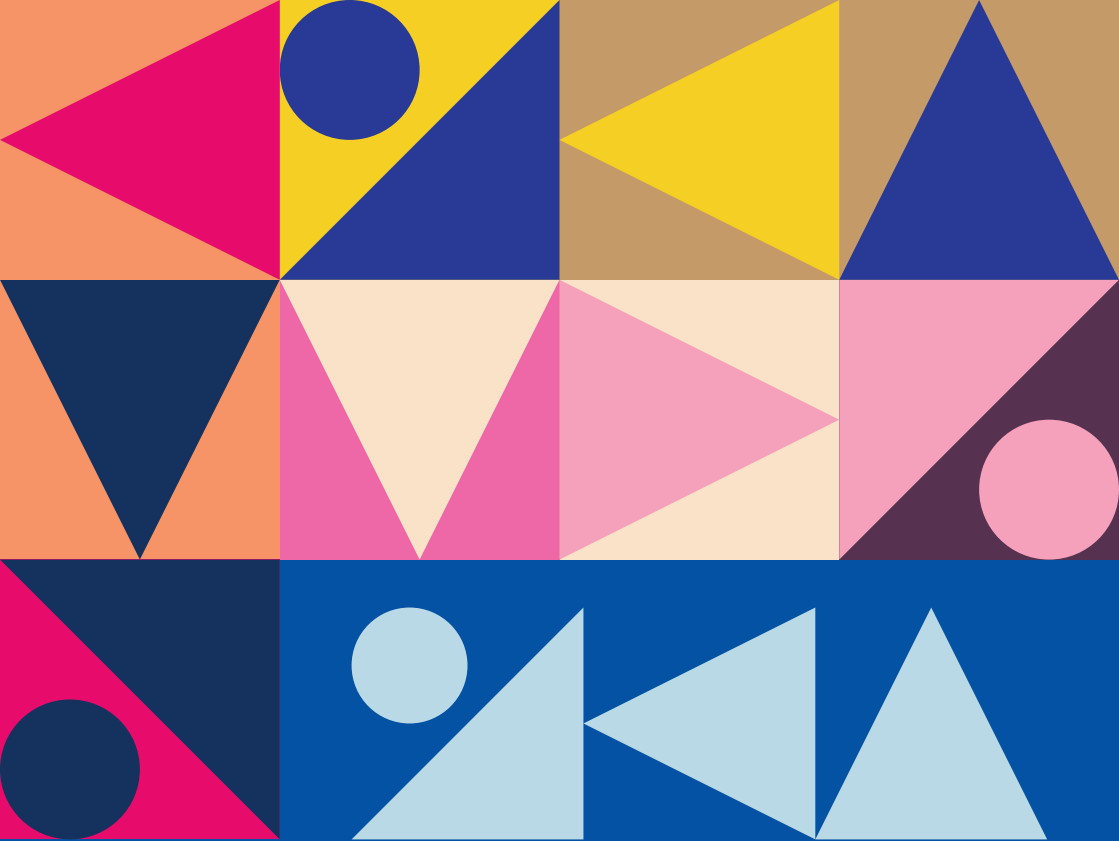




**ICA 2026 | 23rd International
Congress of Aesthetics**

Aesthetics Today

Book of Abstracts

Adrián Kvokačka (Ed.)



VYDAVATELSTVO
PREŠOVSKÉJ
UNIVERZITY

ICA 2026 Aesthetics Today

Book of Abstracts

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Prešov 2026

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Congress Program

Monday
20/07/2026

Session A
Room E 223a

Session B
Room E 225

8:00 – 9:00

Registration
Info point (Main entrance)

9:00 – 9:30

ICA2026 / Opening
Room E203 Auditorium Magnum

9:30 – 11:00

Keynote lecture
Room E203 Auditorium Magnum
MARIA JOSE ALCARAZ LEON
Aesthetic Reasons and the Personal Dimension of Aesthetic
Appreciation
Chair: Lisa Giombini

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee break

11:30 – 13:30

POSTHUMAN AESTHETICS

Chair: Adrián Kvokačka

MARYAM VAHEDI

The Mother Tongue of
Cognition: A Phenomenological
Grounding for Post-Humanist
Aesthetics

VSEVOLOD RYBAKOV

Responding to Non-humans:
Towards the Ecological Model
of Aesthetic Experience

**MAŁGORZATA DANCEWICZ-
PAWLIK**

Why Listen to Animals? A
Plea for Auditive Aesthetic
Experience

NOBUHIRO MASUDA

The Non-Human Genealogy of
the Operational Image: On the
Aesthetics of Images Generated
by Machines and Animals

PAIN, POWER, AND THE BODY

Chair: Max Rynänen

HIDEKI KUWAJIMA

The Geopolitical Aesthetics of
“Pain/Suffering Inversion” in
Edmund Burke’s Enquiry into
the Sublime and Beautiful

RODOLFO WENGER

Violence and Its Relationship
with Biopower, Necropolitics,
and Necroaesthetics

NATASHA LUNA MÁLAGA

What Does It Mean, Being-
in-the-World? The Political
Urgency of a Radical Admission
of the Body

JOZEF KOVALČIK

Aestheticization of Poverty and
Shared Popular Imagination

13:30 – 14:30

Lunch

Session C
Room E 221

Session D
Room E 139

Session E
Room E 142

Registration
Info point (Main entrance)

ICA2026 / Opening
Room E203 Auditorium Magnum

Keynote lecture
Room E203 Auditorium Magnum
MARIA JOSE ALCARAZ LEON
Aesthetic Reasons and the Personal Dimension of Aesthetic
Appreciation
Chair: Lisa Giombini

Coffee break

**AESTHETIC EDUCATION AND
PRACTICE**

Chair: Tereza Hadravová

DORIT BARCHANA LORAND

On the Marginalization of
Aesthetics and the Advocacy
for Art Education

FRANCISCA PÉREZ-CARREÑO
Aesthetic Argumentation in
Art Exhibitions

ARTEM RADEEV
The Role of Practice in
Aesthetics

RUTH LORAND
Art: Theory and Creation

EVERYDAY AESTHETICS

Chair: Mateusz Salwa

DAN EUGEN RATIU

“Everynight” Aesthetics.
An Exploration of a New
Aesthetic Realm: the
Nocturnal Quotidian

NATXO NAVARRO RENALIAS
Aesthetic Appreciation of
Everyday Practices

RŪDIS BEBRIŠS
From Everyday Art Objects
to Everyday Aesthetics and
Back Again: Towards a
Danto-Inspired Ontology of
Art Informed by Everyday
Aesthetics

**CONCHA NAVARRETE
FERNANDEZ**
Modal Aesthetics and the
Consumption of the Rural
Alternative: Everyday
Practices and Meaning
Cycles

**CONTEMPORARY AESTHETICS
OF MUSIC**

Chair: Lisa Giombini

ERAN GUTER

Musical Expression Beyond
the Informing Paradigm

ANNA ZYCH
Hyperrealism and
Cyberrealism as Aesthetic
Values in Music

SLÁVKA KOPČÁKOVÁ
“New music” – Crises of
Music Aesthetics as the
Window of Opportunities

DARIO LOJA
A Possible Virtuous Circle
Between Popular Music and
Musical Form

Lunch

14:30 – 16:00	HEALING AND INCLUSION Chair: Adrián Kvokačka MADALINA DIACONU Healing and the Aesthetics of Multi-R Processes VALERIA COSTANZA D'AGATA For an Inclusive Aesthetics: People with ASD and their Attunement to the Environment HIROMI YANAGISAWA KOBATA Junzo's Philosophy of Aesthetic Consciousness: Aesthetics as a Way of Life	MEMORY AND SOCIALIST IMAGINARY Chair: Lenka Piper TYRUS MILLER György Lukács, Architecture, and the Aesthetics of Realism (Whether "Socialist" or Not) POLONA TRATNIK Socialist Fairy Tales as Aesthetic Experience: Interpreting Socialist Culture with Large Language Models ANDREJ JOVANOVIĆ, UROŠ KULIĆ, MARIJA BLAGOJEVIĆ Matter, Memory, and the Political Imaginary: Rethinking Aesthetics of Commemoration
	Coffee break	
16:30 – 18:00	IMMERSION AND REPRESENTATION Chair: Tufan Acil BRUNO CAPSSA BETTIO Videogame Aesthetics: Perspectives on Immersion, Symbol, and Representation AYA CHAEN Overcoming the Fiction Generated Between Seeing and Interpreting Art: With a Focus on Michael Fried's "Art and Objecthood" and Subsequent Writings BOGNA J. GLADDEN-OBIDZIŃSKA Between Celebration and Erasure: Revaluation and Hybrid Presence of Problematic Heritage	AI AND CREATIVITY Chair: Lukáš Makky WAN-HSIN CHENG Can AI Earn Its Music? Revisiting Roger Scruton's Philosophy of Music SCOTT CONTRERAS-KOTERBAY Uniqueness, incomplete and impossible fictional truths, and AI: technologically-determined iterative boundaries at the aesthetic intersection of creativity and generative ability YIJIE XU Algorithmic Misrepresentation and the New Forms of Deception in AI-Generated Art
	Guided city walk tour Info point (Main entrance)	

ORNAMENT AND URBAN EXPERIENCE

Chair: Matti Tainio

PAOLO FURIA

The ornament of the Earth – Pacha and the landscape

LENKA LEE

The Rhythmic Ornament of Everyday Mobility: Morphogenesis and Participation in Central European Cities

VANDA BOZICEVIC METZGER

Merely Ornamental

CRITICISM AND RESISTANCE

Chair: Barbara Formis

JINRU WANG

Criticism as Keys: The Cognitive Function of Criticism within DEKI Account of Representation

YEVHENIIA BUTSYKINA

“The New Abnormal”: Aesthetic Possibilities of the Continuous Experience of Terror

DIGITAL ART AND AI

Chair: Jakub Petri

CHEN SIQIN

From Divine Gaze to Interactive Experience: The Aesthetics of Digital Transformation in Mogao Caves Art

MATTEO DA PELO

Artificial Creativity beyond Intelligence: Towards an Instrumental Framework

SIR-LIEN HUGH TADEO

The Algorithmic Sublime: The Wrestle of the Beautiful in Digital Art in the Categories of the Kantian Aesthetics

Coffee break

SIMULATION AND URBAN STRANGENESS

Chair: Adrián Kvokačka

CARLOS HENRIQUE MOLLER

Transfiguration or Simulation? The Impossibility of Generative Art Considering Arthur Danto's Theory of Art

MAMI AOTA

A Typology of the Concept of "Strangeness" in Our Urban Everyday Life

LANGER AND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Chair: Lisa Giombini

TEREZA HADRAVOVÁ

What Kind of Cognitivist was Susanne K. Langer?

AGÁTA KOŠIČANOVÁ

Susanne K. Langer's Aesthetic Bridging Legacy

CLARA CAMPUZANO GÓMEZ

Being Affected by Others: On the Normative Force of Aesthetic Reasons

ISSUES IN AESTHETICS

Chair: Jana Migašová

CHRISTOPHER ZYSIK

“AI Slop” and Digital Eco-Aesthetics – A Phenomenological Aesthetic Inquiry into Digital Junk

ANDREA L. BALDINI & ANDREA BORGHINI

Reconceptualizing Street Art: Done, Doing, and Deed

SONIA SEDIVY

The Diversity of Aesthetic Properties: the 'wonder and splendor' of colors

Guided city walk tour

Info point (Main entrance)

Tuesday
21/07/2026

Session A
Room E 223a

Session B
Room E 225

8:30 – 9:00

Registration
Info point (Main entrance)

9:00 – 10:30

Keynote lecture
Room E203 Auditorium Magnum
YURIKO SAITO
The Aesthetics of Care: Our Relationship With the Artifactual World
Chair: Monique Roelofs

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee break

11:00 – 13:00

TATARKIEWICZ
Chair: Tyrus Miller

MAX RYNNÄNEN
Władysław Tatarkiewicz's Idea
History of Art as a Base for
Understanding the Aesthetics of
Popular Culture

ELISABETTA DI STEFANO
From Six Ideas to Everyday
Life: Tatarkiewicz's History
of Ideas as a Framework for
Everyday Aesthetics

ZOLTÁN SOMHEGYI
Environmental Awareness and
the Autonomy of Art: Aesthetic-
Historical Ruminations with
Władysław Tatarkiewicz on
Contemporary Issues

MATEUSZ SALWA
W. Tatarkiewicz's Philosophy
of Art

EAST ASIAN ART AND MEMORY
Chair: Enea Bianchi

KYOUNG HWA KIM
Sound Art in East Asia: History,
Terminology, and Aesthetics in
Korea

KATSUSHI NAKAGAWA
Sound Art in East Asia: History,
Terminology, and Aesthetics in
Japan

HIROSHI UEMURA
Museification,
Commodification,
Naturalisation: Transforming
Memory in Japanese Local Art
Projects

KEIKO ISHIDA
Political Implications of
Abstract Art in the Post-World
War II Era: Focusing on its
Reception in Postwar Japan

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch

Session C
Room E 221

Session D
Room E 139

Session E
Room E 142

Registration

Info point (Main entrance)

Keynote lecture

Room E203 Auditorium Magnum

YURIKO SAITO

The Aesthetics of Care: Our Relationship With the
Artifactual World

Chair: Monique Roelofs

Coffee break

**ARCHITECTURE AND SPATIAL
MEMORY**

Chair: Lisa Giombini

HELEN TATLA

The Ecological Uncanny
as a Creative Power: The
Role of Contemporary Art &
Architecture

ILIJA DJUROVIC

Hybrid Realities:
Architectural Aesthetics of
Memory in the Age of Digital
Materiality

BOŠKO DROBNJAK

Critical Diagrams:
Tracing the Aesthetics of
Architecture in the Context
of the International Congress
of Aesthetics (ICA)

IGNACIO GARAY

The Aesthetic of
Obsolescence: Contingency
Negation and Somatic
Resistance in the Digital Era
of Rock Music

FILM AND REPRESENTATION

Chair: Lukáš Makky

VINCENZO CERULLI

Negative Filmmaking: a
Study on the Aesthetic
Affordances of the Film Set

CHIE SHIMAZAKI

Food as Foreign Object in Jan
Švankmajer's Film

ALŽBETA HAMEROVÁ

The Film Screenplay
as an Open Text:
Aesthetic Experience and
Interpretation

MARIA TIVIKOVA

Gender Representation
in Sports Films: Specific
Features

**DECOLONIAL AND ENGAGED
ART**

Chair: Monique Roelofs

NATALIA ANNA MICHNA

Decolonial Aesthetics of
Weak Resistance and Tender
Solidarities in Transnational
Feminist Arts Activism

LENKA PIPER

The End of Indigenous Art:
Rethinking a Category from
the Past in Contemporary
Contexts

SZILVIA CSANÁDI

Oscillation and Frontiers in
Socially Engaged Art

ANA RITA NICOLIELLO

The Feet on the Ground:
Placing and Locating
Aesthetics

Lunch

14:00 – 16:00	DESIGN AND EVERYDAY AESTHETICS Chair: Matilde Carrasco Barranco MICHALLE GAL Design Aesthetics and Everydayness MONIKA FAVARA-KURKOWSKI Design and the Everyday of Use: Dissolving the Aesthetic-Instrumental Dichotomy KONSTANTINOS MORAITIS Aesthetics of Topology and Landscape as Principal Design References in Architectural, Urban, Interior, and Object Design JOOSIK MIN Appearances of Water	FICTION AND LITERATURE Chair: Lisa Giombini KEI IMAI Seeing and Imagining in Walton's Theory of Depiction: Revisiting the Mutual Interpenetration of Vision and Imagination LOLA MARTÍNEZ-PONS ORTUÑO On Literary Entities: Imaginative Construction and Engagement JOSE JUAN PALOMO DEL REY, ALBA MARÍA JIMÉNEZ GARCÍA & CLARA LLANO GÓMEZ What Can Fiction Do? From Metaphysical Grounding to Cervantes and Dalí MATTEO MARIA PAOLUCCI Queering Community: Literary Aesthetic Resistance after Jean-Luc Nancy
	Coffee break	
16:30 – 18:00	VIRTUAL AND IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE Chair: Jana Migašová ALEKSANDRA LUKASZEWICZ In Search of a Multisensory Experience in Virtual Spaces EKATERINA ZAPOLSKIKH The Expansion of the Aesthetic: Art, Technology, and Embodied Perception JAKUB PETRI Gaia's Breath: Tactility in AR Mediated Emersive Leisure Research	AI ART AND ORIGINALITY Chair: Bogna J. Gladden-Obidzińska LUCIANA NUNES NACIF Generative Irrepresentations: On Signification, Materiality, and Suffering JASMÍNA RAMPACHOVÁ Prompt as Art: Originality in the Age of Artificial Intelligence VERONIKA HAJDUKOVÁ EMI David Cope's Algorithmic Compositions: A Contribution to Questions of Musical Creativity
	Guided city walk tour Info point (Main entrance)	

CROSS-CULTURAL AESTHETICS

Chair: Luciana Nunes Nacif

HANYUN JIANG

Network Mechanisms,
Cultural Transfer, and Style
Construction among France-
Trained Chinese Artists

ALEIX RODRÍGUEZ GRACIA

The Kind: An Ethical-
Aesthetic Category for
Cinema

TAKASHI SUGIYAMA

Nishida on Colour

JEAN LIN

Crossmodal Aesthetics in
Japanese Culture: From
Taste Expression to the
Geidō Traditions

RUINS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Chair: Zoltán Somhegyi

CATERINA DIOTTO

Walking the Narratives:
Ecocriticism on the Hiking
Trail

ERICH MISTRÍK

The European City as a
Symbolic Space: Aesthetic
Considerations

AKIRA IDE

An East-West Comparison of
the Aesthetics of Ruins in the
Context of Dark Tourism

YI-TING WANG

Environmental Art as
Reparative Practice:
Tracework in Post-Industrial
River Landscapes

AESTHETICS OF CARE

Chair: Yuriko Saito

BARBARA FORMIS

Manifestos as Performative
Gestures of Care

ANDRÉS ZENTENO CARDOSO

“Why keep it?”

Emancipatory Potential
and Aesthetics of Care in
Collecting and Preserving
Everyday Objects

YING WU

Traditional Chinese
Medicine in Contemporary
Art: Body, Care and Creation
— A Case Study of Guo
Fengyi’s Art

MIEL ASSAS

Visual Representations of
Top Surgeries as a Care
Practice

Coffee break

AESTHETICS OF CARE

Chair: Elisabetta Di Stefano

RAQUEL CASCALES

Beyond Aestheticization:
Everyday Aesthetics,
Negativity, and the
Aesthetics of Care

ALESSANDRO CARRARA

From Origin to a Future of
the Aesthetics of Care: A
Pragmatist Reconstruction

MAO MATSUYAMA

Sovereignty and Care:
Based on the Concept of
“Occupation” from a Joint
Research of Environmental
Aesthetics and
Environmental Psychology

AESTHETICS OF CARE

Chair: Dan Eugen Ratiu

STELLA ASLANI

The Aesthetic Rhythm of
Care

MATILDE CARRASCO**BARRANCO**

Performing Care: Moral
Deliberation and Aesthetic
Embodiment

DAVID BARRIO RUBIO

The Theory of Individuation
in Relation to the Aesthetics
of Care

Guided city walk tour

Info point (Main entrance)

Wednesday
22/07/2026

Trip – Levoča, Spišská Kapitula, High Tatras

Self-paid (for the transportation only) and subject to registration.
Activity organised by the Society for Aesthetics in Slovakia, an
organising member of ICA2026.

Social dinner

18:30 Park of culture and recreation in Prešov
Self-paid and subject to registration. Activity organised by the
Society for Aesthetics in Slovakia, an organizing member of
ICA2026.

Thursday
23/07/2026

Session A
Room E 223a

Session B
Room E 225

8:30 – 9:00

Registration
Info point (Main entrance)

9:00 – 10:30

Keynote lecture
Room E203 Auditorium Magnum
WOLFGANG WELSCH
We Have Always Been Transcultural
Chair: Enea Bianchi

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee break

	ECOLOGICAL SENSIBILITY Chair: Elena Mancipopi	FASHION AND POLITICS Chair: Adrián Kvokačka
	MUSTAFA KHURAMY Relaxing Aesthetic Entities	RIKA YOSHIHARA The Notion of “Arabesque” in the Drawing Practice of Odilon Redon
	ALESSIO FRANSONI Van Gogh’s Butterfly, Hirst’s Flies, Böhme’s Mosquitos: Aesthetic and Political Claims by Small Flying Insects	MELANIE REICHERT The Possibility of Revolution and the Actuality of Totalitarianism: Thoughts on Simone Weil’s Aesthetic Theory of Factory Work
11:00 – 13:00	FRANCESCA BARONI Neuroaesthetics and Landscape Aesthetics	MARIA KOCHNEVA Images of the Right Turn: The Influence of Conservatism on Contemporary Fashion
	LUCIANA MOLINA “What Times Are These?”: Adorno’s Aesthetics in the Debate on Poetry and Nature	LINDA MUCHOVÁ New Enchantment and Metamorphoses of the Human Body: Benjaminian Roots of the 21st Century Fashion Aesthetics

Trip – Levoča, Spišská Kapitula, High Tatras

Self-paid (for the transportation only) and subject to registration.
Activity organised by the Society for Aesthetics in Slovakia, an
organising member of ICA2026.

Social dinner

Park of culture and recreation in Prešov
Self-paid and subject to registration. Activity organised
by the Society for Aesthetics in Slovakia, an organizing
member of ICA2026.

Session C
Room E 221

Session D
Room E 139

Registration

Info point (Main entrance)

Keynote lecture

Room E203 Auditorium Magnum
WOLFGANG WELSCH
We Have Always Been Transcultural
Chair: Enea Bianchi

Coffee break

BLACK AESTHETICS AND EMBODIMENT

Chair: Lenka Piper

SJ COWAN

Kant and Black Aesthetics: The Persistence
of Reflective Form

MONIQUE ROELOFS

The Strange as a Category of Black
Aesthetics

EVA KIT WAH MAN

Mature Creativity and Well-being: Recent
Interdisciplinary and Confucian Reflections
on Aging and Creativity

ANNA NOVIKOVA

Boredom and the Body: Multisensoriality
and the Aesthetics of Stuplimity in Asemic
and Visual Writing

KITSCH AND COLLECTIVE SUBJECTIVITY

Chair: Maddalena Borsato

LISA SCHMALZRIED

All Sweetness and Light? Rethinking the
Sweet-Sour Kitsch Distinction Through
Gender Stereotypes and Gendered Emotions

JANA MIGAŠOVÁ

Kitsch as an Aesthetic Dimension and Key
to Understanding Contemporary Political
Populism in Central Europe

JUNKO MIKI

Looseness as an Aesthetic Method:
Rethinking Collective Subjectivity in
Contemporary Art

TAIKI YANAGAWA

Nishitani Keiji's Art Theory in Relation to
His Philosophy

13:00 – 14:00		Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	NATURE AND CLIMATE AESTHETICS Chair: Adrián Kvokačka YRJÖ SEPÄNMAA Humanity Meets Nature LAURA FUMAGALLI Anthropogenic Climate Change and the Appreciation of Nature MATTI TAINIO Aesthetics of Less LUCA MORELLI FONSECA Sounding Out the Void: Silence and Aesthetics	ISSUES IN AESTHETICS Chair: Lisa Schmalzried MATTEO ANDRE Authentic Self-Creation Through the Encounter with Art MURAT ÇELİK Against Counter-Stories: Aesthetic and Political Resistance SHIORI KUBO Hajime Tanabe's Interpretation of Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment: On the Relationship Between Reason and Judgments of Beauty JACK DIGNAM Essayism & Aesthetics
16:00 – 16:30		Coffee break
16:30 – 18:00		Executive committee of IAA meeting Rector Meeting Room
15:00 – 16:30		Guided city walk tour Info point (Main entrance)
19:00	Music in the Synagogue TIMINGERIU (self-paid, tickets available at: podujatia.pkopresov.sk)	

Lunch

TIME AND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Chair: Enea Bianchi

MARIIA ZHAROVA

The Aesthetic Category of the Mundane in the Context of the Phenomenon of Guilty Pleasure

KANAE MIZOBUCHI

The Aesthetics of Timelessness in Meredith Monk's Book of Days: Stratifying Time Beyond Linear Modernity

REGINA-NINO MION

Non-Deceptive Pictorial Experience and Illusion

AKIRA TSUGAMI

Intimacy in Nocturnal Scenes: Case Study in 17th Century European Painting

HEALING AND TECHNO-AESTHETICS

Chair: Lisa Giombini

DANIEL PUCCIARELLI

Meta-Aesthetics and Meta-Philosophy of Art: Some Theses on a Concept in the Making

MARÍA JESÚS GODOY DOMÍNGUEZ

Towards an Aesthetics of Healing

SNJEŽANA ŠIMIČ

Life and Beauty: From Kant to Technoaesthetics

ELENA MANCIOPPI & MADDALENA BORSATO

The Aesthetics of Techno-Decadence: Taste and Smell in the Contemporary Arts and Avant-garde Gastronomy

Coffee break

Executive committee of IAA meeting

Rector Meeting Room

Guided city walk tour

Info point (Main entrance)

Music in the Synagogue

TIMINGERIU (self-paid, tickets available at: podujatia.pkopresov.sk)

8:30 – 9:00

Registration
Info point (Main entrance)

9:00 – 11:00

HUMOUR, IRONY, AND THE UNCANNY

Chair: Elena Romagnoli

MILOŠ ŠEVČÍK AND DANIELA BLAHUTKOVÁ

Surprising Wit and Perspective of Humour: Jan Patočka on the Comic

STEFAN SEBASTIAN MAFTEI

To Laugh or Not to Laugh: Hutcheson, Mandeville, and the 18th Century Debate Concerning the Morality of Laughter

MICHAEL ZANGERL

The Metapolitics of Irony. Generalizing Hegel's Critique of Romanticism with Rancière and Badiou

AKARI YAMAZAKI

The Uncanny as an Aesthetic Feeling

ISSUES IN AESTHETICS

Chair: Paolo Furia

RALUCA OANCEA

Landscape, Eco Art, and Post-Photography

THOMAS MEIJS

On the Matter of Images: A Leibnizian Account of Relational Aesthetic Realism

REBECCA TAYLOR

The Onto-Epistemological Unity of Aesthetic Experience: The Onto-Epistemological Unity of Aesthetic Experience: The Case for *Askesis* in an Age of Immediacy

CARLES RIUS SANTAMARIA

Architectural Aesthetics in Heidegger: Constructing (Bauen) as Dwelling (Wohnen) and Caring For (Schonen). The Example of the Hut in Todtnauberg

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00

VR, AI, AND DIGITAL MEDIALITY

Chair: Aleksandra Lukaszewicz

AZUKI NOMURA

Towards an Aesthetics of VR: The Significance of Humanities-Based VR Research

CEMRE SU KAVALLALI

The Politics of Aesthetic Judgment in the Age of AI

TUFAN ACIL

The Mediality of AI: Artistic Practice as Immanent Critique

AESTHETIC THEORY

Chair: Jerzy Luty

WATARU SUZUKI

Jacques Rancière and the Aesthetics of Solitude

LESZEK SOSNOWSKI

The Realist's Paradox: Spots of Indeterminacy and the Intentional Nature of Metaphysical Qualities in Roman Ingarden

ADAM VRCHLABSKY

Touching Margins: Intersections of Everyday Aesthetics and Feminist Theological Aesthetics

Registration
Info point (Main entrance)

ISSUES IN AESTHETICS

Chair: Enea Bianchi

MAXIMILIAN CALIN MUNTEANU

Et in Arcadia Aedificia: Revisiting the Picturesque Aesthetic in the Contemporary Architectural-Urbanistic Acts

ANANY MISHRA

Vakrokti as Rupture: Kuntaka and the Question of Aesthetic Autonomy

ROBERTA ASTOLFI

Challenging a Customized "Normality": Politics, Aesthetics, and the Epistemic-Critical Discomfort

AKIHISA IWAKI

Creating New Circuits of Colour and Scent: Scented Acrylic Colours as an Inter-Sensory Medium

AURA AND SOMAESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Chair: Lisa Giombini

LUKÁŠ MAKKY

Paradox of Aesthetic Experience in the Concept of Aura: Natural vs. Artificial Aura and a Re-Thinking from the Perspective of Atmospheric Discourse

JERZY LUTY

The Aura of Knowing: Epistemic Encounters in the Aesthetic Experience of Visual Art

MAŁGORZATA A. SZYSZKOWSKA

Imaginary Landscapes of Today Uplifting and Transformative Character of the Aesthetic Experience in Ingarden and Steine

LAURA PALMA MAILLO

Unproductive Bodies. Somaesthetic Experiences as Resistance to Dissociation

Coffee break

NATURE AND RURAL EXPERIENCE

Chair: Paolo Furia

ELENA ROMAGNOLI

Leisure, Walking in the Nature and the Everyday: A Schillerian Perspective

TANEHISA OTABE

Being Between the World and Nature: A Challenge for Aesthetics

ALEJANDRO JIMÉNEZ DELGADO

Beyond the Landscape: Aesthetics, Neo-Ruralism and Well-Being in the Rural Environment

DWELLING AND TRANSCULTURAL PRACTICE

Chair: Rosa Fernandez

MOJCA PUNCER

Aesthetics and Multimodal Literacy in Contemporary Visual Arts

TERÉZIA POLÁKOVÁ

From Philosophy of Culture to Cultural Practice: Bildung as a Tool for Social Transformation

GLORIA LUQUE MOYA

The Aesthetics of Dwelling: Transcultural Dialogues between Chinese Processual Thought and Environmental Philosophy

13:00-14:00	Round Table E223a
14:00 – 15:00	Lunch
15:00 – 16:30	Guided city walk tour Info point (Main entrance)

Round Table

E223a

Lunch

Guided city walk tour

Info point (Main entrance)

The ICA 2026 Congress is held under the patronage of:



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**INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION FOR
AESTHETICS**

Keynote Abstracts

Aesthetic Reasons and the Personal Dimension of Aesthetic Appreciation

María José Alcaraz León

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In this presentation, I examine an apparent tension at the heart of our understanding of aesthetic judgment.

The tension arises from two widely accepted ideas. First, aesthetics is a rational or normative domain: aesthetic judgments are expected to be responsive to reasons and are assessable in terms of their correctness (Levinson 2010; Gorodeisky and Marcus 2018; Gorodeisky 2019, 2023; King 2023). Second, aesthetic appreciation is ineliminably personal: in making aesthetic judgments, agents are themselves at stake. That is, in endorsing such judgments, individuals partly constitute themselves and express their aesthetic personality, character, or sensibility (Cohen 1998; Nehamas 2007; Riggle 2015, 2017, 2021, 2024; Riggle and Hopkins 2021; Nguyen 2020; Strohl 2022).

These ideas generate a tension between two competing demands. On the one hand, the normativity of aesthetic judgment seems to require a degree of generality: judgments ought to be guided by reasons that others can, in principle, recognize and assess. On the other hand, the personal dimension of aesthetic appreciation emphasizes particularity: judgments reflect the individual's sensibility, history, and commitments. Jerrold Levinson (2010) vividly articulates this contrast by highlighting a potential conflict between deferring to “true judges” and remaining faithful to one's own aesthetic character. While deference may align with the pursuit of correctness, fidelity to one's taste may instead prioritize coherence and autonomy—even at the cost of divergence from expert judgment.

This tension parallels familiar debates about autonomy and testimony in aesthetics. It invites us to reconsider both the nature of aesthetic judgment and the respective roles of reasons and subjectivity within it. My aim is to show that these roles need not be in opposition. Rather, a proper account of the source of aesthetic reasons can preserve key aspects of both ideas while maintaining their normative force.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I clarify the two ideas in tension. Second, I develop the tension more fully, arguing that many existing views tend to privilege one side at the expense of the other, thereby rendering them difficult to reconcile. Third, I sketch an account of the normative character of aesthetic reasons that allows for some variability over time in what counts as a reason. Finally, I argue that this account preserves both the revisable, provisional character of aesthetic reasons and their genuinely normative role.

Although the proposal I develop does not fully dissolve the tension, it accommodates an important insight: the particular conditions of individual appreciators can serve as sites for the discovery and testing of new aesthetic reasons.

The Aesthetics of Care: Our Relationship with the Artifactual World

Yuriko Saito

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Current discourse on care addresses the ethics of human-human and human-nature relationships. This presentation explores two often neglected issues in care discourse: the relationship between the human and artifactual world and the role aesthetics plays in facilitating it.

Lacking consciousness, intellect, agential power, and free will, all considered hallmarks of human superiority, artifacts, which are created and operated by humans, are commonly regarded simply as things serving our needs and helping us manage our daily living. This widely accepted view has recently been challenged from various discourses, ranging from philosophy, sociology, and anthropology to religious studies, technology studies, and archaeology. They call for a paradigm change by characterizing the human-artifactual world relationship as one of interdependence and mutual support, instead of anthropocentrism justifying human dominance. This new perspective invites us to acknowledge, respect, and appreciate the care everyday things give to us. In turn, we are encouraged to enact a mutually supportive care relationship by performing their care and maintenance to ensure their longevity. Cultivating such a care relationship calls into question the practice of discarding and replacing these things indifferently, often prematurely, one of the consequences of today's consumerism and disposable culture which leads to various environmental damages.

For many of us, housework is the primary domain for practicing care and maintenance of the artifactual world, and aesthetic considerations are intimately involved in this practice. Although often denigrated as a drudgery, a necessary evil of managing domestic life, practicing care and maintenance of our domestic environment and the things within it requires aesthetic attentiveness, cultivates aesthetic sensibility, and encourages somaesthetic engagement.

This potential for developing and enriching our aesthetic life is compromised by recent technological advancements which are designed to reduce, and sometimes eliminate, housework. We may welcome the reduction of backbreaking and time-consuming housework, more efficient use of resources and energy, and a possible corrective to the long-held gender imbalance regarding housework. However, disengaging ourselves from the care and maintenance of the artifactual world incurs a heavy cost. It reduces the opportunities to enrich our aesthetic life and to enhance our aesthetic sensibility needed for care. Furthermore, by not having to work with the world which does not always conform to our wishes and expectations, we miss one of the effective means of cultivating virtues such as humility and patience, as well as ingenuity and improvisational skills. In the face of the inevitable co-existence with technological advancements, we need to work on a judicious deliberation regarding when it is appropriate to relegate care and maintenance of the world to technology and when it is essential to retain hands-on engagement with the world.

We have always been transcultural

Wolfgang Welsch

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The lecture tries to make evident that transculturality is by no means only a characteristic of the present but has de facto determined the cut of cultures since time immemorial. This is demonstrated by reference to the arts.

Examples are the Egyptian origins of Greek sculpture, the Greco-Roman inspiration of the East-Asian figurations of Buddha, the transfer of Bizet's *Carmen* to South Africa, Dürer's entanglement with Venice, Zuckmayer's demonstration of the manifold origins of a 'people', the genetic and cultural transformation of Europe by migrants from the Near East, a contemporary alliance between Death Metal and Buddhism, the national appreciation of the transnational Cloud Gate Dance Theater in Taiwan, and, finally, the transculturality of our menus.

In conclusion: Transculturality, not cultural separation has been the rule in history across continents. Our present life is transcultural to the highest degree. Transculturality is the order of the day. The problems we are facing worldwide (economic and ecological challenges, problems of poverty and human rights) can only be solved if we achieve an understanding with one another across all state and national borders. Transcultural understanding is not a pious wish or a faded idea – it is an elementary necessity of our time. Aesthetics can make a contribution to this endeavor.

Speakers Abstracts

(listed in alphabetical order by the surnames of the authors)

The Mediality of AI: Artistic Practice as Immanent Critique

Tufan Acil

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Artificial intelligence has rapidly evolved from a technological experiment into a pervasive cultural medium whose outputs—images, voices, and texts—increasingly shape contemporary aesthetic experience. Public discourse, however, tends to oscillate between fascination with the spectacle of generative AI and abstract debates concerning autonomy, authorship, and creativity. This paper proposes a methodological shift: to understand AI's role in aesthetics, attention must be directed not towards what AI produces, but towards how such production becomes possible. AI is approached as a distinctive form of mediality—a complex set of algorithmic, infrastructural, and curatorial conditions that both enable and constrain aesthetic meaning.

Understanding AI as medium rather than tool allows artistic practice to be conceptualised as a privileged site of immanent critique. Contemporary artists do not merely comment on AI from an external position; rather, they work within its computational grammar—its datasets, architectures, and characteristic failure modes—to render visible what the system ordinarily conceals: bias, opacity, instability, and the cultural assumptions embedded in algorithmic infrastructures.

A series of case studies illustrates how such immanent critique is enacted. Jake Elwes' Zizi Project (2019–ongoing) exposes the exclusions inherent in facial-recognition datasets by training generative models on queer performance data, transforming algorithmic bias into aesthetic material. Anna Ridler's Bloemenveiling (2019) reconceptualises authorship as process curation, foregrounding the entanglement of human labour, dataset construction, and machine learning. The viral emergence of Loab (2022) demonstrates how algorithmic imagery acquires meaning through distributed authorship, platform circulation, and social interpretation. Mario Klingemann's Neural Glitch (2018) and Trevor Paglen's ImageNet Roulette (2019) convert system errors and classificatory violence into epistemic events, revealing the fragility and politics of machine vision.

These examples indicate that AI-based artistic practice does not simply mirror technological developments; rather, it produces theoretical insight. Art becomes an epistemology of mediation, disclosing how intelligence, perception, and creativity are culturally constructed within computational systems. Such practices reveal forms of situated, embodied, and processual knowledge about AI that exceed the capacities of theoretical analysis alone.

By foregrounding mediality and immanent critique, the paper advances a conceptual framework for understanding AI not as a substitute for artistic agency or a threat to aesthetic value, but as a domain in which new modes of reflection, resistance, and imagination can emerge.

The Uncanny as an Aesthetic Feeling

Yamazaki Akari

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The uncanny is a kind of anxiety accompanied by uncertainty about what is real, triggered by unfamiliar, terrible, or weird things. However, this feeling can also be evoked from the appreciation of artworks or by strangely beautiful things. This presentation aims to argue for the possibility of the uncanny as an aesthetic feeling. By clarifying Freud's argument and addressing its weakness, it shows that the discussion he left unsettled can be further developed.

Freud in 'The Uncanny' (das Unheimliche, 1919) defines this feeling as a function of familiarity and unfamiliarity. According to him, the uncanny arises from the resurfacing of something that was once familiar in our life but was repressed, among things that provoke anxiety. This theory primarily analyses individual real-life experiences as psychological phenomena from the psychoanalytic point of view. On the other hand, Freud notes that in the realm of fiction there are many possibilities of creating uncanny effects that do not exist in real life. Nevertheless, he does not discuss this issue in detail concerning the uncanny within the fictional world created by the author, because he excludes aesthetic discussions from his psychoanalytic ones.

Heidegger in *Being and Time* (Sein und Zeit, 1927) links the uncanny to "not-at-home" (das Un-zuhause). References to the uncanny appear in his analysis of "anxiety" (Angst), one of the fundamental state of mind. He describes as "anxiety" the situation in which Dasein is thrown into the world as an individual being and made to stand out. When he observes that "in anxiety one feels 'uncanny'" this feeling is a primordial phenomenon that threatens the comfortable familiarity of being at home in this world.

If the Freudian position involves thinking about the uncanny from the individual's experiences related to specific objects, the Heidegger senses it in a more subjective framework of the nature of humankind. These two notions become mutually complementary when regarded as originating from different conceptions of feeling. This presentation demonstrates that the question of the uncanny associated with the pleasure evoked by artworks can be effectively handled by shifting our focus from individuals or specific works toward Dasein's being in the world.

Authentic Self-Creation Through the Encounter with Art

Matteo Andre

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An emerging research field in aesthetics is existential aesthetics (Maes 2022), which explores how artworks may have existential significance either by addressing existential questions or by affecting people's lives in important ways. This paper places itself in this field by advancing the claim that art may contribute to the realization of the appreciator's authenticity, understood in a robust sense: not merely as adherence to one's values but as the adoption of a system of commitments that one has agentially shaped rather than passively absorbed (Varga 2012). I will argue for this thesis in three main steps. 1) I begin by elucidating the robust interpretation of authenticity. 2) I then respond to sceptical objections concerning the idea of agential self-creation (Kemp 2015), by drawing especially on Callard's (2018) account of aspiration. 3) Finally, I illustrate the ways in which art may promote a person's authenticity, by examining four considerations. a) Artworks present unfamiliar and thought-provoking situations that may induce moral disorientation (Mikkonen 2021), and hence prompt the appreciator to critically consider the value system they have inherited from external sources. b) By providing what-it-is-like knowledge (Puolakka 2022), art offers a wide variety of experiences and alternative possibilities for behaviour that may inspire a person to reorient their life in a given direction. c) Artworks provide a dimension of playfulness (Riggle 2020), in which the appreciator may distance themselves from their commitments and explore different (moral) perspectives. d) Aesthetic value and artistic beauty may play a role in the realization of one's authenticity, by constituting instances of external reasons that the appreciator may appeal to in sustaining their aspirational process towards a new self-created identity (Aumann 2022).

A Typology of the Concept of “Strangeness” in Our Urban Everyday Life

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This presentation proposes a typology of experiences of “strangeness” in everyday urban life. According to Arto Haapala, we can explain our existential relationship through the concepts of familiarity and strangeness (Haapala, 2005). Strangeness is what we encounter when we visit a city for the first time. When we experience strangeness, our senses become sharpened, and we appreciate the aesthetic features of the environment. In contrast, familiarity is rooted in our attachment to a place cultivated through living there. In daily life, we usually do not deliberately engage our senses, yet we nevertheless find aesthetic pleasure in leading a stable everyday life within our familiar surroundings.

However, the city changes rapidly. Moreover, many cities are so large that even long-time residents have numerous areas they have never visited. Thus, urban dwellers continue to experience not only familiarity but also a persistent sense of strangeness toward the city. Indeed, Haapala himself notes that urban life tends to preserve a higher degree of strangeness alongside familiarity (Haapala, 2003). However, strangeness is not a uniform phenomenon. This presentation explores several axes for a typology of strangeness.

First, we can distinguish between spatial and temporal forms of strangeness. The construction of a new building or the creation of natural spaces such as parks within the city generates experiences of spatial strangeness. Practices such as tactical urbanism, which temporarily transform the use of urban space, or natural disasters, which alter the rhythm of everyday life, may produce experiences of temporal strangeness.

Second, we can distinguish whether the source of strangeness lies in a single object or in a network of objects. It is easy to imagine feeling strange toward a new building. However, we can also imagine creating a new spatial connection between two familiar places by taking an unfamiliar route between them. The latter is an example of strangeness emerging from a network of objects.

Third, it is also important to examine whether a given strangeness arises from nature, from human activity, or from a hybrid of both. Especially in cities—commonly regarded as artificial environments—it is crucial to consider the qualitative differences between strangeness produced by natural and human factors, as this sheds light on the aesthetic and experiential quality of urban life.

In conclusion, by mapping these axes, the presentation proposes a typology of strangeness characterizing our everyday lives in the city.

The Aesthetic Rhythm of Care

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Everyday life unfolds between the quiet pull of routine and the intensity of spontaneous inspiration; between the stability that grounds us and the creativity that enliven us. This paper explores this movement, which I call the routine-charisma spectrum, as a way of understanding care and attention through an aesthetic lens. Care here is not a clinical concept but a practice of living attentively and creatively within the rhythms of ordinary experience.

Considering Richard Shusterman's somaesthetics, Yuriko Saito's everyday aesthetics and Arnold Berleant's aesthetic engagement, the paper lies within the contemporary debates on the aesthetic dimension of life. However, it moves beyond these approaches by proposing the routine-charisma spectrum as a dynamic and tactical model rather than a descriptive one. It focuses on the oscillation itself, the shifting balance between stability and intensity, as the domain of aesthetic meaning.

This resonates with Donald Winnicott's view of play as the transitional space, as well as with Mihály Csíkszentmihályi's concept of flow. Both, in their own language, describe an aliveness that arises from the interplay between structure and spontaneity, something that Schiller called the reconciliation of form and impulse. Moreover, the paper also explores the relational psychoanalytic thought (e.g., Jessica Benjamin, Stephen Mitchell), which sees therapy as a process of mutual creation, aliveness often being the creation itself.

Furthermore, the experience colloquially described as "ADHD", rather than the clinical condition, where attention flows between immersion and dispersion, steadiness and excitement is an experience that resembles this approach. From a philosophical standpoint, it reveals a heightened sensitivity to the aesthetic texture of existence. To live with such sensitivity is to engage in a continuous process of composition, shaping experience so that the repetition does not dull it but also so that the spontaneity does not overwhelm it.

Seen in this way, the aesthetics of care becomes the art of composing a liveable rhythm. It is about awareness, flexibility and creativity in how one inhabits time, space and attention. Care becomes a form of aesthetic practice, a way of making life feel coherent and alive.

Visual Representations of Top Surgeries as a Care Practice

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This paper proposes a situated analysis of visual representations of gender-reaffirming top surgeries, examining how community-based photographic practices contribute to affective archives of care. This contribution draws on a theoretical framework combining visual studies (Mirzoeff, 2011), trans* studies (Halberstam, 2018; Snorton, 2017), archive studies (Gopinath, 2018; Carter, 2006), and feminist/decolonial critiques (Lugones, 2019), and is anchored in the axes Aesthetics and Gender or Aesthetics of Care. The analysis I propose focuses on a visual corpus constructed upon images produced by members of the trans* community, between 1996 and 2025, including works by Loren Cameron, Jess T. Dugan, Wynne Neilly, Lindsay Perryman and Nanténé Traoré. These images, often taken in intimate environments, are quite distinct from the ones produced within biomedical visual regimes (usually serving a before/after teleological narrative). Indeed, by questioning the colonial and cisnormative history of photographic classification, and its shaping of the way marginalized bodies are made (in)visible, they can constitute a political self-representation practice.

To support this reflection, this paper uses a comparative visual analysis method : clinical before/after images (usually serial and ultra-standardized) are put in contrast with portraits emerging from the trans* community. The latter helps conceptualize an embodied practice of care, in Tronto's sense : an understanding of care as a deeply political and ethical structure (1993). When put in perspective with Gopinath's thoughts on queer diasporic archives (2018), I argue that the photographs studied here, while they surely capture the physical body transformation, first and foremost reflect the emotional and social ecologies enclosing gender-reaffirming surgery healing, thus constituting a powerful counter-archive. The frontal portraits of Cameron, Neilly's deeply intimate self-documentation or the community photographic practices of Traoré, when put together, show how visibility can be negotiated and affectively charged rather than imposed.

Furthermore, the top-surgery images studied here can be conceptualized as embodied sites of aesthetic resistance, especially when focusing on the visual motive constituted by the characteristic scars of the procedure. Indeed, they offer an alternative to dominant visual regimes by reappropriating the torso, which has often been used as a classification or fetishisation tool in visual colonial history. These visual practices contribute to the constitution of a living trans* memory, as fragile as it is powerful, in which archives aren't static anymore, but embodied and co-constructed through care, therefore revealing the potentialities of a certain trans* gaze.

Challenging a Customized “Normality”: Politics, Aesthetics, and the Epistemic-Critical Discomfort

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Even if aesthetics is usually associated with beauty or ugliness, or with our personal judgments related to them, it would be a mistake to underestimate its political role. My aim is to highlight how aesthetics—as referred to the human capacity to engage with “sensory knowledge” (Baumgarten 2007 (1750), §1)—enables us to interpret but also challenge our socio-political world. Through our aesthetic experiences, we define our world in a way comparable to Kant’s schematism. Developing this with Rancière, aesthetics also defines socio-political spaces and roles. This epistemic function is complemented by a critical one: through aesthetics we can confront our world—where “world” refers also to the Lacanian Symbolic, the hegemonic norms that regulate social life. This confrontation is triggered by a reaction to something that causes us discomfort. Yet even before we intellectually elaborate this discomfort, it is already the discomfort itself that initiates the confrontation: as depending on something within us that has been provoked by our sense, the beginning of such confrontation(s) is aesthetic. However, today it is crucial to recognize that this process of definition and confrontation is also shaped by hyper-individualized (Rodilosso 2024), and thus “pleasant”, digital entertainment/information bubbles (Nguyen 2020; Pariser 2012), forged by customized algorithms (Koster 2020). By shaping political opinion and general knowledge, our customized digital experience influences our definition of the socio-political world and reinforce it against “other” Weltanschauungen. Although this can empower marginalized and/or oppressed groups, it can also make it more difficult questioning our “pleasant” normality. “Normality” here refers to that which conceals the borders of our society or bubble. These borders divide between what is perceived or defined as normal and what is not (Agamben 2005; Esposito 2004; Foucault 1965). When the clash between competing filter bubbles makes these borders visible, we become aware of a “beyond” of our normality. This is uncomfortable, because it confronts us with an “other normality” that for us makes no sense. It is to regain this sense that we should take seriously the borders that have now become visible and question our socio-political world as structured by them. The epistemic-critical power of aesthetics compels us to question “our” normality and frees us from its heteronomous pressure. This way, our common sense can develop into a good sense (Gramsci) capable of intellectually developing our private, aesthetic reactions into a political critical discourse.

Reconceptualizing Street Art: Done, Doing, and Deed

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In “Capitalist and Anti-Capitalist Placemaking Through Street Art,” Quill Kukla provides a comprehensive overview of the contemporary practices of street art. While acknowledging the heterogeneity of street art as both a resistant and a commercialized practice, Kukla’s approach tends to reduce street art to what is done—the visual artifacts that emerge from these practices. This paper challenges Kukla’s descriptivist take by introducing a more nuanced theoretical framework that distinguishes between the “done,” the “doing,” and the “deed” in street art, concepts we draw from Clark’s (1989) ontology of action.

While Kukla rightly observes that street art plays a significant role in both anti-capitalist and capitalist placemaking, we argue that the critical subversive potential of street art lies not only in its material outcomes (the murals, tags, and installations) but also in the specific achievements—or “deeds”—that these practices aim to realize in public spaces. The “deed,” in our conceptualization, refers to the counterhegemonic use of urban spaces, a subversion of the normative rules governing public space. This distinction clarifies why some forms of street art (particularly those motivated by resistance or protest) cannot be understood purely in terms of aesthetic objects or performances but must also be appreciated for the specific intervention they embody.

Building on Neufeld’s (2014) insight that ontological questions belong to critical evaluation, we show that Kukla’s analysis overlooks this important ontological distinction. By collapsing the “done” and the “doing” into a single category, Kukla’s approach risks erasing the normative force that has historically defined street art as a political act of resistance. We also critique the broad inclusion of works that align with capitalist interests, such as corporate murals, within the same category as works of social and political protest. Our approach offers a more accurate framework for understanding street art’s agency, particularly its ability to challenge existing hierarchies of public space.

Ultimately, we propose that street art should be appreciated not just as a cultural phenomenon or a series of visual objects, but as a specific practice defined by its capacity to enact subversive deeds. In doing so, we open the door for a more robust understanding of street art that preserves its counter-hegemonic and transformative potential, emphasising the critical distinction between art that decorates and art that disrupts.

Manifestos as Performative Gestures of Care

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In an era of escalating social, ecological, and political crises, performativity has become a contested concept, often co-opted by neoliberal discourses to promote individual adaptability over collective transformation. This paper explores how performance art practices centred on maintenance, care and innovative imageries—acts of repair, preservation, and everyday sustenance—offer laboratories for an emancipatory social collectiveness. Drawing on Richard Shusterman’s somaesthetics, which reframes bodily habits as sites of aesthetic and ethical transformation (Shusterman 2012), alongside Yuriko Saito’s aesthetics of everyday life (Saito 2007) and the ethics of care (Tronto 1993; Gilligan 1982), I argue that these practices politicize invisible labour, fostering relational endurance against capitalist recuperation.

Neuroaesthetics and Landscape Aesthetics

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Neuroaesthetics is a new field of study that combines various disciplines: it derives from the combination of experimental research in psychology, neuroscience, and evolutionary biology with philosophical aesthetics. The term was coined by neurobiologist Semir Zeki of the College of London, Berkeley, in 1999 and first appeared in the article “Inner Vision: An Exploration of Art and the Brain,” published by scholars Zeki and Lamb. In that article, neuroscientists attempted to provide an empirical perspective on the aesthetics experience. In this regard, neuroaesthetics can be defined as the study of the neural basis of the production and appreciation of art (and more recently, landscape) through the use of neuroscientific techniques such as brain imaging. One of the most explored theme of the neuroaesthetics is the concept of “perception.” Scholars such as James Gibson have made significant contributions to environmental perception and the human-environment relationship, but the mechanism perception doesn’t appear so clear or universal. Starting from an analysis of Gibson’s theory of perception, we will investigate the perception of landscape and environment through some recent proposals such as the anthropological one of Tim Ingold and the ecological one of George Bateson.

Performing Care: Moral Deliberation and Aesthetic Embodiment

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Aesthetics of care claims that care is an ethical and aesthetic practice (Saito 2022, 1). As something that is practiced, care is embodied in behaviours and in the design of objects and environments that express and encourage it, or, on the contrary, that diminish and oppress it. Care aesthetics is the aesthetics of our relationships with objects and environments but especially with humans, seeking new forms of sociability, raising empathy, interdependence, equality and reciprocity. Thus, the aesthetics of care not only maintains that the expression and communication of care are constitutive to it, but also that, for this reason, they can nourish those relationships and even orientate them in the right way. Since care relationships take place in our ordinary life, aesthetics of care is seen as part of everyday life aesthetics. However, theory of performance has taken interest in care as a practice to cultivate and encourage in participative and collaborative artistic practices such as applied theatre and politically engaged performance.

My paper uses Maurice Hamington's (2020) idea that care can be described as a sort of "improvisational moral performance" in line with Josep Corbí's (2023) characterization of care as a "dialectical activity" for exploring the kind of moral deliberation that underlies the practice of caring and that is tied to its aesthetic embodiment. Hamington uses the model of theatrical improvisation to analyse care actions, where decisions about what to do and how to do it are made without a script and in attentive response to spontaneous interaction with the audience—yet not arbitrarily, but rather displaying an "emergent normativity" and skills acquired through habit, or rehearsal. Corbí explains care as an activity "inspired by a telos" that does not separate the goal from the quality of the actions that lead to it in a constitutive way, which requires its (aesthetic) expression and our ability to recognize how certain gestures, words, or behavioural nuances enhance or diminish care.

In both cases, caring is an ethical commitment that is aesthetically embodied and requires equally aesthetic training. This proposal can serve as a basis for applied theatre projects that seek to inspire relationships of good care in everyday life. Furthermore, I believe it allows us to discern the relevance of the aesthetic character of care in comparison to other human practices or activities, moral ones included, which can likewise be embodied; and it can also help counter possible scepticism regarding the possibility that care can be nurtured through aesthetic means.

From Everyday Objects to Everyday Aesthetics and Back Again

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My contribution aims to legitimize the intertwining of two art-philosophical theories – Arthur Danto’s ontological theory of art and everyday aesthetics –, united by an interest in the question of what separates art from non-art and how everyday objects are experienced in an art or non-art context.

Sixty years have passed since Arthur Danto first asked the question of indiscernible counterparts (Danto, 1964), which became a cornerstone for both his later theoretical endeavours and further developments in philosophy of art in general. Namely: what distinguishes an artwork from a perceptually identical object that is not art? In other words: what distinguishes an artwork from an everyday object? Danto was, of course, primarily interested in the case of the readymade, however since then contemporary art has both extended and further complicated this classic notion through new practices that appropriate everyday life and invoke the opposition between art and non-art: e.g. participatory art (Bishop, 2012), relational aesthetics (Bourriaud, 2002), socially engaged art (see Muller, 2023).

Yet there is another aesthetics framework that holds everyday objects and processes in high regard, which could be considered one of the liveliest current movements in the field: everyday aesthetics (see, for example, Saito, 2024). The movement poses a challenge to the privileged position art is given in aesthetic experience and instead aims to widen the scope of aesthetics by taking everyday phenomena into aesthetic consideration.

What I propose is to turn the vector in the other direction and connect everyday aesthetics back with art. The aim is by no means to downplay the inclusive and scope-widening goals of everyday aesthetics, but rather to search for a way how everyday aesthetics might supplement an ontology of art (and thus non-art). My interest lies in the fundamental tension between the Dantoean position and everyday aesthetics – while Danto examines how everyday objects become artworks, everyday aesthetics reflects on the way everyday objects are and how they are experienced. In most cases, art is encountered and experienced as a non-everyday object, yet the cases of the readymade and other art and non-art blending genres demand a more nuanced view, as they lay on the intersection and are able to be experienced as both art and non-art, thus perhaps being something else altogether. This provides an opportunity to formulate a new understanding of art that – among other things – bridges a conventional framework with an experience-based one.

Videogame Aesthetics: Perspectives on Immersion, Symbol, and Representation

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This work proposes an aesthetic investigation of videogames, especially RPGs, drawing on elements of aesthetic theory from Susanne Langer's *Feeling and Form* (1953). The research seeks to understand how these games, through narrative, interactivity, and the construction of fictional worlds, function as artistic forms capable of expressing feelings and organizing human experience. The study offers a historical overview of the development of RPGs and the emergence of mechanisms such as complex protagonism, moral choices, branching narratives, and multiple endings, which shift the player from a passive spectator to an active participant in the work. It then mobilizes Langer's concepts of symbol, presentational form, and virtual experience to examine how digital games structure aesthetic perception and generate a "presentational symbol of feeling," a mode of expression that becomes evident in interactive systems that shape the player's temporal and emotional engagement with the game world. Examples from the *Persona* franchise, developed by Atlus, illustrate how narrative structure, visual aesthetics, musical motifs, and player agency converge to create simulated environments that heighten emotional resonance, ethical reflection, and formative experiences. The work argues that such videogames broaden the contemporary artistic field by incorporating interactivity as a symbolic and expressive dimension in itself, demonstrating how aesthetic form in the digital era emerges from the dynamic interplay between rules, narrative, and player action, ultimately establishing these games as meaningful artistic artifacts capable of communicating emotional patterns of life and cultivating reflective engagement.

Matter, Memory, and the Political Imaginary: Rethinking Aesthetics of Commemoration

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In the contemporary moment, aesthetics exceed traditional frameworks of sensing and perception, increasingly becoming a political apparatus that configures the relationship between the material and the immaterial, the real and the imaginary, the present and the absent. Drawing on Jacques Rancière's philosophical concepts of the distribution of the sensible and on theories of new materialism, this paper examines how aesthetics have been used as a key mechanism through which we re-interpret collective identities. These conceptions of collective identity are being transformed and interpreted particularly within the domain of memorial architecture.

The contemporary moment represents a complex condition of the world in which physical spaces intertwine with symbolic and affective fields, leading to the understanding that memorial architecture can no longer be viewed statically, as a materialised past. In this sense, it is constituted as a site where architectural materiality encounters various narratives and affective layers of the social. Theories of new materialism allow memorial objects to be conceived as vibrant matter, not as static entities but as active agents that produce affects, initiate interpretive and imaginative processes, and participate in political struggles over the shaping of shared memory.

Modern memorial architecture avoids traditional canons of political symbolism, through abstraction, it chooses what remains visible and represented and what must be imagined. The paper argues that traditional memorial practices, self-determined with precise socio-political references endanger their lifespan in a reshaped social context, while a monument with an abstract expression prolongs its lifespan by separating itself from a certain political position. In this way, we are re-examining how aesthetic regimes participate in the political definition of memory: through spatial relations, materials, sound, and perceptual and affective dynamics.

The analysis encompasses contemporary expressions in memorial design from minimalist spatial-affective interventions and participatory commemorative spaces, aiming to highlight the contemporary position of aesthetics and its role as a political ontology of memory. Memorial architecture thus becomes a space in which the material and the immaterial mutually condition one another, intertwine, and produce forms of collective remembrance, identity, and social imagination.

Ultimately, this paper highlights the necessity of incorporating and developing new modes of aesthetic reading of memorial architecture, which are essential for understanding contemporary politics of memory. In today's complex moment, memorial architecture cannot be understood through a traditionalist lens of one-dimensional representation; instead, it requires engagement with the network of relations between material traces, political orientations, imaginative practices, and affective currents.

Surprising Wit and Perspective of Humour: Jan Patočka on the Comic

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Although Czech philosopher Jan Patočka deals with the issue of the comic rather episodically, in drafts and occasional studies which have been little noticed so far, he approaches it in a consistent manner that allows us to describe the main features of his conception. When examining Patočka's understanding of the comic, it is necessary to recall the contexts of his thought: phenomenological theory of subjectivity and poetics. In general, the paper will point out that the basis of his conception is the idea of incongruity, which Patočka, however, relates to the human condition in reality. The comic is based on the inadequacy of man in relation to reality: man intends, but things are different. Man is "one-sided" and "finite", and contradiction is the inevitable result of this one-sidedness and finitude. The comic thus lies in inadequacy, for example, the inadequacy of human goals and the results of human activity, the inadequacy of causes and consequences, or the inadequacy of the actor and the environment. However, Patočka suggests that only inadequacy associated with naivety or self-deception is ridiculous. This ridiculous inadequacy can therefore intensify into conceited short-sightedness or naive stupidity. The comic thus lies in recognizing the overlooked contradiction. Such recognition also corresponds to the aspect of "surprise", "suddenness", or "unexpectedness", that Patočka emphasizes. The paper will also highlight that, according to Patočka, the recognition of this human inadequacy in the comic brings relief, the negativity of this inadequacy is accepted positively. Recognizing inadequacy in the comic is understood as an "extension" of the "limitations" of human existence. This emphasis on both surprising and relieving contradiction as the basis of the comic is elaborated by Patočka in his reflections on the nature of wit and humour, in which he draws primarily on the views of I. Kant, A. Schopenhauer, S. Kierkegaard, and H. Höffding. Patočka points out that the comic is always associated with a particular kind of unfulfilled intention, wit is based on the disappointment of expectations, and humour is based on insight into human limitations and reconciliation with them. The presence of relief caused by the comic is particularly evident in wit, while in humour this relief takes on a more general character, which consists in a "dialectical" view of human existence. The paper will point out that Patočka's reflections also concern the physical aspect of the comic: a humorous perspective is inconceivable without laughter or a smile.

The Aesthetics of Techno-Decadence: Taste and Smell in the Contemporary Arts and Avant-garde Gastronomy

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This talk explores how contemporary artistic practices engaging food, taste, and smell through technology reflect what we call techno-decadence. Techno-decadent gastronomy can be understood as an evolution of the so-called ‘techno-emotional cuisine,’ the avant-garde of haute cuisine stemming from ‘molecular gastronomy’ which since the 1980s has intensified the emotional role of highly designed experiences and engineered food. However, techno-decadent gastronomy particularly stresses the emotional role of technology itself as an aesthetic vehicle for embodying excess and its decline. Rather than celebrating sensationalism, techno-decadence explores its dark sides, integrating ecological crisis and social inequality into the hedonistic dimension of sophisticated dining experiences.

We take Des Esseintes’s decadent and excessive gastronomy in Joris-Karl Huysmans’s *À rebours* as the archetype of today’s hyper-aestheticization of creative meals. His culinary practices and fantasies resonate with contemporary artistic experimentations that, by means of refined technology, design immersive, multi-sensory experiences centred on taste and smell. Here, technology aims at transcending nature in favour of artifice, yet remaining bound to the very materiality it seeks to overcome.

Contemporary projects such as The Ghost Food Truck by Miriam Simun and Miriam Songester, mEat me by Theresa Schubert, and the mixed reality dining and food installations by Bompas & Parr will be used to outline the similarities and differences in this gastro-aesthetic constellation. They all use technological devices to stage encounters with synthetic and radically transformed food, or to create holograms of a cornucopia of foods facing extinction or reserved for the privileged. In attempting to fabricate taste and smell artificially, these cases expose the environmental crises and ethical dilemmas of contemporary food systems. What emerges is not a triumphant victory of technology over nature, but rather a form of critical hyperbole and a sarcastic commentary on a world that resembles that fin de siècle of over a century ago. We will explore both the potentials and limitations of taste and smell in technologically mediated aesthetic practices. Within this framework, the traditional marginalization of these senses is transformed into a site of resistance and speculative fabulations (Haraway 2016), revealing the aesthetic and ecological stakes of our techno-decadent present.

"The New Abnormal": Aesthetic Possibilities of the Continuous Experience of Terror

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The continuous experience of terror in wartime Ukraine produces a new aesthetic condition that reorganizes perception, embodiment, and urban life. "New abnormal" (Polek), chronic exposure to violence and acoustic terror, anticipatory fear establishes a mode of living in which the ordinary becomes inseparable from threat, and everyday gestures acquire life-preserving intentionality.

Daily routines transform into micro-rituals of survival. Bedtime is preceded by assembling "transition kits," choosing sleep locations safe from shattered glass, preparing routes to shelters, and constructing interior niches as improvised protective spaces. These practices form an emergent aesthetics of care and endurance, where mundane gestures are suffused with existential significance.

The experience differs fundamentally from established theories of terror as spectacle. Here, civilians do not observe violence from a distance but inhabit its interior. One becomes an uncredited participant in an unfolding scene—a future film in which today's "extras" enact survival rather than witness representation. While aesthetic discourse often examines how cinema stages terror, the Ukrainian condition reveals the inverse: the phenomenology of being inside the spectacle, where aesthetic distance collapses entirely.

Urban space is reconfigured through heightened perception. The city becomes a map of safety and vulnerability: echoing "corridors" suitable for drone trajectories, and zones vulnerable to falling debris all enter into a recalibrated sensory awareness ("Shahed-facing side of the building"). This new urban engagement is inseparable from care practices. Shattered windows in buildings are immediately covered with plywood, not only as pragmatic protection but as an act of communal care in Yuriko Saito's sense—an aesthetic of everyday maintenance, repair, and resilience.

Theoretical frameworks illuminate these dynamics. Berleant's negative sublime articulates states where terror overwhelms perceptual capacities, while Kant's notion of the monstrous captures experiences that paralyze imagination and demand moral rather than aesthetic engagement. Contemporary Ukraine inhabits a space where the sublime slides into the monstrous, yet where life continues through adaptive routines, care-based practices, and reoriented urban inhabitation.

At the same time, the continuous visibility of violence—via drone footage, media circulation, and social witnessing—links Ukrainian realities to what Appelbaum and others describe as the theatricality and temporal modalities of terror. Terror becomes part of everyday temporality: something that is happening, has happened, and happens again, merging with quotidian rhythms. Following Battani and Mankel, Ukrainian civilian experience exemplifies a shift from the spectacular to the quotidian type of terror, where attacks resemble ordinary accidents while producing radically destabilizing effects.

“Why keep it?” Emancipatory Potential and Aesthetics of Care in Collecting and Preserving Everyday Objects

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Why do we keep/preserve/collect certain everyday objects? This is the question that multidisciplinary trans-Mapuche artist Sebastiana Calfuqueo (Santiago, Chile, 1991) attempts to address in her work “¿Chumal elkaniengeal?” (“Why keep it?” in Mapudungun). Oscillating between the visual and narrative registers, her proposal, presented in 2023 at the Chilean Museum of Pre-Columbian Art, questions the preservation and, in particular, the care of certain everyday objects from the Mapuche culture, an indigenous community present in the southern territories of Chile and Argentina. Calfuqueo is particularly interested in those objects that have been removed from their everyday uses to be preserved and potentially exhibited as museum pieces. Based on her work, this paper aims to explore the aesthetic potential contained in everyday objects through their connections to the lives and bodies of those who once owned/used them in their daily routines. Through a discussion situated between the ethics and aesthetics of care (Saito, 2022), the objective is to reflect on the “being-in-the-world” of everyday objects that have become items for collection and preservation. Thus, the proposed analysis is grounded in three conceptual axes. The first two focus on exploring the aesthetic connections between these objects as “prostheses” (Preciado, 2000) – or sensitive extensions of corporeality – and as “symbolic bodies” (Groys, 2022) of Mapuche culture, in an individual and collective sense. The third conceptual axis is proposed in terms of aesthetic “atmospheres” (Böhme, 2020) to rethink the production of aesthetic experiences. We maintain, then, that what operates in this “transition” from the everyday to the collection is, on the one hand, a “prosthetic separation” from the symbolic body and, on the other, an “atmospheric change” in the constitution of a different aesthetic experience. Calfuqueo’s work can be analysed, therefore, as the activation of a critical and emancipatory potential, situated in the very material of the pieces that have become objects of conservation, in order to rethink an aesthetic of care in connection with bodies and their atmospheres.

From Origin to a Future of the Aesthetics of Care: A Pragmatist Reconstruction

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This article reconstructs and analyses the idea of an “aesthetics of care,” understood in its full complexity through its conceptual location at the intersection of ethics, aesthetics, and, ultimately, the philosophy of the museum. After distinguishing the main meanings in which the notion has been employed, the paper presents a conception of the aesthetics of care that is not confined to the interpersonal dimension. It further argues for its relevance to the ethical–aesthetic experience fostered by museological institutions in the broad sense.

The first section traces the origin of the current discussion to one of the foundational texts of care ethics, Nel Noddings’ *Caring*, focusing on her theorization of a receptive–intuitive attitude toward objects and ideas. This aspect, largely neglected in later literature, has been overshadowed by an emphasis on interpersonal relations. Concerning the ethical significance of this attitude, the paper highlights Noddings’ ambivalence and critically engages with her position. It then examines subsequent theoretical reformulations of this intuition, especially those proposed by James Thompson and Yuriko Saito, emphasizing their different emphases with respect to the relation to objects.

The paper then explores the possibilities of a pragmatist aesthetics of care. By highlighting the affinities between Deweyan philosophy and care ethics and aesthetics, it analyses the consonances between the pragmatist conception of aesthetics and the relation of care, revealing the ethical qualities of aesthetic experience and the aesthetic dimensions of ethical experience.

Finally, the paper concludes with an embryonic theoretical intuition regarding the relevance of the aesthetics of care for museum theory. Challenging the theoretical stance of John Dewey and Richard Shusterman against the museological institution, the paper argues that the contemporary museum can generate an aesthetic–ethical experience of care. In this way, the claims of care theory are grounded in pragmatist aesthetics and acquire a transformative significance for philosophical and museological theory.

Beyond Aestheticization: Everyday Aesthetics, Negativity, and the Aesthetics of Care

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Beyond Aestheticization: Everyday Aesthetics, Negativity, and the Aesthetics of Care

One of the traditional claims of Everyday Aesthetics is that a lack of aesthetic awareness prevents us from perceiving the constant influence that the aesthetic exerts on our daily lives (Saito, 2007). However, it is worth asking whether this claim still holds today. Permanent exposure to screens and the digital world is silently transforming our experience of the everyday. Are we now more attentive to the aesthetic — or, paradoxically, more accustomed to an aesthetic without perception?

Social media has fostered an unprecedented aesthetic awareness and an obsession with perfection, pleasantness, and consumability. This trend prompts a pressing philosophical question: how does exposure to millions of images shape the way we look, desire, and inhabit the world? Moreover, contemporary aestheticization (Lipovetsky, 2013) has penetrated private life, domestic spaces, and ordinary practices. Even care and household tasks are romanticized, erasing negativity, flattening experience, and eliminating the tension that makes aesthetic judgment possible (Saito, 2017).

Against this backdrop, returning to Yuriko Saito's proposal becomes more necessary than ever. Her Everyday Aesthetics does not seek to beautify the ordinary, but to cultivate a genuine aesthetic perception attentive to the whole of experience, including its negative aspects: the imperfect, the worn, the unfinished, the uncomfortable. Such an approach does not disguise reality but accompanies and interprets it, restoring the complexity of aesthetic experience.

Beyond analysis, this paper emphasizes the intrinsic link between aesthetics and ethics. Our aesthetic choices are never neutral: they have material, ecological, and social consequences. For Saito, aesthetics should not be reduced to personal branding but understood as a means of contributing to the common good. Aesthetic sensitivity thus becomes a form of responsibility: a way of inhabiting the world attentively (Cascales, 2025).

This perspective naturally leads to the Aesthetics of Care (Saito, 2022). Caring involves attending to how we act: to the sensible form of our actions, the atmospheres we create, and the effects those actions produce in others and in the environment. To care, in this sense, is to shape the world with deliberation and delicacy: repairing what is damaged, supporting what is fragile, and improving what already exists by cultivating and refining it. Care thus reconnects aesthetic engagement with ethical responsibility.

In a world obsessed with producing pleasing images, this paper argues that aesthetics can encourage an interiority expressed through gestures of attention, care, respect, and presence, offering not an escape from reality, but a more grounded and responsible way of perceiving and living it.

Against Counter-Stories: Aesthetic and Political Resistance

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In an era marked by polarized discourse and the narrowing of political possibility, this paper turns to the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur to uncover a form of resistance grounded in aesthetics. I argue that Ricoeur's concept of poetics—particularly his account of narrative emplotment—provides a critical framework for ethical and political struggle through the re-description of reality.

Rather than relying on a simplistic opposition between truth and falsehood, I begin with the hermeneutic insight that any event can generate multiple, competing narrative constructions. This hermeneutic openness becomes a political battleground in which dominant powers deploy “counter-stories” to obscure truth and consolidate control. Against such manoeuvres, the poetic function of language emerges not as decoration but as a creative force. I argue that in such conditions, the aim of narrative resistance is not merely to disclose an objective truth but to pursue a teleological good. The central claim is that, against these counter-stories, we must work to craft and circulate ethically and politically better stories. In this sense, poetics—or aesthetics more broadly—is not an escape from the political but a primary mode of ethical world-building. I try to show that Ricoeurian poetics offers a vital strategy of resistance, one that reactivates the human capacity to imagine—and thereby to construct—a more just future.

Negative Filmmaking: a Study on the Aesthetic Affordances of the Film Set

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During the filming of the pilot episode of *Twin Peaks*, the set designer at the time, Frank Silva, accidentally appeared in the reflection of a mirror on screen. Instead of reshooting the scene, director David Lynch decided to keep the “accident” and turned it into a central narrative element: Silva became “Killer BOB,” the antagonist of the series. Accidents and unexpected events have always been integral to filmmaking, and a director’s work often consists in responding to them creatively. The aim of this paper is to interpret this constant feature of filmmaking through the negative philosophy of Theodor W. Adorno. In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno emphasises the crucial relation between the artwork and “its own other,” insisting that in works of art this otherness is never suppressed: <<To exist, their purposefulness (of the works of art) must be suspended through its other.>> (Adorno [2002]: 101) The unforeseen appearance of Silva on screen disrupts the artwork’s purposefulness, and it is precisely through this suspension that the work realises itself in its “completeness,” through the manifestation of its relation to its “otherness.” The film set, beyond being one of the most distinctive elements of filmmaking as compared to other artistic practices, can be understood as an “aesthetic field” (Berleant [1970]) whose boundaries are constantly redrawn by the contingent emergence of different agencies and unexpected “correspondences” (Ingold [2013]). On set, the boundary between “inside” and “outside” is never clearly or permanently fixed; it is precisely within this unstable threshold that the relationship between the director’s project and the negativity arising from the process can be examined through the lens of Adornian aesthetics. By interpreting filmmaking as a site where negativity operates as an aesthetic force, this paper contributes to rethinking artistic creation as a dialectical negotiation between intention and contingency, doing and undergoing, the diegetic and the non-diegetic, control and uncontrollability, the movie set and life itself.

Overcoming the Fiction Generated Between Seeing and Interpreting Art: With a Focus on Michael Fried's "Art and Objecthood" and Subsequent Writings

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In my presentation, I will discuss the art theory of Michael Fried (1939–), an art critic, art historian, and poet whose theoretical framework is grounded in both art history and philosophy. First, I will outline the premise of my discussion by referring to Mathew Abbott's thesis, "Michael Fried and Philosophy" (2018) and Georges Didi-Huberman's *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde* (1992). Abbott critiques Fried's work from a philosophical standpoint, arguing that when we judge historical paintings—for example, those by Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1805)—our eyes are no longer the same as those of Diderot and his contemporaries. According to Abbott, Fried imposes his own judgements and ideas onto the artworks through his act of looking, which makes it difficult for us to evaluate Fried's interpretations. In contrast, Didi-Huberman explains in his book—drawing on Fried's essay "Art and Objecthood" (1967)—that Minimal Art generates fictional, private images that emerge through the contemporary viewer's gaze. In short, Abbott and Didi-Huberman take fundamentally different critical positions toward Fried's work. Second, I will argue that this divergence can already be found within discussions surrounding the same essay, "Art and Objecthood," by examining James Voorhies's *Beyond Objecthood: The Exhibition as a Critical Form Since 1968* (2017) and Christa Noel Robbins's thesis, "The Sensibility of Michael Fried" (2019). Voorhies investigates how post-1968 artworks, which emphasize the role of the spectator, were created and how this tendency persists today. In chapter 1, he identifies Fried's this criticism above as a foundational influence on this development, emphasizing its creative interplay with the artworks of the period. Robbins, however, argues that Fried's evaluations were shaped by the political climate of his time and that his art theory exhibits certain limitations that stem from this context. In other words, Voorhies regards Fried's criticism as highly effective for interpreting these artworks, whereas Robbins does not. This disagreement arises from the "fiction" that emerges between the moment of seeing artworks and the subsequent acts of interpretation and critical writing. Thus, through these four writings, I suggest that this fiction arises from temporal gaps in perception and interpretation. Finally, I will consider to what extent such fiction can be productive within art theory—and even within art history as a discipline concerned with historical facts—and I will conclude by proposing how we might address and overcome this fiction in academic practice.

Can AI Earn Its Music? Revisiting Roger Scruton's Philosophy of Music

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This paper revisits Roger Scruton's aesthetics of music to explore how his distinction between borrowed and earned expression may illuminate current questions about AI-generated music. From an etymological perspective, a cliché does not arise simply from overuse but from a mode of expression that has become fixed and stereotyped. In Scruton's account, the cliché is therefore understood as an expression that has broken away from the natural order and inner movement that once gave it life, a careless or unearned appropriation of phrases and forms that originally emerged from a living cultural tradition. Cliché, closely related to banality, offers a sense of ease that allows us to bypass the demands of artistic struggle. It makes what is difficult appear effortless and diminishes our trust in the possibility of sincerity in art. Building on this framework, the paper considers whether the generative capacities of AI represent merely an extension of established practices or a departure from the artistic vitality that arises when creators draw upon a living cultural tradition and shape it into sincere, historically informed expression. The question is not whether AI should create, but whether its processes can participate in what Scruton describes as an earned form of expression, which requires a vigilant artistic consciousness continuously reflecting on and evaluating whether the musical language it employs still possesses a genuinely living quality. By revisiting Scruton's philosophy in this context, the paper aims to clarify why the idea of sincerity in musical listening needs to be reconsidered in the age of algorithmic creativity.

Uniqueness, Incomplete and Impossible Fictional Truths, and AI: Technologically-determined Iterative Boundaries at the Aesthetic Intersection of Creativity and Generative Ability

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Prioritization of uniqueness has remained an almost entirely unquestioned constant in aesthetic valuation, despite rare instances such as Jerrold Levinson's 1980 article challenging its usefulness. Even in examples of expected duplication, such as prints and photography, the first iteration is almost always assumed to retain automatically a superior value in comparison to any copies. Famously connecting the notion of aura and permanence, Walter Benjamin assertively advanced this privileging sustained in both its aesthetic and political function, stressing the importance of uniqueness and permanence in opposition to reproducibility and transitoriness. It's impossible, however, to continue to consider many examples of contemporary art, with the pervasive use of computational and digital productive methods and its instantiation in the technological material itself, in the same manner. Benjamin would have regarded the infinite reproducibility of computational and digital art objects as an insidiously unavoidable destruction of their aura, but perhaps they were always already lacking one entirely. The nature of computational and digital art objects means that employing an outdated notion of uniqueness as an essential quality to any critical aesthetic response is not only misplaced but should be necessarily avoided as irrelevant. Contrary to Mary Mothersill's assertion that uniqueness ceases to be a distinction because it is universally shared, this presentation will explore how apparent uniqueness in computational and digital materiality is a common structural truth for every example of digital art. This is especially true of AI-generated aesthetic objects, which represent a challenge determined by technology itself through the parallels of recursion and disaggregation, resulting from the human-centric language structure of prompts directed towards our drives. In short, digital art by its very nature always seems to be both unique and readily replicated, a weird state of affairs that is worth exploring in some detail.

Kant and Black Aesthetics: The Persistence of Reflective Form

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This paper tracks a structural tension in contemporary Black aesthetic theory. Paradigms of formalist aesthetics (Kant, Adorno) are often criticized or rejected for both their historical role in European thought and their political implications. Yet their reflective judgmental form recurs—often unwittingly—within the very frameworks that aim to displace them.

My focus here is on Fumi Okiji, who introduces the concept of the “nonsensuous standard” through her account of Black performance, social negation, and Yorùbá aesthetic thought. This standard functions as an enacted, collective measure: a normative pull that binds and orients without relying on sensuous cues or conceptual criteria. While Okiji positions this concept as part of a broader effort to ground aesthetic theory in Black performance and non-Western traditions, I argue that it formally converges with Kant’s account of aesthetic judgment—particularly his notion of *sensus communis*, where normativity is felt without rule. The nonsensuous standard thus appears not as a post-Kantian alternative, but as a situated enactment of reflective judgment under conditions of social negation.

My claim is not that Okiji’s aesthetics unknowingly reaffirms European aesthetic categories, but that this convergence reveals something deeper: the enduring philosophical function of aesthetic form. That is, the form of reflective judgment re-emerges not because of conceptual dependence, but because of a recurring need to register normativity where rule and concept no longer apply. Rather than seeing this recurrence as a contradiction—a failure of aesthetic refusal—it should be understood as a crisis: a structural impasse that reveals the limits of both rejection and inheritance. Aesthetic form begins to look less like a cultural artifact to be discarded or reclaimed than a recurrent philosophical necessity: reflective judgment re-emerges across radically different foundations because it alone can articulate normativity without rule. This helps explain a double movement at the heart of Black aesthetics today: the Western aesthetic tradition must be refused as a political regime of the human, yet the formal resources it offers—especially the structure of reflective judgment—persist as indispensable for thinking difference, shareability, and social attunement at the edge of the sayable.

The central problematic, then, is not who is authorized to theorize aesthetic experience, but why even radical refusals of Western form return to it—and what this recurrence reveals about aesthetic judgment as the condition of critique itself.

Oscillation and Frontiers in Socially Engaged Art

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In this presentation, I reflect on the tendency in contemporary art that responds to the crisis mood of our times, including numerous art works entitled Utopia and exhibitions or projects with similar titles. (Most recently: Utopia, The Right to Hope, Wolfsburg, Germany.) Alongside critical voices, the social turn in art often seeks to promote utopias, thereby decisively shifting the emphasis away from dystopias in the art sphere. Contrary to the pessimistic or ironic attitude of postmodernism, or in dialogue with it, the process has launched a new path for modernity's conception of history, driven by a desire for social progress.

The presentation links the oscillating movement (described by the proponents of metamodernism) — between the commitment of modernism and the detachment of postmodernism, between optimism and scepticism — to Louis Marin's concept of the frontiers of utopia. According to this, utopia is the infinite work of the imagination, which avoids representation. My question is: how can the utopian demand so often found in contemporary practices be freed from the power structures of representation? How can it maintain its role as a frontier functioning as a horizon without totalitarian demands, yet in constant movement committed to liberating collective action? What solutions ensure that contemporary art works function as intervals rather than representations, as aesthetic-political-ethical interfaces that lead to change without territorial boundaries, through the driving force of (romantic) imagination and desire?

In my presentation, I distinguish between types of artworks that, in addition to participatory, collaborative, and activist methods (previously described by Claire Bishop), serve to facilitate social engagement and the convergence of art and life through meditative or therapeutic methods. I argue that if Louis Marin is right in saying that utopia (in order to eliminate its oppressive gestures) must always remain *terra incognita*, then we cannot view the encounter between the frontiers of art and life as anything other than a movement between boundaries, which is realized in the practices of oscillation between real and imaginary spaces, need and utopia, between the workshop and the therapy-room.

For an Inclusive Aesthetics: People with ASD and their Attunement to the Environment

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This paper focuses on the need to rethink aesthetics, fostering an inclusive openness to other ways of inhabiting and perceiving a world that, subject to continuous and rapid change, requires the search for ever-new balances and a more authentic ecological awareness. The exponential increase in recent years in the number of people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder highlights, on the one hand, the need to remove the barriers that make it even more difficult to adapt to a constantly changing environment - in which even the smallest change can radically reshape one's self-perception - and, on the other, the opportunity to experiment with other ways of inhabiting spaces and bringing order to an everyday life often perceived as chaotic and unpredictable.

Aesthetics understood as aesthesiology (Baumgarten 1750) cannot remain indifferent to the sensations and emotions of those who, faced with possible difficulties in communication and social interaction, repetitive and stereotyped behaviour, and restricted interests, demonstrate not a lack of empathy, but rather a capacity to preferably attune not only to the animal and plant kingdoms, but also to inorganic matter. In this way, a pre-dualistic, ante-predicative relationship takes shape, one that cannot be reduced to a mere opposition between the knowing/perceiving subject and the perceived object, but which places itself beyond any distinction as an original experience of the fabric of the world (Manning-Massumi 2014), of that presentational immediacy in which everything participates in the met(r)amorphic and copoietic process that underpins the possible construction of identity (Ettinger 1992; 2006). In this sense, aesthetic experience is configured as an experience of an original relationality that anticipates the emergence of discrete entities, which grasps the correspondences between individual and world, activity and passivity, organic and inorganic, before and beyond any purpose or utility.

An encounter with neurodiversity thus allows us to free ourselves from prejudices that seek to label and constrain divergent forms of thought within normotypical canons. We can rediscover in the aesthetic experience the possibility of establishing emotional resonance with others, of caring for an intimately relational and processual body-world, of finding new ways of inhabiting the world that take into account each individual's specificities, and of developing a profound environmental awareness. In this way, aesthetic reflection becomes truly inclusive, not retreating before forms of weakness, but offering practical ways to rediscover in the pathic body the active and creative potential to establish new balances (Weizsäcker 1940) and give rise to other types of relationships.

Artificial Creativity beyond Intelligence: Towards an Instrumental Framework

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This contribution examines artificial creativity as an instrumental extension of human creativity within the broader philosophical and cognitive debate on generative artificial intelligence. It explores whether AI systems, particularly large language models (LLMs), can be meaningfully described as creative, or whether they merely simulate the external features of creativity without cognitive or intentional grounding. Through a reconstruction of key theoretical frameworks—from Rhodes’s 4Ps to Boden’s and Sternberg’s models—the contribution compares the processes underlying human and artificial generation. While generative models exhibit functional analogues to the classical stages of human creativity (preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification), their operations are algorithmic rather than intentional, lacking authenticity and consciousness. On this basis, artificial creativity is defined as a non-intentional, non-authentic generative mechanism realised by non-cognitive systems that can nonetheless produce outputs meeting the formal criteria of novelty and usefulness. Rather than positioning artificial creativity as a competitor to human creativity, the paper interprets it as a perceptual and cognitive extension that transforms the ways in which humans engage with the world and represent it. Generative systems operate as mediating technologies that, like telescopes or microscopes, expand the domain of human imagination by altering the modalities of perception and expression. Drawing on instrumental realism and post-phenomenological approaches to technology, artificial creativity is conceptualised not as a substitute for human creation but as a relational process in which human intentionality and machine computation co-constitute creative outcomes. The contribution further develops the concept of Co-Cre-AI-tion to describe this interactive synergy between human and artificial agents. Such co-creative systems combine human judgment, contextual awareness, and ethical reasoning with machines’ generative and combinatorial capacities, producing distributed forms of creativity that challenge traditional notions of authorship and originality. Finally, the paper addresses the ethical and epistemological implications of this model, particularly issues of transparency, agency, and creative displacement. In conclusion, artificial creativity, understood as a mediating rather than substitutive technology, reveals creativity to be a plural, relational, and distributed phenomenon. Its study refines the philosophical understanding of human creativity and highlights the transformative role of generative AI as a new form of perceptual technology that redefines imagination and expands the epistemic reach of human cognition.

Why Listen to Animals? A Plea for Auditive Aesthetic Experience

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Although various thematic approaches to depicting animals in art have been present for a long time in art history, it wasn't until the 1980s that there was a systematic academic investigation into the agency and empowerment of nonhumans. John Berger's groundbreaking article *Why Look at Animals?* (1977), which examined the changing dynamics of human-animal connections in the context of seeing, marked a significant turning point in this intellectual trajectory. Nowadays this area of inquiry has spread to the field of sound studies. In her essay *What Would Animals Say If We Asked the Ideal Questions?* published over thirty years later Berger's work, Vinciane Despret (2016) advanced the conversation by raising a thought-provoking alternative query. Building on this trajectory I will attempt to answer the question, related to and paraphrasing Berger's text: Why listen to animals? Does listening to animals represented in art constitute a different kind of aesthetic experience than deep listening and immersion in the audio sphere? Is it possible to categorize the methodological framework for the aesthetics of listening to animals? How do visual approaches and audio approaches to the aesthetic and axiological assessment of animal-themed artworks differ? I will attempt to answer these questions based on examples of field recording experiments, sound art, and the works included in the exhibition "Why Look at Animals? A Case for the Rights of Non-Human Lives," presented this year at The National Museum of Contemporary Art Athens.

What Can Fiction Do? From Metaphysical Grounding to Cervantes and Dalí

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Over the last 25 years, the concept of metaphysical grounding in analytic metaphysics has developed enormously. However, it has hardly been applied to philosophical aesthetics. To begin to remedy this absence, we propose to outline a profound philosophical problem that has not only metaphysical and even meta-philosophical implications, but also directly aesthetic ones: does the fictional, as a social object, have the power to embody a greater ontological freedom than natural objects, even though it does not form part of the most basic level of reality? Can the fictional shed light on the true amplitude of reality, precisely because it depends ontologically on the actions of social agents who are capable of potentially using all of its resources to regulate social reality?

This can be supported by several examples, such as the role of national myths (fictional objects that regulate societies), the arbitrarily complex influence of religious beliefs, or the power of literary characters such as Hamlet. Their existence as fictions does not diminish their ability to exert a normative or emotional force on entire communities. The presentation will focus on two examples: Cervantes' work, particularly his novels "Don Quijote" and "La Galatea", as well as Dalí's painting "La Galatea de las Esferas", as paradigmatic examples of how fiction operates ontologically in the constitution of reality.

"Don Quijote", especially its second part, is not only a compendium of meta-literary devices and games but also offers, due to its meta nature, an arsenal of resources that could be applied to the creation of social norms by showing how narrative structures affect the behavior of people and condition their collective understanding of reality. This is complemented by Cervantes' reflections in "La Galatea" on the influence of literature on reality, which responds to his intuition that narratives not only represent the world, but also produce and alter it, which is the main theme of "Don Quijote".

The depiction of the face in "La Galatea de las Esferas" can be viewed through the gaze that has created it and sustained it in reality through the manipulation of certain mathematical and "material" objects. This makes it a "meta-painting" that represents the creative action of human beings who see, in what is "merely" a material substrate (oil paints), a reality that only they can sustain in reality, exemplifying how perception institutes social and aesthetic objects whose existence depends ontologically on that configuring gaze.

Beyond the Landscape: Aesthetics, Neo-Ruralism and Well-Being in the Rural Environment

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From an aesthetic perspective, the rural environment is often understood in a superficial manner, primarily through the canons of the picturesque and the pastoral (Brook, 2025). This idealized vision of the rural has intensified in recent years as a result of factors such as the rise of mass tourism (Entrena-Durán, 2012) and the proliferation of aesthetic trends on social media, particularly the cottagecore aesthetic (Büsken, 2024).

However, this simplified and mystified understanding of rural space results in a series of negative consequences, most notably the over-touristification of these territories and the gradual neglect of such areas by new visitors who approach the rural more as a visual landscape than as a lived environment.

In contrast to this superficial gaze, the phenomenon of neo-ruralism offers the possibility of developing an alternative aesthetic understanding that emphasizes engagement and participation (Brook, 2025; Nogué, 2012). In this context, this paper aims to examine the advantages of this renewed aesthetic connection with the rural and its positive implications for individual (Brook, 2010), environmental (Brady et al., 2018), and social well-being (Saito, 2022). To this end, this presentation first proposes a critical review of the superficial aesthetic conception of rural environments, highlighting the problems that this perspective generates for both the environment and local communities. Secondly, it analyses the phenomenon of neo-ruralism and its historical evolution since the 1960s in Europe, particularly in Spain and France, to the present. Finally, it argues that this movement enables the development of an environmental aesthetics grounded in engagement, care, and cohabitation, emphasizing how this aesthetic relationship between human beings and nature directly impacts well-being at multiple levels and contributes to the sustainable revitalization of rural areas.

In conclusion, this presentation argues that a renewed aesthetic understanding of the rural, inspired by neo-ruralism, allows us to overcome the idealized and superficial visions that currently predominate. Moreover, it highlights that an aesthetic engagement with the environment, based on care and everyday practices, can enhance individual, environmental, and community well-being.

From Six Ideas to Everyday Life: Tatarkiewicz's History of Ideas as a Framework for Everyday Aesthetics

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This paper revisits Władysław Tatarkiewicz's history of ideas as a historiographical method for aesthetics and extends it beyond the realm of art to the domain of everyday life. While Tatarkiewicz's monumental *History of Aesthetic Ideas* focused on notions such as beauty, form, creativity, and aesthetic experience, his methodological distinction between the history of words and the history of concepts offers a powerful tool to explore implicit aesthetic categories that have shaped ordinary practices and sensibilities across cultures and epochs.

The paper argues that Tatarkiewicz's framework—originally conceived to trace the evolution of aesthetic thought by relating the history of concepts to that of terminology, and by observing where the two diverge—can be fruitfully applied to what contemporary scholarship calls *Everyday Aesthetics*. Such a reorientation allows us to reconstruct a genealogy of everyday aesthetic ideas—those embedded in domestic order, social tact, bodily care, and the shaping of environments—revealing their historical depth and conceptual coherence.

In the first part, I outline Tatarkiewicz's historiographical project and show its continuing relevance for present-day aesthetic theory. In the second, I propose an analytical model for the “history of everyday aesthetic ideas,” focusing on categories such as fitness, order, neatness, and care—ideas that historically connect ethical comportment, spatial harmony, and sensory pleasure. Drawing on ancient sources (Socrates, Xenophon), early modern reflections, and contemporary reappraisals, I suggest that these notions are enduring aesthetic ideas whose significance extends beyond the moral domain.

In conclusion, the paper contributes to a dual aim: (1) it expands Tatarkiewicz's framework from the aesthetics of art to the aesthetics of existence, grounding *Everyday Aesthetics* in a *longue durée* history of ideas; and (2) it redefines the field's genealogical foundations, demonstrating that categories of everyday life—clean/dirty, ordered/disordered, fitting/unfitting—are not late offshoots but central chapters in the broader history of aesthetic thinking. On the 140th anniversary of Tatarkiewicz's birth, this reappraisal underscores the lasting relevance of his historiographical project for contemporary aesthetics and its potential to illuminate the aesthetic dimensions of ordinary life.

Healing and the Aesthetics of Multi-R Processes

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The aesthetics of medicine has been widely discussed with respect to the design and atmosphere of medical environments and clinical encounters, the usefulness of creative therapies and arts for healing, and the multisensory aesthetically appealing staging of traditional healers' performances. However, the research has concentrated on well-being and mental health (Poltrum et al. 2025), while the aesthetics of care sensu largo (Saito 2022) revolves around the caregiver's intentionality and gestures. These should be complemented by exploring the multifaceted aesthetic structure of healing physical illness from the patient's perspective. For the "pathic" (Böhme 2012) subject, healing appears as the ascending part of a (at best) quasi-circular movement of return to everydayness, ordinariness, and normality; in its intransitive meaning, healing implies to undo the suffered harm by following the road to recovery. The subject is caught in an odyssey characterized by nostos (homecoming) and nostalgia (longing for return), which is confirmed by its multi-R terminology (repair, rehabilitation, recovery, resilience). Aesthetic aspects include an increased, partly trained awareness of one's own bodily states and changes; the cultivation of proprioception is the prerequisite for learning self-care. The aesthetics of visible corporeal modifications underlies a specific hermeneutics of signs, forms, textures, and colours, according to which the whitening of scars, the gradual vanishing of "ugly" wounds, the recession of "monstruous" swellings, and the chromatic transformation of bruises become expressions of healing. The perceptual appreciation goes hand in hand with a functional perspective: healthy bodies are considered in principle more beautiful than dysfunctional ones; healing involves bodily "repair" of damages and the recovery of functions, in the sense of restoring a dynamic harmony of forces. Therefore, healing is indissociable from an aesthetics of vitality: regenerative processes testify the power of life and the preconscious agency of the body. The bodily self reacts, fights and leaps back, succeeding to recoil (Latin: *resilire*) from the harm and regain self-control or at least to adapt itself to irreversible changes. Finally, the longer and more complicated the healing processes from illness and injuries prove to be, the more complex is also their embedment in a canopy of emotional atmospheres, with repercussions for the subject's social behaviour.

Essayism & Aesthetics

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This paper articulates essayism as a vital contemporary aesthetic modality and a powerful form of political resistance. Building on ongoing PhD research, I define essayism not merely as a literary genre but as an aesthetic practice—specifically as a Marcusean aesthetic form—constituted by a transgressive engagement in public discourse and civic critique. My central claim is that the essay subverts the “aesthetic of immediacy,” a dominant ideological condition of our time, by strategically appropriating it. Drawing on Adorno’s assertion that “the essay’s innermost law is heresy,” I frame its critical function as a method of using subjective experience to dismantle the impersonal, structural conditions that shape existing subjects. To illuminate this, I connect these conditions with the notion of immediacy developed by Anna Kornbluh. Rather than viewing immediacy as a purely ideological trap, I argue that essayism utilises mediated immediacy to expose the cultural, political and historical conditions of subjectivity. This transformation reframes the everyday into a site of structural analysis, an approach that finds concrete implications in the work of Angela Davis. Davis’s adaptation of these concepts demonstrates how the personal is not a retreat into the private, but a necessary site for challenging the damaged life. Essayism offers a means of making contemporary individual addresses subversive — transforming personal experience into a universally resonant critique while maintaining the particularity of an embodied position. I demonstrate this transgressive aesthetic modality with reference to Irish essayists Emilie Pine (*Notes to Self*) and Rosaleen McDonagh (*Unsettled*), showing how their artistic practice fuses aesthetic reflection with clear political enactment.

Walking the Narratives: Ecocriticism on the Hiking Trail

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The field of ecocriticism and intermediality has seen a growing interest for aesthetic phenomena that sees literary elements intertwined with natural environments. The hiking trail represents a special form of human-nature relationship, and a phenomenon that has not yet been explored by such analysis.

Traced along trade, migration and pilgrimage routes, trails have accompanied the evolution of the human-made landscape from antiquity to the present day. Artistic practices such as sculptures, paintings, music and carvings on stones or trees have always contributed to the creation of intermedial narratives to guide travellers on their journey. A journey that is both exterior and interior, interweaving physical exertion with a path of self-reflection and spiritual transformation.

Considering that literary references are more present in secular rather than pilgrimage trails, it will also suggest that literary imagery supersedes the role of religious imagery in the construction of narratives of self-criticism, liberation and courage.

This paper will explore the literary practices that contribute to such narratives, also by analysing examples from the Italian hiking trail Via degli Dei, that connects Bologna to Florence.

Hybrid Realities: Architectural Aesthetics of Memory in the Age of Digital Materiality

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In an era where boundaries between digital and physical begin to blur, the possibility of expressing memories and experiences of the past through a network of material and digital spaces opens up. They coexist together in a state of hybridity where different realities intertwine. Architecture in this context becomes a medium that designs and manages collective memory through the synthesis of the analogue and the virtual. The development of immersive environments of virtual and augmented reality opens up space for the production of places that trigger and evoke memory. The main question in this paper relates to how memory of the past can be spatially expressed in the modern age through hybrid architectural practices that combine these two realities. In the hybrid state of the place, the synthesis of physical space and digital layer is enabled. The once limited “place of memory” is within this perspective transformed into a dynamic and interactive system. The aim of the work itself is related to the research of such “syntheses” through a three-part case study of relevant spatial practices, showing how new forms of collective memory and experiences of the past are formed through digital aesthetics and design. In the paper, memory serves as a thread that establishes the relationship between human, technology and space. This defines two entities: a hybrid subject and a hybrid space. Analysing three case studies through a phenomenological and posthumanist theoretical framework opens up a field for examining the relationship between memory and digital hybrid spaces. They are not representative models of typologies of this kind, but rather indicators of phenomena that follow such realities. Their role is to illustrate the transition from material to digital reality, thereby articulating how memory is produced through interaction with specific elements of the environment. This approach defines a different position between the place and the subject who experiences it. Consideration of the relationship between these layers serves as a basis for understanding the affective layer that is built from the interconnection of different realities. This type of hybridity is not only found in the object, but also in the subject and the way architecture mediates between the body, digital image and memory, which is not only aesthetic and typological, but also ontological and perceptual. As a result, the shaping of space is defined through experience when such materialities are interconnected.

Towards an Aesthetics of Healing

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Everyday Aesthetics has paid attention to the negative aesthetic aspects of quotidian reality as warning signs that something is amiss in our lives (socially or individually), thereby necessitating urgent change (Mandoki, 1994; Berleant, 2005; Saito, 2007). This ethical and political commitment to our immediate environment has led the Aesthetics of the Everyday towards the concept of care. Understood aesthetically, care signifies that the manner in which we interact daily with other subjects, and even with objects, matters; that since we are somehow concerned with the people and things that take part in our lives, this concern must be expressed through formal, sensible, or simply aesthetic means (Saito, 2022; Godoy, 2025).

Drawing on this groundwork, this study reflects on the wound in its dual variant—physical and psychological—as a maximum negative aspect that we occasionally confront (for instance, due to illness, the loss of a loved one, a natural catastrophe, or a terrorist action), as a particularly “ugly” and bitter side of our existence. Simultaneously, it reflects on the healing capacity of beauty. While this is a theme deeply rooted in the Western aesthetic tradition (dating back to the ancient Pythagoreans), it acquires particular significance in contemporary society as a society of care (Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1993).

Therefore, the objective of this paper is twofold: first, to propose an Aesthetics of Healing, conceptually differentiating it from the Aesthetics of Care to which it is initially linked but from which it is separated by specific aesthetic features; and second, to establish a typology of “things” whose aesthetic experience possesses therapeutic properties. These range from genuinely artistic objects to mundane and commonplace items, including specific spaces and environments. In all cases, the conclusion remains consistent: beauty heals, and that is why we need it in our lives.

Critical Diagrams: Tracing the Aesthetics of Architecture in the Context of the International Congress of Aesthetics (ICA)

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My aim in this paper is to present a systematic review of the interconnections and transconnections between architecture as a material practice of producing meanings and aesthetics as a philosophical domain of sensory perception situated within complex socio-political contexts. For this purpose, I draw on the most recent five editions of the International Congress of Aesthetics (ICA) (Beijing, 2010; Krakow, 2013; Seoul, 2016; Belgrade, 2019; Belo Horizonte, 2023). The proceedings of these editions serve as the primary corpus, enabling a focused examination of how aesthetic discourse has engaged with architectural theory and practice over the last fifteen years. I initiate the study with a comprehensive content analysis of all contributions and then proceed to a narrower selection based on defined criteria such as disciplinary relevance, conceptual framing, and methodological orientation. To uncover structural tendencies within this body of work, I conduct clustering analysis using VOSviewer, mapping co-occurrences of key terms and thematic proximities. This approach allows me to identify leading trajectories, recurrent motifs, and emerging gaps in the recent discourse on the aesthetics of architecture in the context of the ICA. Preliminary findings indicate that architectural discourse within recent ICA proceedings does not constitute a dominant paradigm but instead occupies a liminal zone within the broader field of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline, functioning as a specialized niche that shifts from formalist concerns toward socio-political, ecological, and phenomenological frameworks.

Design and the Everyday of Use: Dissolving the Aesthetic-Instrumental Dichotomy

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Contemporary philosophical aesthetics recognizes two competing definitions of design (Bamford, 1991; Parsons, 2016). The first, advocated by design scholars such as David Pye (1978), Victor Papanek (1972, 1985), and John Heskett (2002), among others, conceptualizes design as a general cognitive activity—a definition often marginalized within aesthetic discourse. The second, defended recently by Glenn Parsons (2016) and Jane Forsey (2013), treats design as a *sui generis* institutional practice: a professionalized art form with its own history, conventions, and disciplinary framework.

This paper argues that aesthetic inquiry today, and everyday aesthetics in particular, benefits more from engaging the broader definition of design as cognitive activity than from limiting itself to the narrower institutional account. Adopting this expansive view reveals how investigations of design can reopen fundamental questions for aesthetic theory, specifically concerning the relationship between aesthetic experience and instrumental rationality—a relationship traditionally conceived as antagonistic in critical theory and in the work of Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, and Martin Heidegger, among others.

Central to this argument is the claim that design exemplifies a paradigmatic form of aesthetically determined instrumental rationality with world-constituting effects. Design is the cognitive activity of attributing functional meaning to artifacts, an activity shaped by aesthetic judgment, imagination's productive capacity, and embodied engagement. I argue that design thinking involves envisioning alternative functional possibilities: when users creatively reappropriate objects—converting a diving mask into a COVID-19 respirator or transforming a tire into a swing—they engage in the same aesthetically determined instrumental cognition that defines professional design practice. These “useful errors” reveal design not as creating aesthetic objects but as an activity of appreciating the potential functional meanings things might embody.

By demonstrating that design is fundamentally a usological practice centred on the cognitive activity of function ascription, I reach two conclusions. First, instrumental rationality can be aesthetically determined rather than opposed to aesthetic experience, thereby dissolving the inherited antagonism between instrumental and aesthetic modes of thought. Second, this theoretical reframing proves methodologically essential: it challenges everyday aesthetics' object-centred approach to design and enables an everyday aesthetics adequate to contemporary practices—from participatory design to repair culture—where professional designers and everyday users alike engage in aesthetically determined functional attribution.

Modal Aesthetics and the Consumption of the Rural Alternative: Everyday Practices and Meaning Cycles

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This study explores the intersection of everyday aesthetic experience, ethical engagement, and the consumption of rurality in contemporary urban life, integrating insights from Michel de Certeau, Yuriko Saito, and the ontology of Jordi Claramonte's modal framework of aesthetics. Building on de Certeau's distinction between strategies and tactics, we examine how individuals enact subtle, poietic interventions within dominant cultural and consumer systems. Everyday objects and practices become sites of resistance and creativity, as users manipulate imposed cultural repertoires to construct personal meaning, reshape attention, and experiment with modes of relationality recovering rurality as a slow alternative.

The ethical dimension of aesthetics, as articulated by Saito and Berleant, complements this approach. By dissolving the strict subject-object divide, aesthetic engagement becomes collaborative, dialogical, and responsive, emphasizing co-creation, humility, and openness to negative or unexpected experiences. From the ideas of Dewey's experiential framework, aesthetic encounters are not passive but require active participation and ethical attention to the environment, objects, and co-participants. In this context, the rural emerges as both a consumable object and an ethical-aesthetic site. Contemporary urban consumers seek a mediated, often nostalgic image of rural life—a “*beatus ille*” ideal—through design elements in furniture, ceramics, textiles, and urban green spaces, as well as curated tourism and lifestyle experiences. These objects invoke an illusory connection to rural authenticity, which simultaneously satisfies emotional and aesthetic needs while obscuring the practical, ecological, and social realities of rural life. This phenomenon reflects a desire for coherence, authenticity, and aestheticized experience in the face of urban acceleration, consumption overload, and disconnection from natural processes.

However, by linking ethical engagement and modal aesthetics, a new relational reading of rurality becomes possible. Attention to materiality, temporality, and sensory qualities allows urban participants to navigate beyond superficial consumption, fostering gestures, practices, and designs that reestablish a meaningful, reciprocal connection to the environment. Rural-inspired objects, when approached critically, can catalyse care, aesthetic reflection, and relational awareness, enabling a form of cultural and ecological resistance to the homogenizing and depoliticizing tendencies of contemporary consumerism.

This integrated perspective frames aesthetic experience as ethically charged, tactically exercised, and modally stratified, where everyday practices, objects, and atmospheres mediate political, ecological, and social engagements. By attending to both the pleasures and the responsibilities of aesthetic experience, urban subjects can reclaim the relational depth of rurality, cultivate attentional discipline, and participate in co-created aesthetic worlds that resist the superficialities of mass-mediated consumption.

Sounding Out the Void: Silence and Aesthetics

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Apophatic discourse is a practice that attempts to understand, think or approach God through negation. While it has its origins as a theological practice, it is a form of speech that has been appropriated by several philosophers during the so-called “linguistic turn” of the late 19th and 20th century. Poets and philosophers such as Stéphane Mallarmé, Charles Baudelaire, Ludwig Wittgenstein, George Bataille and Jacques Derrida all utilized a form of apophatic or generally negative speech to express things that could not be expressed otherwise. In my essay, I argue that apophatic discourse can be understood as a grounding for the comprehension and value of Aesthetics – understood primarily here as a field that is dedicated to the sensible - within philosophy.

I argue for such a thesis based around two premises: I - negative discourse, by taking seriously the notion that silence could communicate better than speech, reconsiders the meaning of the very act of speaking and writing itself. In an age where our capacities of communication are haunted by the possibility of being either entirely produced or distorted by artificial intelligence, as well as the rise of far-right governments that dictate the correct things to say as well as the manner in which to say them, the question of the possibility of authentic speech is more important than ever. The notion of authentic and/or correct speech leads to the consideration of authority within the practice of philosophy itself, as such, premise II - relates negative discourse to Aesthetics insofar as Aesthetics, since its inception as a field of philosophy during the 18th century, is responsible for pushing back against the primarily intelligible and deterministic discourses of Logic, Ethics and Metaphysics.

By this affirmation, I do not mean to install, or rather, to reverse a hierarchy of value amongst the fields of philosophy that places Aesthetics at the top. I would like to argue that negation and the field of Aesthetics are forms of discourses comprehended within philosophy, but that also have the capacity to exceed the affirmative claims that constitute philosophy; they are, in an abstract sense, against the law. This movement that exceeds and is comprehended creates a space within the writing, reading and thinking of philosophy that does not respond to the aims of the practice in a strict sense. What it does is expand the horizons of the practice, while remembering the meaning of practicing it at all.

Van Gogh's Butterfly, Hirst's Flies, Böhme's Mosquitos: Aesthetic and Political Claims by Small Flying Insects

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The depiction of small flying insects in painting is a theme that has interested scholars not only from a symbolic and iconographic point of view, but also because it is intertwined with reflections on the character and purpose of art itself in terms of mimesis, deception and, in general, its relationship with nature. Well-known is the episode, narrated by Vasari, in which Giotto, depicting a fly on a finished painting, deceives his own master Cimabue.

In recent times, the theme of small flying insects has re-emerged in a theoretical context of crucial importance for aesthetics. To explain his idea of the aesthetics of atmospheres, Gernot Böhme invites us to consider the common experience of being in a dark room with a mosquito. Through this example, the German philosopher illustrates how our perception of the mosquito as a simple "objective" presence is replaced by an environmental perception of an "atmosphere of mosquito".

Böhme's reflection is part of a broad area of work that includes other theories focusing on the immersiveness of perception, the conception of the relationship between the perceived and the perceiver as a unified environment or field and a renewed experience of one's own body. This line of enquiry has its roots in a research tradition that can be traced back to Baumgarten.

Starting with an analysis of some works of art from the Renaissance to Van Gogh, Damien Hirst and other contemporary artists, this contribution aims, on the one hand, to investigate the presence of small insects in art from a different point of view: in its ability to establish a relationship between spaces with different connotations and differently inhabited. On the other hand, it aims to verify how the phenomenology of flying insects in art compels us to explore a specific question that Böhme's example, and the aesthetic approach it represents, leaves open in some degree: the need to think the relationship between the perceiver and the environment in terms of a relationship between the environment and presences, significantly in the plural.

We believe that this question raises the possibility or necessity of an aesthetic that intends to engage with "the world" and everyday life, embracing all the individual and collective existential implications, to become a political aesthetic in the true sense of the word, that is, an aesthetic that considers to be an essential fact that human existence on Earth is a plural existence, as Hannah Arendt continually reminds us.

Anthropogenic Climate Change and the Appreciation of Nature

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Considering the impact of global climate change (GCC) on natural ecosystems, some philosophers have recently addressed the aesthetic consequences of this phenomenon. In particular, Brady (2014, 2022, 2023) has argued that GCC is an aesthetic issue. Following Brady, many scholars agree that GCC calls for a new set of conditions to understand the aesthetic experience of nature.

Within this debate, I here consider a less explored topic: how we should understand the impact of the awareness of anthropogenic responsibility in GCC on the aesthetic experience of current natural environments. Some scholars have argued that GCC has a disruptive effect on the aesthetic experience of current natural environments: I argue that one reason for this effect is the friction between perception and knowledge, exacerbated by the awareness of the anthropogenic nature of GCC.

First, I examine some traits of the aesthetic experience of current natural environments that arise from the unique nature of GCC. They include: (A.) the large-scale spatial and temporal nature of GCC, (B.) the fact that many seemingly natural events or environments connected to GCC cannot be described as either natural or non-natural, and (C.) the variety of (likely or predicted) effects that GCC has on different places.

Second, I show how these traits create tension between what we perceive and know. The spatial and temporal vastness of GCC (A.) cannot be perceived directly, whereas its consequences can be experienced on a local level; however, focusing on a single, local event is not so significant, because there is no certainty that GCC actually caused it. Indeed, it is difficult to determine exactly what kind of object we are experiencing (B.), since what is natural in these cases is not necessarily non-human, and the human component is often unintentional or scattered. Following this, it is difficult to understand what aesthetic qualities of natural environments are made more salient or more prominent by GCC (C.).

Because of these unique traits, GCC has a disruptive and bewildering effect on nature's aesthetic experience. In particular, one of the causes of the disorienting and estranging effect of GCC on aesthetics is the tension between what we perceive and what we (cannot) know. The fact that we can only perceive one aspect of a process or event in the appreciation of an environment is not novel; however, in the case of GCC, we perceive aspects of what we can intuitively call nature, knowing, to an extent, that this may be the result of human actions. In other words, the anthropogenic nature of GCC is undetectable through perception, yet it influences how we judge nature aesthetically, making the experience uncanny and weird.

The ornament of the Earth – Pacha and the landscape

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In my talk, the Quechua/Aymara concept of Pacha is proposed as an alternative to the compartmentalisation of the meanings of spatial phenomena that has taken place in Western culture, both in the history of ideas and in socio-spatial practices. The distinction among different meanings of spatiality, captured by terms such as “space”, “place”, “environment”, “territory”, and “landscape”, characterises not only the epistemic framework of modernity but also ordinary language, and thus the lifeworld of the modern and contemporary subject. Today, considerable intellectual efforts in European and American philosophy and human geography are devoted to overcoming overly rigid conceptual boundaries; yet many contemporary spatial practices remain grounded in the separation of the aesthetic layer of the spatial phenomenon (landscape, offered to aesthetic appreciation) from the consideration of its “substances”, both environmental and socio-political (Olwig 1996; Berque 2013). Such separation is part of a broader process of aestheticization (Lipovetsky and Serroy 2013), entailing attitudes marked by a profound insensitivity to the sustainability of individual and collective behaviours and choices, in the name of a narcissistic pursuit of immediate aesthetic pleasure, often reduced to merely visual or audiovisual stimulation. The concept of Pacha resists the aestheticization of landscape without renouncing the always-also aesthetic character of spatial phenomena, thereby opening the way to a comprehensive rethinking of aesthetics in a renewed, substantive, and de-aestheticized sense.

The concept of Pacha is untranslatable into Romance and Anglophone languages because it resists both the modern Western compartmentalisation of meanings and the dualistic framework that underlies it. Without indulging in facile exoticism, I will show how engaging with the concept of Pacha offers Western culture an opportunity to foreground the continuities and interactions among the different semantic layers that constitute a spatial phenomenon, rather than their presumed ruptures. I will address Pacha in relation to the geographical constellation typical of the Andean cosmovision, which includes, alongside Pacha, the concepts of Ayllu, the “family” inclusive of both human and non-human actants; Camac, the spirit that permeates Pacha from within and grants beings the capacity for circulation and communication; and Chakra, the cultivated field, defined by the local anthropologist Grimaldo Rengifo as “the ornament of the Earth” (1994). All these concepts stem from the Andean cosmovision (Incaic and pre-Incaic), which predates Spanish colonisation and the so-called “extirpation of idolatry”. However, they have been revived within the framework of modern Andean philosophy (Estermann 2006; Mazzi Huaycucho 2015), which seeks to renew its links to the original cosmovision while acknowledging hybridisation as an unavoidable condition shaped by historical processes.

Design Aesthetics and Everydayness

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This paper supports a reorientation of contemporary aesthetics of design toward non-transcendent theories of the everyday as a generative field of emergent properties, affordances, and uses. Proposing a materialist philosophy of design that foregrounds emergence and active perception as central to design ontology, the paper opposes the dominant paradigm of intentionalist functionalism.

I claim that a curious paradox emerges when examining the relationship between design theory and everydayness: while formalist aesthetics has historically advocated transcendence from the mundane through pure form, and functionalism has championed the everyday by grounding design in practical use, both approaches ultimately fail to engage with the actual nature of everyday life with objects. Functionalism criticizes formalist transcendence for abstracting aesthetic experience from everydayness. However, in privileging predetermined proper functions and linear designer-user relationships, functionalism paradoxically promotes its own form of transcendence and abstraction—one equally alien to the sometimes messy, generative character of quotidian existence. The illusion of stable function, rooted in teleology, assumes that a design object's identity resides in its intended purpose: a pencil remains a pencil even when used as a top-of-the-finger balance device. This framework reduces objects to transparent vessels of rational plans, overlooking the rich post-production life where visual affordances continually invite spontaneous engagements that exceed predetermined purposes.

Interestingly, formalism's imperative to perceive objects as pure forms—as ends in themselves—may foster deeper intimacy with design objects than functionalism's focus on proper function. Treating an object according to its intended function means looking through it rather than at it, reducing engagements to executing other's plan, with little room for creative interaction or bringing ourselves fully into the experience. Conversely, attending to an object's material properties—even momentarily abstracting from utilitarian concerns—allows for the kind of absorbed, generative engagement that characterizes genuine everyday aesthetic experience. Design objects are fundamentally material entities whose surfaces invite diverse interactions. Everyday life demonstrates this constantly: doors serve as symbols of arrival or departure, chairs become impromptu ladders, objects evoke physiognomic responses. Affordances—the complementary relations between observers and their environment determined by surfaces—enable these creative engagements. Even functions possess non-functional expressivity: the gracefulness of pouring, the strength of supporting, the gesture of containing or opening.

This approach addresses urgent questions in contemporary aesthetics about how experience unfolds in our materially abundant present. Critiquing both transcendence-through-form and stability-through-function, materialism offers a third path, validating the complex, unpredictable ways people actually live with designed things—embracing emergence over control and the generative power of sensory engagement.

The Aesthetic of Obsolescence: Contingency Negation and Somatic Resistance in the Digital Era of Rock Music.

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The current aesthetic landscape in rock music is defined by a central paradox stemming from the increasing mediation of digital technology, providing a critical case study for *Aesthetics Today*. Rock, a genre inherently born of contingent and material processes (analogue recording, physical errors), now faces a fundamental challenge from algorithmic tools and digital production that prioritize posthuman precision. This paper addresses this crisis, which is a critical case study in contemporary aesthetics, by analysing the resulting polarization.

This divide is observed between the pursuit of hyper-quantized, AI-assisted perfection in digital rock production, and the intense aesthetic valorisation of imperfection in obsolete analogue performing and recording practices.

Drawing on the philosophy of technology, specifically the work of Bernard Stiegler on *techné* and temporal alienation and Katherine Hayles on embodiment in the digital age, the analysis establishes that the aesthetic drive for digital perfection constitutes a form of somatic negation. The human body—with its physiological errors, temporal lags, and non-calculable groove—is aesthetically deemed a flaw to be corrected by the algorithm. The digital audio workstation, in this sense, becomes a tool for temporal and physical alienation, reducing the performer's creative input to mere data.

The core thesis posits that the aesthetic of obsolescence is, therefore, a necessary act of somatic resistance. By deliberately choosing technologically inferior or error-prone media, contemporary rock artists and audiences seek to re-establish the value of somatic contingency. This resistance is not mere nostalgia for the past, but a defense of temporal and material imperfections as the signature of human presence and an aesthetic quality in itself. The paper utilizes the rock genre—as a phenomenon bridging the 20th-century analogue era and the 21st-century digital realm—to theorize how musical aesthetics respond to the posthuman condition. It concludes by arguing that the current aesthetic divide in rock is a critical symptom of a broader societal anxiety regarding the ontological status of error when perfection is algorithmically guaranteed.

The proposed analysis contributes specifically to the ICA 2026 subthemes of AI, Virtuality, and the Posthuman Aesthetic and Embodiment, Sensory Experience, and Somaesthetics.

Between Celebration and Erasure: Revaluation and Hybrid Presence of Problematic Heritage

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Since the adoption of the Venice Charter six decades ago, the protection, preservation, reconstruction and documentation of heritage have been guided by a normative principle: the transmission to future generations of the fundamental values of humanity embodied in diverse phenomena – tangible and intangible, cultural and natural. This principle is inherently persuasive and prescriptive rather than descriptive, as it depends on established evaluative criteria for identifying cultural heritage. By framing cultural inheritance as “heritage,” societies commit to its ongoing care and maintenance. Heritage thus emerges as an intrinsically ambiguous construct: simultaneously a gift, resource and repository of meaning, and a burden marked by obligation, responsibility and financial cost.

Debates surrounding the criteria for heritage designation have largely progressed toward greater inclusivity. This trajectory is grounded in two key premises articulated in successive UNESCO and ICOMOS documents: respect for the autonomy of peoples and cultures and the central role of memory and remembrance in sustaining collective identity. Within this framework, the values underpinning heritage protection, conservation and, at times, reconstruction or revitalisation generally fall into three categories: (a) aesthetic or artistic qualities; (b) intellectual qualities, including skills, narratives, belief systems and bodies of knowledge; and (c) social merits, such as tradition, moral norms, and community cohesion.

Despite these inclusive aspirations, heritage practice remains limited. Its emphasis on preserving inherited cultural products frequently constrains the development of new cultural and social expressions grounded in the same value systems. Consequently, heritage governance often entails ongoing negotiation among social, cultural and economic interests. These negotiations frequently result either in the deliberate or inadvertent loss of significant heritage or in the preservation of phenomena, particularly stemming from the supremacy of collective memory over e.g. aesthetic or intellectual value, that no longer meaningfully support the very values that heritage is intended to safeguard (e.g. ingenuity, constructivity, sensibility, or sustainability).

Drawing critically on Friedrich Nietzsche’s concept of forgetting, Nicolás Gómez Dávila’s notion of custodianship, John Dewey’s pragmatist aesthetics and Dietrich von Hildebrand’s phenomenology of aesthetic values, this study proposes a conceptual shift in heritage evaluation. Rather than prioritising fidelity to the past across aesthetic, intellectual, and social dimensions, it advocates assessing heritage in terms of its holistic value for the future. This reorientation introduces a principle of selective evaluation grounded in future-oriented inclusivity and enables the articulation of a third mode of heritage presence, situated between celebratory preservation and erasure, made possible through the application of hybrid and immersive technologies.

Being Affected by Others: On the Normative Force of Aesthetic Reasons

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Aesthetic experience is typically said to be limited by two principles: one of acquaintance, which states that aesthetic judgements must be based on a first-hand experience of the object of appreciation, and other of autonomy, which broadly requires that our aesthetic claims are acquired for ourselves, autonomously. This paper is not directly concerned with the debate around both principles, which is large and beyond reach here. Instead, I focus on what these requirements say about our relationship with aesthetic reasons from others. Are we affected, and if so, how, by reasons from others? On the one hand, aesthetic judgements are said only to rest on the subject's experience and to stand independent of judgements from others and the disagreement of everyone else. To use Kant's words: 'taste lays claim simply to autonomy. To make the judgements of others the determining ground of one's own would be heteronomy' (CJ, §31, 281). On the other hand, taste has a social dimension: we are sensitive to how others –especially critics and those who have mastered the art of judging– appreciate and value things, and peer disagreement seldom leaves us cold. Kant seems to echo this idea: '[...] if each individual had always to start afresh with the crude equipment of his natural state, would not get itself involved in blundering attempts, if those of others did not lie before it as a warning'. The question thus is on the impact (or lack of thereof) of aesthetic reasons from others in one's appreciation. I explore a tension at the core of such answer: (i) aesthetic judgement cannot be grounded on reasons from others by virtue of the autonomy of aesthetic appreciation, and (ii) aesthetic reasons from others seems to play a role in the formation and development of our taste. In this paper I explore what it means to respond to aesthetic reasons from others in order to make sense of this tension. This paper aligns with the idea that good criticism and good reasons make a claim on the appropriateness of a certain feeling (Gorodeisky & Marcus 2018, 2021) in such a way that being affected by those is itself to feel a certain emotion as appropriate. That, I suggest, has the power to provide a new experience in the subject, on which an autonomous judgement can be grounded.

The Kind: An Ethical-Aesthetic Category for Cinema

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In recent years, the resurgence of discourses around care, attention, and vulnerability has reshaped not only ethical thought but also aesthetic practice. Contemporary cinema has turned toward gestures of care, to the quiet recognition of the other, to a trust in the power of tenderness. Yet this revival carries an ambivalence: many works that claim an ethical stance merely aestheticize empathy, transforming care into a spectacle that reassures rather than unsettles. The moral image often conceals, instead of illuminating, the ideological frameworks that sustain inequality and structural violence.

This paper proposes the kind as a category capable of distinguishing between images that moralize and images that genuinely attend. Following Iris Murdoch's intuition that "the only genuine way of being good is to be good for nothing," goodness here appears not as moral virtue but as disinterested attention — a mode of perception that creates space for the other without purpose, reciprocity, or display. Drawing on Simone Weil, Emmanuel Levinas, and Chantal Maillard, I define the kind as a gesture that suspends the economy of the image and opens a zone of ethical presence within aesthetic experience.

A broader account of the kind situates it within a lineage of gestures that resist both sentimentalized empathy and moralizing intent. These gestures affirm a mode of vulnerability grounded in a willingness to be affected rather than to produce an effect. Their force lies in this non-instrumental openness: a form of attention that sidesteps identification and emotional payoff, giving way instead to the possibility of a shared presence. In this interval, the image does not simply thematize goodness; it allows ethical relation to surface in its own time.

Certain filmmakers — Aki Kaurismäki, Alice Rohrwacher, Kelly Reichardt, Tsai Ming-liang — cultivate this aesthetics of the kind: they suspend narrative progression, renounce heroism, and allow gestures of care to unfold as fragile, unproductive, and therefore radical. In these films, the ethical dimension emerges through form itself — in silence, attention, or proximity — rather than through representation. The image ceases to instruct; it begins to listen.

To think the kind today is to reclaim the possibility of an ethics that avoids both the instrumentalization of emotion and the safety of pure formalism. It suggests that cinema, through its very uselessness, can resist moralization and still offer a space of relation — a brief clearing where looking becomes a way of caring, and beauty, a gesture of quiet responsibility.

Musical Expression Beyond the Informing Paradigm

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This paper critically examines Christopher Peacocke's metaphor-based view of musical expression, particularly focusing on his 'exploitation criterion' as it relates to what I term the 'informing paradigm.' While Peacocke's approach distinguishes itself from standard theories in contemporary analytic philosophy of music by grounding musical expression in psychological facts rather than semantic relations, I argue that his reliance on the 'exploitation criterion' as a standard of correctness presents significant philosophical challenges. Through a detailed analysis, I demonstrate three key problems with Peacocke's framework: its failure to secure a robust notion of incorrectness, the limitations of its constrained conception of musical competence, and its inability to account for musical expression on purely musical terms. Using the example of minor chord sadness, I challenge Peacocke's assumption of psychological isomorphisms between musical features and emotional states. Furthermore, I argue that Peacocke's approach fundamentally misunderstands the nature of aesthetic inquiry by separating characterization from experience and privileging verbal description over other forms of aesthetic engagement. Drawing on Wittgenstein's insights, I propose an alternative understanding of musical expression that emphasizes the open-ended nature of aesthetic experience and the importance of mutual tuning-in relationships. This reorientation moves beyond the constraints of the 'informing paradigm' to embrace a more dynamic and interactive conception of musical expression.

What Kind of Cognitivist was Susanne K. Langer?

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Aesthetic theory of Susanne K. Langer is often characterised as “cognitivist”. Aesthetic cognitivism holds that the value of art is, in some way, tied to the knowledge it provides. In my talk, I pursue two aims: first, to distinguish several kinds of cognitivism; and second, to identify the version that best fits Susanne K. Langer’s position.

In the first part, I propose three criteria for differentiating among types of cognitivism. The first concerns the object of cognitive value. Here, three candidates can be identified: the individual artwork, the art kind, or art as such. The second focuses on the form of knowledge at stake. Aesthetic cognitivists typically distinguish between propositional and experiential knowledge and argue that the cognitive value of art consists in one or the other. The third criterion concerns the role of cognitive value within the overall value of art: is it essential, or merely subsidiary? And does it pertain to all artworks, or only to some?

In the second part, I argue that Langer’s view is best understood as an art-kind-oriented cognitivism, which makes her position distinctive within the contemporary cognitivist landscape. I further suggest that her stance in the second debate is ambivalent: while she emphasizes the nondiscursive (or non-propositional) character of the knowledge mediated by art kinds, she also argues—and exemplifies through her own work in *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*—that this form of knowledge can serve the sciences, i.e., the traditional domains of propositional knowledge, in advancing our understanding of the human mind.

Finally, I examine the challenges involved in clarifying how cognitive and aesthetic values are related within Langer’s aesthetics. I will suggest that, although artworks can be cognitively valuable, this value is best understood collectively, at the level of art kinds rather than individual works.

EMI David Cope's Algorithmic Compositions: A Contribution to Questions of Musical Creativity

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The aim of the paper is to analyse compositions generated by David Cope's Experiments in Musical Intelligence (EMI) system. The analysis is based on a comparison of the characteristics of typical cover versions with EMI outputs. However, this is only a preliminary search for common features, while the question of parallels remains unclear. A cover version is a new version of an existing musical composition, often by a different artist (or even the original one) and quite often in a different musical genre, with the aim of reinterpreting or adapting the original. On the other hand, EMI generates new compositions using algorithmic processing of musical patterns identified by analysing the corpus of the composer's work. In a figurative sense, it is a kind of "reworking", but much deeper and less identifiable. It is a process reminiscent of reinterpretation, but it is much more complex. Moreover, it can be assumed that the "as if" (in the manner of Bach, Mozart, etc.) aims to create a new composition, in nothing – except historical style, genre, musical type, etc. – unlike a specific work. Algorithmic creation thus generates new compositions that imitate the style-forming elements of composers, but do not refer to the performances of specific compositions – the goal is distinctiveness (novelty of the generated work). The study compares the aesthetic and compositional properties of cover versions with the aesthetic and compositional properties of works generated by EMI to contribute to the clarification of some questions of musical creativity of AI.

The Film Screenplay as an Open Text: Aesthetic Experience and Interpretation

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This paper explores the aesthetic dimension of the film screenplay through the concepts of indeterminacy and semiotic openness. It examines how the screenplay, situated between literary and cinematic systems, generates a specific mode of aesthetic experience grounded in textual incompleteness. Rather than approaching the screenplay as a merely preparatory or technical form, the paper considers it as a written text whose aesthetic relevance emerges in the act of reading and interpretation.

Drawing on Jurij Lotman's notion of the text as a secondary modelling system, the screenplay is conceptualized as a semiotic structure in which multiple codes—verbal, narrative, and implicitly visual—interact in dynamic tension. Meaning is produced not through textual completeness, but through gaps, discontinuities, and underdetermined elements that activate the reader's imaginative engagement. In this sense, the screenplay can be understood as a text whose aesthetic function depends on its openness and its capacity to generate interpretive plurality. This perspective resonates with Umberto Eco's theory of the open work, which situates aesthetic experience in the cooperative process between text and reader. From a semiotic and aesthetic standpoint, the film screenplay functions as a transmedial textual form that anticipates cinematic realization while remaining embedded in language. Its orientation toward another medium does not diminish its aesthetic value; rather, its structural incompleteness constitutes a central condition of aesthetic experience. Reading the screenplay thus becomes an interpretative act in which the reader constructs a potential visual and narrative world through signs that exceed their immediate textual manifestation.

The paper examines the film screenplay as an example of how aesthetic meaning emerges from the interplay of presence and absence, articulation and silence, textuality and vision. The screenplay's indeterminate character invites active readerly participation, revealing aesthetic experience as a process grounded in the interpretive engagement with what remains unsaid.

An East-West Comparison of the Aesthetics of Ruins in the Context of Dark Tourism

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The concept of dark tourism, first proposed in the UK at the end of the 20th century, has been spreading globally for over a quarter of a century. However, it has not been widely accepted in Japan, and the reasons for this have often been the subject of debate. This report therefore examines “ruins” which occupy a prominent position as a component of dark tourism and attempts to provide a concrete analysis.

The concept of ruins differs significantly between Japan and Europe. In the context of Western art history, ruins were authorized especially Edmund Burke and are recognized as a source of aesthetic inspiration. In particular, in 17th-century England, educational trips for the children of the upper class known as the Grand Tour became common, and tours of ruins, including the Colosseum in Rome, were standards of these trips.

In contrast, in Japan, ruins are often viewed as objects of ridicule, and the aesthetic considerations that have been seen in Europe have been almost non-existent. Rather, there is a prevailing tendency to regard the term “ruins” as taboo, particularly in relation to the area surrounding the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. This is related to the fact that Asian architecture is primarily made of wood, and that buildings which continue to exist as heritages have generally not been built. In other words, it was only after the second half of the 19th century that structures intended to exist for a long period of time began to appear in Japan, and it can be said that Japanese society has yet to gain experience in how to interpret ruins.

Based on this contrast, I will discuss the possibility of elevating the discussion of ruins in Japan and its application to dark tourism.

Seeing and Imagining in Walton's Theory of Depiction: Revisiting the Mutual Interpenetration of Vision and Imagination

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After Kendall Walton's *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, Kendall Walton's approach to fiction has been widely accepted across various fields in the humanities, while also attracting numerous criticisms. Among them is Bence Nanay (2021). Along with Richard Wollheim, Nanay argues that Walton fails to offer a plausible account of fiction, especially concerning depiction. According to Nanay, Walton's account can be formulated as follows. When a spectator sees a depicted object in a picture, she imagines that to see the picture surface is to see the object face to face. However, recent vision science shows that when someone is engaging in sensory imagination, the early sensory cortices are activated, as they do in normal perceptual situations. Especially in vision, early visual cortex has retinotopy, so one can't see A and imagine B at the same time, because seeing and imagining both require resource in early vision cortex that can't be occupied with two different processes.

Nanay's criticism is understandable, especially given that Walton himself holds that his theory is based on propositional imagining. However, Walton underlines the mutual interpenetration between seeing and imagining, when he refers to Wollheim's concept of seeing-in. This paper proposes to focus on this mutual interpenetration in order to answer the aforementioned criticisms. Walton deliberately avoids defining what is imagining, which is the central concept of his theory, as it is an enormously complex task. We agree that it is far too difficult to do that, but it is time to clarify at least part of it.

In this paper, we examine the various mental activities that is involved in visual games of make believe, and speculate what they can be, regarding Walton's works. Then, we argue that Walton's imagination can be compatible with seeing the picture surface. This paper offers a new way of understanding games of make believe and makes it a more plausible account of depiction.

Political Implications of Abstract Art in the Post–World War II Era: Focusing on its Reception in Postwar Japan

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Since the emergence of social art history, investigations into the relationship between art and politics have become prevalent. Feminist and postcolonial art theories—both of which have had a profound impact on contemporary art history—can be seen as products of this development. Their significance lies not only in revealing how specific political conditions shaped artistic production, but also in raising a more fundamental question: on what grounds do we determine what qualifies as “art”?

Judgments about what is beautiful and what constitutes art have traditionally been treated as philosophical questions within Western art theory. Aesthetics and art history, particularly since the modern era, have been discussed within a Western aesthetic tradition that presupposes the autonomy of art. In this view, art is thought to possess its particular logic, with developmental laws and values determined by its own internal relationships.

Formalism emerged from this modern aesthetic framework, reinforcing the notion of art’s autonomy. Abstract art, in particular, was legitimized and promoted through formalist theory, which emphasized the formal elements of pure color, shape, and composition over content or subject matter. After World War II, abstraction experienced a significant breakthrough—especially under the influence of theorists such as Alfred Barr Jr. and Clement Greenberg—and came to dominate the Western art world.

Within this framework, abstract art has often been regarded as universal and politically neutral. However, I would like to pose the following question: Was the discourse surrounding the aesthetic value and success of abstract art not deeply intertwined with the political struggle against fascism and Nazism during World War II, as well as with the ideological contest over democracy during the Cold War? Was abstraction not upheld as a symbol of freedom and a banner of democratic values?

In this presentation, I will explore how abstraction was received in the postwar Japanese art world and how its aesthetic value was constructed within the political context of the time. I argue that the aesthetic value of abstract art—seemingly detached from politics—was, both consciously and unconsciously, entangled with postwar political discourse and historical circumstances.

Creating New Circuits of Colour and Scent: Scented Acrylic Colours as an Inter-Sensory Medium

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This paper examines the creation of colour–scent circuits through scented acrylic paints developed in the ongoing Scented Acrylic Colors Project at Kindai University. Responding to contemporary interest in multisensory experience and to critical reflection on the rigid division of the five senses, the project explores how colour and scent may be integrated into a unified aesthetic medium rather than treated as independent sensory channels.

The project originated when scent designer Megumi Fukatsu proposed scented paints for Masaki Taniguchi—known affectionately as “Mā-chan”—a blind painter. This initial gesture developed into a broader collaboration among @aroma Co., Ltd., Holbein Lab Inc., the General Incorporated Association Kurashi Lamp, A Green Co., Ltd. and the Cultural Design Department, aiming to design, test, and prototype scented acrylic paints accessible to diverse users. Although prior research has shown that universal principles linking color and scent are difficult to establish, workshops with students and collaborators consistently revealed the simple pleasure, curiosity, and creative engagement produced by combining the two modalities. Regardless of universality, such combinations—rarely foregrounded in everyday perceptual experience—may reconfigure sensory frames and, through repeated use, form new cultural codes.

A distinguishing feature of the project is its co-design process, in which professional scent designers work alongside students who, though inexperienced in blending techniques, embody emerging user sensibilities. Another notable departure from existing colour–scent products is that each of the six colours is paired with a multi-source blended fragrance, rather than a one-to-one correspondence between a single colour and a single raw scent material.

To further conceptualize the relationship between colour and scent, the presentation draws on Motoaki Shinohara’s “theory of traffic” (kōtsūron), categorizing interactions into four modes:

- (1) anti-traffic—“scents can only be smelled; colours can only be seen”;
- (2) single-traffic—“making scents visible” or “making colours smellable”;
- (3) double-traffic—“exchanging colour and scent”;
- (4) hetero-traffic—“colours that smell” and “scents that appear as colours.”

The integration of essential oils with acrylic pigments thus raises new questions about how multi-layered colour structures—including interactions among transparent and opaque hues, surface and film colours, and layered polychromatic resonances—might engage with scent. The paper concludes by considering how these practices and conceptual frameworks may open pathways for future cross-modal research and support the cultivation of a richer multisensory culture.

Network Mechanisms, Cultural Transfer, and Style Construction among France-Trained Chinese Artists

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This paper investigates the formation of Chinese modern art through a transcultural aesthetic framework, drawing on Wolfgang Iser's notion of *Transkulturalität* ("cultures interpenetrate and mutually transform," *Undoing Aesthetics*, 1997). Focusing on the community of France-trained Chinese artists active in the early 20th century, the study argues that the emergence of modern Chinese art was not the result of individual stylistic innovation alone but of networked aesthetic agency, produced through collective negotiation, cultural transfer, and shared artistic infrastructures.

The paper integrates Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the "third space of enunciation" (*The Location of Culture*, 1994) to analyse how these artists, such as Lin Fengmian, Xu Beihong, Wu Dayu, Pan Yuliang, and Lü Sibai, operated within an interstitial zone where French academicism, European modernism, and Chinese pictorial traditions were actively retranslated rather than passively adopted. Their transnational mobility generated what Arnold Berleant describes as an "aesthetic field", namely a dynamic relational environment in which aesthetic meanings arise from interaction rather than isolated creation (*Art and Engagement*, 1991).

To illuminate the mechanisms behind this collective formation, the study applies Pierre Bourdieu's field theory and the concept of "cultural capital" (*The Rules of Art*, 1992), showing how Paris-based training functioned as symbolic capital that shaped institutional prestige, pedagogical authority, and patterns of artistic legitimacy within Republican China. Using social network analysis, the paper maps exhibition alliances, lineage of apprenticeship, intellectual correspondences, and shared institutional affiliations, revealing a network-driven model of style formation. This model resonates with Michael Baxandall's idea of "period eye" (1972), suggesting that transcultural competencies formed a new perceptual and stylistic habitus within this artistic community.

By conceptualizing the France-trained cohort as a transcultural aesthetic community, the paper challenges diffusionist narratives and highlights a systemic, multi-centred process of aesthetic modernity. This approach contributes a relational and theoretically grounded perspective to global art history and contemporary aesthetic theory.

The Politics of Aesthetic Judgment in the Age of AI

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Artificial intelligence has recently become capable of generating visual outputs that closely resemble artistic images, a development unprecedented in human history. This technological ability has prompted widespread claims that AI can not only imitate but genuinely create artworks. In this presentation, I argue that such a claim is philosophically unsustainable and politically problematic. While AI systems can generate images through large-scale statistical pattern extraction and predictive modelling, these processes operate without the intentionality, agency, or intersubjective communicability that have historically grounded artistic creation and aesthetic judgment.

To substantiate this argument, I begin by revisiting key transitions in the history of art and aesthetics. I focus on how the conceptual separation between art and craft emerged, how the notion of beauty acquired its normative role in fine art, and how these distinctions were shaped by evolving relations of production. These historical shifts reveal that artistic practices and aesthetic meanings have always been embedded within broader social and political frameworks.

I then turn to Kant's aesthetic judgment, emphasizing the function of *sensus communis* as the shared horizon that makes aesthetic communication and critical reflection possible. This account is followed by Arendt's political interpretation of judgment, where the activities of spectatorship and deliberation constitute essential conditions of political freedom. For Arendt, aesthetic and political life both rely on an open space in which individuals can evaluate, respond to, and contest what appears before them.

Drawing on these theoretical foundations, I examine contemporary deep learning models to clarify what AI systems actually do when generating images. Despite their impressive outputs, such systems lack autonomous agency, do not participate in a shared world, and cannot initiate the reflective distance required for artistic expression. Nonetheless, AI-generated images are increasingly presented as if they were artworks, and AI systems are routinely described as artists. I argue that this attribution functions as a form of totalizing intervention in the sphere of aesthetic judgment: it collapses the distinction between creator and spectator, reduces aesthetic experience to consumption, and diminishes the critical space where disagreement, interpretation, and plurality can emerge.

Ultimately, I propose that granting artistic authorship to AI not only misconstrues the nature of art but also threatens the political freedoms grounded in human judgment and collective sensibility. By revealing this tension, the paper aims to contribute to contemporary debates on AI, aesthetics, and the future of democratic culture.

Relaxing Aesthetic Entities

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Recently, Evers (2024) has developed aesthetic non-naturalism, a view that maintains that there are objective aesthetic truths and (some of) the aesthetic entities described by them are neither reducible to, identical to, nor fully explained by natural entities. He argues for it by focusing on there being some kind of symmetry between our reasons for accepting ethical realism and our reasons for accepting aesthetic realism. Of course, even if that's correct, that might only license one in believing aesthetic realism is true because there are both naturalist and non-naturalist views. I argue that aesthetic non-naturalist views seem to be able to explain some of the data better than aesthetic naturalist views. So far, then, it looks like we've got considerations for aesthetic non-naturalism, at least partly, by focusing on some symmetries between the views. I will go on to argue that there are other symmetries between the views that may illustrate considerations against aesthetic non-naturalism. Then, I'll draw from the recent literature on the metaphysics of normativity and construct ways to 'relax' aesthetic non-naturalism. According to these relaxed views, we can retain the aesthetic truths that aesthetic non-naturalists so desire without taking on the ontological commitment they are thought to have. Therefore, plausibly, relaxed aesthetic non-naturalism also has the advantage of avoiding the standard objections against non-relaxed views.

Sound Art in East Asia: History, Terminology, and Aesthetics in Korea

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This presentation explores the formation and institutionalization of sound art in Korea, situating it within the broader East Asian context articulated by Dr. Katsushi Nakagawa. The study unfolds along three axes: the emergence and development of sound-based artistic practices (history), the introduction and circulation of the term “sound art” (terminology), and the aesthetic discourse formed through the intersections of visual art, media art, and experimental music (aesthetics).

In Korea, the artistic use of sound began to appear across different fields—visual art, media art, and experimental music—from the late 1990s. In its early phase, Korean sound art was influenced by European electronic music and Sonology networks, a trajectory that contrasts with Japan’s American-based path of reception. The 2007 Sound Effects Seoul festival marked a pivotal moment as the first international sound art event in Korea, offering a systematic platform for exhibitions and performances centred on sound. Since then, major art institutions such as the Nam June Paik Art Center, the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Cheongju (MMCA Cheongju Project), and the National Asian Culture Center (ACC) have incorporated sound art into their exhibition programs. However, no dedicated institution focusing solely on sound art has yet been established in Korea.

The term “sound art” came into broader use after the 2000s, spreading through curators, artists, critics, and academic networks. It has functioned as a flexible concept encompassing diverse practices—installation, performance, and media-based work—while ongoing debates continue over its precise definition and scope.

Aesthetically, Korean sound art has evolved through the interplay of materiality, spatiality, and sensory experience. Artists have reconfigured everyday sounds, technological noise, and ecological soundscapes, expanding the boundaries of space and perception. Since the 2010s, such experiments have increasingly addressed the politics as well as the historical, social, and cultural conditions of listening, transforming sound art from a sensory experiment into a critical practice.

These developments position Korean sound art as a vital component of East Asian discourse, contributing to the decentring of Western narratives and revealing the plural genealogies of sound art in the region.

Images of the Right Turn: The Influence of Conservatism on Contemporary Fashion

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In recent years, the United States and several European countries have undergone significant shifts that can be broadly described as a “right turn.” Right-wing politicians are gaining power more frequently, and far-right ideas are experiencing a surge in popularity. Conservative tendencies are gradually permeating contemporary culture. This paper examines how the rise of right-wing movements is influencing dominant trends in contemporary fashion. We focus on two key dimensions: the return to traditional gender roles and the renewed aspiration toward elite aesthetics.

The first dimension is explored through the trad-wife and cottagecore phenomena, which draw on classical patriarchal conceptions of womanhood - domestic caretaking, child-rearing, and the creation of a harmonious home. These ideals visibly shape style. Long dresses and skirts, floral prints, muted colours, long hair, and minimal makeup are the dominant visual markers promoted by influencers. Yet conservative femininity also manifests in less conventional ways, such as the mob wife and office siren aesthetics. These styles take their cues not from homemakers but from mafia wives and 1990s film secretaries - female archetypes defined by beauty and sexual allure rather than personal agency or self-representation.

The aspiration toward elite fashion is analysed through two opposing trends: old money and boom boom. Old money draws on the style of wealthy heirs and financial aristocracies—minimalism, elegance, classic silhouettes, and understated luxury. The trend positions itself against logomania, hyper-consumption, and the fast fashion culture of late capitalism. Yet it is now being challenged by the emerging boom boom era, which reinterprets late-1980s New York fashion. Hallmarks of this style include glamour, excess, and flamboyance. Fur, oversized gold jewellery, leather, rhinestones, and sequins are resurging. As in the 1980s, this mode of dressing expresses not the income people have but the income they aspire to.

The rising popularity of these phenomena is deeply tied to the global economic crisis. As people grow poorer, they turn to the perceived stability of the past, seeking comfort in traditional values; liberalism and personal freedom become less compelling than the security promised by conservative narratives. In fashion, this shift manifests as a retreat from novelty, experimentation, and avant-gardism. Classic silhouettes, the remixing of past visual tropes, and symbolic displays of stability and prosperity - these are the elements that unite the major trends of the present moment.

Susanne K. Langer's Aesthetic Bridging Legacy

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Factors contributing to an individual's understanding of owing someone a debt may form a complex requiring careful thought and discussion. The latest trend of transculturalism that emphasizes avoiding self-sufficiency and highlights ongoing process of overcoming binary oppositions in a continuation of complementarity and plurality is overflowing with questions. It illuminates also the notable shift in the possibility to accentuate the work of the 20th-century American philosopher of art and mind Susanne K. Langer. Rather than acknowledged original philosopher of her lifetime, as a follower of Cassirer's privileged position, Langer used to remain just the Neo-Kantian with a secondary status. On the contrary, as for an art symbol, combined with her university tutor's logic influencing her whole philosophical work, just today, Langerian thinking seems to be on its mission; supposedly even more than any time before. With this, still deeper thoughts and discussions about her philosophy (of art) are appearing. Through her philosophical conceptualization of the category of feeling, Langer has offered a specific point of view on the significance of non-discursiveness for a human life. And, despite her insufficient and complicated credit history, extraordinary Langer Circle establishment (2020), three conferences (Frankfurt (Germany, 2022), Carbondale (USA, 2024) and Vienna (2026)), and great books published (A. D. Chaplin (2021); Lona Gaikis (ed.) (2024)) have raised still further questions echoing in the debt the philosophical world owe this woman. Her actual chapter may lead not only to bridging of distinguished scientific positions of humanities and natural sciences but also to bridging of cultural thinking frameworks as the text will try show. The submitted paper will analyse such a path by means of her specific conceptualization of art symbol as overlapping with Eastern thinking tradition, herewith both their mutual coordinates and specific contributions to the current transcultural scientific debate are going to be ruminated as connected with aesthetics. The aim is simple – to imply an answer for the following question: Are we ready to pay the debt to this woman? The reason has been formed: our collective recognition of the significance of debt repayment we owe her could influence also further perceived expectations of our aesthetic world with all its attributes for humankind.

Aestheticization of Poverty and Shared Popular Imagination

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The aestheticizing the appearance of poverty takes on diverse forms in everyday life – it may be provocative, moving, even pathetic or heroic, and at times nothing but sheer pose. Moreover, as Yuriko Saito points out, this aestheticization is inherently ambivalent. When we aestheticize the appearance of poverty, it may mean that we endorse the status quo – condition of misery or at least signal our indifference to its continued existence. This occurs especially when poverty is represented in a positive light or evokes positive responses. We may also aestheticize poverty with the aim of undermining or overcoming it, which is typically effective when such representations evoke reactions that motivate efforts toward its elimination. A third possibility is the intentional fabrication of a “poor” aesthetic, in which the underlying social reality becomes entirely irrelevant.

Cases of such aestheticization typically informed by popular stereotypes, prejudices, or expectations associated with the given object, person, activity, or community. These function as a shared background against which we position ourselves — by rejecting it, affirming it, or at least presupposing it, even when engaging in the aestheticization of poverty. It makes little difference whether this aestheticization occurs within everyday life, in representations of popular culture, or even within fine art. In my presentation, I examine several instances in which popular stereotypes have informed the ways in which the poverty of marginalised communities in Slovakia has been aesthetically rendered.

"New music" – Crises of Music Aesthetics as the Window of Opportunities

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The subject of consideration is the search for a new paradigm for musical aesthetics in the 21st century. The text suggests that the crisis is perceived as a favourable opportunity for the social practice of creating, listening to music, and musicking. This practice is currently under pressure from the overproduction of artificial intelligence, or rather, it is being tested by its entry into these processes. Throughout the 20th century, it was often claimed that musical aesthetics was in a state of crisis. The underlying causes of each crisis were systematically identified, and the solutions were typically derived from novel trends in aesthetic thinking about music. They tried to redefine what a person listens to, what it is that they listen to (ontically), what changes their listening causes in the individual (psychologically) and in society (socially). Paradoxically, new cultural practices not only serve to complicate the resolution of key philosophical questions that are yet to be resolved, but also have the potential to invigorate them.

Within this dynamic, the areas of concern for new music studies and new music aesthetics can be tentatively defined as follows: firstly, there is a necessity to deepen ontological investigations in relation to the new (including non-human) nature of music creation; secondly, new subdisciplines of music aesthetics must be established (for example, the aesthetics of digital and post-digital music, artificial aesthetics of music, music ethnographic aesthetics, etc.); thirdly, definitions of musical creativity in relation to AI-supported creativity and AI creativity must be rebuilt; and fourthly, claims that musical aesthetics has given up its axiological ambitions must be refuted.

The final question pertains to the enhancement of the role of music criticism and its function in addressing issues of evaluating new musical works and musical products, redefining issues of the musical canon, and the share of authorship. The definition of a new genre of music, created indirectly by humans or not created by humans at all, and its subsequent evaluation, is a task best suited to music critics, and probably also to AI-critics. If "new music" remains attractive to humans and continues to represent a certain segment of their values, it opens up a window of opportunity for us right now.

Hajime Tanabe's Interpretation of Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment: On the Relationship Between Reason and Judgments of Beauty

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This presentation will show how our faculty of reason is related to judgments of beauty in Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment, with reference to Hajime Tanabe's interpretation in Kant's Teleology (1924). Alongside Kitarō Nishida (1870–1945), his colleague in the Kyoto School, Hajime Tanabe (1885–1962) was one of modern Japan's leading philosophers. Kantian teleology was a crucial influence on Tanabe's early thought, and his investigation of it significantly shaped his philosophical development.

In Kant's Teleology, Tanabe offers a “unified interpretation” of the Critique of the Power of Judgment, focusing on the problem of purposiveness. How Kant's third Critique can be coherently interpreted remains an open question, even today. Tanabe presents a distinctive and original approach. His reading of its first part, which concerns judgments of beauty, emphasizes their relationship with reason. According to Kant, judgments of beauty arise from the interplay of the imagination and understanding. However, in the “Dialectic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment,” Kant also states that judgments of beauty are based on the “principle of the purposiveness of nature,” which is a concept of reason. Although Kant notes its connection with judgments of beauty, he does not fully explain how they relate to reason.

Tanabe addresses this gap by interpreting judgment as a mediating faculty that unites understanding and reason. He argues that the “formal purposiveness” of nature, which grounds judgments of beauty, is postulated by reason. In the context of practical philosophy, this postulate is understood as a belief which the subject's free will projects into knowledge. It corresponds to reflective judgment, which is produced through the union of understanding and reason.

Tanabe's interpretation not only clarifies the structure of Kant's theory of beauty but also expands its scope, linking it to the problem of morality and belief. This presentation revisits the fundamental question of how we arrive at judgments of beauty, using Tanabe's interpretation to explore their deeper connections with reason.

The Geopolitical Aesthetics of “Pain/Suffering Inversion” in Edmund Burke’s *Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful*: An Attempt to Subvert the Value Hierarchy Underlying the Dichotomies of “Civilization vs. Barbarism” and “Centre vs. Periphery”

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Edmund Burke (1729–1797), the Irish-born literary and political thinker of the eighteenth century, is widely regarded as the progenitor of modern theories of the sublime for having elevated it to an aesthetic category equal to—or even surpassing—that of the beautiful in “*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*” (1757). In this work, the dichotomy between the sublime and the beautiful is grounded in a fundamental opposition between pain and pleasure. Burke’s originality, however, lies in his inversion of the value hierarchy traditionally attached to this binary. By employing a principle that converts the negativity of pain into a positive aesthetic force, the experience of “delight”—a higher-order pleasure arising from the alleviation or suspension of pain—emerges as the affective foundation of the sublime. This inversion of pain and pleasure establishes a distinctive aesthetic system that privileges non-representational value and anticipates an early form of anti-illusionism.

Such a reversal of aesthetic valuation invites us to reinterpret Burke’s sublime not merely as a psychological or physiological theory of taste, but also as one deeply intertwined with the geopolitics of his Irish identity within the eighteenth-century British world. Burke’s “*Enquiry*” implicitly challenges the canon of beauty aligned with civilization and metropolitan authority by revaluing the marginal and the peripheral, and by redefining the aesthetic significance of barbarism, obscurity, darkness, and terror. This aesthetic inversion resonates with a broader reconfiguration of binary opposition—centre vs. periphery, or civilization vs. barbarism—that structured the geopolitical imagination and power relations of the period.

Within this framework, one may discern in Burke’s writings and political engagements a consistent extension of this pro-peripheral orientation. His sympathetic assessments of ancient Indian civilization in the context of the impeachment of the East India Company, as well as his defense of the property rights of the indigenous Caribs in the West Indies, can be read as political analogues of the same inversional logic articulated in his theory of the sublime. Moreover, his evocations of the peoples and landscapes of ancient Celtic druids, American Indians, and other non-European figures associated with sublime “motives” further underscore how Burke, as an Irish thinker positioned on the margins of empire,

located aesthetic value in what hegemonic discourse conventionally dismissed as uncivilized or peripheral.

By situating Burke's aesthetics within this geopolitical matrix, the present paper demonstrates how his conception of the sublime anticipates a reflective sensibility toward the periphery—one that revalues pain, obscurity, and otherness as sources of creative and moral renewal. Through his theorization of the sublime, Burke thus emerges as a pioneering figure in the subversion of dominant aesthetic hierarchies and the reorientation of aesthetic value toward the margins of civilization.

The Rhythmic Ornament of Everyday Mobility: Morphogenesis and Participation in Central European Cities

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In Central European cities such as Brno and Vienna, contemporary urban transformations reveal ornament as a living rhythm that structures everyday experience. Revitalised tram corridors, participatory redesigns of public squares, and the expansion of green infrastructures show how ornament emerges not as decoration but as a dynamic principle—an ordering process open to variation. The city thus becomes a *kósmos* in the Platonic sense: both a world-order and an ornament, a vibrant field where aesthetic, ecological, and social processes interlace. Drawing on Lukács's conception of ornament as the unity of life and form, Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis, and Deleuze and Guattari's *ritournelle*, this paper understands urban space as a morphogenetic field in which movement, sound, and participation create coherence. Tram lines, crossings, and transit nodes appear as aesthetic organs of the urban body—arteries and synapses through which perception, rhythm, and community circulate. Two current initiatives illustrate this living ornamentality. The Brno Music Marathon, a four-day international festival held in the historic centre, transforms urban architecture into a multisensory instrument. Its performances—ranging from concert halls to “living-room” busking installations by artist Kateřina Šedá—create rhythmic correspondences between sound, movement, and built space. Similarly, Vienna's Calle Libre Festival curates large-scale street art across the city, turning façades into open dialogues between artists and citizens. Both events enact ornament as participatory morphology, revealing how aesthetic order arises through collective rhythm, improvisation, and care. In Brno's participatory budgets and Vienna's community-designed plazas, ornament evolves through shared decision-making and creative intervention. Patterns of daily motion—people walking, vehicles gliding, lights alternating—generate an embodied ornamentality that renders urban life intelligible and emotionally resonant. By interpreting such transformations through the lens of ornament, the paper bridges everyday aesthetics, ecology, and civic imagination. Ornament reappears as what Plato already described: both adornment and order. It embodies the rhythmic intelligence of the everyday world—the principle through which cities, like living organisms, sustain coherence amid change and transform beauty into the very process of collective becoming.

Crossmodal Aesthetics in Japanese Culture: From Taste Expression to the Geidō Traditions

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Scholarly discussions of Japanese culture have long relied on spiritual frameworks grounded in Zen or Buddhism. While influential, these approaches reduce the complexity of cultural practices to a singular ‘spirit,’ risk reinforcing cultural essentialism, and ultimately constrain interpretation. Drawing on recent findings in cognitive science on crossmodal perception, this paper reframes aesthetic experience in Japanese culture at the perceptual level, focusing on culturally developed modes of perception and linguistic expression.

Taste is fundamentally crossmodal, shaped by the integration of vision, aroma, texture, temperature, sound, spatial atmosphere, and social context (Spence 2017). Crossmodality also appears in the linguistic expression of taste, where metaphorical transfers across sensory domains occur. In many cultures, verbalizing taste is more challenging than verbalizing vision. Whereas Western taste expression often relies on metaphors of vision (the “higher sense”), Japanese taste expression frequently draws on metaphors of touch (the “lower sense”), using onomatopoeia such as *toro-toro* or *fuwa-fuwa*, which function as unique devices for bridging the gap between language and sensation. This reveals the culturally specific modes of crossmodal perception and expression, involving both translatability and untranslatability. These differences also highlight how the traditional Western hierarchy of the senses manifests differently across cultures.

Geidō traditions (e.g., tea ceremony, ikebana) are another example of crossmodal aesthetic practices. While ikebana results in visual achievements that resemble sculpture, it also requires crossmodal attention to bodily movement and the spatial design of everyday environments, aligning it more closely with installation or performance art. Geidō often lacks explicit verbal manuals and is transmitted through embodied instruction within master–disciple relations. While the absence of explicit verbalization has led Western interpreters to frame these practices in terms of spirituality, this may instead reflect the fact that fundamentally crossmodal practices are more effectively transmitted through embodied instruction.

Finally, this paper proposes crossmodal comparison, translation, and interpretation of sensory expressions as a method for understanding culturally specific modes of perception without recourse to spiritual frameworks. This linguistically grounded, non-essentialist approach makes cultural relativity in aesthetic experience newly visible. Moreover, because generative AI engages with human sensory experience through language, such a framework offers a basis for exploring how AI might account for cultural relativity or eventually engage with “lower senses” such as taste. By placing taste expression and geidō within a shared framework of crossmodality, this paper highlights possibilities for rethinking aesthetic experience in both human cultural contexts and emerging AI environments.

A Possible Virtuous Circle Between Popular Music and Musical Form

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There has been extensive debate regarding what we experience when we listen to music. In the Western European tradition, tonal theory is considered the best description of the musical experience itself. However, tonality does not appear to exhaust the totality of musical experience, and moreover, the recent history of Western music has also pointed to new ways of organising sound in order to experience something beyond tonal organization. Amidst this debate, popular mass music has emerged, accompanied by technological, social and compositional innovations distinct from the classical tradition. This music, immersed in a market of rapid and mass consumption, has been the subject of critique for its purported simplistic and decadent character. This viewpoint has found concurrence in both theoretical discourse and the commentary of both critics and the ordinary listener. This simplism appears to be associated with the tonal paradigm with which we judge the experience of popular music. There is a perception that the shift away from large-scale structures is detrimental to our musical experience – a ‘tonal prejudice’ that is also evident in the social, moral, or political criticism of this tradition. My proposal is to study the musical experience from the tradition of Wittgensteinian aesthetics, where it is considered in terms of understanding. As with language, experiential content has to do with what we understand when we master the ‘game’ of a certain tradition. My proposal is that, if we look at the set of actions we perform around music and which determine its experiential content, we will see how popular music provides us with a particular salient illustration of non-tonal aspects that are an indispensable part of our way of understanding music. The hypothesis is to show how important is to consider that we integrate non-tonal aspects intrinsic to our way of life through aestheticizations and thematizations that become essential to our musical understanding. The debate regarding the perception of emotions in music was an example of a proposal of this kind, but here I would like to add how other aspects of a form of life become ‘musical’, such as the psychological persona of the musician, the attitudes and ideals of a certain group, or the atmospheres that music seeks to embody – such as the exploration of nostalgia for a bygone era through the use and transformation in studio of sounds, noises or aestheticized allusions to another era.

On the Marginalization of Aesthetics and the Advocacy for Art Education

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Have you ever come across a philosophy department with no ample representation for epistemology and ethics? Or some representation for philosophy of science? But in how many departments, even in renowned universities, do we find that no faculty member has aesthetics as their first area of expertise or interest? Similar underrepresentation occurs in general philosophical journals. Much like the continuously apologetic stance of the arts, the field of aesthetics is often sidelined within the philosophical domain. This carries practical implications for job availability and job security, for level of income, for financial resources for conferences, for peace of mind required for research, for productivity and academic development. Such significantly consequential marginalization of aesthetics should come as no surprise to anyone researching the marginalization of the arts within the social context, and especially the case of art education in the public school system. Considerations of public resources allocation generally leave the arts underrepresented if not almost Platonically banished (e.g., Winner et al., Grethlein, Mims and Lankford, Jeffers and Fong, Rozelle, Hicks). This state of affairs has yielded a long history of apologetic attempts at art education advocacy.

In this paper, I examine the two arguments commonly offered in support of art education: those that justify it on the grounds of its contribution to children's moral character and those that appeal to its role in cognitive development. Both arguments render art education a tool for non-aesthetic goals. Both fail logically, as they provide faulty arguments; empirically, as they cannot be supported by research; and practically as they fail to persuade sceptical policymakers. Following Laura D'Olimpio, I argue that the justification of art education should not be sought outside the realm of aesthetics. The return to aesthetics as the source for understanding the arts and their importance in our lives is part of restoring aesthetics as a major philosophical field.

Art: Theory and Creation

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For nearly fifty years I have been engaged in philosophy of aesthetics. I read ancient and contemporary texts, analysed, interpreted, criticized and even attempted to form my own theory regarding the role of art and beauty in human individual and social experience. In the last six years I switched perspectives: from the critical-theoretical, somewhat external point of view to the inner experience of creating art: I have published since 2019 two novels and am in the midst of writing the third. Yet, the separation between the domains, so I have learnt, is not sharp, and one can gain new insights from both, and have both mutually influential. In my presentation I attempt to demonstrate this understanding by a few cases taken from my recent writing experience in both domains.

In Search of a Multisensory Experience in Virtual Spaces

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The proposed presentation examines the potential of virtual environments to support multisensory aesthetic experience beyond critiques of sensory reduction and visual dominance. Rather than treating virtual spaces as inherently limited perceptual domains, it proposes understanding them as evolving environments shaped by technological, cultural, and artistic practices.

The analysis is grounded in a pragmatic–phenomenological approach within environmental aesthetics, which conceives aesthetic experience as fundamentally embodied. Sensory perception is understood as inseparable from cognition and emotion, and the human being is approached as an embodied social subject requiring perception, communication, and conceptualization to engage with the world.

Given the historical variability of perceptual and cognitive forms, it is argued that humans can become embedded in environments offering non-physical affordances, provided these environments enable the realization of the basic conditions of embodied social existence. Virtual environments increasingly attempt to evoke multisensory impressions that foster immersion through the integration of visual, auditory, spatial, and, to a limited extent, haptic modalities.

These theoretical considerations are supported by a case study based on artistic and curatorial practices in virtual and hybrid exhibition formats from 2020 to 2025. This includes the organization of the final TICASS joint exhibition “RAPPROACHMENT WITH THE PUBLIC SPACE” curated by Adela Machova during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020/2021), the co-curation (with Zbigniew Romańczuk and Radosław Nagay) of the joint exhibition Hyperlink. A New Image of the World (2021), and a series of VR- and XR-based projects realized as both co-organizer and artist, such as The Numerical Art. Fractality of the Universe in Florence in VR with exhibition: Ethereal State, (In)Tangible, Re-Sensing Sculpture at the XR Festival. Liquid Spaces (June 2024 in the CAPHE project). Further examples include the co-organization of Resonances of Stones Biennale 2025. TMMSAC in Naxos, a visually and acoustically virtualized exhibition referring to the Bazeos fortress (September 2025 in the CAPHE project), as well as the co-curated and artistic project The Numerical Art. Critical Fantasy in VR – on the servers of the National Museum in Szczecin, Poland. Critical Fantasy (December 2025). The study concludes with the curatorial project The Virtual Film Memorial. Hybrid Bio_Geo-Graphies of Jacob Barua, presented in Nairobi (December 2025).

The presentation argues that contemporary virtual environments should be understood as sites of multisensory experimentation rather than sensory deprivation, opening new perspectives for aesthetic theory and exhibition practices in the digital age.

The Aura of Knowing: Epistemic Encounters in the Aesthetic Experience of Visual Art

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This talk explores the epistemic and ontological scaffolding of aesthetic experience, asking how our knowledge—of the artist, of the origins, of the moral narrative surrounding a work—inflects our perception and valuation of art. Moving beyond formalist paradigms or affective immediacy, I argue that aesthetic judgment is irreducibly shaped by essentialist intuitions: that artworks are not only seen, but known into significance. Drawing on Paul Bloom’s concept of the human as a “natural-born essentialist” (2010), I propose that our cognitive architecture predisposes us to perceive objects as carriers of hidden, authentic essences—anchored in historical, biographical, and moral contexts. This deep structure of knowing radically alters how we engage with visual artworks, rendering them more than sensory stimuli: they become bearers of authored meaning.

Empirical evidence stems from a three-part study conducted in the Human Being Lab, situated within the emerging field of experimental philosophy of art. Study 1 investigated how perceived effort influences artistic valuation. Study 2 examined how moral character attributed to the artist modulates both aesthetic and emotional responses. Study 3 extended the inquiry to participants from non-WEIRD societies (e.g., Papua New Guinea, Burkina Faso, the Cook Islands, and Aboriginal Australia), revealing a consistent elevation in ratings—beauty, worth, compositional quality—for works by esteemed master artists. Together, these findings suggest that aesthetic judgment is not merely a passive act of perception but a deeply epistemic and morally resonant engagement. It is shaped by evolved heuristics—prestige bias, social evaluation, adaptive intuitions—that guide us in assessing skill, intention, and virtue. This research intervenes in current debates in the philosophy of art, challenging formalist autonomy and reasserting the centrality of context, authorship, and moral cognition in our aesthetic lives. What we bring to an artwork—in terms of knowledge and belief—profoundly reshapes what the artwork becomes for us.

To Laugh or Not to Laugh: Hutcheson, Mandeville, and the 18th Century Debate Concerning the Morality of Laughter

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The paper begins with the premise that laughter in general and comic laughter in particular cannot be disengaged from moral undertones. Comic laughter always brings with it the issue of the acceptable limits of laughter as ridicule. Is there a more or less universal standard to the acceptability of comic ridicule or is the comic ridicule acceptable only in relation to the particular norms of a society or of an age? 18th century authors such as Hutcheson or Mandeville tried to deal with these issues by debating them within the framework of general theories about human nature. Thus, according to Hutcheson and his theory of the natural sociability of man, laughter is an expression of sociability and of man's basically good nature. Laughter also brings release from sorrow. On the other hand, Mandeville's idea of man as a being essentially selfish and driven by self-interest posits a theory of laughter that characterizes ridicule as an expression of human pride and superiority over another human being seen as an object of ridicule, therefore of contempt. According to Mandeville, ridicule nevertheless possesses an obvious social use in that it corrects social behaviour precisely by deriding and thus shaming the characteristics or actions that are deemed as unacceptable to a particular group. Within this 18th century debate, comic laughter thus appears as marked by a certain conditionality with respect to acceptable limits within the framework of general theories about human nature.

Unproductive Bodies. Somaesthetic Experiences as Resistance to Dissociation

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This research challenges the dominance of work and its demands for constant efficiency. Following the philosophical critique of Juan E. Valls-Boix against the tyranny of productivity (2022, 2025), it emphasises bodily unproductivity as a necessary sphere of freedom beyond perpetual self-optimisation. In doing so, it illuminates the importance of everyday somaesthetic experience as a mode of resistance in a dissociated world.

First, we trace the genealogy of the psychological concept of dissociation, from Pierre Janet (1889) to Etzel Cardeña (1994), and then offer a philosophical reinterpretation informed by postcolonial critical theory. Drawing on Gayatri C. Spivak's reworking of Gramsci's notion of the subaltern (1985), we propose to understand the subaltern as a paradigmatic figure of dissociation—conceived here as a disconnection from oneself and from one's environment.

Second, we examine Richard Shusterman's concept of somaesthetics in relation to the Aesthetics of Everyday Life, as articulated by John Dewey and Yuriko Saito, alongside Barbara Formis's distinction between ordinary sensibility and everyday aesthetics (2010, 2021). Through this conceptual constellation, we argue that the sensory continuum embedded in daily life can open pathways towards a more integrated mode of existence—one in which we are not alienated from the very sources that confer meaning upon our lives. In this regard, somaesthetic experiences can be conceived as acts of resistance within a world in which dissociation has been normalised as a coping strategy for conditions that exceed our capacity to sustain them.

Finally, we apply this theoretical reflection to a specific case study. Collective dance practice offers the possibility of encounter without productive expectation: an occasion to move, improvise, and interact somatically without instrumentalising the body. Within a dance jam, we become aware that everything happens between us—as Jean-Luc Nancy emphasises—an insight with not only aesthetic but also ontological and political implications. At this point, we draw upon Emma Bigé's contributions of the ecopolitics of dance.

While we recognise that this research arises from the privilege of relative safety and stability, we maintain that body awareness and socially embodied dance practices can serve as fields of resistance and repair, even in the most adverse contexts.

Paradox of Aesthetic Experience in the Concept of Aura: Natural vs. Artificial Aura and a Re-Thinking from the Perspective of Atmospheric Discourse

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Based on Gerold Böhme's (2017) understanding of his concept (version of concept) of atmosphere and Walter Benjamin's (1969) concept of aura we can assume a certain degree of interconnection. Böhme himself identified this relation but somehow underappreciate its significance. The paper is based on more complex and closed interconnections and mutual dependence of the concept of aura (Benjamin 1969) and atmosphere (Böhme 2017) and convictions, that aura is not only some fragmented predecessor of atmosphere, that was replaced by an understanding of the complex phenomena of atmosphere, but that aura is actually crucial for the creation and existence of atmosphere as such. Main arguments for these conclusions are (a) atmosphere is a residuum of aura, and (b) atmosphere is created by the aura of multiple objects, its properties, and spatial aspects in a certain place and at a certain time. What is crucial for identifying the atmosphere, is the ability to experience it from first person perspective (Griffero & Tedeschini 2019, p. 2) and therefore it is often understood as an "emotional space that involves one's body" (Shusterman 2019).

Aura (defined by place/here and time/now) is, in discourse, usually understood as a property of a work of art, but Benjamin (1969) actually connected it to (1) artefacts that were created by human hands and to (2) natural phenomena that are experienced in a certain place and a certain time. In this second, but ontologically speaking initial aura, Benjamin talks about the uniqueness of our experience of natural phenomena. This aspect of aura creates a paradox, that will be the main focus of the analysis. We will claim that Benjamin identifies two different principles and mechanism for a) natural aura (aura of natural objects) and b) artificial aura (aura of artefacts). Based on his definition we can argue that if we try to identify or experience the aura of human made objects, experience is not important, and cannot change anything, it can only confirm or reveal the existing aura (ontologically defined by the creation of artefacts). The criteria of experience as the moment when we "create" aura, applies only when we experience natural phenomena. This paradox and duality of understanding the aura is in our understanding also responsible for often criticized indeterminacy of atmosphere. We will try to identify logic behind this duality in Benjamin's thinking, and possible solution from this paradox as a perspective both for aura and atmosphere.

What Does It Mean, Being-in-the-World? The Political Urgency of a Radical Admission of the Body

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This presentation explores the possibility and legitimacy of a radical, fully aesthetic understanding of the body. It challenges the need to affirm the body as the fundamental vehicle for understanding the world. The drive to make the body a “signifying body” reveals that we see the “simple” body as insufficient, as if it needed to prove its role in the constitution of meaning to avoid being relegated, as it has been for centuries, by philosophical tradition.

My goal is to undermine the primacy of meaning and propose an ontological horizontalism, that is, to think of the body in its most basic form: as matter, extension, “partes extra partes,” singular, located here or there, always “touching” other bodies; impertinent (challenging and dismantling all definitions), sufficient (not requiring meaning to be abundant and full).

Contrary to what it may seem, this consideration of the “simple” body—and thus of each and every body—does not imply submitting to the realm of commodification, where everything becomes equivalent. On the contrary, we seek to include what has long been despised, precisely under the hierarchy of logos: the bodies of everyday experience, the bodies that need to eat, the bodies forgotten in nursing homes, the bodies sent en masse to war, the bodies exploited in labour conditions, the bodies that migrate as if asking for “permission to live.” We have allowed, for too long, multitudes of bodies to be devoured in the abyss of “insignificance” created by the ontological and epistemological hierarchy that dominates thought.

From our perspective—deeply influenced by Jean-Luc Nancy—to be in the world is to embrace its “simple” materiality, to align ourselves with its level, rather than always trying to understand ourselves as something of a radically distinct nature. It also involves making-the-world. Our perspective also includes the entities (bodies) that make up our everyday spaces, often relegated as lesser.

In addition to a broad sense of “aesthetics,” we will discuss its more restricted sense as “art.” If the world and the body are already a profusion of senses, art is particularly profuse in its materiality, but also in its freedom from the need to “make sense.”

We advocate for a fully aesthetic thought that, in its non-sense, is capable of undermining our assumptions about existence itself, making evident the task of reimagining our being in the world, which, as we will argue, is fundamentally aesthetic and political.

Mature Creativity and Well-being: Recent Interdisciplinary and Confucian Reflections on Aging and Creativity

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This presentation reviews recent interdisciplinary discourses about aging and creativity, including findings of medical research, psychological inquires and Chinese philosophical thinking on the subject. Medical research reveals that while aging affects cognitive domains, creativity remains surprisingly resilient. Brain changes related to aging can enhance integration between emotional and analytical thinking, fostering mature creativity, meaning that creativity is not solely dependent on cognitive sharpness but also on emotional depth and life experience. Psychologists, on the other hand, emphasize that creativity in aging evolves rather than diminishes, and that aging can liberate individuals from societal expectations, allowing for more authentic and daring creative expression. Creativity becomes a tool for coping, identity exploration, and maintaining psychological well-being, especially when integrated into daily life and social engagement. Philosophers view old age as a time for integrating life's experiences into meaningful expression. This presentation expands the discussion to Chinese philosophies, especially Confucianism and Daoism, which frame aging as a spiritual ascent. They conclude that aging is not decay but a sacred phase for realizing the Dao, embodying wisdom, and contributing to societal harmony. The presentation will also review Chinese Landscape painting by aging artists who manifest Confucius' discourses on aging and Shitao's Daoist aesthetics in ink painting. The discussion will see how the findings of medical and psychology studies about aging and mature creativity talk to Chinese aesthetics, and the dialogue is timely for the world's aging population, revealing a growing importance in understanding the subject and how mature creativity is reaching for well-being and searching for new meanings in life.

The Non-Human Genealogy of the Operational Image: On the Aesthetics of Images Generated by Machines and Animals

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This paper proposes the genealogy of the operational image by tracing non-human photographic forms distinct from the political aspects often levelled against contemporary machine vision. Operational images, as defined by Harun Farocki, are “images that do not represent and object, but rather are part of an operation” (Farocki 2004). These images have frequently been the subject of discussions focused on their political and infrastructural aspects – sensing and surveillance since the advent of digital technology, and the algorithmic governance that controls them (Hoelzl and Marie 2015). In contrast, this paper demonstrates that the alternative genealogy of such operational images can be traced back to non-human agency, specifically to the following two instances.

Initially, the early technical systems, particularly photogrammetry from the late 19th century onwards, could be regarded as pivotal antecedents for the automation or computation of photographic technology. Conceived from the announcement of the daguerreotype as a technology enabling the measurement of inaccessible places, examples include the work of Aimé Laussedat in France and Albrecht Meydenbauer in Germany, who developed it for surveying land and buildings from the 19th century (Albertz 2001, Schindler 2018). As Jussi Parikka (2023) observes from a media archaeology perspective, this lineage of photogrammetric surveying can be critically re-examined as the source of contemporary digital photography's algorithms and datafication.

Concurrently, one of the methods enabling remote photographic operation for measuring subjects was animal-mounted photography. This practice was notably exemplified by Julius Neubronner's pigeon photography in the early 1900s (Neubronner 2017), which employed a small automatic camera activated by mechanical timers and carried by flying pigeons. The images captured by this method were distinguished by perspectives and compositions that emerged from the natural movements of the birds rather than from human intention. While these are noted as precedents for contemporary drone imagery, they can also be seen as embodying non-human photography and its visual logic, as Joanna Zylińska (2017) has pointed out.

Thus, to what extent does the genealogy of image generation achieved through these nonhuman photography techniques overlap with, and how does it differ from, the operational images that foreground contemporary digital and political implications? This paper seeks to re-examine these images not only as precursors to military surveillance but also as experiments in perception through hybrid devices combining animals and technology (Canales 2016), with a view to unveiling a sensorial shift that decentred humanity well before the advent of digital sensing technologies.

Sovereignty and Care: Based on the Concept of “Occupation” from a Joint Research of Environmental Aesthetics and Environmental Psychology

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This presentation focuses on the concept of care, which has garnered increasing attention in recent years within the fields of environmental aesthetics and everyday aesthetics. By referencing theories and practices from environmental psychology, it aims to further develop this concept.

Rehabilitation programs for elderly people with dementia and patients in post-illness recovery, conducted based on environmental psychology theories and methodologies, have demonstrated improvements not only in cognitive and physical functions but also in participants’ subjective sense of well-being through various “occupation” programs (Pálsdóttir et al. 2024; Grahn et al. 2022). For example, in horticultural therapy, each process constituting the activity—from spending time in the garden, to filling pots with soil, planting seeds or seedlings, subsequent care, and even communication with other participants—is understood as an “occupation.” “Occupation,” which encompasses the state of “being”—immersing oneself in the environment and observing surroundings—to the state of “doing”—engaging in active behaviour (Pálsdóttir)—holds the potential to overcome the limitations of aesthetic perception models traditionally divided into “detachment” and “engagement.”

Furthermore, in Martin Seel’s theory of aesthetic recognition, Axel Honneth’s related theory of moral recognition, and the care theory within everyday aesthetics associated with them—which I have been discussing—the importance of a subject whose free and autonomous personality is respected is consistently emphasized. This state is precisely what is realized in rehabilitation occupation and overlaps with Honneth’s recent work *The Working Sovereign* (2023), which centres on the relationship between working conditions and democracy.

We must engage in labour daily—in other words, we must fulfil our existential lives—but just as the excess of labour must not undermine the sovereignty to participate in political decision-making, the sovereignty to experience beauty within our everyday environments and to care for them should not be relinquished.

Drawing on pioneering rehabilitation cases from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences I propose a model of “occupation” distinct from “appreciation” or “criticism” through a joint research of environmental aesthetics and environmental psychology.

On the Matter of Images: A Leibnizian Account of Relational Aesthetic Realism

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This paper articulates a relational aesthetic realism that moves beyond externalist representational models, according to which aesthetic properties are either “subjective” or “objective.” Contemporary anglophone aesthetics remains structured by this dichotomy: realists maintain aesthetic properties as mind-independent features of objects, whereas non-realists regard them as subjective projections without objective referents. In this debate, the status of metaphor plays a central role. By returning to the early modern context in which aesthetics was first theorised—specifically, the Leibnizian model of perception taken up by Baumgarten—I offer an alternative framework for understanding aesthetic properties.

The value of returning to Leibniz lies in the reconfiguration of perception as an ontologically real relation. Rather than beginning from an external subject confronted with an independently existing object, Leibniz conceives reality as a system of mutually constitutive relations. Perception no longer merely represents an external object; it participates in the constitution of what the object is. Perception is therefore not a representational act grounded in consciousness, but a real relation that precedes and conditions consciousness itself. As such, Leibniz abolishes the representational distance between a “for us” and an “in itself”: the appearance of a thing, as the expression of the world from a determinate point of view, is an aspect of its reality.

On this account of perception, I centre the aesthetic relation itself rather than either of its poles. Aesthetic properties arise from finite perspectives expressing the infinite whole of which they are a part. They are therefore neither detachable from the world nor reducible to the consciousness that perceives them. Following Baumgarten’s conception of the *analogon rationis*, I locate the specificity of the aesthetic relation in the richness of sensible perception through which the world is apprehended in its heterogeneity beyond conceptual unification—constituting its “obscurity”. Aesthetic realism, thus reinterpreted, does not posit independently existing aesthetic qualities; it identifies a mode of real perceptual relation that constitutes them. I therefore affirm the reality of aesthetic properties (with the realists) while rejecting their independence (with the anti-realists).

Within this framework, metaphor becomes a privileged mode of aesthetic cognition. Far from undermining realism, metaphor expresses obscure sensible relations by drawing on the richness and cohesion of sensibility itself. By discovering real affinities within sensibility, the synthetic activity of metaphor allows its descriptions to individuate relations that add something over and above the true statements generated by analytic modes of conceptual cognition.

Merely Ornamental

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With the exception of architects working in traditional styles, Art Deco movement, or individual architects like Louis Sullivan or Frank Lloyd Wright, due to the dominant global influence of the international style ornament almost entirely disappeared from modern architecture. Since modernists treated ornament as a dishonest addition that undermines functional design, they relegated it to the domain of interior decorators. Mainstream aesthetics, meanwhile, understanding art as autonomous from practical purposes, ontologically elevated from the category of “mere things”, evicted ornament into the aesthetically secondary category of applied art. Reacting against such dismissals, some theoreticians attempt to rescue ornament by differentiating it from decoration, thereby exempting it from negative qualifications, reserving those for what they argue is justifiably considered “merely decorative”.

In the article “The Distinction of Ornament and Decoration in Architecture”, Ahani, Etesam and Islami present an overview of the way terms “ornament” and “decoration” have been interpreted in the theory of architecture. The three main characteristics of ornament they identified are: ornament’s ontological and stylistic inseparability from the building, its structural and architecturally functional role and its role as a means of cultural identification.

Inseparability from the building proves, claim Karsten Harries, Moussavi and Kubo, Kent Bloomer and Christopher Alexander, that ornament is not an extrinsic accessory to the architectural work, but rather ontologically and stylistically its integral part. Ornament is an organic part of an architectural work, essential for its identification, expressing its internal logic; it is “the formula of architectural style” (Ernst Bloch). While modernists architects considered ornaments architecturally superfluous, Roger Scruton and Arnold Berleant demonstrate how they are structurally and functionally relevant. Ornaments help orient the users: they separate buildings from their surroundings; by emphasizing their entrances and windows they visually structure them. By articulating different floors and parts of the building they act as a scale device, making the building easier to “read”. Ornament is also crucial for cultural and historical identification: it embodies the spirit of the times, ethos of the community, to which even post-modernism with its disregard for the historical grounding of ornamental elements it plays with, or modernism with its apparent dismissal of ornaments, indirectly testify.

I conclude that the main arguments aestheticians and architects had for dismissing ornament - its ontological non-autonomy from the building and its non-autonomy from non-aesthetic functions - could actually be turned on their head and used in its defense.

Decolonial Aesthetics of Weak Resistance and Tender Solidarities in Transnational Feminist Arts Activism

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This paper explores feminist arts activism as a form of weak resistance and tender solidarities in postcolonial and post socialist contexts, focusing on Brazil and Poland. It examines how feminist artists negotiate hegemonic power through everyday, non-heroic practices of writing and making, while engaging decolonial aesthetics as a mode of delinking from Eurocentric or Western notions of artistic value, authorship, and visibility.

Drawing on Pannela Castro's HerStory series (2019–2023) and Eliza Proszczuk's participatory embroidery projects (*Intimate Embroidery*, 2018; *Without Title*, 2017), the paper investigates how writing – in painted portraits or traditional needlework – becomes a medium of counter-hegemonic expression. These artistic acts transform intimate trauma, shaped by colonial legacies and postsocialist patriarchy, into collective testimonies. As practices of decolonial aesthetics, they reclaim subjugated knowledges and marginalized forms of making, positioning affect, relationality, and embodiment as central to artistic practice.

In Brazil, Castro's work documents Afro-Brazilian women's experiences of domestic violence, foregrounding how racial and gendered oppression rooted in colonialism persists within private spheres. Her art enacts self-decolonization by reclaiming voice and visibility beyond dominant cultural and institutional frameworks. In Poland, Proszczuk's embroidery workshops create inclusive, communal spaces for women of diverse backgrounds to articulate private experiences publicly. By mobilizing traditional female crafts as feminist tools, her work disrupts binaries of public/private, high/low art, and visibility/invisibility, embodying decolonial aesthetics through the revaluation of suppressed cultural forms.

Juxtaposing these cases reveals convergent strategies of feminist arts activism that unsettle patriarchal/colonial divisions between art and craft, individual and collective, political and intimate. The paper argues that such practices aesthetically and politically exemplify strategies of 'weak resistance' (Majewska 2018; 2019) and 'tender solidarities' (Michna, 2025), not through direct confrontation and hegemonic imposition, but through subtle reconfigurations of aesthetic and social orders.

By foregrounding situated, affective, and communal modes of feminist agency, this analysis contributes to debates on decolonial aesthetics as a framework for imagining alternative futures of artistic expression. It highlights how transnational feminist solidarities emerge not through homogenization but through shared struggles at the margins, cultivating tender solidarities that offer pluriversal visions of art, intimate politics, and life beyond colonial and patriarchal constraints.

Kitsch as an Aesthetic Dimension and Key to Understanding Contemporary Political Populism in Central Europe

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This study offers a re-instrumentalization of the category of kitsch, shifting it from a fluid post-artistic concept to a sharp argumentative and epistemological tool capable of exposing contemporary political populism. We argue that Central European thinking about kitsch is shaped by a specific, culturally framed sensibility rooted in the painful historical experience of totalitarian regimes. This historically conditioned trauma has cultivated a unique diagnostic intuition within our intellectual tradition. Consequently, instead of treating kitsch merely as an aesthetic dimension of modernity, we weaponize it as a cognitive framework to critically analyse and unmask the rising populist strategies of current politicians.

In Central Europe, these anti-elitist narratives programmatically weaponize motifs such as national pride, (proud) peasantry, the sacralization of the agrarian way of life, and isolation from a supposed enemy—offering simplistic answers to complex global questions. Through the paradigmatic texts of Dwight MacDonald, Ludwig Gies, Matei Calinescu, and Ernesto Laclau, but strictly contextualized through the lens of our local post-totalitarian experience, we will interpret how kitsch operates in the contemporary communication space. The core objective is to demonstrate that our specific regional perspective transforms the critique of kitsch into a vital political epistemics necessary for understanding modern democratic erosion.

Looseness as an Aesthetic Method: Rethinking Collective Subjectivity in Contemporary Art

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Art collectives—groups of creators from different professional backgrounds—have become prominent figures in contemporary art since the 2000s. Unlike typical artistic collaborations or institutional coproductions such as medieval guilds, collectives are not based on a singular shared intention or fixed memberships or strict hierarchical structures. These loose groups represent not only a new way to practice art but also an emerging model of human subjectivity that could serve as an alternative to the dichotomy between individualism and totalitarianism.

Contemporary philosophers have often discussed the production of collective subjectivity through group activities. For example, Félix Guattari suggests that a new collective subject, which is formed or transformed through unexpected and temporary connections among disparate elements within the group, counteracts the standardized subjectivity embedded in social systems. For Guattari, the condition of such a collective subject is both active and passive.

Meanwhile, this paper focuses on the inherent “looseness” at the core of art collectives and reconsiders the existential mode of a collective subject as a kind of “middle voice”—a state that is neither active nor passive. Such a distinctive modality does not find its theoretical foundation in contemporary philosophy but rather in modern aesthetics around 1920–1930, such as that of Walter Benjamin or Hannes Meyer. Benjamin coined the term *Kollektiv* to describe the emerging masses in modern metropolises who are so deeply immersed in the city’s phantasmagoria. However, this group is by no means purely passive, nor is it solely influenced by external factors. Instead, it can awaken and transform independently through collisions with external factors, existing in a middle-voice state. Meyer, the second director of the Bauhaus, sought to evaluate the *Kollektiv*, the group of workers engaged in automated operations on the same production line, not as an assemblage of uniform individuals but rather as a creative collective subject in modern design. Furthermore, Japanese modern philosophy might provide a crucial theoretical dimension to this discussion, especially through its original concept of “primordial collectivity.”

Drawing upon these theoretical frameworks, this study examines the structure of horizontal interrelationships within the loosely bounded collective and the creative function of its middle-voice mechanism. Ultimately, we clarify the importance of this emerging model of collective subjectivity from an anthropological-aesthetic perspective.

György Lukács, Architecture, and the Aesthetics of Realism (Whether “Socialist” or Not)

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On April 17th and 24th of 1951, György Lukács was summoned to a debate concerning current questions of architecture in socialist Hungary. The event included the party functionaries József Révai, who was part of the inner circle of the dictatorship, the highest authority on questions of culture, and a friend of Lukács for decades, and Márton Horváth, an influential cultural authority in the party, as well as a number of important architects, artists, and scholars. These latter included the architect Maté Major, a Technical University professor and editor who was a long-standing Communist Party member, former member of the international modernist architecture organization CIAM, and advocate of functionalist architecture in Hungary; the modernist painter turned reluctant socialist realist Aurél Bernáth; and the philosopher and critic Lukács. Notably, Lukács argued against Major’s modernist-functionalist view of architecture as well as the ideological line pushed by the Communist Party leadership, who sought to align socialist architecture with the official policy of Soviet-style “socialist realism.” Anticipating by more than a decade his late, systematic aesthetics’ focus on “the specificity of the aesthetic,” Lukács argued for attention to the aesthetic specificity of architecture, which was neglected by the haphazardly articulated idea of “soc-real” architecture, and, as with his general theory of art, he rooted this aesthetic specificity of architecture in a conception of mimetic realism, “imitating” broad historical-popular currents in the modes of structuring both buildings and their surrounding spaces. Architecture, which is treated at length in the second volume of *The Specificity of the Aesthetic*, posed a challenge, however, both for Lukács’s notion of mimesis and for the conception of artistic realism rooted in it. In what sense, can this constructive relation to the historical context be thought of as “imitative” or “reflective,” and even if this is so, does it define the aesthetic specificity of architecture or architecture as a specifically aesthetic set of “works”? I argue that attention to this earlier, ideologically motivated, and mostly forgotten architecture debate during the Stalinist dictatorship in Hungary helps shed light on Lukács’ discussion of architecture in his late aesthetics, including his seemingly strained attempt to square the circle between architecture and his (mostly literary-based) advocacy of artistic realism.

Appearances of Water

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Water is essential to life, but it is also much more. It plays a significant role in various human productive activities and is closely related to spiritual activities such as art, religion, and philosophy. It is only natural that we should pay academic attention to water. Scholarly interest in water encompasses its origins, scientific properties, practical uses, and mental imagery. To date, water has been studied primarily as a resource for human life or as a physical phenomenon from a scientific perspective. However, humanistic studies on water have not been actively pursued. Therefore, I would like to investigate an aesthetic approach to the various forms of water.

The nature of water is defined by flow and circulation. Flow represents the temporal aspect of change, while circulation represents the spatial aspect of change. These diverse and beautiful forms of water have served as important motifs in literature and the arts. In the Western tradition, water has been considered the origin of the cosmos or the source of life. In the Eastern tradition, it was understood as merging with the realm of personality. In particular, the contemplation of water or waterfalls is a means of enhancing one's character. Water has served as a metaphor for virtue. Eastern literati did not view water from an objective or external perspective; instead, they admired it through an understanding of the moral realm.

Nowadays, we often forget the dynamics of flowing water in our daily lives. We see water only through pipes and lose sight of it once it disappears into the drain. We tend to forget the sensibility of water and the atmosphere of the riverside or seaside, losing touch with its seasonal nuances. We have grown accustomed to treating and calculating water merely as a quantity. Water is a vital theme in aesthetics. The aesthetics of water does not simply mean admiring or enjoying its beauty but rather restoring human sensibility itself by coming into intimate contact with 'living' water.

Non-Deceptive Pictorial Experience and Illusion

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In recent decades, Edmund Husserl's theory of pictorial experience has become widely known and discussed among scholars working within the tradition of Richard Wollheim's and E.H. Gombrich's theories. Among many publications, Jens Dam Ziska's article "Art as Alchemy: The Bildobjekt Interpretation of Pictorial Illusion" (2018) has received relatively little attention. However, his article makes a valuable contribution by proposing an original idea: in seeing pictures, we experience what Ziska terms 'image object illusionism' (or Bildobjekt illusionism). Ziska takes the concept of Bildobjekt (image object) from Husserl's theory of image consciousness and claims that the source of illusion lies in the image object, rather than in the image subject (the depicted scene or object). He also argues that appreciating 'image object illusionism' puts us in a better position to understand Ernst Gombrich's book *Art and Illusion*.

My presentation has two aims. First, I argue that Ziska's interpretation of Husserl's image consciousness is inaccurate and that the Bildobjekt illusionism does not apply to depictions. Husserl clearly states in his Göttingen lecture course "Phantasy and Image Consciousness" (published in *Husserliana XXIII*) that pictures are not illusions. Second, I show that Ziska's article remains valuable since it highlights an important difference between Husserlian and Gombrichian theories of pictures. This difference lies in their understanding of "illusion." For Husserl, pictures cannot be illusions since an illusion is deception. Gombrich holds that only some illusions are deceptive, such as *trompe l'oeil* pictures. Taking this difference into account puts us in a better position to understand why the experience of *trompe l'oeil* pictures does not count as an experience of depiction in Husserl's account. Specifically, at the moment we are deceived into seeing the object face-to-face, we are not having a pictorial experience; and after realizing that all we see is a picture, we no longer have an illusion. Accordingly, in Husserl's account, pictorial experience must remain non-deceptive, and precisely because it is non-deceptive, it cannot be an illusion.

Vakrokti as Rupture: Kuntaka and the Question of Aesthetic Autonomy

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This paper re-examines Rājānaka Kuntaka's Vakroktijīva to argue that his idea of vakrokti—usually translated as “crooked” or “deviant speech”—marks a return to art itself from the more system-bound theories of later Indian aesthetics. In contrast to the teleological, reception-oriented approaches of Ānandavardhana's dhvani and Abhinavagupta's rasa, Kuntaka proposes a creator-centred poetics in which the act of artistic making, rather than its interpretation, defines the aesthetic field. The paper maintains that vakrokti is neither an alaṃkāra (ornament) nor even the process of ornamentation; it is the inner principle that animates poetry. For Kuntaka, poetic language is not adorned from without—it is poetic by virtue of its own deviation from the ordinary.

Interpreting vakrokti as a form of rupture, the paper reads poetic expression as an interruption of the everyday, a deliberate dislocation that reveals the poet's pratibhā or creative vision. The six levels of vakratā described by Kuntaka—from the phonemic to the structural—illustrate how deviation operates through every stratum of composition.

A meta-reading of Vakroktijīva reveals Kuntaka's project as deliberately non-teleological. His emphasis on pratibhā, aucitya (propriety) and lāvaṇya (grace) situates aesthetics within the creative process itself. While the dhvani-rasa theorists analyse the spectator's experience, Kuntaka writes from the standpoint of the maker, fashioning a theory that is inclusive, fluid and resistant to final systematisation. By shifting attention from aesthetic doctrine back to the living act of creation, he restores autonomy to art and recognises its inexhaustibility.

Kuntaka's conception of vakrokti thus anticipates a distinct kind of aesthetic humanism—one that values deviation, plurality and freedom as the conditions of beauty. In placing the emphasis on creation rather than codification, the paper shows that Kuntaka gestures toward a poetics in which, ultimately, art is self-sufficient: it takes care of itself.

The European City as a Symbolic Space: Aesthetic Considerations

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Some buildings and monuments in cities were built based on a conscious decision to promote the city's identity. They draw attention to the city's exceptional history, emphasize its originality, highlight the uniqueness of the era in which they were created, represent domestic or foreign powers, and showcase the exceptional deeds of the city's inhabitants. They express and affirm the strength or uniqueness of the city. – We can find such kinds of buildings in cities like Helsinki, Warsaw, Bucharest, and sculptures in other cities, e.g., Prague, London, Skopje. – Buildings, as well as sculptures, often use monumental morphology, imitations of classical or ancient architecture, and pathos. Frequently, they do not provoke questions, but offer ready-made answers, i.e., easily understandable opinions. They adhere to old-fashioned aesthetic standards. – A different approach is taken by statues and monuments of artists associated with the city, such as in Dublin or Gdansk, and/or some modern architectural landmarks in cities such as Paris, Brussels, and Dublin. In these projects we can see deeper aesthetic innovations. Memorials to artists are designed to show the relationship of the personalities to the city, and the morphology of the sculptures is an attempt to express the character of the artists' works. Some sculptures tend towards realistic representation, other do not avoid pathos and often use symbols. Larger modern architectural landmarks show a high level of creativity. They were clearly supposed to represent the city, still they often became a great enigma, the meaning of which is sometimes difficult to understand. – Buildings commissioned by or for power structures often limit the authenticity of creators and force them to present officially established meanings. Such kinds of buildings are not authentic expressions of ideas, they are statements (Dewey). Then, the result is superficial propaganda bordering on kitsch. On the other side, smaller commissions outside power structures show signs of authenticity of expression (Wittgenstein), of authenticity of action (Sartre), of authentic identity (Kierkegaard), of authenticity of one's being (Heidegger).

The Aesthetics of Timelessness in Meredith Monk's Book of Days: Stratifying Time Beyond Linear Modernity

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This research examines the musical and performative structures that generate a sense of “timelessness” in Meredith Monk’s film and musical work, *Book of Days* (1988/89). In contrast to the linear acceleration of contemporary society, Monk’s work constructs an alternative temporality by intentionally decontextualizing historical and sociopolitical narratives. I argue that this “timelessness” is achieved through what I term “Temporal Stratification,” which functions as a semiotic strategy to construct timelessness by resisting dominant linear paradigms.

Utilizing structural music analysis and semiotic perspectives, this study demonstrates how Monk dismantles linear progression through three primary mechanisms. First, drawing on Joseph Straus’s post-tonal theory, I analyse how Monk establishes pitch centrality to anchor the acoustic space, effectively suspending functional harmonic movement and creating a sense of “frozen” time. Second, applying Jonathan Kramer’s concept of “vertical time,” I examine how repetitive ostinatos and additive structures allow time to accumulate vertically—creating a “thick present”—rather than moving forward toward a teleological goal. Third, integrating the vocal theories of Kate Heidemann and Nina Eidsheim, I argue that Monk’s use of non-linguistic vocables and physiological gestures prioritizes the “vibrational materiality” of the body. This practice resists academic verbalization and functions as an embodied critique of linear modernity.

Ultimately, this paper defines Monk’s stratification as an aesthetic practice that shifts the listener from causal linearity into a realm of “eternal becoming.” By grounding the analysis in the physical reality of the voice and structural stasis, this study offers a new perspective on how contemporary art can intervene in our experience of time.

"What Times Are These?": Adorno's Aesthetics in the Debate on Poetry and Nature

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"What Times Are These?": Adorno's Aesthetics in the Debate on Poetry and Nature

The intention of this paper is to investigate possible contributions of the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno to the field of Ecocriticism in relation to Literature and Arts. The investigation focuses on reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *Aesthetic Theory*, and the essay "On Lyric Poetry and Society". The hypothesis relies on the idea that, complementing the reflection on the Enlightenment tendency toward the domination of nature, Adorno develops, especially in the essay "On Lyric Poetry and Society", a dialectic of nature approached through art: in epic poetry, which has a more political sense, it is possible to observe the explicit concern about the destruction of nature; on the other hand, lyric poetry regularly idealizes a state of untouched nature, in which humans are not in conflict but actually in a harmonic relation with it. Another aim of the paper is to analyse historical changes regarding the relation between art and nature from Adorno's perspective, such as the long line that connects Greek epic - *Odyssey*, for instance - and the political poetry of today. To this end, the intertextuality between poems by Bertolt Brecht, Paul Celan, and Adrienne Rich will also be explored.

Transfiguration or Simulation? The Impossibility of Generative Art Considering Arthur Danto's Theory of Art

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The advent of generative artificial intelligence has prompted debates regarding the ontological nature of its visual productions and the legitimacy of their classification as works of art. This presentation proposes a critical analysis of AI-generated images through the lens of Arthur Danto's theory of art, particularly the concepts developed in *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (1981), arguing that such productions cannot be considered art in the proper sense, as they lack the fundamental constitutive element: interpretation mediated by the artist's style. Danto establishes that the work of art cannot be reduced to the material object but consists in the dialectical synthesis between the object and its interpretation, situated within what he terms the artworld: an atmosphere of, a historical-theoretical context that enables works of art to exist. The transfiguration of the commonplace operates precisely in this dimension: a banal object ascends to the condition of art when invested with aboutness, embodied meaning and interpretation, manifesting itself through style as the unmediated expression of the artist's subjectivity. Style, for Danto, does not constitute a mere formal attribute, but the way of being of the artist, their historicity and existential singularity inscribed in the materiality of the work. Applying this theoretical framework to AI generative productions reveals a structural impossibility. The person entering prompts into the system isn't responsible for interpreting the work itself but simply gives algorithmic directions. The prompt is a technical guideline, not a Dantian interpretation. AI, in turn, operates through statistical synthesis of patterns extracted from vast training datasets, recombining preexisting elements according to mathematical probabilities: essentially, a combinatorial agent, not a transfiguring subject. The supposed "style" of generated images does not emanate from a subjectivity historically situated in the artworld, but constitutes pastiche of styles previously encoded in data. Absent the direct mediation of authorial style and human interpretative intentionality, the AI product remains a "digital commonplace" – a technically sophisticated arrangement of pixels, yet devoid of the transfigurative spark that characterizes the work of art. Danto's theory is still essential for defining art and its boundaries in the digital era. AI may constitute a powerful tool in service of artistic making, but cannot itself be considered an artist, for the essence of art resides in the non-algorithmic relationship between human intentionality, style, and interpretation, mediated by effective participation in the artworld. Transfiguration, unlike simulation, requires the irreducible presence of the artist's historical subjectivity.

Aesthetics of Topology and Landscape as Principal Design References in Architectural, Urban, Interior, and Object Design

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Contemporary architecture and design approaches of every context and scale appear largely influenced by two formal orientations: those of topologically centred structures and the landscape visionary approaches. Our presentation insists on the cultural comment that both influences, though at first sight divergent, the first mathematically orientated and abstract, while the second environmentally founded on the material earth substratum, are finally interconnected. Earth landscape formations appear to be the best possible material metaphor for abstract topological mathematics. Furthermore, topology appears to be the best possible conceptual schematization of landscape design, of landscape-like formations of buildings and urban structures, and of folding forms applied in interior and object design as well. In this context, topologically orientated landscape forms have been installed; they have been 'built into' our conceptual approaches not as functional prerequisites solely but, furthermore, as aesthetic icons. They unconsciously invaded our cultural imagery as symbolic images associated with our expressive interest in environmental and high-technology avant-gardes. Design approaches were thus eroded by topological movement, and 'green' vegetal surfaces covered the roofs and walls of the hardscape structures.

It was in 1995 that Bernard Cache published his book, *Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories*, an English translation of his unpublished French manuscript, *Terre-meuble*, written in 1983. In those texts, the author presented topologically oriented formations as a possible, common formal paradigm for landscape design, landscape or earth 'in motion', and object design as well: a common design approach associated with folding structures, which can be easily depicted through a computer-aided 'animate' approach. During the same period, Gilles Deleuze, in academic conduct with Cache, published his own book in 1988, which also focused on topological formations: *Le Pli, Leibniz et le Baroque*, translated in English under the title *The Fold, Leibniz and the Baroque*, a philosophical investigation of the origins of the neoteric topological approach. Deleuze presented Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's concept of the 'monad' and interpreted the world as a body of infinite folds, which weaves through compressed time and space. It was after the previous publications by Deleuze and Cache that folding design structures were largely proposed as formal design prototypes in general and that the aesthetics of landscape appeared as an important aesthetic contribution to contemporary design: an aesthetic contribution not restricted to the environmentally friendly vision and ecosophic sensitivity but associated, moreover, with abstracted topologically folding formations.

The Aesthetics of Dwelling: Transcultural Dialogues between Chinese Processual Thought and Environmental Philosophy

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In an age marked by ecological exhaustion and metaphysical disconnection, the question of how to dwell on Earth has become not only an ethical or political issue, but an aesthetic one. The accelerating degradation of the planet reveals a deeper crisis in the ways human beings perceive, value, and inhabit the world—a crisis rooted in the dualisms that have long separated mind from matter, subject from object, and humanity from nature. To respond to this disjunction, philosophy must learn to listen again: to the rhythms of change, to the silent wisdom of interdependence, and to the aesthetic pulse that underlies all forms of life. Reimagining our relationship with the Earth thus requires a transformation in the very categories through which we think and experience the world.

This paper explores the possibility of such transformation through a dialogue between Arnold Berleant's environmental aesthetics and the relational ontology articulated in the *Yi Jing* (Book of Changes). First, it will consider the vision of reality offered by the Chinese classic as a ceaseless process of transformation, in which every being participates in a web of mutual resonance and becoming. Instead of static substances or transcendent principles, the *Yi Jing* proposes a universe governed by the fluid interplay of relations—a living cosmos in which creativity and harmony emerge from within the flow of existence itself.

Second, it considers how this processual worldview, placed in conversation with Berleant's notion of aesthetic engagement, illuminates an alternative way of inhabiting the Earth. For Berleant, aesthetic experience is not detached contemplation but an immersive, multisensory participation in the world. Read through the lens of Chinese ontology, such engagement becomes a mode of attunement—a poetic and ethical responsiveness to the dynamism of life.

Thus, the transcultural framework proposed here does not merely juxtapose two traditions; it invites their mutual transformation, generating new conceptual resources for ecological thought. From this encounter arises a form of environmental awareness rooted in aesthetic engagement, embodied experience, and emotional resonance rather than abstraction or control. Ultimately, this dialogue points toward an art of dwelling: a philosophy of participation that reawakens the aesthetic dimension of being as a path toward harmony with the living Earth.

New Enchantment and Metamorphoses of the Human Body: Benjaminian Roots of the 21st Century Fashion Aesthetics

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Walter Benjamin's classic reflections on sartorial fashion are concerned with the category of fetishism. Meanwhile, the second key concept of Benjamin's aesthetics – aura – remains aside in his texts dealing with this phenomenon. In our talk, we will attempt to demonstrate how the development of European fashion aesthetics at the end of the 20th and in the 21st century redefines the category of fetishism in an original way through the concept of atmosphere, thereby connecting the two concepts. This connection presents a new perspective on humans and their environment, making fashion aesthetics a valuable contribution to current discussions.

Benjamin's category of fetishism implies a dialectical intertwining of the living body and inanimate objects. The inorganic which captures human desire becomes both natural and social. Thus, the inorganic becomes utopian living nature in this way of thinking. In this sense, nature is not only a material subjected to humans, but also a dimension of human liberation. At the turn of the millennium, the connection between fashion and fetishism returns in a new form in Hartmut Böhme's theory of culture, which rehabilitates the auratic effect of things on humans through the concept of atmosphere. This theoretical model implies a new image of humans, according to which human autonomy presupposes the autonomy of things that affect human existence. From this perspective, clothing takes on a primary role as the promise of a different, new life, as the magic with which things affect people (Gertrud Lehnert). However, this magic of things does not mean resignation to human freedom. As reflexive hyperfetishism (Barbara Vinken), fashion opens up a space in which the magic of things reveals new possibilities to humans. This "enchantment" can therefore become a means of emancipation. According to this, human freedom and the freedom of nature do not stand in opposition.

Et in Arcadia Aedificia: Revisiting the Picturesque Aesthetic in the Contemporary Architectural-Urbanistic Acts

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After the crisis of both modernism and post-modernism's viewpoints, a search for more meaningful discourse in aesthetics began to take place. Echoed in architecture, it brought into light a romantic search for aesthetic appreciation of an idealized version on an already proved model: the so-called 'traditional' city, outlined organically and spontaneously over time. Its image resulted from two 'attitudes' – the collage or the palimpsest – began to be appreciated during the 18th century for its irregularity, variety and intricacy, as defined towards the end of the century through the aesthetic theory of the Picturesque. On its basis design models were proposed, by studying the picturesque characteristics of and in cities, buildings, gardens and landscapes – real or fictitious. This brought an overturn of previous spatial understanding: not from a planimetric, or rigorously geometrized approach, but as an aesthetic experience, lectured empirically at the eye-level as one walk thought the space. Thus, since the 19th century, the romantic search would be sustained through architectural and urban proposals, aiming for a more meaningful object. This act would not be limited to late romanticism, but it will reappear in the post-war reconstruction debate. The late 18th century episode of the picturesque aesthetic 'debate' seems to entertain a constant search for visual stimuli of intricate forms, as well as its reason and meaning.

However, as it is based on the image of an already sedimented process, this design method implies a paradox: if architecture seeks to create order, through a rational-functional solution, then the intentional search for the picturesque characteristics seems to stand in contradiction within its aim as order-maker. This study proposes to revisit of the picturesque aesthetic theory, paralleled with (post-) post-modernist architectural works, that reflect and play with its characteristics.

This comparative analysis highlights the similarities in aesthetic values of both the Picturesque and contemporary architectural acts, balancing its aim and the acceptance of everyday life's ever-changing spontaneous circumstances. Thus, the picturesque aesthetic would (still) be valid in contemporary design, as the process of becoming resonates with the shared experiences of the wider audience, becoming more meaningful for and closer to it. The findings show that, in a word shaped by images and visual stimuli, within it entertains a narrow understanding of what 'beauty' or 'tradition' are, or if and how they (inter)link, the picturesque episode of the late 18th century can offer lessons regarding how the image translates to feeling and meaning.

Generative Irrepresentations: On Signification, Materiality, and Suffering

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Generative artificial intelligence has instituted a new dynamic cycle: images are no longer merely observed by us but monitor the way we view them, collect our reactions, and continuously reconfigure themselves. This cycle constitutes an active apparatus for shaping perceptions, behaviours, and beliefs. To analyse this mediation, we turn to Rodrigo Duarte's theory of "Modes of Presence," privileging irrepresentation as the central lens. Through it, we see that generative AI operates via a triple movement of concealment.

First, in irrepresentation, generative images break with the optical-causal paradigm. They have no traceable origin or real referent; they are statistical predictions, pure computational process made visible, and may take the form of fictions, dreams, or hallucinations.

Second, in the irrepresented, the rhetoric of the prompt functions as a technological fetish. It conceals the complex material and social relations underpinning AI: the millions of images extracted from the internet, the mineral extraction, the intensive energy infrastructure, and the precarious human labour behind it. The narrative of command-by-text obscures this vast network of exploitation and extraction.

Finally, in the irrepresentable, the apparent magic of AI conceals a twofold violence. On one hand, workers in the Global South—tasked with filtering toxic content for model training—are exposed to extremely violent material, such as scenes of child sexual abuse, murder, suicide, torture, self-harm, and incest, and suffer severe psychological trauma. On the other, the same technology and its financial ecosystem become pillars of a "genocide economy." Tech giants provide AI platforms for mass surveillance, biometric data management, and automated target generation, systematising warfare. Major investment managers, such as BlackRock and Vanguard, connect institutional capital to this military-technological complex, transforming conflict zones into laboratories where civilian populations become involuntary subjects of experimentation and trauma.

In this context, the challenge is not to represent the irrepresentable, but rather to develop critical tools capable of mapping some of the constitutive absences of these systems. And recognising these irrepresented layers is a crucial step towards imagining alternative futures.

Sound Art in East Asia: History, Terminology, and Aesthetics in Japan

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This presentation offers a foundational study of Sound Art in Japan, situating it within the broader context of East Asian countries. The analysis is structured along three axes: the history of sound in the Arts in Japan (History), the history of the term in Japan (Terminology), and a critical examination of its aesthetics in comparison with developments in the United States (Aesthetics). Due to the nature of this objective, the presentation aims to provide a general overview.

In Japan, the practice of integrating sound into the arts emerged notably in the 1950s–1970s, subsequently gaining prominence in the 1980s, exemplified by SUZUKI Akio, YOSHIMURA Hiroshi, among others. This trajectory, while paralleling the history of sound art in the United States, demonstrates a characteristic temporal lag, a pattern observed in the reception of various cultural activities in Japan as an “importing” nation.

The term “Sound Art” itself gained currency in Japan in the late 1980s and the 1990s. During this period, the term functioned as a broad umbrella term, applied broadly to a diverse range of practices, including avant-garde music, sonic experiments within visual art, and site-specific installations, e.g., the work by FUJIMOTO Yukio, those exhibited at Xebec Hall in Kobe in the 1990s, among others. This polysemy complicates a straightforward historical or critical mapping.

Regarding the concept and aesthetics of sound art in Japan, the discourse exhibits a dynamic tension between its use as a reflective yet often vacuous buzzword and its function as a designating term that marks the arrival of “something new” and provides a critical framework for previously uncategorized sonic practices.

In conclusion, this presentation underscores the necessity and scholarly importance of in-depth studies on sound art practices across East Asian countries. This research is a component of a larger project and will serve as a valuable comparative basis with the work conducted by Dr. Kyoung Hwa Kim (Hanyang University) at this congress, aiming to decentre the Western-centric discourse on Sound Art.

The Feet on the Ground: Placing and Locating Aesthetics

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A common thread among several forms of minoritarian thought—certain feminisms and gender theories, antiracist, decolonial and counter-colonial practices, Indigenous cosmologies, and others—is a fundamental disagreement with the current spatial distribution of knowledge-power, as well as a denunciation of the violence this distribution inflicts on marginalized places, bodies, and ways of life. By exposing this spatial stratification and questioning the authoritarian and transcendent position of dominant epistemologies, these minoritarian perspectives reclaim real and symbolic existential territories: places from which situated thought can be formulated and enacted. They defend the value of situated knowledge—knowledge that emerges from the deep connection between the thinking body and its existential territory.

This effort to locate thought (making explicit its conditions of emergence—that is, the material, relational, kinetic, social, geopolitical, and ecological conditions of thinking bodies and their existential territories) belongs to what geographer Edward Soja (1989) calls the “spatial turn” in the humanities. It entails recognizing that space is an operative category as significant as time for understanding social, political, and cultural phenomena.

Traditionally, the problem of space has been an aesthetic problem, since space is an operative concept for understanding sensibility and the sensible. Could aesthetics, and its concepts, then help us address questions of space and the spatial distribution of knowledge-power?

To examine this question, we propose two movements. The first is to situate aesthetics by questioning its place within the striated space of knowledge-power: where did it emerge, and under what conditions? The second is to re-situate aesthetics as an immanent practice of concept creation that accompanies the very act of sensing itself—a practical discipline capable of offering embodied and localized concepts to densify, orient, and deepen our sensing, rather than a transcendental theoretical discipline that reflects upon and proposes purportedly universal statements about objects and experiences (such as beauty and Occidental art).

If sensing is, ultimately, an encounter between the body and its surroundings, then sensibility is not merely a passive faculty that provides data for knowledge, but rather what allows subjectivity to embody and express living places—to deeply understand territorial dynamics and its own belonging and participation within them. Sensibility would thus be the foundation of a situated knowledge, and aesthetics a useful tool for decentring and redistributing epistemology across our shared existential territories.

Towards an Aesthetics of VR: The Significance of Humanities-Based VR Research

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This presentation argues for the social significance of aesthetic and philosophical inquiry into virtual reality (VR).

As a medium detached from physical reality and capable of reshaping perception, VR has the potential to transform human cognition and values. This potential makes VR a compelling subject for aesthetic inquiry.

Yet aesthetic research on VR faces several challenges: social constraints from technological and economic factors, philosophical issues in defining “VR”, and limited concreteness due to its early stage of development. These difficulties restrict inquiry but also highlight its urgency.

This presentation focuses on social constraints and examines two social conditions that may prevent VR from realizing its aesthetic potential. Building on this analysis, it proposes a “survival strategy” for preserving that potential—namely, the creation of a network of “VR art” grounded in aesthetic discourse.

The first social constraint is the concept of “architecture” proposed by legal scholar Lawrence Lessig. In digital spaces, it functions as an invisible system that restricts user behaviour and, often unconsciously, shapes values and sensibility. Since VR is deeply dependent on artificial design, these architectural constraints pose serious and unavoidable limits on its freedom.

The second social constraint is the logic of “platform capitalism.” This logic drives technology companies such as Meta and Apple to design digital architectures, with data collection at its core. VR provides a powerful environment for gathering users’ activity data. Consequently, the involvement of tech corporations in VR development is inevitable. However, if VR spaces are designed solely according to capitalist rationality, the medium’s potential to transform human sensibility and values may be undermined.

Based on these two constraints, the presentation proposes a “survival strategy” to preserve VR’s aesthetic potential—not by rejecting capitalism, but by appropriating its rational logic for our advantage. The presentation focuses in particular on the “network effect.” As Nick Srnicek (2016) explains, technology companies strive to secure a competitive advantage by incorporating ever more diverse user groups into their platforms and building increasingly extensive networks.

By forming user groups centred on avant-garde “VR art,” it becomes possible to create a situation in which corporations are compelled to support artistic VR development that may appear irrational from a business standpoint, to integrate these groups into their platforms. In this process of group formation, it is not technologically constrained artistic practice but rather speculative aesthetic research—and the related ideas and discourses—that plays a decisive role.

Boredom and the Body: Multisensoriality and the Aesthetics of Stuplimity in Asemic and Visual Writing

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In my presentation I would like to discuss boredom as a sensory and aesthetic experience, analysing the examples of asemic and visual writing: an art form that, I believe, heavily relies on reframing our everyday experiences, specifically regarding the distribution of attention and bodily affects related to boredom. Asemic writing is a form of writing that uses non-linguistic or pseudo-linguistic elements: frequently it looks like language, but cannot be understood as such, hence the term asemic, as without stable linguistic meaning. Visual writing, while it may incorporate legible language, prioritizes its visual qualities, making them equal to or more significant than its linguistic content.

To analyse these forms, I use the term “stuplimity” coined by Sienne Ngai in her seminal work *Ugly Feelings* to highlight “a concatenation of boredom and astonishment” — the somewhat dull, repetitive, tedious affect that some examples of asemic writing tend to bring (Ngai, 2005, p. 278). The concept of stuplimity is a part of Ngai’s project of “noncathartic aesthetic”: “art that produces and foregrounds a failure of emotional release”, as opposed to Kantian sublime (Ibid., p. 9). According to the scholar, the boredom of stuplimity “resides in relentless attention to the finite and small, the bits and scraps floating in the “common muck” of language” (Ibid.): she describes in such a way the examples of conceptual writing, like Gertruda Stein’s and Kenneth Goldsmith’s oeuvres. As opposed to the vertical movement, typical for classical narrative books, that horizontal dynamic of the reader applies perfectly to the discussion of visual and asemic writing: “the bits and scraps” produce the environment when a reader is at loss in a mush of pseudo-linguistic structures and particles of language.

My presentation, however, seeks to extend the concept of stuplimity by arguing that in asemic and visual writing boredom is actively modulated by multisensorial engagement and materiality of the medium. This represents a departure from the conventional view of multisensoriality as a tool solely for enhancing interactivity and bringing the attention of recipients, not to produce fatigue, dullness and tedium. By integrating this perspective with theories on the sensoriality of reading and writing, such as those proposed by anthropologist Tim Ingold in his *Lines: A Brief History and Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, and by theorizing inattention as a practice of perception (Frosh, 2018), I would like to explore the aesthetic contents of boredom.

Landscape, Eco Art, and Post-Photography

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This paper examines the shifting condition of landscape in contemporary art, as well as the very possibility of (re)presenting nature in an era marked by ecological and political crises, the rise of AI, and the proliferation of selfies and machinic simulacra. In this context, the artist emerges as a crucial figure—capable of “subverting the message of the apparatus and the industry behind it” (Flusser) in order to reach the situated truth of the landscape. This role is not aimed at reviving a Romantic ideal of “untouched nature,” but at articulating a lucid awareness of the ethical and aesthetic implications of the post-photographic condition.

Two objectives will be pursued. The first implies a reconsideration of key concepts like landscape, aura, and contemplation in light of Benjamin, Baudrillard, and Flusser, as well as recent insights from Mădălina Diaconu, Hito Steyerl, and Timothy Morton, while also engaging authors associated with ecophenomenology in order to situate these notions within an expanded ecological horizon. Once anchored in the static composition of the picturesque (centred on the land), landscape, for instance, has evolved into a dynamic field: lived, immersive, and sentient. The second objective is to interrogate the aesthetic transformations that redefine both the act of representation and the experience of nature.

To this end, the paper develops a series of case studies drawn from Romanian and European contemporary visual art, with a focus on photography, experimental film, new media installation, and land art interventions in natural environments. Within this framework, the photographic act is approached as a technological rearticulation of contemplation, a gesture of care that seeks to restore dignity and aura to trees, stones, and rivers. Landscape, in turn, emerges as a layered configuration of aesthetic, ecological, and political dimensions: a site of phenomenological dwelling rather than one of mere visual consumption.

Out of these practices emerges an aesthetics of reversibility that transcends the dichotomies of subject–object and nature–culture, engaging new categories like the uncanny and the non-anthropocentric sublime and articulating a sensibility that moves beyond human-centred perception. Ultimately, landscape reappears as a heterotopia: a qualitative, non-Cartesian space where human and nonhuman, organic and machinic temporalities intersect. Against the backdrop of ecological crisis and algorithmic automation, the post-photographic artist’s task is to transform technological mediation into an act of freedom, critique, and renewed intimacy with the living world.

On Literary Entities: Imaginative Construction and Engagement

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This paper aims to explore the nature of our engagement with literary entities, with a particular interest on the role of perceptual imagination. The motivation behind this endeavour is twofold. On the one hand, literary entities can be broadly understood as all things portrayed in a literary work, from characters and places to events. As such, when reading, we don't just engage with the text and its features –i.e. the stylistic choices, the structure, and so on– but also with the things pointed at through the former that provide the content of the work. On the other hand, imagination seems to be the main cognitive activity involved in literary interpretation and therefore must play a key part in our engagement with literary entities. Within the different kinds of imaginings –propositional, perceptual, sensory, affective, and experiential–, perceptual imagination seems to be fairly unexplored in this regard unlike propositional imagination, for instance. However, some conceive the ability to engage in perceptual imaginings as the root of genuine literary understanding, so it may be equally as crucial for grasping literary entities.

The issue can be outlined in the shape of two intuitions regarding literary entities, especially fictional ones. For one, literary entities are not real things, in the sense that they don't exist as things in the actual –i.e. material, physical– world, and don't exist at all until created within a particular work. For two, we refer to literary entities as objects of which we have certain knowledge that is shared within a community of readers, or even by a broader community beyond those directly acquainted with a given work. Furthermore, the can get to know about them can as well be right or wrong –that is, we can grasp them correctly or incorrectly. Subsequently, we can already identify at least three intertwined features on which we can build an understanding of literary entities: they are (i) products of imagination, (ii) medium-dependent, and (iii) public.

Whatever characterization of literary entities we may take as the best fit should account for these three aspects of the way we interact with and talk about them ordinarily. Here, Michael Morris's approach is explored with special depth since –among other proposals built around perceptual and/or sensory imagination– it is particularly ambitious regarding the construction of literary entities and the kind of engagement they call for.

Being Between the World and Nature: A Challenge for Aesthetics

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As the expression “being-in-the-world” suggests, human beings exist within the world. The world consists of various things that are ultimately arranged in ways that serve human purposes; in this sense, the world is organized around human beings as its centre. Through technology, human beings seem to attempt to construct a controllable and self-enclosed space around themselves. However, this human-made world does not exist independently in and of itself. It is always surrounded by nature. The question that arises here is how the world and nature are related to each other. Human beings extract materials and means from nature in order to build their world. Yet while the world is constructed around human beings, nature itself is never centred on them. Nature includes human beings only as one of its parts and is, in itself, indifferent to human utility. To borrow Kant’s words, humans seek to become “the ultimate end of nature,” but since “nature has not made the human beings its special favorite,” they can never fully “attain” that position (*Critique of the Power of Judgment*, § 83). The project of transforming nature into a human-centred world is therefore fundamentally unstable, and “being-in-the-world” is essentially tied to a sense of anxiety. Yet the relationship between human beings and nature is not reducible to instrumental use. A different mode of relating to nature is both possible and necessary—one in which human activity appears at the same time as natural. This is articulated already by Pseudo-Longinus, who claims that “art is only perfect when it looks like nature” (*On the Sublime*, 22.1), and later by Kant, who maintains that art is “beautiful” when “it seems at the same time to be nature” (§ 45). Art thus constitutes an intermediate realm between human artifice and nature. This realm should not be reduced to the human side alone, where nature would merely serve as raw material. Rather, in art, this in-between realm is experienced as being supported by the nature that stands behind it. Human activity is enveloped and affirmed by nature as part of its own process. Human beings, then, do not merely exist as insignificant parts of an indifferent nature, nor do they live in perpetual anxiety within a world of their own making. Rather, they exist between the world and nature—and it is precisely this intermediary dimension that constitutes the proper subject matter of aesthetics.

Queering Community: Literary Aesthetic Resistance after Jean-Luc Nancy

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This paper explores the intersection between aesthetics, politics, and queer writing through the lens of Jean-Luc Nancy's notion of "literary communism." Nancy's formulation—an attempt to think community beyond representation, identity, or the closure of meaning—offers a crucial resource for reimagining the political force of writing today. Against the totalitarian impulse to unify language and subjectivity under a single discourse, literary communism names a mode of writing that resists appropriation and opens the space of a shared exposure: a community without essence, founded on the plurality of voices and the unfinished movement of sense. Taking this framework as a point of departure, I propose to examine queer writing as a contemporary site of such aesthetic and political resistance. Queer textual practices—understood here not as a fixed genre or identity, but as a mode of relation—disrupt the normative distribution of bodies, desires, and meanings. Through fragmentation, opacity, and performative excess, queer writing enacts a refusal of the linguistic and social orders that seek to domesticate it. Its resistance lies not in a counter-discourse, but in the invention of a different economy of speech: one that suspends mastery and opens language to the indeterminate, the vulnerable, the sensual. By reading Nancy alongside selected contemporary queer writers, I will argue that writing itself becomes a site where new forms of life and community can be experimented with. In the act of writing, the body is no longer a given substance but a process of becoming-with-others, exposed to the infinite circulation of meaning. The aesthetic dimension of this process—its rhythm, style, and sensibility—is inseparable from its political force: writing resists precisely by inventing forms of existence that elude capture by dominant regimes of truth and identity. Ultimately, this paper proposes to rethink the relation between aesthetics and political resistance not as an external alliance between art and activism, but as a shared movement of invention. In the fragile, collective space of writing, politics is no longer represented—it is lived, written, and continually refigured.

Aesthetic Argumentation in Art Exhibitions

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Much of the literature on aesthetic normativity focuses on the justification of aesthetic judgements or the conceptual problem of justifying judgements of taste. This is true not only when examining the reasons behind personal preferences, but also when explaining and justifying the assessment of artwork value. Consequently, art criticism is the context in which aesthetic judgement and reasoning are given greater importance. However, the relevance of aesthetics to art criticism has been contested in both philosophy and art history.

In this presentation, I will not discuss the aesthetic character of art criticism, but rather, assuming that the public continues to appreciate art aesthetically, to indirectly demonstrate the importance of aesthetic reasoning. To support this argument, I will discuss the use of aesthetic reasoning in discourses on art exhibitions. In particular, I will analyse current exhibitions at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid. Firstly, to understand the importance of genuine aesthetic argumentation in catalogue entries, exhibition guides and art critiques, I will distinguish aesthetic explanations and arguments from other types of reasoning, such as historical or documentary reasoning. Secondly, I will identify and examine the various uses of aesthetic reasoning in these discourses.

My aim is to demonstrate that the focus is less on justifying the value of the displayed artworks or the interest of the exhibition theme, and more on providing the public with guidance on how to appreciate the works, artists and exhibition itself. Ultimately, these are aesthetic reasons, as the goal is to provide the public with the means to appreciate the exhibition aesthetically.

Gaia's Breath: Tactility in AR Mediated Emersive Leisure Research

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Embracing Gaia was an art–research event held in September 2025 in the National Garden of Athens. Participants engaged in a multisensory, site-specific augmented-reality (AR) treasure hunt followed by a guided mindfulness session (Gaia's Breath). The event, co-developed by Narratologies I.K.E. and the Jagiellonian University as part of the Horizon Europe project CAPHE – Communities and Artistic Participation in Hybrid Environments (Grant No. 101086391), examined how immersive cultural practices can enhance ecological awareness and embodied reflection in hybrid (digital–physical) environments.

The paper presents slow haptics methodology (Rodaway 1994, Allen – Collinson, Lebreton, Hockey, 2025, Andrieu, Nobrega 2020) implementation during the mindfulness session designed as an extension of a guided, narrative, hybrid experience. During the session, participants engaged in brief, guided, somatic interaction with selected props related to the AR tour tasks, to articulate their immediate affective-cognitive responses to tactile sensory stimuli. Following the physiological somatic principle that “if we cannot react to it, the sensory impression doesn't clearly register” (Hanna, 1986), the intention of this action was to facilitate the post – exposition assimilation of the AR aspects of the already lived, hybrid experience.

Then, author proposes to grasp the narrated, AR hunts as certain kind of emersive leisure (Andrieu, Parry, Porrovecchio, Sirost, 2018), which apart from their educational and entertainment functions, through practice of ecological immersion, promote reconnection with environment and production of new emotions within the body (Andrieu, da Nobrega, Sirost, 2018, Andrieu, Bernard, Cipoletta, Marrusich, Nobrega, 2020).

The End of Indigenous Art: Rethinking a Category from the Past in Contemporary Contexts

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The proposition of an “end of Indigenous art” may appear provocative, yet it intentionally echoes a lineage of theoretical ruptures—from Hegel’s “end of art” to Barthes’s “death of the author” and Danto’s *After the End of Art*. Like these earlier interventions, it does not signal disappearance, but rather calls for a reconsideration of how specific artistic categories emerge, function, and ultimately outlive their conceptual utility. This paper argues that the term Indigenous art—historically intertwined with colonial epistemologies, primitivist aesthetics, and ethnographic taxonomies—is one such category currently in dissolution.

Drawing on the research of my doctoral dissertation, I trace how the Western classification of Indigenous creativity crystallised in the late 19th and 20th centuries, when evolutionist thought, museum anthropology, and modernist primitivism positioned non-European art as culturally static, anonymous, and timeless. Exhibitionary practices produced and reinforced this difference: Indigenous works were placed in ethnographic museums, contextualised through ritual or mythological frameworks, and evaluated primarily for their function or symbolic content, not for artistic agency. This changed with the interest of modern artists in non-European art, including Indigenous traditions, and the dualisms art versus artefact; art gallery versus museum; art disciplines versus anthropology have arisen.

The global circulation of Indigenous art since the late 20th century, however, has profoundly unsettled this paradigm. Contemporary Indigenous artists engage with experimental media, political critique, global markets, and transnational exhibition circuits. Their works complicate the binary of “traditional vs. contemporary” and refuse the reductive reading of Indigenous art as a relic of cultural authenticity. As these practices enter biennials, contemporary art museums, digital platforms, and cross-cultural collaborations, the very category “Indigenous art” begins to constrain more than illuminate. It presumes cultural homogeneity, marginality, and the persistence of a Western gaze that defines Indigeneity in opposition to modernity.

This paper argues that we have reached a conceptual threshold: not the end of Indigenous artistic practice, but the end of “Indigenous art” as a separate, essentialised category. I propose an alternative framework grounded in global art history, relational aesthetics, and situated knowledge that acknowledges artistic agency, cross-cultural entanglement, and the plurality of Indigenous modernities. Rather than asking how Indigenous art fits into the Western canon, I suggest we recognise Indigenous artistic production as fully part of art—historically, contemporarily, and theoretically.

From Philosophy of Culture to Cultural Practice: Bildung as a Tool for Social Transformation

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This paper proceeds from the assumption that culture can be productively understood not primarily as a set of artefacts or identity-based expressions, but as a process of cultivating and shaping subjectivity (*Bildung*). This perspective draws on Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), who in *Theorie der Bildung des Menschen* (1793–1794) conceptualized cultural development as the continuous expansion of one's capacities to engage with the world and with oneself. For Humboldt, cultural formation is a dynamic activity in which individuals enter symbolic structures while simultaneously transforming them.

Building on this foundation, the paper engages Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics (*Truth and Method*, 1960), which understands culture as a sphere of shared meaning-formation. For Gadamer, understanding is not a technical acquisition of information but a mode of being — an interpretive practice through which individuals learn to recognize their presuppositions, sustain dialogue, and navigate plurality. Culture, in this sense, is not merely a collection of products but a formative process that develops one's capacity to “converse with the world.”

The theoretical analysis focuses on two key concepts: aesthetic experience as an experience of expanded perception that fosters reflexivity, imagination, and receptivity to otherness; *Bildung* as a formative process that links individual self-cultivation with the collective creation of shared worlds of meaning.

The working hypothesis is that, if aesthetic experience is approached as a form of interpretive practice, cultural activity can serve as a site of democratizing understanding — a space in which subjects acquire competencies essential for critical, ethical, and responsible co-existence.

The applied section examines how the Humboldtian–Gadamerian framework can inform the design of cultural, educational, and community programs oriented toward the development of aesthetic sensitivity and hermeneutic competencies. The resulting model of culture-as-*Bildung* understands culture as a foundational condition for social interpretation and transformation

Meta-Aesthetics and Meta-Philosophy of Art: Some Theses on a Concept in the Making

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This paper develops a systematic set of theses on the concept, function, and method of meta-aesthetics and metaphilosophy of art, understood as meta-theoretical subdisciplines of aesthetics and philosophy of art, respectively. While philosophy intrinsically contains a self-reflexive dimension, the paper argues that aesthetics and philosophy of art, despite their long-standing engagement with foundational questions concerning their objects, methods, and disciplinary boundaries, have not yet consolidated equivalent meta-disciplines, unlike logic, ethics, and epistemology. The paper investigates the reasons for this historical deficit and proposes a framework for addressing it.

The paper outlines central tasks for these meta-disciplines: distinguishing the boundaries and intersections between aesthetics and philosophy of art; investigating the necessary and sufficient conditions for their full exercise; providing a typology of their categories (empirical, historical, normative, critical, transcendental); examining the historical constitution of these categories; and determining the position of these disciplines within the broader philosophical architectonic. Through analyses of examples from Monroe C. Beardsley, Theodor W. Adorno, Alain Badiou and other philosophers, the paper illustrates how different meta-philosophical approaches entail distinct conceptions of the discipline and reshape its relation to artistic objects, institutions, and practices.

A key contribution of the paper is the proposal that both aesthetics and philosophy of art presuppose two primordial facts (*Urfakte*): (1) the human perceptual-intellectual apparatus endowed with the capacity for aesthetic experience; and (2) the existence of art in general. These conditions, though contingent, function as quasi-transcendental grounds for the disciplines, while also remaining historically variable.

Finally, the paper contends that establishing meta-aesthetics and metaphilosophy of art has the potential not only to clarify the internal foundations of their parent disciplines but also to affect central philosophical debates in epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics—particularly concerning the status of appearance, the role of sensibility, and the historicity of conceptual structures.

Aesthetics and Multimodal Literacy in Contemporary Visual Arts

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This paper examines how the aesthetic dimension of contemporary visual arts supports the development of multimodal literacy, understood within the tradition of aesthetic education from Schiller onward. Aesthetics provides essential critical tools for interpreting today's multimodal and technologically saturated cultural environment, enabling viewers to navigate complex interactions among image, language, sound, gesture, and spatial form.

Drawing on multimodality as the field of application for semiotic theory, the paper proposes an operational definition of multimodal literacy for the visual arts, encompassing the ability to interpret multimodal meaning across analogue and digital media. Extending multimodal literacy research into digital and algorithmic imagery, the paper shows how computational and AI-generated images transform conditions of signification, creating a bridge between semiotics, cognitive approaches to perception, and emerging algorithmic visual practices – fields in which aesthetic judgment becomes increasingly vital. A key contribution is a process-oriented methodology that integrates multimodal semiotic analysis with technologically informed approaches in aesthetics. Applied to selected multimodal artworks, this approach demonstrates how aesthetic education functions as a critical tool for cultivating multimodal literacy in contemporary art and culture.

The Role of Practice in Aesthetics

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The Role of Practice in Aesthetics

It is common to distinguish between the theory and history of aesthetics, but a third component is often lacking in this distinction: the practice of aesthetics. Aesthetics is not only a theoretical field of study; it is also a form of practice (despite the complexity of ideas surrounding it).

There is a practical aesthetics as a set of areas focused on the practice of aesthetics. However, the practice of aesthetics is a broader phenomenon, as one can engage in various aesthetic experiences without necessarily considering the theory of aesthetics.

From the point of view of classical aesthetics, it is easy to observe that many founders of aesthetics believed practical aesthetics was necessary for theoretical aesthetics. For example, Baumgarten proposed the idea of practical aesthetics, and Kant introduced the idea of the culture of mental powers, among others.

From the point of view of contemporary aesthetics, the idea of a practical aesthetics includes:

- contemporary fundamental aesthetic theories for which practical orientation is an important component (e.g., aesthetics of secondary senses, somaesthetics, pathic aesthetics);
- contemporary fundamental aesthetic theories focused on the synthesis of the fundamental and the applied through experimental research (at the general level – neuroaesthetics; at the particular level – experimental aesthetics);
- contemporary studies in the field of practical aesthetics itself (B. Herzogenrath et al.);
- contemporary applied aesthetics (for example, research on aesthetic surgery or on the beauty of cats' faces);
- forms of aesthetic practice without a focus on history and theory.

Many open questions remain concerning practical aesthetics as a branch of philosophy. What is practical philosophy (in the broadest sense of the word)? How are philosophical experiments possible? In what form is applied philosophy possible? Furthermore, the concept of practice should not be understood in a simplified form as merely “the application of theory.” And the most crucial question is: what can the practice of aesthetics contribute to its theory? For instance, is practical aesthetic experience necessary for the theory of aesthetic experience?

Perhaps the question of the role of practice in aesthetics is also a question about new directions in the field of aesthetics.

Prompt as Art: Originality in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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Artificial intelligence has already entered the realm of artistic creation, transforming our understanding of what we consider art itself. The concept of originality is shifting from the final product to the very process — to the stage of prompting, where human imagination meets computational probability. The prompt becomes a new form of creative invention, in which the author and the algorithm share the role of creator. Yet this raises a question: what does it mean to be an author today, when creation unfolds through a system that not only generates but also shapes our aesthetic expectations? Why does it often matter so deeply, in our aesthetic judgments, whether a work is made by a human hand or by artificial intelligence? Here, aesthetic experience appears less as a property of the artwork and more as a relationship between creator, system, and viewer. This paper explores whether the machine can become a collaborator in aesthetic thinking or remains merely a sophisticated imitator—and how “originality without consciousness” may redefine human creativity as it learns to understand itself through dialogue with technology.

"Everynight" Aesthetics. An Exploration of a New Aesthetic Realm: the Nocturnal Quotidian

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This paper proposes a conceptual extension within the aesthetics of the ordinary by examining a domain that has received little explicit philosophical attention: the aesthetic character of nocturnal, quotidian activities and objects. Within the framework of Everyday Aesthetics (EdA), the "everyday" is typically defined by features such as regularity, familiarity, and the non-exceptional nature of the experiences involved. I introduce the category of "everynight" to capture the aesthetic dimensions of the nocturnal that are not adequately accounted for within existing EdA discussions. The term designates ordinary nocturnal phenomena that share the structural features of the everyday experience while generating aesthetic responses shaped by their nightness, defined here as the set of perceptual, affective, and behavioural conditions that regularly manifest themselves at night and systematically influence aesthetic experience, judgment and attention.

I argue that Everynight Aesthetics (EnA) should be understood as a complementary domain to EdA, one capable of explaining aesthetic phenomena that emerge specifically under nocturnal conditions. These include, but are not limited to: the aesthetic qualities of night work; nightlife and private nocturnal routines as ordinary practices that involve self-presentation, self-stylisation, and mood regulation; the aesthetic dimensions of dreams and related mental imageries; and the status of nocturnal objects, which may exhibit aesthetic properties not present—or not salient—during the day.

The paper addresses three central questions: (1) How do nocturnal conditions function as aesthetic determinants, i.e., as factors that modify or constrain the aesthetic properties or salience of familiar objects and activities? (2) Are nocturnal aesthetic properties context-dependent or do they constitute a distinct class of aesthetic properties? (3) To what extent does recognizing everynight phenomena expand the scope of aesthetic normativity, particularly regarding quotidian evaluative practices?

On this basis, the paper argues that incorporating nocturnal experience into the aesthetics of the ordinary yields a more inclusive and explanatorily adequate account of aesthetic life. Specifically, it contributes to reconceptualizing ordinary aesthetic life by challenging uncritical oppositions between diurnal and nocturnal aesthetic experiences and questioning negative attributes traditionally attached to night and darkness. It also helps grasping the recent shift in the use of "aesthetics" within contemporary youth cultures—where the term refers less to the theoretical evaluation of external objects and more to personal style formation—as a form of quotidian aesthetic norm-setting.

The Possibility of Revolution and the Actuality of Totalitarianism: Thoughts on Simone Weil's Aesthetic Theory of Factory Work

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The proposed contribution examines Weil's writings with regard to an aesthetics and epistemology of precariousness. An important question for Weil was why the Marxist hope for a working class revolution had so far been disappointed. Based on Weil's texts, the contribution pursues the thesis that this shortcoming can be explained not only in discursive-political terms, but also in terms of the aesthetic and epistemic precariousness of the working class.

Weil—decidedly anti-essentialist—describes the “transmutation of man into a worker” (Weil 2023, 41). This happens through a specific regime of time that combines the workers' lack of time and material precariousness in a specific mixture of monotony and chance. The result of this regime, I would like to argue, is a specific distortion of the relationship to the world and the clouding of non-propositional modes of cognition.

Factory work is, writes Weil, characterized by the attempt to eliminate the temporally incommensurable, namely chance. At the same time, she describes how, despite the strict time regime and the monotony of the work, everyday life in the factory is sometimes disrupted by chance in the form of sudden interruptions, e.g. when a technical breakdown in the work-process causes workers to fear for their wages. This combination of monotony and feared suddenness brings about changes on the aesthetic and epistemic level of subjectification: the perception of time is condensed into a tiny point, thus limiting the ability to refer to the past and imagine the future. I would like to take up Weil's descriptions and, with reference to Marx and Bataille, show why this mode of perception does not lead to criticism, but—perhaps ironically—only to totalitarianism and consumerism.

With this precarization of temporality, the subjectification practice of factory work, as is shown in the final step, provides a perversion of the aesthetic epoché, i.e., the interruption that enables non-propositional reflection and critical re-creation. Many artistic interventions of the 20th and 21st centuries are based on the idea of epoché. The complex described above then raises questions of mediation and communicability for these interventions—as well as for social emancipation movements. The contribution thus also raises the question of class conflicts that may exist between revolution theorists, political artists, and their audiences: Would one recognize the revolutionary subject if it appeared? And would one be able to accept its potentially alienating aesthetics and divergent worlds of perception?

Aesthetic Appreciation of Everyday Practices

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This article examines the aesthetic appreciation of everyday practices—such as walking, eating, cooking, etc.—from the participant's perspective. A central difficulty posed by this kind of appreciation is the apparent indeterminacy of its object. Whilst the constituents of the appreciative object are relatively well-defined in paradigmatic cases where one contemplates a predesigned entity (e.g. a painting or a floral arrangement), there is no equivalent 'object' when it comes to the appreciation of everyday practices from the participant's perspective (e.g., walking through a garden). For the appreciator is engaged in the constitution of what is being appreciated, as one's actions shape the practice itself (e.g., one can walk through a garden at a faster or slower pace). How, then, can engaging in everyday practices be appreciated aesthetically? One influential response is offered by Saito, who maintains that such appreciation resists normative evaluation regarding the in/appropriateness of the resulting pleasure: "Without any object, we can't form a judgment" (2025: 170; see also 2017: 53; 2022: 156; or 2024: #7).

My aim is two-fold. First, I critically examine Saito's claim that this kind of aesthetic appreciation lacks an 'object'. I argue that this holds only under a view of the appreciative object as being constituted prior to the act of aesthetic appreciation. However, this view is challenged by participatory arts, such as installations (Caldarola 2020), where the appreciative object is partly constituted through the appreciator's interaction. On the other hand, everyday practices are grounded in material niches (i.e., objects, environments, etc.) that scaffold them. That is, they are carried out through and thanks to artifacts that shape one's experience (e.g., a garden is experienced differently when you explore it in trainers, on a bike or skating). Accordingly, the object of aesthetic appreciation can be understood as emerging through the interaction of the appreciator with those material conditions. Second, I defend a normative account of this kind of aesthetic appreciation. Drawing on Nguyen's (2020) arts of action—art forms designed to elicit and shape the audience's activity for aesthetic purposes—I claim that the characteristics of the objects, environments, etc. that ground everyday practices provide a normative framework to judge the in/appropriateness of the pleasure resulting from participating in them. For, in shaping one's experience, as said, they can prescribe the range of actions that are in/appropriate to appreciate and how within them (see also Carrasco-Barranco 2025b, or Young & Terrone 2026).

The Strange as a Category of Black Aesthetics

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The notion of the strange has a prominent presence in Black art and aesthetics. Artists and writers use it to draw their audiences into their works. Theorists such as bell hooks, James Baldwin, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Achille Mbembe predicate strangeness not only of artworks but also understand it as a dimension of everyday social life. Notwithstanding the functioning of the strange as an element of aesthetic experience, this category has been given scant philosophical attention. Comparisons to the beautiful and the sublime would suggest that the strange is a marginal aspect of aesthetic life. This conclusion is mistaken, however. Work by hooks, Baldwin, Du Bois, and Mbembe, as well as by various contemporary artists, evince a vibrant aesthetics of the strange. This paper investigates this aesthetics, to then further analyse it in engagement with Paul C. Taylor's account of Black aesthetics. Although decolonial and postcolonial scholarship often sees the strange as a tool of problematic cultural othering (Edward Said, Sylvia Wynter, Sara Ahmed), the category is also responsible for different aesthetic effects. While affirming cultural boundaries, strangeness experiences can instigate a trespassing of the boundaries they install, opening up new cultural possibilities. Notably, the strange reveals dynamics that go well beyond those of estrangement, alienation, the uncanny, and wonder, to which it bears connections (Roelofs, *Strange Tastes*, 2026). Linking such aspects and workings of the strange to broader theorizations of aesthetic qualities (Frank Sibley, Carolyn Korsmeyer, Sianne Ngai), this essay explores the operations of the strange as a category of a contemporary Black aesthetics.

Leisure, Walking in the Nature and the Everyday: A Schillerian Perspective

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Leisure time is often associated with marginal moments in which non-essential aspects of life are confined. It is no coincidence that Schiller's famous sentence in the Prologue to *Wallenstein*, "Life is serious, art is serene", has been accused by various sides of relegating art to a mere bourgeois aesthetic state (Adorno) or of proposing a subjectivist and autonomist reading of aesthetic experience (Gadamer). As has been pointed out, however, the serenity of art in Schiller's theory has nothing to do with mere disengagement and marginality; on the contrary, as emerges in the concept of "play" in *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, the serenity of art is the moment in which human freedom is expressed in the highest sense. Similarly, it can be argued that leisure time also has relevant philosophical potential, as in the recent developments in *Everyday Aesthetics*, which have shown the aesthetic dimension in ordinary life.

The aim of my contribution is to investigate the aesthetic relevance of leisure time in the context of *Everyday Aesthetics*, following the thread of Schiller's analysis and focusing in particular on the experience of nature as it emerges in Schiller's poem *The Walk*, considered by Joachim Ritter as emblematic of the modern approach to landscape. For Schiller, walking is not a moment of naive and immediate recovery of modern humanity's lost experience with nature. Rather, it constitutes a space of freedom for humanity that is only possible through a more conscious totality with nature.

Walking in nature is, indeed, what is paradigmatically associated with a "mere" leisure experience (we are used to hearing things like: "I went for a walk to relax" etc.). Far from interpreting these aspects as illusory escape, my contribution aims to recall the aesthetic relevance of the experience with nature from the point of view of leisure as a fundamental aesthetic and anthropological moment.

In particular, the first part of my talk will be dedicated to reconstructing the relationship between art and life according to Schiller's reflections, with a particular focus on his interpretation of *The Walk*. The second part will analyse Ritter's interpretation of Schiller in relation to the experience of nature, which will be discussed in light of the concept of leisure. Finally, an attempt will be made to draw conclusions about the aesthetic value of the experience of nature and its relationship with leisure.

The Theory of Individuation in Relation to the Aesthetics of Care

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This article seeks to establish parallelisms between Gilbert Simondon and Yuriko Saito philosophies based on the key works of both thinkers. The analysis of their works aims to bring together positions which, although distant in time, have a strong conceptual link and coincide in some of their fundamental approaches. For this, the relationship between Simondon's concepts –individuation, the technical object, technical ecology or milieu– and Saito's ideas of –care as a relational process, the everyday object and its materiality, and the ecology of care and sustainability– will be explored.

Both philosophers break with the static or finalized ontological understanding of entities, and conceive, on the contrary, being –of both individuals and of objects– as a process of continuous becoming. Individuals and objects are understood as beings in constant individuation or co-constitution, immersed in an unfinished material process that starts from a metastable pre-individual and potentially contains change. This potentiality, which integrates the materiality of objects within the process of individuation, is articulated through the knowledge of the technical object in Simondon and the everyday care of the object in Saito.

Regarding objects, it is shown that both: the technical object and everyday object are conceived as dynamic and unfinished entities. Their materiality demands attention from the individuals who interact with them. In this way, the maintenance of the object becomes a key concept in both authors who emphasize this relationship between individuals and objects within a continuous process of co-constitution. In addition, a parallel is established between the vision of the environment –Simondon's active milieu–, an indispensable concept for individuation, and the sustainability and ecology of Saito's care, which emphasizes responsibility in the face of the materiality of the world that surrounds the everyday life of individuals.

Finally, the authors address the problem of alienation generated by the traditional division of reality between subject and object. They not only offer a critique, but also formulate proposals to overcome this alienation in their philosophies. Simondon proposes disalienation through knowledge and familiarity with the technical object and its process of individuation. Saito, for her part, does so through an aesthetics of care that values the vulnerability and history of everyday objects, seeking to overcome the lack of attention and superficiality with which individuals relate to them. In conclusion, the article highlights the analogies that can be drawn between the thinking of both philosophers, opening paths towards a richer and less alienated interaction with the material and technical world, and transforming the passive and instrumental stance maintained with objects into an active, conscious, and enriching interaction, promoting a permanent co-constitution where the individual and the world develop mutually.

Tracing Interdependencies, Responding to Non-humans: Towards the Ecological Model of Aesthetic Experience

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Contemporary aesthetics is characterized by the increasing co-presence and opposition of two models of aesthetic experience: on the one hand, the familiar Modern Age model, based on the ideal of autonomous reason and the pleasure of imagination and interpretation play, and, on the other hand, the emerging ecological model, which implies heteronomous reason, correspondence with natural interdependencies and material processes. The difficult step we are called upon to take is to recognize that the development of aesthetics with its values of beauty and sublime in previous centuries implied insensitivity to the ecological structure of life. From tracing lines of interpretation in our minds, which we previously enjoyed, in a situation of ecological crisis we are summoned to move on to tracing connections and interdependencies in the objective world, to probing the structure of our common home (oikos), which is not something external to life, but which is life itself.

When characterizing the ecological model of aesthetic experience, it should be distinguished from the familiar model in at least three parameters. First, ecological aesthetic experience implies the rejection of habitual patterns and stereotypes of beauty, sublime, etc., that is, most of the categories and values of classical aesthetics. Secondly, it is characterized by the convergence of aesthetics and science. At the level of art, this is reflected in the art&science movement, but even this continues to serve the old model of aesthetic experience for it intends to produce discrete pieces of art designed for exhibiting and contemplation, so that a fuller disclosure of ecological aesthetics is only possible in practical aesthetics, which moves from works of art to the art of living. Finally, if the old model of aesthetic experience implied an autonomous mind, then ecological aesthetic experience implies 'earth-bounding,' compliance with nature and its structure. Now we should listen to and understand not the 'spirit' – not other people and the revelation of the spirit in works of art – but nature, non-human organisms and processes, matter.

The key problem of contemporary aesthetics in this case is how to coordinate and negotiate the model of aesthetic experience that we are accustomed to with the ecological one. This conflict within aesthetics reflects a more general worldview dilemma that humanity now faces and which is associated with the transition to post-anthropocentrism. The further course of evolution on the planet now depends on how this aesthetic task is solved.

Władysław Tatarkiewicz's Idea History of Art as a Base for Understanding the Aesthetics of Popular Culture

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2026 marks the 140th anniversary of Polish aesthetician Władysław Tatarkiewicz. While Paul Oskar Kristeller's two essays on the history of the development of the concept and institution of art, "The Modern System of the Arts" I & II (1951/1952), were 'gamechangers,' as they explained how art was a historical phenomenon, and thereby initiated and supported a whole anti-essentialist wave of aesthetic theory to break out a couple of years later (e.g. Morris Weitz's "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," 1956), Tatarkiewicz's *A History of Six Ideas: An Essay in Aesthetics* (1980), and its first chapter, "Art: History of the Concept," enriched the 'story' dramatically – together with Tatarkiewicz's other takes on the history of aesthetics, which always accentuated the influence of the arts on philosophy and vice versa (see e.g. "Two Philosophies and Classical Art," 1963). If Kristeller's methodological stance was one searching for one story, maybe arbitrary and full of absurdities on the way to the art system, Tatarkiewicz accentuated our desire to group phenomena (this is how "Art: History of the Concept" starts), and he kept showing how rich the cultural and philosophical context was at the time of decisive historical turns, making an easy-going story harder to think about. The amount of trivia exploded in his hands, and showed widely what a rich philosophical and artistic landscape existed before the Western art system. After reaching out for Tatarkiewicz, many start seeing more dominantly the randomness and the interesting sidepaths of the history of 'art.' It all could have ended up very differently – which we of course today know, as we have more knowledge also of the way more or less analogous institutions have developed in other parts of the world (I am here referring to my own work from 2020, *On the Philosophy of Central European Art: The History of an Institution and its Global Competitors*). The lists of the artes liberals made the story of art look more potentially also 'poppy.' Tatarkiewicz's work has so provided a more useful base for understanding 'neighbouring' institutions and concepts. For the aesthetics of popular culture Tatarkiewicz's work gives a richer texture to work on. "Art: History of the Concept" even invites in some sense a broader reading than just one leading to an understanding of the story of the development of the highbrow art institution. I will in my presentation show some of the potentials of Tatarkiewicz's work from this perspective, to shed light on his idea historical usefulness for later research on artistic 'non-art' (i.e. popular culture, kitsch, etc.).

W. Tatarkiewicz's Philosophy of Art

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2026 marks the 140th anniversary of the birth of Władysław Tatarkiewicz, who is widely regarded as one of the two most important Polish aestheticians of the 20th century, alongside R. Ingarden. While Tatarkiewicz is primarily known as a historian of aesthetics in Poland and elsewhere (*The History of Aesthetics*, *The History of Six Ideas*), he was also the author of original philosophical theories relating to the definition of art, the understanding of aesthetic experience (concentration versus dreaming) and aesthetics as theoretical reflection on beauty, art and aesthetic experience (explicit versus implicit aesthetics). One can also mention his interest in the methodology of science (the concept of type in art), which is related to the fact that he was an art historian as well, although he eventually abandoned this type of research.

Today, his theoretical works are rarely revisited (partly because they have not generally been translated into foreign languages) and are treated more as evidence of his intellectual biography. Nevertheless, they are noteworthy as original concepts that can be considered in their historical context (e.g. the problem of defining art, the “discovery” of medieval aesthetics, and the history of aesthetics as the history of ideas), as well as positions that are still worth discussing. They are also important for a better understanding of Tatarkiewicz's vision of the history of aesthetics. The two areas of his academic interests, history and theory, are closely intertwined and mutually supportive.

Identifying aesthetics with the history of aesthetics, art with the history of the concept of art, and beauty with the history of the theory of beauty is an expression of his position on the definition of art. Practising aesthetics as research into separate, though overlapping, concepts is in turn linked to his views on typology in science. In other words, Tatarkiewicz's historical works can be seen as an expression of his “implicit” aesthetics or “implicit” art theory, to use his own concept. The forthcoming anniversary provides a good opportunity to present this theory and refer to the lesser-known ideas that make up his “explicit” theory of art and are largely forgotten even in Poland.

Architectural Aesthetics in Heidegger: Constructing (Bauen) as Dwelling (Wohnen) and Caring For (Schonen). The Example of the Hut in Todtnauberg

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In his writing *Building Dwelling Thinking* (Bauen Wohnen Denken, 1951), through an analysis of language, Heidegger shows us that already in building there is implicit the idea of dwelling, and that dwelling implies both taking care of the land (pflegen) and taking care of oneself (sich schonen). But, from here, the philosopher explains us that this constructive activity of the human being embraces four related aspects that we tend to forget: earth, sky, divinities, and mortals. And this conceived in a unitary way, so that he speaks of taking care of the fourfold (Geviert).

With this, Heidegger not only links his thought to a geometric conception with a long tradition in Western thought (from the Pythagoreans until the Bauhaus), but he also shows that after the Second World War, in his reflections on architectural construction, he had a growing interest in re-introducing a certain degree of ethical, ecological and religious thought.

The examples that Heidegger gives in his writing to illustrate this architectural thought are the construction of a bridge and of the traditional country house of the Black Forest. And the truth is that after the suggestions that the theoretical part awakens, the explanations surrounding these two practical cases, especially regarding the first one, are quite disappointing.

However, when one reviews Heidegger's life, one becomes aware that his interest in architecture dates back much earlier, and that probably, when thinking the 1951 essay, the main example he had in mind was one that, for some reason, he did not want to mention: the hut that he had built in 1922 in Todtnauberg, a place where he spent many seasons and where he wrote most of his work.

In this presentation, I propose to analyse this construction from the point of view of the architectural aesthetics that he presented in his 1951 writing, and others such as *From the Experience of Thinking* (Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens, 1947). From here, I will show that we can better understand this simple and modest construction, as well as the meaning of the main decorative element found there: the star-cube that crowns the pylon that is located in the fountain adjacent to the hut, an enigmatic element whose symbolical meaning is yet to be deciphered.

With this, we can better appreciate the influence of Heidegger's architectural aesthetics in other authors, and the urban planning possibilities it may open up.

All Sweetness and Light? Rethinking the Sweet–Sour Kitsch Distinction Through Gender Stereotypes and Gendered Emotions

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The aesthetic home of sweetness appears to be kitsch. Paradigmatic examples of kitsch, such as a golden Christmas angel, a painting by Kinkade, or a romantic Hallmark movie, are instances of sweet kitsch. Sweetness might even be one of kitsch's defining features (e.g., Giesz 1971; Gelfert 2000; Emmer 2014). Speaking of “sweet kitsch” might thus be a pleonasm, which seems to align with everyday linguistic intuitions (Glaser 1920).

Still, several scholars and critics refer to a second kind of kitsch: sour kitsch (e.g., Glaser 1920; Gonda 1948; Holthusen 1954; Harries 1968; Metzger 2010). If kitsch can be sour, the connection between sweetness and kitsch is less intimate than it first appears. What, then, differentiates sweet from sour kitsch? The literature presents two difficulties: authors rarely define these terms explicitly, and those who do offer diverging criteria and examples. This observation motivates the present paper.

The first part approaches the issue from a historical-philosophical perspective, surveying existing definitions. This overview reveals that what is missing is a systematic rationale for distinguishing between sweet and sour kitsch and for choosing precisely these labels.

The subsequent parts adopt a systematic approach. They are guided by the question of whether, and in what sense, it is meaningful to describe kitsch as sweet, and whether it makes sense to distinguish between sweet and sour kitsch. The second part focuses on the pleasure metaphor of sweetness: sweetness is associated with immediate, easily and broadly accessible pleasure. All kitsch may be described as sweet in this sense: all kitsch is supposed to be immediately pleasing to a broad audience, without requiring refined taste or substantial prior knowledge. An effect-based, emotion-centred kitsch definition supports this claim (Schmalzried 2024; 2025): kitsch is an artefact, performance or practice whose dominant function is to easily enable an emotion-based (self-)enjoyment and (self-)assurance.

The third part maintains that the distinction between sweet and sour kitsch still remains defensible. Given the close association between sweetness and femininity, it advances a gender-stereotype interpretation of sweetness and, building on this, an ameliorative account of the sweet/sour contrast: sweet kitsch is stereotypically feminine, whereas sour kitsch is stereotypically masculine. Both variants offer gendered, emotion-based forms of (self-)enjoyment and (self-)assurance by addressing stereotypically feminine and masculine emotions, respectively. Thus, while sweetness in the first, pleasure-related sense captures the universal appeal of all kitsch, sweetness in the second, gender-stereotype sense captures the gender-targeted appeal of some forms of kitsch.

The Diversity of Aesthetic Properties: the 'wonder and splendor' of colors

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Though the diversity of aesthetic properties is increasingly recognized, many philosophers draw a line at specific sensory or perceptual properties like colours, contours, sounds, scents and tastes. These are said to be non-aesthetic regardless of context. This paper argues that specific colours, contours and other sensory properties may be aesthetic depending on context. Works of art in various media illustrate this fact. Musical tones offer perhaps the best example of sensory properties that may be aesthetic, since it is the fully specific quality of a tone or sound that a musician or singer makes that is aesthetic and that musicians and singers strive for.

This paper focuses on colours. I examine two all-over monochrome abstract paintings, Yves Klein's *Blue Monochrome* (1961) and Gerhard Richter's *Grey* (1974), as well as a colour installation, James Turrell's *Ganzfeld Apani* (2011). I argue that these works have aesthetic impact and that in each case, their specific colours have aesthetic impact.

One reason why aesthetic properties seem to be complex or 'higher order' is that in most cases a work has several colours, contours or shapes so that we can point out how specific colours or contours combine to yield an aesthetic property such as the work's dynamism or melancholy mood.

But all-over monochromatic abstractions have only a single colour with a specific material texture on a support of a specific size and shape. Yves Klein's *Blue Monochrome* (1961) offers an expanse of a single shade of blue that has aesthetic effect. There is only one colour and that colour is aesthetically present to us.

Immersive installations can also highlight the aesthetic impact and value of colours. James Turrell's *Ganzfeld* works, such as *Apani* (2011) place us within a foggy light filled space that obliterates contours and continually melds from one colour to another. Our experiences of the specific colour filled space are intensely aesthetic – each colour and the feeling of being immersed in it are appreciated for their qualitative character.

Why might one deny that specific colours and other specific perceptible properties may be aesthetic properties? I examine considerations from vision science, philosophy of perception and aesthetics and show that none support a hard border between aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties that needs to be drawn at sensory properties such as colours.

Recognizing that colours and other sensory properties may be aesthetic depending on context is an important foundational shift in aesthetics that affects our understanding of the aesthetic appreciation of the everyday, of environments and of the arts.

Humanity Meets Nature

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Humans are a physical part of natural ecosystems, but at the same time they maintain a mental distance from them. Distance makes it possible to look at oneself and one's state of being as if from an outsider's point of view, and to shape and refine one's environment in a goal-oriented way. The transition from the material basis to the spiritual sphere is a leap to a new level.

Language supports the fundamental difference between humanity and nature. Human being is "he/she", the object of nature is "it". As a rational being, human being has a unique opportunity to make choices, but therefore also has ethical and aesthetic responsibility for their actions. Other living beings do not have such awareness and the responsibility it brings. Therefore, human being, he/she, is more than anything else, it. Nature treats humans like any other living thing, equally. It provides the conditions for well-being and life: water to drink, air to breathe, land to cultivate and its products to eat.

Humans tend to see nature like themselves, anthropomorphically. Humanized nature cries and smiles, suffers and flourishes. The landscape is given a face, a cape a nose, a lake a back, and a river a mouth. Cultural environment, transformed and built nature, is even more deeply human-like; it's like the portrait of Dorian Gray (a character in Oscar Wilde's novel), a mirror of our good and evil deeds.

Nature has been humanized as Mother Earth, who nurtures, protects, grows and nourishes - actions that have come to be called ecosystem services. We humans also produce services, for example, through conservation and care work, and when we refine raw nature into a cultural environment. The ideal model for our relationship with nature are good interpersonal relationships. In them we see good and bad behavior, respect and contempt, support and opposition. We see ourselves either as a participant and actor or as an outsider, neutral observer admiring scenic views, swimming and hiking, farming and building, panning and brainstorming.

Nature does not remain a passive party either but responds with its reactions and sets limits to human touch. Friendship is responded to with friendship. Our environmental education/civility or wisdom lies in the ability to put ourselves in the position of others, understanding their needs and wishes, respecting and responding to them.

Food as Foreign Object in Jan Švankmajer's Film

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Jan Švankmajer is a Czech filmmaker known for his distinctive stop-motion animation style. One of his most prominent features is the grotesque depiction of food and eating scenes. Examples abound: sausages emerging from a mechanized human abdomen (*Food*, “Breakfast”), or raw meat crawling across the ground and walls (*Lunacy*). This presentation focuses particularly on depictions in which food contains foreign objects or in which food itself transforms into a foreign object, examining these through the lens of the surrealist theory of the “object”, to which Švankmajer was deeply devoted.

Representations of food as a foreign object include, for example, a rotting apple swarming with maggots (*Jabberwocky*) or a soup from which nails emerge (*Little Otik*). These are depictions of food that has become inedible or contains elements that should not be eaten.

Previous studies, such as those by Petek (2009) and Kawakami (2012), have discussed the relationship between Švankmajer's films and the surrealist theory of the object, particularly in relation to his use of stop-motion animation. They argue that the surrealist notion of objectification—the attempt to liberate objects from the state in which their value is fixed and habitualized—finds expression in Švankmajer's frequent use of stop-motion animation, which gives the impression of objects moving by their own volition. His fascination with tactility has also been linked to the surrealist conception of the object (Noheden, 2013).

However, the connection between Švankmajer's representations of food and surrealism, as this presentation attempts to explore, has not yet been sufficiently examined. To represent food as a foreign object is, in effect, to strip it of its essential function as something to be ingested and incorporated into the body of the subject. In this sense, the objectification of food disturbs the subject-object relationship through the motif of food itself—an aspect that merits particular attention.

Finally, this presentation will refer to Švankmajer's short film *Food*, which takes eating as its central theme, to propose that the representation of food as a foreign object can serve as a critical lens through which contemporary eating practices and the modern food system can be questioned.

Life and Beauty: From Kant to Technoaesthetics

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Since Antiquity, the teleological unity characteristic of living organisms has been taken as a model for production (technê). In modernity, this connection between the living and the aesthetic not only deepens but also undergoes a decisive transformation. The relation between parts and whole, that is, the organic relation, is no longer determined by a fixed end but guided by a regulative principle. This shift is decisive in Kant's Critique of Judgment, which also introduces a clear parallelism between the beautiful and the living. It was already Schopenhauer who remarked on this "strange combination" of the two subjects, life and beauty, in a single book.

The aim of this paper is to analyse this "strange" relationship in the Third Critique and, more specifically, to read the aesthetic in the light of the living in the context of the aesthetics of technology. I argue that, for example, Simondon, in his writings on technics and his unfinished technoaesthetics, prolongs Kant's project without explicitly referencing him. The aesthetic character of technology, Simondon insists, lies beyond its functional aspect in a "finality-without-an-end" or "more-than-end" dimension of technology as partly spontaneous. This is possible only because for Simondon a technical object is an inorganic but organised being. Thus, paradoxically, this technological context makes the "vitalist" logic of Kant's aesthetics even more evident: (technical) beauty is inseparable from life(-like) (self-)organisation.

This reveals a deeper connection between life, beauty and technics which, I argue, should be reconsidered and can serve as the basis for a Kant-inspired aesthetics of technology. Moreover, drawing on some contemporary readings of Kant, we may say that the aesthetic feeling is the subjective reflection of the more-than-human autonomy of (biological or technological) nature, which animates the mind. This is also characteristic of artistic creation, which, as Kant says, ought to be guided by the "animating principle" (§49). This point is significant because it shows another, often under-explored, Kantian parallel between aesthetic judgement and artistic creation, both grounded in the model of self-organising nature.

Finally, if technology is capable of self-organisation, then it not only exhibits a kind of artificial life and, consequently, artificial beauty, but also confirms Simondon's suggestion that natural beauty is sometimes perceivable only through technology. After recalling several of Simondon's examples, such as antennas or electrical devices, I will conclude by examining some digital media artworks that illustrate the same point.

From Divine Gaze to Interactive Experience: The Aesthetics of Digital Transformation in Mogao Caves Art

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This paper examines the aesthetic evolution and reconstruction of aesthetic experience in the transformation of Mogao Caves mural art through digitalization and artificial intelligence technologies.

Located in Dunhuang, the Mogao Caves stand at the crossroads of East and West along the ancient Silk Road. Their murals, Caves, and Buddhist sculptures constitute a UNESCO World Heritage site. As expressions of religious art, the Mogao Caves embody sacred, ritualistic, and transcendent aesthetic values, with the “sacred gaze” at the core of their aesthetic experience.

When these sacred images enter the era of digital-intelligent media, as viewers engage in role-playing within the Mogao Caves digital game and interact with the AI large language model and digital avatars of the Caves, their aesthetic logic toward Mogao Caves Art shifts from perceiving it as a sacred object imbued with spiritual aura to experiencing it as an interactive domain.

This paper analyses and compares the presentation of Cave 17 at Mogao Caves—specifically the murals from the Dunhuang Library Cave—with its digital game and the embedded artificial intelligence large language model.

This study explores how digital intelligence reconfigures the sacred experience of Dunhuang murals through the mediation of ancient religious art. On one hand, the interactivity and entertainment value of digital games diminish the transcendental aesthetic and ritualistic qualities of the original religious imagery. On the other hand, the interactive experience enabled by digital intelligence technologies opens up a new realm of networked sharing that transcends historical boundaries.

First, in the Mogao Caves Digital Library Cave game, players enter mural narratives through avatar embodiment, participate in historical events, engage in emotional witnessing, and complete quests to achieve novel sacred experiences. This end-to-end journey encompasses “perception-action-identity-narrative-emotion-interaction,” establishing a new aesthetic paradigm for digital art experiences.

Second, the digital transformation of Mogao Caves murals represents not merely a technological migration of medium, but a practical reproduction of Gilles Deleuze’s aesthetic semantics—such as “movement-image” and “time-image”—and the formation of novel aesthetic experiences. It liberates the sacred experience of beauty from religious spaces, allowing it to persist through digital virtual interaction as a new form of “experiencing the sacred” that transcends history and culture.

Third, the creation of digital avatars based on Mogao murals using real-time motion capture within game engines reaffirms that artistic works transcend mere

appearance to generate experiential value. Digitalization and AI, through experiential aesthetics, offer more open and inclusive pathways for aesthetic realization.

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Environmental Awareness and the Autonomy of Art: Aesthetic-Historical Ruminations with Władisław Tatarkiewicz on Contemporary Issues

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In my paper, I am turning for some advice – on the occasion of his 140th anniversary – to Władisław Tatarkiewicz, for the investigation of a current topic, through the help of re-reading some of the most curious chapters in the history of aesthetics. More precisely, I am interested in the convoluted problematics of the autonomy of art on one side and the questions about the possible “meaning” and “use” of artworks on the other side. My closer case study is concerning pieces of art (also) thematising the looming climate crisis.

Recent research shows that environmental awareness can be more efficiently “triggered” through artworks. Pieces dealing with various issues (e.g. by including representations or elaborations of climate change data) can stimulate stronger emotional responses than mere data graphs about environmental emergency.

Although it is undoubtedly crucial to tackle climate issues, these art practices nevertheless raise new questions concerning the autonomy of art. There is definitely a clash of values here, for which aesthetic investigations arrive at a dilemma: whether to promote similar approaches and artworks for the interest in fighting environmental issues? Or should practitioners of art and scholars of aesthetics worry about jeopardising the autonomy of art? Is there really a threat that the artwork is “reduced” to be(come) a mere carrier of a “message”, or even being transformed into “propaganda”? Is it thus acceptable that *l’art pour l’art* is giving up (part) of its autonomy?

At this point however the discussion is at a curious intersection with another one: climate activism through defacing artworks in museums. Activists pursuing these actions “exploit” the autonomy of art, its values, power and aesthetic properties (e.g. beauty, fame, enchantment) to bring environmental concerns to the forefront. Hence we can see a practically opposite situation, where the autonomy of art and its accompanying aesthetic qualities are much needed for the efficiency in the raising of environmental awareness.

I am investigating these complex issues, comparing the two phenomena, with the help of Tatarkiewicz’s detailed analyses of the relevant parts from the history of aesthetics, in order to see what we can learn from the past for the future. Through this I intend to provide further ideas on how both artistic practice and aesthetic research can benefit from all this, also concerning the self-interpretation of our discipline, as well as how to define its future role, challenges and importance.

The Realist's Paradox: Spots of Indeterminacy and the Intentional Nature of Metaphysical Qualities in Roman Ingarden

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Roman Ingarden's philosophical project is historically defined by his rigorous defence of realism against Husserlian transcendental idealism. Ingarden sought to secure the autonomous existence of the real world; yet, his axiological investigation into "metaphysical qualities" introduces a distinct ontological tension that challenges the rigidity of his realist framework. This paper examines the paradoxical status of qualities such as the sublime, the tragic, and the holy, which Ingarden regards as the summit of human existence but which evade cognition in standard scientific or rational contexts. The paradox centres on the conditions required for these qualities to manifest. Ingarden concedes that in "real life," metaphysical qualities are rare, fleeting, and inextricably bound to the chaotic flux of pragmatics, preventing their full realisation. Consequently, he identifies the literary work of art—an intentional object—as the privileged locus for their revelation. This reliance on the literary work introduces a critical mechanism: the "spots of indeterminacy" (*Unbestimmtheitsstellen*). Unlike autonomous real objects, the literary work is a schematic formation riddled with ontological gaps; it is not fully determined in all its aspects. The reader must actively fill these spots of indeterminacy through the process of concretisation to bring the aesthetic object into appearance. It is precisely this schematic nature that allows the literary work to isolate and stabilise metaphysical qualities, stripping away the "noise" of real-world causality that otherwise obscures them. However, this creates a contradiction for the realist. If the manifestation of the highest order of "reality" (metaphysical qualities) depends on the schematic gaps of an intentional object and the subjective act of concretisation, then these qualities share the structural volatility of intentional existence. They are not waiting to be discovered like physical properties; they require a collaborative, constitutive act to exist for the subject. This paper argues that by tethering metaphysical qualities to the spots of indeterminacy in the literary work, Ingarden unwittingly bridges the gap between the real and the intentional. It posits that metaphysical qualities exist in a liminal space, functioning less like independent realia and more like intentional correlates, dependent on the very consciousness Ingarden sought to exclude from the structure of the real world. Keywords: Roman Ingarden, Metaphysical Qualities, Spots of Indeterminacy, Concretisation, Intentional Object, Realism.

Nishida on Colour

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Kitaro Nishida (1870-1945) is known for the first modern Japanese philosopher and the founder of the so-called “Kyoto School” of philosophy. His essay entitled “The Essence of the Beautiful” (1920; later included as the first essay in *Art and Morality* 1923) represents the culmination of his early philosophy of art. He concludes this essay by asserting that “the artist does not imitate reality; he creates a world of life that cannot achieve its full expression within our bodies. [...] the world of color that Gauguin and Matisse saw must be such realities.” However, the opportunity for Japanese people to see color paintings, either originals or reproductions, should extremely have been limited at that time. Did Nishida then ever see “the world of color that Gauguin and Matisse,” and if so, where? I will answer firstly this question from an (art-)historical perspective. I guess that Nishida probably visited the 5th exhibition of “Shirakaba” circle (Japanese influential literary circle publishing a monthly magazine of the same name from 1910 to 1923) held 1912 in Kyoto, where the works by Gauguin and Matisse were displayed side by side. What does then the problem of colour mean for Nishida? I will answer secondly this question from a philosophical perspective. To do so, it must be taken into account that 1) the color-line (drawing)-relation in Western theories of art has been grasped parallel to the matter-form-relation in the philosophy in general and 2) Nishida establishes his original standpoint of “place” immediately after *Art and Morality* by claiming that “at the basis of Asian Culture, which has fostered our ancestors for over several thousand years, lies something that can be called seeing the form of the formless and hearing the sound of the soundless.” Taken together, these suggest that the problem of colour plays a crucial role in Nishida’s attempt to deconstruct Western hylomorphism. Yet, as a result, the issue of colour retreated from his philosophy of art and reappeared instead in his philosophy of science, where it serves to illustrate “acting intuition,” one of key concepts of Nishida’s late philosophy. We can thus see the problem of colour as a kind of “marker” of Nishida’s philosophy.

Jacques Rancière and the Aesthetics of Solitude

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Jacques Rancière's aesthetics, inseparable from his political philosophy, is grounded in the premise of human equality and the affirmation of emancipation. At the core of this thought lies the notion of dissensus—a moment that opposes consensus. Through the artworks and the aesthetic experiences in general, the existing sensory framework that organizes modes of being, recognition, and belonging—what Rancière calls “*le partage du sensible*” (the distribution of the sensible)—is disrupted and reconfigured. This presentation develops this fundamental idea further, proposing that Rancière's aesthetics also can be characterized as an aesthetics of solitude.

For instance, in *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art* (2011), Rancière discovers the possibility of overturning hierarchies—between plebeian and noble, labour and leisure—in the aesthetic experience of Julien Sorel, the protagonist of Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, who finds an unexpected serenity in his prison cell while awaiting execution. Rancière links this experience to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idea of *far niente* as described in *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*. In doing so, he highlights the emancipatory power of a solitary aesthetic sensibility that suspends social roles and identities.

Rancière's emphasis on solitude rather than mere solidarity also resonates in contemporary discussions on the participation and representation of minorities in contemporary art. In *The Emancipated Spectator* (2008), he critically distances himself from the so-called “relational art” movement, which, in his view, seeks to present social relations in an unmediated way. In contrast, he highly values the work of the art collective *Campement Urbain* and their project *Je et Nous*, which offers oppressed Muslim immigrants the possibility of being alone as a mode of emancipation. Likewise, Rancière turns his attention to the films of Portuguese director Pedro Costa—such as *Colossal Youth*, set in the immigrant neighbourhoods of Lisbon. What this presentation highlights is that Rancière discerns in these works not a direct call to improve the living conditions of the poor or a denunciation of global capitalism, but rather the potential to liberate immigrant workers from their collective identity and to disrupt the social classifications that define their existence.

In conclusion, this presentation defends Rancière against the frequent charge that his thought is complicit with neoliberalism.

Imaginary Landscapes of Today Uplifting and Transformative Character of the Aesthetic Experience in Ingarden and Steiner

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How real and impactful are the virtual landscapes provided by experiences of art and literature? Have recent years of functioning in a hybrid environment changed the way art experiences affect art viewers and listeners? The author presents two accounts of aesthetic experience, in which the authors discuss aesthetic qualities of art that change viewers' lives, providing them with experiences of unforgettable value. Roman Ingarden, in his phenomenological aesthetics, presents the aesthetic experience of art and music as a process during which recipients may find themselves sharing an imaginary community built on co-creative efforts of performers and audiences. The idea of joining together and being part of a shared space is based on experiencing the same performance. Discovering such a community, Ingarden claims, may be the most important moment in a person's life. In this account, the aesthetic and metaphysical qualities of art and literature have the potential to instigate change, as they offer alternative experiences through the dangerous or unexpected events. In more recent times, George Steiner described art realities that provide freedom and happiness to an individual reader or listener. Steiner's account is associated with the subtle yet powerful experiences of art's presence in human life. In their respective accounts of art and music, Ingarden and Steiner illustrate how strongly the aesthetic experience affects recipients during artistic performances. The experiences of art – it is suggested – establish a special dimension or a community, where one follows the effects of the plot, rhythmical patterns, melodic phrases, and particular views, to complete or relive them virtually. Both philosophers describe art's experiences as life-changing. They speak of music, literature, or visual arts as uplifting and metamorphic, exerting positive, transformative influence. Both argue that imaginary landscapes and virtual art realities influence their recipients most deeply and profoundly. Both writers believe that art may unlock reality, in which one's life may be altered for good with virtual deeds and real emotions. Reality where, as both of them suggest – one may face the ultimate sense of existence.

The Algorithmic Sublime: The Wrestle of the Beautiful in Digital Art in the Categories of the Kantian Aesthetics

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Over the last years, Digital Art has gone mainstream following the advancement that Artificial Intelligence facilitated to the world. In fact, digital art has crept through major social media platforms which invited more people to indulge in this new expression of art especially those who are less equipped in manufacturing them.

With this trend being more accepted, it poses serious considerations with regard to the scope of an overall aesthetic experience. These developments challenge long-standing distinctions between human and nonhuman agency in artistic production. Taking cue from the moderate autonomist perspective, this begs the question whether AI generated art can draw out an aesthetic experience such of objectivity, emotional, and moral bents.

Traditional theories particularly that of Kant, categorizes the beautiful in moments which culminates in the sublime. These moments elicit in the subject a progression by which the encounter of the beautiful becomes not only an experience but an adventure to be undertaken. And upon being arrested by the sublime, this will bring the subject into the heights of appreciation, wonder, and ecstasy. But this theory has long been established in relation to time-honoured convention of generating art using human skills.

It is in this light that this paper wants to dialogue with the democratization and globalization of artistic expression, and in this case, the digital art and how it transforms the discourse on aesthetic experience. Currently, there seems to be a divide on how to ground digital art as an artistic expression vis-à-vis the traditional norms in art. It posits an inquiry of whether to allow the prompt engineering to manipulate art in ways by which the subject imagine his/her own art and if this will be gauged as beautiful using the standards meant for human artistry. With the help of the Kantian categories, the author wishes to investigate the wrestle of the beautiful in digital art on the basis of its collaboration with machine systems and how it facilitates a progression in the experience of the beautiful.

Thus, the paper would like to offer some reconsiderations in terms of artistic value, feasibility of an algorithmically conditioned aesthetic environment, and the possibility of claiming an originality between a human and nonhuman artistic production. With Kant as blueprint of the discussion, the author wishes to respectfully suggest some ideas that can complement the existing discourse on this promising aspect of aesthetic theory.

Aesthetics of Less

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What kind the aesthetics can be found in circumstances, where there is less to perceive? When the darkness or shadows obscure one's visual connection to the object of interest? Or when the object of interest is missing or never existed leaving an empty space to perceive?

My presentation focuses on the situations where the perception is challenged, because the sensory stimulus is minimal, the anticipated object of interest is missing or because of its privational nature. My interest in the aesthetics of less has commenced the aesthetics of darkness, which I have been exploring several years. For me, darkness provides a baseline for the inquiry of aesthetics of negations. Full darkness is an ultimate visual negation – there is nothing to see. Experiencing darkness can stimulate the other senses, which produce a kind of aesthetic experience. In spite of this, darkness – even a full darkness – is a visual experience. Being in dark differs from closing one's eyes or being blindfolded. Firstly, being immersed in darkness is something one can observe and, secondly, darkness highlights various things that are either invisible or different in daylight. One cannot see stars in daytime and shadows have a different character in an illuminated environment.

Finding the philosophy of Roy Sorensen turned my interest to also other negations than darkness. His writings about nothingness in philosophy often focus on seeing and employ examples that are aesthetic in nature. Furthermore, Sorensen's philosophical conundrums often consider visual aspects of the world. I have found his approach intriguing especially because the aspects of perception Sorensen is interested are not usually considered within the framework of western aesthetics. However, unlike the western tradition, Japanese philosophy embraces the ideas of emptiness, darkness and privations in general. My paper will consider these ideas parallel to Sorensen's writings. In addition, they are used to compensate the western affinity to distinct objects.

The paper I am presenting attempts to collect some central ideas that are common for subjects where the aesthetic stimulus is a negation – where something is missing in the perception. The focal point of the paper is a discussion about the aesthetic qualities of the non-observable and the voids. The examples I am using range from contemporary art to environmental and urban aesthetics.

The Ecological Uncanny as a Creative Power: The Role of Contemporary Art & Architecture

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Contemporary art & architecture are examined here as domains of actualization of a critical attitude towards the relation of contemporary humans to the world, on the basis of the uncanny experience. As Sigmund Freud observes in his essay on the uncanny, the word *heimlich* (familiar, intimate) can develop an ambivalence and finally coincide with its opposite, the *unheimlich* (uncanny). As a consequence, he states, the meaning of the *unheimlich* is included in and derives from the word *heimlich*.

It is the Cartesian concept of autonomy of the subject, founded on the familiar enclosure of certitude, what is considered here as the cause of uncertainty or of the uncanny feeling, concerning the relationship between the self and the world (Stanley Cavell, Samuel Weber). The ecological crisis on the other hand, could be considered as an outcome of the Cartesian conception of consciousness, haunted by hierarchical dualities which consequently formulated the project of Modernity. The Cartesian separation between mind and matter and the quantification and mathematization of all nature constituted the core of scientific knowledge within human consciousness. Nature could have merit to truth only in this respect. It is here discussed that the uncanny feeling - generated by the ecological crisis - has its roots in the Cartesian dualisms. Besides that, however, the uncanny, functioning as a power of emancipation from the old consciousness, could lose its threatening quality. Cavell and Weber both insist in favour of “a return to the world” through a transformation in the relation between self and world, activated by the uncanny experience. As Juliane Rebentisch observes in relation to the above, although the return to the world proposed here originates in Martin Heidegger, it seems to be closer to a movement of critique as described by Michel Foucault. Nevertheless, we will argue here that this process of transformation is aesthetic in essence. As a consequence, the role of art and architecture is of a principal importance.

The Onto-Epistemological Unity of Aesthetic Experience: The Case for *Askesis* in an Age of Immediacy

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We live in what Anna Kornbluh calls a culture of *immediacy* — frictionless access, algorithmic recommendation, meaning without struggle. Yet the Western philosophical tradition has long recognized another kind of immediacy: the noetic insight Aristotle describes in which “what understands and what is understood are the same.” One immediacy bypasses the effort constitutive of knowing; the other is its consummation. This paper argues that aesthetic experience illuminates the difference, and in so doing, reveals the onto-epistemological unity — the inseparability of being and knowing — of knower, knowing, and known.

Drawing on the concept of *askesis* — exercises of self-inquiry wherein we contemplate our responses to the work of art qua work of art — I show that aesthetic experience discloses a mode of knowing that is at once receptive and active, particular and universal. Such experiences yield the possibility of *noesis*: insight in which we may exceed our own rational capacities and encounter truth through immediate experience. Yet this noetic immediacy is not the effortless immediacy Kornbluh diagnoses; it is achieved only through sustained, disciplined engagement with the work.

Through a philosophical lineage from Aristotle through John Dewey to Alva Noë, I trace how this unity has been understood and why it matters now. Aristotle’s account of nous presents noetic insight as truth disclosed through immediacy rather than inference, with aesthetic experience offering a privileged site for such disclosure. Dewey democratizes this Aristotelian inheritance, presenting aesthetic experience as a rhythmic integration of doing and undergoing in which the separation of knower and known dissolves into consummatory meaning. Noë’s account of art as “strange tools” that facilitate self-reorganization brings this tradition into contemporary focus: his claim that “we are aesthetic phenomena” re-frames aesthetic experience as an active mode of inquiry through which we make explicit what remains implicit in ordinary consciousness.

Taken together, these perspectives reveal that the onto-epistemological unity aesthetic experience discloses — the lived inseparability of knower, knowing, and known — is precisely the mode of immediacy our culture is most inclined to render unintelligible, and that *askesis* offers a disciplined path toward its recovery.

Gender Representation in Sports Films: Specific Features

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Within the framework of contemporary gender studies, the topic of the representation of sport in visual culture, especially in cinema, proves particularly compelling. Indeed, it intersects with the aesthetics of affect and vividly illustrates how social constructs and stereotypes shape society and culture at large.

Turning to the male image, films such as “Raging Bull” (1980), “Legend No. 17” (2013), “Southpaw” (2015), “The Iron Claw” (2023), and others reveal a persistent tendency to aestheticize physical violence as a hallmark of hegemonic masculinity. The athlete – predominantly a boxer, hockey player, basketball, or generic sportsman – is institutionally framed through visceral scenes of physical prowess. Notably, the sports drama genre permits the male figure to embody emotions and affects stigmatized elsewhere. This generic affordance subverts everyday injunctions against male vulnerability, channelling them into productive outlets. For instance, anger and aggression gain legitimacy as visceral forces propelling competitive triumph, aligning with the aesthetics of affect where raw intensity signifies authenticity. Likewise, “male” tears – typically pathologized – emerge as markers of profound trials endured a route to acclaim, reframing pathos as a crucible for hegemonic masculinity. In this way, the narrative justifies emotional intensity, turning possible weakness into victorious strength.

In stark contrast, the female image in sports dramas (“I, Tonya” (2017), “The Queen’s Gambit” (2020), “Million Dollar Baby” (2004), “Gymnasts” (2004)) emerges at the fraught intersection of sports competition and societal demands for femininity. This explains why most films confine her to stereotypically ‘female’ sports like gymnastics, figure skating, or dance: visual codes first affirm her womanhood, subordinating athleticism. However, this construct faces growing disruption through depictions of women as boxers, volleyball players, rugby athletes, and similar ‘masculine’ figures. Yet even here, woman remains ensnared in iterated gender performativity, her body subjected to aestheticization, sexual objectification through the male gaze, and regulatory surveillance — as starkly evident in the heroines’ form-fitting, revealing costumes.

The visual representation of sports thus becomes a commonplace where gender identity manifests itself through corporeality within established social conventions. The male image is directed towards the affirmation of power, while the female image is about reconciling personal agency with the patriarchal order. In this way, cinema not only reflects existing social stereotypes, but also defines the boundaries of what is permissible.

Socialist Fairy Tales as Aesthetic Experience: Interpreting Socialist Culture with Large Language Models

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The paper approaches socialist fairy tales as forms of aesthetic experience that structure perception and shape collective imagination. It examines how these narratives configure relations between individual and collective, desire and duty, and imagination and social reality. Socialist fairy tales are thus understood as aesthetic formations that mediate a specific mode of experiencing the world. The paper examines how fairy tales contributed to the aesthetic formation of socialist society, focusing on the Yugoslav case. The author and her research team are developing an innovative methodology for conceptual mapping, supported by large language models (LLMs), to analyse narrative structures, political concepts, and recurring motifs across a corpus of socialist fairy tales. LLMs are used as tools to trace relations between aesthetic forms and political imaginaries. The approach enables a systematic examination of how specific concepts—such as collectivity, labour, heroism, and solidarity—are narratively and aesthetically configured, and how these configurations help shape modes of perception and collective experience. The paper contributes to contemporary debates on media aesthetics and the transformation of interpretative methodologies in the age of AI.

Intimacy in Nocturnal Scenes: Case Study in 17th Century European Painting

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Aesthetics today is intensifying its attention to lighting, both natural and artificial, and its artistic effects. One of the sources of wisdom could be found in the Nordic countries, Denmark for instance with *hygge* (cosiness) characterised by its link to candlelight. In the field of art history and the theoretics of pictorial art in particular, the artificial light, even though it has always existed in everyday life, was traditionally trivialised as “secondary”, on the assumption of “ideal” nature in the sunlight. Historically, it was after the High Renaissance that an interest in it began to be expressed in paintings, being used as the sole source of light in the pictorial space, a technique developed into various naturalistic nocturnal scenes primarily by Utrecht Caravaggisti after the 1610s. Since these scenes consist predominantly of religious subjects, involving some allegorical and genre scenes, art historians have righteously considered them in relation to contemporaneous religious movements such as Spanish mysticism.

The research question here is whether these nocturnal scenes of the 17th century can be better analysed through the notion of intimacy, with the focus on the Lorraine painter Georges de La Tour (1593-1652), who devoted the latter half of his career to the religious nocturnal scenes. This notion has, from time to time, been discussed in an analytic research context or around some postimpressionistic art movements, and recently, above all, in relation to a Danish interior painter Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916) together with Vermeer. Founded upon those daylight-scene-based studies, this paper proposes an analytic framework tailored to nocturnal scenes, with the help of everyday and atmosphere aesthetics. The framework will be constructed on the basis of Hegel's tripartite discussion of the intimacy in painting (Aesthetics, Pt. III, Sec. III, Ch. 1, 2a) and the semantic argument of literary tradition by Pierre Reboul, which separates designation, meaning and significance. It enables us to grasp the intimate nature inherent in the style, through its *chiaroscuro*, which makes invisible the details in the unilluminated marginal area and transforms still lifes into abstract forms. Here exists no more specificity, which might render the observer unfamiliar to the represented scene, and the harmonised reddish-brown tone prepares the homey empathising atmosphere. By conducting this visual case study, the paper aims to provoke a broader and transdisciplinary discussion of night images and the aesthetic effect caused by a calm firelight, often vaguely looked upon as comfortable.

Museification, Commodification, Naturalization: Transforming Memory in Japanese Local Art Projects

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In recent years, Japan has seen a surge in local art projects, often embedded within regional art festivals. These initiatives take diverse forms—open-air installations, video projections in abandoned schools, craft workshops with residents, and more. Despite their variety, they share a common focus: memory, whether of the local community or broader national history.

History, tradition, and indigenous culture are powerful tools for tourism. To “succeed”—that is, to attract visitors—local art projects inevitably commodify memory. However, these packaged symbols of tradition are not authentic memory, at least not if we define authenticity as something deeply personal or rooted in residents’ lived experiences. Idealized, ideological versions of history—taught in schools or displayed in museums—contribute to collective memory, but they remain fabricated narratives: stories of the past that belong to someone else.

Local art projects thus draw on other types of memory that are innate, latent, and woven into everyday life. Rural rituals, traditional workwear, tools, and oral histories serve as raw material for artists. Yet these intimate memories are not always shared within the community. To many residents, they appear as curiosities—viewed, like the artists themselves, through the lens of an “artist as ethnographer.” Moreover, research-based art often presents these elements as authentic traditions, inadvertently commodifying them once again.

Japanese local art projects, however, leverage this very diversity of memory. Touristic narratives and museographic descriptions offer only conceptualized, second-hand versions of the past. Art projects, starting from these forms of memory, generate memory anew. Through repeated negotiation and collaboration with residents, they co-produce memories that gradually acquire authenticity.

In this process, art becomes institutionally embedded in the locality, and risks ideological naturalization. Political or economic intentions may drive this process, shaping how memory is constructed and perceived. Yet Japanese art projects often incorporate playful ambiguities or “noise” that disrupt these intentions, subtly re-orienting the construction of memory. By doing so, they challenge the very frameworks that seek to define and control it.

The Mother Tongue of Cognition: A Phenomenological Grounding for Post-Humanist Aesthetics

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The ICA 2026 theme Aesthetics Today rightly identifies the profound influence of AI-generated art, digital technologies, and post-humanist thinking. However, the empirical and cognitive approaches often used to analyse these new forms risk perpetuating a disembodied Cartesian legacy. In their search for objective models, they often reduce consciousness to “information-computational modellings” or brain events, assuming perception is primarily visual and that consciousness arises from inanimate matter. This results in a de-animation of perception that fails to account for the lived, animate body.

Offering a phenomenological corrective, the present work argues that before we can theorise a post-human aesthetic, we must first ground our understanding in the animate human. Drawing on the work of Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, the research advocates for the primacy of movement. We are not minds that learn to move; we are alive because we move. Movement is the “mother of all cognition” and the “originating ground of our sense-makings”.

This argument is grounded in kinaesthesia, our “sense of movement,” characterised here as a primary sensory modality rich with its own qualia. We pre-reflectively perceive the qualitative character of our own movement—its smoothness, jerkiness, swiftness, or tensional tightness. These qualia are not secondary “mental products” accompanying motor acts, but are “integral to bodily life” and animation.

By overlooking this “thinking in movement,” cognitive and AI-based models analyse a disembodied abstraction rather than the lived aesthetic experience. Dance, as a form of kinetic intelligence, demonstrates that the qualitative dynamics of movement create their own immanent space and time. The present inquiry thus calls for a re-grounding of aesthetic theory in our foundational “mother tongue,” a corporeal consciousness common to all animate life, which serves as a necessary foundation for any coherent theory of the post-human.

Touching Margins: Intersections of Everyday Aesthetics and Feminist Theological Aesthetics

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Feminist thought contributed crucially to the study of everyday life across the humanities. Its emphasis on embodied experience, relationality, and the politics of daily practices offers a rich perspective on the meanings and values of ordinary phenomena. In recent years, the topic of care has also gained attention in the field of everyday aesthetics. Inspired by feminist ethics of care, scholars such as Yuriko Saito and James Thompson have pointed to important intersections of moral and aesthetic lives and showed the role of the aesthetic in practices of attending, sustaining, and nurturing.

Similar convergence of aesthetics and care can be found in the work of the ecofeminist theologian Sallie McFague, particularly in her book *Super, Natural Christians* (1997), but also in her later writings. McFague has repeatedly expressed that the ongoing planetary crisis calls for a redirection of aesthetic sensibility towards nature; one that would emphasize embodiment, relationality and engagement, instead of distance and objectification. In this context, “touch” represents for McFague a mode of knowing that fuses perception with responsibility, collapsing the gap between subject and object. Mutuality of touch allows for entering into a reciprocal relationship that acknowledges the intrinsic value of the other. In this way, McFague’s notion of the aesthetic highlights the moral dimension in the sensory experience, where perception can become a practice of reverence, compassion, and solidarity. Aesthetic experience, in the view of McFague and also other writers on feminist theological aesthetics, is inseparable from practices of care—whether for the environment or the marginalized.

Building on these insights, this paper will explore three interrelated areas. First, it will compare the role of the aesthetic and care in everyday aesthetics and feminist theological aesthetics, highlighting convergences and tensions. Second, it will draw attention to the neglect (or “marginalization”) of theological aesthetics within contemporary discourse on everyday aesthetics, asking what might be lost if the theological perspectives are excluded. Third, it will demonstrate the potential of feminist theological aesthetics to enrich discussions of everyday life by linking the topics of the aesthetic, care, empowerment of the marginalized, and spirituality. By touching on these margins, the paper aims to contribute to the bridging of the gap between the disciplines of everyday aesthetics and theological aesthetics.

Criticism as Keys: The Cognitive Function of Criticism within DEKI Account of Representation

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This paper argues that artistic criticism plays a central cognitive role in our engagement with art by supplying the ‘key’ through which artworks can model the world. Building on Frigg and Nguyen’s DEKI account of representation, originally developed for scientific models, I show how artworks can be understood as denoting subjects and exemplifying properties, and how critical interpretation enables these properties to be imputed to new targets. On this view, criticism is not a merely secondary practice, but a constitutive part of the artistic inquiry. This framework not only explains how criticism generates insight but also offers a principled response to interpretive pluralism.

This account, however, must confront two challenges. The first is interpretive pluralism, which includes the debate over authorial intention and the objection from the diversity of interpretations. This paper, thus, addresses this challenge by suggesting a multiplicity of Keys, which can accommodate distinct interpretations of critics, audiences, and the author. It supposes that the artwork functions as a model that contains the artist’s own interpretation (K_{author}) and is aimed at an original target ($T1$). It then argues that criticism ($K_{\text{criticism}}$) performs the function of the crucial external Key. $K_{\text{criticism}}$ may either be consistent with the K_{author} to reinforce the imputation onto the original target ($T1$) or differ from it to enable a new imputation onto a different target ($T2$). In this way, it resolves the challenge of pluralism by validating multiple interpretive Keys, evaluating each not by its similarity with the author’s intention, but by its power to enable a coherent imputation onto a given target.

The second challenge is the threat of arbitrariness, which may claim that a multiplicity of Keys allows arbitrary and inappropriate interpretations. In response to this challenge, this paper draws from the epistemology of model-based science to argue that interpretations are not arbitrary because they are constrained by convention and potential intellectual institutions. A Key is only valid if it can coherently impute the exemplified properties within the artwork onto the target. Ultimately, it will be argued that the cognitive value of criticism lies in both its epistemic accuracy, which is found in coherently linking the work to the world, and its pragmatic power, which is manifested on both individual and social dimensions.

Environmental Art as Reparative Practice: Tracework in Post-Industrial River Landscapes

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The Anthropocene as a visual and discursive framework tends to universalize responsibility while producing a distanced gaze that obscures situated, irreversible damage (Demos 2017). Against such abstraction, this project examines how environmental art functions as a reparative aesthetic practice grounded in irreparability of post-industrial river landscapes. Rivers are critical sites for this inquiry, as they are systematically reduced to wastewater sinks (Tarr 1996). Drawing on the Blue Humanities' challenge to terracentric epistemologies (Mentz 2023; Oppermann 2023) and hydrofeminist thought (Neimanis 2017), this research reconceives rivers as relational entities whose fluidity and permeability unsettle the boundaries between human and non-human worlds. Their capacity to erode, deposit, and inscribe demands new forms of aesthetic engagement. Building on Sedgwick's (2003) reparative reading that assembles partial knowledges and Offenhuber's (2023) autographic visualization in which environments inscribe their own data, this paper proposes the concept of tracework—a practice of reading and engaging with environmental self-inscriptions—developed through an analysis of river-oriented artistic interventions. Allan Kaprow's happening *Course* (Cedar River, 1969) engaged participants in digging tributaries and pouring water back, mobilizing bodily response to the river's material processes. Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison (1989) mapped industrial and agricultural contamination along the Sava River, proposing a nature corridor through what they called conversational drift, an open-ended interdisciplinary dialogue that anticipated later transboundary conservation initiatives in the Danube basin. More recently, Tuula Närhinen's *Deep Time Deposits* (Thames, 2020) let river debris inscribe their own cyanotype archive, displacing authorship from artist to river. This genealogy informs my current practice-based research: the *Walking Seminars on the Saar River* (Saarbrücken, June 2026). Conducted in collaboration with a hydrologist, historians, a geographer, and a local environmental organization, these on-site seminars operate as a method of tracework, involving an embodied, multisensory reading of fluvial self-inscriptions: historical and speculative floods, spring water chemistry revealing land-use history; polluted archives at the Rossel-Saar confluence near Völklinger Hütte; erased histories of women's labor along the riverbank; and debris carried downstream as material records of consumption. The seminars feed into a Citizens' Forum on River Rights (July 2026), which advocates for the legal recognition of rivers as living entities (De Toledo 2026). Tracework attends to nonhuman agency beyond anthropocentric ventriloquism, reading the river's material self-inscriptions rather than speaking on its behalf. The situated environmental knowledge that tracework generates provides the epistemic ground on which new institutional imaginaries for human-river relations can be claimed.

Violence and Its Relationship with Biopower, Necropolitics, and Necroaesthetics

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The theory of “necropolitics” by the Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe (b. 1957) is based on the work of Michel Foucault (1926-1984), especially his critique of the concepts of “sovereignty” and their relations with “biopolitics”, war and “biopower”, developed in the last chapter of *The Will to Knowledge* entitled: “Right of Death and Power over Life”; as well as on the ideas of Giorgio Agamben (b. 1942) outlined in his book *Homo sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*.

Mbembe posits the hypothesis that sovereignty resides largely in the power and capacity to decide who may live and who must die. For the African philosopher, letting live or making die constitutes the limits of sovereignty; that is, it becomes its principal attributes: “Sovereignty consists in exercising control over mortality and in defining life as the unfolding and manifestation of power.”

In this presentation, we summarize the relationships that can be established between biopower, and “necropolitics” and “necroaesthetics,” as an aesthetic of death and violence in the context of contemporary societies; which can manifest itself in the form of state violence, such as: war, genocide, racism and repression; as well as in the spectacularization of violence in the media, the audiovisual and entertainment industries, and in popular culture in general.

“Necroaesthetics” refers to the aesthetics of death and violence within the context of contemporary political power. Mbembe argues that, in the age of biopower, power seeks to control not only life but also death, and that death has become an instrument of political and economic power.

The relationship between biopolitics, necropolitics, and necroaesthetics thus reveals how state power and cultural practices interact to regulate and represent life, death, and suffering in contemporary society.

Traditional Chinese Medicine in Contemporary Art: Body, Care and Creation — A Case Study of Guo Fengyi's Art

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Starting from a pragmatic intention of self-healing, the self-taught artist Guo Fengyi created a corpus of drawings grounded in traditional Chinese cosmology, conceptions of life, and theories of the body. At the age of thirty-nine, rheumatoid arthritis compelled her to leave her job; she then turned to the study of Chinese medicine and the practice of qigong to alleviate her pain. During qigong practice, certain images frequently “appeared” in her mind. To record these images, Guo commenced her drawing practice in 1989. Guo’s works are characterized by dense, fluid lines and spectacular compositions. Each image forms a self-contained system that seeks to render an invisible, dynamic field of energy. These drawings do not correspond to any established artistic style, nor can their interpretation be fully addressed through existing methods of art analysis alone. Rather, they must be considered in relation to the ancient Chinese cosmological and somatic theories—(Qi, Yin-Yang, the Five Phases, and the meridian system, etc.) on which her practice relies. Laura Hoptman has commented Guo’s works as possessing the power of “a vision being embodied” (The Drawing Center, 2020). Yet instead of the often-contested notion of “vision”, I prefer to understand Guo’s drawings as diagrams of energetic flow. Like an invisible magnetic field, the lines in her drawings constitute a “realistic” record of the invisible Qi that animates all things. This article offers an in-depth interpretation and analysis of Guo’s works, exploring how her practice integrates healing and aesthetics, body and spirit, as well as the individual and the cosmos. On this basis, it further argues for the intertwined relationship between bodily healing, sensory perception and aesthetic creation, revealing how embodied experience and artistic imagination co-emerge in a continuous, generative loop.

Algorithmic Misrepresentation and the New Forms of Deception in AI-Generated Art

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Current discussions about AI and deception focus primarily on misinformation, deepfakes, and the broader social risks posed by large language models. Far less attention has been paid to artistic forms of deception emerging in AI-generated art—cases in which artworks mislead not through intentional lies or fictional constructions, but through mechanisms intrinsic to algorithmic generation and through the contexts in which these works circulate. This paper aims to fill this gap by offering a systematic account of deceptive phenomena in AI-generated art and by proposing a conceptual framework that differentiates them from both traditional artistic fiction and intentional artistic deception.

I argue that deception in AI art can be structurally analysed through the information flow from instruction input, to algorithmic generation, to contextual presentation. Correspondingly, I distinguish three types of misrepresentation.

(1) Input-level misrepresentation occurs when the model misinterprets a user's prompt—failing to follow epistemic constraints, misreading genre requirements (e.g., non-fiction requests), or silently producing content that diverges from the prompter's intention.

(2) Output-level misrepresentation arises when the generated work contains false or fabricated elements that become deceptive once placed into certain contexts—for example, algorithmically hallucinated historical scenes presented as documentary photographs.

(3) Contextual misrepresentation, by contrast, involves cases in which the artwork itself contains no falsehood, yet becomes deceptive due to its position within an institutional or social context—such as AI-generated paintings submitted to human-only art competitions, or stylistic forgeries being mistaken for works by the original artists.

I argue that the first two types share a common underlying mechanism, which I call Algorithmic Misrepresentation: a non-intentional, non-fictional, mechanism-internal mode of misrepresentation grounded in model training, inference patterns, and representational shortcuts. The third type, however, cannot be reduced to this mechanism; it depends instead on contextual and institutional attributions of authorship, identity, and authenticity.

By articulating this tripartite framework, the paper provides a unified account of deceptive phenomena specific to AI-generated art and shows how AI expands the domain of artistic falsehood beyond traditional categories. These new forms prompt a reconsideration of epistemic and aesthetic norms within the contemporary artworld, especially regarding authorship, authenticity, and the conditions under which artworks may deceive.

NISHITANI Keiji's Art Theory in Relation to His Philosophy

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Nishitani Keiji (西谷啓治, 1900–1990), a philosopher of the “Kyoto School” founded by Nishida Kitaro (西田幾多郎, 1870–1945), has been widely studied for his philosophical work, yet his reflections on art have received far less attention. His writings on art have rarely been examined in relation either to one another or to his overall philosophical system. The purpose of this presentation is to clarify the characteristics of Nishitani's art theory by comparing his texts and considering how they are integrated into his broader philosophical thought.

The discussion focuses on Nishitani's distinction between two modes of art: art that stands directly upon life, and art that stands upon life in the face of death — or, art that seeks eternity by rejecting time, and art that opens up eternity by fully becoming time itself. The former seeks a realm of eternity that lies beyond time, whereas the latter understands time as the present and discovers finite existence in the “now,” in the very midst of the ever-changing flow of the world. The latter mode, Nishitani suggests, plays an important role in Japanese culture.

According to Nishitani, arts such as kado (華道, Japanese flower arrangement) and sado (茶道, Japanese tea ceremony) emerged as forms of everyday culture deeply connected with Zen (禅, a meditative practice in Buddhism). In the process of practice, where a skill is refined and elevated through continuous training, Zen pushes this development to its highest level. Because Zen involves a radical negation that cuts away all superfluous elements, it enables the practitioner to eliminate what is unnecessary in the act itself, leaving only what is essential. Through this process, the true path of the art — the do (道, way) of human existence — is realized.

This presentation thus explores how Nishitani's view of art, grounded in the Zen-inspired transformation of everyday practices, illuminates the overcoming of nihilism and the realization of ku (空, emptiness or nothingness) as the true mode of being embodied in artistic practice.

KOBATA Junzo's Philosophy of Aesthetic Consciousness: Aesthetics as a Way of Life

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KOBATA Junzo (1926-1984) is a rare aesthetician who brought the term “aesthetic consciousness” to the forefront. The Japanese term “bi-ishiki (aesthetic consciousness)” has a different meaning from its German counterpart, “ästhetisches Bewußtsein”. The term “bi-ishiki” contains an ethical connotation in which it has to do with one’s attitude toward life and which has remained in everyday language. So he continued to use the term “bi-ishiki” even when the term “aesthetic experience (biteki taiken)” was accepted in the field of aesthetic research in Japan. He argues that the essential trigger for an aesthetic experience is wonder, and the experience of wonder brings about “awareness of ignorance”. The transformation of the subject in this process can take place in the continuity of life. Gudō or asceticism in everyday life overlaps with the potential of aesthetic consciousness for aesthetic experience. “Aesthetic consciousness” is part of the seeking after truth in everyday life. His continued use of the term “aesthetic consciousness” indicates his understanding of aesthetics as a way of life. This original thought is reflected in his late works, *The Philosophy of Aesthetic Consciousness* (posthumous, 1986) and *Seek-Way Art (Gudō Geijutsu)* (posthumous, 1985). Moreover, his research approach is generally considered to be a phenomenological aesthetic. He uses Husserl’s term “transcendental subjectivity (transzendente Subjektivität)” with a unique metaphor, saying that only when an “experience of wonder” “hits it [sc. transcendental subjectivity] hard” can the “decay” of beauty be prevented. He describes the dynamism of aesthetic consciousness as an “encounter”. Although this term is derived from phenomenological discussions such as Husserl’s “experience (Erfahrung)” and “horizon (Horizont),” it is later connected with Plato’s process of “Eros” in his *Symposium*. Furthermore, Kobata discusses specific practices of cultivation. He also argues that the significance of wonder lies in the “awareness of [one’s own] ignorance” and that the subject changes through the reflection triggered by the wonder, but that such a wonder “strikes” them at the horizon “perpendicularly.” Thus, his originality is demonstrated by his departure from phenomenological terminology, yet this is only possible by presupposing the foundation of phenomenological research. In conclusion, his philosophy of aesthetic consciousness maintains continuity with Western philosophy while possessing a unique Japanese quality as aesthetics as a way of life.

The Notion of “Arabesque” in the Drawing Practice of Odilon Redon

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“Arabesque” has been one of the major topics in the scholarship on French 19th-century artistic movements, a milieu in which the notion attracted particular attention. Research has shed light on the dissemination of the word, utilized by artists and critics to emphasize the expressivity of lines, which impress viewers independently of the narrative content of an artwork. Drawing on its etymology, such statements were conventionally associated with the non-representational nature of Islamic decorative pattern. Yet recent studies have underlined the cross-artistic 19th-century aesthetic, in which arabesque represented a metaphor for capricious undulation in literature and music, resonating with the plastic language of fin-de-siècle visual arts.

However, these latter studies, confirming that the word signified an abstract line in art theory and criticism, retain the view that the importance of arabesque in modern art resides in its contemporary connotation of expressivity of lines. Since they have observed the discourses and their influence on creation, it is even more worth examining what significance arabesque, originally related to line drawing, held in painters’ practices.

This paper revisits the modern phase of arabesque, distancing itself from the word’s signification and prominence in the discourses at the time. The primary corpus is composed of several works by Odilon Redon, who has received comparatively little attention on this topic. Even though it is widely known that the artist mentions the word itself as indeterminate interlacing lines from which figures can emerge, the remark has primarily been interpreted within the framework of the contemporary aesthetic of ambiguity typified by Stéphane Mallarmé. However, the fact that this remark concerns Redon’s principle of drawing indicates the importance of practical aspect. In truth, he produced several drawings and prints where lines transform themselves from contours of figures to indefinable traces, and vice versa. Based on on-site research of drawings, this study re-examines the correspondence between his remarks and his artworks and elaborates on how his conception of arabesque offered him an alternative to naturalist representation. This argument illuminates an aspect of arabesque that is frequently underappreciated with respect to its “abstract” nature, namely, its figurative quality and generative capacity. It also motivates a review of contemporary discourses, focusing on the reception of his works. This whole discussion foregrounds the reciprocal relationship between aesthetics and artistic practice regarding arabesque.

The Metapolitics of Irony. Generalizing Hegel's Critique of Romanticism with Rancière and Badiou

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What's the political significance of irony? Ironically used symbols are not only ubiquitous but are also ascribed political relevance. From high art's self-critical gestures and meme culture to inflatable costumes used at the "No Kings" protests in the U.S.A., irony is deemed to be in alignment with political claims. This is a questionable assumption, for it ignores how symbolism as an aesthetic form inherits certain presuppositions regarding the relation between subject and object, individual and community – and, thus, its own politics.

I base this thesis on Jacques Rancière's reading of Hegel in "Mallarmé. The Politics of the Siren". Here, Rancière synthesizes Hegel's scattered critique of Jena romanticism into a strong argument: because there is no inherent relation between a symbol and what is symbolized, every consciously used symbolization must appear to us as a subjective act. Thus, known symbolization cannot claim to transcend the subject. (Note: "known symbolization" in this sense is very different from what Hegel calls "symbolic art", which is marked by the fact that the artists do not know that they are using symbols.) But if symbolization does not transcend the subject, what does this imply, e.g., regarding the claims that art symbolizing the role of the artist in a capitalist mode of production? In my presentation, I would like to argue that Rancière generalizes Hegel's criticism of Jena romanticism into a far-reaching critique of ironic symbolism in contemporary art. It is supplemented by a performative contradiction: contemporary symbolism endless combinations and recombination of symbols lay claim to a ground outside the symbolic relation (e.g. emancipatory politics, communal experiences, God), yet they first and foremost demonstrate the combinatory ability of a subject. Thus, ironic symbolism circumvents its very claim to relevance. If symbolism is political, it is not via the politics of its proponents.

However, if we want to properly conceptualize the politics of irony, we need to generalize Hegel's critique even further. For this, a productive point of departure is Alain Badiou's attacks on Rancière in "Metapolitics". Here, Badiou accuses Rancière of never "giving up the ironic mastery of whoever catches the master out". This, I will argue, amounts to charging Rancière with a performative contradiction: he criticizes ironic symbolism in an ironic mode. Thus, the question of the political significance of irony remains unanswerable via critique. I will sketch how, according to Badiou, the Hegelian-Rancièrian charge against symbolism, while valid, remains insufficient and apolitical.

The Expansion of the Aesthetic: Art, Technology, and Embodied Perception

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The presentation proposes to examine the notion of the “expansion of the aesthetic” in the context of contemporary technologies. Today, the expansion of the aesthetic reaches beyond the institutional and object-based boundaries of art and is primarily connected to shifts in the very structure of the perceiving subject and in the nature of aesthetic experience itself.

Regarding the first point: the aesthetic subject ceases to be an autonomous “I” and becomes a network of relations between the human and the non-human – the embodied, the digital, the mechanical. The second point (aesthetic experience) is also undergoing transformation. The speaker describes aesthetic experience as a sensory and disinterested encounter with the fullness of a phenomenon, in which the subject, suspending utilitarian attitudes toward the world, opens herself to an event of meaning irreducible to rational judgment, immediate benefit, or physical pleasure (a phenomenological position).

The expansion of aesthetic experience is linked to a shift from a “subject-object” model to an experience of co-being, in which different dimensions of experience intertwine into a single flesh of perception. As an example of such an expansion, the speaker proposes to analyse the aesthetics of digital interfaces. As suggested by the definition above, this experience extends to everyday objects and to new entities such as interfaces. Is it possible to experience disinterested pleasure from an interface if it is functional?

Following A. N. Whitehead, beauty is not a property of a thing but a mode of our co-being with it. Following M. Geiger, the subject changes her mode of perception – from “use” to “contemplation.” Ultimately, however, we arrive at M. Merleau-Ponty, for whom this mode is always already embedded in us and enacted bodily, since we are part of the flesh of the world. The presentation will offer examples of how this manifests in our interactions with interfaces.

The view that aesthetic perception operates by default is also characteristic of recent research in neuroaesthetics. Thus, A. Chatterjee, in his work on developing a taxonomy of aesthetic experience, reaches a similar conclusion; together with a group of researchers, he also attempts to describe this experience linguistically (an effort to make the inexpressible expressible). It is possible that the efforts of neuroaesthetics, in dialogue with fundamental aesthetics and phenomenological aesthetics, may bring us closer to an account of the nature of aesthetic experience, despite the difficulties and limitations involved.

The Aesthetic Category of the Mundane in the Context of the Phenomenon of Guilty Pleasure

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The report is dedicated to an aesthetic category of the mundane. It seeks to establish a conceptual framework for understanding the mundane in contrast to the dynamically sublime, as originally delineated by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgment*. According to Kant, the dynamically sublime is characterized by the subject's experience of fear upon encountering an object; at this critical moment, through the faculty of imagination, the subject apprehends his own freedom, thereby experiencing the feeling of the sublime.

By contrast, in interactions involving a mundane object, the subject experiences neither fear nor the recognition of freedom. Rather, the subject becomes conscious of moral imperfection, owing to an inclination to favour what is insignificant and basic, thus effectuating a denial of freedom. Captivated by the mundane, the subject conceives of his own insignificance and concomitantly experiences guilt.

Consequently, the aesthetic category of the mundane may be conceptualized as engendering a sense of guilt for one's own imperfection and the baseness inherent in human nature, which gravitates towards the unworthy and primitive. This conceptualization illuminates the contemporary notion of guilty pleasure, wherein an individual feels guilt associated with the pursuit of certain forms of pleasure. The object of guilty pleasure is frequently mundane, in contrast to objects deemed appropriate for judgments of sublimity.

The recognition of one's pleasure as shameful prompts the subject to envisage his moral insignificance, compelling concealment of such predilections. Thus, the aesthetic category of the mundane is linked to objects whose appeal is interpreted as indicative of the subject's constrained moral constitution. The subject may surmise that deriving aesthetic pleasure from mundane objects manifests a disregard for the actualization of freedom.

This analysis invites reconsideration of the hierarchy of aesthetic objects and aesthetic experiences. It raises the question of whether the enjoyment derived from the trivial might be comparable in value to that elicited by ostensibly more sublime experiences. Perhaps it constitutes a distinct form of aesthetic pleasure altogether. Furthermore, the guilt central to the contemporary concept of guilty pleasure might undergo transformation into a more nuanced disposition towards individual preferences.

Hyperrealism and Cyberrealism as Aesthetic Values in Music

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The relationship between humans and music has undergone a profound transformation. In contemporary culture, this transformation is increasingly shaped by the development of audio technologies. Today, music is encountered predominantly in technologically mediated, processed, recorded, and digitally circulated forms rather than in the basic acoustic situation of direct co-presence between sound source and listener. As a result, technology no longer functions merely as an external means of preservation or transmission, but as a factor that reshapes the mode of existence of the musical event and expands the field of aesthetically relevant qualities through which musical material may be organized.

The presentation introduces the concepts of hyperrealism and cyberrealism as two aesthetic values emerging within technologically mediated music. Hyperrealism designates an orientation in which technology intensifies the presence, clarity, proximity, selectivity, and auditory fullness of musical material, often while rendering its own role partially transparent. Cyberrealism, by contrast, refers to an orientation in which technological mediation ceases to function merely as a subordinate means and becomes an audible, positively valued, and co-constitutive dimension of musical material. These concepts make it possible to grasp two distinct ways in which contemporary music may be organized in relation to auditory reality: either by intensifying its effect of presence or by affirming technologically produced constructedness, processing, syntheticity, and post-acoustic forms of sonic existence.

It is argued that these values should not be understood as simple stylistic labels or as a straightforward opposition between the natural and the artificial. Rather, they express broader axiological orientations that become intelligible only against the background of the transformed structure of the musical event. By referring to the basic situation of the musical event and to the technological reconfiguration of the relations between sound source, medium, audiosphere, and listener, the presentation shows that contemporary musical aesthetics must take into account not only traditional values such as beauty, expression, or authenticity, but also different models of auditory reality that music is now capable of producing and positively affirming.

"AI Slop" and Digital Eco-Aesthetics – A Phenomenological Aesthetic Inquiry into Digital Junk

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In our current digital age of AI transformation, we can witness the spread of easy-accessible content generating applications, such as Midjourney, DALL-E, Canva, or Suno AI, which are used to create digital images, music, and videos in a matter of seconds. The emissions generated are not only used for private purposes, but are also disseminated on the internet, where they take upon different roles. From branding and marketing over entertainment and practical workflows to education and automation, AI generated content has found a significant position in the digital realm. Despite these purposeful usages, AI generated content and their apps are also subject to misuse, such as creating misleading or false images in political contexts, or cluttering information feeds on various social media websites. This so-called "AI Slop" refers to low-quality content easily created with AI tools that flood online platforms and influence algorithms behind user feeds and advertisements. This has a major impact on the from the ground up highly designed digital world and how we experience it. Understanding the digital realm as an ecological environment with its own logic, it raises the question about AI Slop's ecological impact, not only in the real world but also on the digital world. Drawing inspiration from Malcom Miles (2014), I propose "Digital Eco-Aesthetics" as a field of inquiry to examine, what I would like to call "digital junk," which describes highly processed rapidly generated digital content high in stimulating spectacle, misleading portrayals, and affective manipulation, but low in depth, nuance, context-sensitivity, and quasi-subjectivity. By expanding the "junk food" metaphor, I argue that overconsumption of digital junk content can have detrimental effects on our personal but also social health, such as cognitive overload, emotional desensitization, erosion of social understanding and a *sensus communis*. By drawing from Malcom Miles' Eco-Aesthetics, Mikel Dufrenne's phenomenological approach to aesthetic experience, and Sianne Ngai's arguments about aesthetics in post-capitalist societies, I examine our aesthetic experience of "digital junk content." I will show how it affects and alters our sensibilities in the dialectics of intersubjectivity and interobjectivity as well as empathy and indifference and how their respective imbalance manifests in a post-capitalist aesthetic regime. On this aesthetic basis, I will make brief explorations into the consequences of AI Slop on mental health, e.g., doomscrolling and emotional numbing, on ideologies, like algorithmicized consumerism, and possible ethical reflections on its practices regarding digital safety, digital pollution, and perception of misinformation.

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