

Contemporary Aesthetics (Journal Archive)

Volume 18 *Volume 18 (2020)*

Article 3

1-3-2020

Recent Publications

Editorial Office

editor@contempaesthetics.org

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_contempaesthetics



Part of the [Aesthetics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Office, Editorial (2020) "Recent Publications," *Contemporary Aesthetics (Journal Archive)*: Vol. 18 , Article 3.

Available at: https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_contempaesthetics/vol18/iss1/3

This Recent Publications is brought to you for free and open access by the Liberal Arts Division at DigitalCommons@RISD. It has been accepted for inclusion in Contemporary Aesthetics (Journal Archive) by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@RISD. For more information, please contact mpompeli@risd.edu.



[Home](#)

Volume: 18 (2020)

[The
Journal](#)

[About CA](#)

[Submissio
ns](#)

[Contact
CA](#)

[Editorial
Board](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Browse
Archive](#)

[Donate to
CA](#)

Search ...

Search

Search Archive

Search

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*.

Sue Spaid, *The Philosophy of Curatorial Practice: Between Work and World* (Bloomsbury, 2020), 280 pp.
ISBN 9781350114890

This book walks us through the process of how artworks eventually get their meaning, showing us how curated exhibitions invite audience members to weave an exhibition's narrative threads, which gives artworks their contents and discursive sense.

Arguing that exhibitions avail artworks as candidates for reception, whose meaning, value, and relevance reflect audience responses, it challenges the existing view that exhibitions present "already-validated" candidates for appreciation. Instead, this book stresses the collaborative nature of curatorial practices, debunking the twin myths of *autonomous artists* and *sovereign artistic directors* and treating presentation and reception as separate processes. Employing set theory to distinguish curated exhibitions from uncurated exhibitions, installation art and collections, it demonstrates how exhibitions grant spectators access to concepts that aid their capacity to grasp artifacts as artworks.

To inform and illuminate current debates in curatorial practice, Spaid draws on a range of case studies from Impressionism,

Dada and Surrealism to more contemporary exhibitions such as Maurizio Cattelan “All” (2011) and “Damien Hirst” (2012). In articulating the process that cycles through exploration, interpretation, presentation and reception, curating bears resemblance to artistic direction more generally.

Barbara Carnevali, *Social Appearances: A Philosophy of Display and Prestige*, translated by Zakiya Hanafi (Columbia University Press, August 2020), 304 pp.
ISBN 9780231187077

Philosophers have long distinguished between appearance and reality, and the opposition between a supposedly deceptive surface and a more profound truth is deeply rooted in Western culture. At a time of obsession with self-representation, when politics is enmeshed with spectacle and social and economic forces are intensely aestheticized, philosophy remains moored in traditional dichotomies: being versus appearing, interiority versus exteriority, authenticity versus alienation. Might there be more to appearance than meets the eye?

In this book, Barbara Carnevali offers a philosophical examination of the roles that appearances play in social life. While Western metaphysics and morals have predominantly disdained appearances and expelled them from their domain, Carnevali invites us to look at society, ancient to contemporary, as an aesthetic phenomenon. The ways in which we appear in public and the impressions we make in terms of images, sounds, smells, and sensations are discerned by other people’s senses and assessed according to their taste; this helps shape our ways of being and the world around us. Carnevali shows that an understanding of appearances is necessary to grasp the dynamics of interaction, recognition, and power in which we live—and to avoid being dominated by them. Anchored in philosophy and traversing sociology, art history, literature, and popular culture, *Social Appearances* develops new theoretical and conceptual tools for today’s most urgent critical tasks.

Jussi Saarinen, *Affect in Artistic Creativity: Painting to Feel* (Routledge: 2020), 156 pp.
ISBN 9780367522476

Why do painters paint? Obviously, there are numerous possible reasons. They paint to create images for others’ enjoyment, to solve visual problems, to convey ideas, and to contribute to a

rich artistic tradition. This book argues that there is yet another, crucially important but often overlooked reason.

Painters paint to feel.

They paint because it enables them to experience special feelings, such as being absorbed in creative play and connected to something vitally significant. Painting may even transform the painter's whole sense of being. Thus, painting is not only about producing art, communicating content, and so on, but also about setting up and inhabiting an experiential space wherein highly valued feelings are interactively enabled and supported. This book investigates how and why this happens by combining psychoanalytical theorization on creativity with philosophical thinking on affectivity. It focuses on creative experience itself, and illuminates the psychological mechanisms and dynamics that underlie the affects at stake. Painters' own descriptions of how they feel at work are used throughout to give an accurate, true-to-life portrayal of the experience of painting.

Through its open-minded yet critical integration of contemporary psychoanalytic and philosophical thinking, as well as its truthfulness to painters' experiential descriptions of the painterly process, this book enriches our understanding of artistic creativity and sheds more light on how and why we come to feel the things we do.

Ellen Winner, *How Art Works: A Psychological Exploration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 304 pp.
ISBN 9780190863357

How Art Works explores puzzles that have preoccupied philosophers as well as the general public. Can art be defined? How do we decide what is good art? Why do we gravitate to sadness in art? Why do we devalue a perfect fake? Couldn't anybody have done that? Does reading fiction enhance empathy? Drawing on careful observations, probing interviews, and clever experiments, the author reveals surprising answers from a psychological vantage point to these and other philosophical questions.

Aesthetics in Dialogue: Applying Philosophy of Art in a Global World, Edited By Zoltan Somhegyi and Max Rynnänen (Peter Lang, 2020), 344 pp.
ISBN 978-3-631-81595-3

The impact of aesthetics is increasing again. For today's scholars, aesthetic theories are a significant companion and contribution in studying and analysing cultural phenomena and production. Today's scene of aesthetics is more global than what it is in most disciplines, as it does not just include scholars from all over the world, but also keeps on applying philosophical traditions globally.

Adam Loughnane, *Merleau-Ponty and Nishida: Artistic Expression as Motor-Perceptual Faith* (SUNY Press, 2020), 442 pp.
ISBN 978-1-4384-7612-4

In *Merleau-Ponty and Nishida*, Adam Loughnane initiates a new dialogue between two of the twentieth century's most important phenomenologists of the Eastern and Western philosophical worlds. Throughout the book, the reader is guided among the intricacies and innovations of Merleau-Ponty's and Nishida's ontological approaches to artistic expression with a focused look at a rarely explored connection between faith and negation in their philosophies. Exploring the intertwining of these concepts in their broader ontologies invokes a reappraisal of the ambiguous status of religion and art in the writings of both thinkers. Measuring these ambiguities, the ontologies of Flesh and Basho are read in-depth alongside great artworks and the motor-perceptual practices of seminal landscape artists such as Cézanne, Sesshū, Taiga, and Hasegawa, as well as other major figures of European, Chinese, and Japanese art history. Loughnane studies these artists' bodily practices, focusing on the intimate relations realized with the landscapes they paint, and illuminating a valence of their expressive disciplines as a motor-perceptual form of faith. *Merleau-Ponty and Nishida* is an exciting intercultural reading, expanding two philosophers' projects toward new horizons of research, revealing incitements in their writings that challenge unambiguous distinctions between art, philosophy, faith, and ultimately philosophy East and West.

Ossi Narkkarinen, *Aesthetics as Space* (Aalto University Press, 2020).
ISBN 9789526038414

The book is available as a free epub file here:
<https://shop.aalto.fi/p/1390-aesthetics-as-space/>

A living environment that is perceived as aesthetically pleasant improves our quality of life, and we continuously assess the

world we live in from this point of view. How things look, sound and feel clearly makes a difference. Are the surrounding objects, views, people, user interfaces and buildings beautiful, ugly, handsome or elegant?

In addition to assessing our surroundings, we prefer doing and making things in such a way as to promote aesthetic appeal. We comb our hair, we furnish and decorate, we tune up our social media profiles and we create art for aesthetic reasons. Aesthetic values guide our choices and decisions when we are shopping, dining at the table, spending our time on holiday, voting in the polling booth or choosing a spouse.

But what actually is aesthetics? Where and how does it exist? Is everybody's taste as good as anybody's? How does aesthetics relate to beauty, or art? How are the current megatrends, such as digitalization, molding aesthetics?

Aesthetics as Space explores the aesthetic aspects of our life in the 21st century and addresses the question above, along with many others. There is no all-encompassing 21st-century aesthetics; rather, it is a multi-dimensional space of competing interpretations and ideas. This book gives the reader tools for understanding these different approaches.

The Palgrave Handbook of the Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures, eds., Noël Carroll, Laura Teresa Di Summa-Knoop, Shawn Loht (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 1061 pp.
ISBN 978-3-030-19600-4

This handbook brings together essays in the philosophy of film and motion pictures from authorities across the spectrum. It features contributions from philosophers and film theorists alike, with many essays employing pluralist approaches to this interdisciplinary subject. Core areas treated include film ontology, film structure, psychology, authorship, narrative, and viewer emotion. Emerging areas of interest, including virtual reality, video games, and nonfictional and autobiographical film also have dedicated chapters. Other areas of focus include the film medium's intersection with contemporary social issues, film's kinship to other art forms, and the influence of historically seminal schools of thought in the philosophy of film. Of emphasis in many of the essays is the relationship and overlap of analytic and continental perspectives on this subject.

Zoltán Somhegyi, *Reviewing the Past: The Presence of Ruins* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 274 pp.

ISBN 978-1-78660-760-7

Though constantly in decay, ruins continue to fascinate the observer. Their still-standing survival is a loud affirmation of their presence, in which we can admire the struggle against the power of Nature aesthetically manifested during the decay.

This volume takes a thematic approach to examining the aesthetics of ruins. It looks at the general aspects of architectural decay and its classical forms of admiration, and then turns towards ruins from both classical and contemporary periods, from both Western and non-Western areas, and with examples from “high art” as well as popular culture. Combining the methodologies of art history, aesthetics, and cultural history, this book opens up new ways of looking at the phenomenon of ruins.

Larry Shiner, *Art Scents: Exploring the Aesthetics of Smell and the Olfactory Arts* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 372 pp.
ISBN 9780190089818

Although the arts of incense and perfume making are among the oldest of human cultural practices, it is only in the last two decades that the use of odors in the creation of art has begun to attract attention under the rubrics of ‘olfactory art’ or ‘scent art.’ Contemporary olfactory art ranges from gallery and museum installations and the use of scents in music, film, and drama, to the ambient scenting of stores and the use of scents in cuisine. All these practices raise aesthetic and ethical issues, but there is a long-standing philosophical tradition, most notably articulated in the work of Kant and Hegel, which argues that the sense of smell lacks the cognitive capacity to be a vehicle for either serious art or reflective aesthetic experience. This neglect and denigration of the aesthetic potential of smell was further reinforced by Darwin’s and Freud’s views of the human sense of smell as a near useless evolutionary vestige. Smell has thus been widely neglected within the philosophy of art.

Larry Shiner’s wide-ranging book counters this tendency, aiming to reinvigorate an interest in smell as an aesthetic experience. He begins by countering the classic arguments against the aesthetic potential of smell with both philosophical arguments and evidence from neuroscience, psychology, anthropology, history, linguistics, and literature. He then draws on this empirical evidence to explore the range of aesthetic issues that arise in each of the major areas of the olfactory arts, whether those issues arise from the use of scents with theater and music, sculpture and installation, architecture and urban design,

or avant-garde cuisine. Shiner gives special attention to the art status of perfumes and to the ethical issues that arise from scenting the body, the ambient scenting of buildings, and the use of scents in fast food. Shiner's book provides both philosophers and other academic readers with not only a comprehensive overview of the aesthetic issues raised by the emergence of the olfactory arts, but also shows the way forward for further studies of the aesthetics of smell.

The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication, eds. Aidan McGarry, Itir Erhart, Hande Eslen-Ziya, Olu Jenzen, Umut Korkut (Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 298 pp.
ISBN 9789048544509

Protestors across the world use aesthetics in order to communicate their ideas and ensure their voices are heard. This book looks at protest aesthetics, which we consider to be the visual and performative elements of protest, such as images, symbols, graffiti, art, as well as the choreography of protest actions in public spaces. Through the use of social media, protestors have been able to create an alternative space for people to engage with politics that is more inclusive and participatory than traditional politics. This volume focuses on the role of visual culture in a highly mediated environment and draws on case studies from Europe, Thailand, South Africa, USA, Argentina, and the Middle East in order to demonstrate how protestors use aesthetics to communicate their demands and ideas. It examines how digital media are harnessed by protestors and argues that all protest aesthetics are performative and communicative.

This book is available for free, open-access download here:
<https://www.aup.nl>

Monique Roelofs, *Arts of Address: Being Alive to Language and the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 327 pp.
ISBN 978-0231194372

Modes of address are forms of signification that we direct at living beings, things, and places, and they at us and at each other. Seeing is a form of address. So are speaking, singing, and painting. Initiating or responding to such calls, we participate in encounters with the world. Widely used yet less often examined in its own right, the notion of address cries out for analysis.

Monique Roelofs offers a systematic model of the field of address and puts it to work in the arts, critical theory, and social life. She shows how address props up finely hewn modalities of relationality, agency, and normativity. Address exceeds a one-on-one pairing of cultural productions with their audiences. As ardently energizing tiny slippages and snippets as fueling larger impulses in the society, it activates and reaestheticizes registers of race, gender, class, coloniality, and cosmopolitanism. In readings of writers and artists ranging from Julio Cortázar to Jamaica Kincaid and from Martha Rosler to Pope.L, Roelofs demonstrates the centrality of address to freedom and a critical political aesthetics. Under the banner of a unified concept of address, Hume, Kant, and Foucault strike up conversations with Benjamin, Barthes, Althusser, Fanon, Anzaldúa, and Butler. Drawing on a wide array of artistic and theoretical sources and challenging disciplinary boundaries, the book illuminates address's significance to cultural existence and to our reflexive aesthetic engagement in it. Keeping the reader on the lookout for flash fiction that pops up out of nowhere and for insurgent whisperings that take to the air, *Arts of Address* explores the aliveness of being alive.

Elisa Ganivet, *Border Wall Aesthetics: Artworks in Border Spaces* (New York: Transcript Verlag, distrib. by Columbia University Press, 2020), 247 pp.
ISBN 978-3837647778

Thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, we live in a time of globalization and free trade. Nevertheless, seventy new border walls have been built in this period—put together, they would cover the total circumference of the Earth. While governments offer manifold justifications for building these separation barriers, they invariably attract the attention of artists. Is it merely the lure of transgression, however, that attracts them—or is there a deeper significance in the artistic encounter with border walls? And which artistic strategies do these artists employ to approach them? In order to address these questions, Elisa Ganivet revisits the history of border wall aesthetics and compares more recent border-related works by 100 artists, including Joseph Beuys (Berlin), Banksy (Israel-Palestine), and Frida Kahlo (Mexico-US). Through art and thus beyond art, we understand the flaws and shortcomings of supposedly well-oiled systems.

Tonino Griffero and Marco Tedeschini, eds., *Atmosphere and Aesthetics: A Plural Perspective* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 342 pp.
ISBN 978-3030249410

This book provides a presentation of the concept of 'atmosphere' in the realm of aesthetics. An "atmosphere" is understood to be an emotional space. Such idea of 'atmosphere' has been more and more subsumed by human and social sciences in the last twenty years, thereby becoming a technical notion. In many fields of the humanities, affective life has been reassessed as a proper tool to understand the human being, and is now considered crucial. In this context, the link between atmospheres and aesthetics becomes decisive. Nowadays, aesthetics is no longer only a theory of art but has recovered its original vocation: to be a general theory of perception conceived of as an ordinary experience of pre-logical character. In its four parts (*Atmospheric turn?, Senses and Spaces, Subjects and Communities, Aesthetics and Art Theory*), this collection considers whether atmospheres could take the prominent and paradigmatic position previously held by art in order to make sense of such sensible experience of the world.

Massio Leone, *On Insignificance: The Loss of Meaning in the Post-Material Age* (Routledge, 2019), 234 pp.
ISBN 9781138618312

Focusing on the anthropological consequences of the disappearing of materiality and sensory embodiment, *On Insignificance* highlights some of the most perturbing patterns of insignificance that have seeped into our everyday lives. Seeking to explain the semiotic causes of feelings of meaninglessness, Leone posits that caring for the singularities of the world is the most viable way to resist the alienating effects of the digital bureaucratization of meaning. The book will be of interest to scholars of anthropology, cultural studies, semiotics, aesthetics, communication studies, and social theory.

Philosophical Perspectives on Ruins, Monuments, and Memorials, edited by Jeanette Bicknell, Jennifer Judkins, Carolyn Corsmeyer (Routledge, 2019), 304 pp.
ISBN 9781138504691

This collection of newly published essays examines our relationship to physical objects that invoke, commemorate, and honor the past. The recent destruction of cultural heritage in

war and controversies over Civil War monuments in the US have foregrounded the importance of artifacts that embody history. The book invites us to ask: How do memorials convey their meanings? What is our responsibility for the preservation or reconstruction of historically significant structures? How should we respond when the public display of a monument divides a community? This anthology includes coverage of the destruction of Palmyra and the Bamiyan Buddhas, the loss of cultural heritage through war and natural disasters, the explosive controversies surrounding Confederate-era monuments, and the decay of industry in the U.S. Rust Belt. The authors consider issues of preservation and reconstruction, the nature of ruins, the aesthetic and ethical values of memorials, and the relationship of cultural memory to material artifacts that remain from the past. Written by a group of philosophers, art historians, and archeologists, the 23 chapters cover monuments and memorials from Dubai to Detroit, from the instant destruction of Hiroshima to the gradual sinking of Venice.

Read an interview with the editors, published in *Aesthetics for Birds*: <https://aestheticsforbirds.com/2019/11/29/whats-so-interesting-about-the-past-an-interview-about-ruins-monuments-and-memorials/>

The Philosophy of Rhythm, eds. Peter Cheyne, Andy Hamilton & Max Paddison (Oxford University Press, December 2019), 432 pp.
ISBN 9780199347780

Rhythm is the fundamental pulse that animates poetry, music, and dance across all cultures. And yet the recent explosion of scholarly interest across disciplines in the aural dimensions of aesthetic experience—particularly in sociology, cultural and media theory, and literary studies—has yet to explore this category. This book furthers the discussion of rhythm beyond the discrete conceptual domains and technical vocabularies of musicology and prosody. With essays by philosophers, psychologists, musicians, literary theorists, and ethnomusicologists, *The Philosophy of Rhythm* opens up wider-and plural-perspectives, examining formal affinities between the historically interconnected fields of music, dance, and poetry, while addressing concepts such as embodiment, movement, pulse, and performance. Volume editors Peter Cheyne, Andy Hamilton, and Max Paddison bring together a range of questions: What is the distinction between rhythm and pulse? What is the relationship between everyday embodied experience, and the specific experience of music, dance, and

poetry? Can aesthetics offer an understanding of rhythm that helps inform our responses to visual and other arts, as well as music, dance, and poetry? And, what is the relation between psychological conceptions of entrainment, and the humane concept of rhythm and meter?

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-philosophy-of-rhythm-9780199347780?q=cheyne&lang=en&cc=jp#>

Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Things: In Touch with the Past* (Oxford University Press, 2019), 232 pp.

ISBN 9780190904876

Things: In Touch with the Past explores the value of artifacts that have survived from the past and that can be said to “embody” their histories. Such genuine or “real” things afford a particular kind of aesthetic experience—an encounter with the past—despite the fact that genuineness is not a perceptually detectable property. Although it often goes unnoticed, the sense of touch underlies such encounters, even though one is often not permitted literal touch.

Carolyn Korsmeyer begins her account with the claim that wonder or marvel at old things fits within an “experiential” account of the aesthetic. She then presents her main argument regarding the role of touch—both when literal contact is made and when proximity suffices, for touch is a fundamental sense that registers bodily position and location. Correct understanding of the identity of objects is presumed when one values things just because of what they are, and with discovery that a mistake has been made, admiration is often withdrawn. Far from undermining the importance of the genuine, these errors of identification confirm it. Korsmeyer elaborates this position with a comparison between valuing artifacts and valuing persons. She also considers the ethical issues of genuineness, for artifacts can be harmed in various ways ranging from vandalism to botched restoration. She examines the differences between a real thing and a replica in detail, making it clear that genuineness comes in degrees. Her final chapter reviews the ontology that best suits an account of persistence over time of things that are valued for being the real thing.

Ivan Gaskell, *Paintings and the Past: Philosophy, History, Art* (Routledge, 2019), 246 pp.

ISBN 978-0367189372

This book is an exploration of how art—specifically paintings in the European manner—can be mobilized to make knowledge claims about the past. No type of human-made tangible thing makes more complex and bewildering demands in this respect than paintings. Ivan Gaskell argues that the search for pictorial meaning in paintings yields limited results and should be replaced by attempts to define the *point* of such things, which is cumulative and ever subject to change. He shows that while it is not possible to define what art is—other than being an open kind—it is possible to define what a painting is, as a species of drawing, regardless of whether that painting is an artwork or not at any given time.

The book demonstrates that things can be artworks on some occasions but not necessarily on others, though it is easier for a thing to acquire artwork status than to lose it. That is, the movement of a thing into and out of the artworld is not symmetrical. All such considerations are properly matters not of ontology—what is and what is not an artwork—but of use; that is, how a thing might or might not function as an artwork under any given circumstances. These considerations necessarily affect the approach to paintings that at any given time might be able to function as an artwork or might not be able to function as such. Only by taking these factors into account can anyone make viable knowledge about the past.

This discussion ranges over innumerable examples of paintings, from Rembrandt to Rothko, as well as plenty of far less familiar material from contemporary Catholic devotional works to the Chinese avant garde. Its aim is to enhance philosophical acuity in respect of the analysis of paintings, and to increase their amenability to philosophically satisfying historical use. *Paintings and the Past* is a text for all advanced students and scholars concerned with philosophy of art, aesthetics, historical method, and art history.

Volume: 18 (2020)

[Publisher](#) | [Permission to Reprint](#) | [Links](#) | [Privacy](#)

The author retains copyright for the article.

Downloading, copying in whole or in part, and distribution for scholarly or educational purposes are encouraged, provided full acknowledgement is made to *Contemporary Aesthetics* and to the authors of articles.

© 2022 *Contemporary Aesthetics*

ISSN 1932-8478

