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Silvia Casini, *Giving Bodies Back to Data: Image Makers, Bricolage, and Reinvention in Magnetic Resonance Technology* (MIT Press, 2021), 312 pp.
ISBN: 9780262045292

Our bodies are scanned, probed, imaged, sampled, and transformed into data by clinicians and technologists. In this book, Silvia Casini reveals the affective relations and materiality that turn data into image—and in so doing, gives bodies back to data. Opening the black box of MRI technology, Casini examines the bodily, situated aspects of visualization practices around the development of this technology. Reframing existing narratives of biomedical innovation, she emphasizes the important but often overlooked roles played by aesthetics, affectivity, and craft practice in medical visualization.

Combining history, theory, laboratory ethnography, archival research, and collaborative art-science, Casini retrieves the multiple presences and agencies of bodies in data visualization, mapping the traces of scientists' body work and embodied imagination. She presents an in-depth ethnographic study of MRI development at the University of Aberdeen's biomedical physics laboratory, from the construction of the first whole-body scanner for clinical purposes through the evolution of the FFC-

MRI. Going beyond her original focus on MRI, she analyzes a selection of neuroscience- or biomedicine-inspired interventions by artists in media ranging from sculpture to virtual reality. Finally, she presents a methodology for designing and carrying out small-scale art-science projects, describing a collaboration that she herself arranged, highlighting the relational and aesthetic-laden character of data that are the product of craftsmanship and affective labor at the laboratory bench.

Casini's earlier work has been published in *Contemporary Aesthetics*, Volume 8 (2010) and can be found here: https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_contempaesthetics/vol8/iss1/22/

Arts in the Margins of World Encounters, eds. by Willemijn de Jong, Eriko Aoki, John Clammer (Vernon Press, 2021), 251 pp.

ISBN 9781622736027

Arts in the Margins of World Encounters presents original contributions that deal with artworks of differently marginalized people—such as ethnic minorities, refugees, immigrants, disabled people, and descendants of slaves, a wide variety of art forms—like clay figures, textile, paintings, poems, museum exhibits and theatre performances—, and original data based on committed, long-term fieldwork and/or archival research in Brazil, Martinique, Rwanda, India, Indonesia, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

The volume develops theoretical approaches inspired by innovative theorists and is based on currently debated analytical categories including the ethnographic turn in contemporary art, polycentric aesthetics, and aesthetic cannibalization, among others. This collection also incorporates fascinating and intriguing contemporary cases, but with solid theoretical arguments and grounds.

Mary Bittner Wiseman, *A Grand Materialism in the New Art from China* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 198 pp.

ISBN 978-1-4985-9690-9

In *A Grand Materialism in the New Art from China*, Mary Bittner Wiseman shows that material matters in the work of Chinese artists, where the goal is to call attention to its subjects through the directness and immediacy of its material (like dust from 9/11, 1001 Chinese citizens, paintings made with gunpowder, written words) or the specificity of its sites (such as the Three

Gorges Dam). Artists are working below the level of language where matter and gesture, texture and touch, instinct and intuition live. Not reduced to the words applied to them, art's subjects appear in their concrete particularity, embedded in the stories of their materials or their sites. Wiseman argues that it is global in being able to be understood by all thanks to its materials and the stories that accompany it, and the art is contemporary in having to make the case for itself that it is art. Finally, it satisfies Arthur Danto's characterization of art as any representation that puts its subject in a new light by way of a rhetorical figure that the viewer interprets. The material art from China is the paradigm for an art that is global and contemporary.

Dr. Zoltán Somhegyi, *Reviewing the Past: The Presence of Ruins* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 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.

Aesthetics of Gentrification: Seductive Spaces and Exclusive Communities in the Neoliberal City, eds. Christoph Lindner & Gerard Sandoval (Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 296 pp.
ISBN 9789463722032

Gentrification is reshaping cities worldwide, resulting in seductive spaces and exclusive communities that aspire to innovation, creativity, sustainability, and technological sophistication. Gentrification is also contributing to growing social-spatial division and urban inequality and precarity. In a time of escalating housing crisis, unaffordable cities, and racial tension, scholars speak of eco-gentrification, techno-gentrification, super-gentrification, and planetary gentrification

to describe the different forms and scales of involuntary displacement occurring in vulnerable communities in response to current patterns of development and the hype-driven discourses of the creative city, smart city, millennial city, and sustainable city.

In this context, how do contemporary creative practices in art, architecture, and related fields help to produce or resist gentrification? What does gentrification look and feel like in specific sites and communities around the globe, and how is that appearance or feeling implicated in promoting stylized renewal to a privileged public? In what ways do the aesthetics of gentrification express contested conditions of migration and mobility? Addressing these questions, this book examines the relationship between aesthetics and gentrification in contemporary cities from multiple, comparative, global, and transnational perspectives.

Patrick Grant, *Dialogue in the Digital Age* (Routledge, 2021), 110 pp.
ISBN 9780367688066

Combining literary criticism and theory with anthropology and cognitive science, this book argues that we are fundamentally shaped by dialogue. Patrick Grant looks at the manner in which dialogue informs and connects the personal, political, and religious dimensions of human experience and how literacy is being eroded through many factors, including advances in digital technology.

The book begins by tracing the history of evolved communication skills and looks at ways in which interconnections among tragedy, the limits of language, and the silence of abjection contribute to an adequate understanding of dialogue. Looking at examples such as “truth decay” in journalism and falling literacy levels in school, alongside literary texts from Malory and Shakespeare, Grant shows how literature and criticism embody the essential values of dialogue. The maintenance of complex reading and interpretive skills is recommended for the recuperation of dialogue and for a better understanding of its fundamental significance in the shaping of our personal and social lives.

Tapping into debates about the value of literature and the humanities, and the challenges posed by digitalization, this book will be of interest to people working in a wide range of subjects, including literary studies, communication studies, digital humanities, social policy, and anthropology.

Gioia Laura Iannilli, *The Aesthetics of Experience Design. A Philosophical Essay* (Mimesis International, 2020), 152 pp.
ISBN 9788869772986

While a number of studies have focused on the relationship between aesthetics and design, a specific aesthetic analysis of experience design is still missing, despite the growing importance of the latter. This gap is not coincidental. “Experience Design” can be a broad category potentially including any type of design, and thus, difficult to pin down. Without claiming to be exhaustive, this essay aims to provide a useful approach and some coordinates for a more critical reflection on such a transversally operative phenomenon that is both widespread and urgent to understand. Not least, it aims to show how Experience Design’s highly aesthetic potential can shed new light on design’s canonical conceptual couple “form–function.”

Nicola Perullo, *Epistenology* (Columbia University Press, 2020), 216 pp.
ISBN 9780231197519

We think we know how to appreciate wine—trained connoisseurs take dainty sips in sterile rooms and provide ratings based on objective knowledge and technical expertise. In *Epistenology*, Nicola Perullo vigorously challenges this approach, arguing that it is the enjoyment of drinking wine as an active and participatory experience that matters.

Perullo argues that wine comes to life not in the abstract space of the professional tasting but in the real world of shared experiences; wines can change in these encounters, and drinkers along with them. Just as a winemaker is not simply a producer but a nurturer, a wine is fully known only through an encounter among a group of drinkers in a specific place and time. Wine is not an object to analyze but an experience to make, creatively opening up new perceptual possibilities for settings, cuisines, and companions.

The result of more than twenty years of research and practical engagement, *Epistenology* presents a new paradigm for the enjoyment of wine and through it a philosophy based on participatory and relational knowledge. This model suggests a profound shift—not knowledge *about* but *with* wine. Interweaving philosophical arguments with personal reflections

and literary examples, this book is a journey with wine that shows how it makes life more creative and free.

David Colangelo, *Building as Screen: A History, Theory and Practice of Massive Media* (Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 192 pp.

ISBN 9789462989498

The Building as Screen: A History, Theory, and Practice of Massive Media describes, historicizes, theorizes, and creatively deploys massive media — a set of techno-social assemblages and practices that include large outdoor projections, programmable architectural façades, and urban screens — in order to better understand their critical and creative potential. Massive media is named as such not only because of the size and subsequent visibility of this phenomenon but also for its characteristic networks and interactive screen and cinema-like qualities. Examples include the programmable lighting of the Empire State Building and the interactive projections of Montreal's Quartier des spectacles, as well as a number of works created by the author himself. This book argues that massive media enables and necessitates the development of new practices of expanded cinema, public data visualization, and installation art and curation that blend the logics of urban space, monumentality, and the public sphere with the aesthetics and affordances of digital information and the moving image.

Screen Space, Reconfigured, eds. Susanne Saetgerm & Synne Tollerud Bull (Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 332 pp.
ISBN 9789089649928

Screen Space Reconfigured is the first edited volume that critically and theoretically examines the many novel renderings of space brought to us by 21st century screens. Exploring key cases such as post-perspectival space, 3D, vertical framing, haptics, and layering, this volume takes stock of emerging forms of screen space and spatialities as they move from the margins to the centre of contemporary media practice. Recent years have seen a marked scholarly interest in spatial dimensions and conceptions of moving image culture, with some theorists claiming that a 'spatial turn' has taken place in media studies and screen practices alike. Yet this is the first book-length study dedicated to on-screen spatiality as such. Spanning mainstream cinema, experimental film, video art, mobile screens, and stadium entertainment, the volume includes contributions from

such well-known authors as Giuliana Bruno and Tom Gunning as well as a younger generation of scholars.

Stephanie Ross, *Two Thumbs Up: How Critics Aid Appreciation* (The University of Chicago Press, 2020), 256 pp.
ISBN 9780226064284

Far from an elite practice reserved for the highly educated, criticism is all around us. We turn to the Yelp reviewers to decide what restaurants are best, to Rotten Tomatoes to guide our movie choices, and to a host of voices on social media for critiques of political candidates, beach resorts, and everything in between. Yet even amid this ever-expanding sea of opinions, professional critics still hold considerable power in guiding how we make aesthetic judgements. Philosophers and lovers of art continue to grapple with questions that have fascinated them for centuries: How should we engage with works of art? What might enhance such encounters? Should some people's views be privileged? Who should count as a critic? And do critics actually help us appreciate art?

In *Two Thumbs Up*, philosopher Stephanie Ross tackles these questions, revealing the ways that critics influence our decisions, and why that's a good thing. Starting from David Hume's conception of ideal critics, Ross refines his position and makes the case that review-based journalistic or consumer reporting criticism proves the best model for helping us find and appreciate quality. She addresses and critiques several other positions and, in the process, she demonstrates how aesthetic and philosophical concerns permeate our lives, choices, and culture. Ultimately, whether we're searching for the right wine or the best concert, Ross encourages us all to find and follow critics whose taste we share.

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.

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