



## AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR AESTHETICS

AN ASSOCIATION FOR AESTHETICS,  
CRITICISM AND THEORY OF THE ARTS

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 2      SUMMER 2011

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## *What Is the Cognitive Neuroscience of Art... and Why Should We Care?*

W. P. Seeley  
Bates College

There has been considerable interest in recent years in whether, and if so to what degree, research in neuroscience can contribute to philosophical studies of mind, epistemology, language, and art. This interest has manifested itself in a range of research in the philosophy of music, dance, and visual art that draws on results from studies in neuropsychology and cognitive neuroscience.<sup>1</sup> There has been a concurrent movement within empirical aesthetics that has produced a growing body of research in the cognitive neuroscience of art.<sup>2</sup> However, there has been very little collaboration between philosophy and the neuroscience of art. This is in part due, to be frank, to a culture of mutual distrust. Philosophers of art have been generally skeptical about the utility of empirical results to their research and vocally dismissive of the value of what has come to be called *neuroaesthetics*. Our counterparts in the behavioral sciences have been, in turn, skeptical about the utility of stubborn philosophical skepticism. Of course attitudes change...and who has the time to hold a grudge? So in what follows I would like to draw attention to two questions requisite for a rapprochement between philosophy of art and neuroscience. First, what is the cognitive neuroscience of art? And second, why should any of us (in philosophy at least) care?

There are obvious answers to each of these questions. The cognitive neuroscience of art is a subdivision of empirical aesthetics devoted to just that, the application of neuroscientific methods to the study of our engagement with artworks (more on the cognitive bit later). Why should we care? Neuroscience helps us sort out the kinds of information processing involved in our psychological engagement with the world. So neuroscience is germane to the task of evaluating whether philosophical theories about our engagement with art reflect our best understanding of the psychological processes that underwrite them. But, of course, this claim is really just a hackneyed naturalistic platitude. And platitudes too often leave too many stones unturned to be of much use. The devil is always in the details. In this case the devil is a question of pragmatics, or a question about the real methodological utility of neuroscientific research to aestheticians and philosophers of art in particular cases. So the obvious answers turn out not to be so easy.

I am not sure there was a *neuroscience of art* a decade or so ago. There is a branch of experimental psychology called *empirical aesthetics*. This field traces its roots back to a book published in 1871 by Gustav Fechner called, of all things, *On Experimental Aesthetics*. Fechner was a key figure in the development of the new field of psychology in the nineteenth century (he was instrumental in the development of psychophysics). So empirical aesthetics is as old as psychology itself. This should come as no surprise. Alexander Baumgarten introduced the term "aesthetics" in the eighteenth century to refer to a science of sensuous cognition. Nonetheless, a decade ago the idea of a genuine experimental neuroscience of art was only just emerging as a productive possibility. The literature consisted largely of pieces drawing connections between results in neurophysiology, facts about the formal structures of particular artworks, and anecdotal stories about the productive practices of particular artists.<sup>3</sup> This literature pointed towards the promise of a neuroscience of art. But it was missing the marks of a true experimental science: empirically testable hypotheses and associated experimental research.<sup>4</sup> This is changing.

A general model for a cognitive neuroscience of art has emerged from this early literature.<sup>5</sup> Artists develop general formal vocabularies and particular compositional strategies via

a systematic exploration of the behavioral effects of different sets of marks, movements, tones, rhythmic patterns, or narrative devices. We need not overplay the use of the term 'systematic' in this context. The process need not be explicit. The claim is simple and pragmatic: formal strategies develop relative to their success or failure as a means to evoke desired behavioral responses in consumers. This suggests a means to evaluate artworks as a class of stimuli. Cognitive science, in its most general sense, is the study of the ways organisms acquire, represent, manipulate, and use information in the production of behavior, or to coin an awkward acronym, ARMUI. Artworks are stimuli intentionally designed to induce a range of affective, perceptual, and cognitive responses in readers, spectators, viewers, and listeners. This suggests that we can model our engagement with artworks as an information processing problem: how do consumers acquire, represent, and manipulate information carried in the formal structure of these stimuli, and what is the relationship between these processes and those explicit behaviors associated with our canonically artistic engagement with this range of artifacts? Cognitive neuroscience is a tool that can be used to model these processes and behaviors. These models can in turn be used to evaluate alternative hypotheses about the nature of our engagement with artworks in a range of media. The answers to these kinds of questions can be used to gain traction in debates about the nature of art more generally. Therefore cognitive neuroscience is a tool that can be productively used to explore questions about the nature of art and aesthetic experience.

Why a *cognitive* neuroscience of art? I am often surprised by the degree to which the folks I interact with on the neuroscience side of these endeavors are committed to a core aestheticism. In this regard the term 'neuroaesthetics' isn't just a name. It reflects an ideological bias about the nature of art. And this is a sticking point. I take it that issues germane to theories in aesthetics and the philosophy of art can be peeled apart. There are questions about the aesthetics of nature, industrial design, graphic design, etc., that are not artistic questions. There are questions about the meanings of artworks and the nature of our engagement with characters that are not aesthetic questions. More importantly, the philosophy of art encompasses questions concerning artistically salient aesthetic phenomena, but aesthetics does not encompass non-aesthetic semantic or ontological questions about the nature of art or our engagement with artworks. Therefore, not only are these two sets of concerns distinct, but the philosophy of art represents a broader view of art than aesthetics. Likewise, biased competition models for selective attention demonstrate a close connection between the meaning, identity, or semantic salience we attribute to a stimulus and the affective and perceptual features constitutive of our phenomenal experience of it. Cognitive neuroscientists use fronto-parietal attentional networks (feedback loops) that connect prefrontal areas (areas associated with object identification, working memory, and the attribution of affective salience to a stimulus) to sensory processing in the visual, auditory, and somatosensory systems to model these effects.<sup>6</sup> This suggests that the answers to questions about the semantic salience of artworks generally, issues that are central to the philosophy of art, play a regulative role at a neurophysiological level in determining the aesthetic quality of our engagement with particular artworks. Therefore a cognitive neuroscience of art represents a broader view of art than neuroaesthetics. So, what's in a name...? The change I have proposed is an attempt to realign the research program within neuroscience in order to bring it into register with a more realistic view of the range of issues pertinent to the study of art.

Of course, it is one thing to have a general, abstract model for the potential contribution of neuroscience to philosophy of art. It is another thing to have a good set of case studies that show that the model works passably well in a dirty, noisy, uncooperative environ-

ment. And this is where the pesky, persistent, nagging question, "Why should we care?" becomes important. For a long time the received dogma in computational theories of mind was that neuroscience is implementation-level science. Questions about the nature of a target behavior, what a system is doing, how does it represent information, etc., could be answered through functional level analysis. Neuroscience might tell us how these representations and processes were realized in a type of organism. But this, it was thought, wouldn't contribute much to our understanding of its psychological behavior. This may not always be the case. The scenario I am envisaging is one in which a range of mutually inconsistent alternative theories are each consistent with the observable aspects of some target behavior. If evidence from neuroscience can provide some traction in our understanding the way a system in fact acquires, represents, manipulates or uses information in the production of the target behavior, then neuroscience contributes something novel to our understanding of what the system is doing, or the nature of the target behavior. The result need not necessarily favor one alternative over another. We might instead be forced to reconsider the distinctions that differentiate the alternatives. The canonical case study for this kind of claim in cognitive science is the imagery debate where, dogged disagreements about format aside, evidence from neuroscience demonstrates that modality specific imagery and perception share modality specific processing resources.<sup>7</sup> I have argued that the debate between Simulation and Theory-Theory approaches to narrative understanding provides an analogous example in philosophy of art.<sup>8</sup>

So one reason we should care is that neuroscience can contribute helpful information to entrenched philosophical debates. However, the utility of neuroscience to the philosophy of art does not hinge on the success of its application in controversial case studies. It is sufficient that neuroscience can help us gain traction in understanding the way artworks work, e.g., how they carry and convey their content. For instance, Noël Carroll has argued that part of the power of movies lies in their capacity to direct attention and frame the way we conceptualize and experience film narratives. In particular, he argues that filmmakers use various in-camera effects and editing techniques to focus viewer attention on particular aspects of scenes diagnostic for a directed interpretation of the narrative. These features determine the salience of current actions and events, foreshadow future actions and events, color our retroactive interpretation of previously depicted actions and events, shape our moral expectations about the unfolding lives of characters, and thereby drive our understanding and appreciation of movies. Mark Rollins argues analogously that paintings are perceptual stimuli intentionally designed to direct the attention of viewers toward their aesthetically and semantically salient features. Rollins argues that these strategies work by virtue of the fact that artists' formal and compositional strategies tend naturally to become tuned to the operations of perceptual systems over time. This model can be generalized to other media. In this regard, artworks can generally be interpreted as exogenous, or externally imposed, attentional routines that carry the intentions of the artist. Carroll and Rollins thereby treat artworks as *attentional strategies*.<sup>9</sup> I propose that we shift the burden of responsibility away from the artist to the artwork in these contexts (in part to allow for contextual variance and avoid murky philosophical questions about the role of artists intentions in interpretation) and call them *attentional engines*, or stimuli designed to independently induce a range of experiences in consumers.

Research by Uri Hasson and his colleagues supports this general view of artworks.<sup>10</sup> There is a methodological problem that is a sticking point for any rapprochement between philosophy of art and neuroscience. Our engagement with artworks, like natural vision more generally,

is messy. It doesn't reduce neatly to the kinds of contexts that yield successful neuroimaging experiments. In a standard imaging study one systematically varies the value of one aspect of a stimulus, e.g., the brightness of a color patch. This yields carefully controlled data about change in underlying neurophysiological processes that enables researchers to make inferences about discrete aspects of information processing in the brain. The trouble is that this method is poorly suited to spatiotemporally complex, dynamic stimuli whose content is constrained by a range of ill-defined contextual features, (e.g., film, dance, and natural vision). Hasson has developed a means to overcome this problem for natural vision using what he calls inter-subject correlation analysis (ISC). ISC is used to measure and compare the changing rate of activation over time in different brain regions among a range of participants who have been exposed to the same dynamic stimulus. Film and video are a means to present a repeatable dynamic scene to any number of participants. Therefore they are ideally suited stimuli for these experiments. Hasson has thereby winged two birds with one stone. He has developed a method for studying vision in (more) ecologically valid natural contexts that is also a valid method for a neuroscience of film.<sup>11</sup>

Hasson's studies yield several types of results that support the interpretation of films as attentional engines. For instance, in one study participants were asked to lie on their backs in a scanner and watch the opening 30 minutes of *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966). The movie was presented on a computer screen and viewed in a mirror mounted over participants' eyes. The sound track was provided via specialized headphones designed for use within the noisy, magnetized environment of the scanner. The instructions were simply to watch the movie. Participants were free to choose what to look at, how long to look at it, etc. Despite the uncontrolled nature of the free viewing task there were high, statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) inter-subject correlations in visual areas involved in sensory processing, pattern, form, and face recognition, auditory areas (Herschel's Gyrus), language areas (Wernicke's Area), areas associated with emotional processing, and multisensory areas.<sup>12</sup> All in all ISC demonstrated time-locked processing among subjects in approximately 45% of cortex. These results contrast with results recorded from among groups of participants who were in complete darkness in the scanner and sets of participants who viewed different segments of the same movie. In neither case was there any evidence of ISC correlations. These results are interesting. However, they need not, in and of themselves, reveal anything significant about our engagement with movies. The trouble is the free viewing task. What one really needs is a way to analyze what participants are doing in order to confirm that the ISC measure reflects commonalities in the way participants attend to the film. This information emerges from two sources in Hasson's research. Eyetracking data and gaze maps demonstrate that participants fixated their attention on the same locations at the same time while viewing the clip.<sup>13</sup> These results were replicated and extended in a separate study. Here Hasson compared ISC, eye movement, and gaze map data collected from a 10 minute clip of *The Good the Bad, and the Ugly* and a 10 minute, unstructured, one shot video of a people coming and going while listening to a Sunday morning concert in Washington Square Park in New York City. The unstructured real life event evoked far less ISC than the tightly edited film, particularly in areas beyond those associated with basic sensory processing.<sup>14</sup> Further, eye movements and gaze maps were closely correlated in responses to *The Good the Bad and the Ugly*, but in responses to the video of the unstructured real life event eye movements wandered and participants did not attend to the same locations.

So. There is a story about the cognitive neuroscience of art. There is a suggestion from within philosophy that movies are attentional engines, or that filmmakers have developed a set of techniques de-

signed to capture and direct viewer attention to those affective and semantically salient aspects of scenes that carry critical information for the construction of film narratives. Hasson's research lends support to this claim. I have focused on his work on visual attention in this discussion. These results generalize to ISC measures for the influence of auditory processing of soundtracks in our visual engagement with movies and are independently supported in research by Nicole Speer and her colleagues.<sup>15</sup> A biased competition model of selective attention can be used to model the associated behaviors.<sup>16</sup> In ordinary contexts, selection is a critical problem for perception. The environment is replete with information, only a small subset of which is salient in any given context. Add the fact that our basic processing resources are limited and we can readily see that we need a means to selectively filter information on the fly in order to efficiently collect the information necessary to achieve our immediate goals in real time. Biased competition models describe fronto-parietal attentional networks that direct eye movements, bias the sensitivity of populations of neurons in sensory cortices to goal related features of the environment, and thereby explain the influence of task relevance, semantic salience, and affective salience in perception and attention. These processes can, in turn, be used to model artworks in a range of other media as attentional engines.<sup>17</sup>

I suppose that in some sense none of this is a surprise. We perceive movies. One ought to, therefore, be able to model some aspects of our engagement with movies perceptually. It is likely true that this kind of claim generalizes to any of a range of non-art film and video stimuli, e.g. athletic contests and the nightly news. So, the question rises again... "Why should a philosopher care?" The short answer is that it gives us traction in understanding how artworks work. The longer answer is that an understanding of our engagement with artworks is important because, in the long run it should give us greater traction in a range of problems we are interested in. Is there a risk of default on this promissory note? I suppose. It is, after all, an empirical question how far this model generalizes to questions of interest to philosophers of art. However, artworks are cognitive stimuli. Therefore, whatever else we might think about issues of ontology or value, everything in the philosophy of art rides (I am willing to argue) on answers to questions about our engagement with actual artworks. These are by and large psychological questions about the ways we acquire, represent, manipulate, and use information in the production of behavior. Neuroscience is in the business of modeling answers to these kinds of questions. Where this can contribute information to help sort out difficult questions, resolve entrenched debates, or simply help confirm our best theories about the way artworks work, neuroscience can make a productive contribution to philosophical practice. I'm willing to bet that a few (more) cases like this will emerge.

#### Endnotes

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3. See M. S. Livingstone, "Art, Illusion, and the Visual System," *Scientific American*, 258(1), 1988, pp. 78-85.; M. S. Livingstone "Is It Warm? Is It Real? Or Just Low Spatial Frequency?" *Science*, 290, 2000, pp. 1299; S. Zeki and M. Lamb, "The Neurology of Kinetic Art," *Brain*, 117 (3), 1994, pp. 607-636. See also M. S. Livingstone, *Vision and Art: The Biology of Seeing* (New York: Harry N Abrams, 2002); S. Zeki, *Inner Vision* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); and R. Gregory, J. Harris, P. Heard and D. Rose, eds., *The Artful Eye*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

4. A. Chatterjee, "Neuroaesthetics: A Coming of Age Story," *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 23(10), 2010, pp. 53-62. The one domain for which this isn't true is neuroscience of music which seems to emerge as a robust, coherent experimental discipline at about this time.

5. See N. Carroll, M. Moore, and W. P. Seeley, "The Philosophy of Art and Aesthetics, Psychology, and Neuroscience: Studies in Literature, Music, and Visual Arts," in A. P. Shimamura and S. E. Palmer, eds., *Aesthetic Science: Connecting Minds, Brains, and Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); W. P. Seeley "Cognitive Science and Art," in S. Davies, K. Higgins, R. Hopkins, R. Stecker, & D. E. Cooper, eds., *Blackwell Companion to Aesthetics*, 2nd Edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009), pp. 191-194; W. P. Seeley and A. Kozbelt, "Art, Artists, and Perception: A Model for Premotor Contributions to Visual Analysis and Form Recognition," *Philosophical Psychology*, 21(2), 2008, pp. 1-23; and Rollins, 2004.

6. See Seeley & Kozbelt, 2008; S. Duncan and L. F. Barrett, "Affect Is a Form of Cognition: A Neurobiological Analysis," *Cognition and Emotion*, 21(6), 2007, pp. 1184-1211; S. Kastner, "Attentional Response Modulation in the Human Visual System," in M. I. Posner, ed., *Cognitive Neuroscience of Attention* (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), pp. 144-156; L. Pessoa, S. Kastner, and L. G. Ungerleider, "Attentional Control of the Processing of Neutral and Emotional Stimuli," *Cognitive Brain Research* 15, 2002, pp. 31-45.

7. S. M. Kosslyn, W. L. Thompson, and G. Ganis, *The Case for Mental Imagery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Z. W. Pylyshyn, *Seeing and Visualizing: It's Not What You Think* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

8. W. P. Seeley "Imagining Crawling Home: A Case Study in Cognitive Science and Aesthetics" (2010). *Review of Philosophy and Psychology: Psychology and Experimental Philosophy*, 1(3), 407-426; N. K. Speer, J. R. Reynolds, K. M. Swallow, and J. M. Zacks, "Reading stories activates neural representations of visual and motor experiences," *Psychological Science* 20(8), 2009, pp. 989-999.

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10. For a review of these studies see U. Hasson, O. Landesman, B. Knappmeyer, I. Vallines, N. Rubin, and D. J. Heeger, "Neurocinematics: The Neuroscience of Film," *Projections: The Journal for Movies and Mind*, 2(1), Summer 2008, pp. 1-23.

11. See D. J. Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music* (New York: Dutton,

2006) for an analogous claim about audition and neuroscience of music.

12. See Hasson, 2008, figure 2.

13. See Hasson, 2008, figure 3.

14. See Hasson, 2008, figure 4.

15. Speer et al, 2009; Hasson et al, 2008. Hasson has also found systematic differences in ISC between different genres, e.g., a continuum from high to moderate ISC for Hitchcock suspense thrillers, Spaghetti Westerns, and contemporary sitcom comedies respectively.

16. See Seeley and Kozbelt, 2008; Rollins, 2004.

17. W. P. Seeley, "Seeing How Hard It Is: Selective Attention and Cross Modal Perception and the Arts," unpublished manuscript presented at the Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, December, 2010.

## Where There Be Dragons: Finding the Edges of Neuroaesthetics

Anjan Chatterjee

The University of Pennsylvania

Neuroaesthetics is just starting to be mapped. Its territories and boundaries are not well defined. In these early days, you might ask why philosophers should care about what neuroscientists have to say about aesthetics. Let me ask the complementary question. Why should neuroscientists care about what philosophers have to say about neuroaesthetics? The answer to this question is pretty standard fare. Stuck in the mess and mire of incremental science, most neuroscientists do not have the time or the training to step back and take a broad view of what we are doing, even though that might be precisely what is needed in these early days. We ought have a sense of where we are and where we might go. That, after all, is what maps are about. Refining early maps or drawing new ones is where philosophers could be extremely helpful. What is worth knowing better, what is unknown but knowable, and what should we simply pass over?

To date, different kinds of writings get called neuroaesthetics. One kind of writing, which I have referred to as parallelism, receives a lot of attention. It is a form of speculative science that says that things artists do have parallels in how the brain works.<sup>1</sup> This approach drapes art and aesthetics with neuroscience. Thus, one might propose that artists during the early twentieth century were dissecting their visual world and in the process "discovered" modules that neuroscientists later found in the visual brain. Or one might point out that artists paint in a way that better fits our mental representation of objects rather than the physics of light, shadow and color of the object's physical presence in the world. Or one might make sweeping claims about perceptual principles that are used by artists to "explain" aesthetic experiences. Regardless of the merits of these claims, which would need to be evaluated individually, let us be clear about one thing. Speculative science trades on neuroscience, but isn't doing neuroscience. By that I mean it does not articulate clear theoretical frameworks, propose testable hypotheses or design experiments. Conjecture is often presented as conclusion. When philosophers bother

with neuroaesthetics, unfortunately, speculative science is often what they are bothered by.<sup>2</sup> I suggest that philosophers turn their attention to experimental neuroaesthetics, perhaps by looking at the recent edited volume by Skov and Vartanian<sup>3</sup> or recent reviews<sup>4</sup> including (self-servingly) one that I wrote. This is where conceptual clean up by philosophers could be useful.

As an experimental science, neuroaesthetics starts with a critical core of sensations, emotions and semantics. Each of these domains can be studied to varying degrees in isolation or in combination or in the context of an aesthetic experience. Note that this basic core applies to natural scenes, to the design of artifacts, as well as to artworks. In other words, this core cuts across aesthetics and art. The connection between sensations and emotions is most amenable to neuroaesthetics inquiry. We can look for stable regularities of light, line, color and form in artwork that are pleasing and relate them to the kinds of neural coding for which our brains seems designed. We can make inferences about the kind of emotions evoked by aesthetic experiences in general and to artwork in particular. Much of the research on aesthetic emotion thus far has been on preferences in a fairly simple way. The focus has been on beauty and whether people like what they see. However, these are starting points in an early research program and nothing in principle restricts neuroscience experiments to a beauty-preference axis. Neuroscience might have something to say about more complex combinations of emotions and reward systems. For example, we are learning more about the psychology and neuroscience of anxiety and that of disgust. Experiments looking at artworks that gain force by creating anxiety or evoking disgust could be designed. One could ask if these typically negative emotions, in an aesthetic context, become pleasurable.

Unlike sensations and emotions, when it comes to semantics in art, we run into the limits of what neuroscience can offer. Current neuroscientific methods are best at examining the biology of our minds for things that are stable and relatively universal. However, if the meaning of an artwork changes over time and relies on interactions with its cultural context and the local prejudices of the viewer, then it will be too slippery for neuroscience. Most neuroscientific approaches to semantics cannot deal with this level of complexity. The bulk of neuroscience work in semantics is at the level of single words and objects. How do we recognize or know a lemon or a lion? There is interest in the semantics of actions and events as structured by verbs and simple sentences. This level of analysis adds complexity by going beyond what things are, to what things do in the world. There is even limited work on discourse and on the brain bases for metaphors. However, these forays into semantics by neuroscience are a far cry from the multi-layered meanings and references that art historians and critics peel away when interpreting art.

Getting back to conceptual cartography. Imagine an early sixteenth-century map of the world. In this map, the contours of Europe and Asia and Northern Africa are pretty well worked out. But, some coastlines and interiors lack detail. Off to the west, there is some sense of a "new world," but even the basic contours of this world are not worked out. Even less accessible is the topography under the oceans. Neuroaesthetics faces an old world, a new world and a sub-oceanic world. The sub-oceanic worlds are realms that we cannot reach with available neuroscience methods. As I alluded to, one of these inaccessible realms is art interpretation as understood through the analysis of cultural and social meanings layered on individual works of art. At the other end, we might have a lot to say about the details of the old world. We might show how the brain segregates encounters with paintings that emphasize color from those that emphasize form, or the way different parts of our visual cortex responds to landscapes as compared to portraits. We might learn more about

the reward systems and its connection to emotions as people look at art. This kind of research adds detail to our understanding of aesthetic encounters, but does so within systems on which there is general agreement. For example, it is hard to conceive of a neural system in which landscape paintings would not activate the parahippocampal place area and that facial portraits do not activate the fusiform face area, parts of the brain that respond to photographs of landscapes and faces respectively. Beyond the obvious, there are questions within this old world that are of great interest to neuroscientists, but might not engage folks in the humanities. One such question would be whether visual processing areas evaluate objects in addition to classifying them. Does the fusiform face area also respond to the beauty of faces in addition to classifying them as one kind of object? Work from my lab suggests that these perceptual classification systems might also be evaluating faces.<sup>5</sup> Not everybody reports this finding. Resolving this discrepancy would be of great interest in understanding how the nervous system partitions circuitry dedicated to classifying or to evaluating things. But, understanding the neural organization of this partitioning will not alter the basic idea that we have classification systems and evaluation systems.

A fundamental challenge for neuroaesthetics is understanding new worlds. Can we discover new things about aesthetics? More pointedly, even within experimental aesthetics, can neuroscience methods deliver something beyond what can be learned from behavioral experiments alone? Let me offer one example of the kind of question that comes to mind. We know that if asked whether one likes a painting, knowledge about the painting influences what the person says. However, just from this behavioral observation, it is not clear that the person's emotional experience of the art is altered. They might claim to like the work because they like the knowledge they have of it or because they have learned they should like it. However, preliminary data suggest that this kind of cognitive response is probably not how it works. In a recent imaging study people looked at patterns that they thought were either taken from museums or generated by computers. The participants had greater activity in the medial orbitofrontal cortex for the same images when they were thought to be museum pieces.<sup>6</sup> From the fact that neural activity in a location known to index rewards is modulated by context, we can reasonably infer that information actually changes the emotional experience. This observation tells us something about the nature of the aesthetic experience as affected by knowledge, something that we might not have known strictly through introspection or behavioral observation. While neuroscience is not ready to deal directly with interpreting the complex content of artwork, it can address the effects of knowledge of that content. Admittedly, the knowledge in the experiment I described is one-dimensional compared to the multiple dimensions of knowledge that apply to art interpretation. But, the experiment points the direction that such studies could take. I should be clear that such studies would be directed at how knowledge influences the encounter with a work of art and not the meaning of the work. A fundamental challenge for neuroaesthetics is identifying these kinds of research questions that are relevant, tractable and would potentially reveal new insights into aesthetics.

Perhaps experimental neuroaesthetics is too early in its own evolution and not settled enough to make it worth philosophers stepping in. But, whenever the time is right, now or in the near future, this is the level at which the analytic tools of philosophers could be helpful to neuroscientists. Further discussion of speculative neuroaesthetics does little to advance the field. Some philosophers have dipped into the murky world of experimental neuroaesthetics<sup>7</sup> and I hope more will follow. As we navigate in the haze of this emerging field, it would be nice to be clear when we are scrutinizing old lands and what we might learn from them. It would also be helpful to know when shapes

in the distance are new lands and what new discoveries we might make if we were to land there.

#### Endnotes

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## What Should We Expect from the New Aesthetic Sciences?

**Vincent Bergeron**  
University of Ottawa

As William Seeley reminds us in his article (this issue), the scientific study of aesthetics can be traced back to the beginning of experimental psychology and the work of Gustav Theodor Fechner in the second half of the nineteenth century. Among other things, Fechner showed that certain abstract forms and proportions are naturally pleasing to our senses. For example, he conducted experiments to show that a rectangle is most pleasing when its side lengths are in the golden ratio of approximately 1:1.618. He argued that the empirical study of aesthetics must proceed from the bottom up, where aesthetic concepts and principles are assembled from individual pieces of objective knowledge. This approach, which he called "aesthetics from below," contrasted sharply with what he called "aesthetics from above" (or philosophical aesthetics) in which knowledge of aesthetic phenomena was derived primarily from conceptual and introspective analysis.

Continuing in Fechner's footsteps, experimental psychologists in

the second half of the last century have identified a wide range of factors influencing our aesthetic responses. For example, they have shown that our judgments of aesthetic preference and our feeling of aesthetic pleasure are governed by stimulus symmetry, complexity, novelty, and familiarity, among other factors.<sup>1</sup>

Given the long history of empirical aesthetics, there can be no doubt that this field of study has made a significant contribution to our understanding of at least some aspects of aesthetic response. This contribution extends beyond the early findings that were obtained using simple or ordinary objects (e.g., geometrical shapes and human faces), to recent studies that use artworks as stimuli. But to what extent can empirical studies further understanding of our aesthetic engagement with artworks?

One way of answering this question is to reflect on the goal of aesthetic science. The psychologist Rolf Reber recently suggested that "art theorists... define the criterion of what the [aesthetic] experience is expected to be; scientists... provide a test of whether this criterion is fulfilled."<sup>2</sup> Or consider the case of neuroaesthetics. This new branch of empirical aesthetics is often defined as the study of the neural processes underlying aesthetic experience. In other words, the job of neuroaestheticians is to discover where and how the different components of our aesthetic responses are implemented in the brain. If this is all we can expect from neuroaesthetics (or aesthetic science in general), then perhaps there is cause for skepticism about the utility of empirical aesthetics to researchers in the humanities. But is this all it has to offer?

Jerry Fodor once made the following remark about the idea that neuroscience, and functional neuroimaging data in particular, might help us understand how the mind works:

It isn't, after all, seriously in doubt that talking (or riding a bicycle, or building a bridge) depends on things that go on in the brain somewhere or other. If the mind happens in space at all, it happens somewhere north of the neck. What exactly turns on knowing how far north? It belongs to understanding how the engine in your auto works that the functioning of its carburetor is to aerate the petrol; that's part of the story about how the engine's parts contribute to its running right. But why (unless you're thinking of having it taken out) does it matter where in the engine the carburetor is? What part of how your engine works have you failed to understand if you don't know that?<sup>3</sup>

What, indeed, has a philosopher or an art critic failed to understand about our aesthetic appreciation of a Picasso if she doesn't know, for example, that the colors and shapes on the canvas are processed in distinct areas of the brain? Of course, there are many things about our aesthetic responses to artworks that philosophers and art critics still don't understand. However, knowledge of where and how some specific elements of our aesthetic responses are implemented in the brain is unlikely to give us a fuller understanding of what these responses actually are.

This kind of reasoning, however, misrepresents the goal of neuroscientific research, and not just in the case of neuroaesthetics, but cognitive neuroscience in general. It is certainly true that a great deal of research in cognitive neuroscience is concerned with the mapping of perceptual and cognitive functions in the brain, but it would be a mistake to see this as the primary goal of this research.

Part of the problem has to do with the way neuroimaging findings are reported, especially in the media. Major newspapers and popular scientific publications often report that scientists have identified the

“neural correlates” of a particular cognitive function X (e.g., face recognition, speech versus music perception, the belief in God), and that this finding may have implications for our understanding of X. Science reporters (and their readers) tend to prefer pretty images of colored brains to more detailed analyses of the data. It is therefore not surprising that many readers come to the conclusion that neuroimaging experiments are primarily concerned with localizing X in the brain as opposed to explaining and defining X. This is unfortunate, as neuroimaging data often suggest new ways of understanding particular cognitive functions.

To illustrate this point, consider the recent proposal by David Freedberg and Vittorio Gallese that sensorimotor processes, in the form of action simulations, may be an essential element of our aesthetic responses to visual artworks (paintings, drawings, sculptures).<sup>4</sup> Their proposal capitalizes on the discovery of the mirror-neuron system, the set of brain areas that contain neurons that fire both when someone performs an action (e.g., reaching for a cup) and when the same person observes the same action performed by someone else. Just like in the case of action observation (dynamic case), the idea is that one could hypothesize that the mirror-neuron system would be activated when someone observes the depiction of actions in a painting or sculpture (static case). Building on this, they further hypothesize (more surprisingly perhaps) that the mirror-neuron system might also be activated in response to non-figurative works in which the various marks left by the artist’s handling of the artistic medium (e.g., brush strokes) can be related to the implicit artistic movements that went into the production of the work.

Both hypotheses have now received some level of empirical support from various neuroimaging studies,<sup>5</sup> which suggests that in aesthetic perception, “our brains can reconstruct actions by merely observing the static graphic outcome of an agent’s past action.” Moreover, these findings demonstrate how neuroimaging data can contribute to a deeper understanding of our aesthetic engagement with artworks. Notice here that the empirical investigation of the sensorimotor dimension of aesthetic perception relies on previous knowledge of the localization of brain function – in this case it relies on the identification of the mirror-neuron system – and that it is on the basis of that knowledge that the hypotheses can be tested. It is therefore clear from this example that the utility of neuroimaging data is not limited to knowing where and how this component of aesthetic response is implemented in the brain. Such data may in fact help answer important questions about the extent to which the sensorimotor dimension is involved in aesthetic perception, such as the specific manner in which it contributes to aesthetic response, or whether it is a necessary element in certain forms of aesthetic perception, and if so, to what extent is aesthetic appreciation dependent on sensorimotor expertise (e.g., in artists).

Recent findings in the psychology of music perception provide another example of how empirical research may help advance the understanding of how we engage aesthetically with artworks.<sup>6</sup> The studies, which use audio-visual recordings of professional musicians playing short compositions as stimuli, show that visual information combines with auditory information in the perception of musical expression. In one study, for example, Jane Davidson found that vision contributes to the perception of expressive intensity in both violin and piano performances, and perhaps more surprisingly, that the visual component of the stimuli better indicated expressiveness than the auditory component. In another study, Bradley Vines and his collaborators measured the emotion conveyed by two professional clarinetists playing a Stravinsky composition for solo clarinet.<sup>7</sup> Musically trained subjects presented with the performance rated how strongly they perceived the expression of nineteen emotions in four

groups – active positive, active negative, passive positive, and passive negative. The researchers found that for at least one group, the active positive, visual experience was the primary channel through which variation in the clarinetists’ performance intentions was conveyed to the observers.

What these findings suggest, in sum, is that the expressive properties of music are a function of both the sounds of a musical performance and the visual movements of the performers. Dominic Lopes and I have argued that this forces us to consider the possibility that music’s expressive properties (e.g., its sadness) may be visual as well as sonic.<sup>8</sup> Or more precisely, if music expresses what we think it does, then its expressive properties may be visual as well as sonic. The alternative appears less interesting: if music’s expressive properties are purely sonic, then it expresses less than we think it does.

What, then, can we conclude from these two examples of research in the aesthetic sciences? Perhaps they show that when it comes to research on aesthetic response, a collaboration between the different scientific and humanistic studies should not be a division of labor wherein researchers in the humanities define the nature of aesthetic response, leaving scientists to discover the mechanisms by which it is realized. They suggest, in fact, that the aesthetic sciences should take an integral part, along with philosophers, art critics and historians, in the development of a richer and fuller understanding of our aesthetic engagement with artworks.

#### Endnotes

1. See T. Jacobsen, “Bridging the Arts and Sciences: a Framework for the Psychology of Aesthetics,” *Leonardo*, 39(2), 2006, 155-162 for a brief overview of the literature.
2. R. Reber, “Art in Its Experience: Can Empirical Psychology Help Assess Artistic Value?” *Leonardo* 41 (4), 2008, 367-72, p. 367.
3. J. Fodor, “Let your Brain Alone,” *London Review of Books*, 21(19), 1999.
4. D. Freedberg and V. Gallese, “Motion, Emotion and Empathy in Aesthetic Experience,” *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 11(5), 2007, 197-203.
5. For a review of this literature see C. Di Dio and V. Gallese, “Neuroaesthetics: a Review,” *Current Opinion in Neurobiology*, 19, 2009, 682-87.
6. J. Davidson, “Visual Perception of Performance Manner in the Movements of Solo Musicians,” *Psychology of Music* 21, 1993, 103-12; Bradley Vines, Carol Krumhansl, Marcelo Wanderly, Ioana Dalca, and Daniel Levitin, “Dimensions of Emotion in Expressive Musical Performance,” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1060, 2005, 462-66; Bradley Vines, Carol Krumhansl, Marcelo Wanderly, and Daniel Levitin, “Cross-modal Interactions in the Perception of Musical Performance,” *Cognition* 101, 2006, 80-113.
7. Vines et al., “Dimensions of Emotion in Expressive Musical Performance.”
8. V. Bergeron and D. Lopes, “Hearing and Seeing Musical Expression,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 78(1), 2009, 1-16.

### *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* Editor Search

The American Society for Aesthetics is soliciting applications and nominations for the position of editor of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, the official journal of the Society, to begin 1 February 2013. (The second term of Susan Feagin, the current editor, ends 31 January 2013, and she has announced her intention to step down at that time.) The term of the editor is five (5) years, with a possible 5-year renewal, subject to review and approval by the ASA Board of Trustees. The editor must be a member of the Society and receives a monthly honorarium from the Society.

The editor is responsible for the content of the journal. The editor is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Society and serves on the Executive Committee and all standing Board committees. The editor makes an annual report to the Board of Trustees on the operations of the *Journal*. The book review editor is selected by the Board of Trustees on the recommendation of the editor, and reports to the editor. The editor is advised by an Editorial Board appointed by the editor.

*The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* is published four times a year by Wiley-Blackwell Publishers for the Society. It includes articles, book reviews, and occasional symposia. From time to time a special issue may be devoted to a single topic approved by the Editorial Board, and such special issues may be republished in book form by Wiley. The journal is indexed in The Philosopher's Index and other sources and is electronically accessible through JSTOR and the Wiley Online Library.

The position of editor normally requires institutional support, including office space, student assistance, and released time. The nature and extent of the institutional support to be provided, and a commitment from the institution, should be included in the candidate's application for the position.

Applications or nominations should be submitted to Dabney Townsend, ASA Secretary-Treasurer, P.O. Box 915, Pooler, GA 31322 or electronically at <dabney.townsend@armstrong.edu> by 31 January 2012. A search committee of officers and members of the Society will review applications, conduct interviews, and recommend a candidate to the Board of Trustees, which makes the final decision on the appointment. It is expected that the successful candidate will be notified by the summer of 2012 and formally approved at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees in October 2012.

For further information or questions, please contact ASA President Paul Guyer at <pguyer@sas.upenn.edu>, current editor Susan Feagin at <feagin@temple.edu>, or ASA Secretary-Treasurer Dabney Townsend at <dabney.townsend@armstrong.edu>.

# News From The National Office

## Annual Meeting Information

The program, registration information, and reservation link are now posted on the ASA web site, <[www.aesthetics-online.org](http://www.aesthetics-online.org)>. The meeting is at the Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk 26-30 October 2011. Please note that we guarantee a certain number of room/nights to the hotel in order to receive complimentary meeting rooms. It is important that everyone stay at the Sheraton if possible, therefore. Reservations may be made by going to <<http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/ASA2011AnnualMeeting>>. Additional information about the hotel and meeting is also available at that site.

## The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism Editorship

Please refer to the request for applications for the editorship of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* posted on the previous page of this Newsletter. Susan Feagin, the current editor, has announced her intention to step down when her term expires in January of 2013 after a very successful ten years as editor. The ASA Board of Trustees appoints the editor of *JAAC* and will begin considering applications as they are received. An appointment will be made in time for Susan to supervise a transition period. The editorship requires designated institutional support, including office space and clerical assistance. Applications or inquiries may be directed to me at <[dabney.townsend@armstrong.edu](mailto:dabney.townsend@armstrong.edu)>.

## Projects and Grants

The ASA continues to consider applications for grants projects that promote goals of the Society. These goals include, but are not limited to: promoting research in aesthetics and the philosophy of art by members of the ASA; attracting students, graduates, and junior faculty to work in the fields of aesthetics and the philosophy of art; building diversity and inclusiveness in these fields; raising the profile of aesthetics and the philosophy of art within the profession of philosophy; collaborating with academic societies of aesthetics in other countries; fostering common interests with philosophers who work in other areas; and building bridges with academics and practitioners whose work is art-relevant. While we will consider proposals with larger budgets if they promise to promote a significant number of these goals, we also encour-

age proposals with lesser budgets that would further a more limited number of these goals. While it is likely that a given project will speak to the research interests of participants in some way, the initiative is not designed to encourage individual research but rather to foster projects that involve collaboration with or the participation of a spread of the society's members or outreach to the wider community. Applications may be submitted at any time. Detailed guidelines are available from the National Office at <[asa@armstrong.edu](mailto:asa@armstrong.edu)>.

In addition to funding for conferences, two larger projects of note are underway. Mary Wiseman Goldstein is taking over from Phil Alperson as chair of the diversity project. Inquiries may be directed to her at <[mari-gold21@comcast.net](mailto:mari-gold21@comcast.net)>. Dom Lopes, James Shelley, and Rachel Zuckert are working on a pilot project to digitize and make available key texts in aesthetics. Inquiries may be directed to Dom at <[dom.lopes@ubc.ca](mailto:dom.lopes@ubc.ca)>.

## Membership Renewal

A further reminder: the ASA now operates on a calendar year. Membership applications and renewals are applied to the year in which they are received. *JAAC* subscriptions begin with the next available issue. Back issues are available on-line from the Wiley on-line library, which is one of the membership benefits. Every new member should receive a letter directly from Wiley with instructions about the library and a password. The National Office cannot provide those instructions or a password, but we notify Wiley to send them to every new member. Any current member can request a password by emailing Rhonda Riccardi, <[rriccardi@wiley.com](mailto:rriccardi@wiley.com)>, if you are presently receiving *JAAC*. All memberships received between now and the end of 2011 will begin immediately and will cover all of 2012. I will send a reminder to those who have not renewed later in the year. Please save me work and the ASA postage by renewing now at <[www.aesthetics-online.org](http://www.aesthetics-online.org)>.

## ASA Member Directory

I try to distribute as much information as possible by email, and I always get a number of returns for invalid email addresses. We also get returns from mailing *JAAC* and the Newsletter to incorrect addresses. When you change your mailing address or email address, please notify me at <[asa@armstrong.edu](mailto:asa@armstrong.edu)>. Luddites, please note: it really helps if we have an email address for official business. We never sell or distribute email addresses to outside parties. We will be

preparing a new membership directory for 2012-2013 soon. It is important that we have accurate information. Anyone who does not wish to be listed in the directory should notify me as soon as possible.

See you in Tampa!

Dabney Townsend  
Secretary-Treasurer  
American Society for Aesthetics  
P. O. Box 915  
Pooler, GA 31322  
Telephone: 912-748-9524  
912-247-5868 (cell)  
e-mail: <[dabney.townsend@armstrong.edu](mailto:dabney.townsend@armstrong.edu)>  
web site: <[www.aesthetics-online.org](http://www.aesthetics-online.org)>

# Aesthetics News

## BSA Special Project Fund

The British Society of Aesthetics is pleased to announce that funding of up to £5,000-£15,000 is now available for innovative projects which support the aims of the Society. Anyone who is a current member of the BSA is eligible to apply as the principal applicant. Summary details follow and full information is available at: <[www.british-aesthetics.org/spfund](http://www.british-aesthetics.org/spfund)>. Applicants are strongly encouraged to study the full scheme details as the Society cannot field individual queries regarding eligibility.

The BSA exists to promote the study, research and discussion of aesthetics and the fine arts from a philosophical perspective. The Special Project Fund is intended to foster projects that support the Society in fulfilling these broad aims. Specifically, it is designed to encourage projects that both: i. engage with constituencies outside the philosophical aesthetics community, narrowly construed, and ii. have significant philosophical content and/or advance philosophical understanding of their specific field or object of enquiry. As such, the Special Project Fund is designed to reward innovation in promoting the aims of the Society. Projects may do so in a wide variety of ways. Funding may be sought for projects of diverse length, or for pilot or multi-stage projects, subject to renewal on successful completion of early stages.

The application is a two-stage process. Initial applications should be in the form of 2pp letter of intent outlining the intended project

and specifying the funding category to be bid for (A: up to £5000; B: up to £10,000; C: up to £15,000). On the basis of this initial letter the Society will decide whether to invite a full application. Full details of what both letter of intent and the full application should comprise are available on the URL above, and applications that do not adhere to the required form will be disqualified.

The deadline for initial letters is 1 September 2011. The Society aims to respond within 4-6 weeks. The deadline for full applications, by invitation only, is 1 March 2012 and the Society aims to notify by 1 May. Funded projects are expected to commence the following academic year.

Deadline: 1 September 2011

### **The American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal**

The American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal (ISSN: 1946-1879) has just published its sixth issue at <<http://www.asage.org/>>. We invite you to review the Table of Contents below and to view the full text of all articles on our website. More information about submissions, article reviewing, book reviews and dissertation abstracts can be found on the announcement page of the website. The next deadline for article submissions is 1 October 2011.

### **ACLS Fellowships**

The American Council of Learned Societies is pleased to announce that applications are open for its 2011-2012 fellowship competitions. Updated program descriptions and application information are posted at <[www.acls.org/programs/comps](http://www.acls.org/programs/comps)>.

### **Getty Foundation International Travel Grants, CAA Centennial Conference**

The Getty Foundation awarded a generous grant to the College Art Association to support the participation of international art historians at the CAA Centennial Conference in Los Angeles, to be held from 22-25 February 2012, at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

CAA hereby invites applications from international art historians, including artists who teach art history and art historians who serve as museum curators. Awards will support conference registration, travel, hotel accommodations, and include a per diem and a one-year membership to CAA.

The goal of the program is to increase international participation in CAA; to expand international networking and the exchange of ideas; and to familiarize international participants with the conference program, including the session participation process. Preference will be given to applicants from countries not well represented in CAA's membership. This grant is not open to those participating in the 2012 conference as chairs, speakers, or discussants.

Individuals selected for the CAA grants will be expected to attend the conference throughout its duration and participate in the activities planned in connection with the grant. Applications should include: (1) Completed copy of the application form, (2) A two-page version of the applicant's CV, (3) One letter of support from the chairperson, dean, or director of the applicant's school, department, or museum, (4) A one-page statement explaining how attending the conference will benefit the applicant's professional career.

Please email to Lauren Stark at <[lstark@collegeart.org](mailto:lstark@collegeart.org)> by 23 September 2011.

### **The International Association for Aesthetics Congress 2013**

Krystyna Wilkoszewska and the members of the Polish Society for Aesthetics have established the theme for the next IAA Congress: Aesthetics in Action. The Congress will take place in Krakow, Poland, 21-27 July 2013. The Committee is currently developing the planning details, which will be communicated through future announcements on the IAA website and the IAA Newsletter.

### **Scientific Study of Literature**

You may not (yet) know that the world has seen the birth of a new international journal, *Scientific Study of Literature*, published by John Benjamins in Amsterdam/Philadelphia, the first issue of which has just come out. See <[http://www.benjamins.com/cgi-bin/t\\_seriesview.cgi?series=SSOL](http://www.benjamins.com/cgi-bin/t_seriesview.cgi?series=SSOL)>.

### **Richard Strauss Source Documents Sought**

Since 1 October 2009, the Richard Strauss Institute in Garmisch-Partenkirchen began work on the Richard-Strauss-Quellenverzeichnis (RSQV). The project is under the financial support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). Its goal is to develop and document as completely as

possible the source documents related to the work of the composer Richard Strauss (1864-1949). By source documents we mean, among other things, autograph musical manuscripts (as well as copies of them), printer and copy-editor proofs, additional letters and postcards from or to Richard Strauss. The collected information will then be published online in a musicological database. This would thus provide our research with a modern, effective tool for conducting a quick and uncomplicated search of the source documents.

In this context, we rely decisively upon your support. Insofar as you are in possession of any Strauss source documents, or have particular information of the whereabouts of such items, we ask that you be in contact with us. Everything that bears Strauss's handwriting could be of interest to us. As such, we kindly ask if you would be prepared to grant us access to any relevant documents. It is our concern to describe and catalogue the source documents, not, however, to display them in a digital format. The publication of the source-document data does not mean that you are obliged to have your name appear as owner. It is of course your choice to have your anonymity protected.

Through such help, you can bring our research a decisive step forward. A Richard-Strauss-Quellenverzeichnis has long been an urgent need for musicology. Richard Strauss belongs among the most frequently played composers throughout the world. Considering the high ranking of his oeuvre in the concert hall and opera world, it is unfortunate that his music has made such a small impact in the academic realm. It is for this reason that our source-document project has come into existence, whose task it is to make available a universal listing of Strauss source documents. This project will establish a foundation for future generations of researchers.

We of course remain available to receive questions of any kind. Our contact address is: Richard-Strauss-Quellenverzeichnis (RSQV), Richard-Strauss-Institut, Dr. Claudia Heine, Adrian Kech M.A., Schnitzschulstraße 19, 82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, GERMANY. Email <[quellen-rsi@gapa.de](mailto:quellen-rsi@gapa.de)> or visit our website at <[www.rsi-rsqv.de](http://www.rsi-rsqv.de)>.

### **New Structured Ph.D. in Philosophy of Art and Culture**

The Department of Philosophy at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland has just announced an exciting new Structured PhD program in Philosophy of Art and Culture,

which will run as part of the University of Limerick-NUI Galway strategic alliance. A program flyer, as well as more information, can be found here: <<http://www.mic.ul.ie/stephen/Structured%20PhD%20Flier.pdf>> and here: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/courses/research-postgraduate-programmes/structured-phd/philosophy-art-culture.html>>.

This exciting new inter-institutional Ph.D. program has been developed collaboratively by the Philosophy departments at NUI Galway and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, with the Department of History at the University of Limerick. By blending expertise from the three partner institutions, this program seeks to explore the philosophy of art and culture in an intellectually enriched setting, combining Analytic and Continental Philosophy. The program will be offered on an inter-institutional basis across the three partner Institutions. Students will therefore register at either Mary Immaculate College/University of Limerick or NUI Galway, but will, under the guidance of their supervisors, take a number of core modules in each of the participating institutions, and will choose from a number of other modules on offer. There may also be an element of Distance Education, depending on which modules individual students select for their own needs.

For a copy of the Programme Brochure, Contact: Ms. Linda McGrath, The Arts Office, Mary Immaculate College, Telephone: +353-61-204525, or email: <[linda.mcgrath@mic.ul.ie](mailto:linda.mcgrath@mic.ul.ie)>. For further information on application procedures for the Structured PhD in Philosophy of Art and Culture, please contact: The Graduate Office at MIC: 061 204556 or <[hellen.gallagher@mic.ul.ie](mailto:hellen.gallagher@mic.ul.ie)>. Application forms are also available online at <<http://www.mic.ul.ie/programmes/Postgraduate/pdf/EnglishTaught%20Application.pdf>>.

### **Philosophy Study**

*Philosophy Study*, a professional academic journal published monthly in print (ISSN 2159-5313) and on line (ISSN 2159-5321) by David Publishing Company, commits itself to promoting the academic communication about analyses of developments in philosophy and tries to provide a platform for experts and scholars worldwide to exchange their latest researches and findings. The journal publishes articles, books, reviews, etc., which focus on any subfields of philosophy or interdisciplinary issues. The e-journal provides free access to all content on our website. Accepted papers will appear online immediately followed by the printed in hard copy.

## **Conference Reports**

### **ASA Rocky Mountain Division Meeting** Santa Fe, New Mexico 8-10 July 2011

The Rocky Mountain Division held its 28th annual meeting in the Hotel St. Francis in downtown Santa Fe. The weather, as is normal, was splendid and the Saturday evening reception well attended. The dropping away of those whose papers were accepted but whose travel funds were cut remains a problem. We are holding at eighteen presented papers for this year as for last.

Division President Linda Dove has completed her three year term as division president and James W. Mock began his new term at the end of the business meeting. After extensive discussions, it was agreed upon to change the conference venue to Hotel Santa Fe, which offered a desirable 'package' for the annual meeting, is conveniently located, although not in the center of downtown as was the Saint Francis, and will be less costly for conference participants. It was also agreed that the division contracts and financial records will now all flow through ASA treasurer Dabney Townsend and the ASA national office.

The eighteen presentations accorded with the long-standing interdisciplinary focus of the division. The program panels were: Material and Spiritual Illuminations (Michael Greene, "Vincent van Gogh's Problematic," and Cornelia Tsakiridou, "Aesthetic Reflections on Divine Illumination in Orthodox Christianity and Islam"); The Aesthetics of Self (Sarah Woolwine, "Systematicity in the *Critique of Judgment*: The Emergence of a Unified Subject," and Lawrence Rhu, "The Bright Leaves of Ross McElwee"); The Aesthetics of Ruins (James Janowski, "Bamiyan's Broken Buddhas: Ruined or Restorable?," Reuben Ellis, "Packing the House: The Function of Human Beings in Representations of Pre-Contact Puebloan Ruins in Southwestern Landscape Photography and Literature," and Martin Donougho, "Anarchitecture, or Ruins in the Perspective of Philosophy"); Philosophical Considerations (James Mock, "Hume and Hogarth on Matters of Taste," David Conter, "Is Poetry More Philosophical than History?" and Roger Paden, "Evolutionary Aesthetics and Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art"); Art, Music, and Form (S.K. Wertz, "What Led to Formalism? Flaubert's Account of Senti-

mentalism," and John Samson, "Sidney Lanier's Water Music"); The Aesthetics of Social Media and Situational Context (Heidi Silcox, "Placement Matters: The Situational Significance of Street Art," Raphael Sas-sower, "Mediated Immersion; Contemporary Artistic Expressions," and Eva Dadlez, "Do Vampires Have More Fun? Role-Playing Games, Imaginative Immersion, and Moral Complicity"); Storied Landscapes of the West (Norman Fischer, "The Ongoing Santa Fe Ernest Thompson Seton Exhibit and the Birth of Animal Rights in North America," George Moore, "The Time Machine: Traveling the Spaces of the American West," and Allison Hagerman, "Mapping the Invisible: Digital Cartography and Metaphor in Cultural Landscapes"). Abstracts of the papers are available on the division's website: <[www.rmasa.org](http://www.rmasa.org)>.

The session chairs, as is traditional, managed the timing of presentations and discussions with uniform excellence. Thanks are offered to: S.K. Wertz, James Mock, Allison Hagerman, Martin Donougho, Cornelia Tsakiridou, Michael Manson, Elizabeth graham, Shannon Samson, and Reuben Ellis.

The Friday afternoon Manuel Davenport Keynote Address, "From the Aesthetics of Ruins to the Ruins of Aesthetics," was presented by Robert Ginsberg, Director, International Center for the Arts, Humanities, and Value Inquiry. The Saturday afternoon Artist at Work presentation, "For a Photon There is Only the Present," was by Sally Weber, Resonance Studio, Austin, Texas.

The 2012 meeting arrangements and the call for papers will be announced within the normal schedule on both the ASA and division websites.

J.W. Mock  
President of the Rocky Mountain Division of the American Society for Aesthetics

# Calls for Papers

## **ASA Pacific Division Meeting**

Pacific Grove, California  
11-13 April 2012

Paper and panel submissions from persons in all arts-related disciplines, including graduate students, are welcome. Papers and panels may treat any area of interest to aesthetics and the philosophy of art. Suggested topics include the philosophy of literature, ethical questions relating to film, the status of art as an evolutionary adaptation, the relation between sexual attraction and the aesthetic properties of persons, the history of aesthetics, fictional representations, and cross-media comparisons. Paper submissions must not exceed 3000 words in length (20 minutes in presentation time), and should be accompanied by 100-word abstracts. Panel proposals should include a general description of the topic or theme, along with the names and affiliations of all proposed participants and brief abstracts of papers. Essays written by graduate students will be considered for a \$200 award. Graduate student submissions should be clearly marked as such. Volunteers to serve as commentators and/or chairs of panels are welcome. Electronic submissions are strongly preferred, to Eva Dadlez at <evadadlez@gmail.com> and Derek Matraviers at <d.c.matraviers@open.ac.uk>.

Deadline: 22 November 2011

## **ASA Eastern Division Meeting**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
20-21 April 2012

Plenary Lecture: Susan L. Feagin (Temple University) Monroe Beardsley Lecture, Temple University: Michael Fried (Johns Hopkins University) Papers on any topic in aesthetics are invited, as well as proposals for panels, author-meets-critics, or other special sessions. We welcome volunteers to serve as session chairs and commentators. All participants must be members of the American Society for Aesthetics and must register for the conference. Papers should not exceed 3000 words, should be accompanied by a 100-word abstract, and must be prepared for blind review. Please send submissions in PDF, Word, or RTF format to Jonathan Neufeld at <easa.submissions@gmail.com>.

Deadline: 6 January 2012

## **Graduate Conference in Aesthetics**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
22 April 2012

A one-day conference occurring the Sunday after the ASA Eastern Meeting. Keynote speaker: Sherri Irvin, University of Oklahoma. The conference will accept for presentation five of the highest quality papers from students enrolled in M.A. or Ph.D. programs. A prize of \$200 will be awarded to a student with an outstanding paper. Submissions must be no longer than 3000 words and accompanied by a 100 word abstract. Please email submissions to the conference organizer, John Dyck, at <john.dyck@gmail.com>.

Deadline: 6 January 2012

## **Inner Movement: The Motor Dimension of Imagination**

University College Ghent, Belgium  
1-3 December 2011

This conference explores the role of the moving and gesturing body in the imaginative perception of works of art. Bodily resonance with the way a work of art is or has been created or performed is an essential part of much of our aesthetic experience and appreciation. This kind of 'inner movement' is part of our experience of a whole range of works of art, from an implicit tracing of the draftsman's hand in drawings to an embodied listening in audiovisual works or an explicit feeling of co-embodiment in dance or theatre performances. The notion of 'inner movement' refers not to the representation of movement in works of art, but to the constitutive and creative dimension of the motor body in the perception of works of art, and more generally, to the motor dimension of imagination. More details on <www.kaskprojecten.be/innermovement/>.

We welcome contributions by artistic and/or theoretical researchers in the areas of visual and audiovisual arts or in performance arts. Abstracts of lectures or of demonstrations of 300 words can be sent to <helena.depreester@hogent.be>. Please use word-format (doc or docx) and mention title, author(s), affiliation and email address. Papers or demonstrations should be suitable for a 20-minute presentation in English. Visual and audiovisual presentations (screening or sound) are possible.

Deadline: 1 September 2011

## **Perceptual Tensions, Sensory Resonance Contemporary Opera and New Music Theatre**

Toronto, Canada  
8-9 June 2012

When it premiered in 1976, *Einstein on the Beach* by Robert Wilson and Phillip Glass stretched audience members' experience of time by saturating sensory perception over the opera's five-hour duration. 2012 will see the revival of *Einstein on the Beach* in a new production slated for international tour. In conjunction with performances of this production in Toronto, the University of Toronto will host a two-day interdisciplinary conference on Opera and forms of New Music Theatre, that takes perception and sensory experience as its starting points. Addressing collaborative creation and the changing reception of opera and new music theatre in the last fifty years, this conference seeks to draw upon varied fields including perception, sensory studies, affect theory, audience studies, phenomenological and aesthetic theories, narratology, and the nature of contemporary operatic staging and theatricality. Topics of interest may include, but are not limited to, the following: Multi- and inter-sensory perception; How do our senses work together and in opposition when experiencing contemporary opera and new music theatre? How might we analyze the haptic and kinesthetic modalities of opera and new music theatre? Time, contemporaneity, and temporality; How do historical time, perceptual time, and aspects of compositional-temporal organization intersect in contemporary opera and new music theatre? Repetition and excess; How do minimalist aesthetics work with and against the grain of opera and new music theatre? How might repetition and excess in contemporary opera and new music theatre structure audience members' affective responses? Sensory scholarship; How do we talk about our sensory experiences of opera and new music theatre? How might we write about them, or respond to them in alternate, performative ways? Social efficacy, community engagements; How are opera and new music theatre creators working in and with communities to collaboratively develop new work? What challenges are involved in such partnerships? Setting the stage, situating the audience; How do the sites of performance, and site-specific practices, influence the creation and perception of opera and new music theatre? How have visual media technologies and unconventional performance spaces been used to engage audiences and invigorate productions? Contact: <Perceptual.tensions@gmail.com>.

Deadline: 15 September 2011

**The Society for the Philosophic Study of the Contemporary Visual Arts (SPSCVA)**  
Seattle, Washington  
4-7 April 2012

The Society for the Philosophic Study of the Contemporary Visual Arts (SPSCVA) will meet at the Westin Seattle, 1900 5th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101) APA Pacific proposals should be sent to Richard Nunan (College of Charleston) at <nunanr@cofc.edu>.

The Society for the Philosophic Study of the Contemporary Visual Arts (SPSCVA) invites papers to be presented at its divisional meetings held in the Pacific Division Meetings of the American Philosophical Association in 2012. Papers may address any topic that involves the connection between philosophy and the visual arts: film, photography, video games, or other aesthetic media. Presentations should be 20-25 minutes (10-12 pages in length). Participants must be currently paid members of the SPSCVA. (You do not need to be a member of the SPSCVA to submit a paper for consideration.) Please submit full papers only (not abstracts). The Society also welcomes proposals for panels, author-meets-critics, or other special sessions, as well as volunteers to serve as panel chairs and commentators.

Please submit papers or panel proposals as e-mail attachments, with SPSCVA initiating the subject line in your email. For further information contact: Professor Daniel Shaw, Chair, Philosophy Department, Lock Haven University, (570) 484-2052, Managing Editor, Film and Philosophy

Deadline: 15 September 2011

**American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal**

The American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal is pleased to announce that it is now preparing for the release of its Fall/Winter 2011 issue, for which submissions are now being accepted. The submission deadline for this issue is 1 October 2011, although submissions (particularly for book reviews and dissertation abstracts) are also accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year.

ASAGE accepts papers on any topic in aesthetics, written by graduate students who have not yet completed final requirements for the doctoral degree. Submissions should be under 3000 words (although exceptions may be made at the editor's discretion, to a maximum of 5000 words, particularly in the case of historical papers). They must be ac-

companied by an abstract of no more than 250 words and a word count. Book reviews and dissertation abstracts are also needed, as are article reviewers.

Please see <www.asage.org> for more detailed information on submitting an article, book review, dissertation abstract or reviewer application.

Deadline: 1 October 2011

**2012 ISPA Conference**  
Newcastle upon Tyne, UK  
11-13 July 2012

The International Society for the Philosophy of Architecture is presenting a conference on "Ethics and Aesthetics of Architecture and the Environment."

In taking on the aesthetic in a manner that pushes its considerations beyond the realm of mere beauty, questions of ethics often arise. Indeed, Wittgenstein is quoted as saying, "ethics and aesthetics are one and the same" (1921: §6.421). Questions as to why a building's form takes the shape it does raises not only conventional aesthetic questions but also questions about what purpose or meaning the building serves beyond purely visual stimulation. Does the form for instance relate somehow to a social ideal or economic ideal? And if so, is this ideal something that its inhabitants subscribe to or are even aware of? In an effort to draw thinkers attention to the ethical role architecture plays as well as the ethical function architects play, the second part of this conference call addresses this often overlooked dimension of architecture. Calling both philosophers and architects to grapple with questions regarding the ethical and aesthetic qualities of architecture, the hope is to propel the discourse beyond the limitations of a purely visual understanding of the architectural experience.

Paper abstracts should clearly address one of the highlighted themes above. Each abstract should be no longer than 500 words and should address one of the above or related topics and should be clearly marked if intended for a panel session.

Deadline: 28 October 2011

**Paris International Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences Research**  
Paris, France  
24-28 July 2012

The congress will bring together humanities

and social sciences (HSS) researchers, scientists, academicians, experts, engineers, developers, administrators and other HSS research-related professionals and practitioners from all over the world. The aims are to promote multidisciplinary dialogue and mutual cross-fertilization of ideas and methods; to offer a place for participants to present, discuss, and showcase innovative recent and ongoing HSS research works and their applications or development; to update on, and explore new ways and directions; and to take advantage of opportunities for contacts, interaction, international collaboration and networking. All areas of Humanities and Social Sciences research are invited: anthropology and ethnology; applied mathematics, statistics and sciences for HSS research; archaeology; area studies; arts; business administration; classics; communication studies; cultural studies; demography; development studies; economics; environmental studies; epistemology; gender studies; geography; history; information science; international relations; languages and cultures; law; linguistics and language sciences; literature; philosophy; policy, epistemology and methodology of multi-, inter-, trans- and cross-disciplinary HSS research; political science; psychology; religion; research policy, administration and strategies; and sociology. Proposals are in the form of abstracts. Session formats include individual paper sessions, symposia, workshops, roundtables and poster sessions. The languages of the congress are English and French. Closing date for early bird registration: 29 February 2012. For more information, submission and registration: <<http://education-conferences.org/homehss.aspx>>. Contact: <Paris-Conference@analytrics.org>.

Deadline: 30 October 2011

**Rivista di Estetica**

This issue of *Rivista di Estetica* is focused on wine. Why does this drink, that since ancient times has been considered the "nectar of the gods", never stop raising cultural, philosophical and aesthetic interest? Under a philosophical perspective, wine may be analyzed in at least three different ways. First, from an ontological point of view: explaining what kind of object wine is, what kinds of objects are tastes, aromas, and what is the difference between taste and tasting. Then from an epistemological point of view: what does it mean to know, to identify, to appreciate and to value a wine? What do its aesthetic properties correspond to? And in general what is the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity? Finally, from an ethical-social

point of view: why is wine considered an expression of pleasure and conviviality, and a cultural symbol? Each of these areas makes reference to specifically aesthetic considerations as well as to topics in philosophy of language (How does the lexicon of tasting work? What are the referents of taste terms?) and to philosophical anthropology (the relation between nature and culture). Contributors are invited to submit papers along those guidelines. All editorial correspondence should be addressed to <tiziana.andina@unito.it>.

Deadline: 30 October 2011

### **Athens Institute for Education and Research-ATINER**

Athens, Greece  
28-31 May 2012

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos (President of the Athens Institute for Education and Research & Visiting Professor, University of Strathclyde, U.K.) and Dr. Nicholas Pappas, Professor, Sam Houston University, USA, Vice President of Academics, Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER) & Acting Head of the Philosophy Research Unit of ATINER) would like to invite you to submit a proposal for presentation at the 7th Annual International Conference on Philosophy, 28-31 May 2012, Athens, Greece organized by the Philosophy Research Unit of the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER). For the program of the previous conferences, book publications based on the conference papers and other information, please visit the conference website <www.atiner.gr/philosophy.htm>.

Papers (in English) from all areas of philosophy are welcome. Selected papers will be published in a Special Volume of the Conference Proceedings or Edited Books as part of ATINER's philosophy book series. Please submit a 300-word abstract by 31 October 2011, by email, [atiner@atiner.gr](mailto:atiner@atiner.gr) to: Dr. Nicholas Pappas, Professor, Sam Houston University, USA & Vice President of Academics, Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER) or by regular mail to: ATINER, 8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece. Tel. + 30 210 363 4210 Fax: + 30 210 3634-209. Please include: Title of Paper, Full Name (s), Current Position, Institutional Affiliation, an email address and at least 3 keywords that best describe the subject of your submission. Please use the abstract submitting form available at <<http://www.atiner.gr/docs/2012FORM-PHI.doc>>.

Deadline: 31 October 2011

### **Philosophy of Music: Special Issue of *Teorema***

Philosophy of music is a second-level reflection on the nature of music and our experience of it. Music is a practice fraught with meaning and value in the lives of many people and occupies an important place in our artistic culture. However, it raises philosophical questions perhaps more difficult than other artistic practices. Many philosophers, from the Pythagoreans and Plato to Wittgenstein and Adorno, have been attracted by these issues, and their doctrines are part of the history of the philosophy of music. If we limit ourselves to the major topics that have been the focus of discussion in recent decades, we can group such topics into at least six major areas: (a) issues relating to the definition of music (the difference between noises, sounds and tones, the debate between objectivism and subjectivism about musical phenomena, the opposition between pure and impure music, etc.); (b) problems relating to the ontology of music (the clash between nominalism and idealism about the relationship between a musical work, and its tokens or performances, the controversy between fictionalism and realism, etc.); (c) questions concerning the psychology of music (how music manages to express emotions, what are the listener's emotional responses to it, what are the criteria for assessing such responses, etc.); (d) problems regarding the semantics of music (the semiotics of musical meaning, the link between music and text, the distinction between structure and content, the controversy between representationalism and expressivism, etc.); (e) problems regarding the understanding of music (what constitutes the experience of understanding music, what skills and behavioural responses are involved in such understanding, etc.); (f) issues concerning the value of music: (what makes musical experience valuable, what connections can be established between music and mysticism, between music and ineffability, between music and silence, etc.). *Teorema* invites submissions of papers on these and related topics for a special issue to be published in 2012. Articles must be written in Spanish or English and should not exceed 6,000 words. For the presentation of their articles, authors are requested to take into account the instructions available at <<http://www.uniovi.es/Teorema>>. Submissions must be suitable for blind review. Both a DOC and a PDF document must be sent to the Editor. Notification of intent to submit, including both a title and a brief summary of the content, will be greatly

appreciated as it will assist with the coordination and planning of the special issue.

Deadline: 15 November 2011

### **Corfu Music and Philosophy Conference**

Corfu, Greece  
27-29 April 2012

The philosophy of time occupies a great part in the metaphysics discussion of both continental and analytic philosophy. From Aristotle through Augustine to Bergson, Husserl, McTaggart, Prior, and Tooley, to name but a few, different conceptions of time have been proposed, ranging from phenomenological approaches to the so-called New B-Theories of time. At the same time, interesting connections can be observed from time theories to the philosophy of history, as well as to other cardinal philosophical issues, like modalities, reference, indexicals, persistence through time, antirealism etc. On the other hand, given the philosophical significance of time in music, it is only surprising that so little attention is directed to any and all of the above-described themes in theorizing about music. Proposals in those and related subjects are welcome in this Conference. The deadline for submission of abstracts is 30 November 2011. The notification of acceptance will be sent out by end December 2011 the latest. The official languages of the Conference are Greek, French, English. Invited keynote speakers are: Antonia Soulez (Université Paris 8), Robin Le Poidevin (University of Leeds), Charis Xanthoudakis (Ionian University). There will be a registration fee of 70 Euros. For information please contact the secretary to the Conference dr Petros Andriotis: [pandriot@ionio.gr](mailto:pandriot@ionio.gr) Scientific Committee: Anastasia Siopsi (Ionian University), Antonia Soulez (Université Paris 8), Robin Le Poidevin (University of Leeds) Organizing Committee: Miranda Kaldi (Ionian University), Petros Andriotis (Ionian University), Panos Vlagopoulos (Ionian University) Coordinator: Panos Vlagopoulos (Ionian University).

Deadline: 30 November 2011

### **Thinking Feeling: Critical Theory, Culture, Feeling**

Sussex, England  
18-19 May 2012

As the recent UK riots indicate, there is no escaping the fact that economics provokes, amongst other things, strong feelings. Whether we like it or not, a neoliberal language of economics now pervades and colors our inner 'private' emotional lives; the

government's emerging plans to compile a 'happiness index' is a clear example of how a rhetoric of 'feeling' can be co-opted by capital. More than ever, then, it is important we do not simply accept 'feeling' as a spontaneous or natural phenomenon, but instead subject it to genuinely critical scrutiny. Are some feelings static, essential and ahistorical, or can we trace their genealogies? Are feelings entirely subjective and individual, or are they actually objective and social? If they are social, whose feelings are they?

By placing contemporary cultural and literary theory (especially as it deals with 'affect') alongside the tradition of Critical Theory, this conference asks what might be at stake politically, aesthetically and even experientially in the recent turn towards a discourse of feeling. With its roots in Hegel, Marx and Freud, Critical Theory has always been concerned with the role of feeling, in all its senses. Meanwhile, literary theorists and practitioners as diverse as Georges Bataille, Raymond Williams and Eve Sedgwick have also focused on relations between culture, society and felt experience. The conference will therefore set out to utilize these approaches for a critique of modern and contemporary culture. Contributors are encouraged to engage notions of feeling as they relate to particular cultural practices, objects or texts, and are also invited to use recent work on the emotions to rethink aspects of the Marxist theoretical tradition. We welcome proposals from all relevant fields, including philosophy, literary studies, visual culture, music theory, art history, sociology, political economy, psychology, etc.

Abstracts of 200-250 words should be sent to Dr Doug Haynes, University of Sussex: <d.e.haynes@sussex.ac.uk> (please mark the subject heading as 'Thinking Feeling').

Deadline: 31 December 2011

### **A Special Issue of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*: Song, Songs, and Singing**

Guest Editors: Jeanette Bicknell and John Andrew Fisher

Any philosophical treatment of songs or singing will be considered, but papers addressing these topics are especially welcome:

1. Songs and singing across the genres and cross-culturally – art music, opera, lieder, Broadway and jazz standards, folk song, religious vocal music, lullabies, work songs, popular songs (of all sorts, blues, rock, rap, etc.), mass art. 2. Meaning and Representa-

tion. How is the song representation established and what sort of representation is it? How does it compare to visual art, to the art of poetry or to theatre? 3. Exploring the contrasts between vocal and instrumental music. Do these make different kinds of demands upon listeners, composers, performers? 4. The unity of music and text. What is this, and how is it established? 5. Ontology. How do songs and recordings fit into the ontological catalogue of musical works? 6. Performance. How does singing compare with other types of performance, such as acting? How does live singing compare to recorded? How does singing in popular, jazz or folk music compare with singing in art music, such as lieder? 7. Singing and expression. Does vocal music raise different problems than instrumental music? Are expressive properties established in a different way in vocal music? Is "authenticity" different for songs than for instrumental music? 8. Singing and cinema. The problems raised by both diegetic and non-diegetic songs in film. How does the contemporary use of popular songs as the musical score of films change the relation of sound track to the visual narrative? 9. Ethical criticism. Is moral criticism of popular songs as appropriate as moral criticism of movies and literature? 10. What trends in the history of art theory or core assumptions about the field of aesthetics have inclined philosophers of art and music to ignore songs as an important art form? 11. Philosophical analyses of specific vocal music in any genre.

Submissions should not exceed 7,000 words and must comply with the general guidelines for submissions (see "Submissions" on the JAAC website: <www.temple.edu/jaac>). Send submissions as e-mail attachments to both guest editors, indicating clearly that your submission is for the special issue. Jeanette Bicknell, OCAD University, Canada, <bicknellj@hotmail.com>, and John Andrew Fisher, University of Colorado, <john.fisher@colorado.edu>

Deadline: 16 January 2012

**Canadian Society for Aesthetics**  
Waterloo, Canada  
26-28 May 2012

The 2012 annual meeting of the Canadian Society for Aesthetics will take place in company with meetings of other Canadian associations, including the Canadian Philosophical Association, as part of the 81st Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. Submissions on any topic in aesthetics are invited. But special interest is expressed for papers in the following areas: 1) How

science can illuminate our understanding of the arts; 2) The logic of narrative; 3) Ethical issues in any of the arts. In the initial stage of consideration, preference will be given to completed papers of 10-12 standard pages, accompanied by a 150-word abstract and suitable for presentation in fewer than 25 minutes. Abstracts, if submitted alone, will be assessed later and only if vacancies occur in the program. Proposals for panels on special topics or recent publications are also invited, and should include names and affiliations of all participants plus an abstract of the subject matter. Participants selected for inclusion on the program are required to pay CSA membership and conference registration fees. For graduate submissions included on the program, we offer an annual prize for the best graduate paper presented. Submissions must be sent as e-mail attachments (MS Word or .RTF files). Inquiries or submissions in English may be sent to Ira Newman; Department of Philosophy; Mansfield University; Mansfield PA 16933 (USA) <inewman@mansfield.edu>. Those in French to: François Chalifour; Département des arts, Cégep de l'Outaouais, Campus Félix-Leclerc, 820 boul. De la Gappe, Gatineau, (Québec) Canada J8T 7I7 ,fchalifour@cegepoutaouais.qc.ca>.

Deadline: 15 February 2012

### ***Rivista di Estetica*: The Aesthetic Experience in the Evolutionary Perspective**

Aesthetic experience (AE) has enjoyed an increase of interest over the last several years, even in cognitive sciences and evolutionary psychology. This special issue will focus on the topic of AE in an evolutionary perspective. The aim is to approach the most intense controversies afflicting the recent and multidisciplinary debates. What is AE for? Is AE an adaptation or a by-product? What is the relationship between AE and the goal of knowing? Has AE a mental distinctiveness? What mental processes (perception, cognition, imagination, affect, emotion) are involved (exalted) in AE? What is the relationship between AE and evaluation? What is the articulation of the natural and cultural bases of AE? Has AE the same properties occurring with natural phenomena, cultural artefacts, works of art? How old is art? Is an animal (non-human) AE possible? Could a machine simulate mental processes usually correlated with AE? Advisory Editor: Gianluca Consoli: mail to <gianluca.consoli@libero.it>.

Deadline: 30 January 2013

### **The Monist Special Issue: The Philosophy of Robert Musil**

Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* is one of the most important novels of the 20th century. But Musil was also a philosopher, and after completion of his dissertation on Ernst Mach in 1908 he used his literary writings as a medium for the expression of philosophical ideas. His views on a wide range of philosophical topics are highly original and in many cases surprisingly relevant in the context of contemporary philosophy. Some examples: the relation between perception and action, the anatomy of (sexual) passion, the connection between aesthetic and moral value, the embodiment of cognition, the futility and absurdity of looking for the meaning of life, the thin line between sanity and insanity, and the importance and limitations of scientific reasoning. Contributions are invited on Musil's ideas in philosophy, especially those which attempt to develop Musil's often sketchy thoughts into carefully argued and coherent analyses. Advisory Editor: Bence Nanay (Syracuse University): <nanay@syr.edu>.

Deadline: 31 January 2013

## **Upcoming Events**

### **The American Society for Aesthetics Annual Meeting**

Tampa, Florida  
26-29 October 2011

The 69th Annual Meeting of The American Society for Aesthetics will be held at the Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk Hotel, 200 N Ashley Drive, Tampa, FL 33602. It will be hosted and supported by The University of Tampa with additional support from Wiley/Blackwell Publishing. Program and registration information are now available at <[http://www.aesthetics-online.org/events/index.php?events\\_id=341](http://www.aesthetics-online.org/events/index.php?events_id=341)>. Hotel information can be found at <<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/booking/reservation?id=1108162971&key=AF3AF>>.

### **Perceptual Memory and Perceptual Imagination**

University of Glasgow, Scotland  
6-9 September 2011

Registration is now open for the conference. For details of how to register see: <<http://www.gla.ac.uk/philosophy/cspe/events/perceptualmemoryandperceptualimagination>>. Please send enquiries to Umüt Baysan: <[e.baysan.1@research.gla.ac.uk](mailto:e.baysan.1@research.gla.ac.uk)>.

### **Fiction and Fictionalism Workshop**

Barcelona, Spain  
12-13 September 2011

Organized by PERSP. Organizing committee: Richard Woodward (UB) and Manuel García-Carpintero (UB). This is the first of a series of workshops associated with the The Nature of Assertion: Consequences for Relativism and Fictionalism. Invited Speakers: Tim Crane (Cambridge), Anthony Everett (Bristol), Stacie Friend (Heythrop), Chiara Panizza (UB), Tatjana von Solodkoff (Sheffield). Lee Walters (UCL/Oxford), Kendall Walton (Michigan), Richard Woodward (UB). No registration fee, but if interested in attending please contact <[persp.management@gmail.com](mailto:persp.management@gmail.com)>.

### **British Society of Aesthetics Annual Meeting**

Old College, Edinburgh  
16-18 September 2011

Registration and the full program are available at <<http://www.british-aesthetics.org/conference2011.aspx>>. The conference will end with an optional excursion to Little Sparta. Keynote Speakers: Catherine Wilson (University of Aberdeen), Rachel Zuckert (Northwestern University). Empson Lecture: Stephen Bann (Bristol University)

### **Second International Conference on the Image**

San Sebastian, Spain  
26-27 September 2011

The Image Conference is a forum at which participants will interrogate the nature and functions of image-making and images. The conference has a cross-disciplinary focus, bringing together researchers, teachers and practitioners from areas of interest including: architecture, art, cognitive science, communications, computer science, cultural studies, design, education, film studies, history, linguistics, management, marketing, media studies, museum studies, philosophy, photography, psychology, religious studies, semiotics, and more.

We are pleased to hold the 2011 conference alongside the San Sebastian International Film Festival, founded in 1953 and acknowledged by the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF) as an

A Category Festival. For more information, please visit the conference website: <<http://OntheImage.com/Conference-2011/>>.

### **Faith, Film, and Philosophy Seminar**

Gonzaga University  
30 September-1 October 2011

Gonzaga University's Faith and Reason Institute and Whitworth University's Weyerhaeuser Center for Faith and Learning are pleased to announce their Fifth Annual Seminar on Faith, Film and Philosophy, entitled "Faith, Philosophy, & Mystery in Film." The seminar and its associated public lectures are part of a series of jointly-sponsored programs focused on "Faith, Reason and Popular Culture." The conviction behind these programs is that if Christian institutions of higher learning are to respond properly to their charge to be places where faith seeks understanding, then they must engage contemporary popular culture. Film is among the most powerful and important forms of popular culture. Thus, the seminar organizers seek scholars who will engage in two days of discussion investigating issues of faith and philosophical import raised by contemporary popular film. Presenters need not have any formal academic appointment.

Seminar sessions will take place on Friday (30 September) and Saturday (1 October). Public lectures associated with the seminar will be given on the evenings of 28-30 September 2011.

This year's seminar examines the mystery genre in film. One of the most popular forms of narrative in the contemporary world is mystery fiction, where a crime is committed and eventually solved by an amateur or professional detective. On the silver screen, mystery is almost as old as film itself, with the first Sherlock Holmes movie appearing in 1903. Mysteries are among the very finest movies ever made (e.g., Alfred Hitchcock's) as well as among the very worst (countless forgotten B-movies); and they are so well-known that the list of parodies and spoofs is almost as long as the list of serious attempts at good mystery. One would think that mystery fiction is as old as story-telling itself, yet the genre did not really come into its own until a century and a half ago. What is it about the mystery that modern audiences find so enthralling?

For further information consult <[www.gu-faithreason.org](http://www.gu-faithreason.org)>.

### **Unsettled Boundaries: Philosophy, Art, and Ethics East/West**

Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
12-14 October 2011

The aims of this exciting international conference are to advance mutual scholarly communication and intercultural understanding of issues in contemporary aesthetics and its relation to philosophy and art. Through the papers and the publication that follows we hope to contribute to global appreciation of common ground and differences existing in contemporary approaches to the topic. You are invited to attend this conference and to participate in scholarly dialogue that ranges from East to West.

The conference sessions are free and open to all who have an interest in the subject. Advanced registration is requested. Additional activities may be registered for (see our website) after 1 August by sending your name, affiliation (if you have one), and activities you'd like to attend to: <universityspecialevents@marquette.edu>. Please send checks for meal reservations to: Department of Philosophy Marquette University P.O. Box 1881, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881.

For more information, contact Curtis L. Carter at <curtis.carter@marquette.edu>, Department of Philosophy, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, 53201. Office phone: (414) 288-6962. Please also visit our website at: <unsettledboundaries.wordpress.com>.

### **McLuhan's Philosophy of Media**

Brussels, Belgium  
26-28 October 2011

Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980): media theorist, cultural critic, provoker. Undoubtedly influential. Pitching phrases like 'the medium is the message' and 'the global village,' McLuhan rose to stardom in the 1960s, only to see his fame decay during the last decade of his life. Since the early 1990s however, his ideas have been gradually rediscovered by academics and pop culture alike. The digital revolution made him, retrospectively, a quite accurate analyst of the information era, even a visionary in the eyes of some. Within communication studies, cultural studies, sociology, and philosophy, his insights remain fertile ground for anyone trying to understand the interactions of humans, technologies, and media environments.

In 2011, McLuhan would have celebrated his 100th birthday. A perfect moment to look back as well as ahead. During this interdisciplinary conference, we will discuss McLuhan's ideas

from different perspectives and traditions. At the same time we wish to highlight an aspect of McLuhan that until now has been underexposed: his philosophy of media. Inasmuch as he reflected upon the workings and forms of media, McLuhan truly was a philosopher of technology, very much in the style of contemporary Anglo-American philosophers of technology: weaving together ontology, phenomenology, critique, and cultural observations into an eclectic patchwork bent on understanding media dynamics. And "media," in McLuhan's sense, could be anything made by humans, ranging from cars over political systems to ideas. Throughout this centennial celebration, we seek to investigate McLuhan's "media philosophy," in particular its relation to, relevance for, and place in philosophy and media studies.

Registration details can be found at <http://www.mcluhancentennial.eu/?page\_id=37>. For more information, contact Yoni Van Den Eede, Department of Philosophy and Moral Sciences, Free University of Brussels at <info@mcluhancentennial.eu> or see <http://www.mcluhancentennial.eu>.

### **"The Power to Imagine Better": The Philosophy of Harry Potter**

New York, New York  
29 October 2011

Contact the conference coordinator, Carrie-Ann Biondi (Assistant Prof. of Philosophy, Dept. of Philosophy & Religious Studies), at (212) 517-0637 or <cbiondi@mmm.edu>.

### **Second International Conference on the Constructed Environment**

Chicago, Illinois  
29-30 October 2011

The Constructed Environment Conference is a place to explore the forms and functions of the constructed environment during a time of dramatic and at times disruptive change. The conference is a cross-disciplinary forum that brings together researchers, teachers and practitioners to discuss the past character and future shape of the built environment. The resulting conversations weave between the theoretical and the empirical, research and application, market pragmatics and social idealism. In professional and disciplinary terms, the conference traverses a broad sweep to generate a transdisciplinary dialogue which encompasses the perspectives and practices of: architecture, anthropology, business, design, economics, education, engineering, environmental design, industrial design, interior design, landscape architec-

ture, sociology, town and regional planning, and transportation.

Full details of the conference, including an online proposal submission form, may be found at the conference website: <http://ConstructedEnvironment.com/Conference>.

### **Annual Meeting of the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) 2011**

Cleveland, Ohio  
2-5 November 2011

The intersection of art, science and technology constitutes a burgeoning field of artistic practice and a productive site for the development of new theoretical approaches in science studies. For this panel, we invite submissions from artists practicing in this area as well as theorists grounded in science studies, history and philosophy of science, art history, literary theory and related disciplines whose research addresses the novel questions posed by these new artistic practices. We seek to generate a productive exchange about the hybrid methodologies necessary to theorize these artworks and their contribution to science studies. In the interest of generating approaches to art criticism and interpretation that are informed by science studies, we intend to bring to bear the approaches of a group of theorists on one or more artists or artworks. We welcome submissions on topics that address the significance of scientific materials and methods as artistic media; critical practices within sci-art; the rhetoric of scientific and/or artistic expertise in the production and reception of sci-art; and artworks

### ***The American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-Journal***

*The American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-journal* (ASAGE) is now accepting high caliber articles, book reviews and dissertation abstracts by graduate students in aesthetics and the philosophy of art for its Fall 2011/Winter 2012 issue. We are also seeking article reviewers. More information, including complete submission guidelines, is available on our website at <www.asage.org>.

Deadlines are 1 October 2011 for articles and 1 November 2011 for book reviews and dissertation abstracts.

and theoretical approaches that engage with specific fields such as bio-art, synthetic biology, systems of classification, models of experimental practice, scientific instrumentation, environmental art and nano-art. Looking at the way these works position themselves in relation to science and technology, we will reflect on what tools may be developed for use in other disciplinary arenas as well as considering the ways these artworks engage and respond to debates within science studies.

### **Touched: Philosophy Meets Art**

Liverpool, England  
19 November 2010

Sponsored by: The British Society of Aesthetics, The Mind Association, The Royal Institute of Philosophy, The Forum for European Philosophy, The Department of Philosophy and The School of Arts, University of Liverpool. Some of the most prevalent views in the history of philosophy and art have suggested that philosophy and art are both devoted to the discovery of “universal” truths and should result in works, textual or non-textual, that must remain untouched: their value must defy time and transcend space. Yet neither philosophy nor art can be divorced from concrete experience and they both make a claim on our thinking and being—on our most refined concepts and reasoning as well as our most unrefined desires, emotions and dreams. The distance between “knowing oneself” and “making oneself” seems blurred, and to get our bearings we turn to philosophy and to art: they both issue in forms of experience that intensely influence the way we situate ourselves in the world, the way we construct our personal, community, and cultural identities. We ask: is there a role for touching in the aesthetic division of labour, which is indisputably dominated by the seeing and hearing that seem to safeguard the distance between the work of art and us? How would this change the set of metaphors that still guide our understanding of artistic creation and reception? And then a question of unexpected resonance: are we touched by Art? How do works of art transform the way we understand and form our identities? And indeed, do art festivals such as the Biennial prompt personal, cultural, and social change?

For more information, see the conference website: <[http://www.liv.ac.uk/philosophy/events/conferences/Philosophy\\_Meets\\_Art/index.htm](http://www.liv.ac.uk/philosophy/events/conferences/Philosophy_Meets_Art/index.htm)>.

### **Enlightenment Aesthetics and Beyond**

Edinburgh, Scotland  
15-16 December 2011

The ‘Enlightenment Aesthetics and Beyond’ conference will bring together scholars in aesthetics and the history of philosophy to explore aesthetic theory in the Enlightenment, the reception of British aesthetic theory in Germany, and the significance of these ideas for contemporary debates in aesthetics and other fields.

Speakers include Jonathan Friday, Jason Gaiger, Paul Guyer, Peter Jones, Alex Neill, James Shelley, Alison Stone, Rachel Zuckert. Conference programme and registration can be found at <<http://www.ppls.ed.ac.uk/philosophy/events/view/enlightenment-aesthetics-and-beyond>>.

### **Sixth International Conference on Design Principles and Practices**

Los Angeles, California  
20-22 January 2012

We are pleased to host the Design Conference this year at the University of California, Los Angeles, USA. Los Angeles is a world center of entertainment, arts, design and media. Its cultural and economic diversity, and landmarks of expansion and development over the last century make Los Angeles an ideal place to discuss the dimensions of design theory and practice.

The Design Conference is a place to explore the meaning and purpose of ‘design’, as well as speaking in grounded ways about the task of design and the use of designed artifacts and processes. The conference is a cross-disciplinary forum that brings together researchers, teachers and practitioners to discuss the nature and future of design. In professional and disciplinary terms, the conference traverses a broad sweep to construct a dialogue that encompasses an expansive array of disciplinary perspectives and practices. The highly inclusive format provides conference delegates with significant opportunities to connect with people from shared fields and disciplines and with those from vastly different specializations. The resulting conversations provide ample occasions for mutual learning, weaving between the theoretical and the empirical, research and application, and market pragmatics and social idealism.

As well as an international line-up of plenary speakers, the conference will also include numerous paper, workshop and colloquium

presentations by practitioners, teachers and researchers. Presenters may choose to submit written papers for publication in the refereed *Design Principles and Practices: An International Journal*. If you are unable to attend the conference in person, virtual registrations are also available which allow you to submit a paper for refereeing and possible publication, as well as access to the journal.

Full details of the conference are to be found at the conference website: <<http://Design-PrinciplesandPractices.com/Conference/>>.

### **How to Make Believe: The Fictional Truths of the Representational Arts**

University of Lund, Sweden  
15-17 March 2012

We are looking for proposals that investigate these specific ways of generation of fictional truths within all representational arts. We are inviting proposals from scholars within the whole range of the Humanities. Possible topics of investigation include case-studies of the generation of fictional truths in literature, film, narrative in general, theater, opera, dance, painting, photography, visual arts in general, computer games, music. We especially welcome contributions that focus on works of art in lesser known areas of research, such as the graphic novel, radio theatre and other possible genres and media which so far have been neglected in research about their specific ways of generating fictional truths. We also like to especially encourage papers working with interdisciplinary and interartial approaches, e.g. studies that focus on adaptations of novels into movies, or any other kind of interrelation between the generation of fictional truth in different categories of the representational arts. Besides contributions about specific categories within the arts as well as specific artworks, we are also interested in contributions that further investigate more general topics within the theoretical framework, e.g., but not exclusively the so-called principles of generation: the reality principle, the mutual believe principle, the principle of minimal departure, the principle of genre convention, the principle of media convention, as well as newly formulated principles for the generation of fictional truths, or other topics of more general character within the theoretical frame of fiction as make-believe. Keynote speakers: Gregory Currie, University of Nottingham (Great Britain) Peter Lamarque, University of York (Great Britain) Stein Haugom Olsen, Høgskolen i Østfold (Norway) Kendall L. Walton, University of Michigan (USA).

# Active Aestheticians

**TSION AVITAL's** *Art Versus NonArt: Art Out of Mind* published with Cambridge University Press, is now available in soft cover.

**CURTIS L. CARTER** presented a seminar on "The Influences of Urbanization and Globalization on Contemporary Chinese Art " at the preview week of the International Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, June 2011, on behalf of the Chinese Pavillion. He also presented a paper on "Tradition and Change

in Contemporary Chinese Art" at the 19th International Colloquium of the Slovenian Society of Aesthetics, "Contemporaneity in Art," Koper, Slovenia, June 2011.

**KATHLEEN DESMOND** has published *Ideas About Art*, with Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

**ANKE FINGER** and **DANIELLE FOLLETT** have edited the collection *The Aesthetics of the Total Artwork: On Borders and*

*Fragments* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

**KIRK PILLOW** has been appointed provost of The University of the Arts, Philadelphia, effective March 2011.

Would you like to be featured in "Active Aestheticians" in the next issue of the *American Society for Aesthetics Newsletter*?

Please share information about your professional achievements with the editors via at either:

<goldblatt@denison.edu> or <henry.pratt@marist.edu>.

American Society for Aesthetics  
c/o Dabney Townsend  
P.O. Box 915  
Pooler, GA USA  
31322-0915

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## ASA Newsletter

EDITED BY

David Goldblatt and Henry Pratt  
ISSN 1089-1668

The *Newsletter* is published three times a year by the American Society for Aesthetics. Subscriptions are available to non-members for \$15 per year plus postage. For subscription or membership information:  
ASA, c/o Dabney Townsend, PO box 915, Pooler, GA 31322-0915; Tel. 912-748-9524; email: <asa@aesthetics-online.org>.

Send calls for papers, event announcements, conference reports, and other items of interest to:

David Goldblatt, Department of Philosophy, Denison University, Granville, OH 43023, <goldblatt@denison.edu>

or

Henry Pratt, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Marist College, 3399 North Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601,  
<henry.pratt@marist.edu>

Deadlines: 1 November, 15 April, 1 August