The Aesthetics And Politics Of The Crowd In American Literature Cambridge Studies In American Literature And Culture | 7c484a21e244abb13ccf15ac363480c


Using examples from art and literature, Frantzen explores the social, political and economic implications of both real and imagined depression. Is feeling blue a symptom of the death of progress? Was the suicide of David Foster Wallace a proverbial canary in a coal mine? Margaret Thatcher once declared that there is no alternative to the social order that we now reside within. Have we accepted her slogan as a fact, and is that why so many are on Prozac and other anti-depressants? Frantzen examines the works of Michel Houellebecq, Claire Fontaine and David Foster Wallace as he seeks out an answer and a way to formulate a new future oriented left movement.

This innovative and theoretically sophisticated book investigates how aesthetic judgment forms the groundwork for understanding political identities. It posits aesthetics as central to conceptions of politics that are based on how people understand the relationship between themselves and larger communities. Ferguson focuses not only on how different theories of politics and judgment relate to one another, but also on their historical development and potential meaning for contemporary scholarship across the humanities and social sciences. Drawing on recent contributions to philosophy, economics, cultural studies, feminism, psychology, and anthropology, The Politics of Judgment demonstrates how modern political identities depend upon and are formed by aesthetic judgment. Political theorists, social scientists, philosophers and cultural critics will find this book especially useful, though general readers will also be attracted by the author's keen insight into contemporary political questions.

How aesthetics—understood as a more encompassing framework for human activity—might become the primary discourse for political and social engagement. These essays make the case for a reigned understanding of aesthetics—one that casts aesthetics not as illusory, subjective, or superficial, but as a more encompassing framework for human activity. Such an aesthetics, the contributors suggest, could become the primary discourse for political and social engagement. Departing from the “critical” stance of twentieth-century artists and theorists who embraced a counter-aesthetic framework for political engagement, this book documents how a broader understanding of aesthetics can offer insights into our relationships not only with objects, spaces, environments, and ecologies, but also with each other and the political structures in which we are all enmeshed. The contributors—philosophers, media theorists, artists, curators, writers and architects including such notable figures as Jacques Rancière, Graham Harman, and Elaine Scarry—build a compelling framework for a new aesthetic discourse. The book opens with a conversation in which Rancière tells the volume’s editor, Mark Foster Gage, that the aesthetic is “about the experience of a common world.” The essays following discuss such topics as the perception of reality; abstraction in ethics, epistemology, and aesthetics as the “first philosophy”; Afrofuturism; Xenofeminism; philosophical realism; the productive force of alienation; and the unbearable lightness of current creative discourse. Contributors Mark Foster Gage, Jacques Rancière, Elaine Scarry, Graham Harman, Timothy Morton, Ferra Kolatan, Adam Pore, Michael Young, Nettrice R. Gaskins, Roger Rothman, Diann Bauer, Matt Shaw, Albena Yaneva, Brett Mommersteeg, Lydia Kalilpoliti, Ariane Lourie Harrison, Rhett Russo, Peggy Deamer, Caroline Picard Matt Shaw, Managing Editor

Noise permeates our highly mediated and globalised cultures. Noise as art, music, cultural or digital practice is a way of intervening so that it can be harnessed for an aesthetic expression not caught within mainstream styles or distribution. This wide-ranging book examines the concept and practices of noise, treating noise not merely as a sonic phenomenon but as an essential component of all communication and information systems. The book opens with ideas of what noise is, and then works through ideas of how noise works in contemporary media, to conclude by showing potentials within noise that demands a rigorous engagement. Reverberations brings together a range of perspectives, case studies, critiques and suggestions as to how noise can mobilize thought and cultural activity through a heightening of critical creativity. Written by a strong, international line-up of scholars and artists, Reverberations looks to energize this field of study and initiate debates for years to come.

Observing that the division between theory and empiricism remains inextricably linked to imperial modernity, manifest at the most basic level in the binary between “the West” and “Asia,” the authors of this volume re-examine art and aesthetics to challenge these oppositions in order to reconceptualize politics and knowledge production in East Asia. Current understandings of fundamental ideas like race, nation, colonizer and the colonized, and the concept of Asia in the region are seeped with imperial aesthetics that originated from competing imperialisms operating in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Such aesthetics has sustained both colonial and local modes of perception in the formation of nation-states and expanded the reach of regulatory powers in East Asia since 1945. The twelve thought-provoking essays in this collection tackle the problems that arise at the crossroads of aesthetics and politics in East Asia, aesthetics of affect and sexuality, the productive tension between critical aesthetics and political movements, and aesthetic critiques of sovereignty and neoliberalism in East Asia today. If the seemingly universal operation of capital and militarism in East Asia requires locally specific definitions of biopolitical concepts to function smoothly, this book critiques the circuit of power between the universalism of capital and particularism of nation and culture. Treatment aesthetic experiences in art at large as the bases for going beyond imperial categories, the contributors present new modes of sensing, thinking, and living that have been unthinkable within the mainstream modality of Asian studies, a discipline that has reproduced the colonial regime of knowledge production. By doing so, Beyond Imperial Aesthetics illuminates the aesthetic underside of critical theory to uncover alternative forms of political
life in East Asia. “This much needed volume takes readers on an erudite and challenging journey. Along the way, the theoretically-minded authors explore what a future liberated from the Cold War shackles of securitized institutions and capitalist exploitation as well as concomitant epistemologies of aestheticized domination might look like in East Asia.” — Todd Henry, UC San Diego “Beyond Imperial Aesthetics is an intensive intervention between art, politics, and theoretical reflection in contemporary East Asia. The project convincingly implicates various sites of resistance to the postwar US hegemon throughout East Asia. The editors are to be congratulated for putting together such a timely and compelling work.” — Richard Calichman, City College of New York

This volume investigates our dissonant and exuberant existences online. As social media users we know we're under surveillance, yet we continue to click, like, love and share ourselves online as if nothing was. So, how do we overcome the current online identity regime? Can we overthrow the rule of Narcissus and destroy the planetary middle class subject? In this catalogue of strategies, the reader will find stories on hacker groups, gaming platforms in the occupied territories, art objects, selfies, augmented reality, Gen Z autoethnographies, love and life. The authors of this anthology believe we cannot simply put vanity aside and a rational analysis of platform capitalism is not going to convince the young Tiktoker nor liberate us from Zuckerbergian indentured servitude. Do we really need to wade through the subjective mud and 'learn more' about online aesthetics? The answer is yes.

Ten Theses for an Aesthetics of Politics is an invitation to culture makers, political thinkers of all kinds, and everyday spectators to reconsider the world of appearance. In Jacques Rancièr’s Ten Theses on Politics and work by Hannah Arendt, Stanley Cavell, and Roland Barthes, Stéphanie Benzaquen offers conceptual provocations that emphasize the sense of conviction one has when facing the frictions of aesthetic experience. Rooted in varied and variable experiences of border crossings, Panagia invites readers to reflect on the relational practices that appearances engender. Forerunners: Ideas First is a thought-in-process series of breakthrough digital publications. Written between fresh ideas and finished books, Forerunners draws on scholarly work initiated in notable blogs, social media, conference plenaries, journal articles, and the synergy of academic exchange. This is gray literature publishing: where intense thinking, change, and speculation take place in scholarship.

This book explores the cultural, aesthetic, and political relevance of music in radio art from its beginnings to present day. Contributors include musicologists, literary studies, and cultural studies scholars and cover radio plays, radio shows, and other programs in North American, English, Spanish, Greek, Italian, and German radio.

"I suggest that although at any given place and moment the aesthetic expressions of a political system just are that political system, the concepts are separable. Typically, aesthetic aspects of political systems shift in their meaning over time, or even are inverted or redeployed with an entirely transformed effect. You cannot understand politics without understanding the aesthetics of politics, but you cannot understand aesthetic politics as politics. The point is precisely to show the concrete nodes at which two distinct discourses coincide or convive, come apart or coalesce."—from Political Aesthetics Juxtaposing and connecting the art of states and the art of art historians with vernacular or popular practices—reggae and hip-hop, Crispin Sartwell examines the reach and claims of political aesthetics. Most analysts focus politics as discursive systems, privileging text and reducing other forms of expression to the merely illustrative. He suggests that we need to take much more seriously the aesthetic environment of political thought and action. Sartwell argues that graphic style, music, and architecture are more than the propaganda arm of political systems; they are its constituents. A noted cultural critic, Sartwell brings together the disciplines of political science and political philosophy, philosophy of art and art history, in a new way, clarifying basic notions of aesthetics-beauty, sublimity, and representation—applied in them in a political context. A general argument about the fundamental importance of political aesthetics is interspersed with a group of stimulating case studies as disparate as Leni Riefenstahl’s films and Black Nationalist aesthetics, the Dead Kennedys and Jeffersonian architecture.

An intense and lively debate on literature and art between thinkers who became some of the great figures of twentieth-century philosophy and literature Even though it’s frequently asserted that we are living in a golden age of scripted television, television as a medium is still not taken seriously as an artistic art form, nor has the stigma of television as “chewing gum for the mind” really disappeared. Philosopher Martin Shuster argues that television is the modern art form, full of promise and urgency, and in New Television, he offers a strong philosophical justification for its importance. Through careful analysis of shows including The Wire, Justified, and Weeds, among others; and European and Anglophone philosophers, such as Stanley Cavell, Hannah Arendt, Martin Heidegger, and John Rawls, Shuster reveals how various contemporary televisual discourses deeply shape aesthetic and philosophical ambitions of new television is a commitment to portraying and exploring the family as the last site of political possibility in a world otherwise bereft of any other sources of traditional authority; consequently, at the heart of new television are profound political stakes.

Each of the five volumes in the Stone Art Theory Institutes series—seminars on which the volumes are based—brings together a range of scholars who are not always directly familiar with one another’s work. The outcome of each of these convergences is an extensive and “unpredictable conversation” on knotty and provocative issues about art. This fourth volume in the series, Beyond the Aesthetic and the Anti-Aesthetic, focuses on questions revolving around the concepts of the aesthetic, the anti-aesthetic, and the political. The book is about the fact that now, almost thirty years after Hal Foster defined the anti-aesthetic, there is still no viable alternative to the dichotomy between aesthetics and anti- or nonaesthetic art. The impasse is made more difficult by the proliferation of identity politics, and it is made less negotiable by the hegemony of anti-aesthetics in academic discourse on art. The central question of this book is whether artists and academicians are free of this choice in practice, in pedagogy, and in theory. The contributors are Stéphanie Benzaquen, J. M. Bernstein, Karen Busk-Jepsen, Luis Camnitzer, Diarmuid Costello, Joana Cunha Leal, Angela Dimitrakaki, Alexander Dumbadze, T. Brandon Evans, Gang Youhuang, Boris Groys, Beata Hock, Gordon Hughes, Michael Kelly, Grant Kester, Meredith Kooi, Cary Levine, Sunil Manghani, William Mazzarella, Justin McKeown, Andrew McMahon, Eve Maltzer, Nadja Millner-Larsen, Maria Filomena Molder, Carrie Holand, Gary Peters, Aaron Richmond, Lauren Ross, Toni Ross, Eva Schürmann, Gregory Sholette, Noah Simбир, Jon Simons, Robert Storr, Martin Sundberg, Timotheus Vermeulen, and Rebecca Zorach.

Bringing together a team of international scholars with an interest in urban transformations, spatial justice and territoriality, this volume questions how the interstice is related to the emerging processes of partitioning, enclave-making and zoning, showing how in-between spaces are intimately related to larger flows, networks, territories and boundaries. Illustrated with a range of case studies from places such as the UK, Quebec, the UK, Italy, Gaza, Iraq, India, and South-east Asia, the volume analyses the place and
function of interstitial locales in both a ‘disciplined’ urban space and a disordered space conceptualized through the notions of ‘excess’, ‘danger’ and ‘threat’. Warning not to romanticize the interstices, the book invites us to study it as not simply a place but also a set of phenomena, events and social interactions. How are interstices perceived and represented? What is the politics of visibility that is applied to them? How to capture their peculiar rhythms, speeds and affects? On the one hand, interstices open up venues for informality, improvisation, challenge, and bricolage, playful as well as angry statements on the neoliberal city and enhanced urban inequalities. On the other hand, they also represent a crucial site of governance (even governance by withdrawal) and urban management, where an array of techniques ranging from military urbanism to new forms of value extraction are experimented. At the point of convergence of all these tensions, interstices appear as veritable sites of transformation, where social forces clash and mesh prefiguring our urban future. The book interrogates these territories, proposing new ways to explore the dynamics, events and visibilities that define them.

Political Aesthetics highlights the complex and ambiguous connections of aesthetics with social, cultural and political experiences in contemporary societies. If today aesthetics seems a rather overused term, mixing a variety of historical realities and complex personal states of being, its relevance as a connecting agent between individual, state and society is stronger than ever. The contribution of ‘performative’politics and the resistive power of what the book terms as the ‘universal’ in the universal as it triggers. Considered beyond the poles of power and protest, the book examines how traditional or innovative aesthetic practices may acquire unexpected capacities of subversion. It nourishes the current debate around the new political stakes of aesthetics as an inviolable right of ordinary citizens, an essential element of empowerment and agency in a democratic every day. It will be of interest to students and scholars of international relations, political culture and political aesthetics, as well as critical sociology and history. It will also be useful for some broad courses in media studies, cultural studies, and sociology.

The universe is expanding, the world has gone global, and the US has launched a crusade to export the universal right to democracy to every part of the world. Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the concept of universality is making a remarkable comeback in aesthetic and political theory. The meaning of the world, however, seems more contested than ever. Some denounce it as the ideological guise of particular interests, others as the conceptual equivalent of totalitarianism. But a growing number maintain that universality is an indispensable notion for any genuinely critical aesthetics and politics. Confronting Universalites consists of 12 contributors that examine how contemporary works of art in different media and genres influence, shape, or confront the political realm in both theory and practice by way of the universal. The topics of the essays include depictions of German unification, identity politics of aesthetic taste, contemporary uses of van Gogh, globalized photography, the infamous Danish cartoons, iconic architecture, cinematic representations of migration, the speeches of Nicolas Sarkozy and the interventions of contemporary art in the war in Afghanistan. From various theoretical points of departure, they all demonstrate the importance of the universal in the description of political aesthetic practice in a globalising world.

In recent years we have witnessed an increasing convergence of work in International Politics and Performance Studies around the troubled, and often troubling, relationship between politics and aesthetics. Whilst examination of political aesthetics, aesthetic politics, and politics of aesthetic practice has been central to research in both disciplines for some time, the emergence of a distinctive ‘performative turn’ in International Politics and a critical return to the concept of ‘the political’ in Performance Studies highlights the importance of investigating the productivity of bringing the methods and approaches of the two fields of enquiry into dialogue and mutual relation. Exploring a wide range of issues including rioting, youth-driven protests, border security practices and the significance of cultural awareness in war, this text provides an accessible and cutting edge survey of the intersection of international politics and performance examining issues surrounding the politics of appearance, image, event and place; and discusses the development and deployment of innovative critical and creative research methods, from auto-ethnography to site-specific theatre-making, from philosophical aesthetics to the aesthetic thought of new security scenario-planning. The book’s focus throughout is on the materiality of performance practices –on the politics of making, spectating, and participating in a variety of modes as political actors and audiences-while also seeking to explicate the performative dynamics of creative and critical thinking. Structured thematically and framed by a detailed introduction and conclusion, the focus is on producing a dialogue between contributors and providing an essential reference point in this developing field. This work is essential reading for students of politics and performance and will be of great interest to students and scholars of IR, performance studies and cultural studies.

This book’s main claim is that political art should not disregard questions of aesthetic reception and value. It argues that some neglected aspects of traditional aesthetics actually enhance the relationship between art and politics more than contemporary art theorists are keen to admit. The contributions of this volume explore the political, social, and cultural legacies of May ’68 revolt in France and similar protest movements in other nations around the globe. These events share a global utopian imaginary which found expression in a variety of artistic productions.

This collection showcases a multivalent approach to the study of literary multilingualism, embodied in contemporary Nordic literature. While previous approaches to literary multilingualism have tended to take a textual or authorship focus, this book advocates for a theoretical perspective which reflects the multiplicity of languages in use in contemporary literature emerging from increased globalization and transnational interaction. Drawing on a multimodal range of examples from contemporary Nordic literature, these eighteen chapters illustrate the ways in which multilingualism is dynamic rather than fixed, resulting from the interactions between authors, texts, and readers as well as between literary and socio-political institutions. The book highlights the processes by which borders are formed within the production, circulation, and reception of literature and in turn, the impact of these borders on issues around cultural, linguistic, and national belonging. Introducing an innovative approach to the study of multilingualism in literature, this collection will be of particular interest to students and researchers in literary studies, cultural studies, and multilingualism.

Through comparative and integrated case studies, this book demonstrates how aesthetics becomes politics in cultural policy. Contributors from Norway, Sweden and the UK analyse exactly what happens when art is considered relevant for societal development, at both a practical and theoretical level. Cultural policy is seen here as a mechanism for translating values, that through organized and practical aesthetic judgement lend different forms of agency to the arts. What happens when aesthetical value is reinterpreted as political value? What kinds of negotiations take place at a cultural policy ground level when values are translated and reinterpreted? By addressing these questions, the editors present an original collection that effectively centralises and investigates the role of aesthetics in cultural policy research.
How do we read after the so-called death of literature? If we are to attend to the proclamations that the representational apparatuses of literature and politics are dead, what aesthetic, ethical, and political possibilities remain for us today? Our critical moment, Graff Zivin argues, demands anarchaeological reading: reading for the blind spots, errors, points of opacity or intranslatability in works of philosophy and art. Rather than applying concepts from philosophy in order to understand or elucidate cultural works, the book exposes works of philosophy, literary theory, narrative, poetry, film, and performance art and activism to one another. Working specifically with art, film, and literature from Argentina (Jorge Luis Borges, Juan José Saer, Ricardo Piglia, César Aira, Albertina Carri, the Internacional Errorista), Graff Zivin allows such thinkers as Levinas, Derrida, Badiou, and Rancière to be inflected by Latin American cultural production. Through these acts of interdiscursive and interdisciplinary (or indisciplinary) exposure, such ethical and political concepts as identification and recognition, decision and event, sovereignty and will, are read as constitutively impossible, erroneous. Rather than weakening either ethics or politics, however, the anarchaeological reading these works stage and demand opens up and radicalizes the possibility of justice. 

This thesis is an investigation into the aesthetic and political functions of “rumor” in modern Egypt. While previous studies have emphasized the formal or structural features of the genre, I seek to analyze the cultural, political, and historical context of the genre in its existence as such a powerful and ambivalent way of imagining speech. The scope of my analysis is a collection of texts culled from the tradition of Arabic letters in Egypt, beginning with early works of historiography (16th century), and into the political journals, newspapers, and novels of the 20th century, as well as the blogs, search engines and internet forums of the 21st century. I argue that specific discourses and imaginings of the rumor—contingent and mutable—emerged as an inseparable feature of the elite author’s textual encounter with the masses. Anxieties over the agency of various masses, teeming urban crowds, and other narratives have contributed to the ways in which different writers reify speech. My final chapters of my thesis turn to focus on rumors about the death of President Hosni Mubarak, in order to analyze the role the genre plays in contests over national political authority. Here, the rumor is an index of fears, passions, fantasies and other narratives that the writers both draw on and contribute to. Foregrounding these associations becomes a powerful aesthetic and affective process that allows actors to “fix”—solidify and treat—the agency and subjectivity of others.

Illuminating developments in contemporary Cambodia with political and aesthetic theory, this book analyses the country’s violent transition from socialism to capitalism through an innovative method that combines the aesthetic approach and critical theory. To understand the particularities of the country’s transition and Cambodia’s unfolding encounter with neoliberal capitalism, the book pursues the circuits of desire connecting the constellation of objects and relations, which is identified as Cambodia. Chapters focus on the pre-colonial empire of Angkor, the invasions of Siam and Vietnam in the nineteenth century, the devastation of the Khmer Rouge genocide and the subsequent Vietnamese occupation, and the present capacity of Hun Sen’s neoliberal government. A creative combination of auto-ethnography, critical theory, and area studies and the analysis of a historical moment, the book is of interest to academics working on comparative politics, Asian studies, holocaust studies, critical theory, and in the politics of aesthetics.

This collection investigates modern imperialist practices and their management of hunger through its punctuated distribution amongst asymmetrically related marginal populations. Drawing on relevant material from Egypt, Ireland, India and Ukraine, and the technological context of the globe, The Aesthetics and Politics of Global Hunger is a rigorously comparative study made up of ten essays by well-established scholars from universities around the world. Since modernity, we have been inhabitants of a globe increasingly connected through discourses of equal access for all humans to the resources of the planet, but the volume emphasizes alongside this reality the flagrant politicization of those same resources. From this emphasis, the essays in the volume place into relief the idea that ideological and aesthetic discourses of hunger could inform ethical thinking and practices about who or what constitutes the figure of the modern historical human.

Ewa Ziarek fully articulates a feminist aesthetics, focusing on the struggle for women’s literacy and political modernism and the devastating impact of racist violence and sexism. She examines the contradiction between women’s transformative literary and political practices and the oppressive realities of racist violence and sexism, and situates these tensions within the entrenched opposition between revolt and melanochilia in studies of modernity and within the friction between material injuries and experimental aesthetics. Ziarek’s political and theoretical interventions stand as a counterpoint to the aesthetic intervention of such modernist theorists as Mallarme, Pater, and Wilde. 

When Oscar Wilde was convicted of gross indecency in 1895, a reporter for the National Observer wrote that there was “not a man or a woman in the English-speaking world possessed of the treasure of a wholesome mind who is not under a deep debt of gratitude to the marquis of Queensberry for destroying the high Priest of the Decadents.” But reports of the death of decadence were greatly exaggerated, and today, more than one hundred years after the famous trial and at the beginning of a new millennium, the phenomenon of decadence continues to be a significant cultural force. Indeed, “decadence” in the nineteenth century, and in our own period, has been a concept whose analysis yields a broad set of ideological and aesthetic imaginings of the rumor—contingent and mutable—emerged as an inseparable feature of the elite author’s textual encounter with the masses. Anxieties over the agency of various masses, teeming urban crowds, and other narratives have contributed to the ways in which different writers reify speech. My final chapters of my thesis turn to focus on rumors about the death of President Hosni Mubarak, in order to analyze the role the genre plays in contests over national political authority. Here, the rumor is an index of fears, passions, fantasies and other narratives that the writers both draw on and contribute to. Foregrounding these associations becomes a powerful aesthetic and affective process that allows actors to “fix”—solidify and treat—the agency and subjectivity of others.

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Heavy makeup, gaudy jewelry, dramatic hairstyles, and clothes that are considered cheap, fake, too short, too tight, or too masculine: working-class Black and Latina girls and women are often framed as embodying “excessive” styles that are presumed to indicate sexual deviance. In Aesthetics of Excess Jillian Hernandez examines how middle-class discourses of aesthetic value racialize the bodies of women and girls of color. At the same time, their style can be a site of cultural capital when appropriated by the contemporary art scene. Drawing on her community arts work with Black and Latina girls in Miami, Hernandez analyzes the art and self-image of these girls alongside works produced by contemporary artists and pop musicians such as Wangeci Mutu, Kara Walker, and Nicki Minaj. Through these relational readings, Hernandez shows how notions of high and low culture are complicated when women and girls of color engage in cultural production and how they challenge the policing of their bodies and sexualities through artistic authorship.

In both politics and art in recent decades, there has been a dramatic shift in emphasis on representation of identity. Liberal ideals of universality and individuality have given way to a concern with the visibility and recognition of underrepresented groups. Modernist and postmodernist celebrations of disruption and subversion have been challenged by the view that representation is integral to social change. Despite this convergence, neither political nor aesthetic theory has given much attention to the increasingly central role of art in debates and struggles over cultural identity in the public sphere. Connecting Hegelian aesthetics with contemporary cultural politics, Jason Miller argues that both the aesthetic and political value of art are found in the reflexive self-awareness that artistic representation enables. The significance of art in modern life is that it shows us both the particular element in humanity as well as the human element in particularity. Just as Hegel asks us to acknowledge how different historical and cultural contexts produce radically different experiences-based art calls on its audiences to situate themselves in relation to perspectives and experiences potentially quite remote—or even inaccessible—from our own. Miller offers a timely response to questions such as: How does contemporary art’s politics of perception contest liberal notions of deliberative politics? How does the cultural identity of the artist relate to the representations of cultural identity in their work? How do we understand and evaluate identity-based art aesthetically? Discussing a wide range of works of art and popular culture—from Antigone to Do the Right Thing and The Wire—this book develops a new conceptual framework for understanding the representation of cultural identity that affirms art’s capacity to effect social change.

In this influential sequence of linked interviews, Rancière explores the interplay of art and politics.

Jacques Ranciere’s work is increasingly central to several debates across the humanities. Distributions of the Sensible confronts a question at the heart of his thought: How should we conceive of the relationship between the “politics of aesthetics” and the “aesthetics of politics”? Specifically, the book explores the implications of Ranciere’s rethinking of the relationship of aesthetic to political democracy from a wide range of critical perspectives. Distributions of the Sensible contains original essays by leading scholars on topics such as Ranciere’s relation to political theory, critical theory, philosophical aesthetics, and film. The book concludes with a new essay by Ranciere himself that reconsiders the practice of theory between aesthetics and politics.

Do aesthetic appeals to senses and emotions in political debate necessarily marginalise political reason and reduce citizens to consumers – thus dangerously undermining democracy? Or is sensuous-emotional engagement, on the contrary, a basic fact of the political process and a crucial precondition for revitalising democracy? Artistic and political culture in Modern Society investigates the current interrelationship between aesthetic practice and political practice in Western democracies, focusing on its impact on democratic political culture. Henrik Raae Nielsen argues that aesthetic interventions in the political process do not by definition undermine politics’ content of reason. Instead, a differentiation must be made between a multiplicity of aesthetic forms of intervention – some of which tend to weaken the political judgement of citizens while other forms tend to stimulate competent judgement. This book will be of interest to scholars in the fields of political science, sociology, media studies, and cultural studies.

Communities of Sense argues for a new understanding of the relation between politics and aesthetics in today’s globalized and image-saturated world. Established and emerging scholars of art and culture draw on Jacques Ranciere’s theorization of democratic politics to suggest that aesthetics, traditionally defined as the “science of the sensible,” is not a depoliticized discourse or theory of art, but instead part of a historically specific organization of social life and communal identity. Rather than formulating aesthetics as the Other to politics, the contributors show that aesthetics and politics are mutually implicated in the construction of communities of visibility and sensation through which political orders emerge. The first of the collection’s three sections explicitly examines the links between aesthetics and social and political experience. Here a new essay by Ranciere posits art as a key site where agreement can be staged in order to produce new communities of sense. In the second section, contributors investigate how sense was constructed in the past by the European avant-garde and how it is mobilized in today’s global visual and political culture. Exploring the viability of various models of artistic and political critique in the context of globalization, the authors of the essays in the volume’s final section suggest a shift from identity politics and preconstituted collectivities toward processes of identification and disidentification. Topics discussed in the volume vary from digital architecture to a makeshift museum in a Paris suburb, and from romantic art theory to the wake of Hegel to the history of the group-subject in political art and performance since 1968. An interview with Etienne Balibar rounds out the collection. Contributors: Emily Apter, Etienne Balibar, Carlos Basualdo, T. J. Demos, Rachel Haidu, Beth Hinderliter, David Joselit, William Kainen, Ranjanna Khanna, Reinaldo Laddaga, Vered Maimon, Jaleh Mansoor, Reinhold Martin, Seth McCormick, Yates McKee, Alexander Potts, Jacques Ranciere, Toni Ross

Mary Esteve provides a study of crowd representations in American literature from the antebellum era to the early twentieth century. As a central icon of political and cultural democracy, the crowd occupies a prominent place in the American literary and cultural landscape. Esteve examines a range of writing by Poe, Hawthorne, Lydia Maria Child, Du Bois, James, and Stephen Crane among others. These writers, she argues, distinguish between the aesthetics of immersion in a crowd and the mode of collectivity demanded of political-liberal subjects. In their representations of everyday crowds, they range, from streams of urban pedestrians to swarms of train travellers, from upper-class parties to lower-class revivalist meetings, such authors seize on the political problems facing a mass liberal democracy – problems such as the stipulations of citizenship, nation formation, mass immigration and the emergence of mass media. Esteve examines both the aesthetic and political meanings of such urban crowd scenes.

This book suggests that modern cultural and critical institutions have persistently associated questions of aesthetics and politics with literature, theory, technics, and Romanticism. Its first section examines aesthetic nationalism and the figure of the body, focusing on writings by Benedict Anderson, J. G. Fichte, and Matthew Arnold, and arguing that uneasy acts of aestheticization (of media technology) and abjection (of the maternal body) undergird the production of the national body as “imagined community.” Subsequent
chapters on Paul de Man, Friedrich Schlegel, and Percy Shelley explore the career of the gendered body in the aesthetic tradition and the relationship among aesthetics, technics, politics, and figurative language. The author accounts for the hysteria that has characterized media representations of theory, explains why and how Romanticism has remained a locus of extravagant political hopes and anxieties, and, in a sequence of close readings, uncovers the "anaesthetic" condition of possibility of the politics of aesthetics.

No other country and no other period has produced a tradition of major aesthetic debate to compare with that which unfolded in German culture from the 1930s to the 1950s. In Aesthetics and Politics the key texts of the great Marxist controversies over literature and art during these years are assembled in a single volume. They do not form a disparate collection but a continuous, interlinked debate between thinkers who have become giants of twentieth-century intellectual history.

Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics brings together some of Jacques Rancière’s most recent writings on art and politics to show the critical potential of two of his most important concepts: the aesthetics of politics and the politics of aesthetics. In this fascinating collection, Rancière engages in a radical critique of some of his major contemporaries on questions of art and politics: Gilles Deleuze, Antonio Negri, Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou and Jacques Derrida. The essays show how Rancière’s ideas can be used to analyse contemporary trends in both art and politics, including the events surrounding 9/11, war in the contemporary consensual age, and the ethical turn of aesthetics and politics. Rancière elaborates new directions for the concepts of politics and communism, as well as the notion of what a ‘politics of art’ might be. This important collection includes several essays that have never previously been published in English, as well as a brand new afterword. Together these essays serve as a superb introduction to the work of one of the world’s most influential contemporary thinkers.

An intense and lively debate on literature and art between thinkers who became some of the great figures of twentieth-century philosophy and literature. With an afterword by Fredric Jameson No other country and no other period has produced a tradition of major aesthetic debate to compare with that which unfolded in German culture from the 1930s to the 1950s. In Aesthetics and Politics the key texts of the great Marxist controversies over literature and art during these years are assembled in a single volume. They do not form a disparate collection but a continuous, interlinked debate between thinkers who have become giants of twentieth-century intellectual history.

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In this book the influential philosopher Jacques Rancière, in discussion with Peter Engelmann, explores the enduring connection between politics and aesthetics, arguing that aesthetics forms the fundamental basis for social and political upheaval. Beginning from his rejection of structuralist Marxism, Rancière outlines the development of his thought from his early studies on workers’ emancipation to his recent work on literature, film and visual art. Rather than discussing aesthetics within narrow terms of how we contemplate art or beauty, Rancière argues that aesthetics underpins our entire ‘regime of experience’. He shows how political relations develop from sensual experience, as individual feelings and perceptions become the concern of the community as a whole. Since politics emerges from the ‘division of the sensual’, aesthetic experience becomes a radically emancipatory and egalitarian means to disrupt this order and transform political reality. Investigating new forms of emancipatory politics arising from current art practices and social movements, this short book will appeal to anyone interested in contemporary art, aesthetics, philosophy and political theory.

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