

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2015

CONTENTS

BSA Annual Conference 2015

Conference reports

Aesthetics in Mathematics
Philosophy of Photography
Emotions of Others
Eating Well
Race and Aesthetics
Dance Improvisation

Cambridge Lectures

Funding opportunities

Calendar

BSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

18-20 September 2015, Homerton College,Cambridge

Anthony Fisher (Manchester), Musical Works as Structural Universals



Jonathan Gilmore (New York), The Problem of Discrepant Affects

Julia Langkau (Konstanz), Learning from Fiction
Jason Leddington (Bucknell), The Experience of
Magic

Register at:

http://british-aesthetics.org/product/bsa-annual-conference-2015/

Bence Nanay (Antwerp/Cambridge), Modernism and Pictorial Organisation

Confirmed keynote speakers

Paul Boghossian (New York University)

David Bordwell (University of WisconsinMadison), Art Theory Between Aesthetics and
Criticism (Empson Lecture)

Catherine Elgin (Harvard University)

Symposia

'The Sublime'

Emily Brady (Edinburgh), The Sublime and the Self; Tom Cochrane (Sheffield), Is the experience of the sublime an emotion?; Katerina Deligiorgi (Sussex), How to feel a judgement: the case of the Kantian sublime.

Papers

Christopher Bartel (Appalachian State), The Ontology of Musical Works and the Role of Intuitions

Ben Blumson (Singapore), Metaphorically
Anthony Cross (California), Trading Up in
Relationships with Art

'Genre'

Catharine Abell (Manchester); Greg Currie (York); Stacie Friend (Birkbeck).

'Aesthetic Obedience & Disobedience'

Hanne Appelqvist (Academy of Finland/Helsinki), The Quest for a Common Standard. Kant and Wittgenstein on the Rules of Art; Jonathan Neufeld (College of Charlston), Aesthetic Disobedience; Brian Soucek (UC David School of Law), Artwork Exceptionalism

Postgraduate Papers

Alexey Aliyev (Maryland), What Instances of Novels Are

Tom Baker (Nottingham), Transparency, Olfaction and Aesthetics

James Camien McGuiggan (Southampton),

Abstraction and Predicting Aesthetic from Moral

Properties

Kathrine Cuccuru (UCL), Aesthetic Attention Robbie Kubala (Columbia), Could it be Worth Thinking About Proust on Love?

Panagiotis Paris (St Andrews), The Empirical
Case for Moral Beauty

Madeleine Ransom (British Columbia), Frauds, Posers and Sheep

Nils-Hennes Stear (Michigan), Meriting a Response: Accounting for Seductive Artworks Michel-Antoine Xhignesse (McGill), Titles Unnamed

CONFERENCE REPORTS

BSA Connections Conference 'Aesthetics in Mathematics'

December 5-7, 2014
University of East Anglia

http://aesthetics-in-mathematics.weebly.com/

The conference was very successful, attracting 38 participants (43 registered) from a number of different countries (including Brasil, Canada, France, Netherlands, USA) as well as several institutions based in the UK, including Bristol, Cambridge, London (KCL), Aberdeen, ILLC (Amsterdam), Konstanz, Warwick. The background of the audience was highly multidisciplinary, including philosophers, mathematicians, economists, aestheticians and one flutist (Albert Manders), who kindly performed for us during a break on the second day of the conference. All speakers (with a roughly even split between aestheticians and philosophers of science or mathematics) showed a genuine enthusiasm about the event and interacted very comfortably across disciplinary boundaries. After earlier contacts with Prof. Robert Thomas, the editor of *Philosophia Mathematica*, the conference papers will be submitted to that journal for publication. Once enough of them have been accepted, it will be possible to edit a special issue on the topic of the conference. Acknowledgments to the BSA for

making the conference possible and creating an occasion for the publication of contributions will be included in an introductory piece.

The conference programme included the following papers:

John Bell (University of Western Ontario)
Reflections on Mathematics and Aesthetics
Elisabeth Schellekens (University of
Uppsala/Durham) On the aesthetic value of
reasoning

Toby Bryant (Cambridge) In defense of the aesthetic value of mathematica-physical theories I 5.10-**Logan Fletcher** (University of Maryland) Mechanistic understanding, visual proof, and mathematical beauty

James McAllister (University of Leiden)
Six questions for any account of mathematical
beauty, with some answers

Kenneth Manders (University of Pittsburgh) *On Geometricality*

Thomas Forster (Cambridge) Beauty and Wonder

Nicholas Riggle (Lafayette College)

Aesthetic Properties and Mathematical Beauty

Manya Raman Sundström (Umeå

University) Beauty as fit in mathematics

Catarina Dutilh-Novaes (University of Groeningen) Beauty, explanation, and persuasion in mathematical proofs

Irina Starikova (University of São Paulo)

Symmetry and beauty in mathematics

Catherine Elgin (Harvard) Elegance,

Exemplification, and Mathematics

Adam Rieger (University of Glasgow)

Mathematics and Beauty

Caroline Jullien (Université de Lorraine)

On the aesthetics in Poincaré's philosophy of mathematics

Cain Todd (University of Lancaster) Fitting Feelings: the possibility of aesthetic judgments in mathematics

Angela Breitenbach (Cambridge), Davide Rizza (UEA) and Fiona Milway

The New Philosophy of Photography

Feb 13-14, 2015

The New Philosophy of Photography workshop, organised by Diarmuid Costello, was a collaboration between the London Aesthetics Forum at Institute of Philosophy and the Centre for Research in Philosophy, Literature and the Arts at the University of Warwick. It was generously funded by the British Society of Aesthetics. Over 120 people attended, in addition to speakers and organizers, some traveling across Europe to audit the conference. The speakers came from the US (Charles Palermo), Canada (Dominic McIver Lopes), Mexico (Paloma Atencia-Linares), Germany (Martin Seel), France (Laure Blanc Benon), Belgium (Bence Nanay) and the UK (Diarmuid Costello and Dawn M Wilson).

The conference was convened to consolidate

and test recent work in the philosophy of photography that departs from the view that has dominated the field for the last 30-35 years. The orthodox view is committed to the natural counterfactual dependence of a photograph upon its source, and stresses the non-agential, automatic or mechanical nature of photographic processes. This leads to claims about the epistemic privilege of photography compared to "manugraphic" forms of picturing, but also puts pressure on its standing as art, in so far as art is thought to require agency in the formation of the image itself. Indeed, it typically presents photography's epistemic and aesthetic capacities as a zero-sum game. The new view, by contrast, is grounded in the thought that photography begins, but does not end, with a light exposure and so necessarily depends on further forms of image processing. These may be understood more or less restrictively, but cannot be dispensed with altogether, since they are required to produce a visible image. That such images originate in a light exposure ensures their photographic credentials; that they require further image rendering processes allows various operations to be performed that need not preserve their dependence on the appearance of what caused them. This is true of much photographic art, the evident agency of which has always generated difficulties for the orthodox account.

Speakers addressed this theme from various

angles. Costello provided a road map of the debate, taking the presumed fictional incompetence of photography as a guiding thread, and outlining various challenges for the new view that remain to be resolved. Lopes considered the implication of the new theory for the possibility of abstraction in photography, and whether it is strictly necessary to understand abstract photography as non-depictive. Blanc-Banon argued that the critical censure of colour in favour of black & white photography ought to be an issue for any philosophy of photography that aims to be adequate to photographic art. Nanay considered the implications of a more general view about two dimensional versus three dimensional pictorial organization, going back to Wöfflin, for photographic depiction. Wilson began the second day by considering various analogies between musical works and photographs, focusing on the possible analogues between composing, conducting, performing and improvising across the two arts. Atencia-Linares proposed that the traditional theory would do better to appeal to Sperber & Wilson's notion of honest signaling, derived from research in evolutionary biology, than Grice's conception of non-natural meaning. Palermo considered the implications of the two models for photographic art more directly, by focusing on the problem of conclusively establishing the intention of a single work from Walker Evans 1936 Sharecroppers series. Seel brought the papers to a close by considering the nature of

photographs as appearances more generally, across artistic and journalistic contexts, by means of several paired images. The conference concluded with a round table.

Diarmuid Costello

The Emotions of Others

My colleague, Joel Smith, and I are currently engaged in an AHRC-funded project, Knowledge of Emotion, which seeks to address a series of interrelated questions surrounding our knowledge of the emotions of others, including:

- Upon what grounds do we attribute emotions to others?
- What are the respective roles of expression (facial and postural), on the one hand, and context, on the other, in the attribution of emotion to others?
- On what grounds do we attribute emotions to others as represented in different artistic media (sculpture, painting, drawing, photography, film)?

The project thus brings together research in psychology (e.g. the psychological basis of emotion and of emotion expression), in the philosophy of mind (e.g. the nature of emotion and of social cognition), and in aesthetics (e.g. the scope of representational art forms to represent, and to themselves express, emotion; the means by which

audiences are able to emotionally interpret representations and expressions of emotion).

In 2013, the BSA generously awarded a small grant to support making a film to explore these philosophical issues. We worked with two Manchester-based artists and film makers, Jacob Cartwright and Nick Jordan (http://www.nickjordan.info/wurstundgritz.htm I), to make a short documentary film of approximately 17 minutes, exploring these questions in an engaging and accessible manner. Nick and Jacob directed the film, based on a dialogue script written by Joel and I.

The resultant documentary essay, The Emotions of Others, features a diverse range of filmed participants, combined with a conversation between a 'voice of doubt' and a 'voice of certainty'; a debate that questions whether emotional expression, either in the flesh or via representational media, is a reliable route to the knowledge of others' minds. The film includes examples of facial expressions in old master and contemporary paintings - from Simone Martini to Marlene Dumas - and film clips from F.W. Murnau, Sergio Leone, Jean-Luc Godard and Laurel & Hardy. A voiceover reads extracts from Charles Darwin's The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals (1872).

The documentary is intended to play an educational role in making academic issues

concerning emotion communication and recognition accessible to a non-academic audience; to promote inter-disciplinary research into the fine arts; and to highlight interesting relations between issues concerning the expression of emotion in the arts and issues concerning human emotional expression. We also hope that it will promote the discussion of the communication and recognition of emotion, both in the fine arts and in everyday life, from a philosophical and psychological standpoint.

You can watch the film here:

http://british-aesthetics.org/the-emotions-of-others/

For more information about the Knowledge of Emotion project, see:

http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/su bjects/philosophy/our-research/researchprojects/knowledge-of-emotion/

Catharine Abell

Eating well: experience and value in meals

Workshop held at the University of Warwick 27 March 2015



This interdisciplinary workshop was a day of conversation about meals aiming to acknowledge the complex experiences and values, as well as problems and conflicts, that converge in meals. Ten speakers gave talks, coming from fields with differing perspectives and methods relating to meals, followed by summary reflections by two further speakers at a concluding roundtable. The workshop was attended by approximately 40 people, representing a wide range of disciplines, and audience participation was sharp and stimulating. This was not an event that made aesthetics the focal point of discussion, but one of the good things about the day—here I offer my own impression—was how powerful and challenging the attention to artistic, creative and expressive roles of food and meals was. The combination of topics allowed meals to show up as occasions that can be experimented with, enjoyed, and shaped in

response to problems.

A tour through the topics addressed: Rosemary Collier launched the day by showing the urgency and difficulty of understanding what 'sustainability' in agriculture means. Carol Bryce discussed how meals are experienced by mothers of young children as a symbol of family, bringing ambitious goals, and issues of gender and generational power, into the daily routine. Moya Kneafsey (who brought in a CSA veg box so we could hold muddy parsnips, etc.) linked the CSA movement to 'alternative rationalities', affirming the liberating effects of constraining one's food choices, and the benefits of food production and distribution that de-prioritise profit. Zeina Ghandour, discussing her research in Nablus, told of cake-baking and pride in 'stuffing everything', and considered food's ability to provide a feeling of home, and Durkheimian 'effervescence', even in conditions of war and homelessness. Tim White presented a series of striking examples of artistic-political projects drawing on food's role in social cohesion and the meal's potential for 'microtopian' moments and emancipatory participation (e.g., the Enemy Kitchen food trucks and Nalaga'at Theatre's 'Not by Bread Alone').

In the afternoon, **Helena Tuomainen**'s research on Ghanaian immigrants adapting to London life showed the importance given to

preserving meal formats, food textures and colours when faced with unfamiliar foods and tastes, as well as the gradual change and acculturation that occurred within meals. **Charles Michel** celebrated an emerging food renaissance, in which art and science meet, and explored the psychological and creative possibilities for wellbeing, and deliciousness, open to us as cooks and enjoyers of food. Tereza Stehlíková, highlighting food as linking the internal and external, showed her beautiful film of a real and imagined Icelandic banquet, and raised the question of how art can help us pay attention to and change habits of experience. Rebecca **Earle** steered us to the rich scholarship on how identity is reflected in and constituted by diet, and gave an absorbing history of the model of 'humours' that were taken to determine our individual physical appearance and character, and to which diet was essential. Kate Rawles argued that we must recognise the unacceptable ethical status of our farming and food systems, based on their impact on human and non-human life, and that we need a kind of ethical renaissance in which we change our perspective on the role of the ethical in decision-making.

At the concluding roundtable, **Liz Dowler** pointed to the themes of celebration, banqueting and abundance that emerged during the day and are crucial to the human meaning of meals. But she also emphasised the excluded guests, people who have few food

choices and little political voice, and highlighted the broad issue of food systems consistently meeting the demands of the economically powerful. **Aaron Meskin** posed two pointed questions that opened up the specifically philosophical significance of the day: (1) Does, can and should the 'sustainability profile' of food imbue our experience of food? And (2), with ongoing debates about ethical-aesthetic interaction in mind, how do the ethical and aesthetic value of food and meals interact?

One of the large questions that emerged in discussion concerned why we do not appear responsive to the huge body of information arguing in favour of changing our food systems and eating practices. Some ideas offered: we need courage, imagination in our ethical and social lives, better self-understanding, powerful storytelling, motivators other than fear, understanding of which issues are or can become 'live' for us, and constructive use of the aesthetic-ethical interaction.

Feedback on the workshop was very positive (an average of 8.9 out of 10 on our not-scientifically- conducted survey). People appreciated the interdisciplinary approach and said they got ideas both from the presentations and from the networking opportunities. One respondent said the range of talks was 'really eye-opening', and another thought 'the day was really profitable for provoking thought outside the standard

"green" box.' We wanted to have an intellectually open event that could trigger further research and engagement. Information on the PhD and early career research projects of those attending has been posted on the workshop website, to be a resource for further networking. Based on the conversations that took place, the promise is there, and this was a good, interesting start.

After the workshop, speakers, organisers and some of the attending PhD students gathered for a meal, held at Cryfield Grange, with thanks to Helen Willoughby who cooked us a delicious dinner.

Organisers: Eileen John and Alisa Mandrigin (Warwick) and Tereza Stehlíková (Royal College of Art/Westminster)

Further note: We were glad to have the encouragement to follow the BPA/SWIP guidelines. This turned out to be an event at which nine of the twelve speakers were women, so there was no difficulty in achieving good representation of women. There was also a good mix of senior and more junior colleagues, with, I think, no problems of disparate treatment. It was helpful to me as an organiser to have those sometimes delicate and ignored issues of career status in view.

Eileen John

Race and Aesthetics: A British Society of Aesthetics Connections Conference

Race and Aesthetics: A British Society of Aesthetics Connections Conference took place at Leeds Art Gallery on May 19th and 20th, 2015. Our aim with this conference was to reunite philosophy of race and philosophical aesthetics. The conference was generously supported primarily by British Society of Aesthetics, and additionally supported by Centre for Aesthetics and Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies at University of Leeds and by Leeds Art Gallery.

Diversity was a recurring feature at the conference.

The conference included speakers who approached the intersection of race and aesthetics from diverse philosophical perspectives. In addition to the invited speakers who work centrally in aesthetics (A.W. Eaton, Sherri Irvin, and Paul C. Taylor), the other invited speakers work in political philosophy (Charles Mills and Nathaniel Adam Tobias Coleman), epistemology (Kristie Dotson), cognitive science (Ron Mallon), phenomenology (Alia Al-Saji), and feminist philosophy (Katharine Jenkins and Jennifer Saul). There were also two submitted papers selected via anonymous review (by James Camien McGuiggan, and by Nils-Hennes Stear and Robin Zheng). Moreover, there was also

diversity in the career stages of all speakers, who range from postgraduate students to senior professors.

There was even more diversity in the conference audience. In addition to aestheticians and other philosophers, the conference attracted academics from Sociology, English, and Education. Moreover, the conference also attracted museum professionals, artists and curators, and other members of the public. Altogether, 55-60 people participated in the conference.

The papers presented also exhibited a level of diversity that reflected the richness of the intersection between race and aesthetics. To just give a small sample, the talks covered topics such as: the challenges of racialized desire and bodily taste, the role of aesthetics in maintaining White Supremacy, the experiences and normative evaluations of racialized art, and the mechanics of racial humor. Abstracts of the talks are available at http://raceandaesthetics.weebly.com/abstracts.html . Better yet, the Twitter hashtag #raceaesthetics I 5 provides a stream of conference snapshots from multiple conference participants' perspectives.

To conclude the conference report, we would like to quote a (completely unsolicited) comment, posted on Facebook, from James Camien McGuiggan, who is a postgraduate student at University of Southampton and one

of the (non-invited) speakers at the conference:

"The BSA Race and Aesthetics Conference in Leeds this week was perhaps the best conference I've ever attended. It was enlightening, humbling, invigorating, depressing, inspiring. I felt more vividly than ever what I'd before merely thought: that philosophy must be politically urgent, and that it shies from this obligation at the cost of philosophy itself, not just because philosophy thereby commits itself to irrelevance but because the rigour and clarity philosophy demands is impossible without (intellectual, emotional, perceptual) awareness of how power structures and ideology can shape and distort philosophy's foundations and framework. I was also incredibly humbled by how everyone attending the conference embodied this philosophical excellence, this mutually enriching combination of rigour, bravery, honesty, collegiality and fury. I cannot express enough my thanks to everyone involved; and I mean this 'cannot' deeply: I not only lack the means to thank as much as I know I should, but I do not know how deeply I learnt from the conference; I know only that I learnt much more than I can now appreciate."

Shen-Yi Liao (Sam Liao)

Dance Improvisation: A Philosophical Perspective

An Interdisciplinary and Participatory

Conference on the Philosophical Issues Raised by Dance Improvisation

May 21st-22nd, 2015

University of Leeds



Dance Improvisation: A Philosophical Perspective took place at the University of Leeds' Devonshire Hall on May 21-22, 2015. This conference, organized by Sara Protasi and Aaron Meskin, aimed to promote the philosophical study, research and discussion of an important aspect of a central but relatively underexplored fine art; namely, the role of improvisation in the art form of dance. A secondary aim was to explore a particular way of doing this: by integrating the scholarly and academic perspective (both in philosophy and dance studies) with the practitioners' experience and viewpoint. To this end, the conference incorporated traditional academic talks along with practical and performance

elements.

Hence, the conference organizers collaborated with a number of independent dance artists who form the Leeds-based artists' collective Improvisation Exchange. Renee Conroy's opening keynote address on the first day provided an overview of improvisation in dance and focused on the question of how to appreciate dance improvisation in a performance context. Conroy pointed to some intriguing ways in which dance improvisation calls for different sorts of treatment than does musical improvisation. Ian Heckman explored the status of dance improvisations as works of performing art and drew attention to a variety of ways in which improvisation is a distinctive artistic category. Just before lunch, Rachel Dean, one of the members of the Improvisation Exchange collective, led the conference attendees in an improvisatory movement workshop. After lunch, Donnchadh O'Conaill investigated the question of whether dance improvisation can count as intentional action, while Louise Douse argued for the centrality of flow in improvisatory dance performance. Closing the first day, Vida Midgelow's electrifying participatory performance/lecture explored the undisciplined discipline of dance improvisation. Many attendees joined us for a delicious conference dinner at the Corner Cafe restaurant.



Barbara Montero started the second day off with a keynote lecture about the role of spontaneity and cognition in improvisatory dance. Sherri Irvin followed with a talk on the ontology of improvisatory performance largely based on research done as a philosopher-in-residence with a New Yorkbased dance company. Two performance/presentations followed by members of Improvisation Exchange: Daliah Touré presented work on non-consensus in collaboration while Marie Andersen discussed and performed work focused on bodily knowing. This was followed by a performance by the Improv Exchange dancers of one of Touré's score as well as a chance for some conference attendees to try out the score for themselves. Unfortunately, Carla Bagnoli and Rebecca Stancliffe were unable to present

their talks.

Overall the conference was a great success and it wouldn't have come off without the tireless work of postgraduate assistant, philosopher and dancer, Jade Fletcher.

Aaron Meskin

Cambridge Lecture Series

The British Society of Aesthetics sponsored three lectures in Cambridge between February and April this year. Eileen John gave a paper entitled 'Aesthetic Reasons and Living with Ourselves'; Renee Conroy gave a paper entitled 'Rust Belt Ruins'; and Dawn Wilson gave a paper entitled 'Does a Photograph Capture a Moment in Time?'. Although the talks were greatly appreciated by those who attended, the difficulty of getting an audience big enough to justify the speakers' time suggested that, in future, talks should be held in the period of October to December. Hence, we held over the remaining three talks until the end of the year. I am grateful for to the BSA for sponsoring this series, which is enjoyed by those both inside and outside academia in and around Cambridge.

Derek Matravers

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Full details and how to apply are available on the BSA website:

http://britishaesthetics.org/funding/

'Connections'

A Connections conference should be designed to enhance the dialogue between aesthetics and other areas of philosophy. The majority of papers should be by philosophers who have hitherto not had a primary research focus in aesthetics (effectively an AOS in aesthetics), though they may have made some contributions to the field. The remainder of the presenters should have a research specialism in aesthetics. Papers should explore the connections of other areas of philosophy with aesthetics, or be in aesthetics. The conference should be held within one year of the notification of a successful application; it must be held in the UK, though the organisers need not be based there; and the organisers are responsible for all practical matters concerning its running. The BSA expects to be the sole funder of the conference, which should include 'British Society of Aesthetics Connections' in its title, and all conference materials should publicise the role of the BSA.

Proposals should be sent to admin@british-aesthetics.org no later than Monday I

December 2014. They should be no more than 2,000 words long, and include a

proposed date range and venue, a draft budget, and a list of proposed speakers and topics. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their applications by mid-January 2015.

Any questions about this Call for Proposals should be addressed to the President of the BSA, Berys Gaut bng@st-andrews.ac.uk

The next deadline for 'Small grants'

Is I October (for a decision by mid-November).

Each year the BSA gives small grants in support of UK activities in aesthetics. Past grants have been used to support conferences, workshops, seminars and lecture series. Applicants must be members of the Society. All events must be held in the UK.

There is an upper limit of £5,000 for small grants awards.

The Society strongly advises applicants to allow sufficient lead time when submitting applications, as it will not consider applications outside this cycle.

Applications without a valid BSA membership number will be rejected. If you have any problems with online submission (from here-http://british-aesthetics.org/portfolio/small-grants/) you can email your application as a Word attachment to admin@british-aesthetics.org

CALENDAR 2015

http://british-aesthetics.org/news/

July

Literature and Philosophy 1500-1700

July 14 - 16, 2015, University of Sussex

Aesthetics and the Feminine Conference

July 17 - 18, 2015, University College Cork

Music and the Senses

July 17 - 18, 2015, King's College London

Film-Philosophy Conference 2015: The Evaluation of Form
July 20 - 22, 2015, Oxford

August

International Society for the Philosophy of Architecture

August 1 - 3, 2015, Taos, New Mexico

Sustainable City Life: Exploring Aesthetic
Values in Urban Settings
August 6 - 8, 2015, Lahti

September

Perception and the Arts
September 16 - 17, 2015, Institute of
Philosophy, London

British Society of Aesthetics
September 18 - 20, 2015, Homerton College,
Cambridge

October

International Congress of Aesthetics
October 13 - 16, 2015, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

The Globalisation of Beauty
October 14 - 15, 2015, Birmingham

Aesthetic Concepts
October 29 - 31, 2015, Universidade do
Minho, Braga, and Guimarães

November

Philosophy and Architecture International Postgraduate Conference November 5 - 6, 2015, Lisbon

Nineteenth-Century Music Criticism November 10 - 12, 2015, Lucca

ASA Annual Meeting

November 11 - 14, 2015, Desoto Hilton,

Savannah

December

British Society of Aesthetics Conference on Fictional Characters

December 15 - 16, 2015, University of Southampton