

Introduction

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Art, and especially contemporary art, is often fueled by a need for innovation. Accordingly, the philosophy of art has no shortage of novel topics to address. Furthermore, just like in other areas of philosophical debate, reconsidering less-discussed views on the arts can be a refreshing exercise. Additionally, contemporary reflection on the arts and on aesthetic experience is facing new challenges, stemming from the impact of climate change on the natural and the urban landscape, from the pressing need for intercultural dialogue, and from the acknowledgment of cultural identities related to gender, race, and class. All the authors who successfully responded to our call for papers for the Focus “Philosophy of Art: New Directions” are concerned with the abovementioned issues. The collection, stemming as it does from a call for papers, has no ambition to exhaustiveness, and yet it seems to us that it covers quite a wide range of topics. A variety of research styles is also represented, the only common denominator being the quality of the proposals, in terms of originality, relevance, and argumentative force.

The collection opens with a paper by Andrea Maistrello, who considers whether the notion of fraudulence can shed light on any particular aspect of contemporary visual art. Maistrello looks deeper into a concept that is often advocated in discussions of contemporary art but has received limited attention from philosophers. Contra Stanley Cavell, he argues that some artistic strategies that might be conducive to a feeling of fraudulence did not arise because of the self-critical attitude typical of modernist art, but are instead rooted in the history of art. Inspired by Richard Wollheim, Maistrello suggests that it is rather contemporary art’s predilection for serialized and multiply instantiatable objects which might explain why a distinctive feeling of fraudulence is aroused by some contemporary artworks: those artworks cannot readily be appreciated as objects of love, because that would require experiencing them as unique, rather than serialized and multiply instantiatable. As

a consequence, the public often feels frustrated and perceives the artworks as somehow fraudulent.

Discussion of contemporary visual art continues with Elisa Caldarola's paper, which is concerned with tags – the signatures of writers' street names that, according to some theorists, might qualify as works of street art. Caldarola concentrates on the graphically plain tags produced by the very first such writers in the late 1960s and, more recently, by some street artists, arguing that they all qualify as works of conceptual street art, which are presented for intellectual appreciation. The late 1960s plain tags, in particular, pioneered both the genre of conceptual art and that of street art, Caldarola argues. The novelty of her approach consists in suggesting that those genres, which are usually understood as unrelated, might actually overlap, as well as in discussing tags, which have not attracted much attention from philosophers.

The conceptual aspects of contemporary art are also at the center of Iain Campbell's paper, which discusses how and to what extent New Conceptualism – that is, the recent wave of conceptualism in the tradition of New Music, an experimental musical practice that has revolved around the Darmstadt International Summer Course for the past 70 years – relates to the development of conceptualist strategies in contemporary visual art. While the experimental music of e.g., John Cage, George Brecht and La Monte Young is usually understood as a form of conceptual art, which has challenged the distinction between artist and audience as well as that between art and everyday life, New Music is seen as unrelated to conceptual art, because of its concern with the self-sufficiency of the musical medium. Campbell innovatively disputes this understanding, showing that New Conceptualism manifests New Music practitioners' interest in challenging the aesthetic standards of Western music, in criticizing musical institutions, and in introducing non-sonic elements into musical practice, although lacking the socio-political dimension and, more broadly, the ethical concerns often displayed by conceptual art.

The intertwining of the ethical and aesthetic dimension in art practice is discussed by Xavier De Donato with a focus on architecture. His paper presents a novel approach to the ontology of architecture: environmental integralism. Contra those views that privilege aesthetic over ontological concerns when it comes to philosophical discussion of architecture, De Donato stresses that a proper ontological account can help us reach a correct understanding of architectural objects, necessary to evaluating them properly. In particular, he submits that paradigmatic architectural objects are material, and that they are designed to perform certain functions, some of which are concerned with the spatial and social interactions that can take place in and around them. This, he claims, is why we should understand buildings as material objects that re-

spond to both the physical environment and the social context in which they are built. His proposal has a prescriptive element, since it entails that a good building is one that satisfies not only aesthetic, but also environmental and social concerns.

The need to develop new approaches that account for the interaction between aesthetic and ethical concerns is strongly manifested by Remei Capdevila-Werning and Sanna Lethinen, who introduce the practice of intergenerational aesthetics, which is concerned with aesthetic obligations towards future generations, in relation to issues such as sustainability and preservation of the environment. This approach, as the authors show, is interdisciplinary, and has a normative component, since it prescribes that, when making an aesthetic decision, one should take into account what can be imagined to be the aesthetic concerns of future generations, while not taking for granted that aesthetic values are universal. In the last part of the paper their approach is illustrated with reference to the planned renovation of Alvar Aalto's Finlandia Hall in Helsinki.

Attention to non-universalist stances is also at the center of Marcello Ghilardi's paper, which presents an intercultural approach to artistic and aesthetic questions. Focusing on the relationship between European and Sino-Japanese aesthetics, the author cautions against forcing non-European categories into European ones and neglecting the peculiarities of argumentative and stylistic strategies different from the ones we are accustomed to. At the same time, Ghilardi maintains that the ideal we should aspire to is mutual translatability between cultures. These methodological issues are illustrated with reference to the Western notions of "body" and "image" and to their Sino-Japanese quasi-counterparts.

Alice Barale discusses otherness in relation to art-production from a novel perspective, taking into consideration some very recent, computer-generated images that are presented for artistic appreciation. To generate those images, computers are supplied with data, which they then elaborate through so-called "deep" networks of artificial neurons, not randomly, but with a high degree of autonomy, leading to unpredictable results. The challenge, for artists supplying the computers with data, consists in trying to understand the logic adopted by the machines in order to make reliable predictions about possible outcomes. Barale's hypothesis is that reflecting on our interaction with images constructed by AI can give us insights not only into alternative ways of visually organizing the world but also, by comparison, into how we human beings construct images and what we look for in them. This goal is central to artists who operate with AI-generated images, Barale explains.

Innovative technology and the feeling of otherness are discussed also by Timothy Deane-Freeman – the first not as a means for producing art, but as

one of the themes that, along with black culture and visions of alternative futures, are at the core of artworks that belong to the genre of Afrofuturism. With a variety of references to music, comics, and cinema, the author describes the peculiarities of this genre, which is seldom taken into consideration in philosophical discussions of art, and the genre's relationship to science-fiction. After the African diaspora, the alien and the cyborg – often central to Afrofuturist works, where they also take on ancestral traits – are figures through which a cultural identity can be constructed, which brings together the need to imagine a world radically different from the present one and the need to reconceptualize the ancestral past as a source of innovation rather than as a mark of outdatedness. According to Deane-Freeman, Afrofuturist works are a model of emancipatory political art, from which current cultural production that seeks to resist to globalized capitalism has much to learn.

The collection concludes with another discussion of artistic production in relation to cultural and personal identity, put forward in Laura Di Summa's paper on fashion, style, and identity. Di Summa introduces a novel element into the literature on identity and fashion, by discussing them in relation to style – be it collective, as in the case of its role in the creation of gender and racial identity, fashionable (a notion that, as the author shows, proves quite difficult to define), or personal. As regards the latter notion of style, the author defends the view that fashion – understood as a form of performance – is partly constitutive of one's personality, rather than merely a means for expressing it.

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