From the President

Jale N. Erzen

Dear Colleagues,

I am happy to be able to greet you all again in this shattered and divided world where our relatively open access is mostly reserved to the internet. Most cities, even under ideal democratic administrations, are becoming realms of violence, even if not physical, often sensory. Is it anymore possible to aimlessly roam our cities’ labyrinths like the romantic Benjamin? Most places are becoming off-grounds even if one can sometimes walk by the river on an island, as in New York City. The city is our most ancient and rich artifact, reflecting our political maturity and self-respect by its accessibility and humanism. The city is ideally a spiritual realm because spirit evolves communally through culture. Today in most geographies, notwithstanding the most advanced democratic policies, cities as our only human habitat, are becoming unfriendly, if not repulsive.

*Aesthetics of the City* will be the theme of the next conference organized by the SANART Association for Aesthetics and Visual Culture, 1-4 November 2017 in Antalya, Turkey, in cooperation with the Antalya Chamber of Architects and the Akdeniz (Mediterranean) University. Till 30th of June, proposals for a round table on the ‘Aesthetics of the City’ can be sent to Dr. Kemal Kavas: krkavas@gmail.com for review. Admission is free. This symposium will also be an occasion to discuss the preparations for the upcoming International Congress for Aesthetics in Belgrade in 2017, with the organizers who will be giving papers.

Invited speakers: Ales Erjavec (Ljubljana), Cana Bilsel (Ankara), Madalina Diaconu (Vienna), Miograd Suvakovic (Belgrade), Vladimir Mako (Belgrade), Krystyna Wilkoszevska (Krakow), Joseph Margolis (Philadelphia).

Session Themes: Aesthetics and the City, Nature and the City, Cultural Diversity and Aesthetics, Everyday Aesthetics, Urban history and memory.

Aesthetics, whether it concerns the everyday experiences of citizens or the more artistic and cultural aspects of a city, is one of the most important givens that elevate social relationships and the personal consciousness of individuals, also affecting moods and behaviors, not to mention economy. It is primarily through its aesthetic qualities, whether in visual forms, in cultural
performances or in the general practical workings of a city that a city can be qualified as being pleasantly livable or simply a place of survival. In cities that are growing rapidly due to rural or foreign migration and in cities that are shrinking due to demographic loss, that urban aesthetics becomes vital and is greatly affected. Most of such cities are in developing countries where immigration from the land is great. But, negative changes also come about in cities that face economic crisis and impoverishment. Turkish cities are undergoing great transformations due to demographic change, cultural change and new economic programs that affect building and land use.

The University of Antalya, Faculty of Architecture, the Antalya Chamber of Architects and the Sanart Association of Aesthetics and Visual Culture are together organizing a Symposium in the city of Antalya, November 1-3. The symposium will be open to all. It will take place in English and Turkish, with translation. Proposals for round tables can be sent to Dr. Kemal Kavas krkavas@gmail.com by June 30.

Image: Jale Erzen

Editor’s Note: Dr. Erzen’s sketched the jazz musicians in performance.
From the Secretary General and Website Editor

Zoltán Somhegyi

Dear IAA-members, colleagues and friends,

I hope you all have had a successful academic year. It is my great pleasure to write you that also for IAA this has been a very good year. After many of us had the opportunity to meet each other at the ICA in Seoul, further important conferences were organised, and our members have published inspiring articles and books.

I am also very happy to see the large number of academic activities coming up in the next weeks and months, many of which you can find info on the main page of the IAA website, including CFP for conferences, journals and workshops.

Also, welcome our ‘new readers’ – i.e. the new IAA members who have joined our association since December, hence it is the first time they receive this Newsletter. For an association it is always a good sign that new and interested people join, and we are particularly pleased that many of the members come from areas that previously were a bit underrepresented in our events. We are looking forward to meeting you personally on our next meetings, including the interim conference in Helsinki in 2018 and in the general congress in Belgrade in 2019.

Last but not least, as Website Editor, let me repeat my invitation to send me any information that you think might be of interest of the IAA readership - for example CFPs for conferences, journal thematic issues etc., that I can upload on the website. As you can see under each item, it is regularly consulted by hundreds of readers, hence it is a very efficient way of spreading academic news. Feel free to contact me either at zoltansomhegyi@yahoo.co.uk, or through the contact form on the website: http://www.iaaesthetics.org/contact.

I’m looking forward to receiving your news, and I wish you a great summer period of resting and researching, these two in whatever proportion you might prefer.

Zoltán
Exhibition Review
Text and pictures of Ayşen Savaş

Representing Itself: METU Lodgings #5 Documented

In an architectural context in which nothing is permanent and nothing is indispensable, and in a socio-political environment in which everything is possible, unconventional ways of preservation become essential. Representing Itself: METU Lodgings #5 Documented exhibition emerged out of this perspective in 2013, and the second stage of the project was executed in the spring of 2016 under the guidance of an advance graduate course. The research group took the challenge of designing an unusual exhibition by using different modes, media and techniques of representation. The goal of the exhibition was to make a comprehensive documentation of a relatively unknown Modernist Housing project in Ankara, Turkey, designed by an architect couple, Altuğ-Behruz Çinici. The ultimate objective of this exhibition was to protect these houses, for which a new method of preservation was proposed in which a consciousness was generated of their architectural and social values. “Preservation by raising public and institutional awareness” was the dictum of this long-term commitment.

Preparations for the exhibition took three months, and the transformation of the chosen house into a museum was accomplished in one week. Invitations to the opening ceremony were limited to the university staff and the children of the first residents of the houses. It is readily apparent that the aim of the exhibition opening was not to invite as many people as possible, but rather to keep attendance to only a select few. The commitment here was to create “local awareness”, yet far from making the houses visible – as any conventional exhibition would – the intention was to make them completely invisible and out of sight, thus protecting them from new developments and unskilled conservation attempts. By being kept “invisible”, in a rather Foucauldian manner, the intention was to elude the “consciousness of the public, yet be part of what constitutes scientific research”.¹ The tools of this so-called “scientific research” were both architectural and museological in nature.

The exhibition featured architectural representations of the selected house, which meant that House #5, the home of the exhibition, was actually represented within itself. Using special techniques, architectural drawings, photographs, moving images, models, textual materials and information were made visible, while the house remained concealed. As representation is possible only in the absence of the original object, it was necessary for the house to vanish for the duration of the exhibition.

Architecture has its own particular way of presenting itself to vision, of exhibiting itself; and it would be an abdication if it were to turn to museum to program its own reception or —worse still—to achieve one form or another legitimization.” Hubert Damisch, A Very Special Museum, 2001.

Architecture’s paradoxical position within exhibition space has been assessed and re-evaluated in many recent publications, in which exhibiting architecture has been defined as a theoretical and spatial challenge in the field. The METU Lodging exhibition was put together not only to address this known paradox within architectural exhibitions – the act of “exhibiting a building within a building” – but also to challenge the traditional modes of architectural representation. The method applied in this exhibition is related directly to the production of a real architectural space. That is to say, it is not only a display of architectural objects, but also a space created at different scales that may be experienced both visually and physically. In this regard, the “architecture of the exhibition” matters as much as the “architecture in the exhibition”.

Moreover, the traditional “modes” of architectural representation, namely models, drawings and photographs, are treated not as simulacra of a building presented in its absence, but as a critical form of architecture executed through what can be referred to as “constructed media”. The goal was to introduce “a productive method of representation”, obtained through the actual making of things. The acts of making models and drawings, taking pictures, analyzing materials highlights the intellectual process rather than the end products of models, drawings or photographs. It can thus be suggested here that exhibition space may be conceived as a productive academic environment in which curating or exhibiting architecture becomes an architectural production in itself, and an opportunity to reinforce the relationship with the thinking and producing. More convincingly, we are given the chance to explore the “origins” of architectural ideas.

The exhibition took place in House #5, which was declared a museum for the day, and lasted only one hour. The establishment of this unusual “house museum” was conducted as a research initiative, with the collected materials conceived as the seeds of a “new archive” for emerging research fields. Objects in a museum display are often cherished with the common belief that without exhibitions, collections would be forgotten in storage or archived in the so-called “oblivion spaces” of museums. Careful research, however, reveals that there are many museums in the world today operating without archives, and consequently, many displays are organized in museums without permanent collections. The museological compatibility of many museums is challenged due to a lack of comprehensive collections and archives, and a compelling body of literature has accumulated around this loaded term that reveals its centrality to both academic research and the existence of democratic society.

Ultimately, the archive is a known research institution that has been thoroughly scrutinized, both intellectually and technically, Leaving the ambiguities of the term aside, and benefiting from Michel Foucault’s “discourse” on knowledge-making practices, the term “archive” will here be conceived as a concept that is synonymous with “trace” and “document”. The method applied here will be an exploration of the ways in which “documents” act as “mnemonic devices” constituting an “institutional archive in process”. Rather than the construction of an institution, the idea is to initiate a process of archiving in which “archivization” is seen as a way of preservation. Constructing an operational archive means, in a Tafurian manner, following the traces of “ascertainable facts giving a central role to visuality as extending beyond the collection itself and deploying itself more specifically over the territory of

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history”. This “new archive” begins with the documentation of architectural encounters and personal events of which no direct trace remains.

While the main goal of this exhibition is, in this regard, to compile a collection, the end product, rather than being a frozen entity, will be a “progressive collection” that is based on a series of collection processes. The applied procedure involves treating and displaying “objects” with particular emphasis on their museological aspects, given that the primary component in museology is a collection, while the main function of a museum is the study of its contents. Each object, each artifact or document in a museum collection is valued as a source of historical information, as has been the case since the curiosity cabinets of the 16th century, but there are various ways of forming a museum collection. The most common method is the accessioning of selected objects and the addition new items to an already existing collection, and in the end, this collage of objects is transformed into rudimentary assemblages, encyclopedic collections, aesthetical compilations or “scientific” assemblies. There are also conventional ways of expanding an already-existing collection, such as the acquisition of objects in pre-defined categories, and many established institutions are known for their predetermined policies related to the development of their collections, with only objects in certain categories and of a certain quality included.

This exhibition was organized following the assumption that it is possible to bring together a collection through a reverse process. First, the objects of the collection were “produced”, that is to say, a collection was constructed, after which the exhibition was organized. It was only then that the exhibition space was transformed into the display of the museum, and only after the opening of the “museum” and the first exhibition did the continuous compilation of the collection and its documentation begin. The primary and the ultimate source of this museological process was the house itself, meaning that the “house” was the first object of the display, and consequently, the first object in the collection. This approach can also be perceived as a reverse process of “architectural self-representation”, in that the representational tools were created first, and then the object was documented. Only then did the research begin, with the house taking its place in the archive, like any other document, and subjected to continuous study. Architectural historians will treat the house as any other item in the archive, and as an archival research material it will become an “ambiguous entity, incorporating its own discourse, ideas, and traditions” that, over time, will collectively generate architectural knowledge. Although the exhibition lasted for only a relatively short period of time, the house will gain eventually an unusual endurance and permanence in its created museology. As stated by Hubert Damisch, architectural exhibitions are ephemeral in nature, and in this case, what remains permanent will be the continuous documentation process and the architectural knowledge it compiles.

The goal in this endeavor is to promote the production of “new documents” by means of the active involvement of architects, architectural students, historians, artists, theorists and critics. The project benefits from the definition of the term “curator” as it is used in art world. “The word’s etymological roots attest that it ‘treats’, ‘cures’ art, with its intricate ways” in that it not only makes architectural documents visible and understandable and treats them as

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identified, collected and preserved museological objects, but also creates and completes them in
the construction of an archive for the promotion of architectural knowledge. In other words,
architectural knowledge is obtained through the actual making of documents and the
documentation, and this critical act is conceived as a process rather than an end product.
Accordingly, the exhibition can be conceived as “an instrumental tool” for architectural research,
or, as Eve Blau says, “we curate architecture with architecture”.

As opposed to the singularity and autonomy of the objects in fine art collections, the
specific media of architecture demand constant mediation and contextualization; the
(re)presentation of its-often missing-objects or documents correlates and depends on
historical and thematic frames of references. The architectural collection is therefore
framed by the history and theory of architecture. If the architectural collection is the
blueprint for scholarly research, which outlines, informs and drives its agenda, the
architecture exhibition is the modus operandi, an instrumental tool for research. Eve Blau,
This exhibition should be evaluated as a research initiative, and the collected material should be seen as the seed of a “new archive” for emerging research fields. There are different archival practices that vary from indexing to history writing, and the exhibiting of archival material is another known activity in which documents become visible and intellectually accessible to non-experts. The archival process of the METU Lodgings begins with an exhibition that should be considered a first and a rather unusual step in the establishment of a conventional archive that probably, in the end, will be not so different to other architectural archives. It provides an introduction to the ways in which constructed documents of an archive have been found, contested, examined and reinvented, to be then contextualized and aestheticized by architects, historians and theorists. The exhibition launches the construction of an archive that detaches the house from its environment, maker and designer, and in this regard, it can no longer be considered part of a modernistic history, nor is it the work of a famous architect, having become merely an archive to be studied. The way we study history and make theoretical interpretations of architectural objects and their documentation has contributed to the “expansion” of our disciplinary boundaries, however this exhibition, by focusing particularly on a very specific object of study, “the house”, aims contrarily at bringing architecture back to basics. In other words, our documentation, rather than expanding the borders of architectural production to a necessary social, political and historical context, instead forms the grounds and provides the tools for further contextualization.

Article of Interest to IAA members

The Plight of Aesthetics in Iran

by Majid Heidari

Abstract

Richard Rorty believes that philosophy in the West is the result of a conflict between religion and science. In fact, philosophy seeks to clarify the border between religion and science, so neither of them would be able to overstep its explanatory or predictive potentialities. He remarks that we do not have such a thing as philosophy in the East. This paper intends to ask two questions: what is the nature of the comparable conflict in an Eastern country, Iran, and what are its effects on aesthetic studies? I will draw on the idea of the conflict between theology and mysticism. The main difference between these two sides is the methods each uses to achieve the truth: literal and symbolic interpretation. This conflict happens inside religion and not between religion and science. Consequently, all aspects of society would assemble under the influence of a single paradigm, religion, that dominates all other aspects, including philosophy and science and their practitioners. Nevertheless, with the introduction of modern science and philosophy, and also the historical exhaustion of mysticism, there is a new type of conflict. Now, religion finds itself jointly in conflict with both modern philosophy and science. What is at the center of this conflict is aesthetics.

Introduction

Believing both in a benevolent creator and in the results of modern science might seem to be intellectually irresponsible to some well-educated people who study philosophical texts of the
past one hundred years or so. In fact, neither religion nor science has the ability to fully explain or predict the world we live in. Richard Rorty, in a lecture on “The Compatibility of Religion and Science,” examines the ideas of James and Dewey on “intellectual irresponsibility.”[1] It seems quite justifiable for a philosopher like Rorty to talk about the compatibility of religion and science because through examining this relationship he can get closer to a better definition of the border between these systems in a democratic society. Consequently, neither of them can make promises he is not able to fulfill.

Rorty briefly clarifies the boundaries of science and religion and the times they may overstep these boundaries. In fact, science and religion are competing paradigms for explaining the world. He asserts, “Although there are alternative descriptions of things, descriptions useful for different purposes; none of these get close to the way things really are.” He finds such a description at the heart of the functional description in the pragmatism of James and Dewey. From a pragmatic viewpoint, we may not find any description of things thoroughly detachable from our needs. Rorty finds Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida supporting a conception of truth that is against the correspondence theory of truth that regards truth independent of our needs. For the sake of argument, he believes that there is no definite way to test the correspondence between our conception of reality and the way things are actually in themselves. Rorty’s lecture mainly centers on the rejection of the idea put forth by some scholars who consider religious people as intellectually irresponsible. He claims that there are some people who do not feel any tension when they are asked to present a justification for their life while their life seems to be smooth and happy. Therefore, philosophy or philosophical reading and thinking are not an urgent need for everybody, and we cannot condemn such people for not taking intellectuality as seriously as some others do.

As we know, there are different approaches to the relationship between science and religion, from complete convergence to absolute divergence.[2],[3] The proponents of each side seemed to be more inflammatory earlier, for example in the seventeenth century, and more peaceful recently, in the postmodern era. Now scholars talk about a constructive approach or integrative approach or they try to find ways that religious and scientific discourse can add to each other.[4],[5] For example, McGhee Orme-Johnson asserts, “Bruno Latour offers an argument for what constitutes the purposes of religion and science, and argues that because of these purposes religion and science do not have a connection. Stephen Jay Gould says that while religion and science are inseparable, there is no convergence between the two. I have suggested ways to understand their arguments and still allow for a converging connection between religion and science.”[6]

The contradiction between scientific and religious ideas, as Rorty claims, might not be necessary to resolve. These ideas are two different ways of explaining the world; however, one may seem to be crude and simplified, that is, religion, and the other refined and precise. For Rorty, since the beginning of modern science, religious beliefs and scientific beliefs serve different purposes, the former to predict and control things in space and time and the latter to give our life a kind of purpose. Religion may overstep its boundaries by trying to have a predictive function and science may overstep when it tries to convince us not to believe in God. At the end of his lecture, Rorty draws some conclusions that perhaps could add more weight to the purpose of this paper. Rorty believes that philosophy had a mediating function between
science and religion in the Western culture. There has been a conflict between religion and science since the Renaissance, and philosophy was responsible for resolving this conflict. He says, “We developed this thing called philosophy as an academic specialty precisely because we are in a civilization with a conflict between science and religion and we invented this third discipline to be the mediator.” He claims that in Eastern civilizations there has not been such a conflict between religion and science, so we don’t have a discipline called philosophy. As far as this idea is related to my home country, Iran, I can agree with Rorty that there was not such a conflict in Persian culture between religion and science. Most scientists or thinkers were primarily religious, and we did not nearly have any major secular scientist or someone like Galileo.

Here in this paper I would like to ask two questions. First, I would like to find out if, as Rorty believes, there was not such a conflict between religion and science in Iran, then what kind of possible conflict did we have instead? Secondly, how has this conflict affected aesthetics and related studies?

The conflict

Regarding the first question, a brief historical look at Iran’s philosophy is helpful. Iran’s history is conventionally divided into two eras, before the Muslim conquest of Iran (651) and after that. The most prominent philosopher of the first era was Zarathustra, who is mainly considered a prophet rather than a philosopher. However, in the second era, Avicenna was the most significant Islamic philosopher.

Mostly, Islamic philosophy was the result of the first translations of Aristotelian philosophy. Early Islamic philosophy starts with two independent lines. The first line was al-Kindi (801-873), Rhazes (854-925) and their followers, who were closer to Neo-Platonism, and the second line was the Aristotelians of Baghdad, like al-Farabi (872-951). These two lines merged in the philosophical and scientific investigations of Avicenna (980-1037). He was the first philosopher whose philosophical writings had internal consistency, a system of independent parts based on the syllogistic logic of Aristotle. His philosophy marked the end of ancient and the beginning of scholastic philosophy. Avicenna’s thoughts were dominant in Islamic philosophy afterwards.[7]

Among Islamic philosophers, we may find a very few who had some nonconventional ideas, like al-Razi. “There were even thinkers who seem to have been influenced by Greek skepticism, which they turned largely against religion, and Ibn ar-Rawandi and Muhammad ibn Zakariyya’ al-Razi presented a thoroughgoing critique of many of the leading supernatural ideas of Islam.”[8] Their critique was partial, and they always remained devoted to the religion but asked a few different questions. For example, al-Razi asked, “If God is the creator of the world, why hadn’t he created the world before he created the world?”

We may say that the dominance of Avicenna on Islamic philosophy is comparable with Descartes’ influence in the West. Descartes, contemporary with Galileo, was more of a scientist than a philosopher. He intended to reach a kind of certainty in philosophy that we could find in mathematics. Avicenna, on the other hand, was a religious person who intended to justify Islamic
theology with rational philosophy. He tried to prove the existence of the soul and God with some strong logical reasons. Both Avicenna and Descartes proved the existence of God, mainly under the influence of Aristotelian metaphysics. But the difference I would like to stress is the most essential and inherent one in their approaches to philosophy. The difference is in the point of intellectual departure, the stand each of them takes to start his philosophizing. The one who only believes in God and not much in religion starts with doubt, and the one with faith to God and religion, Avicenna, starts with a kind of confidence that can usually be found in religious people.[9]

For Avicenna, there seems to be a kind of confidence that is derived from his belief or faith in God, a benevolent creator or, as he philosophically described it, as a “necessary existent” in comparison with human existence, which is contingent. We may claim that such a faith, or strong dependence or devotion, is not rooted in philosophical investigations, for certain, as Aristotle himself believed in the “necessary source of movement who is unmoved; everlasting being engaged in never-ending contemplation.” Aristotle’s version of God seems to be more acceptable for a philosopher or even a scientist in Western thought. But Avicenna had made himself exceptionally familiar with Aristotle; he was also a very competent scientist and, at the same time, a very devoted Muslim. We can clearly see that while he is rather meticulous about propositions in his exegesis on Aristotle’s metaphysics, he is rather easy-going concerning religious ideas and dependence on metaphysical realms. We might be inclined to ask if Avicenna was intellectually irresponsible? This question sounds quite ridiculous, at least to those who are familiar with his philosophical and scientific texts. So we may think that there are two possible suppositions here. The first one is that a religious person, aside from his philosophical knowledge and investigations, would at least have some unreasonable and unjustifiable thoughts. The second supposition is that religion gives us a kind of certainty and devotion we cannot find either in philosophy or science, since Avicenna was both a competent scientist and a fervent philosopher.

I would go with the second supposition, as I think Rorty would. It seems that religion has a prominent feature that always comes first, that is, a religious person always suppresses other intellectual investigations and occupations in favor of a religious set of ideas, and it appears that we cannot call it an intellectual irresponsibility since we can see the same approach both in ordinary people and in some philosophers (and scientists).

This feature of religion, the suppression of conflicting ideas, gives rise to a kind of conflict. In the Western tradition, religion is in conflict with an exterior realm of science, and philosophy works as a mediator between the two sides. But it seems that in the Eastern tradition, the conflict happens inside the realm of religion; there is an intrinsic conflict between two different interpretations of religion, namely theology and mysticism. The first believes in the literal exoteric interpretation of religious propositions, and the latter in the symbolic esoteric interpretation of those propositions.

This conflict is partially different from what Bertolacci finds. He believes that, “Outside the narrower scope of philosophy and its history, it is interesting to note how the introduction of a foreign pagan discipline, like metaphysics, into a monotheistic social context, like the Islamic one, determines either the accordance or the antagonism between philosophical theology and
revealed theology, or, in other words, between the quintessence of Falsafa, on the one hand, and
the speculation of Kalâm, on the other. The study of the ways in which this confrontation took
place in the Islamic culture of the Middle Ages may shed light on the contemporary debate on
the relationship between reason and faith and contribute to the promotion of dialogue among
different cultures.”[10]

Here Bertolacci understands the conflict between reason and faith, in other words,
between a field that tries to reasonably justify religious propositions (Kalâm) and a field that tries
to practice reason and logic apart from religious preconceptions (philosophy). Both fields are
Islamic; however, they both include a great deal of faith and reason and we can also find mystic
inclinations in both groups. So it seems that the difference here between philosophical theology
and revealed theology, as Bertolacci understands it, is categorical and linguistic. The conflict
between faith and reason is more of a Western conflict than an Islamic one. Therefore, the
conflict in Persian culture is, as this paper claims, a methodological difference between
mysticism and theology. While the former sets up a spiritual odyssey to find the truth, the latter
uses logic to reach it. Both theologians and philosophers may have mystic attitudes and may
even shift from theology to mysticism.[11] Despite this, the difference between them remains as
one of the most prevailing cultural features, that there are some people who care about the
surface side of religion and those who intend to find the core meaning.

Classic Persian literature comprehensively elaborates on the conflict between these two
sides. Those who are religious try to act as closely as possible to theological findings, and those
who believe religion is only a way to achieve a higher personal truth, the truth that all existents
are just One (the idea of Unity of Existence). We may claim that this conflict is the main theme
of classical Persian literature. The nature of this conflict is quite different from the one we find in
Western culture. This conflict is not between two competing paradigms, but is within a single,
suppressing system that emphasizes purity, faith, and acceptance of truth on both sides. The
result is the integration of all aspects of life, including political, social, personal, and scientific
realms. Consequently, the tolerance of different ideas and perspectives is difficult or nearly
impossible and would lead to accusations of heresy.

With the introduction of Western or modern perspectives in philosophy and science, a
competing paradigm arises. Mysticism, which was an old and difficult practice that was
exhausted over time by the struggle against the suppressing and overwhelming power of
theology, gave its place to newer and stronger realms, that is, modern philosophy and
science.[12] Therefore, in the modern period we came to the same conflict as in the West but
with a considerable difference. Traditionally in Iran, philosophy and science were part of a
bigger paradigm of religion, and distinguishing between the two did not seem practical.
Presently, postmodern interpretations and dialogues can be used by the religious paradigm to
widen its dominance, and to present pluralistic and pragmatic interpretations of its existence with
the interest of keeping its dominance. Thus, from one side, religion emphasizes its dominance
through conventional means like theology and a weakened, controlled version of mysticism, and
from the other side, it uses the potentialities of newer interpretations of science and philosophy
while being fully aware of their inefficiencies to empower its dominance. Here stands aesthetics:
a representative of paradigms of modern science and philosophy.
Aesthetics and mysticism

Aesthetics is the field that brings up the nature of the conflict discussed above. Since in Islamic teachings making pictures and statues is unwelcome, academics who intend to study aesthetics have to find the roots of aesthetics in mysticism, in which there exists various discussions of beauty. The kind of beauty we can find in mysticism, however, is an ontological one that is the result of the creation of God. Conventionally, it is said that God was a hidden treasure that wanted to be known. As a result, He created the world to be understood and appreciated. So the job of humans is the appreciation of that beauty. This appreciation is the same as falling in love with God. So beauty and love are at the beginning of the creation of the world. Hafez says:

> When beamed Thy beauty on creation’s morn,
> The world was set on fire by love new-born.
> Thy cheek shone bright, yet angels’ hearts were cold:
> Then flashed it fire, and turned to dam’s mould
> The lamp of Reason from this flame had burned,
> But lightening jealousy the world o’erturned[13]

Aesthetics in Islamic philosophy is important, since “Many of the problems of religion versus philosophy arose in the area of aesthetics.”[14] The reason aesthetics is more problematic for Islamic philosophy is that it is a new and subjective field of study. As we know, aesthetics found its present connotation in the eighteenth century, with the definition of Baumgarten. After the eighteenth century, aesthetics regarded fine art as an independent field of philosophy. Before the introduction of aesthetics to Islamic dialogues, Islamic philosophy was occupied with poetry and saw it as a logical form. “One of the interesting aspects of Islamic philosophy is that it treated poetry as a logical form, albeit of a very low demonstrative value, along the continuum of logical forms which lie behind all our language and practices.”[15]

Recently, however, Islamic academics who intended to study the aesthetic aspects of their cultural heritage needed to have more than poetry, so they had to look for a broader perspective to study. Islamic theology rejects the idea of image-making or other kinds of art for different reasons. Therefore, mysticism appeared to match the goals of the academic field of aesthetics. Mysticism is the field in which scholars can find long discussions about love, beauty, creation, and truth. These terms are very similar to those we find in modern Western aesthetics. Accordingly, mysticism is the field that can be used for aesthetic studies. However, beauty in Western aesthetics is related to humanity or nature but, in Islamic mysticism, beauty is an ontological and holy idea. The meaning of fine art, therefore, is not reachable in the realm of Islamic aesthetics.

There are few books on Islamic Aesthetics dealing with the conflict presented here. Gonzalez, in a book called, *Beauty and Islam, Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture*, attempts to theorize a formulation showing the presence of aesthetic thought and tradition in Islam. He uses the term “aesthetic phenomenology” to show how Islamic art and beauty can be justified. He asserts, “Aesthetics, and particularly aesthetic phenomenology, forms a specific and new field, which is still not taken into account in the realm of Islamic studies, although it is fully
integrated into contemporary analytical works on art and art theory."[16] He finds the same conflict presented in this paper, the fact that phenomenology is a Western philosophical tradition that sounds inappropriate for Islamic cultural order. But he believes we shouldn’t jump to the conclusion that aesthetics did not properly exist in Islam. Instead, he refers to a book written by Vilchez that outlines the history of aesthetics in classical Arabic thought. But Gonzales himself confirms that this book, in spite of its name, has a historical, sociological, and descriptive point of view, and scholars should look for some aesthetic foundations. He states, “Very few scholars take the initiative to use aesthetics as theory and method in order to understand the conceptualization and the forms of works of art.”[17]

Traditionally it is believed that “religious knowledge is unquestionably the highest form of knowledge.”[18] Such a presupposition leads to the idea of Islamic science, which seems to be independent from Aristotelian methodology. Islamic scholars also talk about shifting from Western human sciences to an Islamic one, the need for reforming and conceptualizing the human sciences from Islamic perspectives, and the need for Islamic grounds for human sciences. What actually happens, however, are some historical investigations that find diverse quotes from different Islamic figures and texts about different issues without any integrative approach or theory.

One example is interpreting Persian miniatures that seem confusing. The confusion lies in the fact that most Persian miniatures follow the same conventions, such as no tendency to imitate nature, two dimensional flat scenes without perspective, decorated background, extension of light all over the scene, and unreal colors. There are very few aesthetically idiosyncratic paintings whose painter has put his or her fingerprint on the work. Persian painting was an inseparable part of book decoration, a major art in Iran. A group of artists would get together under the supervision of a patron, usually a king or a member of royal family, to design, write (calligraphy), bind, and decorate a literary text. Painting was just one of the processes of making this work of art. Little by little, these arts or skills separated from each other until each stood on its own traditions and the conventions that influence them to the present day.

It seems that any study of Persian miniatures has to consider that, first, Persian painting was an integrated part of making beautiful books, it was not an independent art, and second, while Persian painting slowly became independent, it was not fully to the time of Qajar (1784-1925) and when it did become independent, the specific rules of creating and interpreting this art was never clearly discussed.[19]

The most popular theory for interpreting Persian painting is a mystic theory that considers Persian paintings as representation of the Other World. Nasr believes that the ‘non-three-dimensional’ character of Persian miniature is “a recapitulation of space of another world and concerns another mode of consciousness.”[20] He views European perception of perspective during the Renaissance as a kind of betrayal of natural perspective. In this theory, all pictorial elements of Persian paintings are the symbol of the “imaginal world” or *alam al-khial*. As a matter of fact, *alam al-khial* is a metanarrative that is highly inclusive in the way that it can interpret any pictorial element of Persian miniatures with a fixed, simplified viewpoint. In this approach, we can simply interpret elements like space, time, movement, color, and form as
symbols of a secret language referring to some metaphysical ideas. However, this approach does not to have enough explanatory potentiality to describe and interpret Persian painting. Therefore we may say that, while Persian paintings represent real figures, the underlying reasons and justifications have remained unclear. These paintings have their roots in Chinese paintings and old Iranian illustrations (Mani), that narrated classical Persian stories under the influence of Islamic culture. As different traditions have mixed together and evolved during a long history, one cannot find any aesthetic theory underlying Persian paintings.

Possible approaches to aesthetics in Iran

Two main options remain for an academic scholar of aesthetics in Iran. The first and most popular approach is working on different aspects of Islamic cultural heritage and imposing on them Western aesthetic classifications and discussions to make them capable of being the subject of scientific study. This approach is mostly affected by historicism, and it (un)intentionally strengthens the political power relations and cultural conventions. Also, academic scholars who use this approach will win most of the budgets allocated to universities, and their research results enjoy greater attention. In this approach, the incompatibility of method, approach, and the subject of study is ignored, making the result semi-scientific. For example, they study subjects such as mosques’ arabesque and calligraphy with the principles of Western aesthetics in a scientific way. However, the raison d’être of these handcrafts does not match any Western theoretical framework. Islam has encouraged arabesque and calligraphy mainly because they do not involve any pictures.

The main reason for their dominance in Islamic tradition is first, ideological, and then, political, not by the free will of artists. People who made them had not considered themselves as independent subjects who create beautiful objects but were thinking about making the mosque, or “house of God,” as beautiful as possible based on the teachings and norms of the tradition. Imposing any Western theoretical framework on studying these handcrafts ignores the main reason for their formation. Most importantly, they are pure forms without any content and can only be interpreted symbolically.

The second approach is discussing and studying modern Western aesthetics. The problem with this is that such discussions mainly happened in the Western culture, and adopting them to domestic perspectives and cultural situations mostly results in superficial adaptations of the original discussions. The outcome will, most probably, not be acceptable either within the country or outside of the country within the Western academic world. Aesthetics scholars with such an approach will remain suspended between the two incompatible worlds of West and East. Such academics will remain marginal in comparison with the central world of Western intellectual culture, and regarded as nonconventional inside the country.

To summarize the condition, we may say that the tension of the second group is mainly the result of the kind of conflict we had between the Sufists and theologians. This historical conflict resulted, as can be clearly seen from the political and social situation of the society in the exhaustion of the Sufists’ perspective. This means that the literal interpretation of religion managed to suppress the symbolic interpretation of it. But with the introduction of modern science and philosophy, religion has found new rivals.
In the meantime, philosophy has become rather secular, linguistic, analytic, pragmatic, and pluralistic. In the past, philosophy could help religion most when religion was in need of logical justifications. But now philosophy remains far from any hard-line justifications and keeps its distance from both religion and science. Philosophy still attempts to discuss science and religion but does not try to justify them in any way. So now, for religion in Eastern culture, both philosophy and science are rivals and religion has to fight on two fronts, modern philosophy and modern science.

And, oddly enough, we can clearly see that religion benefits most from the critiques that both science and philosophy make of themselves. Religion has the capability of using all the improvements and influence of science or philosophy. Every improvement can be regarded as getting closer to the truth that religion claims, and every philosophical or scientific assertion shows the absurdity and incapability of superficial earthly human knowledge in comparison to spiritual knowledge.

Conclusion

As we know, in the mid-eighteenth century the academic field of aesthetics developed as a distinct area of philosophy. Andrew Bowie truly asserts, “The often hyperbolic importance attributed to art toward the end of the eighteenth century evidently has its roots in the decline of theology and the disintegration of theologically legitimated social orders.” Self-consciousness is an important feature that can be related to the autonomy of aesthetics. Self-consciousness replaces the reliance on God, and beauty replaces the idea of divinity. Such modifications in Western intellectual culture led, in a corollary fashion, to the academic field of aesthetics.

The conflict between religion and science, which was mediated by philosophy, enhances these modifications. Some may find these modifications as improvements and some may disagree. However, this is a controversial question for Eastern academics that sometimes reaches the level of obsession. The discussions related to the definition of modernity and post-modernity are seriously followed in Eastern intellectual cultures. Scholars are eager to find whether these modifications were actual improvements or not, or if they follow the same path. Rorty’s formulation of the Western conflict might seem to be an oversimplification of a larger and more sophisticated problem. But all in all, it is helpful and enlightening. In an Eastern Muslim country like Iran, theology won over Sufism. The conflict was ongoing for about five centuries, since the Safavid Empire. Sufism was suppressed by its rival, which had more political and social power. As universities and academic fields of science were introduced to the country, new rivals for religion seemed to appear: philosophy and science. Interestingly, all these rivals managed to coexist at the cost of some modifications on all sides. Religion tried to look more scientific, logical, and up-to-date, while philosophy tried to look supportive of the basic ideas of religion, and science tried to find justifications for religious habits and actions.

Any academic researcher in the field of aesthetics who intends to carry out his or her research free from social, cultural, and political norms or conventions will face a dilemma between Western and Eastern perspectives that seem to be different and even contradictory in their most basic approaches and methodology. However, they may share the same terminology.
The first step in solving any aporia is formulating the problem. The conflict between theology and mysticism, as seen here, is the first step to moving forward. In religious contexts, the problem is typically formulated based on metaphysical beliefs and ideas, and this sometimes leads to more confusion and misunderstanding of the problem. This paper was a struggle to provide the basis for further dependable formulations of this aporia. [22]

About the author
Majid Heidari has a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Art and professor at Ferdows Institute of Higher Education, Iran. Dr. Heidari writes articles in English on aesthetics and narrative. He also writes novels in the Persian language. mjdheidary@gmail.com.

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Endnotes

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fn2F2BWLZ0Q.
[9] The following quotes from these two thinkers, I suppose, have never been compared to each other. Avicenna (980-1037) starts his book, The Metaphysics of Healing, as follows: “We shall indulge whatever the truth itself reveals of its form, giving evidence against the one who disagrees by means of what [the truth] shows and holds back of itself. That our time be not wasted and bound up by repudiating and sufficiently opposing every school of thought … We shall endeavor, as far as possible, to exhibit the truth arrived at by our predecessors and to excuse what we think they have overlooked unintentionally. ….. God has spared us all this [trouble] and has, in fact, assigned it to people who have exerted their utmost effort in achieving it and interpreting their books …. Part of what the measure of our search has yielded, despite the short space of time we spent therein, is given in the books that we have written and called collectively The Healing. God is the source of our support and strength, and in Him we place our trust. From here we start our exposition.” Avicenna, The Metaphysics of Healing, Translated by Jon McGinnis (Brigham Young University Press, 2009). Descartes (1596-1650) starts his book, Meditations on Philosophy, with sentences like the following: “I am here quite alone, and at last I will devote myself, sincerely and without holding back, to demolishing my opinions. I can do this without showing that all my beliefs are false, which is probably more than I could ever manage. My reason tells me that as well as withholding assent from propositions that are obviously false, I should also withhold it from ones that are not completely certain and indubitable. So all I need, for the purpose of rejecting all my opinions, is to find in each of them at least some reasons for doubt. I can do this without going through them one by one, which would take forever: once the foundations of a building have been undermined, the rest collapses of its own accord; so I will go straight for the basic principles on which all my former beliefs rested.” Rene Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, translated by Jonathan Bennett (2010-2015).
[17] Ibid., p. 1-5.
[22] I would like to dearly thank the reviewers of *Contemporary Aesthetics* for reading through my paper carefully. Because of their comments this paper, I believe, improved significantly and I, myself, learned a lot. I sincerely appreciate their contribution to this paper.

Conference Report
By Jale Erzen
Nordic Society of Aesthetics Annual Conference June 8-10, University of Bergen, Norway

As has been usual for the conferences of the NSA for many years now, the recent conference in Bergen was superbly organized with interesting and mind opening keynote speeches, new approaches from many young academicians and ample time for discussions. Special friendships develop on these occasions maybe because the conferences are never too crowded, the discussions are allowed good time extending over generously provided-for breaks and lunches, and often the heavy rain outside keeps people inside and closer. In the two and a half days of presentations that I could follow, the arguments and examples given by several will stay with me a long time. Prof. Lamarque’s talk on the aesthetics of poetry, with examples from Sylvia Plath and Marilyn Hacker was a very clear analysis of how, when understood deeply a poem can offer a great aesthetic experience. Whether this kind of intellectual and studied
analysis would work for avant-garde poetry is questionable; nevertheless Prof. Lamarque’s analysis offered a succinct example what it means to look deeply at poetic form and content.

Quite a different approach was offered in the excellent presentation of Rita Felski who talked about ‘Atunement’ as a way of ‘falling in love’ with a piece of music, literature or art, that works its way into our mind and soul through not always clearly traceable multiple relations of effects and grounds. Felski used the example given by Zadi Smith about how she unexpectedly began to enjoy Joni Mitchell’s music.* Angela Breitenbach’s keynote speech on the aesthetic appreciation of science was welcome in widening the scope of aesthetic appreciation, analyzing how understanding a theory can offer aesthetic pleasure, much similar to how and why understanding a poem can be an aesthetic experience. Unfortunately I could not stay to hear Henrik Zinkernagel’s talk on aesthetic experience in science, but I learned a lot from talking with him about the novelties in cosmological understanding in the Renaissance and how Michelangelo’s ‘Last Judgment’ painting at the Sistine is a reflection of these new scientific thoughts.

One interesting talk was about Bela Tarr’s awesome film, The Turin Horse, which according to the speaker Franck Darwiche is a non-sentimental account of the ‘End’ which being something that lasts into an unlimited duration is after all not an end at all, but simply a meaningless duration. Zoltan Somhegyi’s presentation of his subject of expertise, which he constantly develops and adds to, the Ruins, were this time presented as backgrounds to contemporary art shows. Ruins Somhegyi talked about this time were war ruins, which added a deeper significance to his favorite subject.

I am sure I missed many good talks on music, dance and the appreciation of nature. The program was quite rich in varied subjects concerning aesthetics, but unlike previous conferences there was almost nothing on art and painting; one would have so much enjoyed listening to one of Bente Larsen’s wonderful analyses on painting.

*Editor’s note: website source of The New Yorker essay Dr. Felski is analyzing: http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/12/17/some-notes-on-attunement

Congratulations to the Nordic Society of Aesthetics and to Morten Kyndrup who has chaired the Society so successfully for so long and who now is leaving the Chair to Arto Happala who surely will continue the great work and this high intellectual tradition.

**Conference Report**

By co-organizers Lars Aagaard-Mogensen and Jane Forsey

Aesthetic Foundations, May 19-21, 2017

Wassard Elea, a refugium for artists and scholars, held its VIIth International Wassard Elea Symposium, in Ascea, Italy, focused on the theme of Aesthetic Foundations. The contemporary diversification of aesthetics as applied to sport, film, video games, food, and so on, has involved a confident and facile use of such notions as aesthetic experience, aesthetic value, aesthetic judgment and aesthetic pleasure. But this use in fact often belies confusion about what these terms mean, or what we mean when we use them. The question of what makes any kind of
encounter or object a particularly aesthetic one cuts to the heart of the discipline at its most complex. This year’s symposium was dedicated to the analysis of some core problems in aesthetics, such as the nature of aesthetic experience, the link between the aesthetic and pleasure, the kinds of objects that can rightly be called aesthetic, as well as the modality of aesthetic judgments.

With two intensive all-day sessions, the symposium was able to accommodate eight presentations with commentaries and twelve discussants, coming from Taiwan, Denmark, Germany, Spain, Sweden, the USA and Canada. A range of approaches to the theme were represented, from a conceptual analysis of the role of vindictive judgments in artistic appreciation to a Nietzschean challenge to the primacy of pleasure in aesthetic encounters. A number of papers sought to clarify the nature of aesthetic experience, as, for instance, being characterized by genuineness and authenticity; as being educative or formative at its core; as being fundamentally interpretive; or as leading to harmony and unity on a Deweyan model. As to what objects can be said to be aesthetic, the range of responses was from (a) anything, to (b) works of art only, and (c) design in particular. Design, it was suggested, can best illustrate how aesthetic categories have changed due to contemporary changes in production and media culture. A defense of Adorno argued that only works of art are aesthetic objects, and moreover that ugly art has an important role to play in social and political critique. The issue of art’s autonomy or heteronomy, and the distinction between aesthetic and artistic values produced lively and, we hope, fruitful discussion for all participants.

The organizers would like to thank all those who submitted papers, and to the symposium’s contributors, for a successful event. Proceedings of the symposium are published in Wassard Elea Rivista, IV, nos. 3, 4 and V, no. 1.

The theme for the VIIIth International Wassard Elea Symposium is tentatively entitled Taste, Bad Taste and Tastelessness. A call for papers is expected in the fall.

**Member Society Report**

by Georgia Apostolopoulou

The Hellenic Society for Aesthetics

The Hellenic Society for Aesthetics organized a lecture (in Greek) on April, 5, 2017. The speaker was Dr. Thomas Symeonidis, holder of the Panayotis and Effie Michelis Chair at the Department of Philosophical and Social Studies of the University of Crete (Rethymnon). The lecture theme was *The Beauty of the World. Thoughts on the Occasion of a Picture at the Metro Station Quae de la Gare in Paris*. The lecture was hosted in the Exhibition and Events Hall of the Panayotis and Effie Michelis Foundation which also organized and hosted the exhibition *Fragments* of the archaeological photos of Greek photographer Socratis Mavrommatis from February 23 to April 30, 2017. The exhibition catalogue is entitled,* Fragments: Less evident realities in applied archaeological photography.*
Exhibition: *Documenta 14 - Learning from Athens* is in Athens until July 16, 2017 and concurrently in Kassel, Germany from June 10 through September 17, 2017. The exhibition is organized by the Greek National Museum of Contemporary Art, Artistic Director Adam Szymczyk with the museum’s curatorial staff. There are a variety of exhibitions, installations, concerts, performances, and projections of films in public venues and in public spaces throughout Athens and Kassel.

A Conference organized by Athena Vogiatzoglou entitled *Takis Papatsonis: The Poet, the Critic, the Thinker* took place May 8-9 at the University of Ioannina. Dr. Vogiatzoglou is Associate Professor of Modern Greek Philology, Department of Philology, University of Ioannina. Takis Papatsonis (1895-1976) served as President of the Hellenic Society for Aesthetics 1964-1969.

**Exhibition of interest to IAA members**


Performance: *Into the Now*- With Marina Gržinić and Aneta Stojnić.

Panel discussion: *Dystopian futures.*

Panelists:
Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid have been involved in experimental videofilm and political productions since 1982. They have collaborated on over 40 video art projects, a short feature 16 mm film and numerous video and media installations.
Marina Gržinić, Ph.D. is a professor at The Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. She is researcher advisor at the Institute of Philosophy SRC-SASA, Ljubljana.
Aina Šmid is art historian and free-lance journalist.
Aneta Stojnić is theoretician, curator and artist. She works as assistant professor at the Faculty of Media and Communications in Belgrade.
Jan Jagodzinski is Professor of Visual Art and Media Education in the Department of Secondary Education, University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.
Martin G. Weiss is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt.

This exhibition encompasses the most significant body of works by the Slovenian artists Marina Grzinic and Aina Smid developed over 35 years. Highly performative in the sense of producing the specific impact in current socio-political reality, their mode of production is prompted by a sharp and accurate sense of the contemporary context, in the way that each of their works is producing a specific account of what we will call radical contemporaneity. The artists showed the historical process underlying the transition from socialism to postsocialism to turbo-capitalism (via turbo-fascism), analyzed the shifts introduced by new media technologies, and exposed the conditions of contemporary global necrocapitalism, giving a harsh critique of
discrimination, racism, and fascism in Europe today. In this regard their opus obtains a historical position in terms of artistic, cultural and political questioning and as a critique of the construction and deconstruction of the political project of former Eastern Europe in relation to the so called “former West”, as well as this testifies of their understanding of the contemporary relations of segregation and exploitation in Europe, especially in terms of class, race and gender. Following this trait while retrospective in its nature, the exhibition obtains a format of accumulated political histories in order to offer a reading of the dystopian present and to think about a possible future. Curator: Aneta Stojnic
- Students: € 20 (including NGE membership through 2018)

Enrolling for the symposium: please transfer the due amount to account no. NL66INGB0006395303 (Ned. Genootschap voor Esthetica), re: ‘participation symposium 2017’. Current members in good standing (who do not need to transfer a participation fee) are requested to send a mail to penningmeester@nge.nl, with the subject line ‘participation symposium 2017’.

Papers in English may (independent of the symposium) also be presented to the NGE online open access journal: Aesthetic Investigations – see http://www.aestheticinvestigations.eu/index.php/journal.

Further information:
Aukje van Rooden [A.vanRooden@uva.nl]
Albert van der Schoot [A.vanderSchoot@uva.nl]

Upcoming Conference

13th International Congress of Aesthetics - Brazil, entitled “Os fins da arte”
October 17-20, 2017

The 13th International Congress of Aesthetics - Brazil will be held in the Department of Philosophy at the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Pampulha. Also known as the Lake District, Pampulha, was recently named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The region, in addition to the University, is home to some of Oscar Niemeyer’s greatest works, entertainment, hotels, shopping, and outdoor recreational activities. The region is easily accessible from Belo Horizonte’s city center by public transportation.

Website: http://abrestetica.org.br/osfinsdaarte/english/

The 13th International Congress of Aesthetics – Brazil, entitled “Os fins da arte”, aims to highlight recurring themes in the history of philosophical aesthetics, elaborating the already constant ambiguity in its title, namely: “fins”. The term refers to the millenarian discussion about the uses of art in the past, present, and future. This takes on the important question about the autonomy of art and the regime of its heteronomy that not only asserted itself in its beginnings, but still imposes itself in the form of market demands tending to disfigure the original impetus of important aesthetic manifestations. On the other hand, the concept of “os fins” opens discussion to the numerous formulations of a possible end of art, as echoed by G.W.F. Hegel in Lectures on the Philosophy of Art, “…the conditions of our present time are not favorable to art…In all these respects art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past”

Sub-themes

The invited speakers will present during the morning sessions throughout the entire event. The afternoons will be reserved for the selected panels and individual presentations, to be followed by the debates that will surround not only the principal theme (os fins da arte) stricto sensu, but will also be relevant to the following sub-themes:
• Engaged art
• Aesthetics and politics
• Popular culture
• Aesthetics and diversities
• Death and art
• Ethics and aesthetic
• Post-history
• Art and psychoanalysis
• Art and Brazilian reality
• The future of art
• Culture industry

Invited Speakers

David Lapoujade (Université Paris-I Panthéon-Sorbonne- Paris, France) is a philosopher and Professor at the Université Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne. He is a specialist in pragmatism, Anglo-American philosophy, and contemporary philosophy.

Jacob Rugozinski (Université de Strasbourg- Strasbourg, France) is a Professor at the University of Strasbourg. Previously, he has worked as the program director at the Collège international de philosophie and as a professor at the University of Paris 8.

Rodrigo Duarte (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais- Belo Horizonte, Brazil) completed his doctorate degree in Philosophy at Universität Kassel in Hesse, Germany. Since 2006, he is a Professor in the Philosophy Department at the Federal University of Minas Gerais.

Alessandro Bertinetto (Università degli Studi di Udine- Udine, Italy) is currently an Assistant Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Udine. After October 2017, he will serve as an adjunct professor at the University of Turin. He was a DAAD researcher in Munich (Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München) and fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt foundation in Berlin (Freie Universität, Berlin).

Márcia Cristina Ferreira Gonçalves (UERJ- Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the State University of Rio de Janeiro. She completed her BA at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (1985), MA at the Federal University of Rio De Janeiro (1991), and PhD at the Free University of Berlin (1996). She has completed postdoctoral fellowships at the Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg (Breisgau, Germany) and the Technical University of Berlin (Germany).

Márcio Suzuki (USP - São Paulo, Brazil) earned his doctorate in Philosophy from the University of São Paulo. Since 1990, he has worked as a Professor at the same university. His research interests focus on German Idealism and Romanticism. He is currently studying the relationship between philosophy and literature.
Günter Gebauer (Freien Universität Berlin-Germany) is a philosopher, sports scientist, linguist, and a Professor at Freie Universität Berlin. Additionally, he served as a visiting professor in Paris, Strasbourg, and Hiroshima.

Event Organizers

Cíntia Vieira da Silva (UFOP-Ouro Preto, Brazil) holds an MA (2000) and PhD (2007) in Philosophy from the State University of Campinas. She is currently an Adjunct Professor at the Federal University of Ouro Preto. Also, she is vice-president of the Brazilian Association of Aesthetics and coordinator of a Deleuze research group.

Debora Pazetto Ferreira (CEFET/MG-Belo Horizonte, Brazil) holds degrees in Philosophy and Plastic Arts from the Federal University of Santa Catarina, the State University of Santa Catarina, and the Federal University of Minas Gerais.

Giorgia Cecchinato, Coordinator (UFMG – Belo Horizonte, Brazil) holds a PhD in Philosophy from the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, where she was a researcher and teaching assistant from 2007 to 2008.

Marco Antônio Alves (CAPES/UFMG-Belo Horizonte, Brazil) holds a PhD from the Federal University of Minas Gerais. His doctoral thesis earned the UFMG Prize for Outstanding Thesis and an honorable mention by CAPES in 2015.

Rachel Costa (CAPES/UFOP-Ouro Preto, Brazil) is currently a scholar (PNDP) in the graduate program of Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art at the Federal University of Ouro Preto. She earned her MA and PhD from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, part of which she completed in the Université Paris 1 -Pantheon-Sorbonne in Paris. She was a postdoctoral researcher at the Braude College of Engineering in Israel, in art and technology.

Rodrigo Duarte (UFMG-Belo Horizonte, Brazil) holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Kassel and, since 2006, he works in the Department of Philosophy at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (Brazil).

Verlaine Freitas (UFMG- Belo Horizonte, Brazil) holds an M.A in Philosophy (1987) from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and PhD in Philosophy from the University of Sciences and Humanities of Strasbourg (1994).

Virginia Figueiredo (UFMG-Belo Horizonte, Brazil) holds an M.A. degree (1996) and a PhD in Philosophy (2001) from the Federal University of Minas Gerais. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Windsor, Canada (2011). Currently, she is an Associate Professor at UFMG and a CNPq researcher.

About the conference site: Belo Horizonte is the capital of the state of Minas Gerais, as well as Brazil’s third largest metropolitan area. The city, originally conceived and planned in the late 19th century, offers a vibrant cultural scene and welcoming academic forum. Local restaurants and Botecos (street bars) demonstrate the state of Minas Gerais’s strong culinary heritage, that is
one of the most celebrated in the country. It is home to urban structure and landscape design projects Brazil’s renowned Modernist architect, Oscar Niemeyer. Belo Horizonte is nestled between cultural epicenters such as the historic city of Ouro Preto and the Inhotim Center of Contemporary Art, both of which can be easily accessed by public transportation.

“Don’t let your music end” Image: Jale Erzen
Call for Papers

Aesthetics Between Art and Society: Perspectives of Arnold Berlent's Postkantian Aesthetics of Engagement

Aesthetic engagement thus pervades human experience and it accounts for both the appreciation of the arts and the appreciation of environment. Leading us beyond the arts, aesthetic engagement can also illuminate and enrich social relations. By recognizing the experience of aesthetic engagement, its presence can be valued and its influence encouraged.5

Espeš Journal (www.casopisespes.sk)

The recognition of the necessity to revise traditional aesthetics has been an important factor throughout the 20th century that has witnessed essential social and political changes oriented towards democratization, and changes in the art sphere, as well. Transcendental rational Kantian aesthetics is has been doubted, questioned, criticized after the discoveries of Charles Darwin, after opening to non-Euro-American cultures, after the fall of rationalism with the machinery of the Holocaust, after the Great Avantgarde and, later, land art, body art, performance art, happenings, (interactive) installations, bio art, and internet art. In order to deal with all these changes it appeared helpful to turn to the original idea of aisthesis related to perception and recognition through senses and not through the rational mind as better suited to analyze new phenomena in art and aesthetically experienced individual and social lives. On this basis Arnold Berleant developed his proposal of aesthetics of engagement, being motivated by the need to form a positive frame for understanding the directedness of experience where the aesthetic becomes the key. Berleant’s endeavour is interesting and worth closer attention, not only because of its intellectual precision, sublimity, and sensibility, but also due to its evolution, which allows considering contemporary issues such as environment, landscape, contamination, city, capitalism, and culture. The perspectives which open up in Berleant’s reflection deserve to be investigated, and the current issue of the "Espeš" Journal is dedicated to contribute to that task.

Aesthetic engagement introduces understanding an environment not as the object in front of the subject (us as humans), but as the continuum in which we are immersed, and which can be analyzed analogically through aesthetic concepts. Similarly, in the experience of art can no longer be separated into appreciator and the art object, or the artist, the performer, and the audience, because these “disappear in the reciprocity and continuity of appreciative experience.”6 This environment trespasses the differentiation of nature-culture and is perceived as artifactually transformed and sensibly experienced by subjects, who very often live in cities and not in the bosom of nature. The urban environment is a vital sphere and we should understand what conditions an urban environment offers its inhabitants and how these affect the quality of their experiences, which are not only pleasing and beautiful, but “encompass the full range of intrinsic

perceptual experience and its associated meanings."\(^7\) Opening the unnecessarily narrow concept of aesthetics, Berleant notices both that “the values we recognize in arts are found more widely in social experience”\(^8\) and that art is never free from its social role (not limited by social constraints).\(^9\)

Arnold Berleant combines continental phenomenology and American pragmatism, which all the more designates him as the right figure to focus on when trying to replace analytical divisions with reflections corresponding to contemporary grasp of society and culture.

We invite your involvement in the development, analyses, and critique of Arnold Berleant’s ideas, and to send papers related to the topics listed below to the e-mail address: aleksandra.lukaszewicz.alcaraz@akademiasztuki.eu with the phrase in the title: “CFP: Espes”.

- Berleantian critique of Kantian aesthetics
- Proposal of aesthetics of engagement
- Environmental aesthetics
- Urban aesthetics
- Garden and landscape aesthetics
- Social aesthetics
- Aesthetic negativity

Deadline for paper submission: September 30th, 2017
Guidelines for publishing papers:

**Call for Papers**

*Contemporary Aesthetics*

Contact: Arnold Berleant, editor@contempaesthetics.org

*Contemporary Aesthetics* invites papers and Short Notes for its fourteenth annual volume. The purpose of *Contemporary Aesthetics* is to publish international, interdisciplinary, peer- and blind-reviewed articles on contemporary theory, research, and application in aesthetics. In the interest of broadening our scope and increasing accessibility to our readers, *CA* is adding a new section to the journal for shorter, more targeted pieces of current interest in aesthetics and

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philosophy of art. These 300-800 word "Short Notes" should offer an opportunity for discussion and may offer points of view on topics such as modes of appreciation of environment or of a theater performance, or an insight gained from a book. Short Notes are more focused than regular articles and should be directed to CA readers whose disciplinary and cultural backgrounds are diverse. With the exception of discussions of books or articles, Short Notes will not ordinarily require citations.

Papers of 7,000 words (including abstract and notes) and Short Notes should be submitted following the guidelines on submissions accessible on our Home Page and both will be refereed. Suitable Notes and papers will be published in the order accepted with most the most recent appearing at the top of the Table of Contents. We welcome the use of visual images and auditory and video clips to illustrate the text. Our journal is able to publish accepted work quickly and offers simple and free access. Contemporary Aesthetics has a wide national and international readership that included nearly 150,000 visits last year. We invite your submission. For more information about submitting work to Contemporary Aesthetics: www.contempaesthetics.org.

Aesthetics websites of interest.

13th International Congress of Aesthetics - Brazil
www.abrestetica.org.br/osfinsdaarte/english/

Contemporary Aesthetics
www.contempaesthetics.org.

Dutch Association for Aesthetics online open access journal: Aesthetic Investigations
www.aestheticinvestigations.eu/index.php/journal
IAA Executive Committee Officers (2016-2019)
President: Jale Erzen (Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey)
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Weilin Fang (China)
Gunther Gebauer (Germany)
Kathleen Higgins (USA)
Eva Kit Wah Man (Hong Kong)
Katerina Parizkova (Czech Republic)

IAA Announcement: IAA Yearbooks
IAA Yearbooks 15, 16 and 17 are now available on the website of the IAA as Open Access editions. Please visit the website of the IAA (http://www.iaaesthetics.org/publications/yearbooks).

IAA Committee Activity
The IAA Publication Committee appointed Zoltan Somhegyi editor for volume 19.
Three volumes are downloadable from the Publications/Proceedings section of our website, here are the direct links:
Jakub Petri (ed.) Performing Cultures:
http://iaaesthetics.org/item/141-jakub-petri-ed-performing-cultures
Ewa Chudoba – Krystyna Wilkoszewska (ed.) Naturalizing Aesthetics:
http://iaaesthetics.org/item/140-ewa-chudoba-krystyna-wilkoszewska-ed-naturalizing-aesthetics
Lilianna Bieszczad (ed.) Practicing Aesthetics:
http://iaaesthetics.org/item/139-lilianna-bieszczad-ed-practicing-aesthetics
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Joseph Margolis (USA)
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Mikel Dufrenne* (France)
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Gao Jianping 2013-2016
Curtis L. Carter 2010-2013
Jos de Mul 2007-2010
Heinz Paezold 2004-2007 *
Ken-ichi Sasaki 2001-2004
Ales Erjavec 1998-2001
Arnold Berleant 1995-1998
Goran Hermeren 1988-1992
Harold Osborne 1984-1988 *
(*Deceased)

Publications
Zoltan Somhegyi (Hungary/United Arab Emirates) Website Editor
Jos De Mul, (Netherlands) Guardian Online Yearbook
Alan Shear (USA): Newsletter Editor
Delegates

American Society for Aesthetics: Eva Dadlev
Asociacion Argentina de Estetica: Rosa Maria Ravera
Australian and New Zealand Association for Literature and Art and Aesthetics: Eugenio Benitez
Brazilian Society for Aesthetics: Rodrigo Duarte
Canadian Society for Aesthetics / Société Canadienne d'Esthétique: Adrienne Dengerink Chaplin
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Société Hellénique d'Esthétique: Georgia Apostolopoulou
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Mexican Society of Aesthetics: Katya Mandoki
Nordic Society for Aesthetics: Jacob Lund
Polish Society of Aesthetics: Krystyna Wilkoszewska
Council of Aesthetics, Russian Academy of Sciences: Konstantin Dolgov
Serbian Society for Aesthetics of Architecture and Visual Arts: Misko Suvakovic
Slovenian Society for Aesthetics: Aleš Erjavec
Sanart Association of Aesthetics and Visual Culture, Turkey: Jale Erzen
Member Societies

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Argentinean Society For Aesthetics / Asociación Argentina de Esthética
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European Society of Aesthetics
French Society of Aesthetics/ Société Française d'Esthétique
Finnish Society for Aesthetics / Suomen Estetiikan Seura
Ha'aguda Hayisraelit Le'aesthetica
Hellenic Society for Aesthetics / Ελληνική Εταιρεία Αισθητικής
Italian Association of Aesthetics / Associazione Italiana per gli Studi di Estetica
Japanese Society for Aesthetics (Bigaku-Kai)
Korean Society of Aesthetics / 한국미학회
Latvian Association for Aesthetics
Lithuanian Society for Aesthetics / Lietuvos estetikų draugija
Mexican Society of Aesthetics / Asociación Mexicana de Estudios en Estética
Nordic Society of Aesthetics / Nordiska sällskapet för estetik/Nordiska sällskapet for estetik/Nordisk Selskab for Aestetik/Nordisk selskap for estetikk/Félag norraenna fagurfraedinga/Pohjoismaiden estetiikan seura
Polish Society of Aesthetics / Polskie Towarzystwo Estetyczne
Aesthetic Association of Russia / Rossijaeskaya Aesteticheskaya Assoziazia
Serbian Society of Aesthetics for Architecture and Visual Arts
Slovenian Society of Aesthetics / Slovensko drustvo za estetiko
L’Association Tunisienne d’Esthétique et de Poïétique / A.T.E.P.
SANART - Association of Aesthetics and Visual Culture Turkey / Sanart; Esthetik ve Görsel Kültür Dernegi)
IAA Publications

International Yearbook of Aesthetics

- Volume 12, 2008, Editor, Jale Erzen.
- Volume 16, 2012, Editor, Peng Feng.

Website: [http://www.iaaesthetics.org/](http://www.iaaesthetics.org/)

Website editor: Zoltan Somhegyi

Guardian of the online Yearbook: Jos de Mul

Newsletter Editor: Alan Shear

IAA/AIE Newsletter

National Societies for aesthetics and members are invited to contribute to the IAA/AIE Newsletter with conference announcements, reports, reviews of books and journals, as well as, reports of the activities of national societies and departments. Contributions may be edited for reasons of space or clarity. The IAA/AIE Newsletter is published by the International Association for Aesthetics. Please send copy for inclusion in the Newsletter to Alan Shear, email: alan.shear9@gmail.com

Since the end of the IAA Congress in August 2010, the IAA Newsletter, under the editorship of Alan Shear, has published two editions per year. The editions are available on the Website for members who may not have received prior issues. Short essays on topics in aesthetics, news items, conference reports, book reviews and other items of interest to aestheticians are welcome. Essays on the state of aesthetics in each national society will be featured as an on-going project. The Newsletter will be published twice annually: Deadline for the next issue #50 is October 2017. Please send your contributions to Editor, Alan Shear: alan.shear9@gmail.com
IAA/AIE Membership

Membership Application / Renewal

Please note that the membership rate is $30.00USA for three years.
Membership rate is $15.00USA for students for three years.
Method of Payment: Pay Pal account: iaagensec@gmail.com.
If you do not presently have a Pay Pal account, you will need to sign up for it (a brief process) and link a credit or debit card to your account. There are instructions at PayPal.com, and once you have an account, use the ‘Transfer’ tab to send the funds. You will receive an email confirmation when the transaction is complete. Following payment, submit the following membership information to the Secretary General, zoltansomhegyi@yahoo.co.uk

Please include the following information:

Full Name
Institution
Address
Postal Code
Country
Email
Telephone
National or International Society (if any)

General membership inquiries can also be sent to www.zoltansomhegyi.com