



American Society for Aesthetics 75th Annual Meeting
November 15-18, 2017
New Orleans, Louisiana

Essay Abstracts (alphabetical by author)

The Aesthetic Value of Local Food

Matthew Adams (University of Virginia)

Friday, November 17, 11:15-1:15 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"I begin by arguing that the problem with the familiar environmental defense of local food is that it rests on empirically false assumptions and cannot establish that there is anything innately valuable about local food. By drawing on Arnold Berleant's work on environmental aesthetics, I then argue that the aesthetic value of local food resides in the fact that it allows us to become engaged in the local environment. After responding to two objections, I close by showing that my aesthetic argument has a major practical application: it strengthens the environmental defense of local food."

The Problem of Disvaluable Aesthetic Experience

Alksey Balotskiy (University of British Columbia)

Friday, November 17, 9:00-11:00 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

"Orthodoxy has it that aesthetic experience is disinterested. In contemporary usage, this claim amounts to one of two things. Either one's aesthetic experience is disinterested in the sense that one values that experience for its own sake or one's aesthetic experience is disinterested in the sense that one attends to that experience (or the object[s] of that experience) for its own sake. In this paper, I look at one argument advanced against this orthodoxy, the argument from disvaluable aesthetic experience. I explain how best to interpret this argument, and argue that although it fails to achieve its original purpose, it nonetheless poses a substantive problem for what I refer to as orthodoxy."

A Simulation Theory of Musical Expressivity: An Expanded Version

Hye-Yoon Chung (Myongji University)

Thursday, November 16, 11:15-1:15 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

"Recently, Cochrane (2009) proposed 'a simulation theory of musical expressivity' (STME, hereafter) in an attempt to elucidate the mechanism through which music is recognized as expressive of emotions. His proposal is based on the view that the mechanism which makes it possible that "listeners to music can often make confident judgments regarding its expressive content" (191) is comparable to the mechanism through which we recognize the emotional states of other. What initially motivates this view is "the problem of how (purely instrumental) music could possibly express emotions when it neither presents the situations that cause

emotions, nor has a body" (193, problem X, hereafter). The strategy Cochrane adopts to solve this problem is to "compare the way we recognize emotions in music with the way we recognize emotions in other people." (193) What justifies this comparison is the fact that both when we recognize emotions in others and when we recognize emotions in music, we usually do so only with perceptual information. For the comparison, Cochrane introduces theory of mindreading which has been developed to explain how it is possible to know the mental states of others, and proposes STME endorsing a simulation theory of mind-reading (STM, hereafter). While very interesting and seminal, Cochrane's theory has some crucial problems. In this paper, I will critically examine Cochrane's STME and propose an enhanced version of STME by clarifying and expanding it."

Transparent and Opaque Performance Personas

Wesley Cray (Texas Christian University)

Thursday, November 16, 9:00-11:00 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

"Jeanette Bicknell has argued that a singer's public persona is relevant to the aesthetic evaluation of that singer's public performances of popular song. Here, I distinguish between two kinds of personas: those which are transparent (such as when a singer performs more or less as that singer) and those which are opaque (such as when a singer performs more or less as a fictional character). After introducing and elucidating this distinction, I discuss ways in which it further informs aesthetic evaluation of such performances."

Seeing Without Being Shown: Finding Diversity in a Shared Visual World

Caitlin Dolan (University of California, Berkeley)

Saturday, November 18, 11:15-1:15 (Astor I-2nd floor)

"By assessing the respective viability of two opposing responses to the idea that "vision has a history," this paper identifies an alternative way of interpreting that thesis, and uncovers certain key desiderata that a conception of the relation between vision and visual art (in particular, depiction) should secure."

Popular Music, Uncovered

Mark Gatten (University of Toronto)

Saturday, November 18, 9:00-11:00 (Astor I-2nd floor)

"In this paper I analyze the language and musical practices surrounding cover versions of songs within the modern popular music tradition in order to show that works of popular music have a unique identity condition for instantiation in a performance or recording: that the work be performed by the privileged or intended performer(s). To justify my view, I consider the aesthetic principles behind the original work / cover version distinction and our reception and evaluation of cover versions. I conclude by suggesting ways in which the identity conditions for a particular work of music can shift over time."

Freedom, Games, and the Good

Jonathan Gingerich (University of California, Los Angeles)
Saturday, November 18, 3:00-5:00 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"This essay explores the aesthetic features in virtue of which games succeed as games. Thomas Hurka has recently argued that the goodness of games lies in their complexity: they structure simple activities into more complicated (and therefore more worthwhile) activities. I argue that an important element of the value of games is their ability to provide players with an experience of freedom, which they provide both as paradigmatically voluntary activities and by offering opportunities for relatively unconstrained choice inside the "lusory" world that players inhabit. Hurka's thesis should be amended to reflect the centrality of this value to many games."

The Ethical Criticism of Artistic Production: A Defense of Means Moralism*

Alessandro Giovannelli (Lafayette College)
Saturday, November 18, 3:00-5:00 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

"Contemporary debate has so far paid little attention to the possible artistic relevance of ethical judgments based on artworks' means, or modes, of production. First, I propose a broad understanding of the notion of modes of production, one applicable to all art forms. Second, I dismiss arguments against the general ethical legitimacy of the judgment in question. Third, I address arguments for the judgment's artistic irrelevance. Finally, I sketch my own theory, means moralism, showing the systematic relevance of the ethical judgment in question across art forms and media."

Subaltern Voices & The Standard of Taste

Sarah Gokhale (CUNY, Graduate Center)
Thursday, November 16, 11:15-1:15 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"How ought we conduct aesthetic judgments to ensure subaltern experts' voices are being heard and diverse audience members are sufficiently able to comprehend criticism? Is Hume's classic account of the standard of taste elitist? Hume proposed the standard of aesthetic taste is known through the joint verdict of Ideal critics. I'll first claim that the social capital required to gain the five criteria needed for Ideal critic status leads to the bad consequence of restricting engagement with criticism to cosmopolitan and well-educated persons. Secondly, I'll assess Stephanie Ross's division of labor approach as a partial solution to this elitism."

Music and the Aesthetic Self

Javier Gomez-Lavin (CUNY Graduate Center) & Joerg Fingerhut (Humboldt-Universitaet zu Berlin)
Thursday, November 16, 11:15-11:15 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

"This project discusses how aesthetic value is related to personal identity. Focusing on music, we report two empirical findings. First, Germans (unlike Americans) judge counterfactual

changes in aesthetic preference from classical to pop music as a change in personal identity, what we term the “aesthetic self-effect.” Second, we explore the conceptual space of genres in music and how it changes as a function of authoritarianist tendencies. We introduce art-engagement as an important personality measure in this respect. We generally claim that philosophical theories of the value of music should be amended by approaches that include individual and social differences.”

Aesthetic Pleasure and the Value of Art: A “Value-First” Proposal

Keren Gorodeisky (Auburn University)

Thursday, November 16, 11:15-1:15 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"Does art have anything interesting to do with pleasure? While a long and venerable tradition answered this question affirmatively, the first half of the twentieth century has introduced many naysayers. But in recent years, pleasure has made a comeback. I welcome this trend and hold that pleasure does play an essential role in proper evaluative engagement with art, but I worry that most of the main players in this recent trend fail to draw the connection between pleasure and art in the right way. My main task in this paper is to argue against those who think that pleasure grounds and constitutes the value of artworks : I argue that rather than grounding and constituting value, aesthetic pleasure is explained by, and grounded in, the value of artworks. On the proposed picture, pleasure is connected to art insofar as it is the proper response called for (and merited) by the value of artworks."

Dancing, Dwelling, and Jazz

Theodore Gracyk (Minnesota State University, Moorhead) and David Goldblatt (Denison University)

Thursday, November 16, 2:45-5:00 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

"This paper makes an inclusive case for understanding dancing to the music of jazz, and the places at or in which the dancing occurred, as essential elements of jazz during a long stretch of its history. Then, sometime around the late 1940's and into the 1950's, there was a reinvention of the social practices surrounding jazz, and these relationships were severed. There is good reason, therefore, to regard subsequent jazz, while still jazz, as really a different kind of art. Severing jazz from social dancing and its venues also severed the functional connection between the music and the form of life that shaped it."

Narrative, non-narrative, and quasi-narrative performances – an epistemic view

James Hamilton (Kansas State University)

Friday, November 17, 2:45-5:00 (Astor II-2nd floor)

"This presentation first offers clear examples of the distinction among the kinds of performances to be discussed. There are two fundamentally different ways one might state, rather than illustrate, the distinction. Brief arguments are presented in favor an epistemic distinction rather than the more familiar metaphysical one that is found in narratology and philosophical aesthetics. What spectators produce by way of evidence they have understood

what has been presented to them marks the distinction we need. Some work in cognitive science and computational narrative comprehension is shown to suggest an explanatory account of how spectators reason to what they produce."

Awareness of Things in Pictures is Unique

Robert Hopkins (New York University)

Friday, November 17, 11:15-1:15 (Astor II-2nd floor)

"When we see something in a picture, seen as a picture, we are both visually aware of the surface and visually aware of the object or scene depicted. Can this last awareness occur in any other context, or is it unique to our experience of pictures? I argue for the latter, by reflecting on the intimate links between that visual awareness and the way the marks on the surface look. Uniqueness threatens various accounts of pictorial experience. After rejecting attempts those views might make to resist the argument for it, I close by considering their prospects for accommodating the conclusion."

Sensual city: The synesthetic basis for a feeling of urban at-homeness

Brian Irwin (State University of New York, Stony Brook)

Saturday, November 18, 11:15-1:15 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"This paper argues that one's feeling of at-homeness in an urban environment depends on the degree to which that environment activates multiple senses in synesthetic interaction to produce a feeling of well-being. First, I argue that modernist design frequently fails by overemphasizing the visual dimension of experience at the expense of the other senses, resulting in the production of destitute places. Then, drawing especially on the phenomenological insights of Merleau-Ponty and Heinrich Wölfflin, I propose that a successful urban environment will draw on several of the senses in synesthetic interaction, an interaction which is necessary for a rich sense of place."

Keeping Our Place: On Performing Lengthy Musical Works

Jennifer Judkins (University of California, Los Angeles)

Thursday, November 16, 9:00-11:00 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

"Lengthy solo musical works, such as those seen in the piano literature, create artistic as well as physical challenges for the performer. We can imagine that arduous memorization process, at least the mechanics of it, one phrase leading to the next, with perhaps entrainment and tremendous muscle memory joining it all physically. Yet how is it that these piano soloists keep their place artistically, producing a stylistically consistent musical interpretation in both large and very fine scale? How are moments developed and connected in deference to a carefully developed larger vision, one never entirely before the performer's consciousness?"

Immersion as an Imaginative State: Fiction and Nonfiction

Laszlo Kajtar (Central European University)

Saturday, November 18, 9:00-11:00 (Astor II-2nd floor)

"Is fiction intimately tied to the imagination? The answer is not simply 'yes' or 'no'. The present paper examines an imaginative state, immersion, in order to argue that it is important to disambiguate 'imagination' when it comes to the fiction-nonfiction divide. It rejects a recent account of immersion by Susanna Schellenberg in favor of one based on Peter Lamarque and Stein H. Olsen's distinction between internal and external perspectives one can take to a work of fiction. It then argues that the distinction applies to nonfictional works as well as fictional ones and that immersion should be understood as an imaginative state in which one takes a large external perspective to a narrative work."

Interpretation and the Implied Author: A Descriptive Ground

Szu-Yen Lin (University of Auckland)

Friday, November 17, 9:00-11:00 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"The utterance model is a popular basis for theories of interpretation in the contemporary analytic philosophy of literature. This model suggests that interpretation be constrained by a work's identity-relevant factors in its context of production because a work, like an utterance, acquires its identity and content in part from its relations with that context. From a descriptive point of view, I argue that the implied author account of interpretation best describes the critical practice following the current positions based on the utterance model. That is, people who interpret in accordance with these positions end up interpreting an implied author."

Beyond Surface and Depth

Ruth Martin (Northwestern University) and Nick Curry (University of Illinois, Chicago)

Friday, November 17, 9:00-11:00 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"As ideological criticism "runs out of steam," literary critics and philosophers of literature have wondered what might take the place of the once-ubiquitous "hermeneutics of suspicion." One candidate, "surface reading," has renewed debate of perennial questions—what is the nature of a literary text? where does its meaning reside—or how is it made? what counts as evidence in producing an interpretation?—while fixing the terms of the debate in a pointed opposition between "surface" and "depth." This paper surveys that debate, then argues its most useful contribution is not in characterizing the nature of a text, but in characterizing the responsibility of the critic."

Aesthetic Autonomy and Norms of Exposure

Samantha Matherne (University of California, Santa Cruz)

Thursday, November 16, 2:45-5:00 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"In this paper, I explore whether there is tension in a view of aesthetic evaluation that is committed to both aesthetic autonomy and norms of exposure. By 'aesthetic autonomy', I have

in mind the Kantian idea that in order to make a proper aesthetic evaluation, one must base it not on the opinions of others, but rather on one's own response. Meanwhile I am defining 'norms of exposure' in Humean terms as norms that require practice with works of art as a precondition of making proper aesthetic evaluations. Prima facie since the latter and not the former makes cultivation a prerequisite of proper aesthetic evaluation, these positions appear to conflict. However, I argue that a closer look at the Kantian account of aesthetic autonomy reveals that it, in fact, incorporates a commitment to norms of exposure."

Authenticity and the Aesthetic Experience of History

Erich Hatala Matthes (Wellesley College)

Saturday, November 18, 11:15-1:15 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"In this paper, I argue that norms of artistic and aesthetic authenticity that prioritize material origins foreclose on broader opportunities for aesthetic experience: particularly, for the aesthetic experience of history. I focus on Carolyn Korsmeyer's recent articles in defense of the aesthetic value of genuineness and argue that her rejection of the aesthetic significance of historical value is mistaken. Rather, I argue that recognizing the aesthetic significance of historical value points the way towards rethinking the very norms of authenticity that Korsmeyer endeavors to defend and explain. Among other examples, I discuss Shannon Lee Dawdy's recent book *Patina*, a study of the aesthetic experience of age in New Orleans."

Aesthetics and the Limits of the Extended Mind

Ted Nannicelli (The University of Queensland)

Friday, November 17, 11:15-1:15 (Astor II-2nd floor)

"This paper considers a particularly provocative and popular externalist thesis – Clark and Chalmers's Extended Mind Thesis (EXT) – in relationship to art production. My argument is that EXT does not create pressure on us to radically revise our conceptions of artists or their creations. On the contrary, an analysis of our creative and appreciative artistic practices raises a new objection to EXT and gives us reason to prefer accounts of cognition that focus strongly on embodiment."

Understanding Fictional Characters

Ira Newman (Mansfield University)

Saturday, November 18, 9:00-11:00 (Astor II-2nd floor)

"Fictional characters are sometimes thought of as universal or general types. Some philosophers have thought differently—most notably Santayana, who thought of the “great characters” of fiction as idiosyncratic, particular individuals. I claim this latter position is closer to the truth, and especially so, in contrast to Aristotle's view that the plausibility of fictional characters rests on our knowledge of general characterological types. To defend the particularist position on fictional characters, a) I point out that scientific explanation in some cases is best understood as particularist and historical; b) I defend conceiving literary characters on the model of human persons (let alone particular human persons), in the face of objections

made by Peter Lamarque et al, and c) I suggest the merits of particularist explanatory models in expressing situationist and self- assessment aspects of human behavior."

Ambiguous Places: A Case for the Everyday Sublime

Ariane Nomikos (University of Buffalo)

Friday, November 17, 11:15-1:15 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"This paper is an attempt to capture the experience of the aesthetic character of what I call ambiguous places – places marked by both familiarity and unfamiliarity. I take Arto Haapala's existential account of the aesthetics of everyday life as my starting point. I suggest that the experience of strangeness (characteristic of, but not unique to, unfamiliar places) can give rise to experiences of the sublime, and extend this analysis to the aesthetics of everyday life in order to make the case for a concept that at first may seem paradoxical – the everyday sublime."

Functional Beauty, Pleasure, and Experience

Panos Paris (University of St. Andrews)

Saturday, November 18, 9:00-11:00 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

"I offer a set of sufficient conditions for beauty, drawing on Parsons and Carlson's account of 'functional beauty'. First, I argue that Parsons and Carlson's account falls short of adequately delivering on its promises of bringing comprehensiveness and unity to aesthetics, and offering sufficient conditions for beauty. I propose instead that the account should be modified to state that if an object is experienced as well-formed for its function(s) and pleases competent judges insofar as it is thus experienced, then it is beautiful. I argue that this version of functional beauty offers greater comprehensiveness and unity—accounting for, inter alia, talk of mathematical and literary beauty—whilst surviving reflective scrutiny"

The Consolations of Instrumental Music

Matt Pianalto (Eastern Kentucky University)

Thursday, November 16, 2:45-5:00 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

"How can music—especially instrumental music—provide consolation? What kinds of consolation can instrumental music offer? I outline several different ways music can console that variously involve memory, pleasure, appreciation of beauty, escape, interpretation, and bodily engagement. I argue that the plurality of musical consolations helps to (further) expose flaws in both musical formalism and the psychological model of music experience that treats music as (like) a "drug." I conclude with a brief re-examination of Hanslick's formalism because his views about how to understand and appreciate music are especially antithetical to some of what I contend are legitimate musical consolations."

Replicas of Paintings: Production and Appreciation

Matteo Ravasio (University of Auckland)

Saturday, November 18, 9:00-11:00 (Astor 1-2nd floor)

"In this paper, I discuss some cases of replication in the visual arts. Particularly, I will focus on the production of copies, an aspect of replication largely ignored by the extant literature. I will claim that, while the process of copying artworks may hone aesthetic understanding, there are philosophical reasons that motivate a skeptical view concerning the use of painted copies to the purpose of aesthetic education."

Funny Punny Logic

Alan Roberts (University of Sussex)

Saturday, November 18, 3:00-5:00 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"Humour has been a surprisingly neglected topic in philosophy. However, Noah Greenstein (2015) has recently given an intuitive schema for modelling the logical structure of puns. Having this logical structure is indeed what makes a pun punny, but I argue that it is not what makes a pun funny. In order for a pun to be funny, the components comprising its logical structure must be related to one another such that certain conditions are satisfied. By using Graeme Ritchie's (2004) linguistic model of jokes, I give these conditions in terms of those components."

The Ruins of War

Elizabeth Scarbrough (Florida International University)

Friday, November 17, 9:00-11:00 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

"It is the aim of this paper to discuss what ought to be done with cultural heritage which has been damaged or destroyed due to acts of war. I propose to examine an ancient ruin that survived war—the Mỹ Sơn Archaeological Sanctuary. Mỹ Sơn is the foremost Champa archaeological site, dating back to the ninth century, and is the largest archaeological site in Việt Nam. In August of 1969, a bomb dropped by an American B52 bomber struck Mỹ Sơn, reducing its largest temple to rubble. Should the site once aesthetically prized as an example of an ancient ruin turn into a memorial to a recent war? Parallels to archaeological sites destroyed by ISIS will be drawn."

Respectability Politics as Aesthetic Practice

Madeline Martin Seaver (University of Oklahoma)

Saturday, November 18, 3:00-5:00 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

The aesthetic does a great deal of ethical work for respectability politics. Respectability politics transforms aspects of self-presentation into emblems of moral worth. Through aesthetic activity involving one's person, one lays claim to ethical consideration. Focusing on dress and hygiene, I first discuss the way advocates of respectability politics intertwine ethical values with everyday aesthetic practices. I then explore what it means to consider "respectable" clothing and hygiene as aesthetic practices. I conclude by explaining how respectability politics present a

problem for branches of everyday aesthetics emphasizing the ways aesthetic agency and moral agency can be of aid to each other.

Bellissima! Reassessing Access to Redress Mass Art (from Nirvana to Mardi Gras)

Sue Spaid (Independent Scholar)

Thursday, November 16, 9:00-11:00 (Astor II-2nd floor)

"This paper characterizes mass art in terms that cover both Noël Carroll's classic examples and alternative forms that elude reproduction, such as well-attended performances meant to be experienced "live" or "in person" and thus cannot be "tokened" or broadcast. Doing so requires emphasizing mass-consumption over mass-production, and replacing Carroll's token constraint with a comprehensibility constraint: 1) Aided by mass delivery technologies, 2) consumers act on beliefs regarding mass art's accessibility, and its capacity to afford them access to artworks of greater or equal value, 3) motivating mass appeal, and eventual mass consumption by untutored audiences."

On Appreciation as an Archaeological Heuristic

Jakub Stejskal (Freie Universität Berlin)

Saturday, November 18, 9:00-11:00 (St. Ann-Mezzanine)

"In this paper, I undermine the assumption – endorsed by recent contributors to the revival of the philosophical anthropology of art – that appreciating the appearance of an artefact from a distant past or remote culture is a fairly reliable indicator of its having been intended to invite appreciation. I claim that while these philosophers' heuristic optimism is not completely misguided, they are optimistic about the wrong thing. I sketch their shared position and its promise for the problem of 'first art', show how it fails to live up to the promise, and present a much more modest version of the argument."

Kant on 'Common-sense' and the Unity of Judgments of Taste

Samuel Stoner (Assumption College)

Thursday, November 16, 9:00-11:00 (Astor II-2nd floor)

"In this paper, I argue that Immanuel Kant's notion of 'common-sense' is the key to explaining the unity of judgments of taste. For, common-sense names the capacity to discern the relation between the cognitive faculties by means of a feeling. Accordingly, the capacity of common-sense mediates between the object-oriented free play of the faculties and the subject-oriented aesthetic pleasure involved in judgments of taste. Therefore, Kant's notion of 'common-sense' reveals that judgments of taste are a single, complex activity that involves both a reflective engagement with a beautiful object and the pleasurable feeling of this reflection."

Mental File Generators

Enrico Terrone (University of Torino)

Saturday, November 18, 11:15-1:15 (Astor I-2nd floor)

What Lies Beneath Fiction and Depiction "The paper highlights a functional kind that underlies fiction, depiction and a variety of other cultural practices. This is the kind of mental file generators, which groups individuals that are capable of generating singular thoughts not only about themselves, but also about other individuals. I argue that this kind exhibits a distinctive unity that distinguishes it from similar notions such as 'representation' or 'symbol'. Then, I use the notion of a mental file generator to explain what fiction and depiction fundamentally have in common. Finally, I exploit this notion to characterize the aesthetic relevance of works of fiction and depiction."

Kant on Informed Pure Judgments of Taste

Emine Hande Tuna (University of Alberta)

Winner of the 2017 John Fisher Memorial Prize

Thursday, November 16, 2:45-5:00 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

Two dominant interpretations of Kant's notion of adherent beauty, the conjunctive view and the incorporation view, provide an account of how to form informed aesthetic assessments concerning artworks. According to both accounts, judgments of perfection play a crucial role in making informed, although impure, judgments of taste. These accounts only examine aesthetic responses to objects that meet or fail to meet the expectations we have regarding what they ought to be. I demonstrate that Kant's works of genius do not fall within either of these categories. The distinguishing features of these works, viz. originality and exemplarity, become unrecognizable on these interpretations because originality and exemplarity, as I will argue, lie in the work's ability to exceed one's expectations concerning its form and content. I solve this problem by proposing alternative transformation methods distinct from that of abstraction, namely concept expansion and repudiation. These additional accounts of transformation lead to a rather surprising outcome: Works of genius turn out to be paradigm cases where one can and indeed ought to form informed pure judgments of taste.

The Fine Art of Social Distinction

Rossen Ventzislavov (Woodbury University)

Thursday, November 16, 9:00-11:00 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"My study tackles the role privilege plays in our relationship with art. While in the context of art social distinction is sanctioned by the artworld, it is not always obvious how this sanction works and, even more crucially, how it affects art making and art appreciation. This question has been productively framed by artists, art historians and sociologists but it is yet to receive philosophers' undivided attention. My study takes stock of previous work on the subject and charts some possible lines of future philosophical interest through the existing scholarship."

Re-encoding light/dark Metaphors to re-present race: The French film noir Connection

Deborah Walker-Morrison (University of Auckland)

Thursday, November 16, 9:00-11:00 (Astor II-2nd floor)

Film noir's structuring metaphor of Darkness versus Light would appear to make it an inherently racist genre, incapable of portraying "Blackness" in anything other than a "bad light." And while contemporary commentators have contested such a view (Diawara 1993; Flory 2000) they do not discuss the way noir's key metaphor is expressed. I will address this question via the French film noir Connection to combating (American) racism, focussing on the immensely popular screen adaptation of Boris Vian's iconoclastic narrative of passing: *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes / I will spit on your graves* (Michel Gast, France 1959).

Beauty Guiding Proofs: Aesthetics in Mathematics

Weijia Wang (University of Leuven)

Thursday, November 16, 9:00-11:00 (Astor II-2nd floor)

"In the Critique of the Power of Judgment, Kant claims that demonstrations or mathematical proofs can be beautiful even though they rely on concepts. In this paper I argue against Breitenbach's reading, which grounds such beauty in our imagination's free creativity. With reference to Kant's account of the relationship between genius and taste in art creation, I propose that formulation of a complex demonstration involves multiple and progressive interactions between the productive imagination and the aesthetic power of judgement. Thus beauty guides proofs and we experience beauty in the process of finding and studying proofs."

Social kinds and meta-ontological revisionism

Michel Xhignesse (McGill University)

Thursday, November 16, 9:00-11:00 (St. Louis-Mezzanine)

"In one meta-ontological corner, descriptivists have suggested that competent users of art-kinds terms cannot be mistaken about the ontology of art, since that ontology depends on what they say and think about it. In the other corner, Julian Dodd has defended art-ontological revisionism on the grounds that our folk-theories are liable to error (folk-theoretic modesty, FM), and that the answers to first-order ontological questions are independent of our thinking (meta-ontological realism, MR). I chart a middle way between the two, arguing that FM models a useful heuristic device but that MR is inapplicable to social kinds like 'art' and art-kinds."

-September 29, 2017