Horror Movies in the Plague Era

Matthew Strohl
University of Montana

The COVID-19 pandemic is by far the weirdest thing I’ve ever lived through. It’s been weird in so many ways, but for me the most acute was the sense early on that pretty much all of us—the entire world—was simultaneously gripped by concrete fears about getting sick, profound uncertainty about the future, and a rushing undercurrent of existential angst as we were abruptly torn from our lives. One of the most surreal experiences of my life was navigating panic at the grocery store as we dodged strangers who appeared to be breathing a little too enthusiastically.

One of the very first things that happened on the day when Trump restricted travel from Europe and America went into panic mode was that someone asked me to put together a list of pandemic-themed horror movie recommendations. The most popular movie on iTunes immediately became Contagion. From the point of view of a philosopher immersed in the literature on the so-called “paradox of horror,” this might be surprising. It is a nearly universal assumption in this literature that part of the reason we are able to enjoy the negative emotions we experience in connection with horror fictions is that we in some manner distance ourselves from the content of these emotions. When we see the green slime onscreen and are frightened by it, we are aware at the same time that it’s fictional—that it’s not really going to hurt us—and the distance that this awareness creates is what clears the way for fear to function positively in our aesthetic engagement.

What we saw happening at the beginning of the pandemic was the opposite: we saw a mass urge to dive deeper into a very real fear in aesthetic contexts. Of course, not everyone shared this urge, but it was stunningly commonplace. The question of why people reacted this way is ultimately empirical, but I can think of two possibilities worth considering.

The first is self-administered exposure therapy. When I’m genuinely scared of something, I rarely have much success ignoring it. It tears and claws at me until I confront it. I often find that a better coping strategy is to dwell on the fear and try to accept that whatever it is that I’m afraid of might indeed come to pass, but that if it does I will be able to endure it. Perhaps many of us dove straightaway into nightmarish pandemic fictions as a way to confront and process our fears.

The second possibility is that many of us experience the emotional impact of horror films as expressive potency. That is, we value these movies because they tap into our most intense personal fears in a way that is aesthetically exhilarating. Theories of horror that place too much emphasis on distance may underestimate what we are happy to put ourselves through in aesthetic contexts. Few things impress me more than an artist who can make me feel something that I can barely stand to feel. Covid has been a time of big, outsized feelings—feelings that many of us have apparently had an urge to dive even deeper into our aesthetic lives.

But perhaps the most striking thing to me about watching horror
movies during the lockdown was the way that so many movies that have nothing directly to do with viruses and pandemics suddenly felt like they were about COVID-19. I had a reciprocal germ-sharing arrangement with my pal Jesse, and even during the lonelier months he came around once a week or so to watch horror movies with me. We constantly found ourselves saying things like, “wow, this really feels like it’s about COVID,” or, “it’s so uncanny how relevant this feels.”

Consider, for instance, John Carpenter’s The Thing. The thing about the Thing is that it could be anyone. Like the T-1000, it can imitate any person it encounters. When someone leaves the room and then comes back again, for all you know they could now be the Thing. The extraordinarily tense middle section of the movie depicts the paranoia that this dynamic generates. As Jesse and I watched the movie together, I started giving him the side-eye. Eventually, I looked over at him and asked, “Bro, you been on Tinder lately? Bumble?” The movie made me vividly aware that every time he leaves my house and then comes back he could have been replaced with a COVID monster who looks and sounds like my friend Jesse.

“Horror reflects society’s fears” is perhaps the most over-used platitude in all of horror criticism. Of course it does. These observations about what it has been like to watch horror movies during the pandemic give us an opportunity to move beyond the bluntest version of this thesis and consider the rich phenomenology of the many different ways in which horror can reflect the fears of society. The case of Soderbergh’s Contagion isn’t especially interesting: we are now very afraid of pandemics and it’s about a pandemic. It’s more interesting to think about how Soderbergh’s Unison (which I much prefer), has gained new resonances. Taken literally and in terms of narrative subject matter, it has nothing at all to do with the pandemic. It’s about a woman who is committed to a mental health facility on a false basis and then tormented by a stalker. But the emotions that it explores—feelings of captivity and powerlessness, of being suddenly torn from one’s world—are all too vividly COVIDesque. Moreover, the digital textures of the movie, which was filmed on an iPhone, call to mind the way that our lives have become so pervasively mediated by digital cameras and microphones.

Or, consider Joe Dante’s classic Gremlins. It’s now a COVID movie. You had three rules: keep the mogwai away from bright light, don’t get it wet, and never, ever feed it after midnight. But you couldn’t follow the rules, could you? Gizmo got wet, then he multiplied, then the resulting flock of mogwai were given chicken after the appointed hour. And what is the result? Abject chaos. Gremlins literally swinging from the chandeliers. We had three rules: wear a mask, stand six feet apart, wash our hands. But we couldn’t follow the rules, could we? And what was the result? ABJECT CHAOS.

The horror movies with the most enduring appeal are often the ones that can be about almost anything—the ones that tap into our most fundamental and pervasive fears. I’m talking, for instance, about the place deep down in our collective gut where we don’t really trust society not to fall apart at the seams. Do I really trust my neighbors? They are friendly enough, but will they pillage my house if food shortages become critical? Movies like Invasion of the Body Snatchers (any version), The Mist, The Happening, Time of the Wolf, and The Purge tap into this fundamental fear, and thus can feel like they are about anything from a war to a pandemic to a natural disaster.

As I write this, the smoke has begun to clear and the world has started to return to something resembling normal. It is a new landscape, where we can no longer assume that the store will have the thing we want to buy and where one’s six-foot personal bubble has taken on new significance, but it is more or less recognizable as the world we knew before the pandemic. Thinking back to the phenomenology of the first few months after the plague took hold is like trying to remember a nightmare the next afternoon. I can recall flashes, but I have trouble immersing myself imaginatively in what it was really like. I am waiting with bated breath to see the next wave of COVID-inspired movies. Sure, there will be highly literal depictions like Songbird, which is too on the nose for greatness (though it does have its trashy pleasures as a piece of COVIDsploitation). What I really look forward to are movies that burrow into the deep, dark undercurrents of the pandemic and immerse us once again in the elusive, nightmarish pall that was cast over the world during those early months.

It’s definitely not for everyone, but Abel Ferrara’s Zeros and Ones comes the closest of anything I’ve seen. It has some literal COVID markers (masks, group video chat, and so on), but that’s almost beside the point. It’s like a transmission from the end of the world—dark and muddy and hard to make out, possessed at once with feverish urgency and resigned desolation. And that’s kind of what it was like, wasn’t it?

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Minimizing Misgendering: A Plea for Better Pronoun Practices

Wesley D. Cray (she/they)
Texas Christian University

At the beginning of this semester—Fall 2021—I announced my resignation from higher education. I’ll be leaving my tenured position at Texas Christian University and taking up the position of Director of LGBTQIA+ Programming at the largest provider of virtual intensive outpatient therapy in the United States, where roughly 70% of our clients are members of LGBTQIA+ communities. Since then, I’ve been very careful to clarify whenever it comes up that I’m not leaving academia, but just the university system. My research communities, including the American Society for Aesthetics, are too dear to my heart for me to not remain connected as much as is manageable. Ideally, that connection will include continuing to attend various conferences, which I’ve always found—on the whole—in-vigorating and affirming, on both professional and personal levels.

It’s incredibly disheartening, then, to hear that apathetic attitudes toward pronoun usage and basic respect toward persons and their gender identities still constitute a noteworthy presence in our communities. Even if such attitudes are not the dominant attitudes, their effects can be felt, and those effects matter—whether they impact seniors, long-time members of the profession or a graduate student who had their first in-person conference experience tarnished by a pattern of disrespect.

I’m not writing this piece in the hope of convincing and converting reactionary who advocate for transphobic policies on the basis of trans-exclusionary gender ideology. It would take more than the space I have available here to disabuse such advocates of the fallacies, junk science, and faux-feminist politics at the heart of such views. Instead, the audience I hope to speak to includes those who’ve always found—the whole—in-vigorating and affirming, on both professional and personal levels.

In this spirit, I’ll provide the following: a very brief discussion of some harms of misgendering; some suggestions for relevant best practices we could adopt moving forward, both institutionally and individually; and, finally, a small handful of suggestions for further resources pertinent to this topic. My aim is to encourage well-meaning members of our research communities to make an active effort to create a more inclusive space for colleagues inhabiting the full spectrum of gender identities.

Some Harms of Misgendering

If you were to inadvertently misgender a cisgender person—that is, use a typically masculine-coded pronoun (‘he’, ‘him’, ‘his’) for a cisgender woman or a typically feminine-coded pronoun (‘she’, ‘her’, ‘hers’) for a cisgender man—you would likely take yourself to have made a mistake. Similarly, I imagine that you would clearly under-stand why the recipient of the misgendering act might take offense, ranging from minor to major depending on the context. If the error continues to the point of becoming habitual, the offense will almost certainly—and understandably—grow.

Trans persons deserve the same level of respect as cisgender persons. But oftentimes, the reactions we receive when it is pointed out (by us or by others) that someone has misgendered us differ from those which you likely imagined in the previous scenario. It is not uncommon for the perpetrator of the misgendering act to assume a defensive stance, commenting that it’s “just so hard to remember,” or that they’re “still learning” or “practicing” and that we “need to remember that people are going to make mistakes.” Perhaps even falling back on the claim that they “had no way of knowing.” Sometimes the defensive stance is accompanied by a deep sigh, awkward laughter, or even an eyeroll. These reactions send a clear message: whether the perpetrator realizes it or not, they do not afford trans persons the same level of respect as cisgender persons. This differential helps constitute and sustain transphobic environments, institutions, and practices.

Few should have trouble imagining how the habitual misgendering of a cisgender person—whether intentional or due to negligence, could start to take a mental and emotional toll on that person. The harmful effects on trans persons are predictably more substantial, insofar as misgendering can exacerbate gender dysphoria—a significant distress or discomfort due to felt incongruence between gender expression (along with typical social reception of gender) and gender identity. Such dysphoria can prove lethal: roughly one half of adolescents and young adults diagnosed with gender dysphoria report having experienced suicidal ideation, and roughly one quarter have attempted suicide (García-Vega, et al 2018; see also Day, et al 2019).

The official position of the American Medical Association is that someone suffering from gender dysphoria ought to receive treatment in part through allowing and encouraging their outward gender expression to be brought into congruence with their internal gender identity ("Advocating…,” AMA). The adoption and uptake of gender-affirming pronouns is one way of allowing and encouraging this congruence. On the other hand, the lack of such uptake actively frustrates congruence, thereby running the risk of perpetuating or exacerbating potentially lethal gender dysphoria.

Those who have never experienced debilitating gender dysphoria have trouble grasping how this incongruence can feel so devastating. Ultimately, though, you don’t need to see how it can in order to see that it can. And the evidence that gender dysphoria is a very serious matter comes, quite simply, from the sincere testimony of trans persons, both anecdotally and as collected through systematic medical study. These studies are useful for driving the point home, but ideally, the anecdata would be sufficient: if someone tells you that something you are doing hurts, you have good reason to stop doing it, even if you don’t understand why or how it hurts.

A final thought: as academics, I’d like to think that we have a commitment to the truth. An act of misgendering amounts to an epistemic error. An attitude of permissiveness toward misgendering is an attitude of permissiveness toward serious errors. Citing how “difficult” correct pronoun usage is amounts to intellectual laziness, especially for academics who spend much of their time puzzling through significantly more difficult practical and conceptual issues. So, in this spirit, I offer a plea: both individually and collectively, and for the sake of the members of our communities: let’s do better.
Suggestions for Best Practices

Here, then, is a short (non-exhaustive) list of suggestions for best practices at the institutional level:

1. Pronoun badges ought to be made available at conferences. These badges should offer a range of pronoun options (including mixed sets, such as “she/they”) and be large enough to be read at a distance. To aid in this, color-coding might prove especially effective. Cisgender persons ought to strongly consider participating in this practice as well, so that it becomes a standard practice rather than merely a “trans thing.” (If you are worried that doing so will give the impression that you are merely “virtue signaling,” please consider that as practices such as these receive wider uptake, such impressions will fade.)

2. Conference participants ought to be able to opt for the inclusion of their pronouns on conference programs. The same recommendation applies to publications in journals, and the previous note regarding cisgender participation continues to apply here, as well.

3. During conference presentations, it ought to be the chair’s responsibility, as chair, to use the proper pronouns for all session participants. The chair should also check with participants prior to the session regarding their preferences for how to handle potential misgendering during the session itself, and then proceed to act accordingly.

4. Habitual misgendering ought to be a censurable offense, at an institutional level.

Here, too, is a short (non-exhaustive) list of suggestions for best practices at the personal level:

1. If you accidentally misgender someone: correct yourself, apologize, and move on. Do not subject the recipient to an extended display of your guilt or an explanation of “how bad you feel,” “how hard it is,” or “how hard you’re trying.” This is often incredibly uncomfortable and only serves to further solidify any harm done.

2. Be mindful of the fact that someone’s outward appearance is not a reliable guide to their gender or pronouns. If you are unsure of someone’s gender, default to using their name or the gender-neutral, singular ‘they’. If you are somehow convinced that ‘they’ is invariably plural, please simply do a brief study of the history of the usage of the word.

3. Practice proper pronoun practices no matter who is around. This will help you build better linguistic habits, and also contribute to building and maintaining a climate in which persons are comfortable being public about their identities and pronouns.

4. Regardless of your gender identity, please consider including your pronouns in your email signature and other such correspondence. You might also consider getting into the habit of offering your pronouns along with your name when you’re first introduced to someone.

5. Work toward conceiving of this issue as one of building an atmosphere of respect, rather than thinking of it solely as a superficial issue of linguistic preference.

6. Listen to your trans friends and colleagues. Do not use them as your personal libraries on these and related issues, but when they do share, actively listen to them. If you don’t have any trans friends or colleagues (that you know of), take time to actively consider why that might be.

Some Resources

Next, here are some resources that I am confident will prove helpful to anyone who is hoping to make a good-faith effort toward better understanding these issues and implementing the above practices.

At the academic level, the following journal articles and book chapters are fantastically informative and helpful:


For more a casual tradebook, I recommend:

- Baron, Dennis. 2020. What’s Your Pronoun?: Beyond He and She. Liveright.

For those who like their information in comics form:


And finally, a quite wonderful online resource:

- MyPronouns.org: Resources on Personal Pronouns (URL: <https://www.mypronouns.org/>
Please, Do Your Part

Just as I didn’t write this piece to convince transphobic ideologues, I also didn’t write it with the intention of pointing fingers. We all have work to do to make our communities—including our research communities—safeter and more inclusive.

What I’m asking is for you to do your part, and to do it mindfully and in good faith. I regularly see up-close the effects of persistent misgendering adolescents and young adults, and that sight is heart-breaking. My heart breaks, too, to know that some among our friends and colleagues in the ASA (and other corners of academia) are similarly affected. With 2021 being the deadliest year on record for trans persons (Parks 2021) and seeing a record amount of anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation in the U.S. (Ronan 2021), let’s please commit to making our communities part of the solution rather than negligently perpetuating these problems.

*Thanks to Matt Strohl for helpful feedback.

References


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News from the National Office

We are all learning how to go on living in the age of COVID. In the last six months, ASA has successfully held three in-person meetings and co-sponsored two in-person conferences. All complied with state and local requirements for COVID precautions and demonstrated how we can go forward.

As noted in August, the Rocky Mountain Division meeting was held in July in Santa Fe, NM. Although attendance was down from their normal registration, the meeting was a great success to those who were able to travel and made us optimistic about how to manage our work in these challenging times. The Southern Division held a successful meeting under an outdoor tent in October. Our Annual Meeting in Montréal was a rousing success with over 150 persons making the trek. International visitors had to show negative tests and vaccination proof to enter Canada and then to return home, but the requirements proved more daunting on paper than in real life. Co-sponsored conferences in Victoria and Rutgers were also successful, complying with on-site requirements for proof of vaccination and indoor masking at those locations.

At this writing, the division meetings in 2022 are all planning to go ahead with in-person meetings. Pacific meets in March in Berkeley, Eastern in April in Philadelphia, and Rocky Mountain in July in Santa Fe. As we did this year, we will comply with all local requirements, such as proof of vaccination, distancing, and indoor masking. The Southern Division has not yet settled on 2022 meeting dates and location, but we will publicize widely when they do. The Annual Meeting in Portland in November will be in-person.

We do understand that, even with these precautions, some members are not able or willing to travel while COVID rages on. As we go to press, the ASA, the Kent Centre for Aesthetics, and the British Society of Aesthetics are working on plans for a Virtual Summer Aesthetics Festival for 2022. As soon as the trustees of all groups review and approve it, we will announce it widely. This will be an opportunity to present work with opportunities for commentary and discussion, especially for those unable to travel to our other meetings. Membership in either the BSA or the ASA will be required for all presenters, but we expect that virtual attendance will be available free to all worldwide. This will be an excellent opportunity for members with work in progress who need feedback on their projects so they can move forward. And, as noted previously, the Feminist Caucus is planning a virtual Summer Symposium again in 2022.

We hope this mix of in-person and virtual opportunities will meet the needs of our members. As we learned in Montréal, trying to combine Zoom with an in-person audience can be cumbersome, disappointing, and technically difficult for all concerned. This form of mixed formatting is not planned for 2022 meetings.

The Trustees have made several important decisions in recent months that we hope will make 2022 a productive year for all members. Of special note:

- Membership dues have been frozen through the end of 2022. For those on tight budgets, we encourage you to switch to a GREEN membership for substantial savings.

- Significant travel support will be available for the November Annual Meeting, including six Irene H. Chayes Travel Grants and at least six Friends of the ASA Travel Grants. These are for persons with papers or panel presentations accepted for the program who do not have institutional support for this travel. If more funds are raised by the Friends, the number of those grants will increase. We encourage those of you who can to contribute to the Friends of the ASA, either online or by mailing a cheque to the national office. These donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law in the US.

- In addition, all full-time students with papers or panel presentations accepted for the program will receive travel grants for the Annual Meeting, with no upper limit on the number of these grants.

We hope you are all safe and well and look forward to seeing you at our meetings in 2022! Happy New Year to all!

Aesthetics News

Transparency at the ASA

Members often remind us of the importance of transparency to the extent possible at the American Society for Aesthetics. Here are some reminders of what we are trying to do to promote this important goal.

Digital Archives: An on-going project in the last several years is collecting and posting on the ASA website records of the Society so all members with access to the Internet can see the contents of the archives. These include:

- ASA Records: All current members can log in to the ASA site and go to the big red Members button on the upper-right. The submenu ASA Records includes board minutes, annual meeting programs, and certain other records. We are missing a few years and hope we can locate those to add to the collection.

- ASA Newsletters: Another submenu includes a complete collection of the ASA Newsletter since its inception in 1980.

- Division archives: Another submenu includes meeting programs for all the divisions. We do have some gaps and welcome your help in locating the missing programs.

- Annual Meeting Records: This submenu, starting with the 2015 meeting, includes reports on all ASA activities (committees, division meetings, grants, etc.); annual reports from the JAAC editors, the Secretary-Treasurer, and the Ombudsperson; and the annual budget approved by the Trustees.

- Public web: Everyone, including persons not cur-
Gilmore received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1999. He is currently Associate Professor of Philosophy at The CUNY Graduate Center and Baruch College. Previously, he was Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Yale University and held a three-year Cotsen Fellowship in The Society of Fellows at Princeton University. He writes on the imagination, philosophy of literature, philosophy of painting and sculpture, artistic style, censorship and freedom of expression, 20th-century European Philosophy (particularly Merleau-Ponty), ethics and aesthetics, theories of the emotions, the cognitive science of art, and the history of Modern Art. He is also a widely published art critic.

Shapshay also earned her Ph.D. at Columbia University (in 2001). Currently she is Professor of Philosophy at Hunter College & the CUNY Graduate Center. Before coming to CUNY in 2019, she taught at Indiana University-Bloomington for 17 years. Her research centers on aesthetics and ethics in the 19th c. (with a focus on Schopenhauer and Kant), environmental aesthetics, theories of the sublime, and the aesthetics and ethics of public commemorative art such as monuments and memorials. In 2018 she co-edited a JAAC special issue, “The Good, the Beautiful and the Green: Aesthetics and Environmentalism”, with Levi Tenen.

The new co-editors anticipate enhancing the Journal’s online presence and advancing the gains the Journal has made in publishing authors, and reviewing books by authors, who belong to underrepresented minority groups in philosophy. They also aim to bring the work and relevance of aestheticians and philosophers of art to the attention of museum curators, gallerists, contemporary artists, musicians, dramaturges, art writers, and all manner of art practitioners/appreciators.

The City University of New York has made substantial commitments in support of the co-editors and the journal, including office space, student assistance, and assigned time. Final negotiations are now underway with the co-editors-designate and CUNY to finalize the appointments.

ASA Announces new Co-editors of the Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism

The American Society for Aesthetics is pleased to announce that the ASA Board of Trustees has voted to appoint Jonathan Gilmore and Sandra Shapshay the new co-editors of the Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism (JAAC), published by Oxford University Press. Their five-year term runs from 2023-2027, and they will be eligible for reappointment.

Gilmore and Shapshay were selected from several very strong applications. All were carefully considered and interviewed by the search committee, chaired by Rachel Zuckert, Northwestern University. The other members of the search committee were David Davies, Theodore Gracyk, Carolyn Korsmeyer, Robert Stecker, and Julie Van Camp (ex officio/non-voting). They selected current co-editors, Theodore Gracyk and Robert Stecker, who have served as co-editors of the JAAC for two five-year terms.
ASA Diversity Committee and Feminist Caucus Announce New Leadership

The current co-chairs of the Diversity Committee, Nils-Hennes Stear and Paloma Atencio-Linares, are pleased to announce that Saul Fisher, the current vice-chair, has agreed to chair the committee, commencing on December 3. The Committee welcomes volunteers to serve as vice-chairs for this committee. Interested persons should contact sfisher@mercy.edu.

The current co-chairs of the Feminist Caucus Committee, Susan Spaid and Gemma Arguello Manresa, are pleased to announce that Elizabeth Scarbrough is joining them as a third co-chair. The Diversity Committee organizes an event at the Annual Meeting and has also developed proposals for the Trustees in recent years, including the Irene H. Chayes New Voices Awards and the Diversity Curriculum Grants. For more information on the work of the committee: <https://aesthetics-online.org/page/diversity>

The FCC organizes a panel at each Annual Meeting and also organizes a virtual Summer Symposium. For more information on the work of the FCC: <https://aesthetics-online.org/page/feminist>

All ASA members are welcome to join these committees by adding these groups on their membership records under “manage profile” on the ASA webpage.

Friends of the ASA

In the past year, the ASA Trustees have surveyed the impact of COVID and the financial calamities in higher education on our members to see what the ASA might do to help. The Trustees learned from many members that their employers had cancelled or suspended travel and research accounts to present their work at professional meetings. In response, they decided last winter to establish the Friends of ASA to raise funds to address these problems.

Twenty-four ASA members, including all of the trustees and officers in January, donated a total of $9,490 for $1000 travel grants for persons with papers accepted for the Annual Meeting who do not have institutional travel support. Fifteen members donated at least $100: María José Alarcéz León, Kristin Boyce, David Davies, Julian Dodd, Susan Faggin, Thomas Leddy, Richard Miller, Russell L. Quacchia, Brian Soucek, Robert Stecker, Jeffrey Strayer, Paul Thom, Julie Van Camp, Peg Brand Weiser, and Michel-Antoine Xhignesse.

For any funds from the Friends donations left after the Montréal meeting, the trustees have approved expenditure in 2022 for travel grants to the Annual meeting in Portland, Oregon. These funds are in addition to six $1000 Irene H. Chayes Travel grants, also for presenters without institutional travel support, and $1000 travel grants for all full-time students with papers accepted for the meeting and all prize winners.

Anyone wishing to contribute to this fund for the 2022 Annual Meeting can donate on the ASA website under Donations: <https://aesthetics-online.org/donations/>.

The ASA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. All donors will receive a receipt which you can use for your tax returns. If you are donating a charitable roll-over from your retirement account, please mail the cheque to: American Society for Aesthetics, Friends of ASA, 1550 Larimer St #644, Denver, CO 80202-1602

ASA Publishes Updated Graduate Guide to Aesthetics

The American Society for Aesthetics is pleased to announce the publication of the updated Graduate Guide to Aesthetics in North America (5th ed.) Please share with your colleagues, students, and appropriate list-serves.

<https://aesthetics-online.org/resource/resmgr/files/GRADUATEGUIDE.pdf>

From the ASA home page <http://aesthetics-online.org>, look for “resources” on the red tab in the upper right corner. Graduate Guide is one of the sub-menus under Teaching. This is free to the public—you do not need to log in as a member. Many thanks to Michel-Antoine Xhignesse, Capilano University, for the updates.

ASA Trustees Adopt Policy for Regular Online Meetings

The ASA Board of Trustees, on June 29, 2021, adopted a new Policy and Procedures for Regular Online Meetings of the ASA Board. The complete policy is available under ASA Policies on the ASA website: <https://aesthetics-online.org/resource/resmgr/files/POLICY_ASA_Board_of_Trustees.pdf>

It is anticipated that online meetings of the Board will be held approximately once a month, but ordinarily will not be held in the month of the ASA Annual Meeting. Minutes for meetings held to date are available to current ASA Members under the red Members tab ==>ASA Records.

Call for Volunteers for ASA Activities

The American Society for Aesthetics frequently calls upon its members to volunteer to serve as reviewers of papers, panel proposals, and books submitted for Division meetings, prizes, and other opportunities. Members are also frequently called upon to serve as commentators on papers being presented at the ASA Annual Meeting and the four ASA Divisional meetings. The ASA also has several committees that rely on volunteer service.

Any a curator at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian. Previously, she was curator at the Renwick Gallery and an assistant professor of art history at the University of Arizona. She received her MA and PhD in American Studies from Yale University and her BA in Native American Studies and anthropology from the University of California at Davis. She has written for American Indian magazine, Art in America, First American Art Magazine, and the Oxford Handbook of American Indian History as well as exhibition essays for Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Heard Museum, the Hood Museum of Art, and the Renwick Gallery.

The meeting will be held at the Drury Plaza Hotel July 15-17, 2022. The deadline for submission of abstracts will be March 15, 2022. When the Call for Abstracts is available, it will be widely publicized.

For more information about the meeting:

<https://aesthetics-online.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1173362&group=>

The meeting will be organized by the RMD officers:

Jeremy Killian, President
Antony Aumann, Vice-President
Wesley Cray, Secretary
Julianne Chung, Past-President

ASA NEWSLETTER
ASA Members are welcome to submit their interests here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/K8HYBLS>.

The purpose of this survey is to enable interested members to inform the ASA of their interest and qualifications in serving in any of these roles. You are free to skip questions, as you wish.

There is no guarantee that persons submitting information here will be selected. Nor is there any obligation that you accept every request made of you from this information.

By submitting this survey to the ASA, you are giving us permission to share your answers with ASA officers, trustees, and other ASA officials. The ASA will not post any of this information to its website or other public venues.

ASA Members at the 2022 APA Eastern Meeting

Many members of the American Society for Aesthetics are presenting their work on aesthetics and related areas at the American Philosophical Association Eastern meeting in Baltimore January 5-8, 2022. Mark your calendars!

Wednesday, January 5
11:00 am - 12:50 pm
Symposium
Mary Gregg (University of Connecticut, Storrs), "Fictional Untruths and Cartoons Per Se: Illustrative Harm in Little Black Sambo"

Symposium
David Sackris (Arapahoe Community College) and Rasmus Rosenberg Larsen (University of Toronto Mississauga), “Are There Moral Judgments?”

Colloquium: Aesthetics
Speaker: Zachary Weinstein (University of Toronto), "Striving to Appreciate?" Commentator: Robbie Kubala (University of Texas, Austin)
Speaker: Antony Aumann (Northern Michigan University), “Art and the Limits of Imagination” Commentator: Saul Fisher (Mercy College)

4:00-5:00 pm
Symposium
Jason Leddington (Bucknell University), “The Event-Property View of Sounds”

ASA Members at the 2022 APA Central Meeting

Are you attending the APA Central Meeting in Chicago February 23-26, 2022? Several ASA members are presenting work on aesthetics and related areas. Please support their presentations.

Thursday, February 24
noon - 2:00 pm: Poster Sessions
Parysa Mostajir (University of Chicago): “Conjoint Communicated Experience: Art as an Instrument of Democracy”

6:00-7:00 pm: Colloquium: Philosophy of Art
Speaker: Gilbert Plumer (Law School Admissions Council): “Argumentative Painting”

Friday, February 25
1:00-4:00:
Author Meets Critics: Thi Nguyen, Games: Agency as Art
Chair: A. W. Eaton (University of Illinois Chicago)
Critic: Christopher Bartel (Appalachian State University)

Author: Thi Nguyen (University of Utah)
2:00-4:00 pm: Panel Anti-racist Pedagogy as Harm Reduction
Presenter: Nicholas Whittaker (Graduate
The panel, organized by Sue Spaid and Rossen Ventzislavov, will be held Friday, February 18 from 10:00 – 11:30 am in the Hilton Chicago, Lobby Level, Continental B.

Panel Title: Recent Perspectives in the Philosophy of Curatorial Practice

Panel Participants: Eleen Deprez, Jean-Paul Martinon, and Sue Spaid

Panel Abstract: In 2020, three philosophers who also have curatorial experience published philosophy books and a dissertation focused on curating. This panel aims to clarify these philosophers’ different insights, as well as to demonstrate the variety of philosophical approaches available to curators and artists alike. Deprez and Martinon address the curator’s role, while Spaid focuses on the spectators’ role.

Discussant: Rossen Ventzislavov (<rossen_ventzislavov@yahoo.com>), Professor of Philosophy at Woodbury University, has written on curating, architecture, literature and theater. His work has appeared in Deleuze Studies, Contemporary Aesthetics, The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, X-tra, Tripwire, Public Seminar, and Debates in Aesthetics. He has been a member of the Encounter art collective in Los Angeles for the last seven years and is currently working on a monograph on performance art.

Eleen Deprez

Abstract for “Restage, Rebuild, Repeat: An Ontology of Curated Exhibitions”

An exhibition can move or change locations while remaining the same exhibition. Sometimes, a reinstallment will use exactly the same artworks, reuse plinths, reproduce the wall labels, and try — within the scope of the new space — to rehang the works in the same way. Often however, a reinstallment will look very different from the original exhibition. For example, because of conservational concerns, lending issues, or practical restrictions, an exhibition’s restaged version lacks the original version’s artworks. We intuit that such changes are acceptable, and that restaged exhibitions — even with certain works omitted — are instances of the same curatorial work. But there do seem to be limits. How much can an exhibition change when it is being reinstalled? Are some features more significant or consequential than others with respect to the identity of a curated exhibition? Motivated by these and other examples, I will argue that a curated exhibition is an ontological hybrid: a concrete site-responsive display of artworks and an abstract curatorial utterance made through that display. I argue that two curated exhibitions are identical if their authored-curatorial utterances have the same illocutionary force and their displays support that utterance through a similar appreciative context. Thus, (i) two exhibitions that look exactly the same but do not make the same utterance are not identical and (ii) that two exhibitions that have the same illocution but achieve this by creating different appreciative contexts (i.e. displaying different works or thematizing different features in the works) are not identical.

Jean-Paul Martinon

Abstract for “Curating Philosophy or Intuitive Science”

If curating is an indeterminate activity with diverse disciplinary inheritances and sporadic scholarly import, then philosophy must stay well clear of it. It must not meddle with curating’s endeavors. Inversely, if philosophy is a heavy abstract undertaking with long-standing lineages of thought, then curating should stay well clear of it. It must not weigh itself down with unnecessary arguments or speculations. At the heart of such a distinction is Plato’s famous condemnation of the arts as being an oblique, unscientific, and opinion-led form of knowledge and his elevation of philosophy as the only science worthy of its name because it is essentially precise and rigorous. Can there be a way of conceiving these two practices together in such a way that it fosters a type of intuitive knowledge, such as that put forward by Spinoza? In this paper, I will attempt to show that intuitive reasoning is paramount to curating and that philosophy cannot do without it, especially if it refuses the shelters provided by ivory towers of knowledge. Through a reading of Spinoza, I will argue that the two practices can come together as both an intellectual and sensory act of knowledge. Alongside Spinoza, this paper will also touch upon the work of authors such as Sarah Kolman and Gilles Deleuze.

Jean-Paul Martinon is a visiting tutor at the Ruskin School of Art at the University of Oxford and an Honorary Researcher at the University of Kent. She is a philosopher of art and a curator.

ASA Panel at the Annual Meeting of the College Art Association

The American Society for Aesthetics is pleased to announce that it is sponsoring a panel at the annual meeting of the College Art Association in Chicago February 16-19, 2022.

The panel, organized by Sue Spaid and Rosser Ventzislavov, will be held Friday, February 18 from 10:00 – 11:30 am in the Hilton Chicago, Lobby Level, Continental B.

Panel Title: Recent Perspectives in the Philosophy of Curatorial Practice

Panel Participants: Eleen Deprez, Jean-Paul Martinon, and Sue Spaid

Panel Abstract: In 2020, three philosophers who also have curatorial experience published philosophy books and a dissertation focused on curating. This panel aims to clarify these philosophers’ different insights, as well as to demonstrate the variety of philosophical approaches available to curators and artists alike. Deprez and Martinon address the curator’s role, while Spaid focuses on the spectators’ role.

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Eleen Deprez is a visiting tutor at the Ruskin School of Art at the University of Oxford and an Honorary Researcher at the University of Kent. She is a philosopher of art and a curator.
Sue Spaid  
Abstract for “The Spectators’ Special Role”:

Building on Marcel Duchamp’s notion that ‘the spectator completes the work of art’, this paper credits spectators with becoming the stakeholders who weave the narratives that lend artworks their meanings over time, a view that philosophers typically attribute to the artist and/or curator prior to the exhibition. In treating artworks as ongoing events whose presentational histories begin with their first public appearance, this paper characterizes artworks as dynamic objects, hardly bound to particular eras. In contrast to the view that individuals read artworks like texts, I cast the entire process as collective, the activity of myriad people working in various contexts and over time. To tease out this view, I articulate the relationship between exhibitions, spectators and future presentations, such that artworks are more profound than mere treasures, since they inspire spectators’ imaginations over centuries.

Bio: The author of five books on art and ecology, Spaid has curated hundreds of exhibitions, including ‘biennials’ such as the 2001 Pacific Northwest Annual at the Bellevue Art Museum and the 2006 Mississippi Invitational at the Mississippi Museum of Art. Her exhibitions have been supported by an Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation Award, Mondriaan Fonds, BankGiro Loterij Fonds and NEA Access to Artistic Excellence. In 2018, The Nick Reeves Award for Arts and Environment cited “Ecovention Europe” “Special Commendation.” Prior to earning a Ph. D. in Philosophy at Temple University in 2013, Spaid worked as a commercial gallerist in Los Angeles, a museum curator in Cincinnati, a sculpture park curator in Philadelphia and a museum director in Baltimore. She regularly presents papers at the American Society for Aesthetics, the European Society for Aesthetics, and the Nordic Society for Aesthetics. An Associate Editor of Aesthetic Investigations, her papers have appeared in Rivista di Estetica, Journal of Somaesthetics, Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Popular Inquiry, Art Inquiry: Recherche sur les art, and Philosophica. The Philosophy of Curatorial Practice: Between Work and World (Bloomsbury 2020) is her first philosophical monograph.

ASA Trustees Adopt Resolution on Virtual and In-Person Meetings

The American Society for Aesthetics Board of Trustees unanimously adopted on November 17, 2021, a Resolution on Virtual and In-Person Meetings for future meetings, as follows:

WHEREAS, the ASA Board of Trustees

• Recognizes the value of meeting in person for its annual and divisional meetings, to encourage interaction and networking among professional colleagues, as well as the drawbacks of expensive travel, and

• Also recognizes the value of virtual meetings to facilitate professional activities for persons not able to travel to in-person meetings for whatever reason, as well as the loss of informal networking with others in the field.

THEREFORE, the ASA Trustees direct the Secretary-Treasurer, working with the Officers and the BOT,

• To explore virtual meetings that complement the schedule of in-person meetings, including, e.g., Summer Virtual Aesthetics Festivals, possibly in collaboration with such organizations as the British Society of Aesthetics and the International Aesthetics Association

• To encourage the Feminist Caucus Committee and the Diversity Committee to explore meetings and Symposia conducted virtually, to increase participation

• To explore the feasibility of adding a virtual component to divisional meetings and the annual meeting, such as models used by the Dance Studies Association and the American Philosophical Association

• To encourage potential grant applicants to explore virtual presentations at minimal cost for conferences and workshops as an alternative to in-person gatherings

• To monitor the evolution of technology for hybrid meetings that is cost-effective and logistically realistic for a small society.

ASA Trustees Approve Freeze on Membership Rates through 2022

The American Society for Aesthetics is pleased to announce that the ASA Board of Trustees has unanimously approved a freeze in all ASA Membership rates and categories through December 31, 2022.

To see the rates: <https://aesthetics-online.org/resource/resmgr/files/Membership_Application_2021.docx>

The ASA encourages all members to consider GREEN memberships, which were instituted in 2017. Green members have all the benefits of regular members, but do not receive print copies of the Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism. All members (green and regular) have full access to the journal on the website of the publisher, Oxford University Press.

Green memberships are considerably cheaper than regular memberships. E.g.,

• Student green worldwide-$25 vs. Student North America-$35 vs. Student international-$70

• Regular green worldwide-$70 vs. Regular North America-$100 vs. Regular international-$115

You can switch to green when you renew your membership. Or we can make that switch for you for your next membership renewal. Just write to <secretary-treasurer@aesthetics-online.org>

ASA Elections for New Trustees

Deadline: December 31, 2021

The American Society for Aesthetics is pleased to provide information on the four nominees for ASA Trustee, nominated by the current Board of Trustees:

SONDRA BACHARACH is an Associate Professor at Victoria University of Wellington. She been an active member of the aesthetics community since 1999, having served as the ASA Newsletter Editor, a Trustee, pro-
SONIA SEDIVY is Professor in the tri-campus Department of Philosophy the University of Toronto and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at University of Toronto Scarborough. Her primary research interests are in the philosophy of mind, especially the philosophy of perception, in aesthetics with a focus on visual art, and in the later work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Like much of her research, her Beauty and the End of Art: Wittgenstein, Plurality and Perception strives to integrate all three areas. She has recently edited Art, Representation, and Make-Believe: Essays on the Philosophy of Kendall L. Walton. She was Program Chair for the 2021 Annual Meeting of the ASA. She is committed to diversity and would strive to promote greater inclusivity and outreach, as well as more dialogue with other areas of philosophy.

The two trustees elected will serve for three-year terms (February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2025). The nominations are being announced on the ASA website and via e-mail to all members. Bios of the nominees also will be available in the December 2021 ASA Newsletter and in October on this website.

As provided in the ASA By-laws, Article VII, additional nominations can be made by any eight members of the Society. All such additional nominations, with the signatures of eight supporting members, must be filed with the Secretary-Treasurer no later than the two weeks following the annual meeting (December 4, 2021). These can be sent by e-mail (<secretary-treasurer@aesthetics-online.org>) or through the US Mail (American Society for Aesthetics, 1550 Larimer Street #644, Denver, CO 80202-1602).

Voting will be conducted on the ASA website from December 4-31, 2021, with an announcement in early January. All members of the ASA in 2021 are eligible to vote by logging into the website, looking for the red “Members” button in the upper-right, and clicking the “Trustee elections” sub-menu. Members unable to vote online should notify the Secretary-Treasurer no later than December 1, 2021, and will be sent a mail-in ballot; notification should be sent to the ASA mailing address, above.

Keren Gorodeisky and Monique Roelofs will complete their terms as trustees on January 31, 2022. For more information on the current trustees and the ASA bylaws, see the ASA webpage (<http://aesthetics-online.org>). Look for the “ASA” red button in the upper-right and click the “About the ASA” sub-menu.

Calls for Papers

American Society for Aesthetics
Pacific Division Meeting
Berkeley City Club
Berkeley, CA
March 18-19, 2022
Deadline Extended: December 15, 2021
Keynote
A.W. Eaton, University of Illinois-Chicago

The 2022 meeting of the Pacific Division of the American Society of Aesthetics will be the division’s second meeting at the Berkeley City Club in Berkeley, CA. After our 2021 virtual meeting due to COVID-19, we look forward to holding next year’s meeting in person.

We invite paper and panel submissions on any topic in aesthetics, broadly construed. Submissions from traditionally underrepresented groups (including women, diverse gender identities, racial and ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities, among others) are encouraged. If your paper or panel submission is accepted, you must become a member of the ASA and register for the conference. You may submit a paper or be a member of a proposed panel, but not both. If you would like to volunteer to serve as a session chair and/or as a commentator, please fill out and submit this form.

Accepted papers will be presented and discussed in pre-read workshop format. All participants will commit to pre-read all accepted papers. (We do not run concurrent sessions, and the number of accepted papers will be manageable for pre-reading.) The author will have three to five minutes to introduce the paper, followed by a ten-minute presentation by the commentator, with the remaining session time allotted for question and answer. This format will be strictly followed to facilitate in-depth discussion. Paper submissions must not exceed 3,000 words in length and must be accompanied by 200 to 300-word abstracts. Submissions should be anonymized for review.

Proposals for panels, author-meets-critics sessions, and other special sessions should include a brief description of the topic or theme, the names and affiliations of all proposed participants, and long abstracts of all papers (400 to 500-word each). These sessions will last an hour and a half with at least half-hour reserved for question and answer and
in most current philosophical body talk is a clear, pragmatic orientation—something that the individual can directly translate into a discipline of improved somatic practice. Both of these deficiencies can be remedied by the proposed field of somaesthetics, a discipline of theory and practice. (PA 271 – Emphasis added by A. Kremer.)

During the last three decades, Pragmatist Aesthetics has been translated into fourteen languages, and the pragmatist approach to aesthetics has become an important direction in the philosophy of art and the aesthetic field. Similarly, somaesthetics has developed into an interdisciplinary field with researchers working in the arts, politics, education, historical and social sciences as well as health sciences and even technology.

In May 2012 the Sorbonne’s philosophy and art departments arranged an international conference and an art show to mark the progress of pragmatist aesthetics since the simultaneous publication of Shusterman’s Pragmatist Aesthetics and its French version entitled L’Art à l’état vif. The conference was called “Pragmatist Aesthetics: 20 years later / L’art à l’état vif: 20 ans après” and the art show’s title was Aesthetic Transaction: Pragmatist Philosophy through Art and Life.

Ten years later we wish to explore the melioristic approach and multiple forms and impacts of pragmatist aesthetics and somaesthetics, not with a mere retrospective regard but with an interest on new thinking for the future. That is why the MOME (Moholy Nagy University of Art and Design) and the Hungarian Forum for Somaesthetics are organizing a conference in Budapest between May 25-28th, 2022. The title of the conference is “The Promise of Pragmatist Aesthetics: Looking Forward after 30 Years.” Possible topics include, but are not limited to, investigations into the following phenomena and trends:

- pragmatist aesthetics in the 21st century (theories, art criticism, institutionalization)
- implications of pragmatist aesthetics on artistic and other creative practices (design, fashion, gastronomy, urbanism, etc.)
- pragmatism, somaesthetics, and artistic research
- pragmatist aesthetics and the place of arts in the social life (everyday aesthetics, arts and politics, collaborative artistic practices)
- pragmatist aesthetics and somaesthetics
- pragmatist aesthetics and performativity
- pragmatist aesthetics and the digital future of arts
- pragmatist aesthetics, somaesthetics, and politics
- pragmatist aesthetics, somaesthetics, and education
- somaesthetics and technological design
- pragmatist aesthetics and social sciences

Keynote speakers:
- Prof. Richard Shusterman
- Prof. Barbara Formis
- Prof. Giovanni Matteucci
- Prof. Tanehisa Otabe

The organizing committee:
- Alexander Kremer (SZTE, Hungarian Forum for Somaesthetics), habil. associate professor
- Bálint Veres (MOME), habil. associate professor
- Attila Horányi (MOME), associate professor
- Botond Csuka (University of Physical Education, Budapest) assistant professor

Abstracts should be sent to the following email address: <pragmatistaesthetics@mome.hu>

Notifications of acceptance: January 15, 2022

Aesthetic Dis/interestedness and Affects

LOGOS Research Group in Analytic Philosophy and the Society for Philosophy of Emotion

Deadline: January 1, 2022

Conference date: May 19-20, 2022 (online)

Affects (i.e. emotions, moods, etc.) often play a central role in aesthetic experience. Many accept this as almost a truism, even when they are puzzled by some aspects of this phenomenon (cf. paradox of fiction, paradox of negative emotions). Indeed, there is a recent trend in aesthetics of defining aesthetic experience in terms of particular affects (e.g.
wonder). Also widespread is an understanding of the ideal of aesthetic experience as one that is disinterested, i.e. disconnected from personal interests or desires. On the face of it, however, such disinterestedness is in tension with the nature of many affects as typically related to the affected person’s personal interests. To appreciate this prima facie tension, consider for instance how often we make emotions intelligible by means of the dis/satisfaction of one’s conative attitudes in general (e.g. she is happy because she passed the exam, which was her desire), or how relevant interests are to characterizing the formal object of an emotion (e.g. the formal object of fear is often defined in terms of dangerousness for the emoter, or for someone/something she cares about). The exploration of such a prima facie tension between aesthetic disinterestedness and the interestedness of affects can disclose important insight about emotions, aesthetic attitudes and the relation between them.

This conference aims to present analyses of this prima facie tension, including discussing to what extent it is a real tension, and what ways out of it there are, if any. Several other questions will also be relevant to pursuing this goal, including:

• Ascertaining whether the tension is in place for certain (kinds of) affective states or events, more than for others (e.g., “aesthetic” vs garden-variety emotions, or positive vs negative affects etc.).

• Understanding the difference that there is, if any, between affects elicited by art (including fiction) and affects elicited by practical concerns.

• Describing and/or discovering any phenomenological differences in our affective experiences arising from our interested encounters with the world, as opposed to those arising from encounters with aesthetic objects.

• Locating where, if at all, the dis/interestedness of the aesthetic experience lies: e.g., whether it is in its affective components or elsewhere.

• Exploring the extent to which affects are in fact central to, or can even define aesthetic experience.

• Exploring the relationship between aesthetic dis/interestedness and active participation on the side of the audience: e.g., whether audience’s interpretative efforts (e.g., deploying imagination in an adequate manner, relating the aesthetic contents to their own experiences and thoughts, etc.) and even their actions (e.g., interactive fictions) are ingredients of aesthetic interest that renders their affective experiences intelligible.

• Ascertaining to what extent interestedness really is the mark of the affective and aesthetic disinterestedness a counterexample to it.

The aims

This conference seeks to foster the study of affects, aesthetics and the relationship between the two. In particular, the idea is to gather inclusively both young and more experienced scholars with shared philosophical interests on aesthetics and affects with the aim of encouraging: (i) the exchange of ideas, (ii) the forging and broadening of research networks; and (iii) the collaborative development of new and interesting approaches to the workshop topic, with an aim to the publication of a special issue of the Journal of Philosophy of Emotion. This conference will feature the following four keynote speakers, along with 6 speakers selected from the replies to this call. It will also be freely open to the public for the public to attend.

The keynote speakers

• Adriana Clavel-Vázquez

How to Apply for the Workshop

This call is addressed to scholars at any stage of their careers (including independent scholars and graduate students) working in the areas of philosophy of affects/emotion and aesthetics. If you are interested in being a speaker at this conference, please send your abstract of about 600-800 words to <aaron.estribor@gmail.com> by the 1st of January, 2022. Your abstract may be sent in .doc, docx., odt., or pdf. format. It must contain the title of the talk, a summary of the main arguments, and some considerations regarding the pertinence and relevance of your contribution to the question under discussion. It must be written in English.

Abstracts will be evaluated by the Scientific Committee on the basis of their general quality and relevance to the workshop, without giving undue weight to linguistic style or fluency. Applicants should send two copies of their respective abstract: one with the name(s) of the author(s), affiliation(s) and email contact, and a second one anonymised for peer review (not including names, affiliations, email contact or any kind of information that could reveal the authorship of the document).

Important Contact Info & Dates

Questions should be directed to <aaron.estribor@gmail.com>

Notification of acceptance: 25th of February, 2022

Scientific Committee

• Aarón Álvarez González (University of Barcelona)
• Tom Cochrane (Flinders University)
• Filippo Contesi (University of Oxford)
• Esa Díaz-León (University of Barcelona)
• Manuel García-Carpintero (University of Barcelona)
Invited Speaker: Hanne Appelqvist (Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies)

Organizers: Maria José Alcaraz (University of Murcia) and Francisca Pérez Carreño (University of Murcia).

Sponsored by: Spanish Research Council via “Normative Aspects of Aesthetic Appreciation” (PID2019-106351GB-I00 Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad); “Beyond Beauty: nature and critical relevance of aesthetic properties” (20934/PI/18) Funded by: Fundación Séneca-Agencia de Ciencia y Tecnología de la Región de Murcia; Spanish Society of Analytic Philosophy. The Philosophy of Hybrid Representations (PID2020-119588GB-I00). Eliminativism, Fictionalism, and Expressivism. The possibility of a negative metaphysical verdict about a discourse (PID2019-106420GA-I00).

Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft

Two Special Issues

Issue 67/1 · 2022 Moral Art: Is Art Allowed to be Moral?
Deadline: December 31, 2021

Is art allowed to be moral? Or must art be evil: immoral, shocking, offensive?
The first issue will lay a special focus on the relationship between art and morality with regard to the production of art.

Issue 67/2 · 2022 ART MORALITY: Does Art Have to be Moral?
Deadline: June 30, 2022

Does art have to be moral? Or is it allowed to be reprehensible from a moral point of view?
The second issue will focus on the relationship between art and morality with regard to the reception of art. Should we tolerate immoral art? Or do we need a moral censorship of art?

Should we renounce the reception of art that is reprehensible from a moral point of view? Should we ban it from museums and public spaces? Should it be provided with warnings? Or should the reception of fascist art, for example, be possible without restriction? What determines whether art is immoral or not? Who makes this decision based which criteria to which artists can orient themselves if they want to produce moral art?

What would it mean for art to be moral? That in itself is an unanswered question. But as difficult as it is to answer, it seems to be clear to many of the art world’s stakeholders that art has the right to be immoral. Ever since Baudelaire’s Les Fleurs du Mal, it even seems as if art must be evil and immoral if it does not want to appear affirmative, boring, unattractive, or embarrassingly moralistic.

Can art only fulfil its mission if it provokes the moral feel-ings of many people? Or does the demand that art should not bow to the prevailing morality, but should disturb and devalue it, fail to recognise the nature of art and the way it affects people? Does it possibly even underestimate the potential impact of moral art and the contribution it can make to improving social conditions?

If art is allowed to be moral: What does this mean for artists and for art production? Is it possible to produce art that deserves to be called “moral”—and if so, how? Are there criteria to which artists can orient themselves if they want to produce moral art?

Or does the moral character of art depend on the way art makes itself if they want to produce moral art? How could we define the meaning of moral art? Is it even possible to qualify art as immoral in a sense that goes beyond a mere subjective opinion? Or does art, due to its essential ambiguity, not allow for such classifications?

Is it justified to toxify or even prevent the reception of works of art because the views or behaviour of their creators are morally reprehensible? Is art liable for the behaviour and the views of those who have created it? What kind of concept of art and artistic freedom lies at the bottom of views that attribute
Planning ahead?
ASA Events in 2022

ASA Pacific Meeting, Berkeley, March 18-19, 2022
<https://aesthetics-online.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1459913&group=>
SUBMISSION DEADLINE EXTENDED: December 15, 2021

ASA Eastern Meeting, Philadelphia, April 22-23, 2022
<https://aesthetics-online.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1233115&group=>
SUBMISSION DEADLINE EXTENDED: December 15, 2021

ASA Rocky Mountain Division, Santa Fe, July 15-17, 2022
<https://aesthetics-online.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1173362&group=>
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: March 15, 2022

ASA Annual Meeting, Portland, OR, November 16-19, 2022
<https://aesthetics-online.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1184489&group=>
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: March 1, 2022

For the complete list of ASA Meetings and Workshops: Scroll down to MEETINGS near the bottom of the page on the ASA website. Click “more” to see the complete list.
a harmful influence to works of art? In what way can and how should we deal with or react to art that appears racist or sexist to some recipients?

Original contributions in German, English, or French that discuss questions such as these in a profound and thorough way—whether in a purely theoretical manner or using art of any kind as an example—are requested by 31.12.2021 (Issue 1) or 30.6.2022 (Issue 2) by email to the editorial office of the ZÄK: <zaek@ds.uzh.ch>.

The length of the submitted contributions should not exceed 45,000 characters (including spaces and footnotes).

The Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft (ZÄK), founded in 1906 by Max Dessoir and re-founded in 1966, is one of the oldest peer-reviewed journals for aesthetics and the theory of art. In its 67th year, it addresses the relationship between art and morality. We welcome original contributions on two complementary topics that analyse the relationship between art and morality: from the perspective of artistic production and from the perspective of the reception of art.

**Special Guest Edited Issue of Dance Research Journal**

Deadline: December 30, 2021

Guest Editors: Thomas F. DeFrantz, Jasmine E. Johnson, and Eric Mullis

Assembly, Gathering, Being with Dance

Assembly is an affair of appearance in which dispersed people find a common ground in public view. The process is often interpreted as expressing self-determination and popular sovereignty. Dance, social, choreography, protests, and other forms of assembly are marked by actions which indicate shared beliefs about the body, the self, and broader social conditions. While spontaneous gatherings or carefully planned political protests might signal shared values through acts of popular will, such interpretations may belie the complexities of group formation. In light of contemporary contexts—including the global pandemics of COVID-19 and antiblackness—impacting conditions of assembly, we think even more pointedly about the processes and politics of gathering.

Assembly can be a strategy of turning the singular into the plural, or the crowd into the collective. The practice of gather-

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**Friends of the ASA**

In the past year, the ASA Trustees have surveyed the impact of COVID and the financial calamities in higher education on our members to see what the ASA might do to help. The Trustees learned from many members that their employers had cancelled or suspended travel and research accounts to present their work at professional meetings. In response, they decided last winter to establish the Friends of ASA to raise funds to address these problems.

Twenty-four ASA members, including all of the trustees and officers in January, donated a total of $9,490 for $1000 travel grants for persons with papers accepted for the Annual Meeting who do not have institutional travel support. Fifteen members donated at least $100: María José Alcarez León, David Davies, Susan Feagin, Thomas Leddy, Russell L. Quacchia, Brian Soucek, Paul Thom, Julie Van Camp, Peg Brand Weiser, and Michel-Antoine Xhignesse. If any funds from the Friends donations are left after the Montreal meeting, the trustees will determine expenditure in 2022, with priority for travel grants to the Annual meeting in Portland, Oregon. These funds are in addition to six $1000 Irene H. Chayes Travel grants, also for presenters without institutional travel support, and $1000 travel grants for all full-time students with papers accepted for the meeting and all prize winners.

Anyone wishing to contribute to this fund for the 2022 Annual Meeting can donate on the ASA website under Donations: <https://aesthetics-online.org/donations/>

ASA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. All donors will receive a receipt which you can use for your tax returns. If you are donating a charitable rollover from your retirement account, please mail the check to: American Society for Aesthetics, Friends of ASA, 1550 Larimer St #644, Denver, CO 80202-1602
ing—whether in a classroom, at a protest, or online—is not simple or necessarily straightforward. While the presence of those gathered may be intentional, the politics of belonging shape how being together is diversely experienced. Who was able to attend the gathering? How do race, gender, sexual identity, class, disability, religion, place, and age impact who is welcomed, affirmed, or protected once assembled? How might the time signatures and spaces of assembly provide both occasion for new solidarities or openings for appropriation? Once the assembly disperses, where does that collective action go? How are its residues alchemized, condensed, or diluted?

Increasingly, gatherings are facilitated, framed, and disseminated by technological devices and artificial intelligence systems. What are the technologies that allow assembly? How have those technologies been crafted, and how are they deployed by people engaged in critical movement, through and beyond? How do dance studios materialize, and what sorts of shared rhetorics of corporeal agreement/disavowal are embedded in their operations? In our contemporary moment, in relation to all manner of previous events, how has protest continued to dance?

Possible areas of focus may include strategies of assembly in particular contexts (such as Native American powwows, vogue balls, multinational dance competitions, or public protests), gathering as both shared belief and disagreement, relationships between dance, place, and shifting cartographies of belonging, dance at/as protest, assembly, media representation, and public perception, and the possibilities and limitations of virtual dance assemblages.

For questions and suggested readings, please email: Eric Mullis: <mullise@queens.edu>

SPSCVA & Film and Philosophy Workshop

Deadline: March 30, 2022
Event date: June 10, 2022

The Society for the Philosophical Study of the Contemporary Visual Arts (SPSCVA) together with Film and Philosophy are sponsoring an online workshop to take place on June 10, 2021.

We are open to submissions from scholars outside of philosophy in order to promote interdisciplinary discussion. We also strongly encourage submissions from women and minorities and from junior and new members of the SPSCVA.

Interested participants are invited to submit detailed abstracts (500 to 800 words in length) for individual presentations as well as panel proposal. We encourage participants to focus on current topics of interest such as, but not limited to:

- The representation of race in film
- Online streaming VS in-person screening
- Animation
- The relationship between film criticism and philosophy
- Contemporary directors
- TV series

Proposals should be prepared for anonymous review and submitted no later than March 30th. All submissions should be sent to <filmphiljournal@gmail.com>.

Accepted authors will be notified by April 15 and will be asked to provide a finalized copy of their paper by May 15. Papers will be presented and discussed in a pre-read workshop format:

- Participants will commit to read all accepted papers prior to the workshop.
- The author will have 10 minutes to introduce the paper; the introduction will be followed by brief comments by an assigned commentator; the remaining portion of the session will be dedicated to Q&A.

Interested commentators, chairs, and tech chairs should reach out to co-Chairs Laura T. Di Summa at <eirenelaura@gmail.com> and John Dyck at <john.dyck@gmail.com>.

While we cannot guarantee acceptance, selected papers will be considered for publication in Film and Philosophy.

Film and Philosophy
Volume 27, 2023
Deadline: June 30th 2022

Film and Philosophy publishes peer-reviewed articles about film from a philosophical perspective. Established in 1994, it is published annually by the Society for the Philosophical Study of the Contemporary Visual Arts (SPSCVA).

Submissions:

Articles:
The journal welcomes original submissions from every philosophical perspective on topics related to film. The journal will consider articles from graduate students and encourages submissions from women and minorities to reflect the diversity of our community.

Manuscripts should be 5000-7500 words (plus end notes) in length. All articles should be formatted in Word and follow Chicago style guidelines. They should be accompanied by a 150-word abstract and prepared for anonymous review.

Submissions should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere. Please include a current postal address, institutional affiliation, and email address in a separate document.

All submissions and editorial correspondence should be sent to <filmphiljournal@gmail.com>.

Book reviews:
Film and Philosophy is accepting timely reviews on books about film, film and philosophy, film criticism, and the film industry. Reviews should be approximately 2000 to 3000 words in length.

Film reviews and criticism:
Film and Philosophy is accepting reviews of recent films as well as short pieces of criticism. Reviews should be approximately 2000 to 3000 words in length.

If you have any questions about submissions, please contact our editor, Laura T. Di Summa at <eirenelaura@gmail.com> or <filmphiljournal@gmail.com>

Membership services for SPSCVA, and publishing services for Film and Philosophy, are provided by the Philosophy Documentation Center:

<www.pdcnet.org/filmphil>
<www.filmandphilosophy.org>

Indexing:
Film and Philosophy is indexed by ERIH PLUS, the International Index to Film Periodicals, MLA International Bibliography,
JAAC Announces CFP for Special Issue on Creative Activism

Deadline: August 1, 2022

The Editors of the Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism announce a Call for Papers for a Special Issue on The Aesthetics of Creative Activism. Guest editors will be Elspeth Tilley and Nicholas Holm. Publication is expected in Spring 2023. The Editors welcome submissions on any philosophically informed exploration of artistic forms as activist interventions, including, but not limited to:

- Ethics and morality in and of artistic activism
- Relationships between aesthetic value and artistic activism
- Affect and effect in and of creative activism
- Race, creativity, and social justice: from jazz music to BLM and beyond
- Advancing an aesthetic theory of creative activism
- Didacticism and its discontents
- Pandemic shock, climate grief, and compassion fatigue: artistic responses to overwhelming topics
- Catharsis and creative activism: compatible or opposing forces?
- Creative activists as futurists: the role of artistic imagination in accelerating social change and generating future solutions
- Creative activism evaluation: how does scholarship from aesthetics and art criticism help us determine outcomes and effectiveness?
- First-order change versus second-order change: can art achieve systemic alteration or only awareness and individual empowerment?
- Critically analyzing the forms, claims and creative processes of artistic activism: avoiding art-washing, and challenging assumptions about what works, what has value, and why
- Decolonization, anti-capitalism, and the role of creative activism in resistance or transformation

Submissions should not exceed 7,500 words and must comply with the general guidelines for submissions (see “Author Guidelines” on the JAAC page on the Oxford University Press website: <https://academic.oup.com/jaac/pages/general-instructions>.

Upload submissions to the JAAC online submission website, <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jaac>, making sure they are identified as submissions for the special issue.

If you have questions please contact: Nicholas Holm <N.H.F.Holm@massey.ac.nz> or Elspeth Tilley <E.Tilley@massey.ac.nz>

For the complete CFP: <https://aesthetics-online.org/resource/resmgr/files/jaac/cfp_jaac_creative_activism_docx>

Active Aestheticians

AILI BRESNAHAN, Associate Professor, University of Dayton, has been selected by the Marc Sanders Foundation to be one of 29 Philosophy in the Media Fellows-Op Ed Writing for 2021-22. Media Fellows, selected from 264 applicants, will receive workshop training, connections to industry professionals, and a $1500 honorarium. Funded in large part by a Public Engagement Grant from the Templeton Foundation, the MSF Philosophy in Media initiative aims to increase the presence of philosophy in print, audio, and video media by training philosophers to write and produce for the public, and by connecting philosophers to editors and commissioners in the media industry.

MOONYOUNG SONG, who was the first American Society for Aesthetics Postdoctoral Fellow, joined the Department of Philosophy at the National University of Singapore as an assistant professor in Fall 2021.

NILS-HENNES STEAR will begin a three year Humboldt-Stiftung funded research project at the Universitität Hamburg on January 1, 2022 titled ‘Beyond Moralism: How Ethics Shapes Aesthetic Value in Art’.

David Collins, recipient of the ASA’s Dissertation Fellowship for 2020-2021, has been awarded a two-year postdoctoral fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), to be held at the University of Oxford under the supervision of Catharine Abell. The proposed research project, entitled “Why Good Art Matters: Connecting Artistic Value with the Value(s) of Art through the Philosophy of R.G. Collingwood”, builds on elements of David’s doctoral dissertation, written at McGill University under the supervision of David Davies and Alia Al-Saji, which he successfully defended on November 26th with Richard Eldridge as his external examiner. The postdoctoral project will examine how Collingwood’s political philosophy, philosophical psychology, and his (largely unpublished) ethics shed light on the remarks in The Principles of Art concerning the artist’s relation to the community and art being a kind of medicine for what Collingwood calls the ‘corruption of consciousness’, and how these ideas from his aesthetics in turn inform his political philosophy—including its applicability to our current social and political context.

Robbie Kubala was appointed to an assistant professorship in the Department of Philosophy at University of Texas at Austin.

Nina Penner, Assistant Professor, Brock University, has received a Brock SSHRC Institutional Grant for 2021-22 for her project “Exploring New Collaborative Models in Indigenous-Led Opera in Canada”. In this work, she is collaborating with Amplified Opera, an opera collective based in Toronto that seeks to amplify previously marginalized voices in the industry.
Time to renew your ASA membership!

Even if your membership has expired, there’s still time to renew and not miss a single issue of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*! You’ll save money by renewing for two or three years. To save even more, consider a green membership or the new green unemployed rate.

**How to renew your membership online:** log in to the ASA website. Click *Manage Profile* in the far upper right. Click on the left for *Membership*. You can renew up to three months before your expiration date. The site accepts credit cards from MasterCard, Visa, Discover, and American Express. If you have problems logging in, rush an e-mail to <secretary-treasurer@aesthetics-online.org> so we can troubleshoot with you.

**What are the benefits of membership?**

- Members get print copies of the *JAAC* (four/year).

- Members get immediate access to the latest issues of the *JAAC* via Oxford University Press’s website (the publisher). (Databases such as JSTOR have a one-year delay in availability.)

- Members have the option of a green membership, with no print mailings, at a substantial cost savings, especially for international members.

- ASA members receive a 20% discount on all Oxford University Press hardcover titles.

- Student members receive travel support to the annual meeting for accepted papers.

- Student members are eligible for travel support to attend certain ASA-sponsored conferences.

- Only ASA members are eligible for Chayes Travel grants to the annual meeting and divisional meetings for people with no institutional access to travel to present their work.

- Only ASA members can apply for the Dissertation Fellowship, the Monograph Prize, the John Fisher Prize, the Ted Cohen Prize, the new Arthur Danto/ASA Prize, the Post-doctoral Fellowship, Major Grants, and other opportunities.

- Only ASA members can serve as editors, trustees, or officers of the Society.

- Only ASA members may present papers or commentaries at the annual meeting.

- All divisional meetings now require that program participants be ASA members.

- Only members can access the Members section of the new website, which includes current and historic records of the ASA, annual meeting programs, Divisional meeting programs, and past newsletters.

- Only members can vote in elections for trustees and officers.
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&
Michel-Antoine Xhignesse
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email: <asa@aesthetics-online.org> or <secretary-treasurer@aesthetics-online.org>.

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

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Deadlines: December 1, April 15, August 1