

## AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE TODAY

### ABSTRACTS

#### **Ana Clemente et al.: Musical and Visual Aesthetic Sensitivity University of the Balearic Islands**

We have proposed a new and revolutionary construct and measure of aesthetic sensitivity, in line with current knowledge and useful for investigating valuation processes. We conceive it as responsiveness, i.e., the extent to which a particular feature affects someone's liking or preference, and measure it as the individual variability in the liking for that feature. We examined aesthetic sensitivity to balance, contour, symmetry, and complexity in music and images separately and across domains within non-experts in music and visual art. Our conception has proven valid and useful, sensitive to subtle temporal variations, and consistent across domains. The results shed light on the nature of aesthetic judgments and uncovered an underlying binary profile related to a preference for information density linked to personality and other traits. Our notion creates a platform for more sophisticated research on aesthetic experience and contributes to understanding valuation processes, which makes it of interest to many fields.

#### **Botond Csuka: Aesthetic Experience, Improvement, and Providence: The “Exercise Model” in the British Enlightenment Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE); University of Physical Education (HUPE)**

The paper examines how “exercise” – the medico-scientific discourse on physical exercise in particular – served as a model for the emerging concept of aesthetic experience in the British Enlightenment. Revisiting Addison's essays and its reverberations in various aesthetic theories, the paper argues that the aesthetic was seen as an experience that not only actively *engages* various human capacities but also *improves* them for certain beneficial purposes. The benefits of the “exercise model” were manifold: it could be utilized to argue for the *therapeutic* and *transformative power* of aesthetic experience, concerning somatic well-being, moral culture, and social cohesion. Based on the reassessment of the role of the Providential Order in the British Enlightenment, the paper claims that the “exercise model” is an important modification of Paul Guyer's Kantian “play model” because the aesthetic experience was far from being a “free play” in the British Enlightenment. It functioned as an “exercise” that could develop human sensibility in accordance with the providential design, which made the aesthetic an integral part of the general endeavour of the Enlightenment: “improvement.”

#### **Magdalena Filipczuk: Chinese Aesthetic Experience in Everyday Life. Gongfu Approach Jesuit University Ignatianum**

“Every human activity has a form and expression, and all forms of expressions lie within the definition of art,” says Lin Yutang (林語堂), well-known Chinese writer and thinker. According to him, everyday activities such as writing, reading, conversation and even lying in bed can

be performed as forms of art, and they can have a very big influence on the quality of our life. Using gongfu introduced by Peimin Ni, I would like to analyze some of the most important passages on Chinese aesthetics experience in everyday life in Lin's writings. I will, therefore, try to take a closer look at Chinese aesthetic experience in a process of living and illuminate mutual interrelations between practice and art and cultivation of illuminative self-consciousness.

**Rachael Goodyer: Necessity and the Experience of Tragedy in Stanley Cavell  
Harvard University**

Stanley Cavell closes 'Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy' with the reflection that 'philosophy concerns those necessities we cannot, being human, fail to know.' The plural 'necessities' immediately guards us against interpreting Cavell in the standard metaphysical sense. He is not speaking of those propositions which are true in every possible world. But if not these necessities, which? This paper aims to give a unified account of necessity in Cavell's work: one which points up how he saw philosophy and literature communing with each other. I argue that the necessities of which Cavell speaks are the deeply entrenched conventions which regulate human life. It is the deep-rootedness of these conventions that makes them hard to attend to as conventions – as communally produced rules subject to change.

**Samantha Groenestyn: The Artwork as Tool: Affective Scaffolding and the Aesthetic Experience  
University of Vienna**

The Extended Emotions thesis, or *affective scaffolding*, suggests how we might treat the double-jointed nature of the aesthetic experience: that between artist-artwork-perceiver. I bring together two discussions of how we use artworks to actively construct our affective environment. For the perceiver, the artwork comprises a 'tool' by which we 'offload' our emotions and thus open up new forms of experience (Krueger, 2019). For the artist, the process of making a work of art itself affords a remarkable way of extending herself. The artwork becomes a tool in a very Heideggerian sense, blurring the boundary between artist and artwork (Saarinen, 2019). I argue that the different *affordances* that the artwork offers perceiver and artist explain the different uses each put it to, and the resulting difference in—and richness of—their experience of it.

**Monika Jovanović: Beyond the Internalism/Externalism Dispute: Kant's Integrative View of Aesthetic Experience  
Belgrade University**

The question what is distinctive for aesthetic experience compared to other types of experiences can be approached from two different perspectives: by asking what does the aesthetic experience consist in (internalism), or by asking what causes that experience, i.e., what is its content (externalism). By analyzing Kant's theses on aesthetic psychology from the third *Critique*, I will try to show that any plausible conception of aesthetic experience must incorporate elements of both perspectives. The merits of such an integrative approach are readily apparent when we judge it not only by its coherency and extensional adequacy, but

also by its explanatory force: to what degree it helps us argue for the universal validity of aesthetic judgments or contribute to an adequate explanation of aesthetic evaluation.

**Dimitra-Mimika Koulaxidi: Benjamin on Nietzsche's Aestheticism, Tragedy and Trauerspiel in the Whirlpool of Art  
University of Patras**

Philosophical criticism pertaining to works of art has engendered unabated controversy with regards to the consolidation of its appropriate methodology. Walter Benjamin, in his 1925 *Habilitationsschrift The Origin of the German Mourning Play (Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels)*, embarks on precisely such an endeavor, handling Germany's theatrical baroque dramas as its subject matter. His critical historical-philosophical approach unfolds in a pivotal manner, one of his cardinal influences being Friedrich Nietzsche's seminal *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nonetheless, Benjamin distances himself from the famous Apollonian-Dionysiac interplay diptych for he considers this Nietzschean discovery as inadequate in accounting for the historical sensitivity of ancient Greek tragedy's character, succumbing, thus, to aestheticism. My talk shall be articulated in three intertwined parts: (i) the juxtaposition of Benjamin's and Nietzsche's interpretations of tragedy's *status* with a coextensive attempt to evaluate the former's objections to the latter's purported aestheticism, (ii) Benjamin's comprehension of allegory, in contrast to symbol, as the means of baroque view's expression and, finally, (iii) an endeavor to encompass their respective standpoints to the broader inquiry of the aesthetic experience's specificity.

**Václav Křížek: About the Relationship of Memory and Aesthetic Experience – To Aesthetics of Marcel Proust  
Masaryk University**

Paper will focus on the issue of aesthetic experience at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. First part will discuss main theories of John Dewey, William James, Henri Bergson and Jan Mukařovský, and the later by Gadamer and Merleau-Ponty. The second part introduces the aesthetics of Marcel Proust, a great thinker and artist of this period. In the same way, his view of the issue of aesthetic experience will be presented. The main question is the relationship between memory experience and aesthetic experience.

The main question of the paper is the following: What did the aesthetic experience look like at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries? How do Proust's reflections fit into this thinking? What is the relationship between memory and aesthetic experience? How does aesthetic experience change over time?

**Lukáš Makky: From „Ur-Experience“ to Aesthetic Experience: Hypothetical Transformation of Experiencing Artworks and its Aura  
Prešov University**

The submitted paper has the ambition to link three issues. Continuing on my previous findings about the somaesthetic aspects of aesthetic experience, researched on example of prehistoric experience, which I believe could be understood as a part of complex experience. On the hypothetical level, however, I would like to extend it by the concept of Walter Benjamin's aura. In particular, I will test the "experience" as a way of responding to the

"intuitive identification" of the aura and its evaluation. On a similar principle as Levinson's "ur-art", I want to try to identify a theoretical situation (not a historical moment) when the aesthetic experience is defined / separated from the complex experience. Through the identification of the transformational moments of aesthetic experience, I come to the second and third issue I want to explore. I can present them with following questions: "Which one, art or aesthetic experience has disappeared/ended?", "Did art or aesthetic experience change?"

**Miloš Miladinov: Heidegger's Concept of Artwork Experience – From *Being and Time* to *The Origin of the Work of Art***  
**University of Novi Sad**

Heidegger's philosophy of art is often regarded as a *Werkästhetik* project, as a project which primarily addresses the problem of the artwork. Such an interpretation is advocated by some of the most important interpreters of Heidegger's philosophy – F. - W. von Herrmann and O. Pöggeler. Moreover, Heidegger's philosophy of art is part of his later philosophy, and is usually interpreted only within this context. However, here I will try to prove two quite different points: 1) Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art* should be interpreted taking into account the main points of the *Being and Time*, and 2) *The Origin of the Work of Art* is not primarily directed to the concept of the artwork, but rather to the *experience* of the artwork or to what was called aesthetic experience in tradition.

**David Monroe: The Second Tongue: Michel Serres on Taste and Knowledge**  
**Staffordshire University; St. Petersburg College**

In his seminal work on perceptual experience, *The Five Senses*, Michel Serres offers a sophisticated, nuanced and rich discussion of the sense of taste. Despite the lushness of Serres' work on taste, there is little elaboration by Anglophone scholars of his corpus, and, surprisingly, scant attention from contemporary philosophers of taste and gustatory aesthetics. The aim of this paper is to explore Serres' account of taste and its relation to knowledge, with the hope of drawing attention to the significance of his work.

I begin by sketching a basic understanding of the "second tongue" in *The Five Senses*, contrasting Serres' conception of taste's role as a sensory modality with that traditionally assumed through the history of western thought. From there, I will outline the problem of the seeming relativity, either subjectively or culturally, of judgments associated with taste, framing them as challenges Serres aims to overcome. The remainder of the paper focuses on how taste is able to make contact with reality and is able to provide genuine knowledge.

**Nicholas Reimann: Exploring the Relationship between the Aesthetic and Moral Value of Food**  
**University of Leeds**

Philosophers of art have been thinking about the interaction between an artwork's moral value and its aesthetic value for some time. The relevance and implications of this debate for thinking about the analogous interaction in food have remained largely unexplored.

I will briefly map out the classic positions in the debate about ethical-aesthetic value interaction in art, before considering the applicability of the debate to food. I then introduce the notion of *trace* and its role in Korsmeyer's 'means moralism' about food. I suggest that Korsmeyer's account is most faithfully interpreted as being normatively committed with respect to the direction of the interaction. Because of these normative commitments, I argue that Korsmeyer commits the 'moralistic fallacy.' I subsequently return to the notion of trace and argue that it fails to establish ethical-aesthetic value interaction in food to begin with. However, this doesn't necessarily undermine the possibility of such interaction.

**Veronika Rubášová: The Aesthetic Dimension of Computer Games**  
**Charles University**

The question if computer games have certain aesthetic quality has been present in aesthetic discourse since the early nineties. Most of the current theories approach videogames through art. In the first part of this contribution, two problems which occur when we consider objective qualities of games through definitions of art will be presented. I believe that this approach does not provide a complete look at the true nature of videogames. One can better understand them if she or he takes into account the fact that they are games. In the second part of this paper will be shown that the possibility of victory and presence of rules are important components we have to deal with when we want to speak about the aesthetic relevance of games. In this respect, I will argue that they resemble sport. I will do that through Wolfgang Welsch's article *Sport – Viewed Aesthetically, and Even as Art?*

**Carlos Vara Sánchez: Not Quite My Rhythm: An Enactivist Approach to Aesthetic Experience**  
**Ca' Foscari University of Venice**

Rhythm is a notoriously slippery concept. Aesthetic experience too. These could be some of the reasons why John Dewey's ideas on the importance of rhythm in aesthetic experience have not received much attention. However, some recent developments on cognitive science point to rhythm, entrainment, and oscillatory activity as essential to understand the interactions between body, brain, and environment through perceptual and affective aspects of cognition. Thus, taking into consideration Dewey's theory of aesthetic experience as a particularly intense type of general experience and some empirical finding, I will propose an enactivist approach –that is, non-representational, non-computational, embodied, and situated– to aesthetic experience. These will be presented as experiential episodes characterized by particular rhythmical dynamics leading to a phase entrainment between environment, brain, and body oscillations affecting agency, attention, and sense-making.

**Toam Semel: Daily Laughs: An Aesthetic Experience or a Quotidian Work of Art?**  
**Tel Aviv University**

Philosophers have long struggled with the ever-elusive subject of The Comic, with different approaches attempting to grasp its many facets while capturing its unique quality. In this paper, I will first present the debate surrounding one approach, which views the comic as a type of aesthetic experience, focusing on the idea of 'detachment.' I will then propose my

alternative, viewing the everyday comic event not as a disinterested subjective experience, but rather as a *work of art*, which we create and take part in, in our daily lives.

Using Heidegger's conceptual framework of the artwork, I will examine everyday examples of humour (which will be my main focus, as opposed to the comedic artform), and demonstrate in what way viewing the comic as a quotidian artwork considers overlooked facets of the phenomenon. Most importantly, it will uncover the comic's nature as an instance of truth, which both steps out of everyday existence, and sheds light upon it.

**Niklas Sommer: Schiller's Reaction to Kant in his Kallias-Letters**  
**Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena**

In this talk, I shall examine one of the central elements of Schiller's thinking in his encounter with Kant; in particular the idea of objective criteria in transcendental aesthetics.

At the center of the aesthetic discussion, as Kant conceives of it, lies the attempt to put the relation between the specific aesthetic pleasure that a beautiful object evokes and that object itself into words and descriptions that are generally agreeable, or at least claim to be.

Following the requirements of the free play of the cognitive faculties, Schiller brings forward the essence of beauty as *freedom in the appearance*

Pertaining to the subject of art criticism, Kant's discussion of the compositional features can now be defined more precisely as the investigation into how the form or composition of an object allows it to appear free or self-explained.

**Pablo Fernández Velasco: The Aesthetics of Being Lost: Disorientation as a Catalyser of Aesthetic Experience in Immersive Environments**  
**Institut Jean Nicod; University College London**

In this paper, I develop a phenomenological analysis of how disorientation can enhance the aesthetic experience within immersive environments. I use as a case study the "Movement Gallery," a VR environment designed at the Interactive Architecture Lab. The Movement Gallery has a slowly evolving spatial structure: over time, walls became larger, fade away or recede, often as unpredictable responses to the viewer's movements. On the one hand, this gives the viewer the experience of a reactive quasi-alive environment. On the other, it creates an uncertainty as to how the space has changed behind the viewer's back.

The above case study serves as the starting point for a theory of how disorientation can serve as a catalyser for intense aesthetic experiences. I argue that disorientation can serve to elicit a suspension of belief, which results in a more engaged and unconstrained interaction with the artwork and in a more gripping aesthetic experience.

**Sylwia Wilczewska: Beyond the Empirical: The Role of Aesthetic Experience in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Agnosticism**  
**John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin**

Within the philosophy of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century agnostics, whose epistemological views were inspired by scientific evidentialism and Herbert Spencer's concept of "the Unknowable," aesthetic experience has often filled the space made empty by the realization of the lack or

impossibility of knowledge about the supernatural. While Spencer associated it with an urge or impulse without any immediate practical significance, such authors as Leslie Stephen or John Tyndall saw it as an inspiration to action in the absence of evidence sufficient for justifying a decision, agreeing with Spencer that its content points out beyond empirical reality. The aim of my presentation is to outline the role of aesthetic experience in Victorian agnosticism and its possible significance for contemporary philosophy – especially religious fictionalism.