban spaces and socialities are generated through art, and how to investigate and interpret encounters between art and its viewers in the city. Discussing a variety of art forms, including mobile cinemas, street improvisation, audiovisual investigations, and assembled objects, the contributors treat public artworks not just as aesthetic installations but as agents that participate in the social and cultural evolution of cities. *Urban Encounters* reveals how art in the urban public space generates encounters that can transform both the city itself and the ways that people relate to it.

Ute Holl, *Cinema, Trance, and Cybernetics* (Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 352 pp.
ISBN 9789089646682

We've all had the experience of watching a film and feeling like we've been in a trance. This book takes that experience seriously, explaining cinema as a cultural technique of trance, one that unconsciously transforms our perceptions. Ute Holl moves from anthropological and experimental cinema through nineteenth-century psychological laboratories, which she shows developed techniques for testing, measuring, and classifying the mind that can be seen as a prehistory of cinema, one that allows us to see the links among cinema, anthropology, psychology, and cybernetics.

Steffen Hven, *Cinema and Narrative Complexity: Embodying the Fabula* (AUP, 2017), 26 pp.
ISBN 978 94 6298 077 8

Since the mid-1990s, a number of films from international filmmakers have experimented with increasingly complicated narrative strategies, including such hits as *Run Lola Run*, *21 Grams*, and *Memento*. This book sets those films and others in context with earlier works that tried new narrative approaches, such as *Stage Fright* and *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, to show how they reveal the limitations of most of our usual tools for analyzing film. In light of that, Steffen Hven argues for the deployment of an 'embodied' reconfiguration of the cinematic experience, one that allows us to rethink such core constituents of narrative understanding as cognition, emotion, and affect.

Benoît Dillet, *The Political Space of Art. The Dardenne Brothers, Arundhati Roy, Ai Weiwei and Burial* (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016), 138 pp.
ISBN 9781783485680

This book discusses the work of four different kinds of artists from four different countries (Belgium, China, the UK and India) to examine how they create a space for politics in their work. The film directors Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne film parts of their natal city to refer to specific political problems in interpersonal relations. The novelist Arundhati Roy uses her poetic language to make room for people's desires; her fiction is utterly political and her political essays make place for the role of narratives and poetic language. Ai Weiwei uses references to Chinese history to give consistency to its 'economic miracle.' Finally, Burial's electronic music is firmly rooted in a living, breathing London; built to create a sound that is entirely new, and yet hauntingly familiar. These artists create in their own way a space for politics in their works and their oeuvre but their singularity comes together as a desire to reconstruct the political space within art from its ruins. These ruins were brought by the disenchantment of 1970s: the end of art, postmodernism, and the rise of design, marketing and communication. Each artwork bears the mark of the resistance against the depoliticization of society and the arts, at once rejecting cynicism and idealism, referring to themes and political concepts that are larger than their own domain. This book focuses on these productive tensions.

Arts, Pedagogy and Cultural Resistance: New Materialisms, edited by Anna Kickey-Moody and Tara Page (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016), 238 pp.
ISBN 9781783484874

This collection demonstrates how physical objects, materials, space and environments teach us, and redefines practice with theory (praxis) as a more-than-human network. The contributions illustrate how the materials, process, pedagogies and theories of arts making question and disrupt the many forms of cultural dominance that exist in our society.

Each contribution synthesizes creative approaches to philosophy and new materialist understanding of practice to show how human-nonhuman interaction at the core of Arts practice is a critical post human pedagogy. Across fine art, dance, gallery education, film and philosophy, the book contends that certain kinds of Arts practice can be a critical pedagogy in which tactical engagements with community, space, place and materiality become means of not only disrupting dominant discourse but also of making new discourses come to matter. *Arts, Pedagogy and Cultural Resistance* demonstrates how embodied, located acts of making can materially disrupt cultural hegemony and suggest different ways the world might materialize. The book argues that the practice of arts making is a post human cultural pedagogy in which people become part of a broader assemblage of matter, and all aspects of this network are solidified in objects or processes that are themselves pedagogical. In doing so the book offers a fresh and theoretically engaged perspective on arts as pedagogy.

Andrew Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work* (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 296 pp.
ISBN 9781783482900

What is the work of art? How does art work as art? Andrew Benjamin contends that the only way to address these questions is by developing a radically new materialist philosophy of art, and by rethinking the history of art from within that perspective. A materialist philosophy of art starts with the contention that meaning is only ever the aftereffect of the way in which materials work. Starting with the relation between history, materials and work (art's work), this book opens up a highly original reconfiguration of the philosophy of art. Benjamin undertakes a major project that seeks to develop a set of complex interarticulations between art history and an approach to art's work that emphasizes art's material presence. A philosophy of art emerges from the limitations of aesthetics.

Against Value in the Arts and Education, edited by Sam Ladkin, Robert McKay, and Emile Bojesen (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016), 446 pp.
ISBN 9781783484904

Against Value in the Arts and Education proposes that it is often the staunchest defenders of art who do it the most harm by suppressing or mollifying its dissenting voice, by neutralizing its painful truths, and by instrumentalizing its ambivalence. The result is that rather than expanding the autonomy of thought and feeling of the artist and the audience, art's defenders make art self-satisfied, or otherwise an echo-chamber for the limited and limiting self-description of people's lives lived in an "audit culture," a culture pervaded by the direct and indirect exorcism of practices of accountability. This book diagnoses the counter-intuitive effects of the rhetoric of value. It posits that the auditing of values pervades the fabric of people's work-lives, their education, and increasingly their everyday experience. The book uncovers figures of resentment, disenchantment, and alienation fostered by the dogma of value. It argues that value judgments can behave insidiously and incorporate aesthetic, ethical, or ideological values fundamentally opposed to the value they purportedly name and describe. This collection contains work from scholars in the UK and US with contributions from anthropology, the history of art, literature, education, musicology, political science, and philosophy.

The Aesthetic Ground of Critical Theory: New Readings of Benjamin and Adorno, edited by Nathan Ross (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 232 pp.
ISBN 9781783482931

Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno are considered today to be the two most significant early theorists in founding critical theory. In their works and correspondence, both thinkers turn to art and the aesthetic as a vital way for understanding modern society and developing philosophical methods. This volume of essays seeks to understand how they influenced each other and disagreed with each other on fundamental questions about art and the aesthetic. The book deals with a variety of key philosophical questions, such as: How does art involve distinctive modes of experience? What is the political significance of modern art? What does aesthetic experience teach us about the limitations of conceptual thought? How is aesthetic experience implicated in the very medium of thought or language? Ultimately, the book presents a systematic argument for the foundational significance of the aesthetic in the development of the early critical theory movement.

Stephen Shukaitis *The Composition of Movements to Come: Aesthetics and Cultural Labour After the Avant-Garde* (Rowman & Littlefield

International, 2016), 208 pp.
ISBN 9781783481736

How does the avant-garde create spaces in everyday life that subvert regimes of economic and political control? How do art, aesthetics, and activism inform one another? And how do strategic spaces of creativity become the basis for new forms of production and governance? *The Composition of Movements to Come* reconsiders the history and the practices of the avant-garde, from the Situationists to the Art Strike, revolutionary Constructivism to Laibach and Neue Slowenische Kunst, through an autonomist Marxist framework. Moving the framework beyond an overly narrow class analysis, the book explores broader questions of the changing nature of cultural labor and forms of resistance around this labor. It examines a doubly articulated process of refusal: the refusal of separating art from daily life and the re-fusing of these antagonistic energies by capitalist production and governance. This relationship opens up a new terrain for strategic thought in relation to everyday politics, where the history of the avant-garde is no longer separated from broader questions of political economy or movement, but becomes a point around which to reorient these considerations.

Giancorno Fronzi, *Philosophical Considerations on Contemporary Music: Sounding Constellations* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 260 pp.
ISBN 9781443816984

The musical universe of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is a force-field in which styles, instruments, personalities, and stories can be found that are ascribable to conceptual frameworks that may differ greatly from one another. Such complexity cannot be traced back to single theories or all-encompassing interpretations but may be tackled, philosophically, starting from certain characteristics. This book identifies nine such characteristics, namely: Extremes, Noise, Silence, Technology, Audience, Listening, Freedom, Disintegration, and New Media. Each of these permits us to open up unforeseen philosophical-cultural paths and interpret, in its multifarious variety, the developments of contemporary music, profoundly interwoven with the history of thought, culture, and society.

Jeffrey Strayer, *Haecceities: Essentialism, Identity, and Abstraction* (BRILL, 2017), 462 pp.
ISBN 9789004338432

Haecceities: Essentialism, Identity, and Abstraction is both an examination of the limits of abstraction in art and of kinds of radical identity that are determined in the identification of those limits. Building on his work, *Subjects and Objects*, Strayer shows how the fundamental conditions of making and apprehending works of art can be used, in concert with language, thought, and perception, as 'material' for producing the more abstract and radical artworks possible. Certain limits of abstraction and possibilities of radical identity are then identified that are critically and philosophically considered. They prove to be so extreme that the concepts *artwork*, *abstraction*, *identity*, and *object* in art, philosophy, and philosophy of art, have to be reconsidered.

David Howes & Constance Classen, *Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses in Society* (Routledge, 2014), 200 pp.
ISBN 9780415697156

Ways of Sensing is an exploration of the cultural, historical, and political dimensions of the world of the senses. The book spans a wide range of settings and makes comparisons between different cultures and epochs, revealing the power and diversity of sensory expressions across time and space. The chapters reflect on topics such as the tactile appeal of medieval art, the healing power of Navajo sand paintings, the aesthetic blight of the modern hospital, the role of the senses in the courtroom, and the branding of sensations in the marketplace. Howes and Classen further consider how political issues such as nationalism, gender equality, and the treatment of minority groups are shaped by sensory practices and metaphors. They also reveal how the phenomenon of synaesthesia, or mingling of the senses, can be seen as not simply a neurological condition but a vital cultural mode of creating social and cosmic interconnections. *Ways of Sensing* provides readers with an introduction to the life of the senses in society.

Paul Crowther, *How Pictures Complete Us. The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Divine* (Stanford University Press, 2016), 208 pp.
ISBN 97808047955739

Despite the wonders of the digital world, people still go in record

numbers to view drawings and paintings in galleries. Why? What is the magic that pictures work on us? This book provides an explanation, arguing that some pictures have special kinds of beauty and sublimity that offer aesthetic transcendence. They take us imaginatively beyond our finite limits, and even invoke a sense of the divine. Such aesthetic transcendence forges a relationship with the ultimate and completes us psychologically. Philosophers and theologians sometimes account for this as an effect of art, but *How Pictures Complete Us* reveals how this experience is embodied in pictorial structures and styles. Through discussions of artworks from the Renaissance through postmodern times, the author reappraises the entire scope of beauty and the sublime in the context of both representational and abstract art, offering insights into familiar phenomena such as Ideal beauty, pictorial perspective, and what pictures are in the first place.

Mathew Abbott, *Abbas Kiarostami and Film-Philosophy* (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 234 pp.
ISBN 9780748699902

A deflationary, anti-theoretical film-philosophy through the cinema of Abbas Kiarostami.

Mathew Abbott presents a powerful new film-philosophy through the cinema of Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami. Mathew Abbott argues that Kiarostami's films carry out cinematic thinking: they do not just illustrate pre-existing philosophical ideas, but do real philosophical work.

Crossing the divide between analytic and continental philosophy, he draws on Ludwig Wittgenstein, Stanley Cavell, John McDowell, Alice Crary, Noël Carroll, Giorgio Agamben, and Martin Heidegger, bringing out the thinking at work in Kiarostami's most recent films: *Taste of Cherry*, *The Wind Will Carry Us*, *ABC Africa*, *Ten, Five*, *Shirin*, *Certified Copy* and *Like Someone in Love*.

Omid Tofighian, *Myth and Philosophy in Platonic Dialogues* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 250 pp.
ISBN 9781137580436

This book rethinks Plato's creation and use of myth by drawing on theories and methods from myth studies, religious studies, literary theory, and related fields. Individual myths function differently depending on cultural practice, religious context, or literary tradition, and this interdisciplinary study merges new perspectives in Plato studies with recent scholarship and theories pertaining to myth. Significant overlaps exist between prominent modern theories of myth and attitudes and approaches in studies of Plato's myths. Considering recent developments in myth studies, this book asks new questions about the evaluation of myth in Plato. Its appreciation of the historical conditions shaping and directing the study of Plato's myths opens deeper philosophical questions about the relationship between philosophy and myth and the relevance of myth studies to philosophical debates. It also extends the discussion to address philosophical questions and perspectives on the distinction between argument and narrative.

Sensory Arts and Design, edited by Ian Heywood (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 280 pp.
ISBN 9781474280211

Artists, designers and researchers are increasingly seeking new ways to understand and explore the creative and practical significance of the senses. *Sensory Arts and Design* brings art and design into the field of sensory studies providing a clear introduction to the field and outlining important developments and new directions.

An exploration of both theory and practice, *Sensory Arts and Design* brings together a wide variety of examples from contemporary art and design that share a sensory dimension in their development or user experience. Divided into three parts, the book examines the design applications of new technology with sensing capacities; the role of the senses in creating new imaginative environments; and the significance of the senses within different cultural practices. Thirteen chapters cover a diverse range of issues – from the urban environment, architecture, and soundscapes to gustatory art, multisensory perception in painting, music and drawing, and the relationship between vision and smell.