

Call for abstracts: On Seeking a Community of Taste
An American Society for Aesthetics-Supported Workshop
Auburn University, April 17-18, 2026

In 1965, Simone de Beauvoir wrote that the art of ‘literature is the privileged site of inter-subjectivity’. Just a few years later, writing in the *British Journal of Aesthetics*, R. K. Elliott affirmed that ‘we are required to assume the possibility of a universal community of taste and to do what is in our power to bring it into being’. In a related Kantian tradition, but across the ocean, in New York, Hannah Arendt argued that only in aesthetics ‘did [Kant] consider men in the plural, as living in a community’.

This is not a work of the past, or merely a 20th-century conviction. The idea of a community that holds together by members’ attachment to art and beauty has been the focus of attention in the last few years in academic writings on aesthetics as much as it has been in the 20th century. On the face of it, this is because the notion of a community that holds together on aesthetic terms is intuitively appealing. Yet, there is also much to debate. Therefore, with support from the ASA, a 2-day workshop at Auburn University will consider the nature and importance of aesthetic community. Some of the questions to be explored at the workshop are:

What is needed to sustain a community of taste? Is agreement in taste required? Is taste the right conceptual focus with respect to aesthetic community, or is it outdated and limited? What is the potential for diversity within aesthetic communities? How can aesthetic modes of presentation and activity constitute meaningful relationships? How do aesthetic communities simultaneously both include and exclude, and what is the aesthetic and ethical significance of these functions? How should we think about the public nature of aesthetic and artistic objects of attention and their potential to give us access to reality, including the reality of other minds? What are the intersecting and differing roles of reasons and norms for conversations within aesthetic communities? What is the role of art and beauty in destabilizing community? Broadly, what is good, problematic, or unclear in various appeals to aesthetic community?

We invite abstracts for papers that will explore the notion of aesthetic community, via some of the workshop’s central questions or related ones.

The abstracts should be 500-1000 words in length, with a 30-minute presentation in view. Please submit two versions of your file, one fully anonymized (and identified as such in the file name) and one including your name and information about your academic affiliation and career stage. Send abstracts to kzg0003@auburn.edu by **February 25, 2026**. Decisions will be made by March 2.

We especially encourage submissions from PhD and early-career researchers, and we welcome and encourage submissions from members of groups currently underrepresented in philosophy. Some speakers will participate as commentators; if your paper is not accepted for presentation, you may still be invited to speak as a commentator. We do not have funding to support travel to the workshop, but the meals during the workshop will be covered.