

Editorial

With no over-arching theme, this issue of *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* presents a diversity of articles that under different perspectives deal with a variety of different topics and medialities, ranging from a critical theoretical exploration of the faculty of judgement, over an analytic evaluation of architectural value, to an enactive approach to aesthetic preference and the bodily conditions of meaning constitution.

The first two articles, by Henrik Kaare Nielsen and Lotte Philipsen, stem from the annual conference of the Nordic Society of Aesthetics in 2011, entitled “Aesthetics and Politics” and held at The Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen (more articles originating from that conference will appear in the next issue). In the article “Aesthetic Judgement and Political Judgement”, Nielsen claims that prominent positions in contemporary theory tend to conceptualize communities in general as aesthetic communities of taste and thereby reducing the political to an implication of the aesthetic discourse. In opposition to this tendency he argues in favour of addressing the aesthetic and the political as distinct discourses that are always engaged with each other in a conflictual interplay. Philipsen’s article, “The Myth of Emancipation Through Interaction: On the Relationship Between Interactive Dimensions and Emancipating Potentials of Contemporary (Digital) Art”, is a critical analysis of the idea of participation in digital art as carrying a democratic potential. She critically addresses what she understands as a widespread assumption that “works of art that make use of digital media automatically, through interactivity, are better suited for generating democratic processes in society in general than other art forms or phenomena that do not make use of digital media”. Then follows Cato Wittusen’s “Exalting Points of View: A Discussion of Michael Fried’s Interpretation of Wittgenstein’s Contribution to Aesthetic Thought”. Wittusen discusses how Michael Fried in his recent book *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (2008) considers an excerpt from Wittgenstein’s *Culture and Value* to help us see more clearly the Canadian artist Jeff Wall’s photographic vision and aesthetic. Wittusen examines Fried’s account of the photographic practice of Jeff Wall, with particular focus on his photograph *Morning Cleaning, Mies van der Rohe Foundation* (1999).

The second half is more analytically inclined and is opened by Andrea Sauchelli’s piece “On Architecture as a Spatial Art” in which he presents

and evaluates various criticisms against the view that architecture and architectural value are to be understood solely in terms of internal space. Sauchelli argues that the architectural value of a building cannot be limited to its internal spatial effects because the value of other elements, such as (non-spatial) function, materials, ornamentation, and so on, are irreducible to spatial values. In the article “Types of Statements on Emotion in Music”, Benjamin Krämer addresses the question of emotion in music from a linguistic perspective in order to provide a typology of statements that can be made about this topic. In particular, he analyzes how an interlocutor could react to such statements uttered by another person, and whether or how the content of the statements could be refuted by the listener, and possibly corroborated by the speaker. He also briefly discusses which theories of emotion in music are compatible with the respective types of statement and what illocutionary and perlocutionary function they may serve. Alfonsina Scarinzi’s article, “Grounding Aesthetic Preference in the Bodily Conditions of Meaning Constitution: Towards an Enactive Approach”, argues for an enactive approach to aesthetic preference contributing to bringing human aesthetic behavior research closer to the enactive approach to human experience. Following enactive studies on bodily sense-making and embodied emotions, she identifies the bodily conditions of meaning constitution in which aesthetic preference is grounded with the subject’s self-regulatory embodied constitution. Unlike mainstream aesthetic preference research in empirical aesthetics, she claims that the subject’s aesthetic preference constitution requires the lived experience of the bodily conditions of meaning constitution through the conscious experience of the subjectively aroused lived body.

The bodily aspect is also of central importance in Richard Shusterman’s paper “Back to the Future: Aesthetics Today” that rounds off the issue. Shusterman’s point of departure is the thesis that contemporary aesthetics can be characterized by a number of leading themes that mark a return to older aesthetic perspectives, after these perspectives have been neglected in modern philosophical discussions. The paper briefly outlines and explores three of these themes whose increasing importance in current aesthetics can appeal to historical antecedents, namely: a focus on perception, the expansion of the aesthetic field beyond the philosophy of fine art, and the close connection of the aesthetic and the practical. After that, Shusterman formulates a fourth theme in aesthetics today which incorporates the first three and whose value for contemporary aesthetics he seeks to highlight, namely: the somatic, as exemplified by somaesthetics.

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