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Contemporary AESTHETICS



An international, interdisciplinary, peer- and blind-reviewed open-access online journal of contemporary theory, research, and application in aesthetics.

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Writing the editorial for last year's volume, I had no inkling of how drastically and dramatically the whole world would change. As a strictly online publication, operations at *Contemporary Aesthetics* were not affected significantly by the pandemic. All the same, so many of us were forced to make significant adjustments to our work and family life in the past year owing to the global health, economic and social justice crises.

In the throes of the pandemic, thanks to hard work by our assistant, Linnie Lyman, and our webmaster, Bob Merrill, we launched the new on-line platform for *Contemporary Aesthetics* this summer. This update was necessary for ensuring the stability and security of our journal. Past volumes are now directly accessible through our home page from the Rhode Island School of Design's Digital Commons where they are archived in PDF format. For the new platform, we preserved what was best on our old format and made changes that improved the legibility of the published texts. We hope readers are as pleased with the outcome as we are.

Another accomplishment in 2020 was the publication of "Special Volume 8: Urban Aesthetics," guest edited by Sanna Lehtinen. As with other special volumes, this one features thought-provoking discussions authored by scholars from around the world and from varied disciplines. As the world population increasingly concentrates in urban environments, the issues discussed by these authors are timely and anticipate future possibilities and challenges. I thank Sanna for her work putting this volume together and presenting these cutting-edge discussions.

We continue receiving submissions from many different parts of the world: China, Finland, Germany, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and Switzerland, in addition to Anglophone countries. The disciplines represented in these submissions are equally diverse: architecture, art, art theory, creative writing, design, English language instruction,

environmental studies, law, music composition, philosophy, and technology. This diversity can be challenging for reviewers since the approaches and writing styles of the work submitted may be different from what they are used to in academic writing. In light of this challenge, I am particularly grateful for the open-mindedness and generosity of reviewers who support our commitment to inclusivity and to judging each submission on the merits of its presentation. We learn something when aesthetics is explored from different disciplinary, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. At the same time, our review process aims to help authors learn what are considered best practices in English-language academic writing.

Our readership continues to grow. Data from Digital Commons indicate that the number of articles downloaded in 2020 was several thousand more than the year before. They also indicate the global reach of our readership. No doubt, our open access makes *Contemporary Aesthetics* an especially good resource for the remote teaching and learning forced upon many academic institutions in the last year.

Our commitment to facilitating cross-cultural exploration continues with the publication of "Special Volume 9: Aesthetic Engagement and Sensibility: Reflections on Arnold Berleant's Work." Most of the articles in this volume originally appeared in *Sztuka i filozofia* (2010), a publication of the University of Warsaw. Exclusively published in Polish, none of those articles were accessible to Anglophone readers. By making updated versions of these articles available in English, we offer those readers an insight into the vibrant aesthetics discourse in Poland. By publishing this particular collection of papers, we salute the lifelong contributions to aesthetics made by our founding editor, Arnold Berleant, who continues to nurture the growth of *Contemporary Aesthetics* to this day.

In fact, next year (2022) will be the 20th anniversary of *Contemporary Aesthetics*, and we will celebrate this milestone with another Special Volume including essays that reflect on the development and change in aesthetics discourse in the past twenty years as well as what we can expect from aesthetics in the near future. Historically, aesthetics has not received the attention we believe it deserves and that current changes in society and culture warrant. Indeed, aesthetic matters abound in the drastic changes we are experiencing with the pandemic, including social relationships mediated by physical distance or technological media, changes in body appearance by face coverings, and the absence of directly participating in or experiencing performances of music, theater, dance, and team

sports. We look forward to highlighting the role aesthetics plays in appreciating our changed lives and culture.

As always, reviewers do much important work for this journal. We are particularly grateful to them this year, as they suddenly adapted to new teaching formats and did their work, including the work they did for *Contemporary Aesthetics*, from home where they also have family obligations. We thank the following reviewers for volunteering their time last year to provide thorough, thoughtful, and fair reviews despite such challenges: Erik Anderson, Arnold Berleant, Jeanette Bicknell, Kristin Boyce, John Carvalho, Renee Conway, Mădălina Diaconu, Peter Doeblner, Lindsay French, Garry Hagberg, Kathleen Higgins, Brent Kalar, James Kirwan, Carolyn Korsmeyer, Tom Leddy, Eva Man, Kevin Melchionne, Bence Nanay, Thi Nguyen, Ariane Nomikos, Dorothea Olkowski, Elizabeth Scarborough, Larry Shiner, Grant Tavinor, Pauline von Bonsdorff, and Stephen Zepke.

I continue to benefit from the wise counsel of editorial board members, in particular Associate Editor, John Carvalho, and Founding Editor, Arnold Berleant. I am grateful to their support and encouragement. We also owe a huge thank you to our assistant, Lynnie Lyman, and our copyeditor, Anne Berleant, without whose work we cannot function. Finally, I want to thank our readers for their support. Nothing pleases us more than to know that *Contemporary Aesthetics* is contributing to your philosophical research and teaching in aesthetics. As always, we welcome your interest in the content we post and in the discipline of aesthetics.

With you, I look forward to improved individual and shared life-scapes in the year ahead.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature reads "Yuriko Saito" in a cursive, flowing script.

Yuriko Saito, Editor

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